



## THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN JAPANESE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY: ANTIBIOTICS DURING THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION, 1945-1952

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This poster presentation illustrates the birth of the post-war Japanese pharmaceutical industry through the emergence of the antibiotics sector during the American Occupation. At the end of the Second World War, much of Japan's small pre-war pharmaceutical industry lay in ruins. Before World War II, pharmaceutical firms in Japan were primarily engaged in the distribution of imported Western medicines, readjusting dosages to adhere to domestic regulation. After the halt of German imports during World War I, however, government policy prompted some domestic production in vitamins, hormonal preparations, and sulfa drugs. While most of the physical capital was lost during the war, much of the human capital and networks from the pre-war industry survived.

In the early years after World War II, the American Occupation was significant to the antibiotics sector in the development and bridging of institutions and organizations that would enable antibiotic development, production, and distribution for the mass market. For the GHQ, enabling Japanese firms to mass-produce antibiotics offered a more cost-effective means of public health administration and providing antibiotics to American troops in Japan. As a supra-governmental occupying power, the General Headquarters (GHQ) had authority over the Japanese government to decide and execute orders to guide an industry into existence. For example, the American military orchestrated and ensured successful technology transfers through seminars taught by leading scientists such as Jackson Foster, the delivery of effective strains of bacteria, and on-site consultations at production sites such as Morinaga and Banyu Pharmaceutical. It also set up a modern pharmaceutical education system, and established regulations such as the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law.

The rapid development of the antibiotics sector between 1945 and 1952 helped to dramatically reduce the incidence of infectious disease in Japan. Thereafter, diseases of affluence became the primary concern.