



Shiokari Pass

Ayako Miura , Florence Sakade (Editor) , Lora Sharnoff (Editor) , Bill Fearnbough (Translator) , Sheila Fearnbough (Translator)

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Based on a true story, Shiokari Pass is a moving tale of love eclipsed by sacrifice and tragedy. The hero of this novel is the young and idealistic Nobuo Nagano, who finds himself forced to make a heart-rending decision, when he must choose between his childhood sweetheart, Fujiko, and his newly found Christian faith. Set in Hokkaido at the turn of the nineteenth century, when for the first time Western culture and ideas were beginning to challenge Japan's long-held traditions, Shiokari Pass takes an intriguing look at Japanese life and thought of a hundred years ago. Filled with drama and featuring a spectacular climax amidst the snows of Hokkaido, the book was a bestseller in Japanese and a successful motion picture as well. Based on the life of a high-ranking railway employee who was revered for his humanitarian deeds, Shiokari Pass offers a revealing glimpse of the long, hard road traveled by Japanese Christians.

Shiokari Pass Details

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Author : Ayako Miura , Florence Sakade (Editor) , Lora Sharnoff (Editor) , Bill Fearnbough (Translator) , Sheila Fearnbough (Translator)

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From Reader Review Shiokari Pass for online ebook

Sarah - There is nothing that upsets me more than a bad book! says

4.5 stars ?? ?????? It's a simple story yet magnificent! Will defs read more by this more by this author from Hokkaido.

Mikejencostanzo says

So, I'm in a "rut," but it's a good rut. I'm trying to read everything written by Ayako Miura that's been translated into English. So far I only know of 4 books that fit this description (Heart of Winter, Wind is Howling, Freezing Point, Shiokari Pass). Any more I'm missing?

I really have enjoyed Miura's writing so far. Shiokari Pass was no exception. The author really takes the reader on an emotional roller coaster through the first couple of chapters. In the space of just a few pages, I went from thinking that the main character's mother was dead and that his father was doing a good job of conscientiously raising his son to thinking that his father is a terrible two-timer having an affair with a local housewife.

Then just a few pages later, I find that everything I've thought is turned upside down as I learn that Mom is not really dead after all. And Dad is not such a "player" either. Rather, he is secretly visiting his wife on a regular basis at her house across town because he's been forbidden to remain married to this Christian woman by his devoutly Buddhist mother.

Crazy stuff. Not to mention that this book gives some really interesting peeks into Japanese culture (especially the culture of the past -- but I think there are still plenty of Japanese people who operate under very similar influences). One such example that really shocked me was the inability of the father to stand up for his own marriage in the face of his mother. It was perceived as completely unacceptable, and this was a cultural expectation he was absolutely unwilling to cross (or maybe didn't even imagine it would be possible to cross). Even when it meant choosing his mother above his wife.

Again, crazy stuff. Other concepts touched on in the course of the story:

Sexual struggles (especially fantasy & invitation to the red district) as experienced by a Japanese man both before & after conversion to Christianity.

The TB epidemic shortly following WWII -- wow! what a terrible disease!

The sometimes inevitable reality of having an "arch nemesis" as a Christian. This can be a very real method of spiritual attack.

I have one quibble with the way the ending of the book was written. And I'm not sure whether it was originally written with this ambiguity or whether it was created in translation... I honestly couldn't tell was was happening in the last paragraph of the book: "Suddenly Fujiko threw herself down on the track. Yoshikawa stood rooted to the spot. In his eyes, blurred with tears, Fujiko's figure and the white spiraea blended together. Her heart-rending cries reached him clearly. It was noon on a cloudless day at Shiokari Pass."

Is this passage depicting Fujiko's graphic display of grief, or has she just committed suicide? I wasn't sure how to take this description. A couple people I've talked to since I read the book have assured me that Fujiko was simply grieving, and is still alive and well at the end of the book -- Phew!!!

--Jen

levenza says

One can identify himself in character of nobuo probably in each stage of his coming to Christian faith. You might be the cynical stage or trying to figure yourself ... The ending shocked me and in a way reminded ourselves the true meaning of this life which is to live like Christ, love our God and neighbours- even though they are not lovable. As only love can truly change a person.

Diane Gihring says

Honestly, I was disappointed in the book. I am giving it the benefit of the doubt that a lot of the reason the book is lacking is because of the translation.

The book just has no "literary" elements to it. There is no subtext or complexity to the plot. It is all just out there and straight forward. It is overly didactic. The translators are British and so there a lot of British idioms, having Japanese people say "Fancy that"...just felt very weird.

On the other hand, the Christian message in the book is great! All of the Christians in the novel are good examples of how a Christian should live their life. The neat thing to witness in the book is how people become Christian, by seeing the example of others. I think this is a good lesson for us today that we are being watched and observed and our life is a testimony about God everyday. Our actions can positively affect the world around us and we can help bring others to Jesus just by being faithful to what God has asked us to do: Love the Lord with all your heart and love your neighbors as yourself.

SO, as far as a Christian novel goes--the message is great. As far as it being a good piece of literature...I wish I could read it in Japanese and hopefully it fairs better in the original language.

Kitty Kestrel says

I have a profound love of Miura's writing-- her characters, their lives, the Japanese culture, and the religious theme that threads into the novel.

Ruth Garlick says

I have just finished Shiokari Pass, by Ayako Miura. A beautiful story, set in Japan. I loved the Japanese names, and the glimpse into their culture.

A bit slow to read – the story only really starts near the end, and there's a sad ending.

A Christian tale, a man who tried to live his life like Christ's.

Astrid Natasastra says

Yes.. this book is THAT good! it even made me cry.. (which I rarely do when I read a book).. I picked up this book accidentally at a discounted book store.. it was so cheap so I just grabbed it after reading the short synopsis on the back cover.. and it was one of my biggest discovery so far.. I have recommended 2 friends to read it and they equally impressed.. and what's even greater .. this was based on true story.. this is the kind of book that will make you feel like you want to meet the character.. (if possible)... They say they have it in movie too.. I don't know how to search for it.. it must be a really really old Japanese drama..

Rochelle says

I really enjoyed this book, which I read only because I am traveling to the author's home city in Japan. I find the adoption of the Christian religion distressing, especially where one's own culture is being rejected (and devalued by the proselytizers.) By adopting the christian religion, which rejects the validity of all other religions, the adoptee is rejecting their own culture in favor of a(another) culture that devalues women and imbues a mythology with dictatorial control of their life and negates acceptance of the values of their original culture.

Otherwise, as a book I felt that I had insights in to the culture of Japan. While these characters attributed their self sacrifice to the Christian religion, after a childhood spent entirely in the Christian religion, their values definitely did NOT derive from Christian values. I can state that with authority.

I also think that it was extremely clever of the missionaries to only give the Japanese NEW Testaments.

Joshua Butler says

A really beautiful book, based on a true story. Muira is now a favourite author of mine. Sadly, buying a physical copy of this book in English seems very difficult

Erica Krueger says

Wow. What a book. I love how it brought Japanese culture to life in such wonderful descriptions and detail. This book is based on a true story of a man's incredible spiritual journey and conversion. We first meet him when he is a ten-year-old boy. I loved reading about the spiritual and developmental journey of this man (called in the story, Nabuo Nagano). His conclusions about life and the teachings of Jesus inspire me to be a better person and disciple of Jesus Christ. This book is credited with helping change the perception of Christians in Japan. There used to be huge prejudices against them. The original Japanese version of this book was a best-seller in Japan in the late 60's and early 70's.

SPOILER ALERT:

I was not prepared for the final 15 pages of this book. Wow. I can say I haven't cried that hard from reading a book since I can remember, possibly ever in my life! But I am inspired to look inside myself to see what kind of disciple I am, and I am determined to do better.

Camilla Severns says

You know those books that just upend your entire life? That make you stare blankly at nothing, questioning your existence after you finish reading? Yeah this book just did that to me. Wow.

Genevieve Ng says

very moving.

Rachel says

0 stars if I could. I don't remember who recommended this to me but if I find them they're getting an uppercut.

This book is a thinly veiled attempt at proselytizing, with a healthy dose of ableism thrown in. The main character is a wooden board and his romance interest is a lampshade.

Maria Ella says

Sad reactions only. T-T

Mary Haynes says

Very good book following the life of a Japanese man who, though born in raised in a Buddhist/traditional Japanese home, becomes a Christian and evangelizes to Japan. Although it was written fifty years ago (or perhaps because of this), I felt this book escaped a lot of the mainstream conversion story stereotypes. Even though the same elements were there (a Christian mother, a street preacher, miraculous medical recovery after conversion), they didn't have any of the cheesiness these types of novels tend to have. Furthermore, it was really interesting to see the Japanese perspective on Christianity, and how the main character wrestled with concepts like heaven in hell as someone who was raised in a Buddhist home. Overall, a very good book and that made me want to learn more about the guy the story is based on.
