



Minka: My Farmhouse in Japan

By John Roderick

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In 1959 journalist John Roderick joined the Tokyo bureau of the Associated Press. There, he befriended a Japanese family, the Takishitas. After musing offhandedly that he would like to one day have his own house in Japan, the family unbeknownst to John set out to grant his wish. They found Roderick a 250-year-old minka, or hand-built farmhouse, with a thatched roof and held together entirely by wooden pegs and joinery. It was about to be washed away by flooding and was being offered for only fourteen dollars. Roderick graciously bought the house, but was privately dismayed at the prospect of living in this enormous old relic lacking heating, bathing, plumbing, and proper kitchen facilities. So the minka was dismantled and stored, where Roderick secretly hoped it would stay, as it did for several years.

But Roderick's reverence for natural materials and his appreciation of traditional Japanese and Shinto craftsmanship eventually got the better of him. Before long a team of experienced carpenters were hoisting massive beams, laying wide wooden floors, and attaching the split-bamboo ceiling. In just forty days they rebuilt the house on a hill overlooking Kamakura, the ancient capital of Japan. Working together, they renovated the farmhouse, adding features such as floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors and a modern kitchen, bath, and toilet. From these humble beginnings, Roderick's minka has become internationally known and has hosted such luminaries as President George H. W. Bush, and Senator Hillary Clinton. John Roderick's architectural memoir "Minka" tells the compelling and often poignant story of how one man fell in love with the people, culture, and ancient building traditions of Japan, and reminds us all about the importance of craftsmanship and the meaning of place and home in the process.



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Minka: My Farmhouse in Japan By John Roderick **Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #1127389 in Books
- Published on: 2015-06-30
- Released on: 2015-06-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .63" w x 6.00" l, .80 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 256 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

Fifty years ago, journalist John Roderick bought a small farmhouse in Japan for \$14, then had the whole thing dismantled and put into storage. *Minka* tells the story of that house's reassembly, its visit by a U.S. president, and Roderick's often-amusing struggles to bridge the cultural divide. -- *Dwell, April 2008*

The book, published in Roderick's 10th decade of life, is also a testament to the possible joys of longevity. It celebrates a life well lived and is an accomplishment that serves as an inspiration for anyone entering advanced age with fear there may be no more of a life's story worth telling. -- *Associated Press, February 1, 2008*

About the Author

John Roderick was an Associated Press foreign correspondent in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East for almost forty years. He lives part of the year in Hawaii and part of the year in his minka in Kamakura, Japan.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Vincent Peck:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open as well as read a book titled *Minka: My Farmhouse in Japan*? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have additional opinion?

John Barrow:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive at this point, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of the actual crowded place and notice by means of surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated the idea for a while is reading. Sure, by reading a e-book your ability to survive enhance then having chance to stand than other is high. For yourself who want to start reading a new book, we give you this specific *Minka: My Farmhouse in Japan* book as beginner and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

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and whenever your conditions throughout the e-book and printed people. Beside that this Minka: My Farmhouse in Japan giving you an enormous of experience for example rich vocabulary, giving you demo of critical thinking that we realize it useful in your day pastime. So , let's have it appreciate reading.

Megan Kelly:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try point that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Minka: My Farmhouse in Japan, it is possible to enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh seriously its mind hangout people. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

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