

WE DON'T NEED A MONUMENT—WE HAVE ONE.
IT'S CALLED "JAPAN"

After World War Two the U.S. occupation policies in Japan contributed to reshaping that nation and coincidentally prepared it to serve as the base of operations for American and UN forces during the Korean conflict. So devastating had been the War's impact on Japan, its economic recovery had progressed slowly to 1950. The seeds of the economic boom of the ensuing decades were planted during the Korean War.

Major changes in occupation economic policy unshackled Japanese big business from earlier restrictions and allowed their industry to provide many of the material needs of the huge buildup of United Nations Command personnel and facilities in the four main Japanese home islands. For the duration of the Korean hostilities, the Japanese



Recent photo of Japan and South Korea alight with activity. So are China and Manchuria. Where is North Korea? (Google)

economy was greatly boosted by eased loan credits, tax cuts, and other favorable policy alterations. Japan quickly became not only a powerful base of operations for the forces committed to the Korean peninsula but also the "arsenal of democracy" for the United Nations Command, reminiscent of

the U.S. role toward Britain in 1940-1941. The huge influx of American special procurement orders for military materials and services as well as loans and various forms of economic assistance from the United States, along with the personal spending of hundreds of thousands of American and Allied servicemen, brought a great surge in prosperity to Japan.

Several Japanese vessels were crewed or leased by the United Nations for participation in amphibious landings and minesweeping chores in the Korean War:

Inchon Invasion—15-16 September 1950:
30 SCAJAP (Japanese) LSTs [Shipping Control Administration Japan]

Wonsan Harbor—25 June to 15 November 1950:
8 Japanese Minesweepers and 4 Japanese Mine Destruction vessels

Hungnam Redeployment—28 December 1950:
7 SCAJAP Charter (cargo) Vessels and 27 SCAJAP LSTs

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In addition, the Japanese Shimano Maru served as mothership for 1,200 Japanese stevedores, who helped with the outloading of supplies and equipment.¹

Japan was never formally part of the UN force in Korea. However, its contribution to the war effort was considerable, and the war brought it great benefits. A huge amount of money, overwhelmingly American, was spent on Japanese labor and goods for use in Korea, or for use in support of other military and naval operations in the Asian Region. To a great extent, this income "jump started" a Japanese domestic economy that had been in the doldrums since 1945.

The Korean War thus gave Japan and South Korea the support each needed to become a major player in the world economy. Be proud of it, guys. The monument is there.

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¹ Adapted from Malcolm Cagle and Frank Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, 1957.