

## The Process of Restructuring the Imperial Household Ministry in Occupied Japan

Hajime Sebata

The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the restructuring of the organization of Japan's Imperial Household Ministry in 1945-1949.

The Emperor was the absolute sovereign and the supreme commander under the Meiji Constitution. The Imperial Household Ministry was independent from the government, authorized by imperial law and separate from the constitution. After WWII, General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Allied Forces wanted to reform the government of Japan. They took over the Emperor's authority and the property of the Imperial House, and set the Emperor as a "symbol" in the new constitution. Thereafter, all acts of the Emperor in matters of state would require the advice and approval of the Cabinet. The Imperial Household Ministry (Kunai-sho) lost much of its authority and was reorganized as the Imperial Household Office (Kunai-fu). However, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida strove to maintain the independence of the Imperial Household Office. He believed its office should be under the "jurisdiction" (not "management") of the Prime Minister.

In Emperor Hirohito's "Postwar Tour," the officers in the Government Section of GHQ criticized the Imperial Household Office as a violation of their policies. They believed that the views of the officers in the Imperial Household Office were unchanging and therefore decided to introduce further reforms. Then Prime Minister Tetsu Katayama and Hitoshi Ashida had the same idea. Ashida reorganized the Imperial Household Office as the Imperial Household Agency (Kunai-cho) under the "management" of the Prime Minister. He dismissed the Grand Steward and the Grand Chamberlain of the Imperial Household and chose persons who had not previously been working in the Imperial Household as the successors. With this restructuring, the Imperial Household Agency became subordinate to the government. Therefore, it would be difficult for the Imperial Household Agency to prevent itself from using the Emperor politically.