

Publishers Weekly



SAMURAI

Hisako Matsubara, translated by Ruth Hein. Times Books, \$9.95 ISBN 0-8129-0852-X

This stunning novel is set in a small town in Japan at the turn of the century. As we follow the collapse of the proud, wealthy Hayato family, members of the Samurai ruling class, ancient Japan buckles in the background under the new traditions brought on by 20th century industrialization and contact with the West. Several themes are masterfully entwined here. There is the devastating story of the ill-fated love of Nagayuki and Tomiko: he is sent by Father Hayato to prove himself a success in America, a feat that takes 60 years; she is forced to remain in Japan. There is also the tale of women in an awesomely patriarchal society, too late developing the strength to fight back. And ultimately there is much said about the terrible Japanese immigrant experience in America. A moving, rich saga, written by an ordained Shinto priest who was born in Japan and educated in Germany, "Samurai" marks the debut of a brilliant talent. [January]