In the history of U.S.-Japanese relations, the period of the U.S. Occupation of Japan (1945-51) remains a fascinating episode of an abrupt yet successful transition from a brutal war to an amicable peace. As John Dower illustrates in *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (1987), World War II featured harsh rhetoric on relations between whites and non-whites on both sides. While asserting which civilization—the white or the colored—was to prevail in Asia, both sides criticized the inconsistency between the other's professed mission in Asia and their own racism against Asian peoples. It was also a war in which racial hatred figured overtly both in propaganda and mutual conceptions of the enemy. Evocation of the "yellow" enemy was echoed in such American expressions as "the yellow bastards" and "yellow vermin." Japan summoned the image of the Anglo-Saxon foes as demonic savages under the popular slogan, *Kichiku Beiei* (demonic and beastly American and British).

Considering the magnitude of wartime propaganda and hatreds on both sides, the relative harmony that was established during the Occupation is quite surprising. In *Power and Culture: The Japanese-American War 1941-1945* (1981), Akira Iriye traces the root of such postwar cooperation in the height of the war, when there was a parallel development on both sides of the Pacific in search of postwar cooperation. U.S. State Department experts had begun defining Japan's position in the postwar world within a framework of fundamental American policies in early 1944. Meanwhile, the liberal Wilsonians inside the Japanese bureaucracy had also set out to chart a postwar agenda for Japan, which supported a return to cooperation with the United States in regional economic and industrial developments. Such wartime planning in both governments, Iriye claims, certainly expedited the restoration of prewar cooperation between the two nations and substantially eased the tasks of the Occupation.2

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While Iriye's argument is convincing, it is nonetheless impossible to assume that the mutual feelings of racism vanished and the invidious race question disappeared with the end of the war, especially considering the fact that the "color versus white" scheme reemerged with new vigor in postwar Asian politics. With the demise of Japan's colonial empire, the Western powers returned in Southeast Asia to reassert control amid the nationalists' fight for independence. In an effort to remain on good terms with such colonial powers as the Netherlands and France, which were allies indispensable to containment of the Soviet Union in Europe, the United States backed their return to colonial rule in Asia. In so doing, the United States carried into postwar Asia the old theme of the "White Man's Burden," which inevitably defined the basic nature of the American task of democratizing Japan.

The Occupation task for the two nations should therefore include defining Japan's identity in racial terms. The United States and Japan had to offer an acceptable interpretation of Japan's racial status within the given framework of American Occupation. This essay attempts to analyze some aspects of early interactions between the two peoples in a crucial transitional phase from war to peace, in which Americans and Japanese gradually and successfully reverted to long-established racial views of each other for collaboration.

On 2 September 1945, the Pacific War formally ended when Japan signed the Potsdam Declaration at the surrender ceremony on the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay, and the United States, for its predominant role in the war, began the exclusive occupation of Japan under General Douglas MacArthur's command. Once the belligerency ceased, both Japan and the United States saw the normalization of their relationship to be in their best national interests, and both quickly adopted much more rational perceptions of the other. Both victorious Americans and defeated Japanese quickly set out to forge a nation culturally and racially distinct from the United States into an American-style democracy. The Japanese eagerly assimilated American values and institutions under U.S. tutelage, making the Occupation a largely successful American enterprise.

In regard to the nature of mutual cooperation which developed rather quickly, race played a complex role leading Japanese psychology to a peaceful collaboration with Americans. After all, race had been underpinning implicit power relations between the white and the colored races since the nineteenth century. It had played a delicate role in determining Japan's position in the world as the only non-Western modern nation, especially vis-à-vis the United States. When the