

The Allied Occupation

Main Idea After World War II, Allied forces occupied Japan and helped to lay the groundwork for postwar Japanese society.

Reading Connection Do you follow the news about efforts to create a new government in Iraq since Saddam Hussein was defeated? Read to learn what happened in Japan at the end of World War II.

From 1945 to 1952, Japan was an **occupied** country—it was held and controlled by Allied military forces. An Allied administration led by U.S. general **Douglas MacArthur** governed. It had three main tasks: to destroy Japan's war machine, to try Japanese officials charged with war crimes, and to lay the foundations for a new Japanese society.

Voices from the Past

After World War II, many Japanese women began to abandon old roles. In a 1995 book, Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow reported on this trend:

“A quick glance at educational statistics reveals a higher percentage of female as compared to male high school graduates entering colleges and universities. The overwhelming majority of female college and university graduates, over 80 percent, are taking up employment and doing so in a wider range of fields than in the past. Better education and the availability of more job opportunities have increasingly made it possible for women to look upon marriage as an option rather than a prescribed lifestyle. . . . A dramatic development has been the advancement by married women, including those with children, into the labor force.”

Social customs, such as the attitudes toward women's roles, take a long time to change. The basis for change, however, began with the Allied government of Japan. Under MacArthur, Japanese society was remodeled along Western lines. A new constitution adopted in 1947 renounced war as a national policy. Japan agreed to maintain armed forces at levels sufficient only for self-defense. The constitution also established a more democratic system. The constitution reduced the power of the emperor, who was forced to announce that he was not divine. It also guaranteed basic civil and political rights and gave women the right to vote.

Finally, a peace treaty restoring Japanese independence was signed on September 8, 1951, by the United States and other former World War II allies. The Soviet Union was not included—although it had been a World War II ally, it was now at odds with the West in the Cold War. On the same day, Japan and the United States signed a defensive alliance that allowed the United States to maintain military bases in Japan. This arrangement gave the United States a military presence in Asia. At the same time, since the size of the Japanese military was limited by the peace treaty, the presence of American troops provided Japan with additional national security.

Reading Check Identifying What were the main tasks MacArthur had in Japan after the war?

The Japanese Miracle

Main Idea By the end of the twentieth century, Japan was the world's second greatest industrial power.

Reading Connection Remember reading about German economic progress after World War II? Read to understand how Japan made dramatic economic progress in this same period.

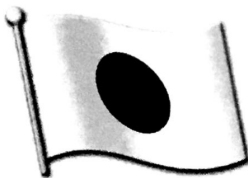
In August 1945, Japan was in ruins and its land was occupied by a foreign army. A mere 50 years later, it was the second greatest industrial power in the world. This transformation has been described as the “Japanese miracle.” How did the miracle occur? The causes were not only economic, but also political and social.

Politics and Government Japan's new constitution was modeled on the U.S. Constitution. It embodied the principles of universal suffrage and a balance of

▼ Japanese woman at work in a Toyota factory



Foundations of Postwar Japan



Political

- New constitution, 1947
- Democratic system with parliament
- Three branches of government
- Multiparty system
- Universal suffrage
- Military limited to defense



Economic

- "State capitalism"
- Subsidized industries
- Zaibatsu* system: large business conglomerations
- Sale of land to tenant farmers
- World's greatest exporter



Social

- Reduction in emperor's power
- Removal of references to patriotism from educational system
- Guaranteed human rights
- Increased women's rights
- Maintenance of traditional values and a strong work ethic

Chart Skills

After 1945, Japan's society, government, and economy were modernized.

- 1. Compare and Contrast** Pick another country discussed in this chapter and compare its economy to that of postwar Japan.

power among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. These principles have held firm. Japan today is a stable democratic society.

At the same time, the current Japanese political system retains some of Japan's nineteenth-century features of the Meiji period. One example can be seen in how political power is distributed. Japan has a multiparty system with two major parties—the Liberal Democrats and the Socialists. In practice, however, the Liberal Democrats have dominated the government. At one point, they remained in office for 30 years. During this period decisions on key issues, such as who should become prime minister, were decided by a small group within the party.

A dramatic change did occur in 1993 when the Liberal Democrats were defeated on charges of government corruption. Mirohiro Hosokawa was elected prime minister and promised to clean up politics.

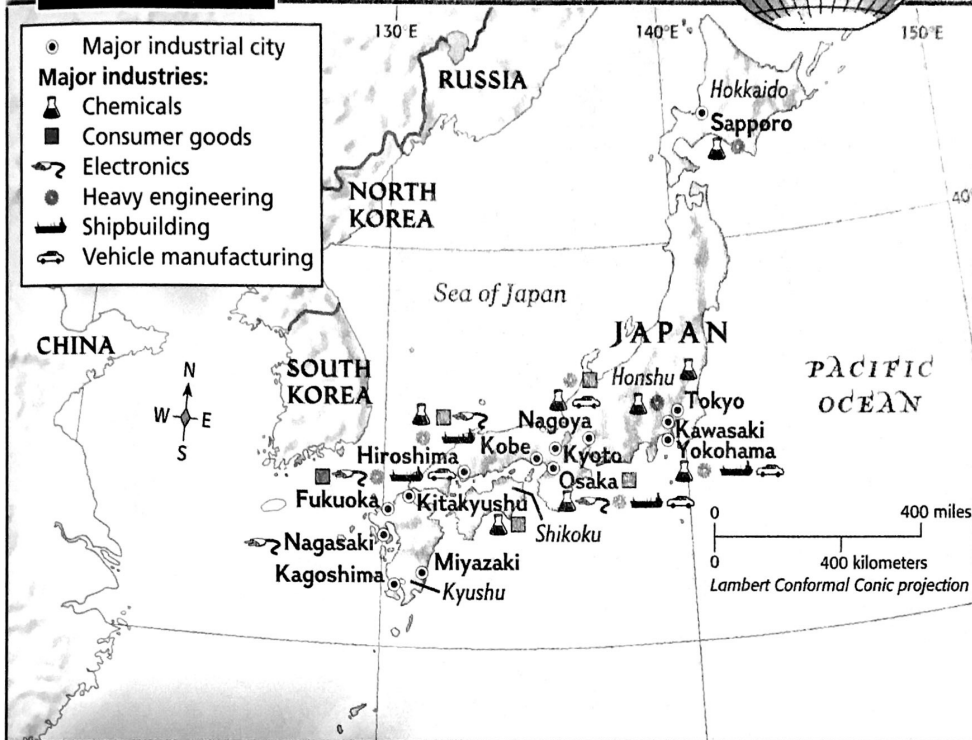


Junichiro Koizumi

Today, the central government plays an active role in the economy. It establishes price and wage policies and **subsidizes** vital industries. This government role in the economy is widely accepted in Japan. In fact, many Western observers often point to the government's role to explain why Japanese industry is so efficient and why Japan has become an industrial giant. The term often used to describe Japan's economic system is **state capitalism**.

Japan faces some problems in its political leadership. Two recent prime ministers have been forced to resign over improper financial dealings with business associates. Unemployment and economic slumps also plagued Japan throughout the 1990s.

The current prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, is a member of Japan's most conservative party, the Liberal Democrats (LP). Koizumi was elected in 2001 because he was from the LP's reform wing. His maverick image, outspoken style, and promises of reform made him wildly popular. Since 2003, people have been less enthusiastic, however, because Koizumi has not taken dramatic action and even fired a reform minister in the cabinet. Koizumi has worked to address the huge government debt and Japan's ailing banking system. So far results have been modest. Some observers feel the economic recovery will be a long process.



- Major industrial city
- Major industries:**
- ⚙️ Chemicals
- 🚗 Consumer goods
- ⚙️ Electronics
- 🚛 Heavy engineering
- 🚢 Shipbuilding
- 🚗 Vehicle manufacturing

Although small geographically, Japan is one of the world's major economic powers.

1. **Interpreting Maps**
What area of Japan is the least industrialized?
2. **Applying Geography Skills**
Using this map and information from your text, explain how Japan's geography influences its economy.

The Economy During their occupation of Japan, Allied officials had planned to dismantle the large business conglomerations known as the *zaibatsu*. With the rise of the Cold War, however, the policy was scaled back. Only the 19 largest companies were affected. In addition, the new policy did not keep Japanese companies from forming loose ties with each other, which basically gave rise to another *zaibatsu* system, similar to a monopoly.

The occupation administration had more success with its land-reform program. Half of the population lived on farms, and half of all farmers were tenants of large landowners. Under the program, lands were sold on easy credit terms to tenants. This reform program created a strong class of independent farmers.

At the end of the Allied occupation in 1952, the Japanese gross national product was one-third that of Great Britain or France. Today, it is larger than both put together and well over half that of the United States. Japan is one of the largest exporting nations in the world and a leading producer of cars and consumer electronics. Its per capita income equals or surpasses that of most Western nations.

What explains the Japanese success? Some analysts point to cultural factors. The Japanese are group-oriented and believe strongly in cooperation with other members of the community. Hardworking and frugal, they are more inclined to save than to buy. This boosts the savings rate and labor productivity. The labor force is highly skilled. Japanese people also share common values and respond in similar ways to the challenges of the modern world.

Other analysts have cited more practical reasons for the Japanese success. For example, because its industries were destroyed in World War II, Japan was forced to build entirely new, modern factories. Japanese workers also spend a substantially longer period of time at their jobs than do workers in most other advanced societies. Corporations reward innovation and maintain good management-labor relations. Finally, some experts contend Japan has an advantage because it uses unfair trade practices—that it dumps goods at prices below cost to break into a foreign market and restricts imports from other countries.

Social Changes During the occupation, Allied planners wanted to eliminate the aggressiveness that characterized Japanese behavior before and during the war. They designed a new educational system, removing all references to patriotism and loyalty to the emperor. It also stressed individualism.

Efforts to remake Japanese behavior through laws were only partly successful. Many of the distinctive characteristics of traditional Japanese society have persisted into the present day, although in altered form. Emphasis on the work ethic, for example, remains strong. The tradition of hard work is stressed in the educational system.

Women's roles are another example of the difficulty of social change. After the war, women gained the vote and were encouraged to enter politics, yet the subordinate role of women in society has not been entirely eliminated. Women are now legally protected against discrimination in employment, yet very few

have reached senior levels in business, education, or politics. Japan has had no female prime ministers, although in recent years about 10 percent of the Diet, or parliament, have been women. Women now make up more than 40 percent of the workforce, but most are in retail or service jobs. Their average salary is only about 60 percent that of men. (In the United States, women make on average about 77 percent of the average salary of men.)

Culture After the Japanese defeat in World War II, many of the writers who had been active before the war resurfaced. Their works now were much more sober and sad. This “lost generation” described its anguish and piercing despair. Several writers committed suicide. For them, defeat was made worse by fear that their Japanese culture would be Americanized.

Since the 1970s, increasing wealth and a high literacy rate have led to a massive outpouring of books. Already in 1975, Japanese authors were producing twice as many fiction titles as American authors. This trend continued into the 1990s.

Much of this new literature deals with the common concerns of all wealthy industrialized nations. Contemporary Japanese authors, raised in the crowded cities of postwar Japan, soaked up movies,

television, and rock music. These writers speak the universal language of today’s world.

Haruki Murakami is one of Japan’s most popular authors. He discarded the somber style of the earlier postwar period to speak the contemporary language. *A Wild Sheep Chase*, published in 1982, is an excellent example of his gripping, yet humorous, writing.

 **Reading Check** **Contrasting** How does the Japanese system of state capitalism differ from the capitalist system in the United States?

