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By Samuel Hideo Yamashita



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Daily Life in Wartime Japan, 1940-1945 (Modern War Studies (Hardcover))

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The population of wartime Japan (1940–1945) has remained a largely faceless enemy to most Americans thanks to the distortions of US wartime propaganda, popular culture, and news reports. At a time when this country's wartime experiences are slowly and belatedly coming into focus, this remarkable book by Samuel Yamashita offers an intimate picture of what life was like for ordinary Japanese during the war. Drawing upon diaries and letters written by servicemen, kamikaze pilots, evacuated children, and teenagers and adults mobilized for war work in the big cities, provincial towns, and rural communities, Yamashita lets us hear for the first time the rich mix of voices speaking in every register during the course of the war.

Here is the housewife struggling to feed her family while supporting the war effort; the eager conscript from snow country enduring the harshest, most abusive training imaginable in order to learn how to fly; the Tokyo teenagers made to work in wartime factories; the children taken from cities to live in the countryside away from their families and with little food and no privacy; the Kyushu farmers pressured to grow ever more rice and wheat with fewer hands and less fertilizer; and the Kyoto octogenarian driven to thoughts of suicide by his inability to contribute to the war. How these ordinary Japanese coped with wartime hardships and dangers, and how their views changed over time as disillusionment, impatience, and sometimes despair set in, is the story that Yamashita's book brings to the American reader. A history of life during war, *Daily Life in Wartime Japan, 1940–1945* is also a glimpse of a now-vanished world.



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Editorial Review

Review

"Offers many insights into the wartime experiences of Japanese housewives and children, city dwellers and farmers, civilians and servicemen."—*Journal of Japanese Studies*

"This is a very important book, the best study in English of how Japanese people conducted themselves during the war. As a child living in Japan at that time, I experienced much of what Yamashita writes about. His empirical data as well as broad observations are impeccable. The book will make a major contribution not only to the study of the Second World War but also to twentieth-century world history."?Akira Iriye, author of *Pearl Harbor and the Coming of the Pacific War* and *Power and Culture: The Japanese-American War, 1941–1945*

"*Daily Life in Wartime Japan, 1940–1945* should be read by anyone who wishes to reflect on the state of militarized modernity and meanings of total war."?Lisa Yoneyama, author of *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*

"Sam Yamashita seamlessly weaves diverse diarists' accounts, from schoolchildren to kamikaze pilots, into simply the best account in English of everyday life on wartime Japan's home front."?Edward Drea, author of *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853–1945*

"A remarkable companion to his recent translations of Japanese wartime diaries, Sam Yamashita gives us a thoughtful and highly readable account of everyday life during the Asia-Pacific War. A wonderful addition to the social history of twentieth century Japan."?Louise Young, author of *Beyond the Metropolis: Second Cities and Modern Life in Interwar Japan*

"This is a vivid story of the Japanese people on the home front?of concerted efforts, hard work, and endurance to win the war and eventual preparation for possible American invasion of the homeland. Especially heartbreaking is the tale of young children (third- through sixth-grade students) in the big cities, who were forced to evacuate in group to the countryside against their indulging parents. By fully exploring an unexploited aspect, mainly through the examination of diaries, Yamashita makes a significant contribution to the history of the Pacific War."?Yasuhide Kawashima, author of *The Tokyo Rose Case: Treason on Trial*

About the Author

Samuel Hideo Yamashita is Henry E. Sheffield Professor of History at Pomona College and author of *Leaves from an Autumn of Emergencies: Selections from the Wartime Diaries of Ordinary Japanese*.

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