Postwar Japan as a political economy has been over for a long time. Japan has not escaped the two key conditions of the postwar, its "subordinate independence" to the United States and the way questions about its wartime actions still complicate its relations with other countries.

The basic elements of Postwar Japan's political economy were created during the Occupation and finalized in 1960. By the 1980s, pursuit of this model of economic development had become unsustainable. The Lost Decade, 1992-2004, represents the death agony of postwar Japan's political economy.

Since then Japanese have struggled to understand what should Japan be?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What role did Japanese and Americans play in shaping postwar Japan during the occupation period? Did one group have more agency than another?
2. Although a particular vision for postwar Japan won out in 1960, there were other visions out there. What were they and who advocated them?
3. What was the key premise behind the Income Doubling Plan? How was it put into practice and by whom?
4. What were the domestic and international factors that made postwar Japan's political economy unsustainable in the 1990s?
5. What challenges did the three elements of the Iron Triangle face during the Lost Decade?
6. If postwar Japan's political economy has been over for a long time, why do we find it so difficult to say that Postwar Japan is over as well?
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. THE OCCUPATION YEARS, 1945-1952

2. BUILDING POSTWAR JAPAN, 1952-1960

3. THE MIRACLE YEARS, 1960-1972

4. FROM SHOCK TO ECONOMIC SUPERPOWER, 1972-1992

5. LOST, 1992-2000

6. FOUND? JAPAN IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

7. THE ENDURING POSTWAR

“Concisely rendered, engagingly written, and thoughtful in its judgments, this short book is a most valuable interpretation of Japan’s remarkable history since the end of World War II.”

— ANDREW GORDON, Harvard University

“Surveys the dramatic changes in Japan’s society, politics, economy, international relations, and culture from defeat in World War II through the disasters of March 11, 2011. Paul Dunscomb analyzes Japan’s postwar experience with balance and admirable clarity, writing in an accessible and fast-paced style that will be welcomed by students and teachers alike. This is by far the best short introduction to the history of contemporary Japan available for classroom use.”

— WILLIAM TSUTSUI, Ottawa University

---

**EXTERNAL LINKS & RESOURCES:**

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LK738CDh21g&ab_channel=PacificCentury%3A--5--ReinventingJapan](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LK738CDh21g&ab_channel=PacificCentury%3A--5--ReinventingJapan)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TWV4PtK4E&ab_channel=PacificCentury%3A--6--TheEraof%22JapanInc.%22](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TWV4PtK4E&ab_channel=PacificCentury%3A--6--TheEraof%22JapanInc.%22)
- [https://www.asianstudies.org/store/huffman/](https://www.asianstudies.org/store/huffman/)