



## Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II

By John W. Dower

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**Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II** By John W. Dower

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the 1999 National Book Award for Nonfiction, finalist for the Lionel Gelber Prize and the Kiriya Pacific Rim Book Prize, *Embracing Defeat* is John W. Dower's brilliant examination of Japan in the immediate, shattering aftermath of World War II.

Drawing on a vast range of Japanese sources and illustrated with dozens of astonishing documentary photographs, *Embracing Defeat* is the fullest and most important history of the more than six years of American occupation, which affected every level of Japanese society, often in ways neither side could anticipate. Dower, whom Stephen E. Ambrose has called "America's foremost historian of the Second World War in the Pacific," gives us the rich and turbulent interplay between West and East, the victor and the vanquished, in a way never before attempted, from top-level manipulations concerning the fate of Emperor Hirohito to the hopes and fears of men and women in every walk of life. Already regarded as the benchmark in its field, *Embracing Defeat* is a work of colossal scholarship and history of the very first order. John W. Dower is the Elting E. Morison Professor of History at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is a winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for *War Without Mercy*.

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## Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II By John W. Dower Bibliography

- Rank: #88207 in eBooks
- Published on: 2000-06-17
- Released on: 2012-05-28
- Format: Kindle eBook

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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

*Embracing Defeat* tells the story of the transformation of Japan under American occupation after World War II. When Japan surrendered unconditionally to the Allied Forces in August 1945, it was exhausted; where America's Pacific combat lasted less than four years, Japan had been fighting for 15. Sixty percent of its urban area lay in ruins. The collapse of the authoritarian state enabled America's six-year occupation to set Japan in entirely new directions.

Because the victors had no linguistic or cultural access to the losers' society, they were obliged to govern indirectly. Gen. Douglas MacArthur decided at the outset to maintain the civil bureaucracy and the institution of the emperor: democracy would be imposed from above in what the author terms "Neocolonial Revolution." His description of the manipulation of public opinion, as a wedge was driven between the discredited militarists and Emperor Hirohito, is especially fascinating. Tojo, on trial for his life, was requested to take responsibility for the war and deflect it from the emperor; he did, and was hanged. Dower's analysis of popular Japanese culture of the period--songs, magazines, advertising, even jokes--is brilliant, and reflected in the book's 80 well-chosen photographs. With the same masterful control of voluminous material and clear writing that he gave us in *War Without Mercy*, the author paints a vivid picture of a society *in extremis* and reconstructs the extraordinary period during which America molded a traumatized country into a free-market democracy and bulwark against resurgent world communism. --*John Stevenson*

From Publishers Weekly

The writing of history doesn't get much better than this. MIT professor Dower (author of the NBCC Award-winning *War Without Mercy*) offers a dazzling political and social history of how postwar Japan evolved with stunning speed into a unique hybrid of Western innovation and Japanese tradition. The American occupation of Japan (1945-1952) saw the once fiercely militarist island nation transformed into a democracy constitutionally prohibited from deploying military forces abroad. The occupation was fraught with irony as Americans, motivated by what they saw as their Christian duty to uplift a barbarian race, attempted to impose democracy through autocratic military rule. Dower manages to convey the full extent of both American self-righteousness and visionary idealism. The first years of occupation saw the extension of rights to women, organized labor and other previously excluded groups. Later, the exigencies of the emergent Cold War led to American-backed "anti-Red" purges, pro-business policies and the partial reconstruction of the Japanese military. Dower demonstrates an impressive mastery of voluminous sources, both American and Japanese, and he deftly situates the political story within a rich cultural context. His digressions into Japanese culture--high and low, elite and popular--are revealing and extremely well written. The book is most remarkable, however, for the way Dower judiciously explores the complex moral and political issues raised by America's effort to rebuild and refashion a defeated adversary and Japan's ambivalent response to that embrace. Illustrations.

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From Library Journal

Dower's magisterial narrative eloquently tells the story of the postwar occupation of Japan by departing from the usual practice of making the story part of General MacArthur's biography and instead focusing on the citizens. With historical sweep and cultural nuance, and using numerous personal stories of survival, loss, and rededication, he follows the astonishing social transformation of a people. (LJ 4/1/99)

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#### **Ana Lopez:**

In this 21st century, people become competitive in each and every way. By being competitive now, people have to do something to make these people survive, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice by simply surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated it for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a publication your ability to survive increase then having chance to stay than other is high. For you personally who want to start reading a new book, we give you this particular Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II book as basic and daily reading book. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

#### **Luz Davis:**

Playing with family within a park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, thrilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II, it is possible to enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout guys. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

#### **Mary Lee:**

Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II but doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource details that maybe you can be one of it. This great information can easily drawn you into fresh stage of crucial contemplating.

#### **Augusta Wilson:**

In this time globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of recommendations to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You can view that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. Often the book that recommended to your account is Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II this reserve consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. That book was represented how can the world has grown up. The language styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some investigation when he makes this book. This is why this book acceptable all of you.

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