

Japan's Contested War Memories

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Japan's Contested War Memories is an important and significant book that explores the struggles within contemporary Japanese society to come to terms with second world war history focusing particularly on 1972 onwards the period starts with the

normalization of relations with china and the return of okinawa to japan in 1972 and ends with the sixtieth anniversary commemorations analyzing the variety of ways in which the japanese people narrate contest and interpret the past the book is also a major critique of the way the subject has been treated in much of the english language philip seaton concludes that war history in japan today is more divisive and widely argued over than in any of the other major second world war combatant nations providing a sharp contrast to the many orthodox statements about japanese ignorance amnesia and denial about the war this is an engaging and illuminating study that will appeal to scholars and students of japanese history politics cultural studies society and memory theory

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singapore fell to japan on 15 february 1942 within days the japanese had massacred thousands of chinese civilians and taken prisoner more than 100 000 british australian and indian soldiers a resistance movement formed in malaya s jungle covered mountains but the vast majority could do little other than resign themselves to life under japanese rule the occupation would last three and a half years until the return of the british in september 1945 how is this period remembered and how have individuals communities and states shaped and reshaped memories in the postwar era the book response to these questions presenting answers that use the words of chinese malays indians eurasians british and australian who personally experienced the war years the authors guide readers through many forms of memory from the soaring pillars of singapore s civilian war memorial to traditional chinese cemeteries in malaysia and from families left bereft

by japanese massacres to the young women who flocked to the japanese sponsored indian national army dreaming of a march on delhi this volume provides a forum for previously marginalized and self censored voices using the stories they relate to reflect on the nature of conflict and memory they also offer a deeper understanding of the searing transit from wartime occupation to post war decolonization and the moulding of postcolonial states and identities

this book explores how narratives exhibitions media representations and cultural heritage sites that communicate memories of conflicts in east asia between 1930 and 1945 spread interact and are re packaged for post war audiences across national divisions the contributors examine individual case studies of grassroots engagement with war memory and collectively demonstrate the necessity of remaining aware of the researcher as participating in another kind of engagement with war memory contributions showcase a number of ways of doing research on war memory alongside case studies from diverse regions of the world taken together they bring a fresh perspective to scholarship on war memory which has tended to focus on space text exhibition or personal narrative rather than bringing these elements into dialogue with one another

hokkaido the northernmost island of japan barely features in most histories of the second world war however the combination of distinctive war experiences a vibrant set of local historian groups and powerful media organizations disseminating local war history has generated an identifiable set of local collective memories hokkaido's status as an early colonial acquisition also makes the island an important vantage point from which to reassess the course and nature of the japanese empire this book argues that hokkaido s experiences of war and its militarized post war constitutes a local case study with a much greater national and international significance on both theoretical and empirical grounds than first impressions might suggest using japanese language sources presented for the first time in english and a number of detailed local history case studies it offers a fascinating and hitherto little known perspective on the second world war it also combines a comprehensive theory of how war memories operate at the local level within a broad historical context that explains hokkaido's pivotal role within japanese imperial history demonstrating that understanding local history and memories is essential for a nuanced understanding of national history and memories the book will be highly valuable to students and scholars of japanese history second world war history and asian history

since the 1990s questions of japanese wartime conduct apologies for aggression and compensation to former victims of the country s imperial policies have been brought to the fore of national and regional politics the state is undoubtedly the most important actor in the process of memory production and along with conservative legislators and the grass root revisionist movement there has been a consistent trend towards denying or undermining the existing acknowledgments of responsibility for japan s wartime past however to fully comprehend war memory in japan due attention must be paid to competing discourses that demand an alternative view and only then can the complexity of japanese war memory and attitudes towards the legacies of the asia pacific war be understood the politics of war memory in japan examines the involvement of five civil society actors in the struggle over remembering and addressing the wartime past in japan today in studying progressive war memory activists it quickly becomes clear that the apologia by conservative politicians cannot be treated as representative of the opinion of the majority of the japanese public indeed this book seeks to remedy the disparity between studies devoted to the official level of addressing the history issue and the grass root historical revisionist movement on the one side and progressive activism on the other furthermore it contributes to scholarly debates on the state of civil society in japan challenging the characterisation of japanese civil society as a depoliticised space by demonstrating a more contentious side of civil society activism drawing important new empirical research this book will be of huge interest to students and scholars of japanese civil society japanese politics japanese history and memory in japan

japan has long wrestled with the memories and legacies of world war ii in the aftermath of defeat war memory developed as an integral part of particular and divergent approaches to postwar democracy in the last six decades the demands placed upon postwar democracy have shifted considerably from social protest through high economic growth to japan s relations in asia and the meanings of the war shifted with them this book unravels the political dynamics that governed the place of war memory in public life far from reconciling with the victims of japanese imperialism successive conservative administrations have left the memory of the war to representatives of special interests and citizen movements all of whom used war memory to further their own interests franziska seraphim traces the activism of five prominent civic organizations to examine the ways in which diverse organized memories have secured legitimate niches within the public sphere the history of these domestic conflicts over the commemoration of the war dead the manipulation of national symbols the teaching of history or the articulation of relations with china and

korea is crucial to the current discourse about apology and reconciliation in east asia and provides essential context for the global debate on war memory

takashi yoshida provides a historical analysis of war and peace museums from the late nineteenth century to the present and traces the historical development of a pacifist discourse in postwar japan that centered on japan s war crimes and responsibility during the so called fifteen year war which began in 1931 with japan s invasion of manchuria and ended in 1945 with the nation s defeat prior to the defeat a culture of war gripped the japanese empire every segment of japanese popular culture during the war bore witness to the flood of patriotism in this book yoshida attempts to demonstrate that the acceptance of japanese wartime aggression and atrocities as historical facts remains evident to this day in the culture of peace museums in japan those who have little knowledge of contemporary japan often hastily conclude that the japanese have been united and monolithic in the way they feel the war should be remembered this book seeks to challenge that assumption

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pt 1 learning war communities go to war forging foreign and domestic weapons the ways of making war the dialogue of politics 1861 1862 pt 2 making war congress and the capitalists congress and the second american system agriculture and the benefits of war industrial workers and the costs of war the meanings of emancipation the dialogue of politics loyalty and unity 1863 1864 pt 3 finding war s meanings world images of war frankenstein and everyman sherman grant and modern war the scars of war the coming of the lord religion in the civil war era conclusion

goetzfridt s work demonstrates the dynamics of history each generation considering past events in light of current realities and contemporary understandings of the world this volume therefore is important not simply because it provides us with an invaluable and substantial fount of references that will be supremely useful to teachers scholars and all enthusiasts of mariana islands history its importance lies also in its packaging as a resource for current and future generations to understand the changing face and contested space of guam history from the foreword by anne perez hattori blending bibliographic integrity with absorbing essays on a wide range of historical interpretations nicholas goetzfridt offers a new approach to the history of guam here is a treasure trove of ideas historiographies and opportunities that allows readers to reassess previously held

notions and conclusions about guam s past and the heritage of the indigenous chamorro people particular attention is given to chamorro perspectives and the impact of more than four hundred years of colonial presences on micronesia s largest island extensive cross references and generous but targeted samples of historical narratives compliment the bibliographic essays detailed name and subject indexes to the book s 326 entries cover accounts and interpretations of the island from ferdinand magellan s discovery of guahan guam in the chamorro language in 1521 to recent events including the japanese occupation and the american liberation of guam in 1944 the indexes enable easy and extensive access to a bounty of information the place index contains both large and localized geographic realms that are placed vividly in the context of these histories an insightful foreword by chamorro scholar anne perez hattori is included

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rather than a history of the war and occupation of indonesia during the years 1942 1945 representing the japanese occupation of indonesia offers a survey of the way in which indonesia japan and the netherlands have shaped the memory of that episode comparison of the memories in the three countries brings out the national patterns of memory this volume gives an impression of the layered and pluriform nature of memory and of the different forms of expression of memory from the most personal level of oral testimony to the most public representation in monuments and films

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