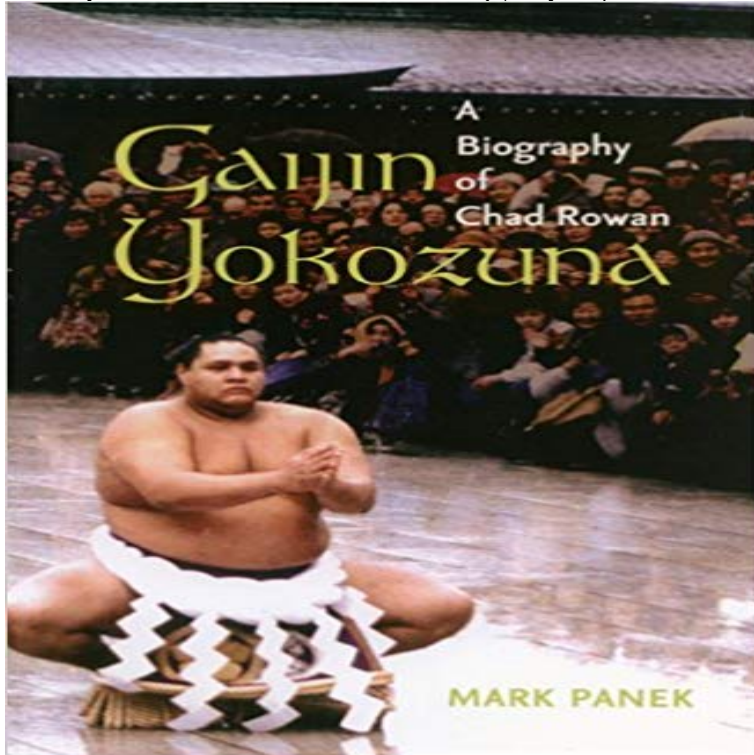


Gaijin Yokozuna: A Biography of Chad Rowan (A Latitude 20 Book)



At the age of eighteen, Chad Rowan left his home in rural Hawaii for Tokyo with visions of becoming a star athlete in Japan's national sport, sumo. Five years later, against the backdrop of rising U.S.-Japan economic tension, Rowan became the first gaijin (non-Japanese) to advance to sumo's top rank, yokozuna. His historic promotion was more a cultural accomplishment than an athletic one, since yokozuna are expected to embody highly prized Japanese values such as hard work, patience, strength, and hinkaku, a special kind of dignity thought to be available only to Japanese. Perhaps the defining moment of the gaijin's unique success occurred at the 1998 Nagano Olympics, when Rowan, chosen to personify Japanese to one of the largest television audiences in history, performed a sacred sumo ritual at the opening ceremony. *Gaijin Yokozuna* chronicles the events leading to that improbable scene at Nagano and beyond, tracing Rowan's life from his Hawaii upbringing to his 2001 retirement ceremony. Along the way it briefly examines the careers of two Hawaii-born sumotori who paved the way for Rowan, Jesse Kuhaulua (Takamiyama) and Salevaa Atisanoe (Konishiki), competitors, and of course Rowan himself, whom he accompanied on three Japan-wide exhibition tours. The work is further informed by volumes of secondary source material on sumo, Japanese culture, and local Hawaii culture.

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