



A Daughter of the Samurai: How a Daughter of Feudal Japan, Living Hundreds of Years in One Generation, Became a Modern American

Etsu Inagaki Sugimoto

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Dust jacket notes: "Ever since it was published in 1926, this delightful book has had an enthusiastic following. The Japan of the samurai - a land of tradition and set behavior - has almost disappeared, but Etsu Sugimoto has succeeded in recreating for the reader the flavor of her childhood in feudal Japan. The author was brought up in a samurai family, rigidly schooled so that she would be an intelligent and capable wife, and then sent to America to meet for the first time her future husband. Her life in the West enabled her to remember her childhood with nostalgia, and yet with detachment. Her childhood memories are, perhaps, the most intriguing part of her story. Her tomboy adventures in the big old family home, her journey over the mountains to Tokyo in a palanquin, her first taste of meat - when the family shrine had to be covered so the gods would not be offended - these are magic memories. But her account of the impact of America on a Japanese mind full of eager curiosity shows us Western life in a new light. How lucky that Madame Sugimoto did record her memories! Soon after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 introduced Western ideas into a still feudal Japan, the samurai were fated to disappear. This, then, is a memoir of an almost-forgotten age, which shows us an apparently alien world from the inside. In his Introduction Christopher Morley writes: 'What a lovely book it is, and how much it has to teach us. I have a secret notion that it will go on for years and years, making friends for itself and for the brave woman who wrote it.'"

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