



Persona: A Biography of Yukio Mishima

Naoki Inose

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Yukio Mishima (b. 1925) was a brilliant writer and intellectual whose relentless obsession with beauty, purity, and patriotism ended in his astonishing self-disembowelment and decapitation in downtown Tokyo in 1970. Nominated for the Nobel Prize, Mishima was the best-known novelist of his time (works like *Confessions of a Mask* and *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* are still in print in English), and his legacy—his *persona*—is still honored and puzzled over.

Who was Yukio Mishima really? This, the first full biography to appear in English in almost forty years, traces Mishima's trajectory from a sickly boy named Kimitake Hiraoka to a hard-bodied student of martial arts. In detail it examines his family life, the wartime years, and his emergence, then fame, as a writer and advocate for traditional values. Revealed here are all the personalities and conflicts and sometimes petty backbiting that shaped the culture of postwar literary Japan.

Working entirely from primary sources and material unavailable to other biographers, author Naoki Inose and translator Hiroaki Sato together have produced a monumental work that covers much new ground in unprecedented depth. Using interviews, social and psychological analysis, and close reading of novels and essays, *Persona* removes the mask that Mishima so artfully created to disguise his true self.

Naoki Inose, currently vice governor of Tokyo, has also written biographies of writers Kikuchi Kan and Osamu Dazai.

New York-based **Hiroaki Sato** is an award-winning translator of classical and modern Japanese poetry, and also translated Mishima's novel *Silk and Insight*.

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