

# Yasukuni, The War Dead And The Struggle For Japans Past

Journal of East Asian Studies 14 (2014), 459–471

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past.* Edited by John Breen. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. 202 pp. \$26.50 (paper).

The core characteristic of this book, and in effect of the whole Yasukuni problem, is captured in this sentence: "It is important to allow the possibility that there are multiple Yasukunis" (p. 12). John Breen says this in the context of the transformations the Yasukuni shrine has undergone ever since its establishment in 1869. The argument, however, can be applied much more broadly. Yasukuni indeed means many things to many people and the nine essays in this volume demonstrate this point.

Approaching Yasukuni from political, religious, legal, and historical perspectives, and often the combination thereof, the nine essays manage to cover all the problems associated with the shrine today. This includes the issue of enshrinement of war criminals, Japanese ministerial visits, the Yūshūkan war museum, the possibility of establishing a new site for national mourning, and the interpretation of the very nature of Yasukuni itself. The authors' conclusions, however, often contradict each other. As such, the book reflects well the larger reality surrounding Yasukuni presently. It showcases the profusion of viewpoints on Yasukuni as well as their varying quality. Half of the essays in this book are polemical and very selective with their historical evidence (chapters by Kevin Doak, Wang Zhixin, Seki Hei, and Nitta Hitoshi). The other half are more nuanced academic pieces (written by John Breen, Caroline Rose, Philip Seaton, and Takahashi Tetsuya). The imbalance in the quality of the contributions is the most conspicuous feature of the book.

I believe there are two ways to interpret this. First, the editor tried to provide the reader with the closest possible approximation of the scale and type of arguments that Yasukuni elicits in the present climate. If this is the case, the volume is very successful. Both the polemical and the more dispassionate essays serve a purpose. None accounts for the complexity of the Yasukuni problem alone, but reading them as a whole, one walks away with a much richer and tex-

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This book is the first authoritative volume in English on Yasukuni, the controversial Shinto shrine in the heart of Tokyo, dedicated to the Japanese war dead. This book is the first authoritative volume in English on Yasukuni, the controversial Shinto shrine in the heart of Tokyo, dedicated to the Japanese war dead. Twelve convicted and two suspected Class A war criminals are enshrined at Yasukuni, while the shrine's museum narrates an. Located in the heart of Tokyo, Yasukuni is a controversial shrine dedicated to the Japanese war dead. It holds the remains of twelve convicted and two. Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions CSJR Newsletter Autumn Issue CSJR Newsletter Autumn Issue Publications Yasukuni. Few topics within Japan studies invite a controversy as strong as the Yasukuni shrine. This volume edited by John Breen is a timely, up-to-date addition to the. Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past. Edited by John Breen. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. \$ Yasukuni, the war dead and the struggle for Japan's past. Responsibility: John Breen, editor. Imprint: New York: Columbia University Press, c Physical. Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past Edited by John Breen. Mark MacWilliams. St. Lawrence University. Search for more. Yasukuni, the War Dead, and the Struggle for Japan's Past. Edited by Breen John. New York: Columbia University Press, xv, pp. \$ (cloth); \$ On Dec 1, Ivo Plsek published: Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past. Edited by John Breen. New York: Columbia University Press. Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past. Edited by John. Breen . London: Hurst and Company, xv + pages. Hardback? By John Breen (Ed). C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, , pages, ISBN Review by Sean Curtin. Long-standing disputes surrounding Japan's. Creator: Breen, John, Publisher: New York: Columbia University Press, c Format: Books. Physical Description: xv, p., [7] p. of plates: ill. ; 23 cm. Booktopia has Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past by John Breen. Buy a discounted Hardcover of Yasukuni, the War Dead and the. Yasukuni: The War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past by John Breen (Ed.). Singapore: Horizon Books Pte Ltd, Hardcover. New/new. New.

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