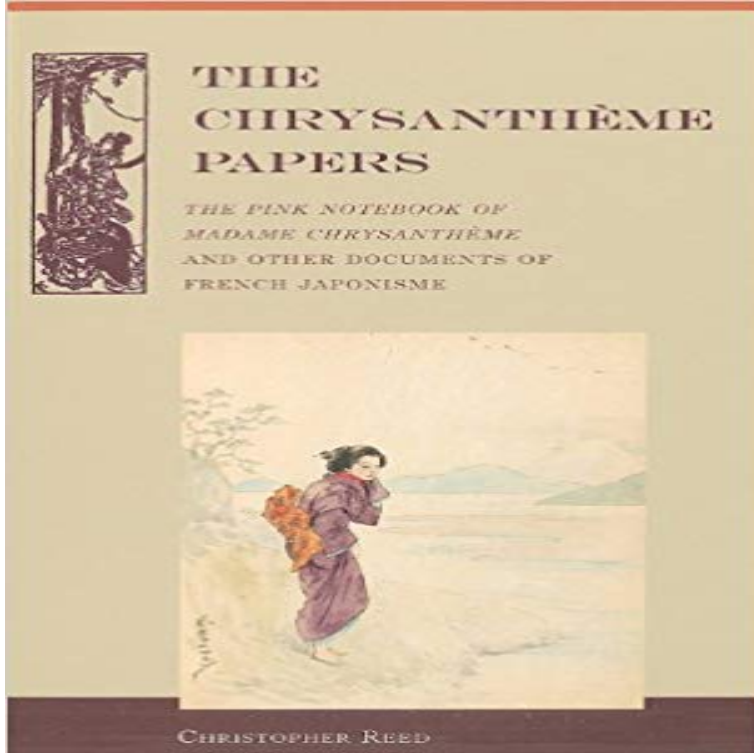


# The Chrysanthemum Papers: The Pink Notebook of Madame Chrysanthemum and other Documents of French Japonisme



Pierre Lotis novel Madame Chrysanthemum (1888) enjoyed great popularity during the author's lifetime, served as a source of Puccini's opera Madama Butterfly, and remains in print to this day as a classic in Western literature. Lotis story, cast in the form of his fictionalized diary, describes the affair between a French naval officer and Chrysanthemum, a temporary bride purchased in Nagasaki. More broadly, Lotis novel helped define the terms in which Occidentals perceived Japan as delicate, feminine, and, to use one of Lotis favorite words, preposterous?in short, ripe for exploitation. The Pink Notebook of Madame Chrysanthemum (1893) sought, according to a newspaper reviewer at the time, to avenge Japan for the adjectives that Pierre Loti has inflicted on it. Written by Felix Regamey, a talented illustrator with firsthand knowledge of Japan, The Pink Notebook retells Lotis story but this time as the diary of Chrysanthemum. The book, presented here in English for the first time and together with the original French text and illustrations by Regamey and others, is certainly surprising in its late nineteenth-century context. Its retelling of a classic tale from the position of a character marginalized by her sex and race provocatively anticipates certain aspects of postmodern literature. Translator Christopher Reed's rich and satisfying introduction compares Loti and Regamey in relation to attitudes toward Japan held by notable Japonistes Vincent van Gogh, Lafcadio Hearn, Edmond de Goncourt, and Philippe Burty. Reed provides further intellectual context by including new translations of excerpts from Lotis novel as well as a portion of the travel journal of Regamey's travel companion, the renowned collector Emile Guimet. Reed's emphasis on competing Western ideas about Japan challenges conventional scholarly generalizations concerning Japonisme in this era. This elegant translation of The Pink

Notebook and Japoniste documents will delight both general and specialized readers, particularly those interested in the ambiguities in the dynamics of nationalism, gender, identification, and exploitation that, since the nineteenth century, have characterized the West's relationship to Japan.

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