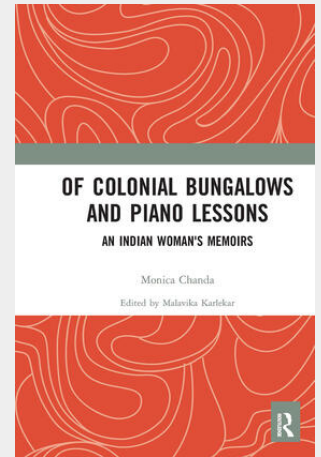


Karlekar

## Of Colonial Bungalows and Piano Lessons

An Indian Woman's Memoirs

Of Colonial Bungalows and Piano Lessons can be read as a metaphor — as an icon — of the encounter between cultures. The memoir is based on Monica Chanda's recollections between about 1913 and 1927, of life in Calcutta, districts of undivided Bengal, holidays in Kashmir and in Europe. There is more than a whiff of a Victorian upbringing in the pages. Neither honed in one culture nor fully at home in those practices superimposed by Monica's father's professional life as a member of the Indian Civil Service, her dilemma comes through in these writings. While her father, Jnanendra Nath Gupta, was avowedly against formal schooling for girls, he encouraged his daughter to undertake long and at times hazardous journeys by river, rail and road to perfect her skills as a pianist. Though there was an occasional longing for a freer life like that lived by her cousins, yet, Monica also enjoyed the privileges of living in spacious bungalows with a retinue of servants, going on exclusive launch trips down the Ganges, and being invited to parties at Government House and even Buckingham Palace. While there is a tautness palpable in her narration of an encounter with a clearly racist Eurasian sergeant and almost near-encounter with a tiger, Monica's style avoids hyperbole and dramatic sequences. She presents facts and situations as she saw them — though there are a few times when emotions of love, fear and excitement ripple through the pages of this tightly-woven memoir. Please note: Taylor & Francis does not sell or distribute the Hardback in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka



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