CHILDREN of the OCCUPATION
JAPAN'S UNTOLD STORY

WALTER HAMILTON
CHILDREN of the OCCUPATION

WALTER HAMILTON is a journalist with close to four decades of experience working for Australian Associated Press and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in Sydney, Canberra, London, Singapore and Tokyo. He was Northeast Asia Correspondent for the ABC for a total of 11 years between 1979 and 1996. He covered civil strife and democratic change in South Korea, Taiwan, China and the Philippines; economic boom and bust in Japan; natural disasters, including the Kobe Earthquake; and man-made terrors, such as the Aum Shinrikyo sarin nerve gas attacks. He has published two books, Serendipity City: Australia, Japan and the Multifunction Polis (ABC Books) and Koala No Hon (with Hamish McDonald, for Simul Press).
CHILDREN of the OCCUPATION
JAPAN’S UNTOLD STORY

WALTER HAMILTON
Contents

Preface
Abbreviations
Glossary
Acknowledgments
Maps
Introduction
  1  Karumi’s story
  2  Butterfly and child
  3  War of purification
  4  Mitsuyoshi’s story
  5  Conquering Kure
  6  Remaking Japanese women
  7  Mayumi’s story
  8  Mixed-blood mythologies
  9  The Eurasian malaise
 10  George’s story
 11  Occupational hazards
 12  Enemies in miniature
 13  Kiyotaka’s story
 14  Plausible deniability
 15  Our mixed-bloods
 16  Kazumi’s story
 17  The Kure Project
 18  Half into whole
 19  Johnny’s story
 20  Where are they now?
 21  A mixed future
Notes
Select bibliography
Index
As I was about to depart Australia to take up my first posting as a correspondent in Japan, 33 years ago, a woman friend expressed the earnest hope that I would ‘not go marrying some Chink’ (by which she meant any Asian). The fact I eventually did marry a Japanese is one reason for my undertaking this book. Another derives from my experience of living for a dozen years in a country where I could only ever be an outsider, a *gaijin*: physically conspicuous but socially invisible. I was shown many courtesies as I went about my work for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation; being allowed to be ordinary was not one of them.

If I felt caught between two opposing ideas of where I belonged, how much more difficult it must be, I thought, for someone made to feel they did not belong where they came from? This is what struck me most when I encountered the mixed-race offspring of the post-war occupation. They were Japanese in every other respect – language, mentality and cultural orientation – except the way they looked. In their case, they were given no choice as to where they should be or which allegiance to hold. Worse still, their origins were perceived, rightly or wrongly, to be low and immoral. I found myself drawn to their story.

On the 60th anniversary of the Japanese surrender, I made a short documentary for ABC-TV’s *Foreign Correspondent* program, retracing the lives of several individuals fathered by Australian members of the occupation forces. The freckle-faced, fair-haired children – so outstanding in films and photographs from the 1950s and 1960s – were now grey-haired, settled members of society. Their poignant reminiscences spurred my desire to learn more – to better understand not only Japanese attitudes to race mixing and the war but also why Australians of my own generation still spoke in terms of ‘Chinks’.

Through document searches and personal contacts, I assembled a casebook on 150 men and women born mainly in the city of Kure, in Hiroshima prefecture, which served from 1946 to 1952 as headquarters for the British Commonwealth Occupation Force. I call the mixed-race children left in this part of western Japan the ‘Kure Kids’. Their fathers were Australian, American, British, New
Zealander or Indian. They stood out by their appearance and because so many were concentrated in one provincial area.

Unsurprisingly, when I began my research, many of the Kure Kids expressed reluctance to revisit unpleasant memories. In agreeing to be interviewed, they needed to find a way past lingering pain and resentment. It was a journey some declined to make, for their own sake or that of their families. Another challenge was tracking down those who had moved away to other parts of Japan or gone abroad. They had put a physical distance between themselves and the past; going back would entail a different kind of risk.

To satisfy both the historical and biographical aims of this book, I combine two styles of narrative. One tells the stories of selected individuals in their own words and through contemporary documents. The other chapters seek to position these lives within a richer context, by examining how attitudes to race mixing have evolved over the centuries and by tracing the impact of racial ideology on national policy and cultural identity in Australia, Japan and the United States.
Abbreviations

ABC  Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACC  Australian Council of Churches
Advertiser  The Advertiser, Adelaide
Age  The Age, Melbourne
Argus  The Argus, Melbourne
Asahi  Asahi Shimbun
ASIO  Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
AWM  Australian War Memorial, Canberra
BCFK  British Commonwealth Forces Korea
BCOF  British Commonwealth Occupation Force
Chu N  Chugoku Nippo
Chu S  Chugoku Shimbun
CPD  Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates
DoEA  Department of External Affairs
GHQ  General Headquarters
Herald  The Herald, Melbourne
HoR  House of Representatives
ISS  International Social Service
ISSAm  Archives of ISS America: Social Welfare History
ISSJ  Records of ISS Japan: un-catalogued Japanese and English-language documents held in the Tokyo office
JCOSA  Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia
Mainichi  Mainichi Shimbun
Mirror  Daily Mirror, Sydney
M Truth  Melbourne Truth
NAA  National Archives of Australia (Canberra, unless otherwise stated)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nikkei</td>
<td>Nihon Keizai Shimbun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLA</td>
<td>National Library of Australia, Canberra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYT</td>
<td>The New York Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS</td>
<td>Pacific Stars and Stripes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAA</td>
<td>Recreation and Amusement Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF</td>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R &amp; R</td>
<td>Rest and Recuperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSL</td>
<td>Returned &amp; Services League of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sankei</td>
<td>Sankei Shimbun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCAP</td>
<td>Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>The Sydney Morning Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>The Sun, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun-Herald</td>
<td>The Sun-Herald, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun-P</td>
<td>The Sun-News Pictorial, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegraph</td>
<td>The Daily Telegraph, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo S</td>
<td>Tokyo Shimbun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP Day</td>
<td>Victory in the Pacific Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yomiuri</td>
<td>Yomiuri Shimbun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

ainoko  half-caste
burakumin  former sub-caste minority
gaijin  foreigner
hāfu  mixed-race Japanese
harō-no-ko  child of 'hello'
Hokusai  Artist (1760–1849) famous for his ‘Thirty-Six Views of Mt Fuji’
ie  household
Inland Sea  waterway separating three of Japan’s main islands (also Seto Inland Sea)
kokusaiji  international child
kokusai-ka  internationalisation
konketsuji  mixed-blood child
koseki  household register
Manchukuo  the puppet-state in occupied China
Meiji period  reign of Emperor Meiji (1868–1912)
métis, mestizos  European-Native Indian mixed-blood
minzoku  ethnic group
modan gāru, moga  modern girl
mompe  women’s labouring trousers
musume  daughter
nikkeijin  person of Japanese descent
Nisei  second-generation, foreign-born Japanese
onrī  mistress; de facto wife
panpan, pansuke  streetwalker; prostitute
shimbun  newspaper
tatami  straw-mat flooring
taxi dancer  female dance partner for hire
Tokugawa  ruling family in Edo Period (1600–1868)
Yoshiwara  Tokyo’s former licensed brothel quarter
yukata  thin cotton gown
Interviews and research were conducted in collaboration with my wife, Shizue Noguchi, whose patience, knowledge and language skills made this project possible. Special thanks go to Kuniko Ōmori, secretary-general of ISS Japan, for allowing access to the organisation’s files related to the Kure Project. Earlier drafts of the manuscript greatly benefited from the comments of Deanne Whittleston, Hamish McDonald and John Tulloh. Dr Christine de Matos (University of Wollongong), Wakao Koike (Japan Foundation), Dr Duncan Williams (University of California, Berkeley, Center for Japanese Studies) and Dr Keiko Tamura (Australian National University) kindly provided forums in which I could develop my ideas. Dr Paul Spickard also lent generous support. Stephen Roche expertly brought the text up to scratch, and Phillipa McGuinness and Melita Rogowsky of UNSW Press were ideal editorial champions.

I wish to thank the following for agreeing to be interviewed or in other ways assisting this project: Johnny and Mamiko Akiyama; Teruko Blair; Peter Budworth; John Cameron; Barbara Chamberlain (née Evans); Takeshi Chida; Fumika Clifford (née Itō); Joan and Tony Dockerty; Glenda Gauci; Paul Glynn; Paul and Eiko Gray; Mitsuyoshi Hanaoka; Doug Helleur; Kumi Inoue; Mari Ishi-kuni; Yone Itō and Kenneth Wybrow; Jōichi Kawamura; Sachiko Kawana; Kiyotaka, Ritsuko and Ryo Kawasaki; Allan Kellehear; Kiyoe Koyama; John Menadue; Frank Mulhall; Ai and Mayumi Okamoto (née Kosugi); Kuniko Ōmori; Kazue Ozawa; John and Sharon Pate; Junko Shintani (née Fukuhara); Jōji Sugimaru; Keiko Tamura; George, Hatsue and Kōji Tsutsumi; Ted Weatherstone; and Mitsuko Yoshida, Kazumi Purvis (née Yoshida), Mayumi Blanksby and Tamiko Blasse.
Japan and Korea
Kure and surrounds
Introduction

The post-war occupation of Japan swept over the country like a tsunami, obliterating social boundaries, submerging moral landmarks, lifting up and carrying away lives to new and unexpected places. Once the tide receded, the familiar cultural topography re-emerged more or less intact, albeit with a new freedom installed. Only the detritus of jazzy music, coarse manners, foreign slang and unwanted babies needed clearing away. This, I would suggest, represents the majority view of that generation.

Few physical reminders of those shameful years remain to challenge the gaze of today’s Japanese. Visitors to a new museum dedicated to the doomed battleship Yamato, in the city of Kure, need to look carefully to find any reference to the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) formerly based there. Tokyo’s cityscape has even less to declare about the past. Gone is the Dai-ichi Insurance Building, opposite the Imperial Palace, which served as headquarters for the imperious General Douglas MacArthur. Ichigaya Court, venue for the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, presided over by the Australian judge Sir William Webb, has also made way for developers.\(^1\)

Instead of monuments, quizzical reminders linger in hidden corners. On the wall of a railway underpass in Tokyo’s midtown Yurakuchō district – old haunt of the infamous panpan streetwalkers – a grimy shingle advertises a long-defunct VD clinic. At the exclusive Mitsui Club, beside the Australian Embassy, ungainly wooden bolsters fitted under the central staircase recall the outsized American officers once billeted there. At the Hotel New Grand in Yokohama, which is more incongruous, General MacArthur sharing space in the picture gallery with Charlie Chaplin or the petrified chewing gum on a pillar in the lobby, left undisturbed through a million dustings? One has been reduced to mere celebrity; the other is no longer recognised for what it is.

The occupation was a daring social experiment at the end of a savage race war. It lasted twice as long as the Pacific conflict and brought a million Allied troops to Japan. Its most enduring legacy is not to be found in edifices, state institutions or cultural borrowings. It rests with the descendants of those who crossed the divide of
race and culture and marked a true end of hostilities through marriage and childbirth. Their clans reach across oceans and continents, continuing to bind up old wounds.

One aspect of this historic encounter has remained largely unexplored: the links that connect Americans, Australians, Britons and others to Japanese blood relations never known, never met. I refer to the thousands of mixed-race children left behind after the occupation by fathers who never knew of their existence, refused to acknowledge them or were prevented by military dictate from marrying the mothers. The eminent American historian John Dower has called the children ‘one of the sad, unspoken stories of the occupation’. This book aims to give them a voice, an identity and a place in the lives of others.

So familiar is the idea of military conquest leading to the birth of supposedly unwanted children, they tend to be dismissed as a natural corollary of war. Their appearance in occupied Japan certainly came as no surprise; the Madame Butterfly tradition provided a ready-made model of Western men exploiting Japanese women. As if they were defined by their biological inevitability, the children received mostly superficial attention from Western politicians, scientists and writers, who acquiesced in facile assumptions about their fate. In the Australian author Hal Porter’s over-ripe phrase, they were ‘heirs of nothing except agony’.

Japanese historical accounts have more to say on the subject without necessarily being better informed. Eiji Takemae’s major study of the occupation (translated into English as Inside GHQ) claims most of the children were ‘secreted away in poorly funded, ill-equipped private orphanages’ and remained illegitimate unless acknowledged by their fathers. Not so. Most were raised in the community, and a considerable number became ‘legitimate’ through adoption by a family member. Japanese fictional treatments of the issue evince a similar determination to link the children exclusively to prostitution, moral collapse and national humiliation. Unresolved feelings of shame and resentment over the war defeat have obscured a more complex reality.

The discrimination the children suffered in Japan was real enough; that is not in dispute. What has been missing from their story is a clearer understanding of what motivated society’s prejudice, the forms it took and how the mixed-bloods responded to it. Leaving them trapped in the historical memory as ‘heirs of nothing except agony’ only serves to perpetuate the sort of image opponents of race mixing have exploited for centuries. Furthermore, it confines the issue to Japan, when their fate, to a
large extent, depended on decisions taken elsewhere. Japan’s racial intolerance was fully matched in the nations it fought against.

From its inception, the United States served as a hothouse for racial theories that underpinned slavery and then, after Abolition, were used to justify segregation. The word ‘miscegenation’, coined during the Civil War by two rabble-rousing New York journalists, lent a scientific-sounding gloss to an old fear. Black–white sexual intimacy had been unlawful in parts of America since the 17th century; the modern trend was towards even tighter control of interracial contact, by expanding anti-miscegenation statutes to include Asians. On the presumption that people of a different race or culture were unreliable citizens, the Roosevelt administration herded 110 000 Japanese Americans into internment camps during the Second World War. Japanese migrants (apart from war brides) continued to be excluded from the country until 1952, and immigration quotas based on national origin remained in place until 1965. This statutory discrimination directly affected the mixed-race children born during the occupation.

Apologists for America’s restrictive immigration laws often cited the White Australia policy as an example of what like-minded peoples were doing to defend their way of life. The first act of Australia’s new federal parliament in 1901 was to make controls on the entry of non-whites uniform across the country. It was a nervy era of spy intrigues and invasion scares on both sides of the Pacific. Such was the enthusiasm for the visit to Sydney in August 1908 of 16 battleships of the US Navy – the ‘Great White Fleet’ – the welcoming crowds exceeded the turnout at the founding of the Commonwealth. A verse tribute in the Sydney Morning Herald imagined Australians and Americans (‘the grand old Anglo-Saxon race’) linking arms ‘To check with stern unflinching mace/ The swarming hungry Orient’. More down-to-earth was the boast of a ‘Mutt and Jeff’ cartoon in the San Francisco Examiner: ‘Does not yon sight make you want to punch a Jap in the nose?’. 

A world war and a depression later, Americans were far less interested in punching foreign noses by the 1930s. Absent any idea of how to overcome their fears, Australians kept them in check by bowing to another imperial gesture. Fortress Singapore, standing guard over what British subjects called ‘the Far East’, was so far east of London the Admiralty calculated (in secret) it would take naval reinforcements 180 days to arrive in an emergency. The Japanese needed less than half that time.

The shocking unreality of the situation is illustrated by a littleknown episode that occurred just weeks before the outbreak of the Pacific War. Confidential signals flew back and forth between
Singapore and Australia on the subject of troops marrying local women and applying to take them home. The prospect so alarmed the 6 Another official commented acidly on the visa application of one Eurasian wife: ‘It is presumed that Australian soldiers who are unwisely led into marriage with a coloured woman would at least have the sense to choose those who are not too obviously dark and objectionable’.

The spurious risk of a few ‘coloured’ wives soon gave way to something truly objectionable: the fall of Singapore and Malaya in February 1942 delivered 130 000 Indian, British and Australian servicemen into captivity and brought the entire phantasmagoria of the Yellow Peril to Australia’s doorstep. For Prime Minister John Curtin, the thought of invasion came with the added horror of blood incompatibility: he rallied the nation to defend the ‘citadel’ of the British race. Feted in Canberra after his narrow escape from the Philippines, General MacArthur waxed lyrical about ‘that indescribable consanguinity of race’ linking Australia and the United States. Around the same time, Admiral Ernest J King, US Chief of Naval Operations, laid before Franklin Roosevelt the vital case for maintaining Australia and New Zealand as ‘white men’s countries’. 7

Racial pride is a virulent and recurring theme in Australian accounts of the war. Prisoner-of-war stories – a prolific and everexpanding literature – often convey the impression that the physical hardships of captivity were easier to endure than the mental anguish of being lorded over by an inferior people. The idiom used by POWs is revealing. A whisky and soda was a ‘half caste’. In a poem by another prisoner, his inferior and contaminated food was ‘half-caste rice’. These men clung to their dignity by emphasising what neither captivity nor degradation could make them. After being liberated from an internment camp in Manila in 1945, the journalist Jack Percival published an indictment of his captors. The first complaint he brought against the Japanese military – before any mention of privations or brutalities – was their failure to prevent ‘insults’ to the civilian internees. 8

An end to the self-described status of ‘white coolie’ required a swift restoration of the proper order of things. Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia, issued an instruction that there be no shaking of hands or sitting at the same table with Japanese during surrender proceedings. Australian field commanders elaborated on this theme. At Wewak, in New Guinea, the diminutive General Hatazō Adachi was escorted the entire length of an airfield between lines of soldiers specially
selected for their exceptional height. After attending a surrender ceremony in Borneo, one officer wrote: ‘The yellow creatures were marched in again ... I felt almost guilty, sitting there quietly, knowing what atrocities his race had perpetrated – echoes of the darkest ages. I feel they are not humiliated enough’.  

Anglo-American wartime solidarity did not, however, rest on a shared commitment to the old imperial order. President Roosevelt might have held some peculiar views on race mixing (Japanese-European mixtures were ‘thoroughly bad’ in his opinion), but he was politician enough to recognise an irresistible trend. Looking ahead from the low foothills of 1942, he foresaw a world in which nations ‘will more or less become melting pots’. His comment led the Australian representative on the Pacific War Council, Owen Dixon (later Chief Justice of the High Court), to remark: ‘If we accept the President’s thought in this matter, it would seem to be of little importance who wins the war’.  

For Dixon and the overwhelming majority of his compatriots, victory, when it came, equalled vindication for White Australia. They saw Japan as unchanging and unchangeable – best reassigned to the ‘obscurity and isolation in which it had slumbered for 2,000 years’, as one editorial writer suggested. The Australian Commander in Chief, General Sir Thomas Blamey, standing amid the ruins of downtown Tokyo in September 1945, restated his conviction that the enemy was  

At a cocktail party in Tokyo, two years later, the Melbourne academic William Macmahon Ball, a member of the Allied Council for Japan, was telling General ‘Pat’ Casey, one of MacArthur’s inner circle, why it was too early to resume trade with Japan, when the exasperated American cut him off. ‘When, for Pete’s sake’, implored Casey, ‘will you seven million Australians realise the importance of having 70 million allies in this country?’ The comment merely confirmed for Ball that the occupation’s reform agenda was being sacrificed to Big Power politics. In his opinion, Japan’s leaders were as likely as ever ‘to want to use war as an instrument of national policy’.  

Another influential Australian, the popular author Frank Clune, was visiting Japan at the time to gather material for a new book. Ashes of Hiroshima would set the tone for many a triumphal reckoning of history: ‘The Japs were ... exterminated and obliterated in New Guinea by a race of men who were superior to themselves in fighting ability, discipline, training, courage and intelligence’. He would waste no tears on a starving population, he told readers, if they were too ‘stupid’ to grow anything other than
rice. Here was the ‘uncrossable mental gulf ’ Clune was pleased to say separated Australians from ‘Asiatics’.13 Here also was the rest of the answer to General Casey’s question.

Australia’s colour bar, relaxed during the war to admit Asian merchant seamen and African-American troops on leave, was rigorously reinforced. Cinema newsreels showed Chinese and Malay seamen, who had had the effrontery to marry white women, being frogmarched along the Sydney docks and onto deportation ships. Most remaining ethnic Japanese, including residents of 50 years’ standing, were expelled. In the summer of 1946, 2500 men, women and children put to sea from Melbourne crowded onto the decks and pressed into the dank holds of the Koei Maru. A local newspaper described, with unconcealed satisfaction, the miserable conditions aboard ship, under the headline ‘Sons of Heaven Sent Home’.14

Rules for the admission of persons of mixed race were tightened, in the words of the policy document, ‘to provide a desirable margin for error’.15 Applicants for permanent residence needed to prove they were at least 75 per cent European in racial origin – up from 51 per cent – and predominantly European in ‘appearance and upbringing’. A teenage girl of Japanese-French ancestry was denied entry in 1947 to attend school, even though she was travelling on a French passport and had family in Australia. The following year, a Portuguese national engaged to an Australian serviceman was also excluded because she was part Japanese.

A racially selective migration program, conceived as a strategic defence against Japan, attracted a million settlers in the decade to 1955. Former enemy nationals from Italy, Germany and Austria were granted access to the benefits of assisted migration, while almost all non-Europeans (who made up just 0.2 per cent of the Australian population in 1947) continued to be excluded. The Immigration Minister, Arthur Calwell, reminded parliament that the White Australia policy prevented the creation of ‘an unfortunate class of half-breeds ... [who] would be ostracized by their brothers and lead miserable lives’.16

The BCOF troops sent to Japan were under instructions not to fraternise. The policy was presented as necessary to maintain military discipline and security – although this could hardly explain why Japanese Americans and African Americans were barred from BCOF recreational facilities. Servicemen who sought permission to marry a Japanese were, without exception, refused. Anyone defying the ban risked arrest and removal from the country. Once again, the chief motivation was political or racial, not military: civilians also