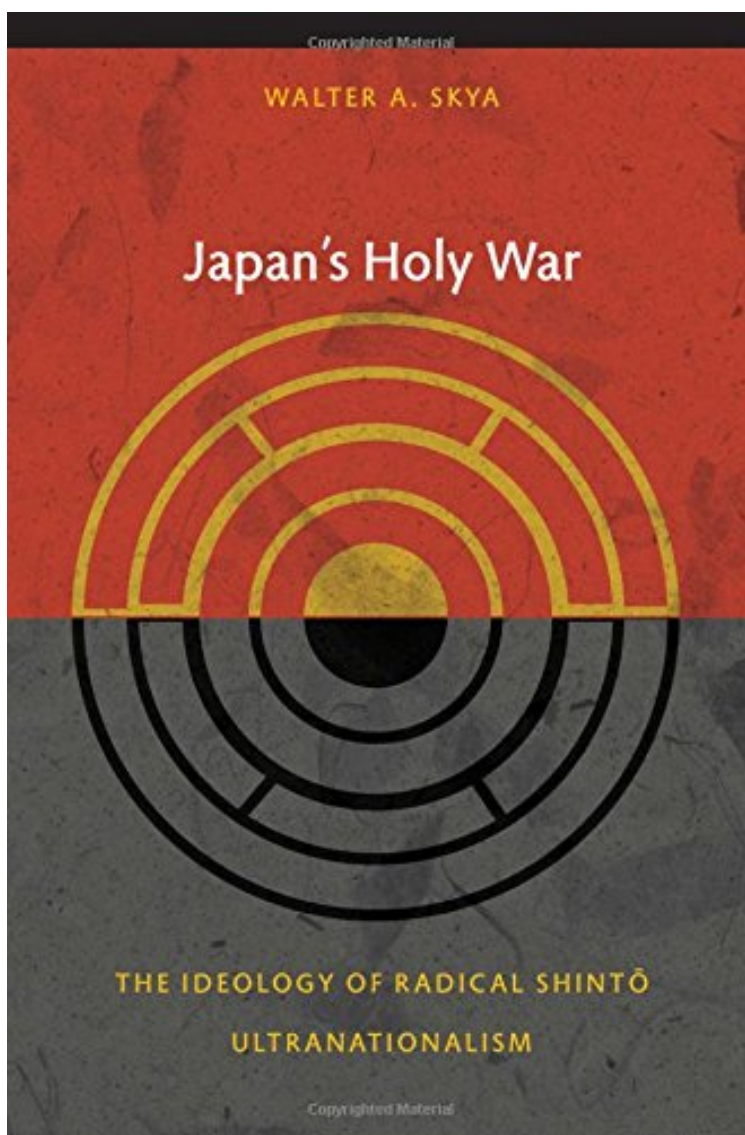


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## Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultrationalism (Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society)

Walter Skya

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Walter Skya : Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultrationalism (Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultrationalism (Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society):

14 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Unfortunate Typos....By Deer Girl in SnowI found the thesis of

the book exciting, a perspective that has not been studied much: interpreting the imperial throne through legal documents. The book traces and illustrates well how one interpretation became dominant in broad academic discourse and people behind it. Such investigation responds, in one way, to a long-standing question of the role of intellectuals in 1930s and 40s Japan. While I agree with the previous reviewer in many respects, the book certainly brought about an overlooked insight about the wartime Japan and its intellectual history. What ticked me off was rather petty---typos, yet became grave---throughout the book---to the extent that some of them certainly confuse readers. For example, Minoda Muneki is introduced as "Minoda Kyki" then switched to "Muneki," and returned to "Kyki." Similarly, on page 233, T Katsuaki is misspelled as "Fuji" Katsuaki, while Kajikawa Hikaru as "Kajiwara Hikaru." "Konuma Tadashi" on p. 236 is usually referred as Onuma Sh. Some names miss macrons while other names have extra macrons. Especially, the book does not contain "Kanji," such misspelling can be fatal. Despite an exciting thesis, I was very much distracted by typos.... which is very unfortunate.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Excellent work. It is the only systematic analysis of ...By American samurai

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Japanese nationalism as a war against individualism

By Richard Koenigsberg

Well, you can call the ideology "radical, but it was the ideology that generated World War II. Nationalism itself is a radical ideology, but we don't perceive OUR OWN nationalism as radical. Skya reveals the bizarre fantasy that lay at the heart of Japanese war-making: the belief that Japanese individuals could fuse or merge with the Emperor. Thus the entire nation could become "one heart, one body." Each and every Japanese human being would become assimilated into the body of the Emperor, and each and every Japanese would fuse with one another. According to this theory--that Skya lays out clearly--there could be no such thing as individualism, or individuality. The idea of the SEPARATE INDIVIDUAL terrified those who bought into the fantasy of oneness. The separate individual contradicted or negated the individual that there was only one body (the body of the Emperor) that contained every human being. The Japanese waged war in order to destroy the idea of the "separate individual" which, they imagined, was promoted by Westerners.

Japans Holy War reveals how a radical religious ideology drove the Japanese to imperial expansion and global war. Bringing to light a wealth of new information, Walter A. Skya demonstrates that whatever other motives the Japanese had for waging war in Asia and the Pacific, for many the war was the fulfillment of a religious mandate. In the early twentieth century, a fervent nationalism developed within State Shint. This ultranationalism gained widespread military and public support and led to rampant terrorism; between 1921 and 1936 three serving and two former prime ministers were assassinated. Shint ultranationalist societies fomented a discourse calling for the abolition of parliamentary government and unlimited Japanese expansion. Skya documents a transformation in the ideology of State Shint in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth. He shows that within the religion, support for the German-inspired theory of constitutional monarchy that had underpinned the Meiji Constitution gave way to a theory of absolute monarchy advocated by the constitutional scholar Hozumi Yatsuka in the late 1890s. That, in turn, was superseded by a totalitarian ideology centered on the emperor: an ideology advanced by the political theorists Uesugi Shinkichi and Kakehi Katsuhiko in the 1910s and 1920s. Examining the connections between various forms of Shint nationalism and the state, Skya demonstrates that where the Meiji oligarchs had constructed a quasi-religious, quasi-secular state, Hozumi Yatsuka desired a traditional theocratic state. Uesugi Shinkichi and Kakehi Katsuhiko went further, encouraging radical, militant forms of extreme religious nationalism. Skya suggests that the creeping democracy and secularization of Japans political order in the early twentieth century were the principal causes of the terrorism of the 1930s, which ultimately led to a holy war against Western civilization.

The study may help illuminate some otherwise indecipherable currents of thinking that exist in Japan even today. - Andrew J. Nathan, Foreign Affairs