

Endo Shusaku Literary Museum

Endo Shusaku (1923–1996) is sometimes referred to as “the Japanese Graham Greene,” as he wrote novels based around Catholic themes. In particular, Endo’s 1966 masterpiece *Silence*—which tells the story of a Portuguese Jesuit priest wrestling with doubt in the face of the brutal persecution meted out to the Japanese Christians in the seventeenth century—is often compared to Greene’s *The Power and the Glory*, the story of a drunken priest in the anti-Catholic Mexico of the 1930s.

Endo was born in Tokyo and spent much of his life there, as well as long periods studying in France, but he felt a strong affinity for the Sotome region because of its associations with Catholicism. He chose Sotome as the setting not just for *Silence*, but also for *Kiku’s Prayer* (1982), a love story set against the final throes of Christian persecution in the 1860s. It was this strong bond that prompted Endo’s widow and son to agree to the museum being located here in 2000. The museum is in a spectacular location, with the hills of Sotome and Shitsu village on one side and the Sea of Sumonada and the Goto Islands on the other.

The permanent collection includes a re-creation of Endo’s study, as well as numerous photographs and manuscripts. The museum also organizes special thematic exhibitions.