

HISTORY

Hikiagesha no sengo [The Postwar Period for Repatriates]

By Shimamura Takanori, ed.

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Modern Japan advanced into Taiwan, Korea, North-east China, Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands, the South Sea Islands, etc. Many Japanese lived in these areas and formed societies. After Japan lost the war in 1945, it also lost its dominion over these lands and Japanese residents had to return home along with military troops and civilian personnel working for the military. There were about 6,600,000 people, half of whom were non-military civilians. These people are called “repatriates.”

There were many repatriates who could not return to their hometowns. They spread out within Japan and created a new social space. Commercial spaces were created by repatriates and residential complexes were built for them. While their forms may have changed many continue

to exist as shopping centers and housing projects. According to repatriates, what distinguishes their “culture” is their “diet.” Popular dishes of today, such as *ramen*, *gyoza* dumplings, etc., were brought back by repatriates.

How did repatriates live in postwar Japan? Valuable testimonies have been discovered through investigations of diverse fieldwork. These testimonies make it clear that there are memories of various foreign experiences residing in Japanese society. (Yonahara)



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The culture and history of Japan's repatriates