



The River With No Bridge (Tuttle Classics of Japanese Literature)

Sue Sumii

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The River With No Bridge (Hashi no nai kawa) explores with outspoken frankness a subject still taboo in Japan: the intolerance and bigotry faced daily by Japan's largest minority group, the burakumin.

Racially no different from other Japanese, over the centuries burakumin have been cruelly ostracized for their association with occupations considered defiling. Spanning the years 1908 to 1924, the original six volumes of this novel trace the developing awareness of burakumin of their rights and dignity as human beings. Volume 1, translated into English for the first time in 1990, is a story about childhood in a burakumin village. It tells of young Koji Hatana's questioning of the rigid social order and his growing sense of injustice as he meets prejudice from other children at school and from his teachers who try to instill in him their belief that since he was born defiled he should resign himself to his fate.

Told against the backdrop of Japan's struggle to shed its feudalistic past and enter the modern age, the novel is a courageous work and a compelling read.

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