

Japan Surrenders – 1945

Text: *JAPAN SURRENDERS*

Narrator: 1931, Japanese troops leave for the conquest of Manchuria. Japan, the first of this war's aggressor nations, starting out a full 14 years ago on a career of international conquest and pillage. Shanghai in 1937, full scale warfare against China. The world was still unready to deal properly with such wanton aggression. Japan's diplomats, addressing the League of Nations, attempted to justify their crimes against peace and decency, and then walked out.

The long series of brutal attacks upon an unprepared neighbor continued. Japan seized a whole new empire, set up puppet rulers, grew even more self-confident and aggressive as she fed on other people's suffering. Japan's successful imperialism encouraged other aggressors. Italy invaded Ethiopia. Later Germany and Italy, by military intervention, helped overthrow the Republican government in Spain. Three nations toasted the consummation of an infamous alliance, the Axis military pact of 1940. Germany and Italy, who had plunged Europe into war, became fully united with Japan in the strategy of terror.

And through it all, bleeding, pillaged China continued as the scene of misery and death. Millions of her people were made homeless. With indomitable courage but pathetically inadequate weapons, the Chinese fought back. Alone, they kept the resistance to Japanese imperialism alive.

Kurusu and Nomura, Japanese envoys to the United States, described themselves as missionaries of friendship and peace. While they were still negotiating, their countrymen struck a savage blow, unparalleled in infamy. Pearl Harbor, December the 7th 1941.

In spite of crippling damage, the United States fleet, augmented by British, Australian, and Dutch units, set out to find the enemy. In the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, the Japanese advance was halted. Even as the enemy made fast his grip on Hong Kong, Burma, Manila, Singapore, the Allies began the long journey back at Guadalcanal. Step by step, the Japanese were beaten back, at Bougainville, Tarawa, Kwajalein, Saipan, Guam. In the Philippines, under Japanese rule, Allied prisoners had been subjected to indescribable suffering. The Filipino people had never stopped fighting. Douglas MacArthur had promised them, "I shall return," and return he did. Iwo Jima, only 450 miles from Japan. The full power of the American Pacific fleets – of land, sea and air forces, tirelessly rehearsed in combat through scores of swift amphibious invasions – struck a semi-final blow. The Japanese dead ran into the hundreds of thousands, and once again a flag of liberty was dramatically run up. Under General Buckner, who gave his life there, combined American forces fought the long and costly campaign for Okinawa in the Ryukyus, at the very doorstep of Japan. It was Japan's final hour and in incredibly furious combat, enemy soldiers had to be destroyed cave by cave and one by one. But finally, their morale cracked open by American power, the first masses of Japanese soldiers began to give up voluntarily. Japan's fanatical suicide corps, in desperation air attacks, inflicted heavy damage on American naval forces off Okinawa. This was kamikaze. It was sensational, but it could never stop the Allied advance.

The B-29s, scourge of Japan's home islands, mighty engines of destruction bringing home the lesson of Pearl Harbor. From hard-won Okinawa, from the carrier-based planes of the 3rd and 5th Fleets, Japan came under the inevitable rain of ruin. Allied sea forces, moving up to the Japanese home islands, shelled the mainland almost without opposition. Admiral Halsey's ranging naval might was helping to hammer the enemy to his knees. But there was worse to come: the unimaginably destructive atomic

bomb perfected by Allied scientists. First mission: the industrial city of Hiroshima. Second mission: the port of Nagasaki. Japan had its choice, complete surrender or complete ruin. At Potsdam, even as they laid the foundations for a stable European peace, Clement Attlee, Harry Truman, and Joseph Stalin had decided on common action against Japan. As agreed at Yalta, Russia joined the Allies in war on the last remaining Axis enemy. Japan's stronghold in Manchuria was attacked. For Emperor Hirohito and for Japanese militarism, the war was lost. Japan sued for peace. In Washington, Secretary of War Stimson and Secretary of State Byrnes hurried to the White House with Secretary of Navy Forrestal. The United States Cabinet meeting with President Truman studied Japan's surrender messages, in full coordination with the governments of Britain, China, and Russia and other Allies.

The world remembered Franklin Delano Roosevelt, commander-in-chief, American war casualty. Years of grave responsibility took their toll. A grateful world honors him today.

Douglas MacArthur, leader of Pacific Armies, now named Supreme Allied Commander in Japan. Chiang Kai-shek, leader of fighting China. Chester Nimitz, commander of the mighty Pacific fleets.

Harry S. Truman, four months after taking oath as president, leads his country finally to victory and peace. Mr. Truman and his Cabinet meet in emergency session. Former Secretary Hull is on hand as the President breaks the momentous news of Japan's surrender.

President Harry Truman: I have received this afternoon a message from the Japanese government in reply to the message forwarded to that government by the secretary of state on August 11th. I deem this reply a full acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, which specifies the unconditional surrender of Japan. In the reply, there is no qualification. Arrangements are now being made for the formal signing of the surrender terms at the earliest possible moment. General Douglas MacArthur has been appointed the Supreme Allied Commander to receive the Japanese surrender. Great Britain, Russia, and China will be represented by high-ranking officers. Meantime, the Allied armed forces have been ordered to suspend offensive action. The proclamation of V-J Day must await upon the formal signing of the surrender terms by Japan.

Narrator: Newsmen rush the President's report to a waiting world, and through the early evening, Tuesday August 14th, the fateful news is flashed. In New York City, as throughout a rejoicing nation and world, vast throngs of grateful, happy people celebrate the end of fighting, the dawn of peace. Two million New Yorkers jam Times Square. It's official. It's all over. It's total victory.

All night long the rejoicing continues. Never before in history has there been greater reason to be thankful for peace. The world's free people are united in their determination that the world's peace shall never be endangered again.