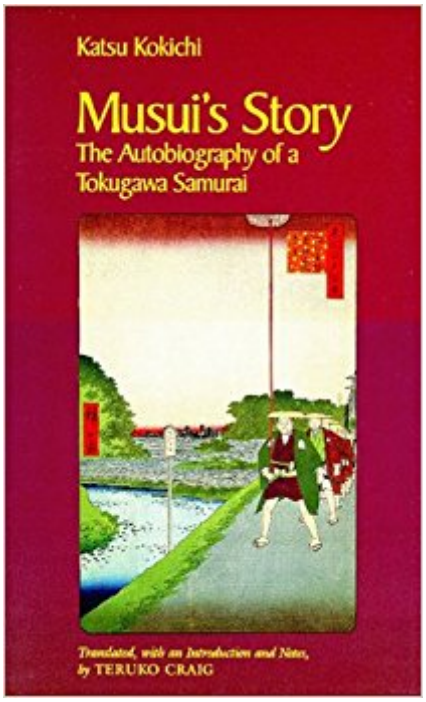
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Musui's Story: The Autobiography Of A Tokugawa Samurai



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Synopsis

A series of picaresque adventures set against the backdrop of a Japan still closed off from the rest of the world, Musui's Story recounts the escapades of samurai Katsu Kokichi. As it depicts Katsu stealing, brawling, indulging in the pleasure quarters, and getting the better of authorities, it also provides a refreshing perspective on Japanese society, customs, economy, and human relationships. From childhood, Katsu was given to mischief. He ran away from home, once at thirteen, making his way as a beggar on the great trunk road between Edo and Kyoto, and again at twenty, posing as the emissary of a feudal lord. He eventually married and had children but never obtained official preferment and was forced to supplement a meager stipend by dealing in swords, selling protection to shopkeepers, and generally using his muscle and wits. Katsu's descriptions of loyalty and kindness, greed and deception, vanity and superstition offer an intimate view of daily life in nineteenth-century Japan unavailable in standard history books. Musui's Story will delight not only students of Japan's past but also general readers who will be entranced by Katsu's candor and boundless zest for life.

Book Information

Paperback: 208 pages
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Customer Reviews

"This charming book...portrays Tokugawa society as it was actually lived, instead of as it was portrayed in moralizing tracts and governmental ordinances. Attractively translated by Teruko Craig, it depicts the life of a man born into a family with the hereditary privilege of audience with the shogun, yet he shamelessly consorted with the riffraff of Edo, ran a protection racket, lied, cheated, and stole....Craig is to be commended for the felicity of her translation and for her clear presentation

of a complex social order in the Introduction....Anyone interested in Japanese history and society or in how people interact with each other in whatever age or place will enjoy reading this book."Ã¢â ¬â •Monumenta Nipponica "Tells the life of Katsu Kokichi, a samurai on the lower fringe of his class who gave up the aspirations expected of him to mix with the scruffier elements of the Edo streets. . . . Teruko Craig has my applause for selecting what may be a unique document, translating it so gracefully, and supplying it with an informative introduction and annotation. . . . Enjoyable reading."Ã¢â ¬â •Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese "This valuable translation provides many insights into Japanese life. . . . Teruko Craig is to be commended on the vivid picture of this slice of Tokugawa life."Ã¢â ¬â •Journal of Royal Asiatic Society "A delightful little book. . . . one of those one sit, cover-to-cover reads."Ã¢â ¬â •American Asian Review "A colorful, involving glimpse of the gritty side of a distinctly foreign culture."Ã¢â ¬â •Kirkus Reviews

Text: English, Japanese (translation) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Not as enjoyable as anticipated - he seemed to waste a lot of his life which is what people do who have no focus and no goals -and sohe wrote about himself - sort of like a typical Facebook entry - nothing really to it

I very much enjoyed this story - autobiography. It paints a very unique picture of the early 1800’s in the Tokogawa period of Japan. Also, as one who has enjoyed reading and learning as much as I can about Ryoma Sakamoto, Musui’s Story adds a little info as Musui was the father of Katsu Kaishu, Ryoma’s mentor. I have already recommended the book to others.

Ok read

The translation is easy and enjoyable. The book reads quickly. Musui’s Story (1802-1850) de-mystifies the time, place and lives of ordinary people in Japan. One is left with the inclination to forgive the rascal for his obvious imperfections.

Musui was quite a scoundrel and a lot of his activities were repetitious. We read this as part of our small book group at the Morikami Museum in Delray Beach, Florida that reads Japanese authors (in translation, of course!)

Good copy Thank You!

Katsu Kokichi’s autobiography shows the gritty, dark, realistic side of Tokugawa society. This samurai, who was always down on his luck, mostly because of his own rotten ideas and unethical actions, lied, cheated, stole and ran around with the riffraff of Edo. He ran away from home, twice, once at the age of 14 and once at the age of 21. The second time he was running away from his OWN household - his wife and his bills. He once lived as a begger, travelled a lot (well, ran away a lot) and learned a lot about how to get money without doing any real work.This book is important as a piece of first person history into the real lifes and people of the 19th Century Japan. It showed how many Samurai lived during the time of peace, trying to take odd jobs, make some money and still dress, act and give the impression of being warriors. A must for any history library.

Arrived right on time and great quality for a good price. Will come back again for more books. Thanks alot.

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