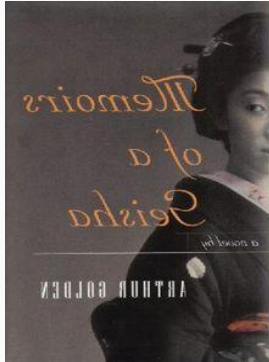


# Exploring the lives of Geisha

**Grip Tape Learning Challenge:**  
By Ayana Stuart, Alcia Francis



# Why Geisha?



Reading Arthur Golden's "Memoirs of a Geisha" intrigued us to further explore the life of a Geisha. One may argue that these women helped shape the status and roles assigned to women in Japanese society. We are curious to learn how this role and status evolved through Japan's history.

We've been interested in the Japanese culture for some time now; thus this learning journey seems like a perfect opportunity to take a deeper dive into a topic of interest.

Besides, as two young women we grapple every day with gender roles and societal expectations for women. Thus, the study of Geishas will help us better understand ways in which women have and continue to shape societies.

# Questions we seek to answer

What is the history of the Geisha?

How has this tradition evolved throughout  
Japan's history?

What is the significance of the tea ceremony  
performed by Geishas?

How are Geishas trained for their role?

How have Geisha shaped the status and role  
of women in Japanese society?

How have Geishas influenced the role and  
status of women in other societies?

# Goals of the Learning Journey

We want to use the GripTape learning challenge as an opportunity to expand our knowledge about Japanese society and the role of Geishas in that society. Specifically,

We will study the history of Geishas:

We will study the history of Japan and Geishas in particular online

We will travel to meet with Prof. Doris Bergen at the University of Mass in Amherst

We will interview [Liza Dalby](#), the only non-Japanese Geisha

We will learn about the significance of Geishas to the modern gender relations in Japan:

We will read “[Geisha, harlot, strangler, star: a woman, sex, and morality in modern Japan](#)” by

# Relation to success

Having knowledge of other cultures helps not only open our minds to the vast world around us but also expose us to different possibilities. Learning about the geisha will put in perspective how we as women are viewed in different cultures in relation to our own.

This learning journey will also allow us to meet at least two outstanding scholars of the Japanese culture, and gain them as a resource as we prepare to pursue our undergraduate studies next Fall.

# Ensuring we will lead

Ayana and Alcia will set weekly assignments and will meet for at least 2 hours each week to share about findings

Each learner will keep their own notebook to document their learning

Ayana and Alcia will develop interview questions to pose to the two scholars we plan to speak to in the course of the journey

Both learners will read each book and keep their reading journal

# Time Needed and Money

We would like to have the full three months to give us time to efficiently learn the history of Geishas, read scholarly texts to understand the relevance of Geishas to the broader society, and learn the tea ceremony.

We would like to request the following resources:

\$70 to pay for the two sets of books;

\$300 to travel to the University of Massachusetts to meet professor Doris Barga

\$150 to pay for 3 lessons to master the tea ceremony

# Documentation

We will take videos and pictures of the tea ceremony as we learn them.

We will keep detailed notes related to our learning

We will record our interviews with scholars