

Visitor Information

● Hours

9:30 to 17:30 (admission until 17:00)

● Closed

Mondays

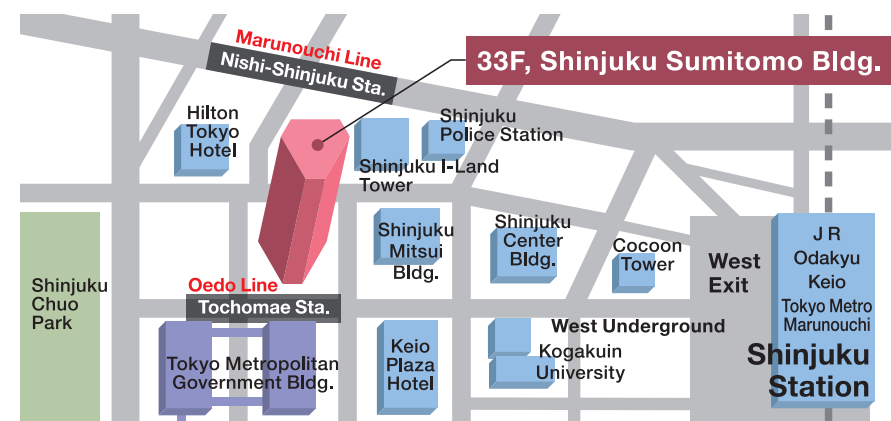
- If a national holiday or its substitute falls on a Monday, the Museum is open, and is closed on the following day.
- The Museum is open on Mondays during the summer season.

Year-end and New Year holidays

(December 28 to January 4)

When the Shinjuku Sumitomo Building is closed

● Access



- 1-minute walk from exit A-6 of Tochomae Station (Toei Oedo Line)
- 5-minute walk from Nishi-Shinjuku Station (Tokyo Metro Marunouchi Line)
- 10-minute walk from Shinjuku Station (JR, Odakyu and Keio Lines)

33rd Floor, Shinjuku Sumitomo Building
2-6-1, Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 163-0233

Tel.03-5323-8709 Fax.03-5323-8714

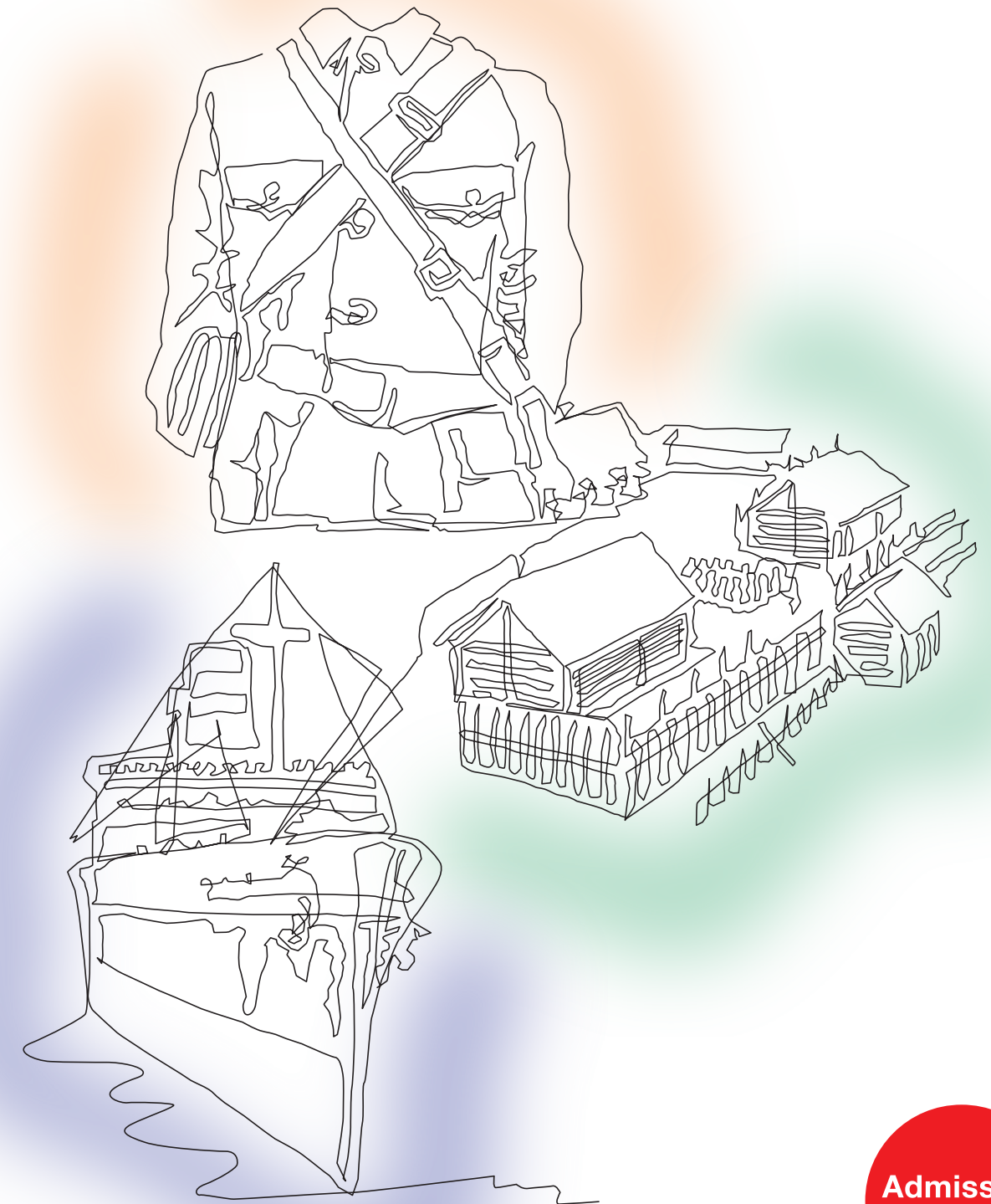
<https://www.heiwakinen.go.jp>



@heiwakinen

**Memorial Museum for Soldiers,
Detainees in Siberia,
and Postwar Repatriates**

Memorial Museum for Soldiers, Detainees in Siberia, and Postwar Repatriates



**Admission
Free**

This Museum displays, in an easy-to-understand format for the generations who have not experienced war, objects, graphics, images, and dioramas that communicate the hardships endured because of World War II by soldiers, postwar detainees, and repatriates from overseas. The Museum's aim is to deepen people's understanding of the hardships suffered by those who experienced the war and to pass on this understanding from parent to child, from child to grandchild, and on to the next generation. Moreover, in order to make good use of the materials and to communicate the hardships effectively and widely, the Museum organizes exhibitions and other field activities throughout Japan.

Soldiers

They left their families and went to fight for their country, risking their lives to fulfill their duties and enduring great hardship.



Detainees in Siberia

They endured brutal forced labor, inadequate food rations, and appalling living conditions in Siberia and other Arctic areas of the former Soviet Union and Mongolia, even after the war.

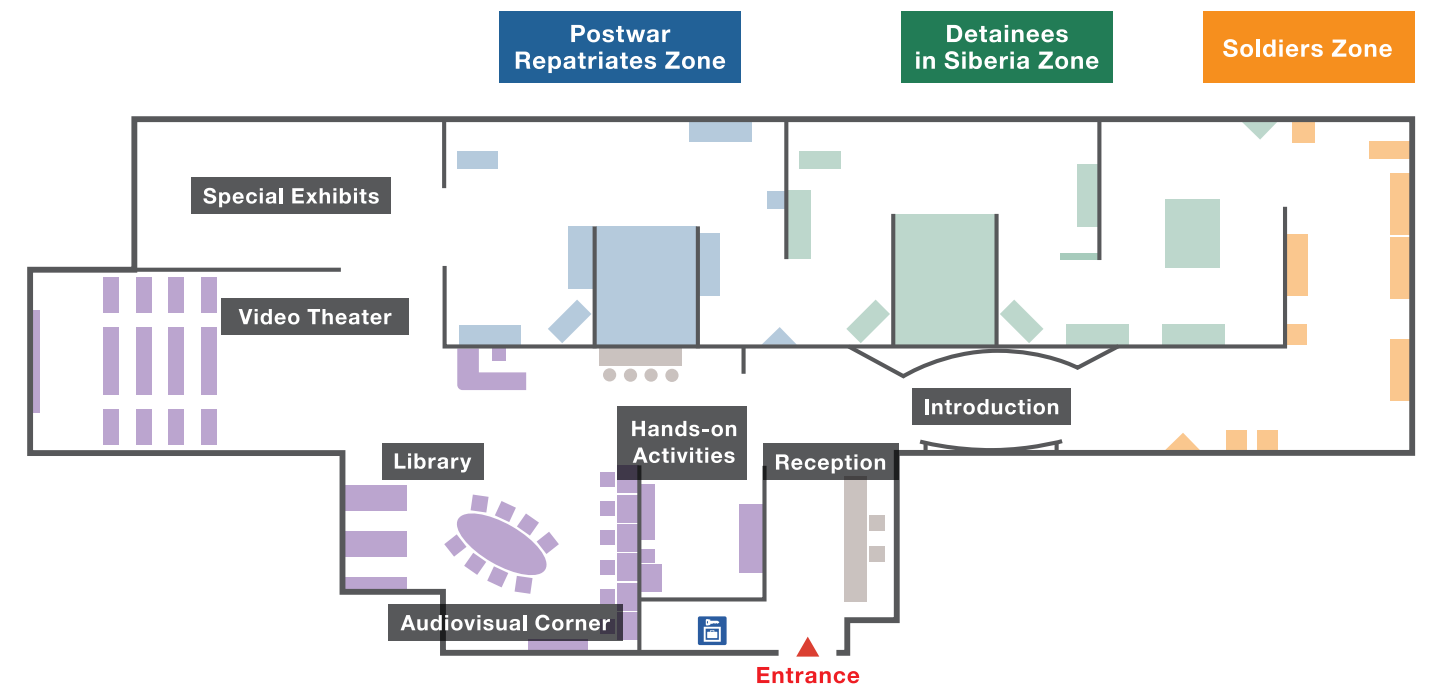


Postwar Repatriates

They had been living overseas and were dispossessed after Japan's defeat in World War II. They endured terrible conditions and physical danger as they made their way back to their homeland.



Guide to the Museum



Introduction



Through image spaces composed of the testimonies and photographs of those who experienced the war, the Museum introduces the hardships of the soldiers, postwar detainees, and repatriates from abroad.

The displays in this zone show a draft order, military uniforms, diaries, letters, and other items that communicate the hardships of the soldiers.



The Mandatory Conscription System and the Japanese Soldier

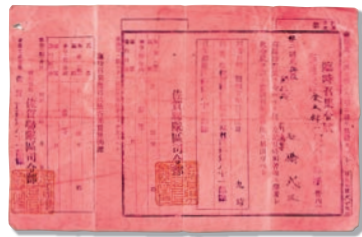
Until 1945, Japan maintained a military conscription system. Young men who had reached the age of 20* were obliged to undergo a conscript physical examination, and those who passed became soldiers. Under this system, many ordinary people were called to military service as their obligation to the nation.

*In 1944, the age was lowered to 19.



Enlistment

This display recreates the scene of a soldier enlisting after his draft order was delivered, based on the testimonies of those who experienced it.



Draft Order

A draft order issued to a man who had passed the conscript physical examination at the time when large numbers of soldiers became necessary for the war. Draft orders were known as *akagami*, or "red paper," because of their color.

A Soldier's Sense of Duty and Family Prayers for a Safe Return

During the war, many ordinary young men became soldiers. Leaving behind families and relatives, friends and hometowns, they headed for the battlefield. Soldiers at the front left behind messages and testaments as well as keepsakes. Their families and friends sent "thousand-stitch cloths," amulets, and Japanese flags inscribed with messages, all bearing their prayers for a safe return.



Sennin-bari, or Thousand-Stitch Cloth

Thousand-stitch cloths were amulets that women sent to soldiers at the front. Praying for each soldier's success in battle and safety, one thousand women sewed red thread into the cloth, one stitch at a time.



Waistcoat with Prayer for Protection against Bullets

A waistcoat that a female student in Korea sent to a soldier at the front, praying for his protection against bullets and for his continued success in battle.

The Draconian Life of a Soldier

In their first year of military service, soldiers had to learn discipline, basic information, and various skills. They also had to develop the physical strength necessary to endure combat and marches. Therefore, they experienced severe training and education as part of their military lives. Eventually, towards the end of the war, a downturn in the military situation meant that the shortage of soldiers at the front became acute and reserves in equipment and materials as well as manpower were depleted. Many newly recruited soldiers were sent to the battlefield without receiving adequate training or education.



Army Manual

A manual that includes the identity card and personal history of a soldier in the Army. In addition to his name, date of birth, and legal residence, information such as his military unit, branch, rank, uniform size, and military record since enlistment are found in this document.



Army Signal Corps Telegraph Key

A device that signalers used to send Morse code messages. Manufactured in 1941, this telegraph key was used in the training of new recruits who were assigned to the Army Signal Corps.

The Expanding War Front, and a Worsening Outlook

Following the Manchurian Incident of 1931, war with China broke out in 1937. In the midst of this military quagmire, Japan plunged into the Pacific War in 1941. Japan sent more than 10 million people to battlefields in various places. As the war dragged on, the course of the war turned to Japan's disadvantage and shortages of supplies, including weapons and food, became conspicuous. Under these harsh conditions, numerous soldiers lost their lives in honorable deaths (*gyokusai*), kamikaze missions, and honorable suicides (*jiketsu*) as well as through starvation and infectious disease.



Mirror

An amulet for protection against bullets. A soldier going to the battlefield might place it in his left chest pocket and carry it with him at all times.



Military Identification Tags

A metal plate inscribed with unit number, name, and personal number was provided to each soldier so that his identity could be confirmed if he died in war.



Soldiers Receiving Comfort Bags Photograph by Koyanagi Tsuguichi



Comfort Bag

Japanese people filled comfort bags with items such as daily-use goods, magazines, letters, amulets, and sweets and sent them to the soldiers at the front in order to encourage them.



Container for a Menthol-Ethanol Preparation

A container for a medical preparation made primarily of menthol* and ethanol. The medication was used at the front as an antiseptic and to revive soldiers who had lost consciousness.

* A derivative of peppermint oil

The displays in this zone show includes a model of a gulag, or Soviet forced labor camp, as well as tools used in forced labor, handmade eating utensils, and pictures drawn by those who experienced gulag life.



The End of the War and the Beginning of Detention

On August 8, 1945, the Soviet Union declared war against Japan and from the next day, August 9, began its invasion of Manchuria and the northern part of Korea. After fierce fighting near their territorial boundary, the Soviet and Japanese armies agreed on a ceasefire and carried out disarmament in various areas. Japanese military personnel, civilians employed by the military, and ordinary civilians were organized into groups of one thousand and were told by the Soviet military that they would be returning home. They were ordered to leave by freight train, boat, or on foot. However, their destination was not Japan but regions such as Siberia and Mongolia in the north. The detainees numbered as many as 575,000.



Gulag: A Soviet Forced Labor Camp

A reproduction of Sub-branch 217 of Mavrinsk Village in Khurmuli Branch 2 in the Khabarovsk Krai, based on the testimony of those who were detained there.

The Cruel Task of Fulfilling the Daily Work Quota

The detainees were assigned various forms of labor. The content of the labor differed according to the geographic area and detention camp but included logging, railroad construction, road building, cargo handling, building construction, agricultural work, and mining. For each type of work a daily quota was set. If the quota was not reached, the detainees were given the severe punishment of having their already small food ration further reduced.



Russian-made Axe and Saw

An axe and a saw of the same shape as the ones used by detainees to fell trees.

Life in the Gulag

Distributing Meals

Drawing on testimonies and pictures of those who experienced detention, this diorama depicts a scene of detainees having a meal. The daily meal ration at the gulag was meager: 350 grams of black rye bread, thin gruel made from various grains, and a small bowl of soup. The bread was handed out in whole loaves. Because it was difficult to cut it into equal pieces, the detainees apparently used a handmade scale and ruler to measure it before cutting.



Sleeveless Padded Overcoat

In the Siberian winter, the temperature drops to minus 30 to 40 degrees Celsius. The owner of this overcoat, unable to endure his hunger, exchanged the sleeves of his coat with a local worker for some bread.



Death Notification, Photograph, and Death Report

A letter written in June 1947, describing the last days of a detainee fatally weakened by the severe conditions in the gulag. It was sent to the dead man's wife by another man detained there. Based on this letter, a death report was issued three years later by the home prefecture.



Handmade White Birch Eating Utensils

Eating utensils that a detainee in the town of Slyudyanka in Irkutsk Oblast made by shaving wood from a white birch tree. As he made them, he thought of meals he had enjoyed in his hometown.



Prisoner-of-War Post Card

Detainees exchanged postcards with loved ones in their hometowns through organizations such as the Red Cross. To allow the contents to be inspected by Soviet censors, some messages were written completely in katakana script. Others described contents that were quite different from the reality of the detention camp.



Handmade Mahjong Tiles

Mahjong tiles that a detainee made by whittling wood chips. Dyes made from materials such as grasses and merbromin, a topical antiseptic, were used to color them.



Handmade Booklet of Popular Songs

A booklet of popular songs that a military nurse detainee received from a Japanese combat medic when she was working in the detention camp.

The displays in this zone show documents issued at the time of repatriation, a model of the repatriation ship, and photographs of children.



Japanese Who Emigrated Overseas

Following the Great Depression of 1929, Japan was unable to emerge from its long economic slump. The big increase in population was also causing problems. After the Manchurian Incident of 1931, Manchuria became the focus of attention as a place for Japan's surplus rural population to settle. Beginning in 1936, some villages were divided to form settler groups that would be sent to Manchuria along with youth groups such as the Brigade of Patriotic Youth for the Development of Manchuria and Mongolia. In 1945, some 1,550,000 Japanese people were living in Manchuria.

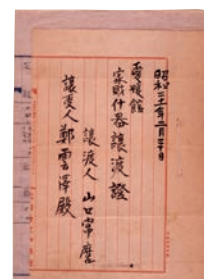
The Tragic Results of the Soviet Entry into the War Against Japan

On August 9, 1945, as a result of the Soviet army's sudden invasion of Manchuria, the border area between the two countries was thrown into confusion. Evacuations were begun immediately, but since almost all young and mature males had been conscripted into the Kwantung Army, the exodus of only women, the elderly, and children was tragic in the extreme. In the cities to which they evacuated, sexual assaults and ransacking by Soviet soldiers were an everyday occurrence. Japanese people spent their days in hunger, fear, and anxiety. Because of the suddenness of the Soviet attack, they had no place to flee to. In addition, there were assaults by local people who felt antipathy toward the Japanese. Avoiding roads and villages, the evacuees ended up wandering across the fields.



Diary of Confinement

This is a diary from February 1 to November 30, 1946, written while the author was staying at a Catholic-run detention camp on the way to repatriation.



Certificate of Transfer of the Ehimekan Assets and Household Effects

Ehimekan was a Japanese-style inn located in Wonsan, northern Korea. After Japan's defeat in the war, Ehimekan became a Soviet lodging facility. Fearing that he would never be able to return home, the Japanese manager gave the building, furniture, and appliances – the entire inn – to the Korean subordinate who had worked faithfully at the inn for many years. This document is the certificate of transfer.

Repatriation to Japan

Repatriation from the former Manchukuo began in April 1946. Although the repatriation efforts came to an end in August 1948, women who had stayed in order to survive and children who had been taken in by Chinese families remained in their local places. The total number of people repatriated from overseas, including from the former Manchukuo, reached some 3,200,000.



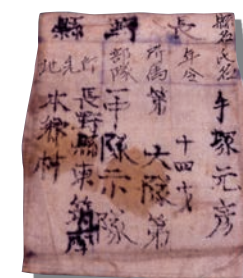
In the Bottommost Level of a Repatriation Ship

Drawing on the testimony and photographs of those who experienced repatriation, this diorama shows the bottommost level of the *Hakuryu Maru*, a ship that left Huludao (Koroto) in Manchuria in July 1946 and headed for Hakata in Fukuoka Prefecture. Most of those being repatriated had lost their entire livelihoods in the chaos of the war's end. After difficult times in evacuation and detention camps, they were finally returning to Japan.



Child's Dress Made from the Diapers of a Baby Who Died

A dress made at the time of repatriation by a mother for her four-year-old daughter, using the cloth diapers from her baby who had died.



Repatriation Badge

At the time of repatriation, each person wore a nametag on his or her chest. Inscribed on it was information such as the person's name and destination.



Handmade Rucksack

A rucksack that the owner made by gathering old pieces of cloth while waiting for repatriation in July 1946.



Bowl for Meals on the Repatriation Ship

Aluminum eating bowls were distributed to people as they boarded a repatriation ship at the Port of Kaohsiung in March 1946.



Certificate of Repatriation

A document that certifies that the bearer was repatriated from overseas. Certificates of repatriation were issued by the Local Repatriation Relief Bureau offices set up in each departing port. With these certificates, repatriated people could receive free train transportation to their registered place of residence and supplies necessary for daily living.



Handbook for Returnees

A booklet issued by the Ministry of Education. Carrying the subtitle "Towards a New Departure," it explains the laws and systems newly established in the postwar era for the benefit of repatriates, demobilized soldiers, and others.



Special Exhibits

Special exhibits are displayed on various themes.



Video Theater

Videos of about 30-40 minutes are shown on a weekly rotating basis.



Library

About 2,000 volumes in the open stack collection are available for reading. A volume of notes entitled "The Foundations of Peace" by those who experienced the war and books related to the exhibited materials are included in the collection.



Audiovisual Corner

Visitors can listen to the valuable testimonies of those who experienced the war and watch videos. Try the quiz!



Hands-on Activities: Look, Listen, and Touch

Visitors can review the exhibition by looking, listening, and touching.

Programs and Events



Storytelling

On the third Sunday of each month, the Museum holds storytelling events in which those who lived through the war talk about their wartime experiences.



Explanations of the Exhibits

In order to enhance visitors' understanding of the exhibits, explanations are given by the Museum staff.



Audio Guides

Visitors may borrow audio guide devices at no charge to hear explanations of the main exhibits.



Events at the Museum

The museum organizes various programs and events, including storytelling, readings, workshops, and film screenings.

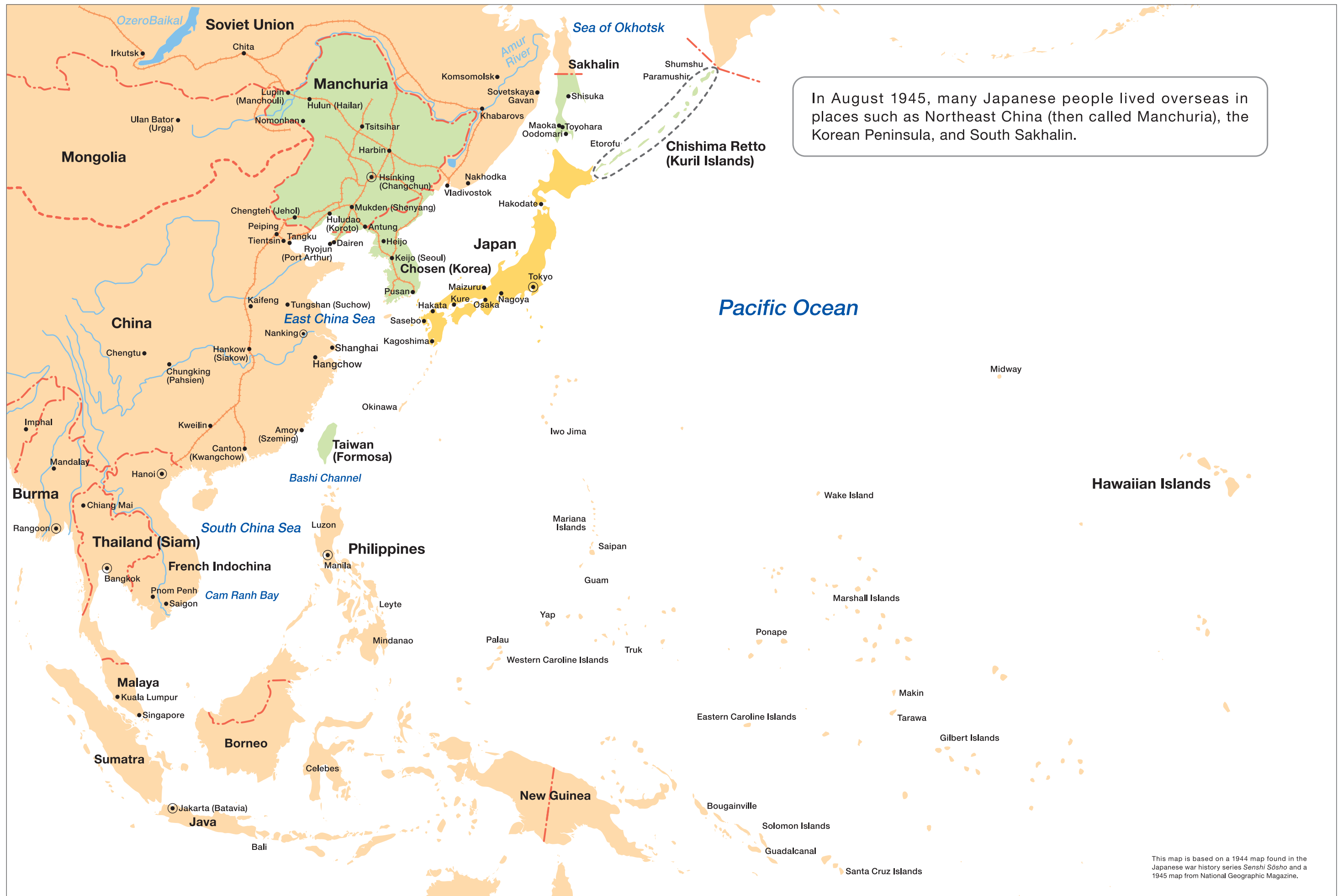


Traveling Exhibitions

Traveling exhibitions are held throughout Japan, making use of representative documents, photographs, and other materials housed in the Museum.

The Rise of the Military		The Advance into Mainland China	
1926			
	December 25	First year of the Showa Era (1926-1989)	
1928			
	February June	Japan's first general election after the introduction of universal male suffrage The Huanggutun Incident, reported at the time as "A Certain Important Incident in Manchuria." (Zhang Zoulin is killed in an explosion planned by the Kwantung Army, the Japanese army unit stationed in Manchuria between 1919 and 1945.)	
1930			
		The Showa Depression begins. (The Great Depression of 1929 spreads to Japan, causing a serious economic slump.)	
1931			
	September 18	The Liutiaohu Incident (Beginning of the Manchurian Crisis, the Kwantung Army occupies all areas of Manchuria.)	
1932			
	February	The Lytton Commission arrives in Japan. (The League of Nations begins its investigation of the Manchurian Incident.)	
	March	Proclamation of the establishment of Manchukuo	
	May 15	The May 15 Incident (Young naval officers assassinate Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi. Government by party cabinet ends.)	
	September	The Japan-Manchukuo Protocol signed. (Japan officially recognizes Manchukuo.)	
1933	October	The Lytton Commission delivers its report to Japan and China. First group of emigrants dispatched to Manchukuo. (They become pioneers of the Manchurian-Mongolian settler groups.)	
	February	Based on the findings of the Lytton Report, the League of Nations rejects the recognition of Manchukuo.	
	March	Japan withdraws from the League of Nations. (In October, Germany also announces its withdrawal.)	
1936			
	February 26	The February 26 Incident (Young army officers assassinate Home Minister Saito Makoto, Finance Minister Takahashi Korekiyo, and others.)	
	August	The Hirota Koki Cabinet decides to settle one million households (five million people) in Manchukuo over a period of 20 years.	
The War with China Turns into a Quagmire		The Outbreak of World War II	
1937			
	July 7	The Marco Polo Bridge Incident (Beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War) People throughout Japan make thousand-stitch cloths and comfort bags enthusiastically and send them as encouragement to Japanese soldiers.	
1938			
	January	The First Konoe Proclamation: "We will not deal with the Nationalist Government." (Japan announces the termination of peace negotiations with the Chinese government.)	
	April	The National Mobilization Law announced. (The government is given the authority to mobilize materials and labor necessary for the war effort without authorization from the Diet.)	
1939			
	May	The Nomonhan Incident (Hostilities break out between Japanese and Soviet military forces at Nomonhan, close to the border between Manchukuo and Mongolia. Hostilities cease in September.)	
	September	On September 1, the German army invades Poland. In response, the United Kingdom and France declare war on Germany. (The beginning of World War II)	
1940			
	September	Japan, Germany, and Italy sign the Tripartite Pact.	
	October	All political parties disbanded and the Imperial Rule Assistance Association established.	
War in Asia and the Pacific		Expansion of the War	
1941			
	April	Japan and the Soviet Union* conclude the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact, in which they agree on mutual non-aggression in their respective territories. *The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It remained in power from 1922 to 1991 and was the first socialist state, composed of the Russian Republic and 15 other countries. After its collapse in 1991, its powers were largely assumed by the Russian Federation.	
	June	The German army invades the Soviet Union. (The beginning of the Soviet-German War)	
	July - August	On July 28, the Japanese army advances into southern French Indochina.* In response, on August 1, the United States places an embargo on oil exports to Japan. *The southern part of present-day Vietnam	
	December 8	The Japanese army attacks British troops on the Malay Peninsula and U.S. troops at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. (The beginning of the Pacific War)	
	December 11	Germany and Italy declare war on the United States.	
1942			
	January - May	The Japanese army occupies areas of the Asia-Pacific region, including Singapore, Indonesia, Burma, and the Philippines.	

The Deterioration of the War Situation		And Then, the End of the War	
1942			
	June	The Battle of Midway (Turning point in the war)	
	August	American troops land on Guadalcanal.	
1943			
	February	The Japanese army withdraws from Guadalcanal. With this withdrawal, added to the defeat at Midway, the Japanese military loses its command of sea and air and its supply lines are cut.	
	September	Italy unconditionally surrenders to the Allies.	
	October	Students mobilized for military service. (In order to remedy the shortage of soldiers, the conscription deferral granted to male university students aged 20 years or older in both the arts and sciences is rescinded, and students are sent to the front.)	
	December	The leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom, and China announce the Cairo Declaration. (The Declaration announces the parties' agreement on the return of Taiwan and Manchuria to China, the independence of Korea, and their resolve to fight until Japan's unconditional surrender.)	
1944			
	July	Saipan falls, and the Tojo Hideki Cabinet resigns.	
	November	Using Saipan as a base, American B-29* bombers carry out full-scale air raids on targets throughout Japan. *A heavy bomber developed by the U.S. military, capable of delivering nine tons of bombs.	
1945			
	February	Leaders from the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union hold the Yalta Conference. (A secret pact is made granting the Soviet Union possession of South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands and its interests in Manchuria in return for joining the war against Japan after the defeat of Germany.)	
	March 10	The Great Tokyo Air Raid (American B-29 bombers carry out indiscriminate bombing of Tokyo's Shitamachi area, setting about 40 percent of the city on fire.)	
	March 26	On March 26, American forces land on the Kerama Islands. On April 1, they invade the main island of Okinawa.	
	April	The Soviet Union informs Japan that it will not renew the Neutrality Pact between the Soviet Union and Japan. The agreement remains in force until April 1946.	
	May	Germany unconditionally surrenders to the Allies.	
	June 23	The Japanese army ends organized military operations against U.S. forces in Okinawa.	
	July 26	The leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom, and China issue the Potsdam Declaration, which outlines their occupation policy and calls for the unconditional surrender of Japan.	
	August 6	An American B-29 bomber drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima.	
	August 8	The Soviet Union declares war on Japan. (On the 9th, the Soviet Union invades Manchuria and northern part of Korea; on the 11th, it sends troops into South Sakhalin.)	
	August 9	An American B-29 bomber drops an atomic bomb on Nagasaki.	
	August 14	The Japanese government makes the final decision to accept the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration.	
	August 15	The Jewel Voice Broadcast (The Showa Emperor announces the end of the war to the Japanese people.)	
	August 23	Soviet leader Joseph Stalin decides to use "500,000 Japanese prisoners of war" as a labor force. His decision is announced on August 24.	
The Allied Occupation of Japan		The Beginning of Demobilization, Detainment, and Repatriation	
1945			
	September 2	The Japanese government signs the instrument of surrender based on the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration. (End of World War II. Led by the United States, the occupation of Japan by the Allied Powers begins.) The first ship carrying repatriates to Japan, the <i>Koan Maru</i> , arrives in Sensaki (Yamaguchi Prefecture) from Pusan in southern Korea.	
	September 25	The first ship carrying demobilized soldiers, the <i>Takasago Maru</i> , arrives in Beppu (Oita Prefecture) from Mereyon Island in the western Pacific Ocean, now part of the Federated States of Micronesia.	
	October	The United Nations is established.	
	November	A Repatriate Relief Section and Local Repatriate Relief Bureau offices* established within the Ministry of Welfare. *Newly established bureaus were located in Uruga, Maizuru, Kure, Shimonoseki, Hakata, Sasebo, and Kagoshima. In addition, Hakodate, Nagoya, Tanabe, Ujina, Otake, and Sensaki, served as ports of entry for repatriates.	
	November - December	The Ministry of the Army and the Ministry of the Navy abolished. The First Demobilization Ministry and the Second Demobilization Ministry established.	
1946			
	March	It is decided that repatriation of Japanese citizens from overseas will be carried out by the Japanese government in accordance with the Basic Directive Governing Repatriation issued by the GHQ.* *The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), of which General Douglas MacArthur was commander-in-chief.	
	April	The first Japanese ship carrying repatriates from the former Manchukuo arrives in Hakata. By October, roughly one million civilians have returned from the former Manchukuo.	
May - June		At the request of the Japanese government, the United States initiates negotiations with the Soviet Union over the return of Japanese detainees.	
	December	The first Japanese ships carrying repatriates from the Soviet Union, the <i>Daikyu Maru</i> and the <i>Esan Maru</i> , arrive in Maizuru from Nakhodka. As a result of the signing of the Soviet-U.S. Convention on the Repatriation of Detainees in the Soviet Union, the return of detainees is regularized. The first ship carrying repatriates from the northern part of Korea, the <i>Eiroku Maru</i> , arrives in Sasebo from Hungnam.	
1947			
	May 3	The Constitution of Japan enacted.	
1948			
	May	The Repatriate Relief Agency established within the Ministry of Welfare.	
	August	Establishment of the Republic of Korea	
	September	Establishment of the Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea)	
1949			
	October	Establishment of the People's Republic of China. Group repatriation from China suspended.	
1950			
	June	Outbreak of the Korean War	
1952			
	April 28	With the San Francisco Treaty of Peace taking effect, the Allied occupation of Japan ends and Japan regains its sovereignty.	
1953			
	March	Based on an agreement with the Beijing government, repatriation of Japanese from China resumes.	
	July	The Korean Armistice Agreement signed.	
1956			
	October	The Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration signed. (Diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Japan are restored.)	
	December	The last repatriate ship from the Soviet Union, the <i>Koan Maru</i> , arrives in Maizuru from Nakhodka.	
1958			
	November	The last remaining Local Repatriate Relief Bureau, located in Maizuru, ends its operations.	



This map is based on a 1944 map found in the Japanese war history series *Senshi Sōsho* and a 1945 map from National Geographic Magazine.