

Human Trafficking and Geishas Research Paper

Alejandra Castillo

Copper Hills High School

Do you know what human trafficking is? No? What about human trafficking for prostitution? Does that paint a better image? Not many people will recognize what it is if they just hear “human trafficking.” The truth is, you might have an idea of what it is without even realizing it. Have you ever seen *Memoirs of a Geisha* or *Taken*? These films are excellent examples of the evils and wrong doings of human trafficking. Let’s focus more on the film *Taken*. In this movie, the daughter of a former detective gets permission from her divorced parents to go to France with her friend. What her parents, or she herself, don’t know is that her friend’s family members won’t be home where they are staying. As the daughter and her friend reach their destination of France, they catch a taxi cab with a French man who was flirting with them at the airport. The man stays for the ride until the girls get to the house. He finds out, as well as the daughter, that they will be staying there alone. Once they are inside, the friend turns on some music and starts dancing. The daughter, feeling guilty, calls her father to inform him that they will be staying alone. While on the phone, she looks out the window and can see her friend in the other room through her window. What she sees is terrifying. She watches three men dressed in black take her friend against her will. As tears of fear and panic stream down her face, she explains to her father what just happened. He calmly walks her through what she should do. He tells her to go to the nearest room she can find and crawl under the bed. He tells her that they are going to take her and that she must leave the phone under the bed. She follows his instructions and she is taken. Her father immediately goes into action. He flies down to France in search of his daughter. Some of the images in the movie are shocking. It is very surprising to see all of the things that

are done to the girls that are kidnapped and sold into prostitution. Most of them aren't very lucky. One of these unlucky girls includes the daughter's friend. When her father finds her, she is found in an abandoned house, handcuffed to a bed, with drugs that have been injected into her body, abused off, and dead. Many other girls were in her position. When the man finally finds her daughter, she is being sold as a sex slave. In the end he manages to save her and bring her back home.

Although this was a fantastic movie to show the horrors of human trafficking, it did not have a realistic ending. Not many girls have a father who is a spy and has the skills to save them. The sad truth is that most girls' lives are not saved. Once they are kidnapped and forced into the business, they cannot get out. Human trafficking isn't something that is constantly on the news or something that many people talk about it, not many people are informed about this issue. This isn't a matter that should just be glazed over. Millions of young girls and women are taken against their will into these businesses.

In *Memoirs of a Geisha*, a young girl and her sister are sold to a Geisha house by their father. He was only trying to give them the best that they could since he was only a Fisherman and he would not be able to provide a good enough life for them. Once at the Geisha house, the young girl is taken in but her sister wasn't pretty enough so she is sent elsewhere to work as a servant. The young girl faces many obstacles while working at the Geisha house. Her main obstacle was the head Geisha, Hatsumomo. Hatsumomo realized from the very beginning that this young girl would be a danger to her career. She gets the girl into a lot of trouble causing her to end up as a servant. One day while running her errands, the young girl collapses on a bridge and starts to cry. A

man comes up to her and takes her out for shaved ice. He gives her a hanker shift which she keeps forever. She falls in love with him and is then determined to meet him again, someday. That day she also finds out that he is the head man for the Geisha house she lives in. Several years later, Mameha, Hatsumomo's rival Geisha, comes to the young girl's Geisha house to look for her. Mameha takes the young girl with her to train her as a Geisha. The young girl's first show was a huge success and she becomes known as Sayuri. As World War II begins, they are all separated and sent to different areas to work. When they come back, Sayuri is reunited with the chairman.

Geisha's are a whole different idea of Human Trafficking. My paper will focus a little more on the life of the Geisha and what effects it has on young as well as older women.

Part I: What is a Geisha?

Geisha's are found in Japan. They are usually mistaken for a Japanese prostitute. This is not exactly true. In fact, they are performers. They put on ceremonies in which they dance, sing, read poetry, talk and flirt with the men. Their main goal is to satisfy the men, especially the ones with the most money, because they are the ones who pay the Geishas. After a performance, it is not required of a Geisha to have intercourse with a man but it is usually to their benefit. If a man in the audience enjoys one Geisha in particular, he may offer a price which the performer can then deny or accept. A higher price is offered for one who is a virgin.

Part II: The History of the Geisha

Geisha's were originally played by men. Only those who had been trained in dance and music were permitted to perform. As time went on, women started to be introduced to this occupation. Some of them were prostitutes that already worked in the quarters. Others were girls sold by their parents at a young age and they were trained in all aspects that a Geisha must be in order to be successful. This type of entertainment actually used to be illegal. It was legalized in 1779.

Part III: The Good about Geishas

Geishas were started off as an entertainment occupation. Not a prostitute's job. All women that were trained to take this job went through a lot to obtain it. It wasn't just going out and selling your body. They offer many girls an opportunity to be a performer. As a performer myself, I believe this is an excellent opportunity. When it comes to performing, many hard hours must be put into training oneself to understand how to do things correctly and master them. An example would be a ballerina. If you watch the Prima Ballerinas in the big Ballet recitals, their movements seem flawless and their bodies look perfected. This is because they have devoted their entire lives to this. First off, they need the training to gain the muscles that they need to use. Standing En' Pointe (on your tippy toes) is approximately the same pressure on your toe as lifting an elephant. On top of this, they also need to gain the flexibility, and techniques which take many years to create and get into your body. They also need the perfect body. They need to be skin and bones due to laws of physics. They have almost no time for school or anything else. This applies to the Geisha. They start their training as little girls. They do not attend school. In fact, they live in sumo houses known as Geisha Stables. Here,

they are trained in dance, music, makeup, instruments, calligraphy, poetry and etiquette. Besides the performance experience, this also offers parents another opportunity to give their kids for a better life if they do not have the money to be able to offer it to them. Parents are also paid in advance for what their daughters will offer in a performance.

PART IV: The Bad about Geishas

Again, going back to the fact that all of their lives will be devoted to the performance experience, some young girls will not want to be involved with this. It might even be preferred by them to live out a hard life filled with difficult work. When parents sell them to the Geisha houses, some are not pretty enough to be a performer and are taken as servants for the rest of their lives instead. This is a terrible situation to be stuck in since you can't even put up a fight to find a decent job that is somewhat enjoyable and being considered ugly, and reminded of that by working for the Geishas every day, can be very damaging to a young girl. There are also many deathly diseases transmitted through sex, and even though it's by choice, prostitution is a difficult choice to make in their position.

To conclude my research, being a Geisha has its ups and its downs. To wrap up and bring this down to one opinion; young girls should become Geishas, but only by choice. They should also be given an alternative out in case of a change of mind later in the future.

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Resources:

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