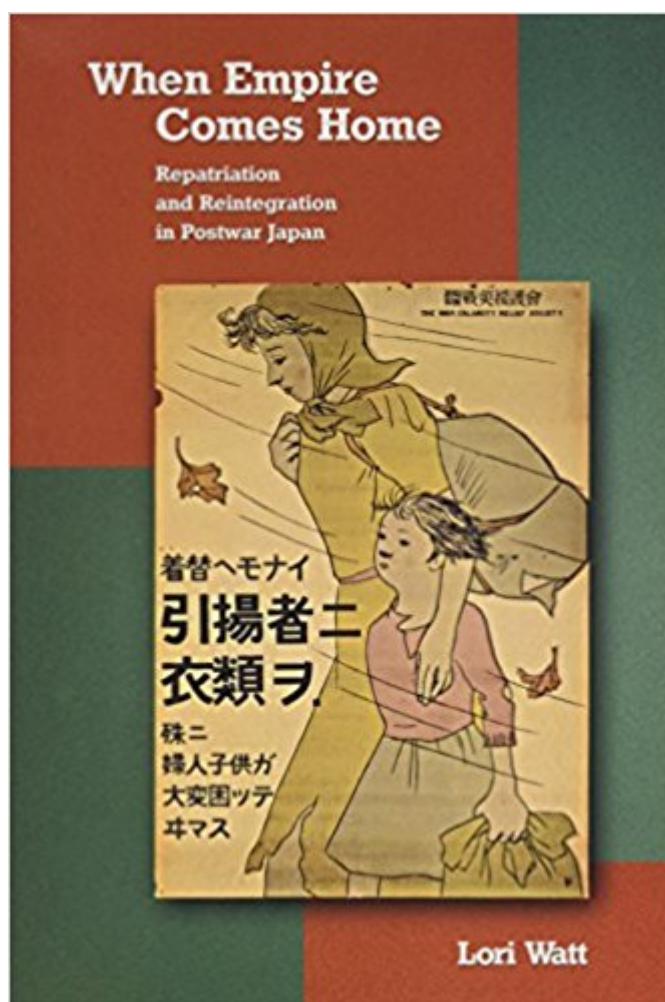


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When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation And Reintegration In Postwar Japan (Harvard East Asian Monographs)



Synopsis

Following the end of World War II in Asia, the Allied powers repatriated over six million Japanese nationals from colonies and battlefields throughout Asia and deported more than a million colonial subjects from Japan to their countries of origin. Depicted at the time as a postwar measure related to the demobilization of defeated Japanese soldiers, this population transfer was a central element in the human dismantling of the Japanese empire that resonates with other post-colonial and post-imperial migrations in the twentieth century. Lori Watt analyzes how the human remnants of empire, those who were moved and those who were left behind, served as sites of negotiation in the process of the jettisoning of the colonial project and in the creation of new national identities in Japan. Through an exploration of the creation and uses of the figure of the repatriate, in political, social, and cultural realms, this study addresses the question of what happens when empire comes home.

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Customer Reviews

Lori Watt is Assistant Professor of History at Washington University in St. Louis.

The forced return (or "repatriation") of over six million Japanese from colonies or allied/imperial territories shows a human dimension to the project initiated by the US victors. Not only soldiers but entire families, some of whose members had never even been to Japan, were forced to return to the Japanese homeland. At the same time over a million non-Japanese were deported back to their

native countries even against their will. Clearly written for both the academic and layperson, the reader learns that many former colonials were left stranded and experienced different levels of hardship both in getting home and once in the homeland. Many civilians were killed by vengeful mobs because they were Japanese. They then faced an uncertain future in Japan with nothing but the clothes on their backs. For comparison only: Imagine if Texas declared independence and ordered all non-Texans out with only what they could carry. Many non-Japanese were also forced out of Japan by the allies. This was done even if the affected wanted to stay for various reasons. The reintegration of the returning colonials was a long process that lasted years, even after the end of the Occupation. The different factions (where they came from- Manchuria, Korea, or Southeast Asia) faced different problems in the process of reintegration. Necessary reading for the study of Japan in the postwar period. The author has done an excellent treatise on this subject.

Great source material for anyone who wishes to explore the situation of the Japanese settlers after the fall of the Japanese Empire. Combined with Mayumi Itoh's work "Japanese War orphans in Manchuria: Forgotten Victims of World War II" it gives a well rounded view of the plight of the Japanese settlers in Manchuria after the end of the War.

Professor Watt's book is meticulously-researched and compelling. I purchased it to do family history research, and found that the accounts in the book correspond very well, and supplement, everything I have heard from people who went through the process. Highly recommended.

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