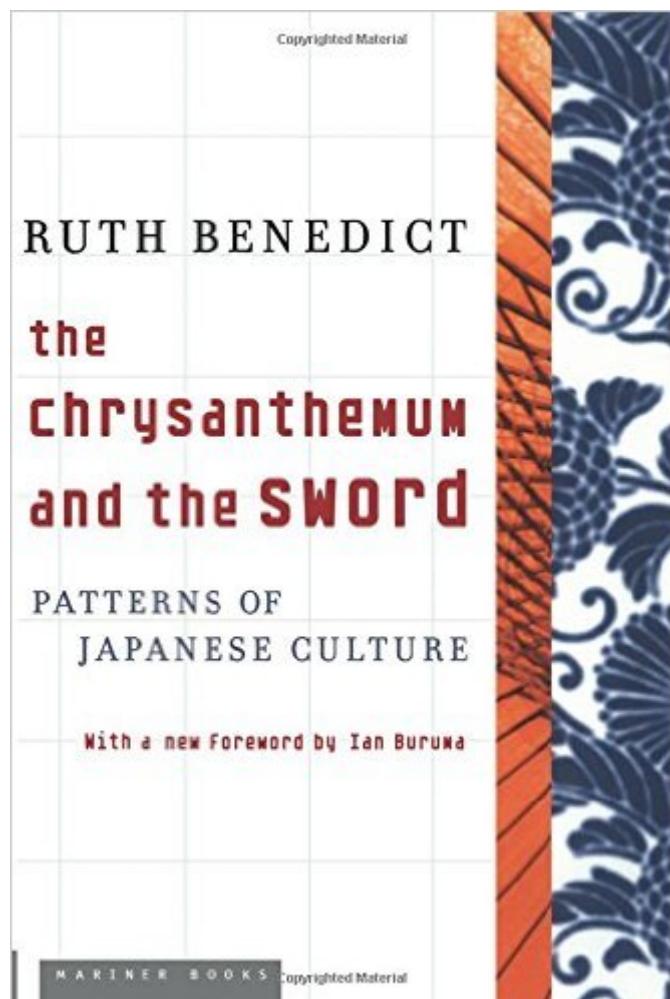


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The Chrysanthemum And The Sword



Synopsis

Essential reading for anyone interested in Japanese culture, this unsurpassed masterwork opens an intriguing window on Japan. Benedictâ™s World War IIâ™era study paints an illuminating contrast between the culture of Japan and that of the United States. The Chrysanthemum and the Sword is a revealing look at how and why our cultures differ, making it the perfect introduction to Japanese history and customs.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In 1944, the Allies landed in Normandy, forcing the German army to fight on two fronts; on the Pacific the counteroffensive against Japan gave the Americans one victory after another. The war was almost finished and the new world order was only a matter of time. The losers, Germany and Japan, not only had to be punished, but these nations needed to be revived and given a fresh start. In this political situation, the American government decided to get advice not only from the military and politicians, but also from the anthropologists - in an attempt to understand foreign, now subordinate, societies. The Japanese culture, so alien and distant from the American one, which is firmly rooted in Europe, was analyzed by Ruth Benedict, an anthropologist from Columbia University. The goal was to learn of the strengths and weaknesses of the Japanese in order to assume the best strategy towards the end and after the WWII. Benedict writes with rare objectivity, describing Japanese traditions and customs, the habits, which are obvious in Japan, but weird, extreme or unheard of for an average Western person. She describes the situations, when the Japanese expect politeness and respect, and when they cannot count on any; when they feel

shame, confusion and embarrassment; what they demand from their family, friends, co-workers and themselves. She discusses their roots, symbols and ideas on which the society is based (this is not a book about religion or art, so they are only mentioned when necessary). The fact, that Benedict had never set foot in Japan, was nothing special - it was believed that it is possible for an anthropologist to use means other than personal experience in their work.

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