Omprakash Valmiki's Joothan: A Dalit's Life

Omprakash Valmiki describes his life as an untouchable, or Dalit, in the newly independent India of the 1950s. Joothan refers to scraps of food left on a plate, which Valmiki uses metaphorically to describe his life. The book is an autobiography that brings to light the harsh realities of life for Dalits during that time. Valmiki's life story is representative of the struggles faced by untouchables in India. The book is a powerful testament to the resilience and strength of the human spirit, even in the face of adversity.

The book was originally written in Hindi and translated into English by Arun Prabha Mukherjee. It was published in 2003 by Stree-Samya Books and received the New India Foundation Best Book Award in 2004. The English translation of Joothan has been praised for its ability to convey the pain and dignity of Dalit life to a wider audience.

Joothan is one of the first texts in Hindi that identifies itself as a part of Dalit literature. It is a significant work in the context of Indian Caste System, Dalit politics, and autobiography. Valmiki's life narrative gains a representative quality and imparts the true story of a Dalit's life to readers.

The book has been a catalyst for change, not just in India but also internationally. It has inspired many readers to reflect on the issues of caste and discrimination.

Joothan is a must-read for anyone interested in understanding the struggles of untouchables in India and the fight for Dalit rights.