

History 4363-Essay #1

M.G. Sheftall's *Blossoms in the Wind* provides an examination of the Japanese *kamikaze* program during World War II. Sheftall frames the concept of the *kamikaze* in the larger context of Japanese society and within the framework of Japanese strategic culture. In an extended analytical essay of (800-900 words), I ask that you discuss the following issues:

- 1) What is Sheftall's primary thesis and what reason(s) does he identify as to why Japanese pilots agreed to participate in the program?
- 2) What insights does the work reveal on the nature and importance of cultural beliefs and socialization in shaping the actions of these pilots?
- 3) What evidentiary sources does Sheftall use to support his argument? Evaluate these sources and their importance.
- 4) Finally, discuss the importance of *Blossoms in the Wind* with respect to our contemporary world? Does it provide potential insights into the methods by which individuals can be conditioned to willing sacrifice their lives for an ideal?

Your essay should include specific examples and citations from *Blossoms in the Wind* to support your argument. When citing from the work, use the following convention:

Example 1 (Direct Quote): Sheftall argues, "Japan's collective memory of the war, as with so many other issues in its history, has a tendency toward selective amnesia." (Sheftall, 446)

Example 2 (Citation of evidence): Sheftall discussed the presence of journalists at the *tokkō* airfields and noted their importance in publicizing the role of the pilots in the kamikaze attacks. (Sheftall, 278)

The essay is due to Turnitin.com by the start of class on Lesson 9 (18 Mar 2021). Late assignments will not be accepted. Good luck!