



# **I Thought the Sun Was God: The Spiritual Journey of a Descendant of the Last Satsuma Samurai Clan**

*Masako Kimura Streling*

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Born in a poor fishing village under difficult circumstances, Masako, a descendant of the Satsuma Samurai Clan, grew up burdened with many, filial responsibilities, in a rigorously class-conscious and patriarchal society-one headed for massive and profound change. Unable to reconcile herself to the many roles within roles imposed upon her, and feeling in her heart that she was destined to make a difference, Masako embarked on a lifelong journey of growth and self-discovery that took her across the Pacific Ocean and eventually led her to God. In their sixties-when most Americans are hoping to retire and enjoy the fruits of their labors-Masako and her husband Carl spent three years as the first Lay Missionaries for the Society of St. Columban in Japan. Those years, while life changing, were also painful and left Masako scarred and in a state of spiritual and emotional crisis. Questioning her role, her identity, and her very worth, Masako returned to the United States to rebuild a life, and reconnect with the Church community. I Thought The Sun Was God is a powerful story of faith's eventual triumph over deprivation, denial, and rejection. It relates the author's struggle with adversity and injustice, culminating with her eventual surrender to the true higher power. It is about the struggle versus adversity and injustice, but it is also about surrender to one true higher power and finding one's voice while listening for the small, still voice of God.

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