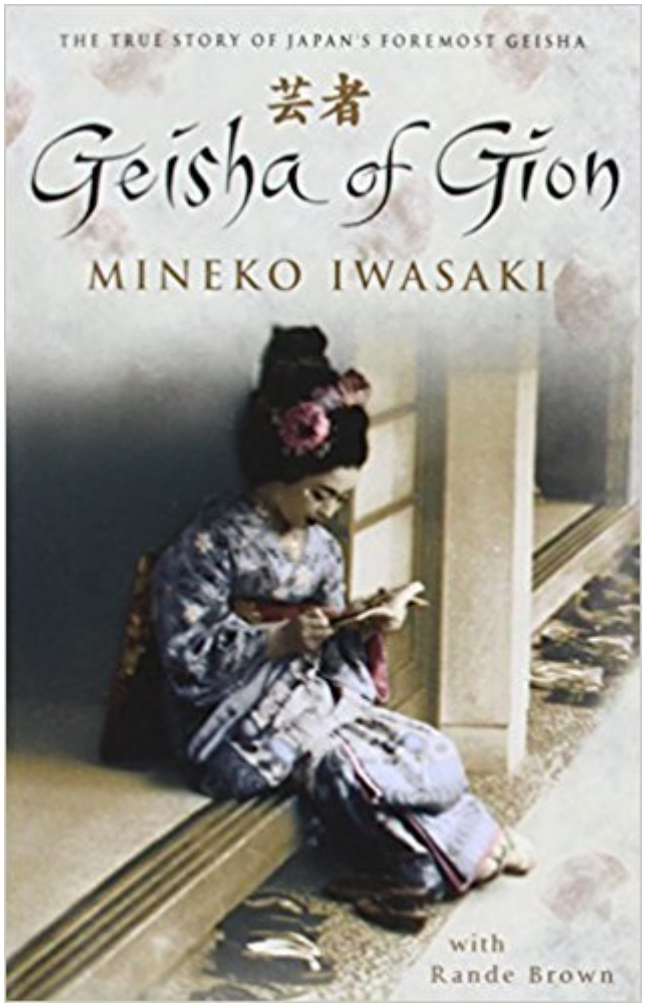
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Geisha Of Gion: The True Story Of Japan's Foremost Geisha (Memoir Of Mineko Iwasaki)



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Synopsis

The term artificial life describes research into synthetic systems that possess some of the essential properties of life. This interdisciplinary field includes biologists, computer scientists, physicists, chemists, geneticists, and others. Artificial life may be viewed as an attempt to understand high-level behavior from low-level rules - for example, how the simple interactions between ants and their environment lead to complex trail-following behavior. An understanding of such relationships in particular systems can suggest novel solutions to complex real-world problems such as disease prevention, stock-market prediction, and data mining on the Internet.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

MINEKO reached the peak of her career as a geisha in the 70s and 80s, performing for the likes of the Queen and Prince Charles. Now fifty-two years old (and still stunningly beautiful), she is the mother of one daughter and lives with her husband in a suburb of Kyoto, Japan.

I found this to be a very well written memoir about the time spent in the flower and willow world by a prominent geisha of her time. Mineko’s story starts off as a young child, around the age of four, and continues until she shockingly leaves the world around the age of 29, at the prime of her career. It is written in a way that a non Japanese reader can gain insight into some of the customs and traditions of this fairly closed society. To us it seems odd that a child would be adopted out and forever "leave" their birth family, but this was a fairly routine practice. Mineko leaves home, begins geisha training,

finds a true passion for dance, and becomes the adopted heir apparent to a well known established geisha house.I found the surrounding people in the house fairly fascinating as well, and I am glad she included insight into their lives, how they became to be associated with her okiya. There is the expected bickering between coworkers and the "bosses" trying to hold it all together.I liked the fact she talks about her dance training, talks about the teachers and her commitment to being the best dancer. I also like that she is up front about her, well we would call it her introverted personality, and how she knows this hinders her in other areas of her profession. (Entertaining at tea houses does not simply entail dancing, she has to entertain the guests and interact with other maiko and giesha.)She is candid about some personal relationships, and that is refreshing in a book from this culture.My only complaint, is that she often talks about how she wanted things in the geisha world to change, that she complained to " the head office" about things. I wish she would have written more about what she saw as problems. I guess if we sat down and had a cup of tea she might expound on how she felt their education was lacking (they basically don't learn any "real world skills") and what she would want changed. I didn't know if it was just that education, their working hours, their servitude to a house due to their debt, what issues she felt needed to be changed. I think that would have helped me appreciate her plight slightly more. Because she was basically at the top of the geisha food chain during her time, and if at the top she felt she had problems, it would be interesting to view her problems and how it might be worse for those geisha lower down the ladder.But all in all I would say I loved this book. It had enough fancy kimono descriptions, geisha training/school stories, personal relationships, and family and geisha society descriptions to keep me turning the pages and wanting more. I think it was incredibly fortunate this book was written.

Very readable, autobiographical-style account of what it was like to be a geisha in the decades following World War II. The word geisha literally translates to "art person", which is an accurate description of the kinds of skills a geisha needed to acquire. Top geisha were highly trained in a variety of arts and could earn the same kind of money as very successful doctors and lawyers in the United States. They needed to; their fine, handmade silk kimonos cost a small fortune. "Gion" in the title refers to the most famous geisha district in Japan, which is located in Kyoto. This book does an admirable job correcting common misconceptions about the nature of the geisha profession. Highly recommended building block toward a well-rounded understanding of Japanese culture.

I really enjoyed this book! I feel like it gives a good insight of the daily lives of a geisha. I knew that memoirs of a geisha was based off the life of Mineko Iwasaki so I decided to read her book first. I

had read that many people didn't like this book because the author seemed so self centered but I honestly feel like that's no reason to not like a book, it is all about her life anyways. I also love the fact that she included pictures.

Iwasaki illustrates her ascent into performances, decorum and the social politics of Kyoto's geisha in this candid biography. As a narrator, she tends to speak favorably of herself when describing herself as a dancer and entertainer. And frankly, why should she not? This is the world that she has been trained to live in since she was a toddler. Despite the many rigorous rules of decorum and education, passed down through a series of strict dance instructors and mentors, and the cultural passive role that geisha are expected to commit to in their line of work, Mineko's stubborn and independent personality emerges. Iwasaki's relationships with the female mentors, friends and foes in her life guide and shape her views on what it means to be a geisha, what it ultimately meant to walk away from the world and what it meant to tell her story.

The book arrived on time and was in great shape.I sat down to read this story and was vividly impressed with the character of Mineko, she and I seemed to be growing up in the same time and space miles and cultures apart. Mineko as an appreciated artist did her thing unashamed; I appreciate her for sharing her story of a rich tapestry of the mystery that surrounds the life of a Geisha how HARD they really practice, work and study the ancient culture and principles of mindfulness...A vocalist and visual artist myself none can imagine why I had to stand alone, practice---practice---practice, no time for the mundane things in this life; but she told our story! Even the hiding from the sight of others when we were very young. Her in the cupboard, me in my mother's closet (LOL). Mineko, THANK YOU for opening up and making me know that I am not/ was not anything other than what/who I'm supposed to be! I give her two thumbs up! KUDOS!

A great read! I've been an Arthur Golden fan for many years, and didn't realize his book was partly based on the life of Mineko Iwasaki. I found it most enlightening to read her true biography and compare it to Golden's portrayal. He changed much of what he wrote, but it's interesting to see what he changed and what he kept the same. (I'm aware Golden's is a work of fiction.) If you're a fan of the flower and willow world, this is a must-read. You might be surprised!

This is a great book. It's based on a true story unlike Memoirs of a Geisha, so if you want to know what being a geisha was really like, read this book!!

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