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Ocha Teacher: A Memoir

Keiko Amano



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Keiko's mother was an Ocha (chanoyu or chado) teacher who forced Keiko to practice the traditional art. Keiko rebelled against it and many old Japanese customs. The story revolves around this mother-daughter conflict, starting in 1957 in Yokohoma, Japan. In the 1960s, Mother continued to discourage Keiko's desires. The Beatles were coming to Japan in the summer of 1966 and Keiko desperately wanted to go to their concert in Tokyo. She knew it was an opportunity of a lifetime to see the legendary band. Mother, of course, did not want her to go. Mother also didn't want Keiko to travel to the US to attend college. Keiko's actions all seemed to defy Mother's traditional Japanese values. Keiko never understood why her Mother was always so fanatic about Ocha. She also never knew why Mother didn't discuss the death of her mother Toyo, a Cinderella —member of the ordinary citizen class married into the upper class—who died under mysterious circumstances. Keiko set out to explore the family taboos and find the answers. The more facts she uncovered, the more she understood her mother and grandmother, and ultimately herself.

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