



# Grassroots Fascism: The War Experience of the Japanese People (Weatherhead Books on Asia)

*Yoshimi Yoshiaki*

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*Grassroots Fascism* profiles the Asia Pacific War (1941--1945) -- the most important though least understood experience of Japan's modern history -- through the lens of ordinary Japanese life. Moving deftly from the struggles of the home front to the occupied territories to the ravages of the front line, the book offers rare insight into popular experience from the war's troubled beginnings through Japan's disastrous defeat in 1945 and the new beginning it heralded.

Yoshimi Yoshiaki mobilizes personal diaries, memoirs, and government documents to portray the ambivalent position of ordinary Japanese as both wartime victims and active participants. He also provides equally penetrating accounts of the war experience of Japan's imperial subjects, including Koreans and Taiwanese. This book challenges the idea that the Japanese operated as a passive, homogenous mass during the war -- a mere conduit for a military--imperial ideology imposed upon them by the political elite. Viewed from the bottom up, wartime Japan unfolds as a complex modern mass society, with a corresponding variety of popular roles and agendas. In chronicling the diversity of the Japanese social experience, Yoshimi's account elevates our understanding of Japan's war and "Japanese Fascism," and in its relation of World War II to the evolution -- and destruction -- of empire, it makes a fresh contribution to the global history of the war. Ethan Mark's translation supplements the Japanese original with explanatory annotations and an in-depth analytical introduction, drawing on personal interviews to situate the work within Japanese studies and global history.

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