Imaginary Democratization under Turmoil: Embracing the Real Politics and Broadcasting Idealized Democratic Images of the Japanese Emperor, 1945-1947

A thesis submitted to Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

by
So Mizoguchi
May, 2010
Thesis written by
So Mizoguchi
B. A., Rikkyo University, 2005
M. A., Kent State University, 2010

Approved by

Mary Ann Heiss/ Advisor
Kenneth Bindas/ Chair, Department of History
John R. D. Stalvey/ Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
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Many people have contributed to the excellence of this work. First, I owe special thank to Dr. Mary Ann Heiss for her hours of hard work. It took a long time to correct non-native English and to strengthen my ideas. Next, I would like to thank professors and colleagues of History Department at Kent. Dr. Patti Kameya often supported my first grad school life abroad. I also thank Jason Csehi, Sarah Zabic, and Nathan Fly. Special thanks to the staffs at both the Rikkyo University and Kent State University libraries for their help. My friends Michel and Kimiko Lynch help me even though they are busy. I also thanks to Elizabeth Omar, Jerry and Nancy Naughton, Keisuke Ida, and Megumi Watanabe. Lastly, my family has always been supportive me during this time. Without My mother and my brother’s help, I would not finish this thesis. I only regret not to be able to show the thesis to my father, Hajime.
Introduction

The contemporary world’s greatest power, particularly since the end of the Cold War, the United States is in a position to exert significant influence throughout the world, a reality that has provoked condemnation and envy. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, however, embodied a challenge to U.S. global hegemony that prompted the George W. Bush administration to herald the “war on terror” and initiate wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Although America’s unparalleled hard power easily overwhelmed these weaker nations, the Bush administration failed to win the hearts of the Iraqis and Afghans. The euphoria of military victory faded away, and the United States bogs down in Iraq and Afghanistan even in 2010. The failures of nation building in Afghanistan and Iraq reminded many people of the historical records of American military interventions, and scholars and journalists alike began to analyze previous American occupation policies. Even then, however, many scholars have focused on the numerous failed American occupations rather than examining successful stories, such as Japan.¹

Did the United States really succeed in getting democracy to take hold in Japan? This thesis seeks to shed at least some light on this simple but important question. In a speech two weeks before the invasion of Iraq, then-president Bush pointed to the American occupation of Japan as a success. Bush emphasized that the society that once bred

¹In accordance with Japanese practice, the surname is placed first in all Japanese names, except in referring to published work in English where the author’s name is given in the reverse order.

fascism and militarism discovered the permanent value of liberty, and that the cultures of Japan sustained democratic values.\textsuperscript{2} A \textit{New York Times} article, headlined “U.S. Has a Plan to Occupy Iraq, Official Reports,” informed its readers that the Bush administration was developing a plan for postwar Iraq “modeled on the postwar occupation of Japan.”\textsuperscript{3} These statements remind Americans that the U.S. war against Japan was a “good war” that liberated the people of Asia, including the Japanese themselves, from Japan’s imperialism and feudalism. This thesis will evaluate these and other claims regarding the Occupation.

For conservatives who supported the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States has to preserve and enhance its principles such as democracy, the free market, and respect for liberty on the strength of its huge military capacity. Eschewing the admonition of John Quincy Adams, neo-conservatives believe that the United States has the capacity as a giant to contain or destroy many of the world’s monsters.\textsuperscript{4} Only the United States emerged stronger and richer at World War II’s end. According to one estimate, 60 million people were killed during the war, more than 36 million of them in Europe. The Soviet Union lost as many as 24 million, and Japan almost 3 million out of a prewar population of 70 million.\textsuperscript{5} The U.S. predominance at this time was similar to the geographic situation at the end of the Cold War era.

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\item \textsuperscript{5} George C. Herring, \textit{From Colony to Super Power} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 595-596.
\end{itemize}
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Although U.S. military forces have gone into troubled countries dozens of times in the last half century and have attempted many nation-building projects, one of the important issues about nation building is that deploying U.S. armed forces to repair or transform other regimes was not the intent of such operations. In considering the effectiveness of nation-building efforts, the interventions did not always cause democracy. On the contrary, the presence of U.S. armed forces inevitably reflects the relationship between the conqueror and conquered.

In the Cold War era, the U.S. government used American culture to reduce the influence of anti-American feelings in other countries. Although cultural infiltration usually remained on the periphery of America's Cold War strategy, as many studies note, cultural infiltration became a component of national security policy. In Okinawa, where more than 70 percent of the U.S. troops stationed abroad are located, local sentiment toward the U.S. military is complicated. While people in Okinawa recall with gratitude the initial generosity and kindness of the American occupiers, they remember with nostalgia the peace and tranquility of the island in the years before the war. More interestingly, in the demonstrations against the renewal of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty of 1960, a survey of Japanese public opinion showed that 47.4 percent of respondents regarded the United States as their favorite country, a much higher percentage than those

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6 For example, Austria 1945-55, Dominica Republic 1965-67, Haiti 1994-96.


who disliked the United States.\footnote{Yoshimi Shunya, \textit{Shinbei to hanbei} (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007), 11.} During the Vietnam War, this changed and leftists in Japan criticized the United State as imperialist. But even such criticisms could not destroy the image of the United States as the symbol of democracy, and the United States continued to attract Japanese. Many Japanese could not completely forget the memory that the United States emancipated them from Japanese militarism.

To understand this deep-rooted pro-Americanism in Japan, this thesis will examine how the United States established Japan’s postwar democratic institutions and promoted democratic images through propaganda such as the leaflets, magazines, and books that passed censorship muster in the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD). These materials implicitly or explicitly presented idealized American images. Many existing studies, however, examine how American democratic reformation took hold in Japan from an American point of view only. One of contributions of this thesis is to examine Japanese responses to the American reformation using Japanese resources. Propaganda itself has a bidirectional character, and the outcome of American propaganda cannot be evaluated without also analyzing the output from Japanese.

Although American influence spread throughout the whole of Japanese society, it is impossible to examine all domains. Therefore, this thesis focuses on one specific topic, the future of the Japanese emperor, Hirohito. In the context of the American occupation and the advance of the Cold War, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) changed the image of the emperor from a significant military dictator to the symbol of Japanese democracy. The author believes that examining this reformation of the emperor
closely related to the question of whether the United States really succeed in getting
democracy to take hold in Japan. This is because the prewar emperor that depended on
the myth of emperor worship was incompatible with postwar democratic institutions;
therefore, the presence of a reimaged emperor demonstrated the uniqueness of democracy
in the postwar Japan.

Generally speaking, many Japanese welcomed the American liberation from the
total war of World War II. Although SCAP instituted censorship, U.S. sponsored
democratization broadened the freedom of expression compared with Japanese wartime
restrictions. As we will see, however, extended civil liberties did not translate into respect
for democratic ideology. A growing number of historians have shown in theories of
discourse that after the “cultural turn,” the work of textual interpretation has different
meanings. As the meaning of words has changed in the context of the place and time, so
too has the meaning of democracy changed. Consequently, there is no one criterion to
evaluate the American occupation in Japan, and thus Western-oriented discourse, such as
the concept of democracy, is reconstructed in the context of Japanese society. Following
the idea of postmodernist theory, the author considers that the existence of the emperor
represented this non-Western discourse.

At the end of the Second World War, the Japanese had to face defeat and reorient

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10 War experiences have had a variety of impacts on post war Japanese society. See, Yoshikuni
Igarashi, Bodies of Memory: Narrative of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970 (Princeton:

11 See, Victoria E. Bonnel & Lynn Hunt, ed., Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study
of Society and Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Peter Burke, What is Cultural
History (Cambridge: Polity, 2008); Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt & Margaret Jacob, Telling the Truth
about History (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994).
their government from an emperor-oriented system to a democratic one. This was literally one of the greatest turning points in Japanese history. As one of Japan’s leading and influential postwar intellectuals, Maruyama Masao, said in 1951, “the great number of Japanese did not know how Japan would regain the meaning of its existence facing the following crises: surplus population and a lack of natural resources and national army.”

The intellectuals, who grasped the new era in broad perspective, keenly understood the difficulty of spreading American democracy in Japanese society. Given these difficulties, it is worth exploring why U.S. policy succeeded in getting democracy to take hold in Japan. The author hypothesizes that retaining old authority and remaking the emperor as a symbol of democracy in the postwar era is at least partly responsible for getting democracy to take hold in Japan.

This research situates itself at the intersection of two historiographic trends in the study of the American occupation of Japan: diplomatic history and cultural history. Although the people in democratic countries are the sovereign authority, they are almost wholly unaware of diplomatic processes between independent states. On the other hand, diplomats, who owe loyalty to their own government, minister, foreign office, and sovereign, often reside in foreign countries for long periods of the time, and fall out of contact with their own people. In line with this trend among diplomats themselves, the main concern of diplomatic history has been the statesmen, generals, and diplomats when they write about foreign relations. The effect of the American occupation, however,


extended to the political, social, and economic domain for some time, and thus historians who study the American occupation of Japan have to delve into the history of forgotten ordinary people. Cultural history offers the opportunity to examine the many different identities and cultures of the people in a society, thereby promoting cultural diversity. A cultural history helps reveal the ordinary people’s response in Japan to the American occupation.

There has been much written on the American Occupation of Japan. During the 1950s and 1960s, American scholars had a strong tendency to define the Occupation as an example of American benevolence that liberated and democratized the Japanese. The Occupation was almost from the beginning exclusively controlled by the United States. Japan was completely stripped of its military machine. The new Japanese constitution, which was drafted under U.S. Army General Douglas MacArthur’s guidance in 1947, renounced war as a sovereign right of the nation as well as the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. At the same time, Japanese scholars during the same period were critical of U.S. operations, focusing on the occupation’s “reverse course” and its repressive antidemocratic measures. The reverse course refers to a major

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shift in U.S. policy in Japan around 1947. The agenda of democratization was replaced by one of rebuilding Japan as an economic and military ally for the emerging Cold War.

Since the 1970s, these two historiographic schools have modified their clearly opposing views and many studies focus on the limitation of U.S. occupation policies. In the context of the expected strife with the Soviet Union, the Truman administration ended the Pacific War without a specific vision of postwar reforms in Japan. As mentioned above, the United States executed reform policies aimed at making Japan a political democracy. Nonetheless, the U.S. occupation authorities intentionally retained preoccupation institutions. This is because the occupiers simply did not have enough personnel or language ability to control the Japanese government: thus, the United States had to search for a way to conduct a democratic reformation with this limited capacity. The most obvious example was the U.S. decision to retain the Showa Emperor Hirohito. In 1945, the U.S. Senate adopted a resolution recommending that Hirohito be tried as a war criminal. The Truman administration, however, finally decided to retain the emperor because his presence might be used to maintain effectively the postwar Japanese social order. Moreover, SCAP filled postwar government positions by retaining important Japanese officials from the prewar era. In fact, the vast majority of prewar and wartime civil servants remained in their positions. These shifts in occupation policies were


18 Shaller, op. cit., 3-19.
attacked by critics from both the left and right in the United States. Leftists attacked policies such as the retention of the emperor. From the right, criticisms were focused on the unfairness of the purge of war criminals. Although some of these criticisms have continued to be voiced, currently historiography has for the most part evaluated the Occupation as a success.

As mentioned above, many scholarly works have investigated the process that SCAP and the Japanese government used to retain the institution of the emperor. Most of this research, however, has focused on the role of Douglas MacArthur toward the emperor and therefore does not reveal the whole picture of American policy toward the emperor, Hirohito. In the wartime and postwar United States, many people believed that the emperor was a key person in Japanese militarism and held a harsh anti-emperor views. Conversely, the State Department began to consider the effectiveness of the emperor in restraining the Japanese from resisting American Occupation as early as 1942. In addition, by 1944, the Office of Strategic Service (OSS) suspended anti-emperor propaganda. It is obvious that extensive ground-work toward changing the image of emperor in both the United States and Japan had been laid even before the war had ended. Using primary resources, this thesis seek to broadly consider the wartime and postwar foreign policy process that resulted in the decision to retain the emperor. In addition to exploring the American side of the story, it will also make use of Japanese-


language resources regarding contemporary attitude toward Hirohito. While some scholars have examined how the emperor adjusted to his new role under the postwar constitution, there is little scholarship that examines the diverse Japanese responses to the American policy toward the new emperor system.

As Herbert P. Bix remarked in *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, SCAP and the Japanese government adroitly modified the institution of the emperor. They fabricated evidence that the modernization process after the Meiji Era (1868-1912) established a constitutional monarchy, and thus the institution of the emperor could harmonize with postwar democracy.²¹ This political compromise is open to criticism because it obscured the emperor’s war guilt. As a result, the democratic reformation was incomplete. By focusing on discussion of the meaning of the postwar democracy as well as the Japanese response to the modified emperor, this thesis seeks to reveal that the political compromise retaining the emperor also made postwar Japanese democracy vague.

The myth of the emperor was a part of the curriculum in prewar schools so that the Japanese understood the sanctity of the emperor. The American Occupation suddenly took off this mysterious veil of the emperor. When the modified emperor appeared as a human and a symbol of the state in front of people, the Japanese could not help but react. These Japanese reactions constitute important primary sources for this thesis.

This thesis will consist of three chapters that will collectively compare diplomatic with ideological perspectives of American occupation policies and examine how the Japanese reacted to those policies. The first chapter will discuss the American occupation...
reformation policies from the point of diplomatic history. Using declassified primary sources such as the *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, National Archives documents, and secondary sources, this chapter will explore the contrasting idealistic democratization and realistic occupation plans. This chapter reveals the flow of pro-emperor occupation policy from Joseph Grew to Douglas MacArthur.

Chapter two deals with the American censorship that was aimed at prohibiting the Japanese media from spreading anti-American sentiments. Based on their experience in two world wars, the American occupiers of Japan took it for granted that censorship and media guidance were extensions of U.S. foreign policy directed at replacing Japanese militaristic and ultranationalist ideas with American democratic values. U.S. officials also paid special attention to communist propaganda that intended to humiliate the emperor. In the context of the Cold War, the emperor under the constitutional monarchy became a bulwark against communism in Japan. The Japanese movie, “Nihon no Higeki” [The tragedy of Japan], represented how the U.S. aim of censorship toward the emperor shifted from freedom of discussion to anticommunism.

The final chapter of the thesis will focus on Japanese perspectives about the emperor as a symbol of a democratic Japan. This chapter emphasizes the diversity of the Japanese responses to the emperor by addressing the ideas of three intellectuals as well as ordinary Japanese citizens. The three influential intellectuals each represent a distinct understanding of democracy: Minobe Tatsukichi, who understood the democracy within the Meiji Constitution, Maruyama Masao, who believed that establishing an independent individual was the key to postwar democracy, and Eto Jun, who explored democracy
mingled with Japanese identity. Articles from newspapers such as *Asahi* and *Manichi Shinbun* and letters to MacArthur reveal the distorted nature of Japanese democratic images. These resources also prove that Japanese society was a product of American censorship and yet contained remnants of prewar Japanese society. Although newspapers offer a wealth of information about the social, political, economic, and cultural life of the past, the material of news events passes through filters of reporters and editors that narrow the range of stories published.\textsuperscript{22} Letters are rather personal nature, and they identify not just the author but also the intended audience, MacArthur.\textsuperscript{23} As theorists such as Michel Foucault have argued, self-reflection does not happen in a vacuum, but is rather promoted and guided by powerful discourses within a given society.\textsuperscript{24}

As postmodern theory reveals, shared discourses permeating a society disallow any objective explanation of a historical event. In this view, historians cannot arrive at any objective truth, and historical meanings are only embodied in a symbolic, linguistic, and representational system.\textsuperscript{25} This means that there are absolutely no criteria to evaluate the American Occupation in Japan, and thus its discourse, in the context of American society because democracy was reconstructed in the context of Japanese society. In other words,

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{23} Miriam Dobson, “Letters,” ibid., 69.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 61.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
this thesis will argue finally that understanding democracy from the bottom up from the perspective of the Japanese is essential for evaluating the U.S. Occupation of Japan.
It is often said that the United States imposed democracy in Japan. The American Occupation of Japan was in this view a challenging reformation that turned a military regime into a democratic one. While the occupier recognized that Japanese culture included undemocratic traditions such as feudalism and emperor worship, some American officials profoundly believed that the universal appeal of liberal democracy would change Japanese minds.\(^1\) Once the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) carried out occupation policy that aimed at the demilitarization and democratization of Japan, many Japanese welcomed the American liberation from the total war of World War II. As we will see, however, it would be premature to conclude that the Japanese appreciation of extended civil liberties was the product of the American occupation.\(^2\) Democracy could not be given or forced by an outsider but should be fostered by the Japanese. Many changes toward democratization in the postwar era owed to American initiative, and the reformations spread over the political, social, and economic domain. In fact, it was impossible to change all traditional Japanese values into


democratic ones. The U.S. decision to retain the Showa Emperor Hirohito as a symbol of the new Japanese constitution meant that the occupiers were in fact prudent and pragmatic. Japan’s emperor system has been deeply related to the nation’s political, social, ideological, and religious domains. This chapter will consider how the occupier relocated the status of the Japanese emperor in the context of the wider occupation policy.

Although the American side never permitted the Japanese government to retain the emperor system in perfect prewar condition, MacArthur and policymakers in Washington understood the utility of the emperor to reduce the costs of the demilitarization and democratization of Japan. Retaining the emperor, who was the only sovereign until the new Japanese constitution established on May 4, 1946, inevitably gave rise to a controversy, in both the United States and in Japan, about whether postwar Japan could democratize while still embracing the symbol of the Japanese empire, Hirohito.

II

How and when did American occupation policy for Japan originate? The Franklin D. Roosevelt administration started to investigate a plan for the postwar world system even before the Pearl Harbor attack. On February 2, 1941, Secretary of State Cordell Hull established a research group, the Division of Special Research (SR), in the State Department. The president soon gave Hull official approval to reorganize and expand the number of SR, and this group was reconstructed as a subordinate of the Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy (ACPFP). This committee consisted of five subcommittees on territorial problems. The purpose of ACPFP was to examine postwar
planning in a broad context.\(^3\) Although SR succeeded in gathering experts from various American universities, the number of experts who were familiar with Japanese affairs was small before the Pacific War.\(^4\) Under this situation, the State Department set up the Far East section in SR in August 1942. The chief of this section was a specialist in Far Eastern affairs and a professor at Clark University, George Blakeslee. Blakeslee had never stayed in Japan for long, and he could not speak Japanese. Consequently, he relied on his staff opinions.\(^5\) Other members included Japan hands such as Hugh Borton, a professor at Columbia University, Robert A. Fearey, a private secretary of the ambassador in Japan, and Cabot Coville, an adept diplomat who served on the staff of the American Embassy in Tokyo.\(^6\)

According to Borton, Roosevelt spent more time with the Joint Chiefs of Staff than the State Department, and thus the Far East section initially had to draft postwar plans without clear guidelines.\(^7\) It was natural that a belligerent nation had hostile feelings toward an enemy, and, while the American mass media tended to broadcast heroic stories

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\(^3\) The member of ACPFP was following: Isaiah Bowman, Hamilton F. Armstrong, John Van A. MacMurry, Anne O’Hare McCormick, Joseph W. Ballantine, Kenneth P. Landon, Robert Stewart, George H. Blakeslee, Hugh Borton, R.A. Feary, A. Vandenbosch, David Harris, Walso Chamberlin, C.E. Black. T Minutes Notter File.

\(^4\) Tanikawa, Takeshi *America eiga to senryō seisaku* (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Gakuzyutsu Shuppan Kai, 2002), 18.


\(^7\) Borton, op. cit., 122.
of American soldiers, it emphasized ruthless Japanese acts and vice versa.\(^8\) Roosevelt himself revealed racially discriminatory ideas in a letter to an anthropologist, Ares Hrdlicka. In his letter, the president asked about the possibility of reducing aggressiveness in the Japanese by means of interracial marriage with other races.\(^9\) At the Casablanca Conference, the Allied Powers pledged to completely destroy the military system of the Axis powers and ban Japan from speaking in the international community. This means that the United States would impose harsh sanctions and a “hard peace” on Japan.

Complicating the picture, however, was the fact that Roosevelt had already declared a lofty ideal in the Atlantic Charter, intended as the blueprint for the world after World War II. Although the charter called for aggressive nations to disarm, it held out hope for Japan to become a member of the global economic system and retain the right of self-determination. The Japan hands in the State Department preferred an American occupation policy based on the ideals of the Atlantic Charter. In other words, they drafted an occupation policy that hinted at the reconstruction of U.S.-Japan relations.\(^10\)

In 1942, the Roosevelt administration established three general stages for the postwar world system. In the first stage, the immediate goal was to end the war on both the European and Asian fronts. The second was to manage political and economic problems such as modifications of boundary lines and reparations. In the last stage, an

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international organization would take responsibility for a lasting world peace, and the victor nations would conclude a peace treaty with the defeated.\textsuperscript{11} As a precondition for constructing the new world order, the U.S. government decided to force the Axis powers to accept unconditional surrender. Considering these general guidelines, the Far East section investigated a variety of issues, such as the emperor system of Japan, the scope of Japanese territory, and economic reconstruction plans in Japan.\textsuperscript{12}

ACPFP was eventually forced to reorganize in 1943, and the Japan hands in the State Department tried to take the initiative in designing American occupation policy in Japan. Their patron, Joseph C. Grew, exerted considerable leverage on that policy. Grew served for more than ten years as the American ambassador in Japan before being taken into custody for six months after the start of the Pacific War. After the U.S. government succeeded in exchanging Grew with the Japanese ambassador in the United States, Nomura Yoshisaburo, Grew went actively on lecture tours around the county. At first, his lectures sought to raise the will to fight against Japan. In his lectures, Grew often pointed out the indefatigable perseverance of the Japanese and predicted that the Americans would need more patience than the Japanese to win the Pacific War. Once the war situation improved for the United States after the Japanese military retreated from the Solomon Islands in August 1943, however, the gist of his lectures drastically shifted to American occupation policy in Japan. According to Grew, the United States should take responsibility for a postwar recovery of Japan. To support his view, Grew suggested that

\textsuperscript{11} Borton, op. cit., 123.

\textsuperscript{12} Takemae, op. cit., 7.
the failure of the Paris Peace Conference and the rise of Nazi Germany resulted from the unreasonable demand for reparations. In addition, Grew tried intentionally to separate ordinary Japanese from Japanese military authorities and recommended American help to get democracy to take hold in Japan.\textsuperscript{13} Although his effort to persuade the Americans not to confuse the Japanese emperor with the military authorities aroused domestic anger, the State Department could not ignore his diplomatic skills honed as the ambassador in Japan.\textsuperscript{14} Not surprisingly Grew’s view about the American occupation in Japan was close to other Japan hands in the State Department.

In January 1944, Secretary of State Hull established the Committee on Post-War Programs (PWC) along with several new subcommittees. In these new subcommittees, the Inter-Division Area Committee on the Far East took charge of the research for the American occupation policy in Japan. The leading member of the Far East section in SR moved to this new committee.\textsuperscript{15} The main agenda of the PWC was to consider whether U.S. authorities should directly force Japan to democratize after the war. By September 1943, several State and War Department committees had already decided that the initial objective of post-surrender policy was to create a new Japanese government that would fulfill international obligations and respect the rights of other states. In domestic policy, constitutional and administrative changes would be needed to strengthen democratization.

\textsuperscript{13} Iokibe, op. cit., 73-77.

\textsuperscript{14} Address by Joseph C. Grew. War and Post-War Problems in the Far East. Department of State Bulletin, January 1, 1944.

\textsuperscript{15} Tanikawa, op. cit., 20-21.
and deprive the military of its special political privileges. Finally, PWC concluded that although the occupation authorities assumed all of the power of the Empire of Japan, the occupiers would leave room to allow the new Japanese government to voluntarily conduct democratization.

The more the war front in the Pacific turned in American favor, the more the Roosevelt administration had to bring the occupation policy around to a conclusion. After the Japanese military retreated from the Marshall Islands in February 1944, the Department of War and Navy requested the State Department to draft a policy paper that would be the guideline of the American occupation army. With the Inter-Division Area Committee on the Far East as the central figure, the State Department prepared many documents that were in fact reflected in the American occupation policy in Japan. These documents were called “PWC” or “Country and Area Committee (CAC)” series. These documents covered wide-ranging political, social, economic, and cultural issues: the emperor system of Japan; the reformation of the political system; democratization; freedom of religion, expression, and education; war crimes; and the range of territory. On December 1, 1944, Roosevelt established the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) to coordinate differences of view among the departments and determine the final occupation plan. Roosevelt also conducted secret diplomacy, and thus no one had accurate information about the Yalta Agreement by which Roosevelt

16 Moore & Robinson, op. cit., 23.
17 Takemae, op. cit., 8.
18 Ibid., 9.
19 Tanikawa, op. cit., 34-35
secured the promise of Soviet participation against Japan. In the State Department, however, Grew got a chance to conduct his plan as an undersecretary of state. Although the new president Harry S. Truman appointed Edward R. Stettinius Jr. as his secretary of state, he was not familiar with foreign affairs. Under these circumstances, Grew’s influence became strong in the State Department.

Generally speaking, the Japan hands in the State Department placed high value on moderate and liberal forces that they believed had existed in Japanese society and thus concluded that the democratization of postwar Japan could be achieved by the Japanese themselves.\(^{20}\) In their view, it was impossible to conduct democratization without spontaneous support from the Japanese; thus the American compulsory request for democratization in Japan was just a desktop plan.\(^{21}\) According to Borton, the Japanese were historically opposed to radical reformation. This apolitical attitude resulted from the special political privileges of the military authorities. This militarism prohibited the Japanese from forming political associations and expressing their free will. Therefore, the spontaneous demand for democratization was a key to block the rise of militarism.\(^{22}\)

The recommendations of the Japan hands in the State Department did not, however, permit the Japanese to spontaneously embark on some democratization efforts from the beginning. American authorities believed that it would take some time for the Japanese to

\(^{20}\) Iokibe, op. cit., 64.


\(^{22}\) Borton, op. cit., 128.
absorb the American democratic way of life.\textsuperscript{23} One of the most important missions of the U.S occupation army was to supervise the new Japan, and educating the Japanese not to breed antidemocratic movements was a minimal standard of intervention. At the same time, the more occupation policy was discussed, the more the U.S. government realized its limited capacity to control the Japanese.

In early 1945, the War Department started to examine the landing operation in the southern part of Japan, Kyushu. In its view, the U.S. military would gain control of the whole of Japan by the end of 1946.\textsuperscript{24} All-out Japanese military resistance at the Battle of Iwo Jima in February 1945, however, revealed that military planners were overly optimistic. In the battle of Iwo Jima, 6,000 soldiers were killed and 23,000 wounded. This unexpectedly heavy loss led the War Department to reconsider the landing operation plan. Suicide attacks also frightened the U.S. soldiers. The Japanese Imperial headquarters educated Japanese soldiers not to surrender to the enemy, and many committed suicide. In June 1945, President Harry S. Truman summoned the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to consider the overall aspects of landing operation, “Olympic.” Operation Olympic had a contingency plan. The U.S. military would first invade in the Kyushu area, and then undertake other attacks around the Kanto Plain. According to the JCS, expected U.S. casualties were 40,000 killed and 1,903,500 wounded.\textsuperscript{25}

A key U.S. goal was defeating Japan without wasting much time and energy. As the

\textsuperscript{23} Bishop to PA/H-Mr. Hornbeck. Hornbeck Papers, box 237.

\textsuperscript{24} Iokibe, op. cit., 87.

\textsuperscript{25} Hasegawa Tsuyoshi Anto: Stalin, Truman to Nihon kofuku (Tokyo: Chuo Koron Sha, 2006), 168.
reason that President Truman decided to use the atomic bomb was to save the lives of American soldiers because of the landing operation in Japan, the Japan hands in the State Department believed that skillful diplomacy could induce Japan’s surrender without paying an extravagant cost. They paid special attention to the Japanese feudalistic nature that respects their sovereign, the emperor. The U.S. military gathered information that emperor worship made the Japanese jingoistic. Therefore, it was logical to believe that the Japanese government would accept surrender on condition that the U.S. government would show a generous attitude toward the emperor. The reports written by the Far East section also suggested that emperor worship became a part of patriotism for the Japanese. It was not a complicated process to stop propaganda work against the emperor because it was task within U.S. governmental organizations. It was, however, a far thornier problem to treat the emperor after the war. Once the United States decided not to attack the emperor during the war, how should it treat him after the war? While American citizens disliked the emperor, U.S. policymakers keenly believed that they would face fierce Japanese resistance if they tried to abolish the institution of the emperor.

III

The existence of the Japanese emperor was regarded as both a means to control the

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27 Iokibe, op. cit., 104.

28 No title, Hornbeck Papers box 237.
Japanese effectively and a most serious problem. The Office of War Information (OWI) avoided broadcasting direct criticism of the emperor by late 1944. This is because the State Department suggested that propaganda against the emperor would provoke harsh anti-American feelings in the Japanese minds. At the same time, the War Department decided not to include the Imperial Palace as a target of U.S. airstrikes. According to the analysis of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), bombing the palace would produce harsh anti-American reaction, such as promoting voluntary contributions to the munitions industry. Moreover, the emperor started to distance himself from the hawkish military authorities, and thus the possibility to utilize his political influence for the occupation increased.

After the U.S. military took the Mariana Islands, the United States won command of the air and conducted airstrikes on the whole of Japan. On March 10, 1945, the U.S. air division launched the greatest airstrike aimed at Tokyo, leaving almost 100,000 victims. Although the emperor, Hirohito, was shocked to view a wide stretch of burnt ruins in Tokyo, the Imperial Palace was not totally destroyed.

The Japan specialists in the State Department also recognized the political influence of the emperor. In their view, by virtue of his position as Japan’s sovereign ruler, he was useful in achieving early surrender and democratization. The Far East section examined and gathered information about the emperor system of Japan. In many reports, they

29 Record of Pertinent Portion of Press Conference on December 9, 1942 of Mr. Elmer Davis, Office of War Information, Hornbeck Papers, box 237.

30 Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch. R&A No. 2395. RG59 OSS 2395. NA.


32 Takahashi Hiroshi, Showa tenno 1945-48 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten,2008), 8
concluded that the antigovernment groups often abused emperor worship to legitimize their political ambitions. Japanese military authorities also abused emperor worship, and thus the United States needed to completely eradicate this evil religious custom. At the same time, the Japanese hands asserted that the emperor himself was originally a façade to mobilize the Japanese people and thus might be helpful in implementing U.S. democratization efforts.

On May 9, 1944, the State Department addressed the future of the imperial institution. According to this document, the U.S. government considered three approaches. The first would transfer all rights and authorities of the emperor to the occupation authorities, which would then govern Japan directly. There was some doubt, however, about whether U.S. occupation authorities could run the country given the fact that the Japanese bureaucrats pledged loyalty to the emperor and would not obey the occupation authorities after the United States abolished the institution of the emperor. The second approach was to retain the institution of the emperor. In this scenario, the occupation authorities would put the emperor under surveillance somewhere and the United States would govern Japan in his name. The problem with this approach was that U.S. citizens might resist retention of the emperor. The third approach was partial retention of the emperor. Although this approach would provoke Japanese antipathy about U.S. violations of the sanctity of the emperor, the State Department paper considered it

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33 For example, Minutes of the Inter-Divisional Area Committee on the Far East. NA Microfilm T1197; H-114[Series] Japan: Postwar Political Problems: The Institution of the Emperorship. Notter File; PWC 146 Japan: The Institution of the Emperor. Statement Read by Mr. Grew at the Meeting of the Committee on Post War Programs, April 26 1944. Notter File.
the most prudent.\textsuperscript{34}

This effort to weigh the advantages and the disadvantages of the imperial institution reflected the balance of ideology and reality that shaped the occupation policy. According to the Atlantic Charter, the United States would have to permit the Japanese to choose their political system in the final stage of the Occupation, and the Far East section predicted that the Japanese would support the institution of the emperor. Even so, the U.S. occupation would have to take preventive measures not to allow Japanese military authorities to encourage emperor worship. To put it concretely, the Japanese needed to be schooled in the principles of liberalism so they could make the constitution democratic. In the Meiji Constitution, only the emperor could propose the constitution. Therefore, it could be effective to promulgate the new constitution under the name of the emperor.\textsuperscript{35} In sum, the Japan hands understood that although it would be preferable to deconstruct the emperor system, it would take a long time to achieve this goal. Moreover, a radical reformation, such as the immediate abolition of the institution of the emperor after the war, would produce the opposite effect to what the United States desired.\textsuperscript{36}

Using the emperor, who was regarded in the United States as the chief war criminal, however, could not help but stir political controversy, and a wide range of groups expressed their repugnance for the emperor. Both liberal and conservative newspapers often wrote defamatory articles about the emperor, and the majority of U.S. citizens also

\textsuperscript{36} PWS 145 Japan: Institution of the Emperor. Statement Read by Mr. Ballantine at the Meeting of the Committee on Post-War Programs, April 26, 1944. Notter File.
wished to punish the emperor severely. On January 2, 1944, a *New York Times* editorial
cast doubt on the view that the United States should exploit the emperor in order to
smooth the conduct of its occupation policy. The editorial’s main point was that worship
of the emperor implied that the emperor was the leader of the world and included the
nature of expansionism.\(^{37}\) According to a Gallup poll in June 1945, almost one third of
the Americans surveyed answered that the emperor should receive the death penalty.
Only 3 percent approved of using the emperor as a stooge of the U.S. occupation.\(^ {38}\)

Many intellectuals also supported harsh punishment for the emperor. One typical
example was an article “The Mikado Must Go” by Sun Fo, who was a son of Chinese
revolutionary Sun Wen. In his view, the existence of the emperor was the essence of
militarism in Japan, and it was thus nonsense to adopt an appeasement policy toward him.
Although Son Fo appreciated that it would take longer to democratize Japan without the
emperor, he emphasized that the United States and China should take on the task.\(^ {39}\) A
Johns Hopkins University professor, Owen Lattimore, also roundly criticized the Japan
hands’ idea of retaining the emperor in order to make Japan a democracy. In his book,
*Solution in Asia*, Lattimore developed his argument by comparing British and Japanese
history. According to Lattimore, the attempt to establish a democratic Japan with the
Japanese emperor meant the creation of a constitutional monarchy. In his view, the British
could maintain such an institution because they themselves had punished their king,


\(^{38}\) S. Shepard Jones to Mr. Grew: Recent Expression of Opinion Concerning the Future Role of the
Japanese Emperor. NA.

\(^{39}\) C.E. Gauss to the Secretary of State. No. 1726. Subject: Article by Dr. Sun Fo Entitled “The
Mikado Must Go.” Hornbeck Papers, box 237.
Charles I. Lattimore concluded that it was thus impossible to establish a constitutional monarchy in Japan without a radical revolution such as the Puritan Revolution. His alternative plan was to exile the Showa Emperor and the paternal line of the Japanese Imperial Family to China.\textsuperscript{40}

As mentioned above, the Roosevelt administration had actively discussed how to treat with the emperor and the institution of the emperor in Japan. Some groups in the State Department also sought to attack the Japanese and the emperor from the point of racism and domestic domains. A leading advocate of harsh punishment toward Japan was an adviser in the Office of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department and a specialist in Chinese affairs, Stanley K. Hornbeck, who endorsed a plan to completely isolate Japan from the international community in the postwar era. According to Hornbeck, Japan’s position as an island country made it much easier to separate from the rest of the world than Germany. This idea, however, drew few supporters in the State Department. With a population of almost 70 million in the 1940s, Japan could not feed itself without access to overseas imports foods.\textsuperscript{41} Although economic self-sufficiency with little imported food was achieved in the Tokugawa era (1603-1867), the population at that time was 30 million. Hornbeck’s proposal was tantamount to letting 40 million people die.

While there was a racial perspective about Occupation policy in the State Department, other harsh views of the Japanese emperor resulted from the domestic American atmosphere. After the Roosevelt administration decided to make Japan a

\textsuperscript{40} Takeda Kiyoko, \textit{Tenno kan no soukoku} (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2001), 15-19.

\textsuperscript{41} Iokibe, op. cit., 56.
democratic nation, one of main questions to be answered was when to abolish the institution of the emperor. Policymakers predicted that the process of democratization would take a long time, during which Japan’s imperial system would be abolished. Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long took a hard-line, anti-Japanese occupation policy that required the abolition of the institution of the emperor.\(^{42}\) Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs Dean G. Acheson and Assistant Secretary of State for Press Archibald MacLeish also took a harsh stance, though that was largely due to their positions: during the Pacific War, the U.S. Congress and public opinion advocated harsh treatment of the emperor.\(^{43}\)

Until the impeding defeat of Imperial Japan in August 1945, the Japan hands in the State Department succeeded in suspending the argument about the institution of the emperor. Breckinridge Long’s resignation following Hull’s resignation was one reason.\(^{44}\) Another was the considerable influence of Joseph Grew.\(^{45}\) In hearings before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Grew explained why the U.S. government should seriously consider retention of the emperor as a way of ensuring the effective occupation of Japan. Although Grew appreciated that the main purpose of the American occupation was to destroy militarism completely and establish a lasting world peace, he could not ignore the need to ensure the safety of the American occupation army. Retention of the

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\(^{43}\) Iokibe, op. cit., 134.

\(^{44}\) Fred L. Israel, ed., The War Diary of Breckinridge Long (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 390.

\(^{45}\) Tanikawa, op. cit., 42.
emperor, he believed, would shorten the occupation, thereby reducing domestic U.S.
opposition to the continued deployment of U.S. troops. He also noted that it was highly
difficult to predict the psychology of the Japanese after the war because Japan had never
lost a war with a foreign country until the Pacific War. Grew, therefore, emphasized the
psychological damage to the Japanese if they also lost the emperor. He explained his
position by using a metaphor comparing the emperor to a queen bee. Just as a queen bee
is the prop of her society, he predicted that Japanese society would collapse if the
occupation authorities abolished the emperor.46

Although it was possible that the Showa emperor might abdicate over responsibility
for the war, Grew’s recommendation to consider the costs and benefits of keeping the
emperor got a favorable response from Truman and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson.

On May 31, 1945, the State Department declared America’s diplomatic policy toward
Japan. In this statement, the administration suggested the possibility of giving the
Japanese the freedom to select their form of government if the nation immediately
accepted unconditional surrender.47 Stimson strongly supported Grew’s opinion that the
U.S. government should not simply punish the Japanese but help them establish
democracy. While Stimson did not promise to save the emperor, he suggested his political
consideration toward the Japanese when he ordered that Kyoto be removed as a target of

46 Hearings before the Committee of Foreign Relations, Senate, United States, Seventy-Eight
Congress, Second Session on the Nominations of Joseph C. Grew, of New Hampshire, to Be Under
Secretary of State. December 12 and 13, 1944.

47 Draft of Proposed Statement. Enclosure to the Unconditional Surrender of the Japan-Proposed
Statement of United Nations Aims. 740.0011 EW/5-3145. Na; Memorandum of Conversation:
Appointment with the President, Joseph C. Grew. Grew Papers, NSA1 1687, 3 vol. 7 no. 19; Iokibe,
op. cit., 135-137.
the atomic bomb. In his view, the Truman administration’s plan for the postwar occupation would go more smoothly if it was not responsible for the destruction of Japan’s cultural and historical center.

Truman basically approved Grew’s and Stimson’s opinion, but he also refrained from official comment about the Japanese emperor.\textsuperscript{48} Truman was not in sympathy with Japanese culture, and his decisions about the occupation policy were based on political considerations. While Truman hoped to reduce the cost of the American occupation, he also desired to prevent the Soviets from intervening in Japanese affairs. In the context of U.S.-Soviet relations, the atomic bomb was a diplomatic card to make Japan surrender before the Soviets could participate in the war on the Japanese mainland.\textsuperscript{49} Therefore, he decided to drop the atomic bomb but avoided aiming at Kyoto.\textsuperscript{50} Unlike Roosevelt, Truman turned a critical eye toward the Soviet Union. For him, a political bargain with the emperor was a way to exclude the Soviets. The Potsdam Declaration that the State Department issued on July 26, 1945 reflected the many considerations that went into U.S. policy and simply called on the Japanese to surrender unconditionally without specific mention of the emperor.\textsuperscript{51}

After the U.S. army dropped two atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese government accepted the Potsdam Declaration on August 14, 1945. The next day, Emperor Hirohito spoke to the nation by radio broadcast and brought his country’s

\textsuperscript{48} Iokibe, op.cit., 143.


\textsuperscript{50} Schaller, op.cit., 173.

\textsuperscript{51} United States, States Department, \textit{The Department of State Bulletin, No. 316}, 137-138.
resistance in the Pacific War to an end. At this point, the Truman administration raised the possibility that the U.S. occupiers would leave the Japanese room to be able to decide their own form of government. Even so, it was unclear whether the United States could conduct the occupation without abolishing the institution of the emperor. Because the U.S. administration succeeded in securing Japan’s surrender before the Soviets could intervene in the war on the Japanese mainland, the United States would take the initiative in occupation policy. Even so, Washington decided at that time not to punish the emperor severely. The final power to retain the emperor then moved to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), Douglas MacArthur.52

IV

On August 8, 1945, Truman appointed MacArthur as SCAP. As mentioned above, policymakers in Washington engaged in long discussions about the Japanese emperor. Although MacArthur was excited when Truman appointed him as SCAP, he was in fact excluded from the decision-making process.53 Truman requested that he merely implement American policy as defined by the Potsdam Declaration and Washington’s policy directives, but seldom did MacArthur actually do so. As many scholars explain, MacArthur governed Japan like the Tokugawa shogun.54 At the same time, he acted upon patriarchal ideas that regarded the Japanese as an immature race compared with the

52 SCAP represented both the whole organization of the U.S. occupation authorities and the chief of this organization, MacArthur.

53 Ibid., 180-182.

54 Sodei Rinjiro, MacArthur no nisennichi (Tokyo: Chuokoron sha, 1976), 81-82.
Anglo-Saxons and thus highly malleable.\textsuperscript{55} In addition, his personal support for the emperor contributed to the birth of a new kind of emperor and constitution in the postwar era. MacArthur’s strong personality had a great impact on the occupation policy.

The power that the emperor and the Japanese government had over the Japanese was transferred to MacArthur. His first task was to instruct the emperor to order the Japanese army to stop military action and disarm under the name of the emperor.\textsuperscript{56} He also dealt with other problems. In Japan, a rumor spread that U.S. soldiers would commit rape upon Japanese women. To satisfy the soldiers’ sexual desires, the Ministry of Home Affairs spontaneously set up legal brothels.\textsuperscript{57} While the Japanese felt disgrace when many U.S. soldiers flirted with Japanese women, they felt strong affinities with friendly soldiers. At the same time, many U.S. soldiers were seized with fear that the Japanese might resist disarmament and leave the U.S. occupation force surrounded by a hostile population.\textsuperscript{58} In the end, the Japanese military accepted the disarmament. When the ceremony for the Japanese instrument of surrender was held on the USS \textit{Missouri} on September 2, 1945, Japanese armed forces numbered more than 6 million. A month and a half later, MacArthur declared the end of the disarmament process without a shooting conflict. On

\textsuperscript{55} Schaller, op.cit., 193; Moore and Robinson, op.cit., 33.


\textsuperscript{58} Sodei, op.cit., 115-118.
September 17, 1945, MacArthur announced that the U.S. occupation authorities would reduce the number of U.S. personnel because of the rapid progress toward disarmament. Interestingly, MacArthur did not consult with Washington about this statement, which created some political friction between SCAP and Washington.\(^{59}\)

From the American point of view, this smooth disarmament process may be seen as the Japanese simply showing their loyalty to their old majesty, Hirohito.\(^{60}\) While the overwhelming majority of offices obeyed the emperor’s order, the emperor carefully laid the groundwork not to fight against the U.S. forces.\(^{61}\) On August 16, 1946, Hirohito sent three imperial princes as cease-fire monitors to Changchun, Saigon, and Nanjing. This kind of mission was conventionally undertaken by a chamberlain, but “The emperor was determined to retain control of the situation and therefore sent the imperial princes to handle the matter.”\(^{62}\) On August 25, 1945, the emperor declared that the imperial army and navy should obey disarmament orders and engage in civil service to reconstruct Japanese society.\(^{63}\)

Although the emperor showed active cooperation toward the U.S. occupation authorities like this, his fate was still undecided. In the fall of 1945, SWNCC resumed discussion about the emperor’s war guilt. In August 1945, a major shake up at the State


\(^{60}\) Takahashi, op.cit., 54.


\(^{62}\) Takahashi, op.cit., 32. "(author’s translation).”

\(^{63}\) Ibid.,33.
Department ousted the Japan hands.\textsuperscript{64} Subsequently, treatment of the emperor was revised. On October 6, 1945, SWNCC 55/3 concluded that the emperor, Hirohito, would not escape arrest, judgement, and punishment as a war criminal.\textsuperscript{65} In SWNCC 55/6 on October 25, 1945, the process to punish the emperor proceeded. In this document, the Far Eastern section concluded that SCAP should secretly collect evidence to judge the emperor and then send the investigation to the JCS with MacArthur’s opinion.\textsuperscript{66}

While the documents in the SWNCC 55 series focused on the punishment of the emperor, Hirohito, the institution of the emperor was considered in the SWNCC 209 series.\textsuperscript{67} Although the new Far Eastern section adopted a less generous attitude toward Japan than its predecessor, the SWNCC 209 series admitted that the institution of the emperor could be utilized to achieve the supreme goals of the American occupation such as the democratic reformation of Japan and extermination of the worship of the emperor. Finally, the SWNCC 209 series concluded that a great number of Japanese were not willing to abolish the institution of the emperor and that SCAP should not actively try to change this institution.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{64} The chief of Far Eastern section replaced John C. Vincent with Blakeslee, and the Under Secretary State also replaced Grew with Acheson. Tanikawa, op.cit., 49.

\textsuperscript{65} SWNCC55/3 Political-Military Problems in the Far East: Treatment of the Person of Hirohito, Emperor of Japan. RG 353 Box 15 SANACC 55 Series, NA.

\textsuperscript{66} SWNCC 55/6 Treatment of the Person of Hirohito, Emperor of Japan. RG 353 Box 15 SANACC 55 Series, NA.


\textsuperscript{68} SWNCC 209/1 Treatment of the Institution of the Emperor of Japan. RG 353 Box 36 SWNCC 209 Series, NA.
In any event, as these documents suggested, it was clear that MacArthur had influence on the final decision about the emperor.\(^6^9\) On January 25, 1946, MacArthur reported on his investigation into the emperor’s war guilt to Chief of Staff Dwight D. Eisenhower, concluding that:

No specific and tangible evidence has been uncovered with regard to his [the emperor’s] exact activities which might connect him in varying degree with the political decisions of the Japanese Empire during the last decade • • • If he [the emperor] is to be tried great changes must be made in occupational plans and due preparation therefore should be accomplished in preparedness before actual action is initiated • • • Certainly the US should not be called upon to bear unilaterally the terrific burden of manpower, economics, and other resultant responsibilities.\(^7^0\)

Interestingly, MacArthur’s vision regarding U.S. occupation policy was similar to that of the Japan hands in the State Department. Why did MacArthur advocate such generosity toward the emperor? To answer this question, we must go back to the inner workings of his policymaking process.

MacArthur’s recommendation to Washington was formulated after consultation with his subordinates. His military secretary Bonner F. Fellers, who was in charge of psychological tactics toward the Japanese and was the best expert on Japanese affairs on MacArthur’s personal staff, devoted himself to saving the emperor. It is possible that Fellers was motivated in part by the action of Prime Minister Prince Higashikuni Naruhiko who undertook a political maneuver to prevent the emperor from being punished. As a link between the imperial palace and SCAP, Higashikuni found a Japanese Christian, Isshiki Yukiko, who was a classmate of Fellers at Earlham College.\(^7^1\) Although

\(^6^9\) Takemae, op. cit., 78.

\(^7^0\) United States, States Department, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, vol. 8, 395-397.

\(^7^1\) Moore & Robinson, op. cit., 40-41.
it is unclear whether the prime minister’s appointment of Fellers’s old acquaintance was responsible, Fellers subsequently advised MacArthur that he highly recommended keeping the emperor in the postwar era, a position he based in part on religion. According to Fellers, the Japanese traditionally tended to respect their ancestors and the emperor was the symbol of this ancestor worship. From this logic, punishing the emperor as a war criminal was tantamount to violating the Japanese peoples’ freedom of religion. In addition to this religious reason, Fellers also emphasized the emperor’s contribution to making the Japanese people more cooperative toward U.S. occupation authorities. Without the emperor’s order, Fellers assumed, the Pacific War would have gone on longer and resulted in several hundred thousand American soldiers being wounded. Finally, Fellers showed his pragmatic conclusion that the United States would need to maintain friendly relations with the Oriental nations for its national interests and should not therefore encourage Japanese hostility.  

Although not all American advisors in Japan agreed with Fellers, it was clear that foreigners could not freely remake another country and that the United States had to utilize the emperor to ensure that democratization proceeded smoothly in Japan. As Acting Political Advisor in Japan George Acheson argued it was important to separate ideal plans from occupation policy. According to Acheson, the institution of the emperor should be abolished if the occupiers completely democratized Japan but the U.S. occupation authorsizes had to utilize the Japanese government to govern and reform

72 Memorandum to the Commander-in-Chief: Bonner F. Fellers, Brigadier General, G. S. C., Military Secretary to the C-in-C. RG 5 Box 63, MacArthur Library.
Japan. Therefore, the utility value of the emperor was indisputable.73

While these memorandums had influence on MacArthur’s decision to protect the emperor, another important factor was his personal positive impression of the emperor. On September 27, 1945, MacArthur and the emperor held their first meeting.74 According to MacArthur, he was moved by the emperor’s courage in trying to assume full responsibility for the Pacific War and requesting the release of all war criminals instead of himself.75 Although it was impossible to substantiate the statement of the emperor, MacArthur at least regarded the emperor with respect and implied the possibility that the two could work together on the occupation policy. According to those close to the emperor, “Hirohito said that he and General of the Army [Douglas MacArthur] had to help each other.”76 After this first meeting, the emperor would be spared severe punishment. Those close to him saw his face lighten.

Cleverly, the Ministry of Home Affairs turned MacArthur’s positive impression into a fait accompli by broadcasting MacArthur’s proclamation that he respected the emperor. This move, however, ended with a contrary result as it led Washington to tighten press reports out of concern that they might give the Japanese and people in other countries the...
impression that the emperor was located above MacArthur.\footnote{Howard Donovan, American Consul General to the Secretary of State. Subject: Bombay Press Comment on Meeting Between General MacArthur and the Emperor of Japan. 740.0011 Control (Japan)/10-945.NA.}

The emperor’s Humanity Declaration on January 1, 1946, reflected U.S. intentions by reaffirming the Allied victory in the Pacific War and denying emperor worship. In this edict, the emperor said:

We wish to make this [Meiji] oath anew and restore the country to stand on its own feet again. We have to reaffirm the principles embodied in the charter and proceed unflinchingly toward elimination of misguided practices of the past; and, keeping in close touch with the desire of the people, we will construct a new Japan through thoroughly being pacific, the official and the people alike obtaining rich culture and advancing the standard of the people. • • • Love of family and love of country are especially strong in this country. With more of this devotion should we now work toward love of mankind. • • • We stand by the people and wish always to share with them in their moment of joys and sorrows. The ties between us and our people have always stood upon mutual trust and affection. They do not depend upon mere legends and myths. They are not predicated on the false conception that the Emperor is divine and that the Japanese people are superior to other races and fated to rule the world.\footnote{Emperor’s Imperial Rescript Denying His Divinity. Iku Okamura, America senryoki no minshuka seisaku (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2007), 279.}

In sum, the emperor was forced to remove the veil from the myth. He destroyed the myth of emperor worship and rebuilt his relation with the Japanese people based on humanity. Although the Japanese had to be loyal to this humanitarian emperor, they would not serve a living god but respect the new monarchy.\footnote{Tenno no ningen sengen an, Yamagiwa & Nakamura, ed., 526; Shosho [Imperial Edict],ibid, 527-528.} Both the Japanese and American populations praised the emperor for adopting a constitutional monarchy by himself, but SCAP took the initiative on this edict as is evident in MacArthur’s expression of full support for the Humanity Declaration as it was being issued.\footnote{Asahi shinbun, January 3, 1946.} According to MacArthur, “[The Emperor] undertakes a leading part in the democratization of his people. He
squarely takes his stand for the future along liberal lines." This statement meant that SCAP censored the emperor’s edict ahead of time, and that MacArthur adroitly reconfigured the image of the emperor from a military dictator to the symbol of a democratic Japan.

As mentioned above, policymakers in Washington regarded the institution of the emperor based on the myth of emperor worship as an obstacle to progress toward democratization in Japan, but they tried to utilize the reputation of the emperor himself to quickly remake Japan as a democratic country. Therefore, Washington had to downplay the impression that it violated the authority of the emperor, and emphasized instead the rhetoric that the reformation of the institution of the emperor was conducted by the emperor’s initiative. To move around the emperor’s rear, SCAP concealed that they were the occupiers.

SCAP used the same rhetoric when the Government Section (GS) of SCAP submitted the draft of the new Japanese Constitution to the Shidehara cabinet. At first, MacArthur preferred to use the new democratic constitution draft written by the Japanese. In September 1945, MacArthur ordered Prince Konoe Fuminaro to make the new constitution draft. In MacArthur’s view, the constitution had to protect five democratic reformations: the emancipation of women; protections of labor unions; freedom of education; the dismantling of the secret police; and the democratization of the

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82 SFC 141 Treatment of the Institution of the Emperor of Japan. RG 353 Box 101 SFE 141, NA.
economic structure.\textsuperscript{84} Although the Japanese Constitutional Problem Investigation Committee, consisting of eminent Japanese constitutional scholars, concluded that the amendment of the Meiji Constitution met the standards that MacArthur requested, its draft could not have satisfied GS.\textsuperscript{85} One of the biggest problems was that the Japanese draft hardly changed the supreme power of the emperor. In this draft, the emperor’s status merely changed from that of a sacred and inviolable person to that of a respectable person, and he still had legislative power.\textsuperscript{86} Even if SCAP did prefer to use the Japanese draft, this draft created a government that was far from a democracy. Finally, MacArthur stipulated the necessary conditions of the new constitution and then GS set about drafting it.

MacArthur insisted on the protection of three conditions. First, the emperor would be at the head of the state but his duties and authorities would be regulated by a constitution that reflected the will of the Japanese. Second, Japan would have to renounce its right for war. Third, Japanese feudalism would have to be abolished. Except for the Imperial family of Japan, only present nobility could hold their privilege.\textsuperscript{87}

When MacArthur’s top aide, Major General Courtney Whitney submitted the GS draft to Foreign Minister Yoshida Shigeru on February 13, 1946, Whitney explained why GS had to make its own draft. According to Whitney, MacArthur understood that the

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 72-88.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 148-149.

\textsuperscript{87} Three basic points stated by Supreme Commander to be “Musts” in constitutional revision. Government Section paper prepared about 4 Feb 1946.
Japanese had demanded revision of the constitution, and he also opposed trying the emperor as a war criminal. In his view, however, MacArthur was not almighty and thus he would not resist the pressure that the emperor must be punished. In fact, the discussion about the war guilt of the emperor is still a lively topic in both Japan and other counties. For example, a left-oriented Japanese newspaper at those days, *Yomiurihouchi shinbun*, reported that “even a majority of the Imperial Family of Japan support the dethronement of the present emperor, Hirohito.”

The Australian government above all demanded severe punishment for the emperor because Australia was damaged by the Japanese military. Considering these internal and external circumstances, Whitney implied that a constitutional monarchy was the only way to reconcile two contradictory demands: democratization and retention of the emperor.

Although the Japanese side could not easily quash its draft and sought to defend that draft’s democratic aspects, Whitney took a firm attitude against the Japanese draft. He finally gave the Shidehara Cabinet two options: promulgate the GS draft or SCAP would directly do so. In the Shidehara Cabinet, Yoshida endorsed the GS draft as protecting the institution of the emperor. In his view, even if the emperor lost the supreme power, Japan should secure political stability at first. On February 19, 1946, Yoshida’s

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88 Yomiuri Houchi Shinbun February 27, 1947. “(author’s translation).”

89 Australia government officially requested the Truman Administration that the emperor should be exempted from war guilt. Takeda, op. cit., 142-143.

90 Koseki, op. cit., 152-153.

91 Ibid., 155-159.

92 Watanabe, Osamu *Sengo seijishi no naka no tennosei* (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1990), 120-121.
secretary, Shirasu Ziro, notified Whitney that the Shidehara Cabinet accepted the GS draft to protect the emperor in the context of a constitutional monarchy.\textsuperscript{93} In a March 5, 1946 meeting with Shidehara, the emperor finally admitted his new status without actual political power in the new constitution.\textsuperscript{94} After the Japanese side revised the GS draft so that it looked more Japanese, the Shidehara Cabinet issued the draft of the new constitution on March 6, 1946.\textsuperscript{95}

While tacit agreement was reached between SCAP and the Shidehara Cabinet about the constitutional monarchy, MacArthur’s arbitrary activity led to cracks between SCAP and Washington. MacArthur did not even consult with the Office of the State Department at Tokyo about the GS draft. On March 8, 1946, the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan, Max Bishop reported to the Secretary State James F. Byrnes that:

There has not been time to prepare a careful analysis of the new draft, sudden announcement of which came as surprise. It is apparent General MacArthur’s press release and from the Imperial rescript that the Government’s draft was carefully considered by Headquarters and was approved by the Supreme Commander and by the Emperor before its issuance.\textsuperscript{96}

Facing this unexpected incident, the State Department had to be too slow to respond. Immediately, the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) asked Washington for accurate information which the State Department also needed.

Rather than exclusively conducting occupation policy in the Japanese mainland and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[93] Koseki, op.cit., 163.
\item[94] Watanabe, op.cit., 119-120.
\item[96] United States, States Department, op. cit., 172-73.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Okinawa, the United States created a multinational commission that also included the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the Republic of China, the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, France, the Philippines, and India.\(^{97}\) In the end, the rise of the Cold War confliction between the United States and Soviet Union made the FEC a dead institution. While the Soviet Union preferred to place Japan under the joint control of the Allied Powers, the United States often exercised its veto to prevent Soviets’ intervention. Even so, the United States had no discretionary power over the future of the emperor and the rewriting constitution and had to consult with the other FEC members about these issues.\(^{98}\)

MacArthur’s unilateral action regarding the constitution could not help but create a stir in the U.S.-Soviet relations. Washington requested MacArthur to explain the situation of the draft incident and postpone general elections in Japan until Moscow could response to the constitution draft. MacArthur refused to bow to what he considered outside intervention. However, in a telegram to the JCS, MacArthur explained his opinion that:

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\text{I am in full agreement with the need for a closer working arrangement and understanding between the Supreme Commander for the Allied Power (SCAP) and the Commission and stand ready to do everything in my power to such end. I do not believe, however, that the dispatch of an officer from my staff to confer with the Commission would provide a solution to the problem. In the first place, as Supreme Commander I have given my personal attention to the matter of constitutional reform, and there is no other officer in position to the express in detail my views on that subject. In the second place, my key officer personal situation has become so critical, due to the rapid demobilization of officer personal, that the release of a key officer for such a purpose could not be effected without impairment to the Command.}^{99}\]

\(^{97}\) Toyoshita, op.cit., 41-47; Takemae, op. cit., 22-53.

\(^{98}\) Ibid., 52.

After the MacArthur’s response, Washington finally gave up on complaining about him.

In the State Department, Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs Vincent Carter attempted to compromise with FEC. According to Carter, although General MacArthur should not have approved the draft constitution and failed to satisfactorily defend his actions, he carried out in a limited but sufficient measure the policy decision of the Far Eastern Commission by indicating that changes in form and detail might result from examination of the draft constitution. Therefore, Carter believed, no useful purpose would be served by any further discussion of the draft constitution matter. In this point, MacArthur succeeded in pushing through a plan that would democratize Japan with the emperor remodeled as a symbol of a constitutional monarchy.

V

If there were a possibility that the emperor might be abolished after the draft constitution matter, it was the Japanese free will. If Japanese spontaneously desired to establish a democracy without the emperor, the United States would not oppose. Outsider pressure to abolish the emperor had to be rejected, however, because the U.S. occupation authorities were not almighty and had to compromise between the ideal and real occupation plans.

On May 3, 1947, Emperor Hirohito promulgated the new Constitution of Japan in the plaza in front of the Imperial Palace. In this constitution, “The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the

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100 Ibid., 211.
people with whom resides sovereign power.”\textsuperscript{101} Like this, the emperor gradually stepped toward a symbol of the democracy. But because peeling away the emperor’s divine veil revived resistance to efforts to the institution of the emperor, he still needed U.S. help.\textsuperscript{102} In fact, the Japan Communist Party referred to the emperor’s responsibility for the Pacific War and actively appealed to the Japanese people to abolish the imperial institution.

\textsuperscript{101} Article 1 of the Constitution of Japan. “(author’s translation).”

Chapter 2

Warping the Image of the Emperor: Propaganda Work for the People’s Emperor

Despite its power vis-à-vis Japan in 1945, the United States could not simply remake Japan as it wished. Following the Potsdam Declaration, the Truman administration adhered to the principle of remaking postwar Japan into a democratic country. Ideally, the Americans sought to abolish the institution of the emperor and punish Hirohito. Throughout the Pacific War, U.S. propaganda juxtaposed Hirohito with Hitler and Mussolini. In September 1945, Congress passed a joint resolution that the emperor should be tried as a war criminal.\(^1\)

In truth, Washington and SCAP governed Japan with limited human resources. As the only constructive compromise between ideology and reality, the occupier gave the Japanese a constitutional monarchy retaining the emperor in the new democratic constitution. As mentioned above, the creation of the new emperor succeeded at the intergovernmental level after much discussion. At the same time, SCAP also needed to encourage the Japanese to acknowledge the new status of the emperor.

This chapter will consider how SCAP conducted its propaganda work for the emperor in Japan. Although SCAP worked to discourage the Japanese from worshipping the emperor, it did not want them to attack the emperor as a symbol of the new constitution. This meant that the United States preferred a democratic reformation to a

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\(^1\) Erik Barnouw, “Iwasaki and the Occupied Screen,” \textit{Film History} Vol.2 (Nov.-Dec, 1988), 351.
revolution. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the leftists in Japan were active leaders in the push for the abolition of the institution of the emperor. Although U.S. officials supported the call for the abdication of the emperor, they could not permit agitation that might have shaken the occupation policy. Although both the United States and the Japan Communist Party sought to eliminate the emperor’s divine authority, SCAP became hostile to the Japanese communists.

II

Before the Japanese Imperial government had even accepted the Potsdam Declaration, U.S. officials were already examining how the occupation authorities could utilize the media to democratize and stabilize the Japanese. On December 17, 1943, the Inter-Divisional Area Committee on the Far East (CFE) decided the basic mass media strategy in postwar Japan. In this strategy, the United States considered the liberalization of mass media that was controlled by the Imperial government and the eradication of expansionism through the media. Enshrined in the CFE’s PWC-288 series, these studies suggested that U.S. occupation policy toward the media always contained two contradictory aspects: although U.S. occupation policy sought to promote the freedom of expression, it also established broadcasting regulations. According to PWC-288b, there were three basic purposes of the propaganda works in the postwar Japan. First, U.S. occupation authorities should prevent the Japanese from broadcasting anti-Allied content. Second, they should support the media in promoting the idea or concept of democracy.

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2 Tanikawa Takeshi America Eiga to Senryo Seisaku (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Gakujutsu Shuppan Kai, 2002)
Third, they should help to develop freedom of expression in Japan.  

In fact, SCAP permitted the production and distribution of many enlightenment pamphlets, movies and radio programs that allowed the Japanese to consider what democracy was. The occupation era was a time when democratic institutions were appearing everywhere, but no one was sure what democracy would mean for the Japanese. For example, a pamphlet titled “Demokurashii to minseikatsu” [Democracy and the People’s Life] contrasted the Japanese, who acted selfishly, and democracy, which was based on mutual understandings. In a movie, *Buta to senkan* [Pigs and Battleships], one gang member misunderstood the meaning of democracy. For him, ruthless individualism and personal gain was equal to democratization. One radio program *Hanashi no izumi* [Fountain of Anecdote] was also supervised by SCAP. This program was based on the American radio quiz program, “Information Please.” Like the American program, *Hanashi no izumi* was an audience participation program in that quizzes were collected by radio listeners thereby replicating the public participation that characterized a democracy. While the people participated in other quiz programs as panelists, the main purpose of *Hanashi no izumi* was to beat panelists who were distinguished and erudite people. In sum, *Hanashi no izumi* instructed the Japanese how to protest democratically against authority. Although this program became popular, producers admitted that some questioners did not understand the purpose of this program.

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3 Ibid., 28-32.


5 Mark Sandler, *Confusion Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 44.
and wanted to slander panelists. On the contrary, the American questioners were well aware of the intended light humor. In sum, producers were impressed that American humor was much better than the Japanese humor.\(^6\)

As these examples revealed, the media was an important educational resource to imprint democratic ways of thinking on the Japanese mind. At the same time, the influence of the media was so powerful that SCAP took the hard view of it and sought to conduct many democratic reformations using prewar Japanese governmental institutions. This was because the occupiers simply did not have enough personnel or language ability to control the Japanese government, and thus there was little space in which to carry out the occupation directives.\(^7\)

This approach, however, was not adapted to the Japanese media. The regulation of the Japanese media consisted of two aspects. One was censorship, which the Civil Censorship Department (CCD) handled. CCD checked “more than 15 million printed pages of published and unpublished materials submitted to CCD from 1945 to 1949.”\(^8\)

This section acted following the Press Code (SCAPIN33) and the Radio Code (SCAPIN43) that regulated anti-Allied broadcasting. In these regulations, for example, “there shall be no destructive criticism of the Allied Forces of Occupation and nothing which might invite mistrust or resentment of those troops” and “there shall be no mention

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\(^8\) Sey Nishimura, Medical Censorship in Occupied Japan 1945-1948, The Pacific Historical Review 58 (Feb, 1989), 4.
or discussion of Allied troop movements unless such movement has been officially released.” In addition, CCD also forbade fraternization between Occupation troops and Japanese, involvement of soldiers with the black market, and extremely pessimistic views of the food shortage. The other aspect was administrative guidance from the Civil Information & Education Section (CIE). The chief of the CIE was Major General Kenneth Dyke, and 150 American and 900 Japanese staffs worked at this section. CIE took on the responsibility of information, education, and public relations that aimed at demilitarization and democratization. CIE made and broadcast radio programs that aimed at democratizing the Japanese through the Japan Broadcasting Corporation.

Just after the defeat of the Pacific War, the Japanese Imperial Government also understood that SCAP would control the Japanese media. Japanese officials’ concern was especially the future of the national broadcasting organization, Japan Broadcasting Corporation, which almost monopolized the radio networks. On September 14, 1945, SCAP forced one of the Japanese news agencies, Domei Tushin, to stop radio broadcasts because it was hostile to the Allied Powers. Domei Tushin conducted anti-Allied propaganda in both English and Japanese during the Pacific War. Although SCAP

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9 Press Code for Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, op. cit., 180.


permitted the agency to resume broadcasting the next day, SCAP completely put Domei Tsushin under its control.\textsuperscript{13} It was finally dissolved one month later. The Japan Broadcasting Corporation naturally felt a sense of crisis after this incident. To avoid the distinction of the Japanese media, the Japanese government allowed the private corporation access to broadcasting rights. CCD acknowledged the value of nongovernmental broadcasting stations, and Japan Broadcasting Corporation succeeded in avoiding dissolution under SCAP censorship.\textsuperscript{14}

In regard to newspapers, SCAP ordered the Japanese government in SCAPIN51 to democratize Japanese papers of September 24, 1945. During the total war, the Imperial Government censored Japanese newspapers, and the newspapers published patently false articles that the Imperial Army and Navy had defeated the U.S. military on a daily basis. After SCAPIN51, the Japanese newspapers became independent from the Japanese government and free from Japanese censorship. Compared with the imperial Japanese governmental censorship, CCD censorship was tolerant because over 99 percent of the material was passed without any changes.\textsuperscript{15} Even so, the Japanese newspapers could not run any article that included anti-Allied Powers content such as the inhumane destructive power of the atomic bomb, while CIE admitted some Japanese photographers to record effects of the bomb under its supervision.\textsuperscript{16} The Japanese later criticized the atomic bomb

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\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 43-44.
\textsuperscript{15} Nishimura, op., cit,5
\textsuperscript{16} Barnouw, op.cit., 344.
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press code that prevented the Japanese from learning information about this weapon because Japanese doctors could not get useful medical information to help victims who were exposed to radiation.\(^\text{17}\)

From the point of the newspaper administrations, independence from public supervision meant a shift to the capitalistic system. The Japanese newspapers were part of system that conducted a total war. While they were infringed on the freedom of press under Japanese censorship, media control yielded excessive profits to major papers. This is because the Imperial Government awarded one local newspaper a monopoly in each prefecture.\(^\text{18}\) Concurrently demilitarization and democratization upset the executives of the Japanese newspapers. In fact, some Japanese started voluntary democratization campaigns. For example, the biggest newspaper at that time, *Asahi Shinbun* published an editorial apologizing for its war guilt.\(^\text{34}\) At *Yomiuri Shinbun*, the other major newspaper, the employees blamed the executives for cooperating with the military authorities and deceiving the Japanese people. Local newspapers *Hokkaido Shinbun* and *Nishi Nihon Shinbun* experienced labor-management problems and the executives resigned en masse to take the responsibility of propaganda works.

Interestingly, SCAP did not initially show its stance toward labor-management issues. Although CIE may have shown favoritism to the labor side at first, it later changed its stance because the rising Cold War changed the meaning of the labor-management

\(^{17}\) Nishimura, op. cit., 11.


\(^{34}\) *Asahi Shinbun*, August 23, 1945.
conflict. In other words, SCAP supported demands for the dismissal of the CEO as a leftist media outlet. The American media bolstered this anti-communist approach.\textsuperscript{20} Finally, CIE concluded that voluntary activities of the Japanese newspapers could not accomplish the democratization of the Japanese media and thus established the censorship system. In this system, CIE controlled the Japanese newspapers through the Japanese Newspaper Publisher & Editor Association.\textsuperscript{21}

In regard to other publications, SCAP confiscated textbooks and reference books that included content about Shintoism and ultra-nationalism. As mentioned above, the U.S. government had decided to annihilate the myth of emperor worship during the Pacific War. According to OSS, the main purpose of Japanese education was to promote loyalty to the emperor, and monopolization of textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education deepened the process of thought control.\textsuperscript{22} After analyzing books in many subjects, the CIE concluded that the textbooks in morals, Japanese history, and geography contained ultra-nationalistic content.\textsuperscript{23} While the CIE ordered the Japanese to either delete inappropriate words and phrases altogether or halt the use of these textbooks, it soon understood that all textbooks published during the Pacific War were full of ultra-

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\textsuperscript{21} Yamamoto, “Sekinin wa towarenakatta,” 46-47.

\textsuperscript{22} Japanese Administration: Education, Office of Strategic Service Interoffice Memo, RG 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Service, R&A 1330.

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nationalistic language and should therefore be confiscated.\textsuperscript{24} CIE and CCD subsequently worked together to confiscate more than fifty thousand books. To collect books quickly, CCD often confiscated many books not governed by the censorship regulations. This was because the Japanese side secretly disposed of documents and books. In fact, many publishing companies wanted to hide their relationships with the Japanese military authorities and in February 1946 burned up 488,100 copies of magazines on their own.\textsuperscript{25}

III

These restrictions on freedom of expression and publication had an impact on the argument about the imperial institution. As mentioned above, SCAP set two contradictory plans about the emperor. While SCAP exterminated the myth of emperor worship, it retained the emperor as a symbol of the new constitution. When Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru requested that SCAP approve retention of the Penal Code deeming an act of violence against the person of the emperor as subversion against the state, MacArthur refused, explaining that:

As the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, the Emperor is entitled to no more and no less legal protection than that accorded to all other citizens of Japan who, in the aggregate, constitute the State itself.\textellipsis The respect and affection which the people of Japan have for the Emperor form a sufficient bulwark which need not be bolstered by spherical provisions in the criminal law implying suzerainty.\textsuperscript{26} Yet SCAP avoided leading the Japanese to abolish the emperor. Although CIE

\textsuperscript{24} Yamamoto, Toshikatsu “Senryoki GHQ no shuppanbutsu boshu to toshokan,” \textit{Media shi kenkyu}, March 1994, 122.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 124.

recommended that the Japanese media discuss the question of war guilt and the institution of the emperor, it prohibited the Japanese from overcriticizing the emperor. This was because SCAP understood that its direct intervention in the emperor dispute would turn the tide of the discussion in favor of the communists or ultranationalists.\textsuperscript{27} Therefore, MacArthur secretly sought to humanize the emperor and present him as the symbol of democracy in Japan. Because the Japanese did not know MacArthur’s intentions, debate about the institution of the emperor was warped.

To grasp the whole picture of the debate about the institution of the emperor in the occupation era, it is useful to consider the history of the wartime anti-emperor movement. During the Pacific War, the Japanese were prohibited from discussing the imperial institution. Nevertheless, anarchist groups such as the Japanese Communist Party criticized the institution of the emperor as representing feudalism and the symbol of imperialism.\textsuperscript{28} Although the Japan Communist Party often clashed with the Special Higher Police that supervised thought crime, the anti-national polity movement was ruthlessly suppressed after the revision of the Peace Preservation Law in 1928. In this law, perpetrators of anti-government acts were sentenced to death, and the freedom of association was significantly restricted.\textsuperscript{29} For example, proletarian writer Kobayashi Takiji was arrested by the Special Higher Police for \textit{lese-majesty} and tortured to death. The lower half of his dead body swelled up to twice its normal size because of the harsh

\textsuperscript{27} Hirano Kyoko, \textit{Tenno to seppun: America senryou ka no eiga kenetsu} (Tokyo: Sosisha. 1998), 185.

\textsuperscript{28} Manabu, \textit{Teikoku no showa} (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2002), 164-165.

\textsuperscript{29} Eguchi Keiichi, \textit{Futatsu no senso} (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1993), 213.
beating. A leftist philosopher, Miki Kiyoshi, died from unsanitary conditions and maltreatment in Toyotama prison.\textsuperscript{30} In this atmosphere, the Japanese Communists could not conduct political activities until the end of 1930s. In addition, many leftist intellectuals stopped criticizing the government or began cooperating with the Pacific War like other liberal intellectuals.

After the war’s end, the Japanese Communist Party embarked on a reconstruction campaign. On October 10, 1945, SCAP released a memorandum titled “Removal of Restrictions on Political, Civil and Religious Liberties to the Japanese Government.” This memorandum ordered the following actions: securing free discussion about the institution of the emperor, the Imperial Family, and the Japanese government; rescinding the Peace Preservation Law; release of political prisoners; abolition of the Special Higher Police; and removal of the Home Minister and the Superintendent-General of Police.\textsuperscript{31} Following this memorandum, the Shidehara Cabinet immediately released three thousand political prisoners that were regarded as anti-government forces. One of these political prisoners, Japan Communist Party member Tokuda Kyuichi, left Fuchu prison and was greeted by eight hundred people holding red placards. With other Communist party members, Tokuda released a statement expressing gratitude to the Allied nations for the emancipation of Japan from fascism and the overthrow of the institution of the emperor. Although Tokuda approached the Japan Socialist Party about forming a common front against the institution of the emperor, it rejected this offer because some of its members

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\textsuperscript{31} Takeyama, Syoko “America senryoki masuseuma no tennosei rongi” *Mediashi Kenkyu*, November, 1996, 116.
supported the emperor.\textsuperscript{32} Although the Japan Socialist Party sought a goal of socialist revolution, it tried to change Japanese society within the framework of the Japanese constitutional monarchy. This left the Japan Communist Party as the only party to demand the abolition of the institution of the emperor.\textsuperscript{33} In fact, the Japan Communist Party drew up the new constitution draft that relied on the doctrine of popular sovereignty without the institution of the emperor.\textsuperscript{34}

The Japanese Communist Party also started to mock the emperor in the pages of its magazine \textit{Shinso} [The Truth]. For example, a cover story surveyed taxation of the emperor and concluded that he should be legally obligated to pay taxes because he was declared to be a human.\textsuperscript{35} Another issue contained a satirical cartoon depicting the emperor as being upset because the Japanese portrayed him as the commander in chief.\textsuperscript{36}

The Japanese Communist Party also insisted on its own ideas about the emperor on radio. On November 21, 1945, Japan Broadcasting Corporation broadcasted a radio round table on the institution of the emperor. In this round table, Tokuda strongly insisted on the abolishment of the emperor. According to Tokuda, an unbroken line of emperors or sovereigns was a historical fiction. In his view, “the unshakable faith of people toward the emperor completely broke down. Therefore, the defeat in the Pacific War meant the


\textsuperscript{33} Shiga, Yoshio, “Hanseiki ni wataru tennosei to no tatakai,” \textit{Gendai no riron} Oct 1972, 100-101

\textsuperscript{34} Koseki Shoichi, \textit{Nihonkoku kenpo no tanjo} (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2009), 63-64.


defeat of the institution of the emperor.”  

The other two debaters, a representative of conservative opinion, Kiyose Ichiro, who was the defense counsel of Tojo Hideki in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, and a representative of liberal opinion, Makino Ryozo, paid some attention to the tradition of the emperor as the head of the Japanese. While Hirose emphasized that the people’s trust for the emperor was unshakable because the Japanese obeyed the imperial edict that demobilized the army and navy, Makino admitted that the Japanese believed that the emperor was the head of the Japanese, and that Japan consisted of the people who held this belief.  

Although this roundtable drew no conclusion, CIE was satisfied with this free discussion about the emperor. CIE permitted the Japanese media to criticize the emperor until this criticism also referred to the Allied Powers’ occupation policy toward the institution of the emperor or the emperor himself. When a criticism claimed that SCAP failed to eradicate the emperor, this phrase was eluded. The purpose of CIE was not to dethrone the emperor but to accustom the Japanese to free debate. The emperor was the best topic for this purpose because the Japanese could not publicly criticize him before the Pacific War.  

How did the Japanese people respond to this radio program? Interestingly, Tokuda’s opinion was too radical to evoke a favorable response. Both the pro-governmental newspaper Asahi Shinbun and the moderate newspaper Mainichi Shinbun printed a letter

37 Takeyama, op. cit., 118-119. “(author’s translation).”  

38 Ibid., 119.  

39 Hirano, op. cit., 183.  

40 Ibid., 120.
criticizing him. Yet some readers felt pity for Tokuda because he seemed to confuse intense hatred for the prison guards who tortured him with intense hatred against the emperor. Many newspapers administered public opinion polls during those days, with the result that the majority supported the emperor as a symbol of the unity of the people. *Asahi Shinbun* reported a 92 percent approval rating for the emperor. *Yomiuri Shinbun* claimed that more than 95 percent of the people it surveyed supported the emperor. SCAP also investigated public opinion toward the emperor. While there were limits to this investigation because the Japanese felt psychological pressure under censorship, it was clear that the majority of the Japanese supported the constitutional monarchy. For example, more than 75 percent of students at Tokyo University supported the institution of the emperor after attempting institutional reformation. Conversely, only 6 percent supported the abolition of the institution of the emperor.

Although it is impossible to know how these numbers showing a sympathetic attitude toward the emperor affected SCAP, it was inevitable that SCAP would tighten its supervision over the Communists following the rise of the Cold War. According to the Acting Political Adviser in Japan, while MacArthur did not regard the Communists as an immediately political threat to Japan, he paid attention to the rise of communism in industrial labor. This was because MacArthur believed “that its immaturity in organized

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41 *Mainichi Sinbun*, November 24, 1945.

42 Ibid.

43 *Yomiuri Houchi Shinbun*, December 9, 1945.

44 *Asahi Shinbun*, January 23, 1946

45 Takeyama, op. cit., 122.
reform render it easy prey to leadership which offers a wealth-sharing panacea to existing impoverishment, however unsound the promise.”

Therefore, he considered that “potential danger to every other segment of Japanese society from a Communist controlled labor movement would be very real.” In 1950, the Japanese government at SCAP’s suggestion launched the so-called Red Purge. Roughly thirteen thousand alleged Communist Party members lost their jobs, on the grounds that their political activities were impeding the goals of the occupation.

In the context of the debate about the emperor, this anticommunist movement sought to decrease the generation of anti-emperor propaganda. While MacArthur assisted the Japanese people in the development of a constitutional monarchy, he also believed that the emperor stood as a bulwark against communism in Japan. Therefore, a direct attack on the emperor would weaken democratic elements and instead strengthen both communists and militarists. Leftist propaganda ultimately received the tightest controls. Although CCD ended post-censorship on October 15, 1947, ultra-left as well as ultra-right magazines were still controlled.

In the end, as a bulwark against communism, the

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47 Ibid., 602.

48 Douglas MacArthur’s Letter to Prime Minister, National Diet Library Sheet No.GS(B) 01751; Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 239

49 W.J. Sebald to H. Merrel Benninghoff, Deputy Director, Office of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State. RG 59 Box 3709, MacArthur Library. [740.00116 PW/10-2648 and 894. 001/10-2948]


51 Rubin, op. cit., 84-85.
emperor under the new constitution became one aspect of American occupation policy.

One of the clearest examples of SCAP opposition to anti-emperor propaganda was a movie, *Nihon no higeki* [Tragedy of Japan], directed by Kamei Yumio, a leftist who had studied abroad in Leningrad. In 1941, Kamei was arrested by the Special Higher Police for the violation of the Peace Preservation Law. Interestingly, CCD supported this movie because it had been directed by a sympathizer of the Communists. Nevertheless, *Nihon no higeki* could not win internal Japanese government approval. According to the producer of this movie, Iwasaki Akira, Prime Minister Yoshida became highly indignant after watching this movie at the Prime Minister’s Official Residence and recommended to MacArthur that it not be shown publicly. Under the new constitution, Yoshida believed that the new position of the emperor should represent the morals of the state. Therefore, he opposed propaganda such as Nihon no higeki that might harm the emperor.

How did Kamei describe the emperor, Hirohito, in this movie? First of all, the purpose of this move was to criticize political leaders who had deceived the Japanese into fighting the Allied Powers. *Nihon no higeki* subjected numerous newsreels, documentaries, and newspapers that were used as propaganda works during the Pacific War to careful scrutiny to discover how far they departed from truth. For example, Kamei cited Japanese reports that the air force of Zero fighters at first damaged the U.S. fleet and then a narrator explained the truth that Zero fighters were shot down by antiaircraft

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52 Hirano, op. cit., 200.

53 Ibid., 214.

fire while the film showed delighted U.S. sailors watching the Zero fighters. In the following scene, the Prime Minister Koiso Kuniaki besought the emperor to pay a visit to Ise shrine to be blown a providential wind that would destroy the U.S. fleet. Japanese folklore taught that a providential wind prevented the Mongolians from invading Japan in 1281, and thus the Koiso cabinet tried to inspire the Japanese to victory in the Pacific War through the emperor’s divine power. After that, the narration heaved a sigh with a scene of the Japanese military surrender.\(^{55}\)

CCD did not, however, regard scenes that criticized political leaders as dangerous. The last scene in which the narrator called for execution of the emperor as a war criminal was, however, problematic. Kamei also cited many newspaper reports that the Philippines wished to punish the emperor. For CCD, these scenes constituted leftist propaganda. In fact, Kamei even included a scene in which a young lady called fanatically for the punishment of the emperor in a communist meeting.\(^{56}\)

IV

As mentioned above, one of main purposes of American media strategy toward Japan was to promote freedom of speech. In fact, CCD requested that the Japanese discuss the institution of the emperor, although as this chapter has revealed there were limitations on this policy. SCAP did seek to eradicate the myth of the emperor, but it also tried to utilize the emperor as a symbol of democracy. In addition, the advent of the Cold War was lucky

\(^{55}\) Hirano, op. cit., 204-206.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 216.
for the emperor and unlucky for the leftists of Japan. Ordinary Japanese did not know of
SCAP’s two-sided approach. Japanese leftists, who were completely suppressed by
Japanese censorship, immediately set about attacking the emperor. From the very nature
of things, radical propaganda, such as talk of punishing the emperor, was beyond the pale
for U.S. authorities, even if the number of people making such propaganda calls was
small. The example of *Nihon no higeki* demonstrated that SCAP was not only a
democratic emancipator but also an anti-communist occupation army. It was natural for
the occupier to consider how to effectively control its dependent.
Chapter 3 Understandings of Democracy: Japanese Responses to the New Emperor

The American occupation equipped Japan with democratic institutions and processes such as a new constitution and a series of land reforms, but it was the Japanese people’s desire for political liberty and peace that finally established and sustained a democratic Japan despite the retention of a former symbol of feudalism, the emperor, Hirohito. This chapter explores Japanese understandings of democracy on the basis of the new constitution that reconstructed the emperor as a symbol of democracy in Japan. But first, it examines intellectuals’ understandings of democracy and then suggests various Japanese perspectives about democracy expressed in newspapers and personal letters to MacArthur.

Although various kinds of scales can be used to categorize intellectuals, this discussion identifies three influential intellectuals with distinct understandings of democracy: Minobe Tatsukichi, who understood democracy within the Meiji Constitution; Maruyama Masao, who believed that establishing an independent individual was the key to postwar democracy; and Eto Jun, who explored democracy mingled with Japanese identity. Generally speaking, many intellectuals welcomed the American liberation from total war. Even under U.S. censorship, many intellectuals could express their opinions more freely than under the Japanese wartime organization. As I will discuss later, however, the liberation did not mean the adoption of a democratic
ideology. On the contrary, Japanese intellectuals had to face the defeat of the prewar Japanese political system and reconsider the meaning of their nation-state. As one of the leading and influential postwar intellectuals, Maruyama, said in 1951, “the great number of Japanese did not know how Japan would regain the meaning of its existence facing the following crises: surplus population and a lack of natural resources and national army.”

Intellectuals who grasped the new era in a broad perspective faced postwar democracy as well.

II

The new constitution downgraded the emperor’s status from absolute monarch to a “symbol of the State and of the unity of the people.” Before it was promulgated in November 1946, many Japanese people were interested in a constitutional monarchy. According to a survey of public opinion in February 1946, more than 80 percent of Japanese demanded the symbolic emperor. Apparently, the new constitution reflected the voices of the Japanese, but in fact most Japanese did not understand the meaning of the term “symbol.” The Meiji government chose Germany as a model of its monarchical


4 Mainichi Shinbun, February, 4, 1946.
institution. This is why many Japanese statesman, soldiers, and scholars admired the success of the German imperial system in accommodating to the revolutionary forces of liberalism and keeping the strength of the monarchy and its controlling bureaucracy through the end of World War I.\(^6\) Yet, the American officials decided to replace the authoritarian German legal model with an Anglo-American legal tradition. The occupation rested on the assumption that democratizing Japan according to Western values and institutions was the best way to create a peaceful Japan.\(^7\) The origin of the phrase “symbol of states” was the British constitutional monarchy, and, in this sense, the emperor represented “Anglo-American and European democratic ideals.”\(^8\) In other words, American occupation policy was aimed at establishing a full parliamentary government in Japan, and thus the emperor had to relinquish any actual power in the postwar era.

In *Embracing Defeat*, John Dower notes that this misconception grounded in cultural differences became a sort of tragedy or farce. Prime Minister Shidehara Kijuro totally misunderstood real U.S. intentions and believed that it would be possible to retain the Meiji Constitution.\(^9\) This optimistic view had a certain influence on intellectuals who

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\(^9\) Ibid., 351.
had been suppressed in wartime. State Minister Matsumoto Joji, a legal scholar and the chair of the Japanese Constitutional Problem Investigation Committee, stated that “even while maintaining imperial sovereignty, some minor reforms to the Meiji Constitution would give Japan a system similar to that of England wherein the so-called parliamentary democracy has complete sway.” In addition, both Shidehara and Matsumoto blindly believed that they were victims of Japanese military authorities and pro-Americans. From this aggrieved feeling and sympathy to the occupiers, some intellectuals regarded the U.S. occupation authorities as emancipators from Japanese Fascism and allowed the Japanese a little latitude to amend the constitution.11

Minobe Tatsukichi (1873-1948), a professor at Tokyo University, also supported the Meiji Constitution in the postwar era. Minobe published an article in 1912 that legitimized the centrality of the Diet in the decision-making process. In this article, he juxtaposed the emperor with other state organs including the Diet. In the increasingly militant environment of the 1930s, Minobe’s liberal interpretation of the role of the emperor came under attack from military officers and ultranationalists who believed that the emperor should take personal totalitarian control. When people understand Minobe’s background in 1930s, it seemed natural that many Japanese regarded him as an opinion leader who supported liberal democracy in the postwar era. As Kenneth J. Ruoff remarked in *The People’s Emperor*, however, Minobe was a man of Meiji and did not question the emperor’s sovereignty under the Meiji Constitution.12

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12 Ruth, op. cit., 55-56.
The main purpose of Minobe’s constitution theory was to oppose an oligarchic government system. The specific objectives of his program were:

1. Abolition of the influence of the old statesmen in government, especially in making and breaking cabinets;
2. Abolition of the privileged position of the military oligarchy— the independence of the service ministers from cabinet control on certain matters, and the power of the army and navy staffs to control the appointment and withdrawal of the service ministers;
3. Reform of the civil-service appointment ordinances to enlarge the range of political appointments;
4. Recruitment of popular talents to government service in order to break the bureaucratic monopoly of position in the government and in the parties themselves.\(^{13}\)

In his theory, however, the relationship between the Diet and emperor was ambiguous, and the function of the Diet was to check the authority of the emperor.\(^{14}\) Minobe also pointed out that the Western constitution referred to “holy” and “inviolable” sovereign powers.

For those who stretched the interpretation of the Meiji Constitution during the American occupation, democracy did not conflict with the system of government by emperor. Once the American occupation denied the authority of the emperor, the old champion of relatively advanced liberal democracy in the Meiji era concluded that establishing a British-style constitutional monarchy and full parliamentary government was too radical an institutional reform. In Minobe’s view, the institution of the emperor in Japan was culturally different from the Western constitutional monarchy. Minobe especially emphasized that the unbroken line of the emperor, which was regarded as longer than twenty-six hundred years, was based on the respect of the Japanese for the emperor, a feeling that was essential for the reconstruction of Japanese society.\(^{15}\)

\(^{13}\) Mikker, op. cit., 36.

\(^{14}\) Ruth, op. cit., 30.

\(^{15}\) Watanabe, op. cit., 72.
new Japanese constitution was enforced, Minobe argued vehemently that Japan remained a monarchy even if the Japanese people were sovereign. He still believed that the monarchy was the best way to mobilize the Japanese to promote the national interest, and that democracy was just a means to exclude Japanese fascists. In any system, Minobe believed that the emperor should mainly function as an instrument of national identity.

III

While some intellectuals emphasized the systematic continuity of democracy between the prewar and postwar constitutions, others considered postwar democracy to be beyond the Meiji Constitution. When Maruyama Masao (1914-1996), who was a professor at Tokyo University, published “Chou kokka shugi no rinri to shinri” [Logic and Psychology of Ultranationalism] in 1946, many Japanese positively responded to the essay. This is because Maruyama vividly pointed out the fundamental irrationality of the wartime organization. In this article, Maruyama criticized not only Japanese fascism but also the Japanese who were not free and autonomous. According to Maruyama:

The dominant characteristic of prewar and wartime society was a lack of perceived distinction between the individual and the state. The state maintained this by employing the kokutai (national polity) ideology as a psycho-cultural tool which defined morality in terms of power. Rather than a preserve of the individual, morality was defined by [the] state, and all values were national values. The cohabitation of morality with the state was justified by what Maruyama called “proximity to the ultra value,” personified by the emperor. In kokutai ideology, the Japanese emperor is regarded as a transcendental deity who could not be restrained by

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the Meiji Constitution; no one could defy his will.19

According to Maruyama, the divinity of the emperor resulted from historical tradition. His analysis of the institution of the emperor went back to ancient times. Originally, the Japanese emperor administrated both politics and religion but came to take responsibility only for religion. This means that the emperor embodied the authority of power but that other people or groups seized the actual power under the name of the emperor. In Maruyama’s view, this dual power structure was reinforced by Confucian theory. In China, the emperor was located under the god and could govern his people because he was the most virtuous person. Therefore, it was possible to overthrow the dynasty following this theory because the god could choose the next emperor. The Japanese emperor, however, embodied both the most virtuous person and the living god. In the Japanese case, opponents of the official regime seized the actual power on the pretext that they evicted villains who had deceived the emperor.20 Because of this historical tradition, the Japanese wartime stance had been literally blind obedience to the emperor and Maruyama concluded that the mission of the impeding postwar era was to enlighten the Japanese and develop an autonomous identity.21

Generally speaking, the Japanese intellectuals’ postwar experience was a struggle to search for positive ideas in postwar society as well as to evaluate the negative aspects of prewar society. In Maruyama’s case, he placed high value on Enlightenment thought and


21 Yoneyama, op.cit., 39.
Enlightenment thinkers in the Meiji era such as Fukuzawa Yukichi. As Mary L. Hanneman remarks in “The Old Generation in (Mid) Showa Japan,” Maruyama criticized the myth of emperor worship, which was created by political rulers, and extended his criticism to deny the government of the emperor in the Meiji era.

According to Maruyama, he agonized for six months over whether to criticize the myth of emperor worship. Because Maruyama believed that the emperor Hirohito was not an expansionist, he was closed not to the military authorities but to his liberal statesmen. At the same time, Maruyama came to understand that liberalism in the Meiji era had its limits. Even liberalists in the Meiji era gave up fundamental principles of liberalism such as basic human rights, and they finally concentrated on avoiding the war guilt of the emperor. Facing the tragedy of Japanese fascism, Maruyama counterposed an idealized Western modernity consisting of autonomous individuals to oppose Japanese ultra-nationalism. He concluded that ultra-nationalism finally destroyed the residue of democracy in the Taisho era, and that postwar democracy therefore needed to form a more universal and Westernized democracy.

The notion of autonomy is fundamental to democratic philosophy, and this word can be distinguished into two types of autonomy: personal autonomy and social autonomy. As


24 Tanaka, op.cit., 136.

the second son of the liberal journalist of the Taisho era, Maruyama Kanji, Maruyama was predisposed in life to be liberal. While still at high school, he attended a gathering of academics founded by a liberal colleague of his father, Hasegawa Nyozekan. This background played an important role in his later career as provocateur and promoter of democracy and autonomy.\textsuperscript{26} In Maruyama’s view, personal autonomy was the cornerstone of genuine democracy. He understood the importance of social autonomy, which featured a pluralistic society in which multidimensional individuals preserved their political mobility in society. Even so, successful social autonomy was impossible unless it was premised on personal autonomy.\textsuperscript{27}

In \textit{Minshu to Aikoku}, Oguma Eiji remarks that Maruyama’s political thought in the postwar era reflected his own war experience. In October 1943, the Japanese war cabinet started to mobilize students and scholars for the war front. Although quite a number of students went to the war front believing the idealistic wartime propaganda such as the idea of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, military service in reality was a truly painful experience. As many intellectuals stifled their anger and pretended to accommodate themselves to their newfound inferior ranks, Maruyama had to endure violence under fascism. Although he seldom talked about his own war experience in public, as an assistant professor at Tokyo Imperial University, Maruyama was literally a sitting duck for torment in the platoon to which he belonged. According to Oguma, student- and scholar-soldiers tended to be targets of lynching in the army. The root of the

\textsuperscript{26} Kersten, op cit., 9.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 4.
discrimination was the income gap between urban and rural areas. Many student-soldiers were sons of the urban middle class and had little understanding of the harsh circumstances in poor rural communities. While many farmers did not have basic literacy, many university students were familiar with foreign languages. In military service, however, this intellectual hierarchy was inverted and the hatred of both the intellectuals and the farmers intensified.\textsuperscript{28} From these experiences, Maruyama realized how intellectuals had isolated themselves from popular forums, and he emerged as an opinion leader to set the agenda for public debate on the issues of democracy in the postwar era.\textsuperscript{29}

Fortunately, Maruyama got an opportunity to give a lecture about the relationship between democracy and the emperor immediately after the Pacific War. One of his senior officers ordered Maruyama to give a lecture on the emperor’s fate after the war. In this lecture, Maruyama concluded that the Japanese emperor could be retained when the institution of the emperor changed into a constitutional monarchy such as the British royal family. As a professor of political thought, he knew full well that although republicanism and monarchy were diametrically opposed, democracy and monarchy could coexist as far as political theory was concerned.\textsuperscript{30} SCAP literally conducted an occupation policy depending on this logic.

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\textsuperscript{28} Eiji Oguma, \textit{Minshu to aikoku} (Tokyo: Shinyo Sha, 2002), 50-53.

\textsuperscript{29} Kersten, op. cit., 5, 49.

\textsuperscript{30} Maruyama, op. cit., 33.
When the Japanese emperor spoke to the nation by radio broadcast and brought his country’s resistance in the Pacific War to an end, Eto Jun (1932-1999), an eminent Japanese literary critic in the postwar era, was thirteen years old. The teenagers who listened to the emperor’s voice were greatly influenced by the emperor-centered education system. For them, support for the war was a normal condition, and the most important social code was to contribute to Imperial Japan. This was tantamount to being told that they would be drafted and die in a battle. As one of these teenagers, Eto suffered from emotional turmoil that was caused by the defeat and subsequent American occupation.

According to Oguma, Eto’s wartime experience strengthened his aversion to the American occupation. Although he was free from the fear of death because of the American occupation, Eto’s family was affected by the economic depression for several years after the war, and he harbored both a moral and an economic sense of loss. Consequently, he did not accept the propaganda that American liberation was a pleasant experience. Unlike intellectuals such as Minobe and Maruyama, who were impatient for freedom of speech, as a product of the emperor-centered education system, Eto had no alternative identity to ultra-nationalism and always felt a deep sense of loss during the American occupation era that led him to cast doubt on the meaning of democracy that the Japanese upheld in the postwar era.

31 Oguma, op. cit., 658.
32 Ibid., 670-681.
33 Eto Jun, Tozasareta gengo kukan: senryogun no kenetsu to sengo Nihon (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju,
In *Ambivalent Moderns*, Lawrence Olson remarks that Eto’s answer to the American occupation led back to Japanese history. His first achievement as a Japanese literary critic was challenging established notions of Natsume Soseki’s conception of an autonomous identity. Eto saw Soseki as a man of the late Meiji era who was wracked with the tension between society and emerging individualism. In his view, Soseki could not put impulses of the self above public duty. His evaluation of Soseki was deeply related to postwar Japanese society, and Eto believed that the imbroglio that arose between Western ideas such as autonomous identity and non-Western Japanese society spread thorough all the areas of Japanese daily life in the postwar era. According to Eto, many Japanese, especially young people, were more eager to adopt Western culture than to explore the Japanese tradition from the Meiji period to the present, but much of the essence of Western thought remained untransplanted to Japanese society. Eto concluded that the reason for this was that Japan was an immature modern society with immature individuals. In addition, he also pointed out internal psychological and cultural factors in Japan that would resist the wholesale transplantation of Western culture and even transform it to such an extent that one could no longer perceive the link between the

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34 The former literary critics thought that Soseki had helped to enlighten and cultivate his readers by showing that the demands of the self became precedence over the claims of the society. Lawrence Olson, *Ambivalent Moderns: Portraits of Japanese Cultural Identities* (Maryland: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, 1992), 8.


original and the transplant at a glance.\textsuperscript{37}

Although Eto pondered the problem of undeveloped individualism in modern Japan, he did not unconditionally applaud Western culture and criticized the proposition that Western culture was superior to Japanese culture. In his view, the strong sense of obligation to catch up with the West in Japanese society led to contradictory reactions. While some people idealized or glorified Western culture, others rejected it on the ground that they considered themselves too Japanese to conform to the West no matter how superior it might be.\textsuperscript{38}

The latter sentiment, of course, provoked a reaction against Western culture. In “The Politics of Loss,” Ann Sherif remarks that Eto himself sought the deception of American democracy and found that both American occupation policies and the Japanese fascist regime had an oppressive nature. It is an undeniable historical truth that the United States disseminated democracy in a certain antidemocratic way in the American Occupation era. The American occupiers of Japan took it for granted that censorship and media guidance were a part of U.S. reformation policy directed at replacing Japanese ultra-nationalistic ideas with American democratic values.\textsuperscript{39} Eto embraced his role as a critic of the Allied Occupation and he undertook archival research in Washington D.C. with the aim of discovering censorship policies. According to Eto, even if the occupiers succeeded in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 436.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 441.
\end{itemize}
implanting democracy in Japan, it was not rooted in the free will of the Japanese.\textsuperscript{40} For him, the American Occupation era was not a historical period of democratization, but part of the history of a defeated nation.\textsuperscript{41}

Under these feelings of uneasiness during the American occupation era, Eto found a contradiction within the new constitution. According to Eto, the problem of the new Japanese constitution resulted from both American and Japanese sides. First of all, Eto criticized this constitution as based on the American draft and simply camouflaged by SCAP as a Japanese product. In addition, Japanese were apathetic regarding the problem of the constitution imposed by SCAP.\textsuperscript{42} In his view, Japanese intellectuals did not fulfill their responsibilities to remedy this problem. While Eto paid attention to the existence of censorship, he believed that American hands in Japanese society tacitly admitted ideal American democracy.

In this American-made Japanese democracy, Eto also saw something wrong with the emperor as a symbol of the new constitution. While Article 1 of the Constitution of Japan stipulated that “the Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power,” Article 2 stipulated that “the Imperial Throne shall be dynastic and succeeded to in accordance with the Imperial House Law passed by the Diet.”\textsuperscript{43} In sum, the Japanese could not interfere in the right of succession to the Imperial Throne.

\textsuperscript{40} Eto, \textit{Tozasareta gengo kukan}, op. cit., 314.
\textsuperscript{43} Article 1 and 2 of the Constitution of Japan.
Why did the constitution retain this privilege of succession? To answer this question, Eto returned to emperor worship. Eto highly respected the emperor, and thus he believed that the Imperial Family should resolve the succession issue itself. For Eto, there were differences between considering the institution of the emperor and the emperor himself. In his view, the constitutional monarchy imposed by SCAP was a blank institution in the end. On the contrary, Eto believed that the Japanese felt an affection to the emperor and thus could not forget the old institution of the emperor. According to Eto, this attachment to the emperor fundamentally resulted from freedom of thought. In other words, Eto concluded that worship of the emperor was based on the freedom of Japanese thought and that the institution of the emperor could not be touched by the United States.

V

As discussed above, Japanese intellectuals’ responses to the new emperor as a symbol of the new constitution were diverse. This same diversity was observed in ordinary Japanese citizens’ sentiments. While some people were still filled with hostility toward the U.S. occupiers, others immediately took an oath of allegiance to the former enemy. According to police reports that recorded the will of the people immediately after the Pacific War, one Japanese citizen said that “He would kill MacArthur, if he lived in the Imperial Palace.” Others signaled their allegiance, such as the one who proclaimed: “I raise three

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44 Matsumoto Kenichi, “Ware ha sentei no isin nishite sintyo no itsumin to kaki hirakareta koushitsu ni chinmoku wo turanuita riyuu,” Sapio, Jul/Aug, 2009, 86.

banzais [hurray] to General MacArthur and extend my congratulation on the successful stationing of your country’s troops.”

This diversity of opinion is evident in newspapers and letters that were sent to MacArthur. Interestingly, SCAP did not initially recommend that the Japanese people send letters. It was Prime Minister Higashikuni who announced that his cabinet needed to know the people’s sentiments and advised the public to send letters for this reason. According to Sodei Rinjiro, the idea of addressing letters to the highest authorities meant the expression of long-suppressed emotions and the hope of change from the top.

Considering the established power structure in those days, MacArthur ranked higher than the prime minister. This meant that the Japanese had higher expectations resulting from writing to MacArthur than from letters sent to the Japanese government.

MacArthur received 500,000 letters. Between September 1946 and December 1950, SCAP carefully read each one and translated those whose contents it needed to know. In October 1945 the Mainichi Shinbun ran an article with the headline, “Letters to General MacArthur” that categorized the letters into twenty-one types with such topics as antimilitarism to appreciation for the American occupation.

Not surprisingly, some of these 500,000 letters contained various opinions about the

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48 Ibid., 6.
49 Ibid., 16.
50 Ibid., 9.
51 Mainichi Shinbun, October 15, 1945.
emperor. According to SCAP’s analysis, the letters that referred to the emperor had the following features. First, it was impossible to determine whether these letters referred to the institution of the emperor or the emperor himself. Second, the Japanese opinions in the letters broadly divided into two groups that either supported or opposed the emperor. Third, the people who requested regime change were likely to take part in debates about the institution of the emperor. In fact, save for the highly educated, the Japanese did not always distinguish between the institution of the emperor and the emperor himself before the Pacific War. This was because the emperor was covered by the veil of the myth. In the Meiji Constitution, the emperor himself was the center of national polity and other institutions such as a government, worked to advise him while he did not have political responsibility as a sacred monarchy. Although SCAP decided to remove the veil of the myth of the emperor worship, it took time for Japanese to get used to the new emperor as a symbol of democracy.

Under this reformation of the institution of the emperor, some Japanese still paid attention to the traditional image of the emperor as a godlike person. For example, one correspondent appealed to MacArthur to protect the emperor like this:

We feel as if our hearts were breaking whenever we pray for the emperor’s tranquility and preservation of the institution of the emperor. We often understood the responsibility for this war and prepared for any kind of compensation for this war. Even so, to lose the emperor would be equal to the loss of our parents. Otherwise it will be equal to the loss of sight or hope.

Another petition to save the emperor contained almost the same content:

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52 Kawashima, op. cit., 152-153.

53 Yomiuri Houchi Shinbun, December 18, 1945.

54 Kawashima, op.cit., 156. “(author’s translation).”
“The emperor is our life. We cannot live without the emperor. Please do not make His Majesty suffer. This is the ultimate and most earnest request for the Japanese people. Please accept our request.”

While some letters strongly repeated the importance of the emperor, other letters focused on the emperor as a pacifist:

The emperor of Japan is absolutely not a war criminal. I see articles in recent newspapers treating the emperor as though he is a criminal, but the articles are written by people with some misunderstandings. The emperor is an advocate of world peace, and we, the Japanese people, all revere him. As you know, the bullies—his counselors, the militarists, and the government—because of their own wrongheadedness, were not able to understand the emperor’s mind, nor his great intentions, and they started a hopeless war. They used the emperor because they were wrongheaded. The emperor is not a militarist or an imperialist. The Japanese emperor is a pacifist and a person who advocates peace.

After SCAP permitted the Japanese to discuss the institution of the emperor, the letters to MacArthur increased. Between the emperor’s Humanity Declaration on January 1, 1946, and announcement of the new constitution draft on March 6, 1946, the number of letters peaked. The Humanity Declaration was literally the turning point for considering the new status of the emperor as a symbol of a democratic state. Once the emperor denied his divine nature, some people loudly criticized him.

Generally speaking, libelous letters regarding the emperor were relatively small in number except for sympathizers of communism. In the International Prosecution Section file on Emperor Hirohito, 9 letters out of a total of 164 were accusatory toward the emperor. It was, however, natural that people who lost loved ones or were on the verge of starvation directed their anger at the emperor and requested that he be punished.

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55 These petitions were sent to the International Prosecution Section, where they consider whether Hirohito had responsibility for the war. Sodei, 65.
56 Ibid., 72.
57 Ibid, 152.
58 Ibid.,85.
59 See, Sodei, ibid, and Kawashima, op.cit.
old man expressed his distrust of the emperor like this:

“While the Japanese soldiers who fought abroad returned to the mainland because of your [MacArthur’s] kindness, the soldiers under the Soviet control lost contact. My family hated the emperor for avoiding taking responsibility for a war that was conducted under his imperial order.”

Another offered this opinion:

“Farmers are sick and tired of war. All we want is to be able to live happily. Even if there were no emperor, we would be satisfied as long as we can eat our fill of rice and lead a happy life.”

Because of the combination of human and natural disasters such as the prolongation of the emperor’s lost war, ineptitude of the elites, and unseasonable weather, a majority of Japanese already were malnourished. The average calorie intake per person had declined to far less than the standard for engaging in light work by mid-1945. In mid-November, it was reported that 733 individuals had died of starvation in five large cities: Kobe, Kyoto, Osaka, Nagoya, and Yokohama.

By contrast, the emperor did not lack the bare necessities of life. When the war was over, the total assets of the Japanese Imperial Family overwhelmed other zaibatsu families (industrial conglomerate groups). While major zaibatsu such as Mitsui and Mitsubishi had around 300 to 5500 million yen, the Imperial Family had 3.7 billion yen immediately after the war. SCAP ordered the Japanese government to freeze the assets of the Imperial Family and then almost of all of the assets went into the national treasury. Even so, the emperor, Hirohito retained his personal assets that amounted to

60 Ibid., 150-151. “(author’s translation).”
61 Sodei, op. cit., 86.
190 million yen when he died in 1989.\footnote{The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, \textit{Documents Concerning the Allied Occupation and Control of Japan}, Vol. II Political, Military and Cultural, V.}

On May 12, 1946, 130 people incited by the Japanese Communist Party marched on the Imperial Palace to request that the emperor release foodstuffs stored there. Although the demonstrators caused trouble with security guards, they were not rioters. After finally requesting that the emperor check the kitchen of the Imperial Palace, abundant foodstuffs were found.\footnote{Takahashi, op. cit., 123.} The leftist magazine \textit{Shinso} immediately ran an article about the daily dinner menu of the emperor. According to this article, “the emperor is a gourmet. He likes greasy foods such as broiled eel and prawn tempura.”\footnote{Kawashima, op. cit., 263-267.} While this article received favorable responses from the people suffering from starvation, there were critics of this demonstration. According to \textit{Asahi Shinbun}, almost 90 percent of letters criticized the demonstration. The majority view was that it was against etiquette because the emperor was the head of the state.\footnote{Yoshimi, op. cit., 101. “(author’s translation).”} The emperor’s kitchen dispute revealed that the Japanese struggled to deal with an emperor who became a human and a symbol of the new Japan.

VI

As discussed above, the Japanese represented various opinions about the emperor. This discussion did not, however, continue for a long time. In fact, it ceased after the new Japanese constitution was implemented and the symbolic emperor was established by

\footnote{Asahi Shinbun, May 29, 1946; Kawashima, op. cit., 281.}
SCAP. Even so, it did not mean that the Japanese could accept the new role of the emperor as a symbol of their now democratic country smoothly. The main point of this discussion about the emperor was not a problem of the dichotomy between protecting or abolishing the emperor. For the Japanese, the most important thing was the emperor himself. As one letter to Mainichi Shinbun remarks, the future of the emperor determined the future of democratic Japan. If the emperor was retained, how would Japan as a democratic country treat him? In the political domain, the emperor was the source of authority. In the psychological domain, he was the living god. After the Pacific War, SCAP took all his political power and remade the god as a person who represented a state. It was for the Japanese a world-shaking event, and it was impossible to resolve this highly complicated dispute quickly.

In fact, ultranationalists immediately tried to reinstate the emperor to his lost privileges after the U.S. occupation authorities left. They appealed to the Japanese government to nationalize the Yasukuni Shrine where a dozen Class-A war criminals were deified. While the majority of Japanese rejected the restoration of emperor worship, they could not sink the emperor into oblivion. When the emperor died in 1989, the Japanese media gave the event widespread coverage and implied that the Japanese should be in mourning. Many government offices and private companies hesitated to hold

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69 Ibid, 142.
70 Mainichi Shinbun, January 22, 1946.
72 Watanabe, op. cit., 190.
celebrations and even abstained from drinking alcohol.\textsuperscript{73} These events reminded the Japanese that the emperor was a part of their nation’s postwar identity.

Conclusion

When the Pacific War ended, the United States possessed overwhelming national power. Nevertheless, the American occupation of Japan faced constraints and limits. The United States was also aware of the limit of pressure from the outside for democratization. The State Department started to plan occupation policy even before official U.S. entry into World War II after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Japan hands such as Joseph Grew recommended that Presidents Roosevelt and Truman utilize the emperor as a political tool to smooth conduct of the occupation plan. Although Truman did not understand Japanese feelings toward the emperor, his realistic way of thinking that the United States had to finish the Pacific War before the Soviets entered the Japanese mainland and that the American occupation policy should be as cost-effective as possible corresponded to Grew’s idea.

Yet, it was undeniable that the United States fought with the Japanese to achieve lofty ideals in Japan. As the Potsdam Declaration revealed, Washington demanded the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces. Even so, the United States did not intend to subordinate the Japanese but instead sought the demilitarization and democratization of Japan. In order to completely accomplish these goals, the United States should have abolished the institution of the emperor or should have dethroned Hirohito because he was the commander in chief according to the Meiji Constitution. This gap between the reality and the ideal when it came to the emperor could not be easily offset. First, the majority of Americans called for punishing the emperor as a major
war criminal. Second, other countries such as Australia and China that suffered from Japanese aggression were filled with hatred for the emperor. Third, the China hands in the State Department always opposed an appeasement policy toward the emperor. Even after the American occupation started, the China hands rehashed this argument.

While the emperor showed a cooperative attitude toward the American occupation, it was MacArthur who established the groundwork of the new institution of the emperor in postwar Japan. Although MacArthur’s strong personality based on self-confidence that he knew the Oriental peoples’ psychology often led to clashes with officials in Washington, the Truman administration gave official approval to MacArthur because his efforts to save the emperor and deconstruct the myth of emperor worship corresponded to the overall goals of the occupation. The emperor’s “Imperial Rescript Denying His Divinity” and MacArthur’s draft of the Japanese new constitution adroitly remade the status of the emperor from sacred supreme ruler of the Japanese to a symbol of the new democratic Japan. SCAP smartly conducted these policies in the form of the emperor and the Japanese government’s initiative. To maintain the façade of Japanese initiative, SCAP concealed that it was an occupier.

Through this highly sophisticated political decision, the constitutional monarchy was established from the top. This did not mean, however, that the Japanese accepted the new emperor as a symbol of the democratic Japan without criticism. On the contrary, this reformation of the emperor had to be sold to the Japanese. At first, SCAP recommended that the Japanese discuss the institution of the emperor. This was because SCAP needed the Japanese to get used to freedom of discussion. SCAP also intended to unmask the
image of the emperor as a living god. The Japanese soon started to consider the emperor and institution of the emperor in the new constitution. Some groups denied the existence of the emperor himself, especially the Japan Communist Party, which became a victim of lese-majesty for a long time and strongly opposed the retention of the emperor, Hirohito. In fact, Japanese advocates of abolition of the institution of the emperor were in the minority. Even so, it was fortunate for the emperor that the rise of the Cold War increased anti-communist sentiment. For the emperor, communism was a most dangerous foe. Although SCAP did not intend to lead the debate about the institution of the emperor, it tightly censored anti-emperor propaganda especially that produced by sympathizers of communism. SCAP’s interventions to curb freedom of expression belied U.S. plans for Japan’s complete democratization. The movie Nihon no higeki [The Tragedy of the Japan] was one example of this reality.

This warped suppression of free speech reflected the debates about the emperor in postwar Japan. Some politicians, such as Shidehara Kijuro and Matsumoto Joji, strongly believed that the Meiji Constitution itself would be filled with SCAP intentions of democratizing Japan. The United States, however, decided to enforce the new constitution, and thus the institution of the emperor had to be changed to a Westernized constitutional monarchy.

Minobe Tatsukichi, who was regarded as the representative of liberalism in the prewar era, rejected the idea that the emperor could be a constitutional monarch. In Minobe’s view, the institution of the emperor in Japan was culturally different from the Western constitutional monarchy. He still believed that the emperor himself represented
Japan and that the Japanese were subjects of the emperor while he denied oligarchy to abuse the authority of the emperor.

For his part, Mayumaya Masao finally accepted the emperor in a Westernized constitutional monarchy. In his article, “Chou kokka shugi no rinri to shinri” [Logic and Psychology of Ultranationalism], he asserted that the main reason for the tragic war was the fundamental irrationality of a wartime organization legitimized by the transcendental deity of the emperor. In Maruyama’s view, the old institution of the emperor needed to be reformed to a democratized Japan that consisted of Westernized autonomous individuals.

Eto Jun was also torn between the traditional image of the emperor and Western culture. While Maruyama tried to overcome tradition, Eto returned to the myth of the emperor. To overcome this dilemma, Eto examined the shortcomings of Western culture and found fault with such anti-democratic occupation policies as the censorship that was conducted under the name of democratization.

As these intellectual reactions suggest, the Japanese responses to the new position of the emperor were diverse. Some people begged MacArthur to save the emperor because they still believed in the traditional image of the emperor as a godlike person. Others directed their anger at the emperor. Although negative responses toward the emperor were relatively rare, it was natural that the people who lost loved ones or who were on the verge of starvation were disenchanted with an emperor who evaded responsibility for the war and had no shortage of food.

Clearly the American occupation based on cost-effective consideration established democratic political institutions in Japan. The emperor changed his image
dramatically from that of a military dictator to a symbol of state. Even though the people could change the institution in a short time, it was impossible to change the people’s minds. Debates about the future of the emperor ceased when the new constitution based on the American draft was enforced. It was only two years from the defeat of the war to enforcement of the new constitution, but the people’s struggle between democratic and traditional values continued.
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