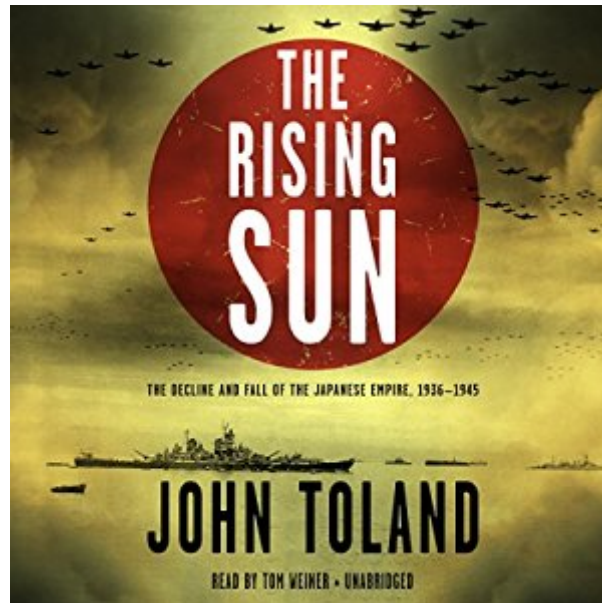


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# The Rising Sun: The Decline And Fall Of The Japanese Empire, 1936-1945



## Synopsis

This Pulitzer Prize-winning history of World War II chronicles the dramatic rise and fall of the Japanese empire, from the invasion of Manchuria and China to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Told from the Japanese perspective, *The Rising Sun* is, in the author's words, "a factual saga of people caught up in the flood of the most overwhelming war of mankind, told as it happened - muddled, ennobling, disgraceful, frustrating, full of paradox." In weaving together the historical facts and human drama leading up to and culminating in the war in the Pacific, Toland crafts a riveting and unbiased narrative history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For anyone truly interested in finding and reading one of the first definitive histories of Imperial Japan, this is the book. This work is at once carefully documented and scholarly yet is also eminently readable and entertaining. Although there is no single volume that adequately explains the mysterious story of how Japan rose to threaten the eastern half of the globe, author John Toland delivers a most informative and exhaustively researched manuscript that does help us to understand the essential elements stirred in the witches brew that poisoned most of Asia from 1933 until 1945. It has the unique and helpful tact of being written from the Japanese perspective, something Toland was able to accomplish with the help of his Japanese wife and collaborator. As with all his works, Toland spent several years researching this book with intensive interviews by surviving principals, and had access to a wide range of archival data and previously unpublished data and facts. The result is this magisterial work. As mentioned above, this is a book that concentrates heavily on interviews with a literal torrent of people who had significant contact and

knowledge of the circumstance and conditions that fostered and expedited the rise of the militant and imperialistic military class within Japanese society, and of the ways their rise and interests coalesced and matched the long-term desires of the Japanese power elite, who mistakenly believed they could manipulate and control the military in their actions. Like the German aristocracy that climbed into bed with Hitler thinking they could do the same, they made the fatal error of underestimating the Machiavellian aims and purposes of the Japanese military.

This is an impressive work that really makes an attempt to analyze the causes of Japan's conflict with the United States during the Second World War, and the events during the war that culminate with Japan's defeat. I have read no other work that goes into comparable depth as regards the complexities of 1940s Japanese politics. This work impressively manages to at least try to explain why the Japanese side decided to go to war with the United States, a country that many of its leaders understood to be more powerful than Japan in almost every measurable category of war-making capability. Author Toland does manage to inject a certain amount of pro-Japanese bias into the causes of the War. Essentially, Japan wanted for itself more or less what the British had in their own Empire: a group of states that were economically and militarily subservient to Japan. The Japanese "Co-Prosperity Sphere" was plainly modelled on the British and other European colonial empires. Toland spends less time dealing with the fact that the countries that Japan had decided should be part of this new Empire did not wish to be Japanese colonial subjects. Further, he touches upon the fact (but deemphasizes its importance) that this Japanese ambition involved savage mistreatment of civilians that both the American government and US public opinion could not possibly have condoned. Further, Japanese politics in the 1930s and 1940s was dominated by militarists to a greater extent than any Western power. Even Nazi Germany was a civilian government to which the military was clearly subservient. (Of course its civilian government was more radical and fanatical than the German military, creating a different host of problems.

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