

... *Wings of Defeat is an ideal film
for concluding a unit on the Pacific War* ...

to successfully pilot a plane. Due to a labor shortage, high school girls in Japan were pulled out of the classroom to manufacture planes for these pilots. This alone makes the film engaging for students.

Interesting details in *Wings of Defeat* show the humanity of tokko pilots. When the director visits a small Tokkotai museum and opens a journal kept by one of the pilots, she shows intriguing drawings and entries that look very similar to what my students would journal. Many of the pilots adopted families around the training centers to help them ease the constant thoughts they had of their own deaths. Members of these families made dolls that represented themselves for the pilots to carry in their planes so that they would not be alone when they died. In a picture kept by one of the pilots, he points out the doll attached to his waist.

Wings of Defeat will help students think more deeply about the nature of warfare. This film is about how ideology and belief guided the Japanese to use the Tokkotai as a last resort. In an interview with one of the director's elderly family members, she said she had believed Japan would win the war once the government began to use the kamikaze. She believed the pilots were "deities" (*kami-sama*), and that now the gods were on the side of Japan. Even in the spring of 1945, when the war was at its worst for Japan, the kamikaze became a tool of propaganda. The population was urged to die for their nation, and the film shows a propaganda poster with the caption "Every citizen is now kamikaze."

This film has relevance today, as students are confronted almost daily with news about terrorists, fanatics, and suicide bombers. Perhaps this film will give them an anchor to ask the questions that should be asked. This is why Edgewood Pictures markets *Wings of Defeat* not just for History classes, but also for courses in Peace and Justice, Human Rights, Political Science, International Relations, and Media and Culture.

Teachers who purchase the film also receive a teacher's guide created by SPICE with "Letters to Educators" from Professor John Dower, Professor Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, Linda Hoaglund, and Risa Morimoto.

After viewing this film, I know I will devote more than fifteen minutes to the kamikaze. *Wings of Defeat* is an ideal film for concluding a unit on the Pacific War, and it will generate a classroom discussion questioning the nature of war. ■

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Journeys in Japan the Japanland

DIRECTOR, KARIN MULLER

DISTRIBUTOR: WWW.JAPANLANDONLINE.COM

225 MINUTES, COLOR, TWO DVD SET, ALSO AVAILABLE IN VHS

Reviewed by Guven Witteveen

Karin Muller's *Japanland* book was published in 2005, and the double DVD set was released in 2006. Classroom supplements went online at japanlandstudyguide.com at the end of 2007. This review focuses on the four hours of short video segments that can be viewed as stand-alone pieces or played as a linear story that follows Muller's year of observing and participating in mainstream Japanese life, as well as pursuing far less common experiences across the islands.

The story opens with Karin introducing herself and the judo training that brought her to Tokyo. She then ventures out to some places within easy reach of the capital. From her interest in the similarities to and difference with her life in the US, she sets off for several months across the islands to learn about ongoing traditions and everyday life among the Japanese people.

What Karin does not say is that she has made travels before and presented them through film. Her other work, along with still images, some commentary (www.japanlandjourney.com), and ordering information for the *Japanland* set are online at www.japanlandonline.com. The quality of the audio and video is high. The pacing of edits and the length of each segment are also well done. Her storytelling and production skills are clear. No prior knowledge about Japan is presumed. The opening menu on each DVD allows easy navigation to individual episodes, which run between two and eight minutes. The story flows in chronological

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*A simple, powerful element she uses is to give
the names of the people
she meets and learns from along the way.*



Karin Muller.
©2005 Karin Muller

order from one seasonal event to another, from one end of the main island to the other, and circling the Inland Sea island of Shikoku on its pilgrimage route.

A simple, powerful element she uses is to give the names of the people she meets and learns from along the way. Another is to try her hand at all sorts of activities, without introducing any exoticism to the unfamiliar things she is doing. Together, this naming and participation personalizes the viewer's experience. One feels the subject is familiar—that one could step right into the same event, know the people involved, and understand a good deal about the activity's main features.

Muller groups the segments into three broad types: scenes from urban life today, religious practices, and traditional arts and practices. Urban scenes include youth fash-

ions and pastimes, the hub of activities at the train station, including the bicycle parking lot enforcement, full service gas station routines, the nighttime noodle vendor, a visit to the pachinko parlor and golfing decks, a neighborhood fire patrol, a night at a capsule hotel, and lives of homeless people. Muller visits Mt. Koya's monastery, tagging along for a retreat with *Yamabushi* (mountain ascetics) and the eighty-eight pilgrimage stations around Shikoku with a group to demonstrate some religious practices. There is also a segment with a door-to-door itinerant lion dance troupe, as well as other festivals and ceremonies.

The third broad category of traditional arts and practices illustrates historical samurai commemorations, apprentice sword-making, wood-fired pottery making, fishing village life and the morning market, learning and performing *taikō* (festival drumming), and an annual village winter outdoor stage production.

This two-DVD set will be of greatest value to people seeking cultural literacy about Japanese social life. Students of Japanese language, exchange students past, present or future, as well as foreign residents will gain most from the presentations. Other audiences include social studies classes. There are also specific segments of interest to students of arts, music, and religions. The convenient form and the rich content of *Japanland* makes it a pleasure to view and to use. Teachers who would like to contact Karin Muller may reach her at karin@karinmuller.com. ■

GUVEN WITTEVEEN is an anthropologist of Japan and has worked in public outreach and international education at the National Resource Centers (see <http://www.outreachworld.org>) of Michigan State University and then University of Michigan. He is now co-editing a handbook for outreach educators to better serve pre-college students and teachers. His photosets from Japan and Korea are online at <http://picasaweb.google.com/eastasia108>. Contact him at anthreview@gmail.com.

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—Mark Selden, Senior Fellow, East Asia Program,
Cornell University

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I am delighted that *Through Indian Eyes* is coming in a new edition. While meant for students, I can well imagine its being read with pleasure by people going to India and wanting "the best short book on India." I will certainly add it to the list of "best short books" that I am frequently asked to name.

—Ainslie T. Embrie, Professor Emeritus of South Asian
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