



Seventh Avenue Literary Agency

Non-Fiction

Song of the Azaleas

A Memoir

Kenneth Ore

A personal and dramatic memoir, ***Song of the Azaleas*** is story about Kenneth Ore's work as an underground Communist in British Hong Kong from post World War II to the mid 70's and the mystery in his life he never revealed to his mother. A young Chinese boy influenced by the hardship of his people during the brutal Japanese occupation and under the corrupt Kuomintang rule, he becomes a secret and illegal recruiter for the Communists in Hong Kong. Over twenty-five years, Kenneth sacrificed his one true love, his career (a brilliant ballet dancer), and most of all, the welfare of his mother, to the Party that ultimately and dramatically deserted him at the most crucial time of his life. Kenneth's story ranges from a child's-eye view of war—horrific, poignant and, at times, amusing—to an adult relating how his dedication to the Party's cause led to the betrayal of those around him.

Song of the Azaleas provides a first-person eyewitness account of the covert activities of the Communist Party, its cult-like recruitment and brainwashing of impressionable youngsters, and its nepotism and infighting. But at the heart of ***Song of the Azaleas*** is the story of a family led by Kenneth's remarkable mother Wai Chi. An exceptional doctor who saved many lives during the occupation, she battled malaria, helped nurse her own daughter during a grave illness, saved her children from starvation, and using her wits and determination, taught them how to survive. All his life, Kenneth wanted to tell his mother about his work for the Communist Party, but she died in Vancouver in May 1995 before he could reveal his deep secret and seek her forgiveness.

From the Prologue:

"Dear Mama,
You know I loved people, like you did Mama. I wanted to help them. You even supported my efforts to help others. You must have wondered what I did with my money from my many jobs. Did you think I was frittering it away instead of supporting you? Were you disappointed you couldn't depend on me?

I want you to understand more about who I was, what I did, and, more importantly, why I did it.

I always intended that after I retired, we would have time to talk, and I could explain my life to you. I am 67 now, and wanting to talk, but we can't. Can you hear me in heaven Mama?

What you didn't know, Mama, was that I was an underground member of the Communist Party in Hong Kong for 25 years.

This is my story..."

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