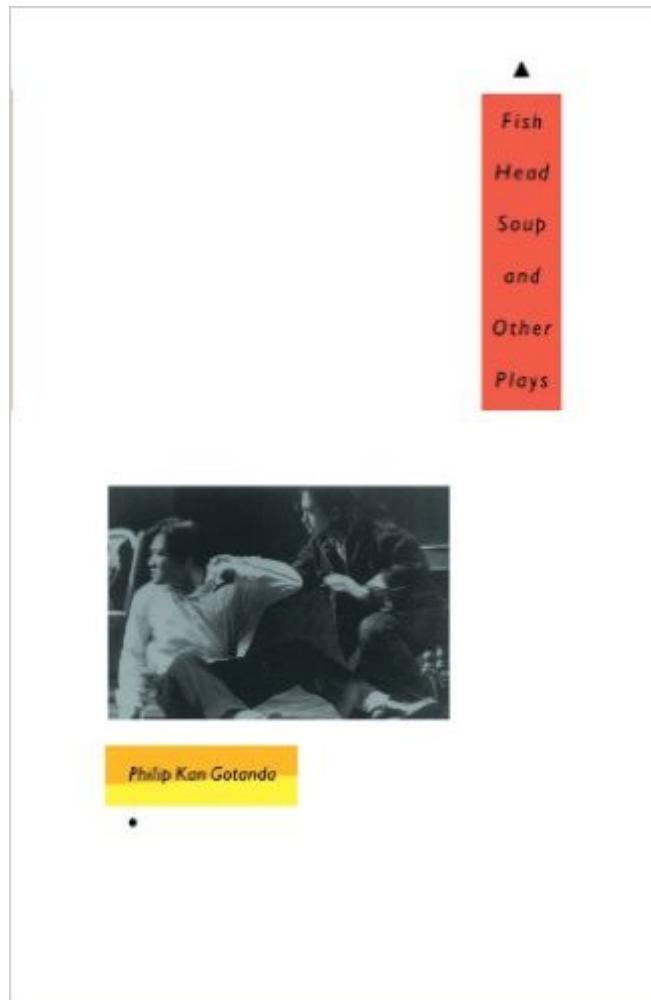


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Fish Head Soup And Other Plays



Synopsis

Like many other immigrants who have come to melting-pot America, Japanese Americans have experienced radical shifts in fortune. From the farms and small businesses founded by the first arrivals in the early years of this century, to the trauma of the relocation camps during World War II, to the search for new values in a heterogeneous society, each generation of Japanese Americans has had to confront its own challenges. Exploring the relationships among the Issei (first generation), Nisei (second generation), and Sansei (third generation), playwright Philip Kan Gotanda has crafted four powerful dramas. Japanese American family life is at the heart of the plays, from elder traditionalists and Nisei still troubled by the message of the wartime camps, to women seeking new roles and brash youth seizing opportunities in a larger society. The four plays included are "Song for a Nisei Fisherman", "Fish Head Soup", "The Wash", and "Yankee Dawg You Die." Throughout these dramas, many facets of Japanese American life are revealed as compelling characters interact. Gotanda understands and sensitively depicts the stresses this traditional culture endures, not only in its relation to the heterogeneous society that surrounds it but also among the generations that comprise it. An introduction by Michael Omi, assistant professor of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, considers the sources of the plays in Gotanda's personal history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

No question, this is a must read. Most people will never see a full production of these scripts. Live

theater featuring new work by living playwrights is rare in most places. For those interested in truth and in drama, the full range of the American experience and the Asian Pacific Islander American perspective, from a sansei point of view, Fish Head Soup and Other Plays is the definitive published collection of Philip Kan Gotanda's work to date. Better yet, read the text *and* see the productions. If you can. Gotanda tells stories that describe and illuminate the truth about what it means and what it's like to be Japanese American, but cultural heredity is not a prerequisite or barrier to the book. His work challenges the "truth" of other recent writers who blur the line on what really carried over to the US of A when folks from around the Pacific Rim came to stay. The drama and humor are universal and poignant, un-stereotypical in the sense that the conflicts and human interest come out of relationships and dreams, not exoticized romanticism. The dramatic lines are not always gentle, and some are shocking. The humor is grounded in what makes "other" interesting and "family" familiar. It's a window on what's happening in Asian Pacific Islander America today.

Barring that, get this book. While all four of the plays, Fish Head Soup, Yankee Dawg You Die, The Wash and A Song for a Nisei Fisherman, are strong, stirring, beautiful pieces, perhaps the most powerful of these is Yankee Dawg You Die. Although written over a decade ago, Yankee Dawg is absolutely timeless: the ethnic actor's eternal struggle of taking a demeaning, stereotypical role because it pays the rent versus refusing such a part for the sake of artistic integrity is a challenge all ethnic actors still face. ... Read Yankee Dawg -- better yet, go see it any chance you get (!) ... and pray that its premise does not remain relevant in the decades to come.

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Great book!

If you enjoy this type of writing, you will enjoy this book. Fish head soup is real.

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