



Kinshu: Autumn Brocade

Teru Miyamoto, Roger K. Thomas (translator)

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Life, death, karma—these interwoven themes form the heart of this lyrical novel in letters, *Kinshu: Autumn Brocade*, the first work to be published in the U.S. by Teru Miyamoto, one of Japan's most popular literary writers.

The word *kinshu* has many connotations in Japanese—brocade, poetic writing, the brilliance of autumn leaves—and resonates here as a vibrant metaphor for the complex, intimate relationship between Aki and Yasuaki. Ten years after a dramatic divorce, they meet by chance at a mountain resort. Aki initiates a new correspondence, and letter by letter through the seasons, the secrets of the past unfold as they reflect on their present struggles. From a lover's suicide to a father's controlling demands, to Mozart's *Thirty-Ninth Symphony* ("a veritable marvel of sixteenth notes"), to the karmic consequences of their actions, the story glides through their deeply introspective and stirring exchanges. What begins as a series of accusations and apologies, questions and excuses, turns into a source of mutual support and healing. Chosen as an Outstanding Work of Japanese Literature by the Japanese Literature Publishing Project.

Kinshu: Autumn Brocade Details

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From Reader Review Kinshu: Autumn Brocade for online ebook

Stephen Douglas Rowland says

The problem with epistolary novels, as I see it, is they're unrealistic at the core. Real people don't write letters with such novelistic attention to detail and an unfailing memory of dialogue that is necessary to make the novel absorbing in the first place. Thus it's difficult for me to look past that inherent unreality and simply enjoy the contents. I began and abandoned "Kinshu" many times before telling my mind to shut up and proceed, so it's a shock to me that I finally became compelled enough to finish it in less than 24 hours. With the exception of the heavy-handed metaphysics that keep popping up in the narrative, the prose is undoubtedly exceptional, and the finished product, though certainly sentimental, is truly moving because of its earnestness.

Marcia says

I've read this book twice now and really enjoyed it each time. The tone is lovely and gentle. I wish the publisher would print more of this author's work in English translation.

Sae-chan says

A beautiful prose, like a delicate lace. It's very appropriate to have it titled as brocade.

Many things look clearer when looked from a distant, whether in space or time.

Bonnie says

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Mèo l??i says

? Nh?t B?n, ng??i ta có t?c ng?m lá momiji ?? r?c mÙa thu, g?i là "momijigari" (?????- t?c là ?i tÙm c?nh ??p do lá mÙa Thu t?o cho. MÙnh ch?a t?ng ???c ng?m lá momiji, c?ng ch?ng bi?t cái ??p ?y nh? th? nÙo. Nh?ng S?c lá momiji ?Ùng là m?t cÙu chuy?n ??p.

S?c lá momiji b?t ??u t? nh?ng lá th?, k?t thÙc c?ng b?i nh?ng lá th?. Th? tay, m?t hÙnh th?c truy?n t?i thÙng tin quá ? l?i th?i l?i ???c tÙc gi? l?a ch?n. D? nÙiên là ông ý có th? ch?n m?t cách k? khÙc ?i, nh?ng ?t h?n khi ?y cÙu chuy?n ch?ng cÙn cái h?n c?a nó. B?i l? th? tay, dù th? nÙo ?i n?a, luÙn mang ??n s? riÙng t? (và c? cÙc ???c), nÙi khi?n cho nh?ng suy ngh? v? s? s?ng và cái ch?t, v? con ng??i và b?n ngã ???c th? hi?n m?t cách ??y sÙu s?c và ý nh?.

Tr? l?i v?i v?n ?? chÙnh, S?c lá momiji k? v? ?i?u g?i? Ngo?i tÙnh? TÙnh yÙu? hay là nh?ng suy t??ng v? cu?c s?ng? MÙnh ngh? r?ng cu?n sách m?ng này ch?a ??ng t?t c? nh?ng ?i?u tr?n. Cu?n sách b?t ??u b?ng nh?ng dòng th? tay nh? th? này:

"Anh! Vi?c g?p l?i anh tr?n chuy?n cÙp treo t? khu v??n th??c d??c ?i ??n ??m Ddokko ? Zao ?y là ?i?u em khÙng th? tin ???c."

Hình nh? lÙu l?m r?i, mÙnh m?i ???c nh?ng dòng c?m thán ? ??u th? nh? v?y. (ch?c b?i mÙnh giÙ, m?t ph?n l?i ?a tÙo lao, nÙn hay th?y c?m ??ng tr??c m?y ?i?u nh? nh?t). Ti?p theo ??y là c? m?t cÙu chuy?n bu?n v? ph?n ng??i, v? nh?ng ?i?u trÙng h?p ng?u nÙiên, v? nh?ng b??c ngo?c l?n mà chÙng ta v?n th??ng g?i là s? ph?n.

Aki yÙu và c??i m?t ng??i ?Ùn ông tÙn là Yasuaki. B?ng m?t hÙm, cÙc nh?n ???c tin bÙo ch?ng mÙnh có dÙnh ??n nghi v?n t? sát cÙng v?i m?t ng??i ph? n? tÙn là Yukako. D? nÙiên, h? ly hÙn. KhÙng h? có b?t c? m?t l?i gi?i thÙc hay bi?n minh. M?i th? ?? v? trong im l?ng, s? im l?ng v?n th??ng ?i ?Ùi v?i s? cÙc ??n khÙng h?i?u c?a m?i cu?c tÙnh. D?u sao ?i n?a, chÙt ti?c nu?i v?n cÙn hi?n h?u ?y khÙng ?? ?? nhen nh?m l?i tÙnh yÙu.

MÙnh s? khÙng nÙi v? nh?ng ?i?u ?Ù x?y ra vào bu?i t?i ??nh m?nh, khi Yukako mu?n cÙng Yasuaki ?i vào cÙi ch?t, b?i l? cu?n sách này, ngoÙi vi?c k? v? quá kh? cÙn có hi?n t?i. Hi?n t?i là th? ?Ù xen vào gi?a quá kh? và t??ng lai, nÙo v?c ta d?y sau m?i l?n r?i vào v?c th?m, hay m?i l?n ??m chÙm vào quá kh?. Hi?n t?i v?i Aki có l? chÙnh là ??a b?i t?t nguy?n Kiotaka, k?t qu? c?a cu?c hÙn nh?n v?i ng??i ch?ng sau. CÙn v?i Yasuaki, hi?n t?i ch?c h?n chÙnh là Reiko, ng??i ?Ù nhÙn th?y ph?n tÙm h?n ?Ù ch?t c?a anh.

C? hai ??u ?Ù ch?i b? hi?n t?i c?a mÙnh, t? d?n v?t mÙnh tr??c nh?ng ??n ?au cu?c s?ng mang l?i. H? ch?n cho mÙnh nh?ng cách ??i di?n khÙc nhau, Aki cho r?ng ?ó là nghi?p do Yasuaki mang l?i, Yasuaki ch?i b? tÙnh yÙu, luÙn t? d?n v?t b?n thÙn mÙnh b?i nh?ng l?i l?m anh gÙy ra. Tuy?t nÙiên, ch?ng ai ch?u m? lÙng mÙnh, th? tha cho nhau và cho chÙnh b?n thÙn mÙnh. M?i th? r?i vào m?t vÙng trÙn lu?n qu?n c?a tÙnh yÙu-bi?k?ch-cÙc s?ng, khÙng ?i?m ??u, và c?ng ch?ng có k?t thÙc.

S?c lá momiji là m?t cÙu chuy?n r?t ??i bÙnh th??ng và dung d?. NÓ ?Ù g? nh?ng nÙt th?t ? trong lÙng thÙng qua nh?ng lá th? ??y chÙn thÙnh. ThÙng qua s? giÙi bÙy, b?c b?ch b?ng nh?ng lá th? tay, h? ??n g?n h?n v?i s? c?m thÙng, t? ?ó tha th? cho nhau, bi?t cách nhÙn vào hi?n t?i ?? s?ng. Có l? m?t trÙi tim ch? tr? nÙn v?n trÙn khi nó bi?t s? chia và c?m thÙng cho nhau.

"-Chuy?n g?i s? x?y ra khi ng??i ta m? cÙi lÙng mÙnh?

-Ng??i ta s? t?t lÙnh h?n."

Haruki Murakami

Ấy còn là m?t câu chuy?n mang ??y tính Ph?t giáo. Có khác ch?ng tính Ph?t ? ?ây không hi?n h?u trong nh?ng bài kinh, nh?ng giáo ?i?u bu?n t?, nó hi?n h?u trong nh?ng giai ?i?u c?a Mozart, hi?n h?u trong cách nh?n cu?c s?ng khi ?ã tr?i qua nh?ng n?i ?au c?a cu?c ??i. S? s?ng và cái ch?t có l? ch? là m?t. Aki ?ã nói nh?v?y khi nghe b?n Sonat th? 3 c?a Mozart tr??c ông ch? ti?m cafe, ng??i ?ã dành c? ??i cho Mozart. Ph?i ch?ng, khi tr?i qua nh?ng m?t mát, th??ng t?n c?a cu?c ??i, con ng??i ta m?i ý th?c ???c cu?c s?ng? Ph?i ch?ng nh?ng kh? ?au ?y là ti?ng chu?ng c?nh t?nh ta s?ng t?t h?n, ?? bình th?n ch?p nh?n cái ch?t khi ?i ??n cu?i ch?ng ??ng?

Kì l? thay, cái ???c g?i là s? s?ng, b?ng tr? n?n h?t s?c bình d? qua nh?ng câu chuy?n nh?. Yasuaki ?ã k? cho Aki nghe câu chuy?n v? ng??i bà c?a Reiko. ??y là ng??i ?àn bà ch? có 4 ngón tay ? m?i bàn tay. Bà l?n l??t m?t ?i 4 ng??i con trai b?i chi?n tranh, m?t trong s? ch?ng t? t? sau khi th?y ??ng ??i m?n?n ngã xu?ng vì nh?ng ?i?u v?n ích. M?i kh? ?au ?y, bà n?n l?i trong tim, và ?em k? l?i v?i ng??i ch?u c?a m?n?, Reiko. Ch?ng hi?u sao, bà có m?t ni?m tin m?nh li?t là s? g?p l?i 3 ng??i con c?a m?n?, kh?ng ph?i ? ki?p sau, mà là ? ngay ch?nh ki?p ng??i n?y. Là 3, kh?ng ph?i 4. Reiko l?u?n ngh?, ng??i con bà mu?n g?p l?i nh?t ch?nh là ng??i ?ã t? t? khi ?y. Ch? có ?i?u, ?áng bu?n thay, ng??i ta ch?ng th? n?o ??u thai khi t? t??c ?i s? s?ng c?a m?n?. D?u sao ?i n?a, ch?nh ni?m tin ?y ?ã v?c d?y cu?c s?ng c?a ng??i bà ?áng k?nh kia. Và có l? là c? Reiko.

Aki sau khi nghe câu chuy?n ?y ?ã d?ng l?n m?t ni?m th??ng c?m (và c? ??ng c?m) v?i Reiko. Anh ?ã m? lòng m?n?n ra, b?t ??u m?t cu?c s?ng m?i, ?? l?i quá kh? ? sau l?ng.

Ấy kh?ng h?n là m?t câu chuy?n bu?n, c?ng kh?ng ph?i là m?t câu chuy?n k?t th?c có h?u. Có ch?ng n?o là b?n giao h??ng gi?a nh?ng n?i ?au cu?c s?ng và s? c?m th?ng, s? chia nhau trong ??i, ch?ng ?an xen v?i nhau, h?o quy?n vào nhau th?t nh?p nh?ng m?a c?ng th?t ??i th??ng. V? dù th? n?o ?i n?a, n?o h?n là m?t câu chuy?n ??p, tr??c nh?ng n? l?c v??n m?n? ?? ?ón nh?n t??ng lai c?a c? Aki và Yusuaki.

H?y ??c n?o, c?m n?o tr?n tay, có th? ch?ng c?n nh?c Mozart l?m n?n, m?n?n tin b?n s? th?ch n?o. Ho?c gi?, n?u b?n kh?ng th?ch, h?y c?m th?ng h?n v?i ng??i vi?t review n?y. :D

Gertrude & Victoria says

Kinshu: Autumn Brocade by Miyamoto Teru is a beautiful tapestry of love, forgiveness, and healing. This novel takes the form of letters between two people once married ten years before - Yasuaki and Aki.

A chance encounter begins the novel. And like all events in life, chance imposes its own way, without our consent, in a seemingly capricious manner. Aki, the ex-wife of Yasuaki, is driven by desire to come to terms with her past and begins a correspondence with Yasuaki.

The plot is intriguing throughout. From a tragic accident in a hotel, to a run-in with the yakuza, we are left wanting more and submissively follow along, letter after letter, discovery upon discovery. The characterizations are painfully realistic - both Yasuaki and Aki are decent people with good intentions but scarred by their past. They try to close the gap of misunderstanding as they magnanimously search for answers.

Miyamoto Teru prose is steeped in rich beautiful colors. He so gracefully writes of two courageous people caught in unfortunate circumstances. Through an emotional epistolary exchange, he convincingly demonstrates the resoluteness of the human character.

BoekenTrol says

Miyamoto is the second Japanese author I read a book from. It was a present from my friend.

At first I left it unread, although I usually cannot wait to start a new book, discover a new world. Because that's what this was for me. I do not know very much about Japanese habits, traditions other than the usual things about geisha's and that there is a punctual railroad system.

I was afraid that I might not like the book, because it was a novel in letters. I find it difficult to read letters in a book and see them in a whole as a book instead of separate items.

This book however was marvellous. It took me from the first line away in the world of Aki and Yasuaki, in their past, their present and stops when they enter their future. It is a fine description of what is going on between a man and a woman that once loved each other very much. How they parted, what they thought, how their lives went on after their divorce. A bit of anger, but most of all I tasted apologies, trying to find ways to explain, to make what happened hurt a little less.

Nothing much happens, in that view it is a dull book. But nevertheless I could not put it down until I read it all, anxious to find out what would come next.

Despite I was born and raised a world apart from his, Miyamoto succeeded to let me understand the book, not looking strangely when a thing like an arranged marriage comes around, or the way both Aki and Yasuaki look at life's happenings. Through this delicately written novel he gave me a little insight in the Japanese way of doing things, of thinking.

I simply loved it. My words fail to describe the feelings I had when reading this book any better, therefore I say no more.

Beti says

Timpul scurt în care am terminat cartea stă ca dovedă pentru caracterul captivant al cărții; pentru farmecul personajelor misterioase pe care doresc să le cunoaști prin trecut, prezent și viitor. Cartea a ilustrat perfect concepția de karma, sau mai românește "cum își așterni, așa dormi". De asemenea, povestea poate fi ca un exemplu că după muncă multă, fără cu interes, se poate regăsi satisfacția în viață după anumite evenimente neplăcute.

Deși scurtă, această carte a cuprins multe subiecte importante și a tras niște concluzii și posibile sfaturi de viață pentru oricine în privința complacerii în nefericire. Chiar și pasul lent, murind într-un proiect, atât timp cât este fără, într-un viitor, cu siguranță, se vor vedea rezultate, datorită perseverenței și dedicării.

Th?o says

Hai kì vắng quá à cho con này nêu bùa thay vắng. Ông bà con của con này nhảm kinh lên ???c, may mắn và sau có chay con cua Reiko và nam chính - quên tên rõ ràng - con vắng lâu ?o bà con của chán kinh khi?p ?y.

Leslie says

[Review in English followed by review in French]

[Critique en anglais suivie de critique en français]

I can't express how much this book moved me. I wouldn't even be able to explain why. Maybe it is because lots of things in this story remind me of my own life, even though the context is extremely different. But I don't think this is the only reason. The writing, the style, are beautiful and carries a very strange poetry which find its strength in the triviality of life. This story is not tragic or sad as such and yet I several time found myself shedding a few tears. A deep melancholia emanates from these pages.

Relationships between human beings are quite complicated, and life isn't a free ride, but what can we do aside from moving forward or dying? This novel shows that it is better to move forward, because death will find us anyways when time will come.

Je ne peux pas exprimer à quel point ce livre m'a ému. Je ne saurais même pas expliquer pourquoi. Peut être est-ce parce que beaucoup d'éléments dans cette histoire me font penser à ma propre vie, bien qu'ils soient en fait très différents. Mais je ne pense pas que ce soit la seule raison. L'écriture, le style, sont magnifiques et d'une poésie très étrange qui tire sa force de la banalité de la vie. Ce récit n'est pas tragique ou triste à proprement parlé, pourtant plusieurs fois je me suis retrouvée à verser quelques larmes. Une mélancolie profonde se dégage de ces pages.

Les relations entre les êtres humains sont bien compliquées, et la vie ne nous fait pas de cadeau, mais que peut on faire à part avancer ou mourir ? Ce roman nous montre qu'ils vaut mieux avancer, la mort viendra de toute façon quand elle aura choisie son heure.

Suzan Emami Yeganeh says

The book is in the form of different letters between the two main characters. The style is very interesting and I enjoyed reading this book. In moments, it got very deep and spiritual, but that's to be expected with Japanese culture (and what I love).

I really liked this book, it was different from anything I've ever read. I don't think I'll remember any detail after a month, meaning it didn't give me the WOW feeling of being so original and mind blowing. Therefore 3 stars.

osoi says

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Maria says

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?Laura says

This book is an English translation of a Japanese novel written in the form of letters exchanged between a divorced couple after running into each other by chance after ten years. Through their letters we learn of the events leading up to their divorce and how their lives have unfolded since. Themes of karma and choice, failure and redemption run throughout this book. The storyline was interesting and I was eager to learn more of this couple's history as the letters progressed. The translation seemed a bit awkward, though, which kept me from fully connecting with the characters. I enjoyed this book, but I think it is probably more beautiful in its original Japanese.

Eric Hinkle says

Just astounding. The first book I've read in awhile where I got pretty emotional at the end, just with how beautiful it was, and how much I didn't want it to end.

What the heck can I even say about this book? It's a modern classic.

Read it, duh.
