



Mandala Road

Masako Bandō, translated by Wayne P. Lammers

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Fantasy/Contemporary

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Description

Two generations of the same family confront the after-effects of war and violence, explore the nature of family, human interaction and love.

In the present day, a young married couple, Asafumi and Shizuka are trying to start a new life, having had to move after losing their jobs. Asafumi decides to join the family business of selling medicines, and a notebook that used to belong to his grandfather Rentarō leads him to explore the mysterious Mandala Road in the hopes of finding his grandfather's former customers. Shizuka, meanwhile, struggles to resign herself to her new role as a housewife and wonders if she made the right choice in marrying Asafumi.

Following the end of World War II, Saya, a woman from a Malayan native tribe, is on her way to Japan with her seven-year-old son to find Rentarō, who was her wartime lover and the father of her child. When she arrives, however, she discovers that Rentarō has another family and has no place for her. Haunted by memories of torture from the Japanese seeking information about Rentarō and the abuses she suffered working in a brothel, Saya tries to rebuild her life and learn to live with her past.

Both setting out alone on Mandala Road in two different time periods, Asafumi and Rentarō wake up one day having both entered a post-apocalyptic world, where the people seem to have mostly been wiped out by a mysterious "calamity" and the ones that remain are scarcely human. Asafumi, Rentarō, Saya, and Shizuka are all, in their own way, on a private journey to discover and reconcile themselves to the memories of violence, both seen and experienced, as they learn to live with a past that seems always to be too close behind them.

Readership: Readers of fantasy, adventure and contemporary fiction.

About the Author

Masako Bandō was born in 1958 and graduated from Nara Women's University. After studying design and architecture in Milan, she returned to Japan as a children's novelist, and in 1993 began writing adult fiction. Her novel *Yamahaha (Mother in the Mountain)* was awarded the prestigious Naoki Prize in 1996, and when *Mandala Way* was first published in Japan, as *Mandara do*, it was awarded the Shibata Renzaburo Prize.

Having spent his childhood in Japan, **Wayne P. Lammers** grew up speaking Japanese and English. He studied Japanese language and literature to graduate level, and taught these subjects at universities for a number of years before moving into freelance translation. He has won two translation awards for his literary work, which has been highly varied, having included short stories, novels, plays, memoirs and a classical romance.

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