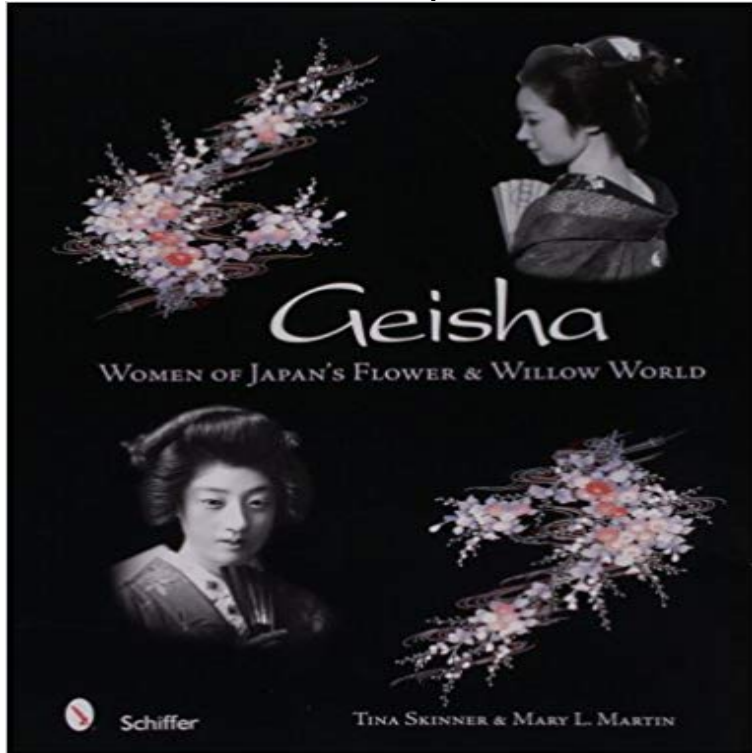


Geisha: Women of Japans Flower & Willow World



This is the most comprehensive assembly of historic geisha images ever compiled in a book. Over 500 exquisite views - drawn from postcards produced primarily between 1900 and 1940 - illustrate the rarified world of Japan's now-extinct licensed pleasure districts. Soon after the West pried open Japan's doors in 1853, stories about Japan began to circulate wildly through Victorian societies. Geisha quickly attained folkloric status as both imagery, widely traveled stage productions, and titillating novels spread their fame, and postcards bearing their images circulated the globe. Enter a world dripping in symbolism, elevated by accomplishment. For the Westerner, it is a world of exotic misconceptions, characterized by a male fantasy of the submissive Asian beauty devoted to his pleasure. Equally exotic to the average Japanese, Geisha embody the highest level of a proud culture. Geisha are accomplished in music, letters, and the intricate art of the tea ceremony. Epitomizing feminine grace and beauty, geisha are always carefully adorned, every hair oiled into place, and every step and gesture perfectly executed. The comprehensive text introduces historical background about the talented geisha entertainers and other women who were indentured in virtual slavery within the famed and idealized Flower and Willow World. High-class prostitutes, as well as lowly tea servers are pictured, and the life of early 20th century women in Japan is explored. The symbolic kimono, poses, and accouterments of the women photographed are explained in captioning that will help to open the eyes of many Westerners to Japanese culture, and help to debunk misconceptions regarding the status and nature of geisha. For the Japanese historian, this is the best source of original imagery ever assembled within two covers about Geisha. For anyone with even a casual interest in this utterly unique

culture, this book will prove a captivating page turner. .

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