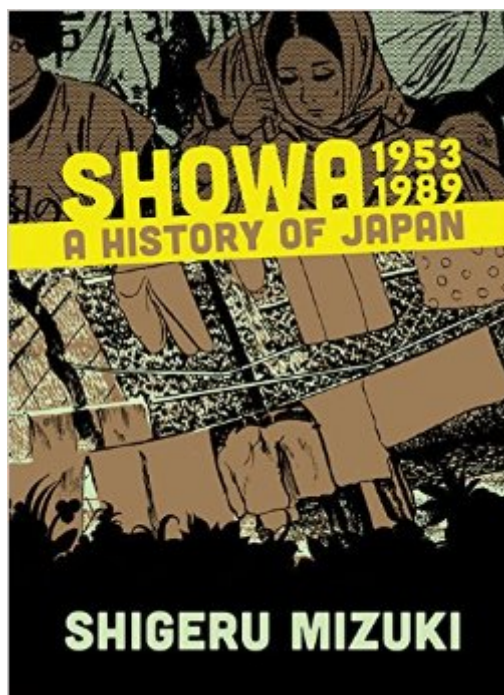


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Showa 1953-1989: A History Of Japan (Showa: A History Of Japan)



Synopsis

The final volume in the Eisner-nominated history of Japan; one of NPR's Best Books of 2014! "Showa 1953-1989: A History of Japan" concludes Shigeru Mizuki's dazzling autobiographical and historical account of Showa-period Japan, a portrait both intimate and ranging of a defining epoch. The final volume picks up in the wake of Japan's utter defeat in World War II, as a country reduced to rubble struggles to rise again. The Korean War brings new opportunities to a nation searching for an identity. A former enemy becomes their greatest ally as the United States funnels money, jobs, and opportunity into Japan, hoping to establish the country as a bulwark against Soviet Communist expansion. Japan reinvents itself, emerging as an economic powerhouse. Events like the Tokyo Olympiad and the World's Fair introduce a friendlier Japan to the world, but this period of peace and plenty conceals a populace still struggling to come to terms with the devastation of World War II. During this period of recovery and reconciliation, Mizuki's struggles mirror those of the nation. He fights his way back from poverty, becoming a celebrity who is beloved by millions of manga-reading children. However, prosperity cannot bring the happiness Mizuki craves, as he struggles to find meaning in the sacrifices made during the war. The original Japanese edition of the "Showa: A History of Japan" series won Mizuki the prestigious Kodansha Manga Award; the English translation has been nominated for an Eisner Award."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Manga master Shigeru Mizuki's "Showa" series exemplifies the melding of memoir, history and

comics. Its vast scope, comprising four large volumes in English, encompasses the entire reign of the Emperor Hirohito, which spanned from 1926 to 1989, the longest rule of any Japanese monarch. From the Chrysanthemum throne Hirohito oversaw some of the most tumultuous years the tiny archipelago nation ever experienced. During that era Japan's government morphed from late Taisho democracy into fervent nationalism, then to proto-fascism, to an all out aggressive military state and finally to the constitutional monarchy that exists today. Though Mizuki named his magnum opus after the Emperor's era, Hirohito himself makes very few appearances within its massive bulk. The story instead integrates Japanese history with Mizuki's own personal history. Both provide fascinating parallel narratives. Drafted like so many others, Mizuki served in the Japanese Army during World War II and miraculously escaped death numerous times. This frequently horrifying story takes up much of Showa volumes two and three. Volume four, the final volume, expands on the years during and following the American Occupation and Japan's "economic miracle." By 1989 Japan had emerged from the shadow of its humiliating defeat into an inexorable economic powerhouse, though Mizuki paints a bizarre and sometimes shocking picture of Japan in the late twentieth century. Many prospered but some prospered more than others. Some suffered horribly. At the end of volume three, Mizuki catches a train to Tokyo, chasing the nascent comics boom. So far his career in Kamishibai has proved mostly fruitless. He sets out to change that. Volume four begins with a discussion of the political climate in the early 1950s.

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