

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910461204003321
Titolo	Japanese prisoners of war // edited by Philip Towle, Margaret Kosuge and Yoichi Kibata
Pubbl/distr/stampa	London ; ; Rio Grande, Ohio : , : Hambledon Press, , 2000
ISBN	1-283-20196-8 9786613201966 0-8264-3978-0
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (216 p.)
Disciplina	940.54/72
Soggetti	World War, 1939-1945 - Prisoners and prisons, Japanese Prisoners of war - Europe Prisoners of war - United States Prisoners of war - Australia Prisoners of war - Southeast Asia World War, 1939-1945 - Concentration camps - Southeast Asia World War, 1939-1945 - Conscript labor - Southeast Asia Electronic books. Southeast Asia History
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Contents; Acknowledgements; Contributors; Introduction; 1 The Japanese Army and Prisoners of War; 2 The Changi POW Camp and the Burma-Thailand Railway; 3 Allied POWs and the Burma-Thailand Railway; 4 Understanding the Enemy: Military Intelligence, Political Warfare and Japanese Prisoners of War in Australia, 1942-45; 5 POWs and International Law; 6 Culture, Race and Power in Japan's Wartime Empire; 7 Japan's Racial Identity in the Second World War: The Cultural Context of Japanese Treatment of POWs; 8 Japanese Treatment of British Prisoners: The Historical Context 9 Religion, the Red Cross and Japanese Treatment of POWs 10 The Post-War Treatment of Japanese Overseas Nationals; 11 Towards Reconciliation: Japanese Reactions to Ernest Gordon; Bibliography;

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### Sommario/riassunto

During World War II the Japanese were stereotyped in the European imagination as fanatical, cruel, almost inhuman - an image reflected in most books and films about prisoner of war in the Far East. While the Japanese certainly treated those they captured badly, behaving far worse to Chinese and native captives than to Europeans, the conventional view of the Japanese is unhistorical and simplistic. It fails to recognize that the Japanese were acting at a time of supreme national crisis, at a particular period of their history, and that their attitudes were influenced by a combination of th