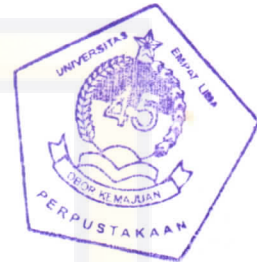


**ANALYSIS OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN  
ARTHUR GOLDEN'S "MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA"**



**SKRIPSI**

**Presented to the Faculty of Letters University "45" Makassar  
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the S1 Degree  
At the English Department**

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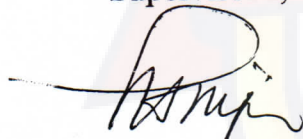
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## TABLE OF CONTENT

PAGE OF TITLE .....	i
PAGE OF APPROVAL .....	ii
ABSTRACT .....	iii
AKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENT .....	v
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Identification of The Problem.....	2
1.3 Scope of The Problem .....	3
1.4 Formulation of Problem.....	3
1.5 Objective of The Study .....	4
1.6 Method of Research.....	4
1.6.1 Method of Collecting Data.....	4
1.6.2 Method of Analyzing Data.....	5
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	6
2.1 Definition.....	6
2.1.1 Novel.....	6
2.1.2 Character .....	7
2.1.3 Setting.....	9
2.2 Synopsis.....	11
2.3 Biography of the Authors.....	12

CHAPTER III DATA ANALYSIS .....	12
3.1 Geisha .....	14
3.1.1 ..... The History of Geisha.....	19
3.2 The Women Characters in “Memoirs of A Geisha”.....	25
3.2.1 Sayuri.....	25
3.2.2 Mameha.....	36
3.2.3 Mother.....	37
3.2.4 Auntie Nitta.....	38
3.2.5 Pumpkin.....	38
3.3 Setting .....	39
3.3.1 Kyoto.....	39
3.3.2 In 1929.....	42
3.4 Geisha and Prostitution.....	46
CHAPTER IV CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS .....	51
4.1 Conclusions .....	51
4.2 Suggestions .....	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	54

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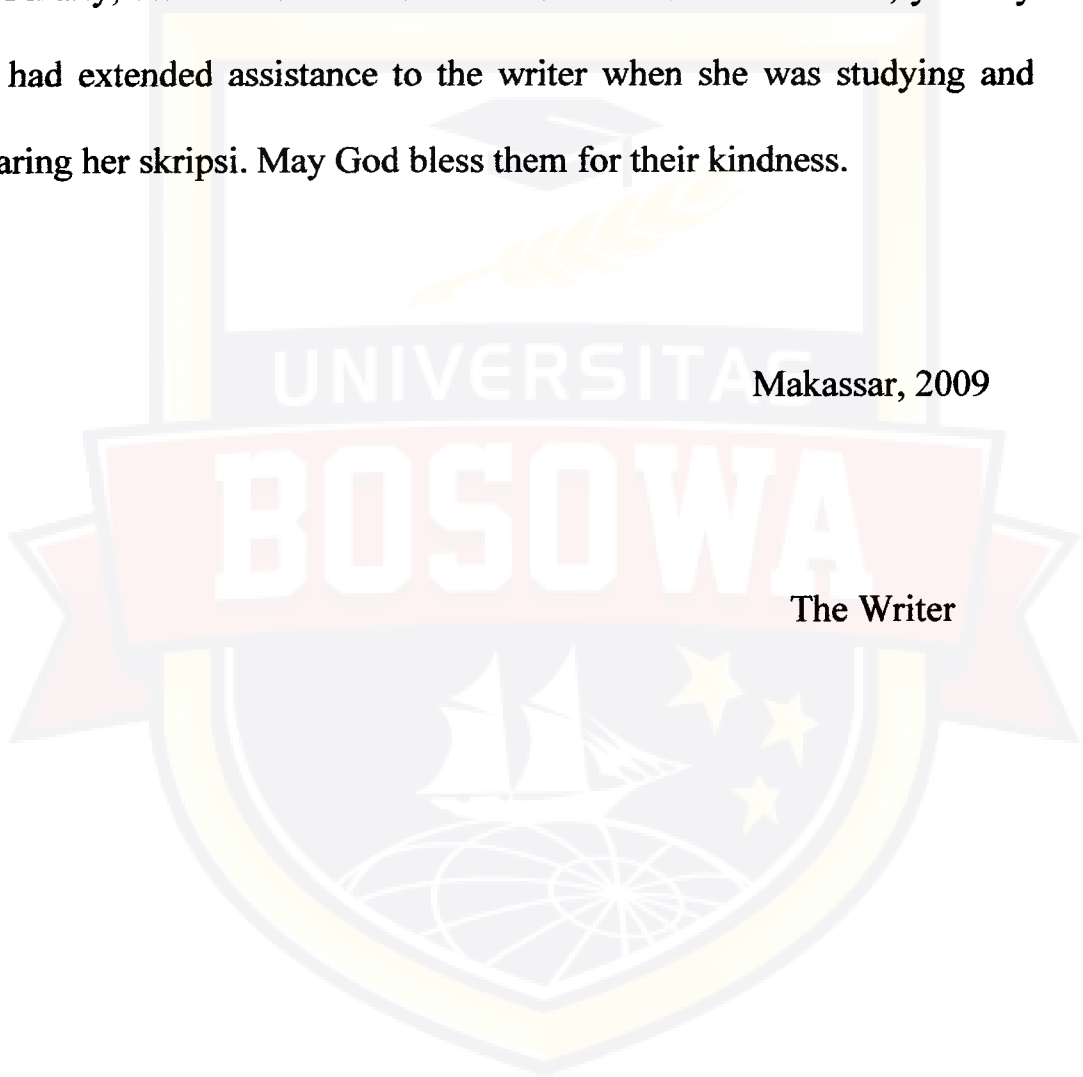
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Makassar, 2009

**BOSOWA**

The Writer



## ABSTRAK

Penulis menganalisis karakter-karakter wanita dalam “Memoirs of A Geisha” ini dengan menggunakan metode struktural genetik, yaitu metode yang menganalisis suatu karakter dari segi penampilan, watak, dan kehidupan sosialnya dengan lingkungan sekitar. Di dalam novel ini karakter utama adalah Sayuri. Ia digambarkan sebagai wanita yang dijual oleh ayahnya sejak kecil dan dilatih menjadi seorang Geisha yang dapat menaklukkan hati siapa pun yang melihatnya.

Penulis menarik kesimpulan bahwa Golden menggambarkan karakter Geisha dengan cermat dan berdasarkan wawancara dan penelitian.

Setelah menganalisis drama ini, penulis menarik kesimpulan bahwa segala sesuatu yang terjadi pasti ada penyebabnya, seperti yang terjadi pada diri Sayuri.



## Biography of The Author

A member of the Ochs-Sulzberger family (owners of the *New York Times*), Golden was educated at the Baylor School (then a boys-only school for day and boarding students) in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He attended Harvard College and received a degree in art history, specializing in Japanese art. In 1980, he earned an M.A. in Japanese history at Columbia University, and also learned Mandarin Chinese. After a summer at the Peking University, he worked in Tokyo. When he returned to the United States, he earned an M.A. in English at Boston University. He currently lives in Brookline, Massachusetts.

## Synopsis

*Memoirs of a Geisha* is a novel by Arthur Golden, published in 1997. The novel, told in first-person view, tells the fictional story of a geisha working in Kyoto, Japan, before and after World War II.

The novel is told from the point of view of Nitta Sayuri, a retired geisha in her seventies, living in the Waldorf Towers in New York City. She is interviewed by Jacob Haarhuis, a professor at New York University. The story is told in a flashback format.

Sayuri recalls her early childhood as Chiyo Sakamoto, a young girl who is sold into a life of servitude by her parents when she is nine years old.

# CHPATER I

## INTRODUCTION



### 1.1 Background

In literary works, women and their lives are broadly discussed and analyzed. It is because of their status and their role in the society. For many centuries women have been forced to obey their husband and to be taken care of. They could only listen and do whatever the men tell them to do. Women have no rights to express neither their thoughts nor their dreams. Though, women were considered as house accessories or properties, which could be removed or could be sold to others. Due to this fact, it is right to say that women were forced to neglect their career for the sake of their marital status. Men and women, the young and the old, and the various number of extended family not only have to fulfill function considered appropriate to their respective status, but each has an individual position in relation to others within the general framework of the social system.

Therefore, the writer finds it important to gain more knowledge on the women characters in Arthur Golden's "Memoirs of A geisha". Not many people understand that women have no obligation to serve men but their husband. But in the novel, the author explains about how women can also have different role in Japan, as the entertainer which is laso known as *geisha*.

## **1.2 Identification of Problem**

There are many problems that can be found in Arthur Golden's "Memoirs of A Geisha". They are:

1. History of Geisha
2. The role of women in the novel
3. The women characters in the novel
4. The writer's point of view about Geisha in the novel
5. The Controversy of Geisha

### 1.3 Scope of Problem

The title of this writing is *Analysis of Women Characters in Arthur Golden's "Memoir of A Geisha"*. The writer would like to concentrate her research on the women characters in the novel. Based on the identification of problem, here are the scopes of problem:

1. The women characters in the novel
2. The writer's point of view about Geisha in the novel
3. The controversy of Geisha

### 1.4 Formulation of Problem

To broaden the inner thoughts of this writing, the writer proposes some questions:

1. What are the roles of the women characters in the novel?
2. How is the writer's point of view about Geisha in the novel?
3. Why is Geisha controversy?

## **1.5 Objective of Study**

As answers to the questions above, the objectives of problems are:

1. To describe the roles of the women characters in the novel
2. To explain the writer's point of view about Geisha in the novel
3. To explain why geisha is considered to be controversy

## **1.6 Method of Research**

The method which the writer would like to use in this research is library research. Due to the fact, it is important for the writer to get as many as information from the novel, articles, and the internet which of course connects to his research.

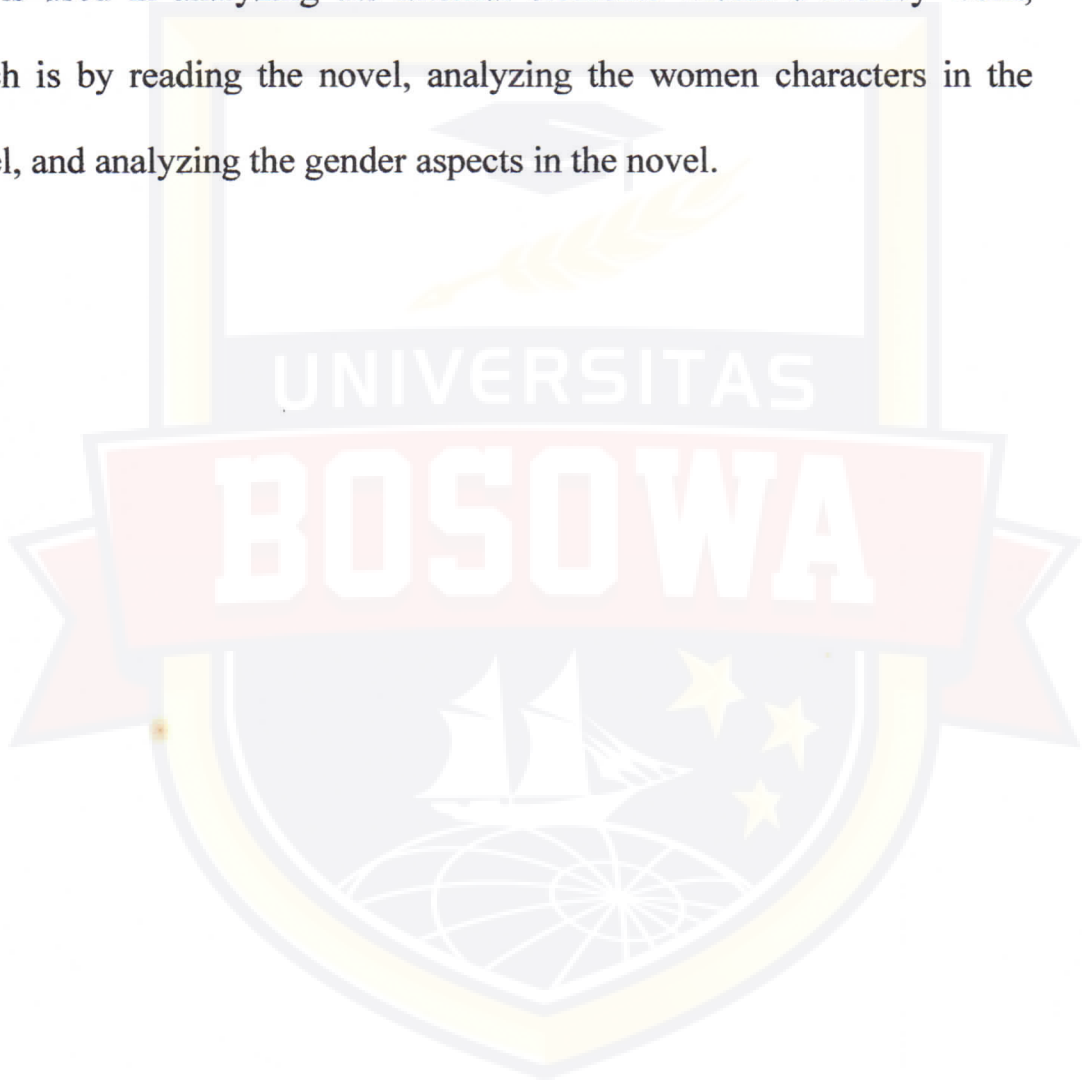
### **1.6.1 Method of Collecting Data**

The writer uses library research in collecting data. The writer also reads several books and some important information based on the objective of study. The data is collected from the novel "Memoirs of A Geisha".



### **1.6.2 Method of Analyzing Data**

Since the writer applies structural approach, which is the approach that is used in analyzing the internal elements within a literary work, which is by reading the novel, analyzing the women characters in the novel, and analyzing the gender aspects in the novel.





## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Definitions

In analyzing a literary work, such as novel, it is necessary to give *definition of the supporting elements in the novel itself*. Therefore the writer feels it is important to give definition as follows:

##### 2.1.1 Novel

A novel (from French nouvelle Italian "novella", "new") is an extended, generally fictional narrative, typically in prose. Until the eighteenth century, the word referred specifically to short fictions of love and intrigue as opposed to romances, which were epic-length works about love and adventure. Literary theory of genres has not yet managed to isolate a "single definite, stable characteristic of the novel" that holds without reservations.

Novel can be understood as cultural instrument designed to confront intellectual and social crisis. This conflict embodied in Richardson and Fielding, who according to this method can be understood as representing alternative methods of doing the same thing.

During the 18th century the novel adopted features of the old romance and became one of the major literary genres. It is today defined mostly by its ability to become the object of literary criticism demanding artistic merit and a specific 'literary' style—or specific literary styles.

### **2.1.2 Character**

Characters are usually presented through their actions, dialect, and thoughts, as well as by description. Characterization can regard a variety of aspects of a character, such as appearance, age, gender, educational level, vocation or occupation, financial status, marital status, social status, cultural background, hobbies, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ambitions, motivations, personality, etc.

Reaske (1966:56) gave comments about the definition of character as follows:

“Some characters in a novel don’t change the beginning as the same kind of character as they are in the end. These passive characters are acted upon the events of the novel, they are usually static, or unchanging conversely, some characters are active. They perform act, they have a large part in the novel, and they usually undergo certain changes as the result of the action of the story. Instead of being static, they are considered dynamic.”

Type of characters, as quoted above, are called static and dynamic characters. The static character is the character that does not undergo the change from the beginning to the end of the story. On the contrary, the dynamic character provides emotional changes at the end of the story.

Both static and dynamic characters give the interlink role in constructing the unity of a story. This possibly related to the fictional story as the integral unity in literary works. Fiction serves you a story about a person or people that called “character”.

### 2.1.3 Setting

According to [home.cfl.rr.com/eghsap/apterms.html](http://home.cfl.rr.com/eghsap/apterms.html) (2009),

“Setting is the environment in which the action of a fictional work takes place. Setting includes time period (such as the 1890's), the place (such as downtown Warsaw), the historical milieu (such as during the Crimean War), as well as the social, political, and perhaps even spiritual realities. The setting is usually established primarily through description, though narration is used also.”

Therefore, definition of setting is quite simply, which is the story's *time and place*. While setting includes simple attributes such as climate or wall décor, it can also include complex dimensions such as the historical moment the story occupies or its social context. Because particular places and times have their own personality or emotional essence (such as the stark feel of a desert or the grim, wary resolve in the United States after the September 11th attacks), setting is also one of the primary ways that a fiction writer establishes mood. Typically, short stories occur in limited locations and time frames, such as the two rooms involved in Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour," whereas novels may involve many different settings in widely varying landscapes.

Even in short stories, however, readers should become sensitive to subtle shifts in setting. For example, when the grieving Mrs. Mallard retires alone to her room, with "new spring life" visible out the window, this detail about the setting helps reveal a turn in the plot. Setting is often developed with narrative description, but it may also be shown with action, dialogue, or a character's thoughts.

Setting is a term in literature and drama usually referring to the time and location in which a story takes place. The term is relevant for various forms of literary expression, such as short stories, novels, dramas, and screenplays.

Broadly speaking, the setting provides the main backdrop for the story and often sets the overall tone for it as well. For example, many of William Faulkner's novels are set in the early 20th Century in Yoknapatawpha County, a fictional county in the American South. More specifically, the term "setting" can also refer to the time or location of a single scene in a larger story.

In John Cheever's short story "The Swimmer", for example, the story's protagonist visits various swimming pools in his neighborhood with each pool serving as its own unique setting.

## 2.2 Synopsis

*Memoirs of a Geisha* is a novel by Arthur Golden, published in 1997. The novel, told in first-person view, tells the fictional story of a geisha working in Kyoto, Japan, before and after World War II.

*Memoirs of a Geisha* is an American novel, and as such the attempt at West does East, especially on the complex and delicate subject of the geisha, is compelling, interesting, but also heavy-handed and ultimately ineffective (even more so in the case of the film). It is a wonderful introduction to geisha, Japanese culture, and the East for the uninitiated Western reader.

The world of Geisha is a secret and forbidden world. The shell is beautiful and seems to be a life of luxury, but the core is pure suffering. Geisha do not love, they do not choose their fate, and their life is owned by the men they entertain. They are not meant to feel. The very word geisha means moving art. That's all they're meant to be. Not humans but

paintings. Like a sculpture, beautiful but cold as the stone they were made of. *Memoirs of a Geisha* is a book that is based on a true story and more. The world of Geisha is a secret and forbidden world. The shell is beautiful and seems to be a life of luxury, but the core is pure suffering. Geishas do not love, they do not choose their fate, and their life is owned by the men they entertain. They are not meant to feel. The very word geisha means moving art. That's all they're meant to be. Not humans but paintings. Like a sculpture, beautiful but cold as the stone they were made of. *Memoirs of a Geisha* is a book that is based on a true story and let's us catch a glimpse of the world where the women paint their faces and don't deserve to love.

### **2.3 Biography of The Author**

Golden was born in 1957 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to a family of journalists. His parents, Ben and Ruth, published the Chattanooga Times, and in the early 2000s his cousin, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, published the New York Times. Golden's parents divorced when he was eight, and his father died five years later. Golden relates this to his



challenges with the Chairman's character as Sayuri's love interest. Because his father was absent for much of his childhood, Golden struggled to make the character and the relationship believable. Golden attended Harvard College (the school of fine arts at Harvard University), where he earned a degree in art history with a specialty in Japanese art. He then completed a master's degree in Japanese history (he also learned Mandarin Chinese) in 1980 from Columbia University. After a summer at Beijing University and a work stint for an English-language magazine in Tokyo from 1980 to 1982, Golden returned to the United States. He entered Boston University, where he completed a master's degree in English in 1988. After his graduation, he worked as a writer and instructor in literature and writing.

*Memoirs of a Geisha*, published in 1997, is Arthur Golden's debut novel. The bestselling novel was a long time in the making; Golden spent more than ten years on the novel, throwing out the first two drafts before finding his "voice" in the first-person account that was a publishing success.

## CHAPTER III

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 Geisha

“Geisha like all Japanese nouns, has no distinct singular or plural variants. The word consists of two kanji, 藝 (gei) meaning "art" and 者 (sha) meaning "person" or "doer". The most direct translation of geisha into English would be "artist" or "performing artist". Another name for geisha used in Japan is geiko, which is usually used to refer to geisha from Kyoto.” ([www.answers.com/gesiha](http://www.answers.com/gesiha), 2009).

According to Arthur Golden's absorbing first novel, the word "geisha" does not mean "prostitute," as Westerners ignorantly assume--it means "artisan" or "artist." To capture the geisha experience in the art of fiction, Golden trained as long and hard as any geisha who must master the arts of music, dance, clever conversation, crafty battle with rival beauties, and cunning seduction of wealthy patrons. After earning degrees in Japanese art and history from Harvard and Columbia--and an M.A. in English--he met a man in Tokyo who was the illegitimate offspring of a renowned businessman and a geisha. This meeting inspired Golden to spend 10 years researching every detail of geisha culture,

chiefly relying on the geisha Mineko Iwasaki, who spent years charming the very rich and famous. Like yakuza and bushido, geisha, too, is a product of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603-1868). Most people take the mobile female entertainers called shirabyoshi as the proto-geisha.

“The word 'geisha' itself was coined around 1688, not in Kyoto where everything 'traditional' come from, but in the 'modern' Tokugawa city Edo (today's Tokyo). Those days, 'geisha' was male. Their job was not to entertain except verbally -- they usually spent their days as guides to pilgrims and 'tourists'. Then gradually they took up pantomime, singing, and story-telling, and got their fees for providing amusements in parties. Female entertainers who would be today's geisha were called 'geigi'.”  
 ([www.wikepeida.org/geisha](http://www.wikepeida.org/geisha), 2009).

Geishahood in its current form was born in 17th century. When the Tokugawas built what they called 'licensed quarters', it soared as a coveted profession -- young girls of any social class associated the job with glamor, easy money and beauty, without, of course, any slight notion about hard work, as today's teenagers see the denizen of Hollywood.



There has been Kyoto geisha and Tokyo geisha since then. They,

even if not having any discernible difference except that the Kyotoite geisha keeps a separate system for apprentices ('maiko'), a Japanese would have been able to tell where a geisha is from via their accent.

Kyotoite geisha even today still insist to speak the so-called 'Kyoto language', i.e. the somewhat 'noble' accent that has been bound to be *confusing to other Japanese not so 'refined'*. The institution of geisha as we know it today, came to be in the late 1800's. Geishas live in communal type areas, or close neighborhoods. These are known as "hanamachi". Here they have their living quarters "okiya", tea houses, and various shops.

The head of the household or the "mother" if you will is known as the "okamisan". She looks over and trains her family. Young girls known as "tamago" (meaning egg) are taken in at various ages and perform various household chores and they observe the "maiko" (geisha's in training) and the geishas. At the age of 17 these "tamago" may become "maiko" to train to become geisha.

As maiko, they learn traditional dance, how to play the shamisen.

They will attend parties with the geisha, to learn and observe, but will not have the responsibilities of the geisha.

Geisha and maiko are known by their white face makeup and cherry red lips. The maiko only puts red lipstick on her lower lip. Other differences are seen in how the kimono is worn or how the "obi" is tied.

She trains for 3-4 years. Around age 20-21, the maiko goes through a ceremony called "erikae", which literally means "to turn the collar" and refers to a manner in which the way the kimono is worn when she becomes a geisha.

Now forbidden, there was a time not too long ago when the maiko went through what is called "mizu-age". This was a ritual in which she lost her virginity to the highest bidder. Once a geisha, her makeup changes, and is no longer as bright and stark. Her kimonos are no longer as bright and colorful. The older one gets the more subdued the kimono. Like all cultures where the youth tend to wear brighter fashion statements, the maiko wears bright colorful patterns, like young beautiful butterflies. The older one gets, they become more experienced and poised. Their dress reflects this subtle maturity. Geisha mainly make their

living working in teahouses. There they serve beverages, and entertain the guests with charming conversation. Their services are very expensive, and their clients are primarily the rich and powerful.

Their lifestyle is a very elegant and expensive lifestyle. Often their livelihood is supplemented by gifts of fine kimonos or even money. Yes these men obviously do get more attention, but that attention does not necessarily include sex. It is strictly up to the individual geisha to decide what her sexual intimacies will be.

A geishas training and life are very expensive. The cost of acquiring her either through a "slave trader" or directly from her parents is covered by the "okiya", as she underwrites all of the expenses. She would repay for her training through the years. She could be bought out by a wealthy patron.

### **3.1.1 The History of Geisha**

Technically "geisha" refers to "one who lives as art". What "art" are we referring to? It is a multifaceted art, playing the shamisen, drums, dancing, performing the tea ceremony, calligraphy and the ability to converse.

The art of geisha began in the 1600's in the Tokugawa period (1600-1868) in Japan, but did not really take hold as an institution until the late 1800's in the Meiji era (1868-1910's). Originally geisha were men, who entertained. If you can imagine the USO shows in the south pacific, when they had no dames, servicemen crossdressed and put on shows to improve the moral of the men. Eventually all geisha were women. They were not allowed however to compete with the prostitutes. They were kept separate. Geisha play a significant role in the change in governments from Tokugawa to Meiji. Much of the planning of the revolution took place in the Tea Houses. The geisha was cited for keeping her mouth shut, and rewarded for their support with more official support shall we say from the seats of power.

With the modernization of Japan and the new materialization of



Japanese Culture in the 1920's, geisha soon realized that they must maintain their uniqueness in Japanese culture or soon they would be just like every other bar hostess (jokyu) or cafe girl. With WWII the geisha institution was disbanded. After the war they returned to their old areas, but their numbers were few. The jokyu has assumed the place of the chief "entertainers" (in the western sense), and geisha became an institution celebrating the traditional arts. A war of modern and traditional took place. Prostitutes started calling themselves geisha in order to draw the attention of the American GI's.

Geisha have their roots in female entertainers such as the Saburuko of the 7th century and the Shirabyoshi, who emerged around the early 13th century. They would perform for the nobility and some even became concubines to the emperor. It was in the late 16th century that the first walled-in pleasure quarters were built in Japan. Like so many aspects of Japanese culture, they were modelled after those of Ming Dynasty China. After they were relocated in the mid-1600s, they became known as Shimabara (after a fortress in Kyushu).

Meanwhile a marshy patch of land (Yoshi-wara) in Edo had been

designated as the site for a brothel district under the auspices of the Tokugawa shogunate. Brothels and the like were not allowed to operate outside the district and strict rules were applied. Included among these were that no customers were allowed to stay in a brothel more than 24 hours; courtesans were to wear simple dyed kimonos; and any suspicious or unknown visitors were to be reported to the Office of the City Governor.

With Japan enjoying a long-awaited period of peace following centuries of civil war, many samurai found that society no longer had such need of their services. It's thought that many daughters of these formerly noble families became courtesans, with the result that quarters such as Yoshiwara and Shimabara were places of refinement and culture. Peace also brought an increase in prosperity and the rise of the merchant class, or chonin. Add that to the presence of artists and an atmosphere free of the strictures of the outside world, and it truly was something of an adult amusement park, with culture thrown in for good measure.

Within the hanamichi there were many different classes of

courtesans, and over the decades the hierarchy and the standards expected of them changed many times, not always for the better. The situation deteriorated in the mid-18th century to the extent that a new form of entertainer emerged in Kyoto and Osaka. The earliest geiko were men, while the first females, who appeared shortly after, were odoriko (dancers) or played the shamisen. Female geisha soon became popular enough to be able to steal clients from the courtesans, and in the case of Yoshiwara it was decided to start a kenban, or registration system, to keep them under control and force them to pay taxes. It strictly controlled their dress, behaviour and movements and was considered so successful that it quickly became the norm at hanamichi across Japan.

These strict rules in fact allowed the geisha to flourish as artists and entertainers. Though more simply dressed than the courtesans, they became regarded as fashion leaders. But many aspects of the lifestyle itself were less glamorous. Young girls were sold into the geisha life by their families until the mid-20th century and were often subject to the ritual of 'mizu-age,' whereby their virginity was sold to the highest bidder. Such practices were eradicated after World War II and the geisha

profession went into a steady decline. Today, if geisha are hired to entertain at a private party outside the upper echelons of society, they are most likely to be seasoned veterans, more akin to your favorite aunt or even grandmother than the girl next door.

Arthur Golden's 1998 novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* revived interest in an aspect of Japan that is so intrinsic to the Western stereotype and yet so far removed from the reality of daily life here. Geisha do still exist and ply their trade, of course. But the role they play in modern society is minor and, except for the attention they get from camera-wielding tourists, largely unseen. In fact, most of the women captured on film are either maiko (apprentice geisha) or tourists themselves, done up for a few hours of faux sophistication and attention seeking.

But like their male counterpart the samurai, the geisha and her world continue to fascinate people around the world as part of their image of a mysterious and timeless Japan. Prostitution is of course referred to as the "oldest profession," and the history of the geisha stretches back several centuries. But while many people assume that geisha is just a Japanese word for a prostitute, the somewhat more

romantic word 'courtesan' is probably closer in nuance, though even that is misleading when you consider their history. The word geisha itself literally means 'person of the arts' - indeed the earliest geisha were men - and it is as performers of dance, music and poetry that they actually spend most of their working time.

Traditionally, Geisha began their training at a very young age. Although some girls were sold to geisha houses (okiya) as children, this was not a common practice in reputable districts. Daughters of geisha were often brought up as geisha themselves, usually as the successor (atotori, meaning "heiress") or daughter-role (musume-bun) to the okiya.

A maiko will start her formal training on the job as a minarai. Before she can do this she must find an onee-san ("older sister": an older geisha acting as her mentor). It is the onee-san's responsibility to bring her to the ozashiki, to sit and observe as the onee-san is at work. This is a way in which she will gain insights of the job, and seek out potential clients. Although minarai attend ozashiki (banquets in which guests are attended by geisha), they do not participate at an advanced level. Their kimono, more elaborate than a maiko's, are intended to do the talking for

them. Minarai can be hired for parties but are usually uninvited (yet welcomed) guests at parties that their onee-san attends. They only charge a third of the usual fee. Minarai generally work with a particular tea house (minarai-jaya) learning from the okaa-san (literally "mother," the proprietress of the house). From her, they would learn techniques such as *conversation and gaming*, which would not be taught to them in school. This stage lasts only about a month or so.

### **3.2 The Women Characters in "Memoirs of A Geisha"**

Analyzing women characters is one of the unique ways of analyzing characters in a literary work, because women and their worlds have different characteristics. Therefore the writer finds it interesting in analyzing the women characters in the novel.

#### **3.2.1 Sayuri**

The novel is told from the point of view of Sayuri Nitta, a retired geisha in her 70s, living in the Waldorf Towers in New York City. She is interviewed by Jakob Haarhuis, a professor at New York University, who



is credited as the story's translator, although he is a fictional character himself. This is apparently a reference to Golden's interviewing of a retired geisha as part of his research for the novel. The story is told in a flashback format, with continuous references to the time between Sayuri's career and the time she is being interviewed. She also periodically explains different aspects of geisha life.

The novel's heroine, Sayuri (born "Chiyo") is born in the small fishing village of Yoroido. She lives with her older sister, Satsu, and her parents. Her unusual gray eyes distinguish her from other girls, and this feature plays a significant role in her success later as a geisha. She is clever, energetic, and imaginative. In childhood, her imagination shows her innocence as she dreams up fantasies about being adopted by Tanaka. As a woman, however, her imagination shows her maturity, as she is able to maneuver the complicated social and interpersonal workings of being a geisha.

Sayuri is adept at learning to socialize with men and manipulate



them, although she does not use her skills for her own selfish pride. She learns to recognize good character, and she values friendship. This makes it harder when she must find a way to avoid having Nobu as her danna. Sayuri is driven by feelings for the Chairman that she has been harboring since she was a young girl. This is what inspires her to be a great geisha, and it is what compels her to hurt Nobu. In the end, however, her years of longing are rewarded when the Chairman becomes her danna until his death.

Sayuri's voice is one that expresses quiet emotion and wisdom. She recalls her life through the perspective of retrospect, understanding more now than she did then. She sprinkles life lessons in her narrative but does not attempt to cover up her own foolishness. For all she has been through, she emerges gracious and kind.

In 1929 an impoverished nine-year-old named Chiyo from a fishing village is sold to a geisha house in Kyoto's Gion district and subjected to cruel treatment from the owners and the head geisha Hatsumomo. Her stunning beauty attracts the vindictive jealousy of Hatsumomo, until she is rescued by and taken under the wing of

Hatsumomo's bitter rival, Mameha. Under Mameha's mentorship, Chiyo becomes the geisha named Sayuri, trained in all the artistic and social skills a geisha must master in order to survive in her society. As a renowned geisha she enters a society of wealth, privilege, and political intrigue. As World War II looms Japan and the geisha's world are forever changed by the onslaught of history. *Written by dumpster\_cakes*

A young nine year old girl, Chiyo, lives in a rather poor fishing village, Yoroido, on Japan's coast. Along with her older sister, Satsu, she is sent to the geisha (Japanese for artisan) district called Gion. Split from the only family she has left Chiyo is sent to the Nitta Okiya while her sister is transported else where and becomes less of a role. And Okiya is a house (sort of a compound) where a geisha lives and is taken care of. Here at the Nitta Okiya Chiyo meets another girl about her age nicknamed Pumpkin. Together Pumpkin and Chiyo struggle through the daily life of being treated as nothing more than slaves to the resident geisha, Hatsumomo. Hatsumomo, the story's resident villain, tries her hardest to make Chiyo's life as miserable as possible. On one particular occasion Chiyo feeling so depressed collapses on a bridge in tears over

her life's woes. Much to her surprise a high society passer by stops to question why she is so sad. Here little Chiyo meets The Chairman for the first time. He shows her kindness in a world which has been naught but cruel to her and from that point on Chiyo makes it her goal to break free from the social class she was born into and become a geisha worthy of The Chairman. After much work and hardship Chiyo is allowed to attend school where young girls are taught all the important practices associated with the life of a geisha. She learns tea ceremony, how to play the shamisen (like a little banjo or acoustic guitar), as well as quite possibly the most important act, how to dance. The word geisha in Japanese is derived from a term referring to art so a geisha is like an artisan, or an artist. After some more altercations with Hatsumomo, Chiyo is taken under the wing of one of Gion's most popular geisha, Mameha. Mameha also happens to be Hatsumomo's arch-rival as a geisha. Mameha takes a long time to introduce Chiyo as her apprentice however once she does she is already blessed with fame for being associated with someone of Mameha's class. Here is the part of the story where Chiyo's name changes to Sayuri (her geisha name). Mameha introduces Sayuri is many

numerous figures in Gion life and it come to a point where men are fighting for the highest bid on Sayuri's mizuage. All this time Sayuri is struggling with the common life lessons learned when one is growing up into a young woman. It is very much a coming of age story. Through all trials of adversity Sayuri faces her one goal is always to see The Chairman again. Finally the day comes when she is invited, along with Mameha, to a party at a teahouse at which The Chairman is attending. For the next couple of weeks she attends multiple parties which the chairman attend all the while seemingly coming closer to achieving her goal. Tension has been growing concerning World War II and the society in Gion is beginning to feel the effects of war. Rations are set up and many part of the giesha district have begun to close. Geisha are fleeing to other parts of the country hoping to avoid getting caught in an attack.

Sayuri and all of her friends are split apart until after the war and

once everyone returns to Gion it is realized the effects of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. All geisha who fled to these cities obviously died and it is a loss greatly felt by the community. Sayuri desperately attempts to attain the love of the Chairman and the climax of the story is whether or not she does meet her goal. Written by Ai is Baka

In Japan of the 20's, the nine years old Chyio and her sister Satsu are sold by her fisherman father to a Geisha house in Miyako. Satsu is not accepted in the house and is sent to a brothel, and along the years, Satsu escapes from he brothel where she lived and the rebel Chyio is left alone, becoming a slave of a geisha. However, six years later, she learns how to become the geisha Sayuri with the support of the successful Mameha, while fighting against the evil and jealousy of the wicked Hatsumomo. While still a child, Chyio falls in love with The Chairman, and in the post-WWII, they meet each other, in a period o changes in Japan with the occupying American forces and the country completely destroyed.

As a girl, Chiyo is sold by her father and taken to Kyoto where she

escapes the brothel to become the servant in an on Okiya. With enough work, the Okiya will put forth the money in order for her to undergo Geisha training. Unfortunately, after repeated mistakes and some lies, Chiyo loses her chance at becoming a Geisha. Or so it seems. Taken under the wing of famous Geisha Mameha, who changes Chiyo's name to Sayuri, Chiyo undergoes a quick Geisha training. Indeed, she seems a natural. Soon, she becomes one of the most famous herself. However, her life is far from perfect. She loses her sister, loses her love, and has to stuff down every emotion that she has that contradicts that of a Geisha, which she does. She's a strong character, without a doubt, one who suffers and struggles. While she doesn't seem to be getting any closer to what she truly wants, she persists and endures at all costs.

Sayuri recalls her early childhood as Chiyo Sakamoto, a young girl who, along with her sister Satsu, is sold into a life of servitude by her elderly father and dying mother when she is nine years old. Chiyo is taken in by the unsympathetic proprietress of the Nitta geisha house, whom she addresses as "Mother". She befriends Mother's sister ("Auntie") and another young girl in the house, Pumpkin, but also earns

the jealous ire of the head geisha of the house, Hatsumomo. Chiyo spends most of her remaining childhood working as a maid to pay off several large debts: her purchase price; the soiling of a kimono owned by a well-known geisha, which Chiyo was blackmailed into defacing by Hatsumomo; and her medical bill, incurred after she injures herself while *trying to escape*. Her sister is sold to a brothel, but she eventually succeeds in escaping, never to be seen by Chiyo again.

One day while crying in the street, the young Chiyo is noticed by a passerby, Chairman Ken Iwamura, who buys her an iced sorbet and gives her his handkerchief with some money. Inspired by his act of kindness, Chiyo resolves to become a geisha so that she may one day become a part of the Chairman's life. Early in her teenage years, Chiyo is taken under the wing of Mameha, one of the top geisha in Kyoto at the time. *Under Mameha's tutelage, the girl Chiyo becomes Sayuri, the most famous geisha in all of Gion.* Her growing success impacts on the careers and lives of Hatsumomo and Pumpkin. Hatsumomo tries to destroy Sayuri's career, but ends up destroying her own when she bites one of her clients in a jealous fit. Sayuri is selected over Pumpkin as the heir of the

okiya, earning the name Sayuri Nitta, and causing Pumpkin to despair.

Through her work as a geisha, Sayuri is reunited with the Chairman, whom she has secretly loved since she was a girl. But her intentions of spending time with the Chairman are curtailed several times when she inadvertently attracts other clients seeking to become her patron, including the Chairman's business partner of Iwamura Electric and close friend, Toshikazu Nobu. Her successful career is cut short by the outbreak of World War II, but Sayuri's safety is ensured by Nobu, who sends her to a different town to live with his friend's family. Nonetheless, Sayuri and those close to her must endure a life of hard labor. After the end of the war, Nobu visits Sayuri and asks that she return to Gion to help entertain Deputy Minister Sato, who can help to restart the Chairman and Nobu's company that was all but destroyed during the war. Nobu also tells Sayuri that once Iwamura Electric's future is ensured, he will become Sayuri's patron. This distresses Sayuri, but she agrees to help due to her feeling of debt toward Nobu.

Once returned to Gion, Sayuri seeks the help of Mameha and



Pumpkin to entertain the Deputy Minister. The three females become geishas once more, and Sayuri reunites with the Chairman through these entertainment gatherings. Eventually, Nobu tells Sayuri that the time has come for him to become her patron and Sayuri is in despair. On a weekend trip to Amami Islands with Iwamura Electric, Sayuri devises a plan to humiliate herself with the Deputy Minister in front of Nobu, thereby ending any affections Nobu has for her and freeing herself to be with the Chairman. Instead, Sayuri is humiliated in front of the Chairman by Pumpkin, who still harbors resentment toward her. Sayuri despairs that her dream of being with the Chairman is lost.

Three days after her return from Amami, Sayuri receives a call to meet with Iwamura Electric. Sayuri is saddened as she anticipates meeting Nobu and discussing his patronage. Sayuri is surprised when the Chairman shows up rather than Nobu. The Chairman finally reveals to her that he knows she is Chiyo, and that he was responsible for sending Mameha to her so that she may become a geisha. The Chairman also states that he knows Sayuri humiliated herself with the intention of hurting Nobu, and thinks that she may have a purpose for the scheme.

Sayuri admits to having personal reasons for hurting Nobu. The Chairman continues to explain his feeling of debt toward and friendship with Nobu, and how he was not able to take away the woman his friend so cherished. Sayuri confesses her love for the Chairman, which she has been harboring for more than 15 years. The Chairman kisses Sayuri, to her surprise since he had explained his loyalty to Nobu just moments ago, and the Chairman explains that Nobu has given up on Sayuri when he learned of her intentions at Amami.

The story ends with Sayuri recounting her subsequent life as the Chairman's mistress, including her time in Gion as a retired geisha, a mention of a son she had with the Chairman, her and her son's relocation to New York City so as not to disrupt possible inheritance issues of Iwamura Electric, and reflections of all the people in her life.

### **3.2.2 Mameha**

Mameha is one of the most successful geishas in Japan. She agrees to take Sayuri as her "little sister," an apprentice position. Mameha is not as beautiful as Hatsumomo, but she is kinder and wiser. She is very

clever and knowledgeable about the social politics of Gion. She also makes more money than Hatsumomo because she has a *danna*. Mameha and Hatsumomo are rivals, so Mameha is happy to help Sayuri become more successful than Hatsumomo and end her reign of terror.

### **3.2.3 Mother**

Mother is the head of the *okiya*, and her primary concern is money. Although she is younger than Auntie is, she is in charge at the *okiya*. She is strikingly ugly, described by Sayuri as a bulldog-looking woman with discolored features. Mother tries to be fair, as she knows that Hatsumomo is manipulative and conniving, but her main goal is to keep the finances in order. When Sayuri attempts to run away from the *okiya*, Mother stops paying for her geisha lessons until Mameha makes her see that there is serious money to be made. Later, when she adopts Sayuri as the daughter of the *okiya*, she continues to capitalize on any opportunity to make money from her.

### **3.2.4 Auntie Nitta**

Auntie manages the staff and performs various functions around the okiya, run by her adoptive sister, Mother. Because her hip is malformed, she was destined early to the ranks of servitude in the geisha district. She interacts with Sayuri the most of the three women who own the house, and she is the most understanding. Still, she is harsh when she deems it necessary.

### **3.2.5 Pumpkin**

Sayuri gives the other girl her age at the okiya the nickname "Pumpkin," and it stays with her even into her geisha years. Pumpkin begins working at the okiya as a servant until she is ready to begin geisha school. She is sweet natured, but not particularly intelligent. She has difficulty mastering the skills taught at geisha schools, and Hatsumomo has no trouble dominating her when she becomes her apprentice.

Pumpkin and Sayuri are friends until their apprenticeships with

rival geisha force them to compete with each other. The backlash of the rivalry generates bitterness in Pumpkin, who sabotages Sayuri's plan to alienate Nobu.

### **3.3 Setting**

#### **3.3.1 Kyoto**

Kyoto is considered by many to be where the geisha tradition is the strongest today, including Gion Kōbu. The geisha in these districts are known as *geiko*. The Tokyo hanamachi of Shimbashi, Asakusa and Kagurazaka are also well known.

In modern Japan, geisha and maiko are now a rare sight outside hanamachi. In the 1920s, there were over 80,000 geisha in Japan, but today, there are far fewer. The exact number is unknown to outsiders and is estimated to be from 1,000 to 2,000, mostly in the resort town of Atami. Most common are sightings of tourists who pay a fee to be dressed up as a maiko.

Geisha are often hired to attend parties and gatherings,

traditionally at tea houses (茶屋, Chashitsu|ochaya) or at traditional Japanese restaurants (ryōtei). Their time is measured by the time it takes an incense stick to burn and is called senkōdai (燗香代, "incense stick fee") or gyokudai (玉代 "jewel fee"). In Kyoto, the terms ohana (お花) and hanadai (花代), meaning "flower fees", are preferred. The customer makes arrangements through the geisha union office (芸者連合会 kenban), which keeps each geisha's schedule and makes her appointments both for entertaining and for training.

A sluggish economy, declining interest in the traditional arts, the exclusive nature of the flower and willow world, and the expense of being entertained by geisha have all contributed to the tradition's decline.

Although archaeological evidence places the first human settlement on the islands of Japan to approximately 10,000 BC, relatively little is known about human activity in the area before the 6th century AD. During the 8th century, when the powerful Buddhist clergy became involved in the affairs of the Imperial government, the Emperor chose to relocate the capital to a region far from the Buddhist influence. Emperor Kammu selected the village of Uda, at the time in the Kadono district of

Yamashiro Province, for this honor.

There was some consideration by the United States of targeting Kyoto with an atomic bomb at the end of World War II because, as an intellectual center of Japan, it had a population "better able to appreciate the significance of the weapon." [3] In the end it was decided to remove the city from the list of targets due to the insistence of Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War in the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. The city was largely spared from conventional bombing as well, although small-scale air raids did result in casualties.

As a result, Kyoto is one of the few Japanese cities that still has an abundance of prewar buildings, such as the traditional townhouses known as machiya. However, modernization is continually breaking down the traditional Kyoto in favor of newer architecture, such as the *Kyoto Station complex*.

Kyoto became a city designated by government ordinance on September 1, 1956. In 1997, Kyoto hosted the conference that resulted in the protocol on greenhouse gas emissions that bears the city's name.

### 3.3.2 1929

American Flag The 1929 New York Stock Exchange crash and the failure of important European banks plunged the entire world into an economic depression. Japan was hit especially hard. With practically no natural resources, the nation had to import oil, iron, steel, and other commodities to keep its industry and military forces alive. But to buy these things, it had to export goods for sale abroad. This became harder to do in the early 1930s as nation after nation, including the U.S., raised tariffs (taxes on imports) to protect their own struggling industries.

As Japan's economy grew worse, the country became more aggressive. One way Japan could gain greater access to raw materials and markets was to increase the amount of territory under Japanese control. Generals and admirals, working together with leading industrialists and financiers, dreamed of a Japanese empire that would bring "the eight corners of the world under one roof." They campaigned against politicians who stood in their way.

In the novel, the story starts off in a small fishing village by the



Japanese Coast. Sakamoto Chiyo and her Sister Satsu are taken away from her family and taken to Kyoto only a short time before her mother dies. There they are sold. Satsu gets sold to a brothel where she is to work as a prostitute. Chiyo is sold to an Okiya, a traditional Geisha house, where Geishas live and where they also get trained. Chiyo gets to this Okiya because of her startling blue-grey eyes, something that is not very common in Japan.

Right from the start Chiyo senses that the only Geisha living in that house, Hatsumomo, does not like her. This gets her into trouble later on and she goes from being trained as a Geisha to becoming just a normal maid in the Okiya. This changes with the encounter with the Chairman. The Chairman is a wealthy man, and he gives her encouragement. Soon after the encounter with him she meets Mameha, the most famous and popular Geisha in Gion at that time. But she's not only that. She's also Hatsumomo's rival. When she discovers that Chiyo lives with her and that she is not becoming a Geisha she decides to take her in. That's how Chiyo becomes Mameha's 'little sister'. Older Geishas take in young apprentice Geishas to train them and show them

how to become a Geisha.

By that time Hatsumomo also has a 'little sister'. Another apprentice Geisha living in their house. Her and Chiyo are quite good friends right from the start and their friendship still goes on even after they are the 'little sisters' of rivals.

Mameha takes her around the district to tea ceremonies, parties and she also goes to school in the mornings to learn instruments, dances, tea ceremony and how to entertain men. This is all a very exciting and new life for her and she enjoys it. Once her virginity is sold (to an old doctor in Gion) she becomes a very successful Geisha in Gion. She also manages to pay back her debts, which she made at the Okiya during her time as a maid, and, as a consequence, the mother of the Okiya adopts her. This one thing destroys Sayuri's friendship with the other Maiko (apprentice Geisha) living in her house, Pumpkin, because she was hoping to get adopted and one day inherit the Okiya.

During all this time Sayuri can't stop thinking about the Chairman who still hovers around in her head. She meets him and his friend one night but can't seem to get close to him. But she does get close to his



friend Nobu. He is the one who is really interested in Sayuri and later on in the book wants to become her danna. But first there's the Second World War. The Geisha districts in Tokyo, Kyoto and everywhere in Japan are closed and the Geishas are ordered to companies to manufacture different things, mostly weapons, for the war economy. But Sayuri is lucky, and Nobu can get her a job with a kimono maker who now has to sew parachutes. This is a job she does until the war is over. After that she goes back to Gion and to her Okiya. Now the time has come when Nobu wants to become her danna. Before that happens, they go on a trip with Nobu, the Chairman, a few other men and a few Geishas. Sayuri and Mameha go, and so does Pumpkin. Sayuri is desperate, she knows very well that Nobu wants to become her danna, but she still loves the Chairman. So she makes a decision. If she sleeps with a man and Nobu finds them, he would not want to be her danna anymore, because that would mean that she sleeps with men.

So she asks Pumpkin if she could lead Nobu to the old theatre building at a certain time, and she goes there with a man and seduces him. Only shortly after she has undressed, Pumpkin comes into the room.

But the man at her side is not Nobu. It's the Chairman.

### **3.4 Geisha And Prostitution**

*There remains some confusion, even within Japan, about the nature of the geisha profession. Geisha are regarded as prostitutes by many Westerners. However, legitimate geisha do not engage in paid sex with clients. Their purpose is to entertain their customer, be it by dancing, reciting verse, playing musical instruments, or engaging in light conversation. Geisha engagements may include flirting with men and playful innuendos; however, clients know that nothing more can be expected. In a social style that is common in Japan, men are amused by the illusion of that which is never to be.*

Geisha have been confused with the Edo period's high-class courtesans known as oiran, from whom they evolved. Like geisha, oiran wore elaborate hairstyles and white makeup, but oiran knotted their obi

in the front. It has been commonly thought the obi was tied that way for easy removal, though anthropologist Liza Dalby has suggested that it was because it was the practice of married women at the time.

During the Edo period, prostitution was legal. Prostitutes such as the oiran worked within walled-in districts licensed by the government. In the seventeenth century, the oiran sometimes employed men called "geisha" to perform at their parties. Therefore, the first geisha were men. In the late eighteenth century, dancing women called "odoriko" and newly popular female geisha began entertaining men at banquets in unlicensed districts. Some were apprehended for illegal prostitution and sent to the licensed quarters, where there was a strict distinction between geisha and prostitutes, and the former were forbidden to sell sex. In contrast, "machi geisha", who worked outside the licensed districts, often engaged in illegal prostitution.

In 1872, shortly after the Meiji Restoration, the new government passed a law liberating "prostitutes (shōgi) and geisha (geigi)". The wording of this statute was the subject of controversy. Some officials

thought that prostitutes and geisha worked at different ends of the same profession—selling sex— and that all prostitutes should henceforth be called "geisha". In the end, the government decided to maintain a line between the two groups, arguing that geisha were more refined and should not be soiled by association with prostitutes.

Also, geisha working in onsen towns such as Atami are dubbed onsen geisha. Onsen geisha have been given a bad reputation due to the prevalence of prostitutes in such towns who market themselves as "geisha," as well as sordid rumors of dance routines like Shallow River (which involves the "dancers" lifting the skirts of their kimono higher and higher). In contrast to these "one-night geisha," the true onsen geisha are in fact competent dancers and musicians. However, the autobiography of Sayo Masuda, an onsen geisha who worked in Nagano Prefecture in the 1930s, reveals that in the past, such women were often under intense pressure to sell sex.

Geisha are expected to be single women; those who choose to marry must retire from the profession. It was traditional in the past for established geisha to take a danna, or patron. A danna was typically a

wealthy man, sometimes married, who had the means to support the very large expenses related to a geisha's traditional training and other costs. This sometimes occurs today as well, but very rarely.

A geisha and her danna may or may not be in love, but intimacy is never viewed as a reward for the danna's financial support. The traditional conventions and values within such a relationship are very intricate and not well understood, even by many Japanese.

While it is true that a geisha is free to pursue personal relationships with men she meets through her work, such relationships are carefully chosen and unlikely to be casual. A hanamachi tends to be a very tight-knit community and a geisha's good reputation is not taken lightly.

Geisha always wear kimono. Apprentice geisha wear highly colorful kimono with extravagant obi. Always, the obi is brighter than the kimono she is wearing to give a certain exotic balance. Maiko wear the obi tied in a style called "darari" (dangling obi).

Older geisha wear more subdued patterns and styles (most notably the obi tied in a simpler knot utilized by married women known as the "taiko musubi" (□□□□), or "drum knot").



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 4.1 Conclusions

“Memoirs of a Geisha” is told from the point of view of Sayuri Nitta, a retired geisha in her 70s, living in the Waldorf Towers in New York City. She is interviewed by Jakob Haarhuis, a professor at New York University, who is credited as the story's translator, although he is a *fictional character himself*. This is apparently a reference to Golden's interviewing of a retired geisha as part of his research for the novel. The story is told in a flashback format, with continuous references to the time between Sayuri's career and the time she is being interviewed. She also periodically explains different aspects of geisha life.

These performed characters are the reflection of geishas and their problems. The author tries to compare the women characters by describing their social background, and how they react about their *feeling*.

#### 4.2 Suggestions

Novel, as a literary work, is not only the result of author's



The sign of a prosperous okiya is having geisha not wearing a kimono more than once, meaning that those okiya with higher economic status will have "storehouses" of sorts where kimono are stored and interchanged between geisha.

The growing interest in geisha and their exotic appearance have spawned various popular culture phenomena both in Japan and in the West. Western interest in geisha increased with the 1997 novel and 2005 film *Memoirs of a Geisha* and the autobiography of former geisha Iwasaki Mineko, titled *Geisha of Gion*.

the analysis of a novel must be done continuously in order to reveal the moral value contains in a story.

“Memoirs of A Geisha” basically tells about a girl name Sayuri who was sold by her father and ended up as a geisha in a brothel

Sayuri recalls her early childhood as Chiyo Sakamoto, a young girl who, along with her sister Satsu, is sold into a life of servitude by her elderly father and dying mother when she is nine years old. Chiyo is taken in by the unsympathetic proprietress of the Nitta geisha house, whom she addresses as "Mother". She befriends Mother's sister ("Auntie") and another young girl in the house, Pumpkin, but also earns the jealous ire of the head geisha of the house, Hatsumomo. Chiyo spends most of her remaining childhood working as a maid to pay off several large debts: her purchase price; the soiling of a kimono owned by a well-known geisha, which Chiyo was blackmailed into defacing by Hatsumomo; and her medical bill, incurred after she injures herself while trying to escape. Her sister is sold to a brothel, but she eventually succeeds in escaping, never to be seen by Chiyo again.

The writer would like to suggest that the study women characters

in the novel “Memoirs of A Geisha” should be intensified among the English Department. And the interest in reading the novel is very essential and should be increased for better understanding of literature.



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