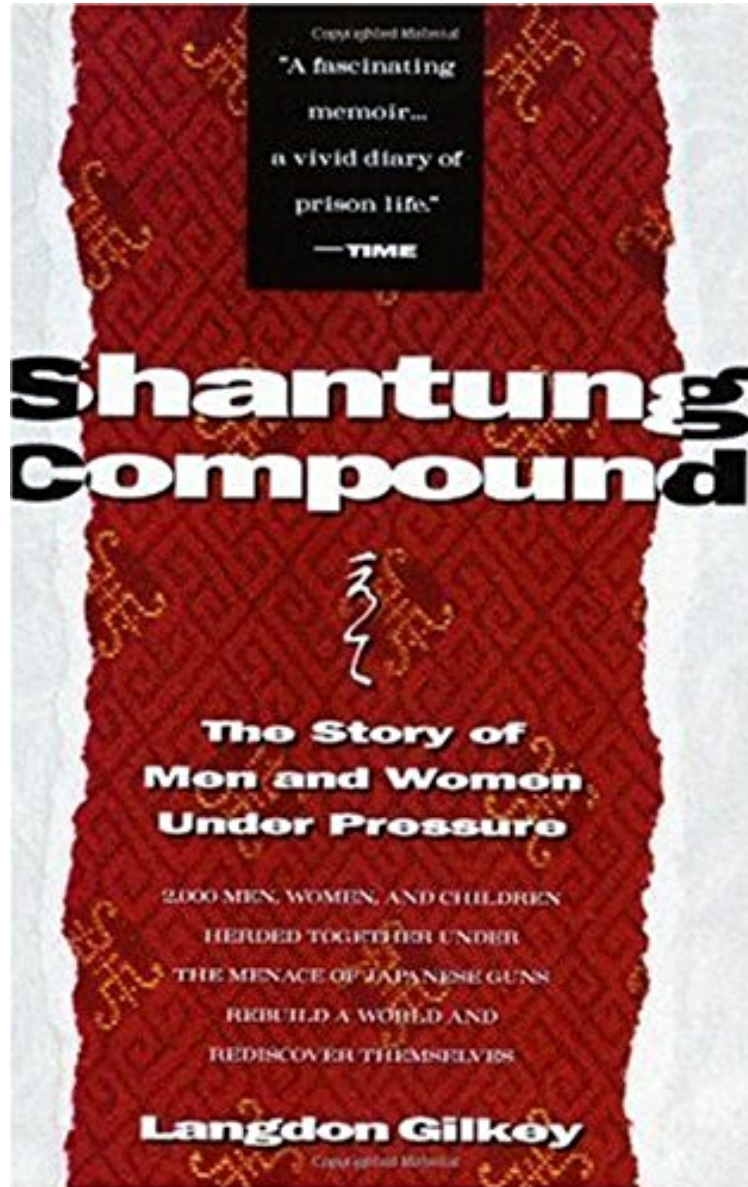


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Shantung Compound: The Story of Men and Women Under Pressure

Langdon Gilkey

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#124079 in Books Langdon Gilkey 1975-06-17 1975-06-17 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .61 x 5.311, .47 #File Name: 0060631120272 pages Shantung Compound | File size: 30.Mb

Langdon Gilkey : Shantung Compound: The Story of Men and Women Under Pressure before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shantung Compound: The Story of Men and Women Under Pressure:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Common grace
 By Joyce
 This book came about because Gilkey, a young American teaching in China in 1943, was rounded up by the Japanese with 1500 other foreigners and interred in a camp for 2 1/2 years until World War II ended. Fortunately, Gilkey, a fine writer, kept a lengthy journal and has a sense of political and moral dynamics. The book, therefore, is a novelistic narrative of a sociology laboratory which is both fascinating and sobering. His opening quote is from Bertolt Brecht: "For even saintly folk will act like sinners, unless they have their customary dinners." Gilkey continued to be surprised that this diverse group of 1500, shut up with barely enough food and space to survive, and with the necessity of creating their own system of housing, feeding, and governing themselves, would often have difficulty doing the obviously just and fair thing. In creating technical solutions to their problems, they were ingenious; but when food and space were short, they had difficulty seeing things from the perspective of the group as a whole. The most divisive issue arises when the 200 American internees receive generous supply packages from the Red Cross. Should they share with the others? In reflecting on democracy Gilkey remembers his teacher Reinhold Niebuhr who said that the goodness and rationality of people made the rise of democracy possible. But Gilkey observed in the camp that it was the grouching, the orneriness, and outright resentments of people that made democracy necessary. Gilkey discovered a number of things that apply to any group, whether a small community or a nation or the world: 1) Without a degree of moral health no community can survive. Gilkey asserts: "A democratic society can possess no stronger law than the moral character of the people within it will affirm and support." This means that some people in any group must be capable of self-sacrifice for the good of the whole. At the beginning, when the group was setting up their quarters, kitchens, and governing bodies, it seemed to Gilkey that all that was needed was the wonderful ingenuity evident in these activities. But as time went on and stress on the community increased, it became apparent that skill was less important than character. Gilkey says: "Far from being at the periphery of life, spiritual and moral matters are the foundation for all the daily work of the world." 2) Justice as an ideal is not the same as justice in real situations. You have to do the best you can in the midst of ambiguity and it likely won't be perfect. 3) The things the human family most longs for (e.g., peace, prosperity, long life) depend less on the latest inventions than on the ability to achieve harmony and justice among ourselves. 4) A viable community must possess force to compel compliance to its agreements (laws) and to punish serious offenders. In Gilkey's words: "Morality can never replace force, but it must provide the deep basis for the creative use of force." Of the missionaries and religious of various stripes in the group, the Catholic monks, priests, and nuns were the favorites. They were willing to do the dirtiest work, made friends with everyone, and generally communicated acceptance of all. The Salvation Army people also won affection by their willingness to help others. The fundamentalists were trying so hard to be "holy" that their compassion for others was stunted. Gilkey's stories about all these groups are lessons - sometimes inspiring and sometimes cautionary tales. Gilkey's final words about the camp include this statement: "The unwanted is often creative rather than destructive. No one wished to go to Weihsien camp. Yet such an experience, resisted and abhorred, had within it the seeds of new insight and thus of new life for many of us. Almost because of its discomfort, its turmoil, and its boredom, it eventually became the source of certainties and of convictions with which life could henceforth be more creatively faced. This is a common mystery of life, an aspect, if you will, of common grace: out of apparent evil new creativity can arise if the meaning and possibilities latent within the new situation are grasped with courage and with faith." 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A society of westerners confined to a Japanese camp in China during WW2
 By Tim
 This is an absolutely spectacular read. The setting is an detention camp for western business and religious workers caught in China during the Japanese occupation of the second World War. Langdon Gilkey was there and played an interesting role, later becoming a professor of theology at the University of Chicago. As it turns out, Eric Liddell was also in the camp. Liddell is the key person in the Chariots of Fire movie of many years ago. The Japanese rounded up all the westerners in China and put them in the Shantung Compound to set up their own "culture." The book is mostly about what happens to people when packaged in very close quarters and left to build a society. It's an interesting and true story. While not written as a Christian book, readers see the interesting interactions of the Christians living among many other world views in very challenging circumstances. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good Read
 By conan curry
 I enjoyed this book about World War II prisoners-of-war story and the implications that the author communicates as a result of the experience. Most of the chapters dealt with difference aspects of camp life, following mostly a chronological timeline. The meat of the book is right around chapters VII through XI, where the author discusses morality and meaning of life topics. While some may not agree with his results about these concepts ultimately leading to the necessity of God, it is an interesting read nonetheless and worth your while.

This vivid diary of life in a Japanese internment camp during World War II examines the moral challenges encountered in conditions of confinement and deprivation.

"A fascinating memoir... a vivid diary of prison life." -- "time"
 From the Publisher
 This vivid diary of life in a Japanese internment camp during World War II examines the moral challenges encountered in conditions of confinement and deprivation.
 From the Back Cover
 When the props of society are taken away, how do people survive? Langdon Gilkey

was a young American teacher at Yenching University near Peking, China, when the Japanese military under wartime pressure rounded up all foreigners into an internment camp. Two and a half years later they were released. Santung Compound is based on a journal Dr. Gilkey kept during his imprisonment.