



In the Beginning, Woman Was the Sun: The Autobiography of a Japanese Feminist (Weatherhead Books on Asia)

Raicho Hiratsuka

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"In the beginning, woman was truly the sun. An authentic person. Now she is the moon, a wan and sickly moon, dependent on another, reflecting another's brilliance."-Hiratsuku Raicho

Raicho Hiratsuka (1886-1971) was the most influential figure in the early women's movement in Japan. In 1911, she founded *Bluestocking (Seito)*, Japan's first literary journal run by women. In 1920, she founded the New Women's Association, Japan's first nationwide women's organization to campaign for female suffrage, and soon after World War II, the Japan Federation of Women's Organizations.

Available for the first time in English, *In the Beginning, Woman Was the Sun* is Raicho Hiratsuka's autobiography of her childhood, early youth, and subsequent rebellion against the strict social codes of the time. Hiratsuka came from an upper-middle class Tokyo family, and her restless quest for truth led her to read widely in philosophy and undertake Zen training at Japan Woman's College. After graduation, she gained brief notoriety for her affair with a married writer, but quickly established herself as a brilliant and articulate leader of feminist causes with the launch of the journal *Seito*. Her richly detailed account presents a woman who was at once idealistic and elitist, fearless and vain, and a perceptive observer of society.

Teruko Craig's translation captures Hiratsuka's strong personality and distinct voice. At a time when interest in Japanese feminism is growing in the West, there is no finer introduction to Japanese women's history than this intimate, candid, and compelling memoir.

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