



# Yoshiwara: Geishas, Courtesans, and the Pleasure Quarters of Old Tokyo (Tuttle Classics)

*Stephen Longstreet, Ethel Longstreet*

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**"Lust will not keep...Something must be done about it."**—*inscription at the entrance to Yoshiwara*

For over a hundred years the Western world has heard whispers of the pleasure city, Yoshiwara, set behind its walls in the city of Edo itself, which is today called Tokyo. Here was an eastern red light district, the place for the hedonists, the woman-seekers, the sensual pleasure-hunters of old Japan. There, behind moated walls, an erotic Japanese world unmatched by the West was created by beautiful courtesans, geishas, dancers, actors, and artists. To this "floating world" came the hedonists and the sensual pleasure hunters of old Japan. Many myths and legends encircled the secrets of the Yoshiwara, and still do. In time other Japanese cities tried to copy the original, sometimes even calling their district for geishas and courtesans and pretty waitress girls a Yoshiwara.

Stephen and Ethel Longstreet use prints and fascinating original sources to trace the rise and fall of this city within a city, a sanctioned preserve of teahouses and brothels that was not abolished until 1958, sketching a vivid, no-holds-bared portrait of social and sexual mores in Japan's capital.

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