



Lake of Heaven: An Original Translation of the Japanese Novel by Ishimure Michiko (AsiaWorld)

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Lake of Heaven is the story of a traditional mountain village in Japan that is destroyed in the process of constructing a dam. It tells of the lives of the displaced villagers as they struggle to retain their traditional culture—including their stories, dances, music, mythology, and dreams—in the face of displacement, environmental destruction, and rapid modernization. Although fictional, the work is rooted in the events of actual villages in the mountains of Kyushu and Ishimure's imaginative reconstructions of their people's tales. Lake of Heaven considerably stretches the familiar Western conceptions of the novel form. Its interweaving of local stories, dreams, and myths lends it a deep sense of the Noh Drama. Gary Snyder writes that Lake of Heaven is 'a remarkable text of mythopoetic quality—with a Noh flavor—that presents much of the ancient lore of Japan and the lore of the spirit world.' The story becomes a parable for the larger world, 'in which all of our old cultures and all of our old villages are becoming buried, sunken, and lost under the rising waters of the dams of industrialization and globalization.'



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