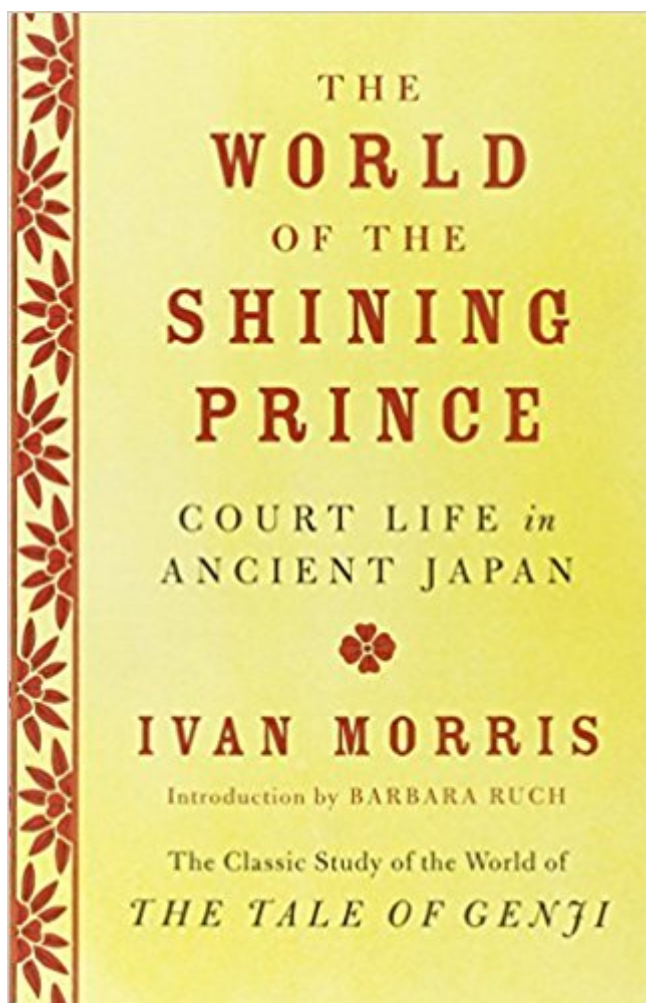


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The World Of The Shining Prince: Court Life In Ancient Japan



Synopsis

Ivan Morris's definitive and widely acclaimed portrait of the ceremonious and melancholy world of ancient Japan. Using *The Tale of Genji* and other major literary works from Japan's Heian period as a frame of reference, *The World of the Shining Prince* recreates an era when women set the cultural tone. Focusing on the world of the emperor's court "a world deeply admired by Virginia Woolf, among others" renowned scholar of Japanese history and literature Ivan Morris explores the politics, society, religious life, and superstitions of the period. Offering readers detailed portrayals of the daily lives of courtiers, the cult of beauty they espoused, and the intricate relations between the men and women of the age, *The World of the Shining Prince* has been a cornerstone text on ancient Japan for half a century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reading the *Genji Monogatari* by Murasaki (X Century) is like an immersion into old Japan. But without the splendid comments and explanation of Ivan Morris, most of that world would be lost for us, falling back into the darkness of remote times.

For those interested in the Heian time and/or those interested in books like the *Pillow Book* or the *Tale of Genji*, this book is a useful resource with lots of helpful background information regarding the court, politics, everyday life in the court, and much more. However, it is a much older book and a book of its time. For example, religion and superstition are separate chapters, and some French phrases are thrown around without any translations. I guess the original target readers were expected to understand? I must also point out that most modern readers will have newer translations

of the books referenced in this book, so there will be some minor and major differences. The names of the head consorts as so often referenced in the Pillow Book and Lady Murasaki's diary are stated to be totally different names for some reason.

I loved this book. It makes a great companion to The Tale of Genji and made reading Genji so much easier because I had an understanding of the background of Heian Japan. It's an easy read, with good footnotes and a good bibliography. The appendices are very helpful. If you want a better understanding of the background to The Tale of Genji, get this book.

This book is really very good and an excellent starting analysis of the context in which The Tale of Genji was written. However, it was written in a different era, and some out-dated attitudes shine through in the text from time to time. It's very clear that certain aspects of Japanese culture simply WEREN'T brought up at all due to reader expectations during the decade in which this book was written. However, what is there is quite good and this makes for a compelling read.

Not too crazy about this book

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