



Emperor Hirohito and the Pacific War

Noriko Kawamura

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This reexamination of the controversial role Emperor Hirohito played during the Pacific War gives particular attention to the question: If the emperor could not stop Japan from going to war with the Allied Powers in 1941, why was he able to play a crucial role in ending the war in 1945? Drawing on previously unavailable primary sources, Noriko Kawamura traces Hirohito's actions from the late 1920s to the end of the war, analyzing the role Hirohito played in Japan's expansion. Emperor Hirohito emerges as a conflicted man who struggled throughout the war to deal with the undefined powers bestowed upon him as a monarch, often juggling the contradictory positions and irreconcilable differences advocated by his subordinates. Kawamura shows that he was by no means a pacifist, but neither did he favor the reckless wars advocated by Japan's military leaders.



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