

# Showa History, Rising Nationalism, and the Abe Government

Heather O'Connell

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# Authentic Account of the Showa Emperor's Life (page number)

- Collected over 3000 primary materials (1)
- Took nearly 25 years to complete (1)
- Fails to paint a clear picture
- Omits many key events
  - “Dodged questions about important events before, during, and after Japan’s lost war.” (2)

*Readers **cannot completely understand** without access to **key documents**.*

# Ommited Events

- Emperor's sanctioned aggression in Manchuria (2)
- Records of the emperor's meetings with General MacArthur (3)
- Indirect selection of men for war crimes tribunal (5)
- Continued to play secret political role while only a ceremonial figure (5)
- Emperor's responsibility for war time actions (8)
  - Ex. Negative response to recommendation to surrender
  - Ex. Consenting to American military control of Okinawa

*Basically, any **unseemly events** were deliberately **skipped over**.*

# Domestic Propaganda

Why omit so much?

*To uphold the emperor's image.*

Pacifist

Benelovent

“Non-political, constitutional  
monarch” (2)

“Tirelessly working for peace” (6)

# Relation to Today's Political Climate (6-7)

- PM Abe's political goals:
  - Historical revisionism (ex. comfort women, education revision)
  - Strengthen nationalism
  - Restore "lost honor"
  - Maintain Japan's position in global economy

*How can Abe change Japan into **a state capable of fighting wars** while at the same time **avoiding the emperor issue** that is also a **war crime and impunity** issue?*

# PM Abe's View (7)

Parts of the Constitution  
need to be rewritten.

- Ease restrictions on Japan's military involvement
- Strengthen restrictions on criticism of the symbol monarchy
- Bring the press into line

# Last Page

Opinion survey results (2013):

In comparison to 2008, respect for the emperor increased by 34%

*Link between **rising nationalism** and political tendencies to focus on the **symbol emperor**.*

- Little to be found from professional academic historians and political scientists
- Meanwhile, “myth of the pacifist” continues to be re-affirmed

# Opinion Time

- Trying to return “lost honor” with dishonorable actions
- “Santizing” history is a lie of omission
- Restricting the press over an image is petty
- Better to confront the truth
- Think of the future historians