



The Tatar Whirlwind

A Novel of Seventeenth-Century East Asia

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ISBN	9781891640469
Publisher	Floating World Editions
Binding	Hardback
Territory	USA & Canada
Size	6.39 in x 9.45 in
Pages	656 Pages
Price	\$39.95

By the early seventeenth century the Tokugawa shogunate had achieved supremacy over the islands of Japan. Meanwhile, the great Ming dynasty of China, which came to power in 1368, was on its last legs. North of the Great Wall, the nomadic Jurchens were beginning to cause the Ming government trouble. Across this stage of international conflict and intrigue wanders a completely unlikely couple, the Jurchen princess Abiya, shipwrecked on the island of Hirado, and the minor samurai Katsura Shosuke, charged by his lord with returning her to her North China homeland. Neither has any inkling that they will soon become caught up in events that will shape the history of East Asia, and will bear witness to the birth of two remarkable and enduring regimes. An epic of colorful characters animating pivotal events taken straight from documented history, *The Tatar Whirlwind* was penned by Japan's most popular writer of historical fiction and rendered in a masterful and accurate translation by a noted scholar of East Asian history.

By the early seventeenth century the Tokugawa shogunate had achieved supremacy over nearly all its opponents throughout the islands of Japan. Meanwhile, the great Ming dynasty of China, which came to power in 1368, was on its last legs. Corruption was rampant, extravagant expenditures emptied state coffers, while rural poverty and banditry were destroying the fabric of life in north China. North of the Great Wall, the nomadic Jurchens were beginning to cause the Ming government trouble. Yet the very idea that these barbarians might someday invade and conquer China scarcely crossed the mind of any but a thoughtful few. Across this stage of international conflict and intrigue wanders a completely unlikely couple, the Jurchen princess Abiya, shipwrecked on the island of Hirado, and the minor samurai Katsura Shosuke, charged with returning her to her North China homeland. Neither has any inkling that they will soon become caught up in events that will shape the history of East Asia, and will bear witness to the birth of two remarkable and enduring regimes. The Manchus will rule over China until the imperial system is overthrown in 1911, while the Togukawa shoguns hold sway over Japan until the Meiji restoration of 1868. An epic of colorful characters animating pivotal events taken straight from documented history, *The Tatar Whirlwind* was penned by Japan's most popular writer of historical fiction and rendered in a masterful and accurate translation by a noted scholar of East Asian history.