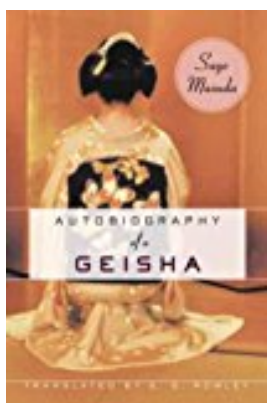


[PDF] Autobiography Of A Geisha

Sayo Masuda, G. G. Rowley - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: Autobiography of a Geisha
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Description:

Sayo Masuda's *Autobiography of a Geisha* offers a story of unremitting hardship faced by a hot-springs geisha, a virtual indentured sex-slave in pre-World War II Japan.

Born in 1925, Masuda began work as a nursemaid at age 5 and suffered a childhood of emotional and material poverty. She was then sold to the Takenoya geisha house in Upper Suwa at age 12. While her food and clothing were provided for by Takenoya, she was subject to constant verbal abuse as an apprentice. At one point, she was heaved down the stairs by her "Mother" (the name she uses for the proprietor of the geisha house) and nearly lost a leg. During her recovery, she

attempted suicide and further injured herself.

Eventually, Masuda mastered the art of seduction as a geisha. The middle portion of the narrative is taken up with stories of her successful campaign for a *danna* (patron), of her brother's tragic suicide, and of her star-crossed love affair with a Japanese politician.

Autobiography of a Geisha, translated for the first time into English by G. G. Rowley, was published in Japan in 1957 and has been in print in Japan steadily ever since. The tale is rendered in a simple English prose to reflect Masuda's own, untrained style (she did not have schooling and she only learned to write hiragana script later in life). For Western readers, Masuda's autobiography is a gift: a glimpse into the dark reality behind one of the most shrouded institutions in Japanese culture.
--Patrick O'Kelley

From Publishers Weekly Masuda's account of being a geisha in rural Japan at a hot springs resort is at once intriguing and heartbreaking. There is nothing idyllic in her description of geisha training or life between the world wars. Born in 1925, Masuda was sent to work for a wealthy landowner when she was five. At 12, she was sold to a geisha house for about 30 yen, the price of a bag of rice. During those years, Masuda writes, "I wasn't even able to wonder why I didn't have any parents or why I should be the only one who was tormented. If you ask me what I did know then, it was only that hunger was painful and human beings were terrifying." Originally published in Japan in 1957, where it is still in print, this book grew out of an article that Masuda, who didn't learn to read and write until she was in her 20s, submitted for a contest in *Housewife's Companion* magazine. Her picaresque adventures as a geisha, then mistress, factory worker, gang moll and caretaker for her young brother offer an impassioned plea for valuing children. "Never give birth to children thoughtlessly!" she writes. "That is why, stroke by faltering stroke, I've written all this down."
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