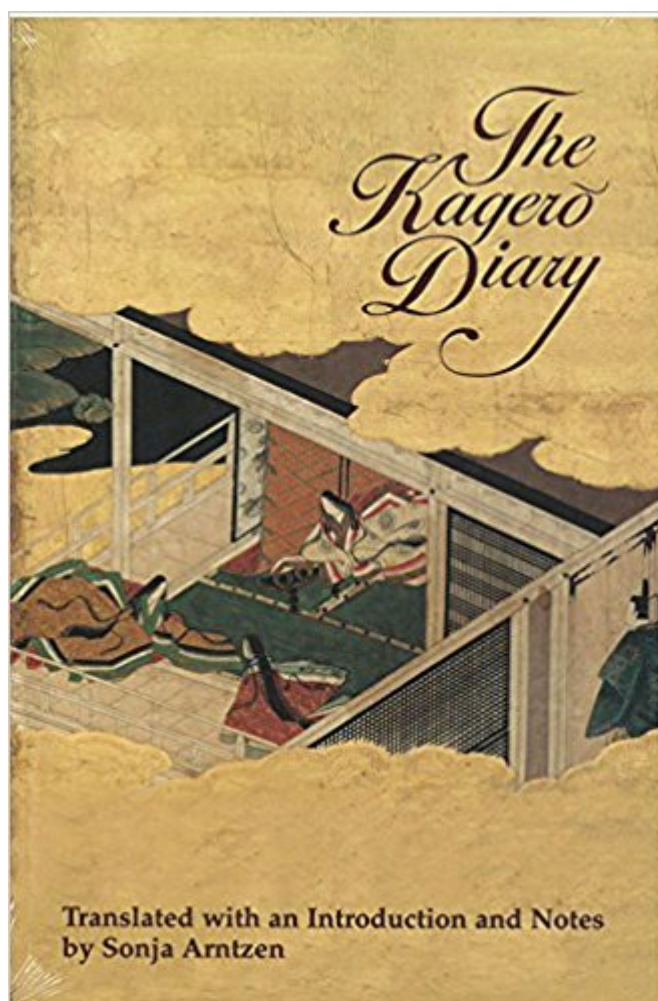


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The Kagero Diary (Michigan Monograph Series In Japanese Studies)



Synopsis

Japan is the only country in the world where it was primarily the works of women writers that laid the foundation for the classical literary tradition. The Kagero Diary is the first extant work of that rich and brilliant tradition. The author was a member of the middle-ranking aristocracy of the Heian. period (794-1185) and her autobiographical text gives readers access to a woman's experience of a thousand years ago

Book Information

Series: Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies (Book 19)

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

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

I love the book. the narration is inspiring and the poems unique. I found myself highlighting so many lines while I read it.

Arrived quickly as promised. Or at least, as early as I had needed it to. Content is subjective, and though it is suited to the class I am enrolled in, I enjoy it and can understand the main character, Michitsuna's Mother, as well as all of her feels, trials and tribulations throughout the book, and trying to deal with her assthat of a husband throughout her marriage to him.

This book (same as the Gossamer Years tr. Seidensticker) is a series of fairly short passages written by "Michinaga's Mother," describing her life in the last quarter of the 10th c., starting with her marriage to a Fujiwara who would become one of the most powerful lords in the country. She is particularly interested in recording the poems she wrote and those written to reply to them by her husband and others. She also gives a vivid picture of her moral struggle with the Buddhist rejection of human loves and the cultural pleasures she is so deeply involved in. I am just getting interested in Heian Japan after reading the Tale of Genji, and the Kagero Diary is a wonderful source of information and understanding. As a memoir it is much more powerful (IMHO) than Murasaki's own diary or Sei Shonagon's Pillow Book. You can see and feel the author coming to terms with who she is and the life she has lived as she narrates the events that were most important for her. The text of the translation is set on the right-hand pages and the notes on the facing page. The poems are all transcribed so that one can see the words in them, and Arntzen, the translator, comments on the puns, etc. The notes and introduction are in some places personal, describing a modern woman scholar's changing understanding of the author. They are also smart and scholarly. I am not sure whether this translation would be satisfactory all by itself, but with the notes one feels one is getting in touch with the original. Unfortunately, there are many irritating typos.

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