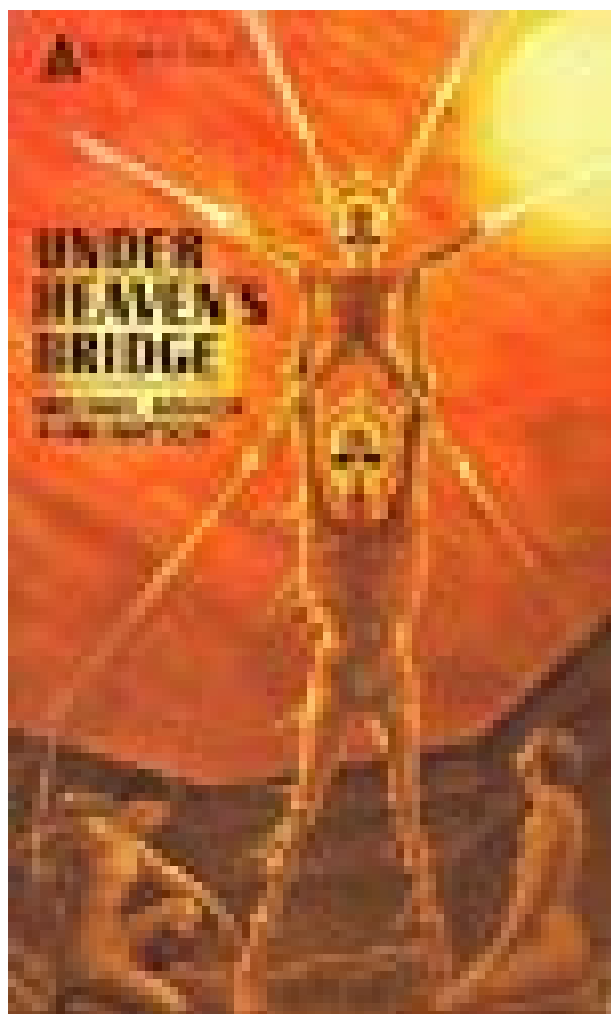


Under Heaven's Bridge



Genre:	Science Fiction
Goodreads Rating:	2.75
Language	English
ISBN13:	9780441844814
Author:	Michael Bishop
ISBN10:	0441844812
Published:	April 1st 1982 by Ace

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The kybers are an unnerving sight for human eyes, more like Giacometti sculpture than living things. Are they flesh or machine? No one knows - and the Kybers themselves remain impassively silent on the subject. Only Dr. Keiko Takihashi, ship's linguist, has been able to establish any communication with them; each day a Kyber comes (The same each day? No one knows.) to hear what she teaches of Earth's language and history. In return it tells her - nothing. What the Kybers call themselves, how they view the world, their two suns, all remains a mystery. But a time is coming when the Kybers must respond, or die; one of their suns is about to go nova. Surely nothing could live through that fierce heat - assuming, that is, that the Kybers are living. Keiko Takihashi is convinced that they are, and determined to save at least some of their race from annihilation. The Kybers have singled her out; surely they will tell her their secrets, open themselves to her, allow her to take some few on board ship and away to safety. In interfering so, Keiko is about to step over a line established at man's first contact with alien races; she knows all too well that no one can predict what will happen now.