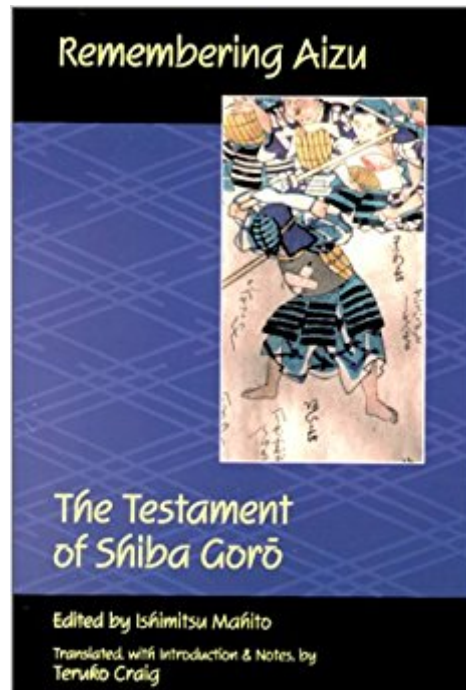




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Remembering Aizu



Synopsis

Remembering Aizu tells of Goro shiba's early years. It provides an extraordinary story that provides insights and material for a social history of the Restoration and its aftermath.

Book Information

Paperback: 168 pages

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Customer Reviews

This is a fairly short book, which I found fascinating. There is a very useful introduction which gives the historical context and details on Shiba's family. The memoir takes place during the early years of the Meiji era, when Japan was undergoing an upheaval and transformation from a feudal state to a modern country. Gorō Shiba, son of an upper class samurai family, lost his mother, grandmother and 2 sisters during the punitive war against Aizu province. His father and 3 brothers survived, but they were separated, though they managed to keep close ties. He lived from the ages of 10 to 15 as an underpaid servant. At 15 he was accepted into a military school, and his fortunes took a better turn. He eventually retired as a general. This memoir covers his life from about 8 to 16. It is simply but well told, and often quite moving. It offers a glimpse into Japanese life in those turbulent times not well known in the West. I highly recommend it.

This unassuming book is such a treasure to help understand the realities of being a samurai in the latest stages of the Tokugawa period. This is not simply an academic textbook, although I am sure scholars with an 'F' in their Myer-Briggs type, will really enjoy the intimacy offered here by Shiba. I hope this gets picked up by Penguin or Vintage as a genuine classic of literature for future generations. If you are interested in social histories, then give this a go. Despite the losses and

challenges in his life, Shiba constantly demonstrates honour, humility, and empathy for others in his life. A heart warming and informative read.

This work was a required read for a course on Japanese history course, and provides an interesting perspective for cultural studies through time.

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