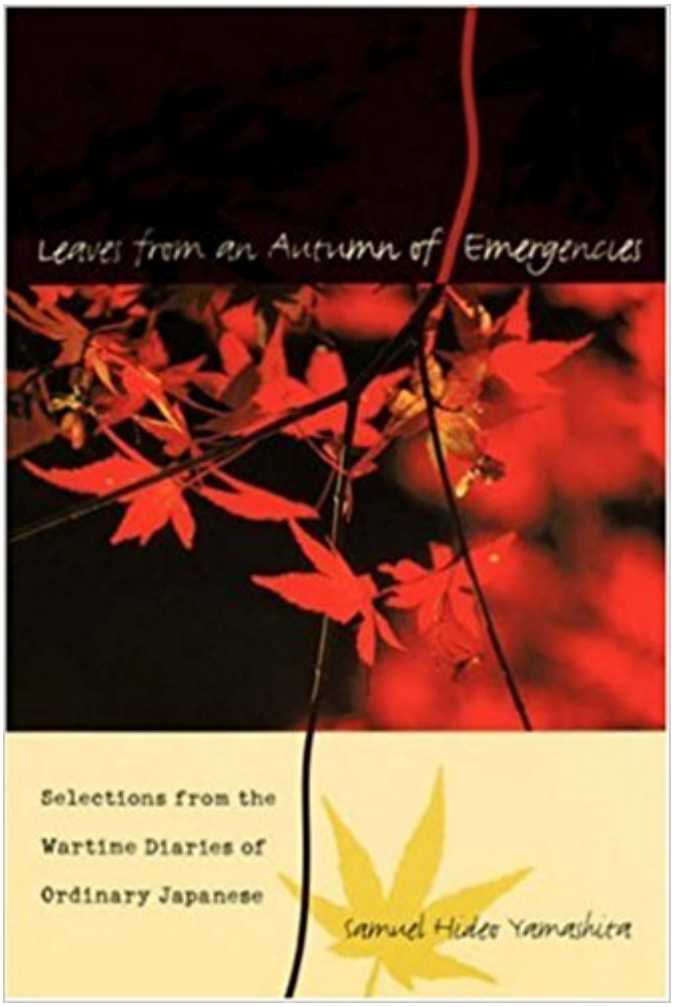
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Leaves From An Autumn Of Emergencies: Selections From The Wartime Diaries Of Ordinary Japanese



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Synopsis

The fall of Singapore and the brilliant victories achieved since the start of the war mean we are protected, but I donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t know just how grateful I should be. Ã¢â ¬â ¢Takahashi Aiko, housewife, February 1942This is my final departure from the home islands. I have paid my respects to those who have helped me. I have no regrets. Ã¢â ¬â ¢Itabashi Yasuo, navy kamikaze pilot, February 1944 We had rice gruel for lunch again. There was no tofu in it, but there were potatoes.... We went through with the closing ceremony and received our report cards. Everyone was there. From now on, IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ll persevere and not fail. Ã¢â ¬â ¢Manabe Ichiro, primary school student, July 1944 This collection of diaries gives readers a powerful, firsthand look at the effects of the Pacific War on eight ordinary Japanese. Immediate, vivid, and at times surprisingly frank, the diaries chronicle the last years of the war and its aftermath as experienced by a navy kamikaze pilot, an army straggler on Okinawa, an elderly Kyoto businessman, a Tokyo housewife, a young working woman in Tokyo, a teenage girl mobilized for war work, and two schoolchildren evacuated to the countryside. Samuel YamashitaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s introduction provides a helpful overview of the historiography on wartime Japan and offers valuable insights into the important, everyday issues that concerned Japanese during a different and disastrously difficult time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The diaries reveal a far richer variety of attitudes toward the war than previous works have shown us; they reveal a thoughtfulness and a down-to-earth approach to life that will surprise those reared on wartime stereotypes."Yamashita s volume, drawing on correspondence and conversation with

the families of the diarists, is carefully researched, annotated, and illustrated with photographs. . . . [This book] should help considerably in advancing the urgent project of defining and assessing responsibility, not only for Japan but for all combatants, and not only for World War II but for all conflicts and modes of political violence.-- "Journal of Japanese Studies"The individual stories . . . are involving in their own right, but they also convey a feel for changing popular attitudes to the war, the mechanisms of social control and wartime logistics, the effects of bombing on everyday life and social structures, and other aspects of social history.-- "www.dannyreviews.com"Writing diaries was an old Japanese tradition. During the war, diaries of soldiers and pupils were inspected by their officers and teachers. Nevertheless, as Yamashita points out, the writers of these diaries were not afraid to reveal their feelings even when these clashed with the official line.-- "Monumenta Nipponica"Outstanding. . . . There can never be a perfect window into the war, but Yamashita's skillful selection of diaries and his faithful and humane translation brings to life a range of Japanese experiences that will both broaden and complicate any discussion of what it meant to live through the Second World War in Japan.-- "Education about Asia"Enhances our understanding of the social history of wartime Japan. Perhaps its greatest value in the classroom is that the diaries enable English-speaking readers, many of whom will be residents of countries that fought Japan in the war, to put themselves in the shoes of others and to see the war briefly through Japanese eyes. It is a testament to Yamashita's skill and hard work that his book succeeds so well as a means of broadening horizons and provoking thought.-- "American Journal of Education"Yamashita's volume, drawing on correspondence and conversation with the families of the diarists, is carefully researched, annotated, and illustrated with photographs. . . . [This book] should help considerably in advancing the urgent project of defining and assessing responsibility, not only for Japan but for all combatants, and not only for World War II but for all conflicts and modes of political violence.-- "Journal of Japanese Studies"

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"Leaves from an Autumn of Emergencies: Selections from the Wartime Diaries of Ordinary Japanese" by Samuel Hideo Yamashita, (2005), 331 pages. The author has read numerous diaries written by Japanese civilians and soldiers during World War II, and from them has selected eight of them for reduction to only 20-30 pages each. The author undertook this reduction to highlight various insights and experiences of these civilians.Most of these "how I survived the war" diary entries discuss the difficulty of obtaining extra food, as the rations provided by the government were so meager -- more than just hunger pangs: some suffered outright starvation.Other quotations are about how some believed that Japan was still going to win the war, even as they saw more and more of the cities around them being firebombed into near obliteration. Others doubted that their air-force could actually sink 20 American warships during a single battle. Some discussed their doubts about the sincerity of their politicians in being honest in reporting on the outcome of various battles -- as more and more American airplanes appeared overhead, and how the battle-lines of the war-front continually shrank as Japanese forces were overrun.As at the time of this review there was no "view inside" feature, following are the book's chapter titles:"Chapter One: Introduction: The Pacific War and Ordinary Japanese": a review as to how the author make his selections from various war diaries [48 pages]."Chapter Two: The Diary of a Navy Special-Attack Pilot": selections from the diary of a kamikaze (tai-atari) pilot who after training to become a suicide dive-bomber had to wait over a year before finally crashing into an American warship. Hard to believe that this guy so badly wanted to die for his country -- especially after so many of his co-pilots had met a fiery death. [30 pages]."Chapter Three: Bittersweet: The Wartime and Postwar Diary of an Ordinary Kyoto

Person": details of growing disillusioned with the war effort [50 pages]."Chapter Four: The Diary of a Defeated Japanese Soldier": a disillusioned Japanese soldier on Okinawa doesn't learn about the end of the War until 30 days later -- he surrenders, but feels ashamed. His daily comments as to how he held out in small caves while American soldiers searched for him and other stragglers. [30 pages] "Chapter Five: From the Start of the War" [30 pages]."Chapter Six: Until the War Ended" [30 pages]."Chapter Seven: The Diary of a Labor Service Corps Girl" [14 pages]."Chapter Eight: The Diary of an Evacuated Schoolboy" [31 pages]."Chapter Nine: The Diary of an Evacuated Schoolgirl" [40 pages]."Glossary" [6 pages]. Bibliography & Index w/ map of Japan.Usually not exciting reading, but one of the few books that details the thoughts of war-weary Japanese civilians. (Also see: "Japan At War" by Cook.)

While not exactly an exciting read, most of the diaries in this book contain quite good narratives that go beyond the basic doings of the days and are reflective in nature about politics, "the Japanese way," and the physical and mental anguish during war while also discussing the struggles for food, inequities in distribution, the black market, neighborhood associations, difficulties in getting to work - and in finding coffins. A good variety of people are represented, including a kamikaze pilot eager to defend his country to the death because "we cannot not win," a soldier with misgivings who hoped for a cease-fire, musings of a Christian housewife who had spent time in the U.S., a weary working woman who writes, "no doubt the sun is unimpressed...," a hungry old man dreaming of his next meals and reminiscing of the countless sweetfish he caught as a boy," and evacuated children who seem happy except that they keep losing weight. There is a highly informative introduction that explains and summarizes the wartime situations within Japan to give readers a historical and cultural background to the diaries. A glossary and index finish the reading.This book has a place in libraries and educational institutions as a rare English language study of Japanese lives during WWII, but it is a worthwhile addition to the bookshelves of anyone curious about how the Japanese people survived the war. I'm keeping mine! See alsoÃ Â Senso: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War: Letters to the Editor of Asahi Shimbun

I ordered this book for class. Brand new; fast shipping :)

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