

Oak Thuru Arana: Thoughts blossomed in unknown lands

# Foreign verses beautifully captured in Sinhala

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Oak Thuru Arana  
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**A**t first glance it seems to be a book of poetry but a second will tell you it is not just lines written on

paper but a collection of verses with an array of fascinating drawings to feast your eyes on. This simply bound book, *Oak Thuru Arana*, has two features in one: a treat for poetry lovers and an engaging array of sketches to accompany the poems. It is compiled by Amal Shantha Munindradasa, an artist who is well versed in his subject. Looking at this book one

will not fail to note that he had done an exceptional job in translating a selection of Japanese Haiku poems and international verses to capture the essence of a foreign land with traditions and images which are close to our own.

Haiku, a traditional form of Japanese poetry, is a short verse of 17 syllables in three metrical sections (lines) of

5-7-5 syllables. A compact yet profound and evocative form, haiku gives an objective, suggestive, pithy and fleeting picture of its subject.

What is said is important but what is unsaid may be more important. The poet may talk of nature but what he is conveying may be some deep feeling, an intuition or a concrete experi-

ence of life. Haiku is more concerned with human emotion or with experience than with human acts, and nature is used to reflect or suggest that emotion.

Munindradasa has borrowed the best elements in this form of poetry to set the ideas into Sinhala without distorting the original content.

Take the poem *Gimhana*

*Hiru* for example. The poem effectively captures the liveliness of the energetic quality of the summer sun when it sparks life into living beings.

The book includes 35 verses with an effective sketch to go along with each poem. If you are in search of a collection of international poetry translated into Sinhala, poetry which is mind

## Thaipongal

*A festival of thanks-giving*

"Thaipongal", a festival of thanks-giving  
Celebrated on the first day of "Thai", praying  
The Sun with gratitude and joy  
Dreams and hopes come true many a way

One who killed every virtue may escape yet  
But, no escape for him, who killed a benefit  
"Thaipongal" offered as gratitude to Sun  
For helping the farmer in cultivation

Farmers are the linch-pin of the world  
They support others who cannot till the field  
Rain and shine helped harvest and the farmer  
Who is always grateful to Sun, the giver.

Cattle helped Farmer in the paddy field  
In many ways to get good yield  
He shows gratitude to them, offers another Pongal  
On the following day, called "Maattu Pongal".

- K. K. ARUMAINAYAGAM

## Body language

Throbbing of drums  
Raises her left leg  
With clasped hands  
In a worshipping posture.  
Then, in the next moment,  
With a graceful upward movement  
Of her shapely and ivory white arms,  
Amidst an array of blinking stage lights  
In a variety of shades,  
She smiles,  
Whirls,  
Jumps,  
Sway her body,  
Rolls her eyes,  
And with the lithe steps  
Moves all over the stage,  
Keeping time to the drum beat,  
With graceful movements of her hands;  
Then, goes down on one knee  
To get up slowly.  
Then, with a coy glance and a radiant smile  
She bows to the audience,  
Before the curtain falls,  
To end her eloquent body language  
Amidst the loud applause!

- S. T. PUSHANANDA

## You will never know

You beautified my life  
In ways that you will never know  
The simple things you did, brought  
Such joy to my life completing it  
In ways that you will never know

- BERTHOLAMEUZE  
NISANSALA DHARMASENA

## A sweet dream

Mountain of brown chocolates  
Iced treacle water falls  
Green leaves of icing sugar  
Decorated the valley colour  
Sand sugar, toffees scattered  
I walked on a colourful road  
Studded with sweet smarties  
To a cottage of walled cakes  
Its doors are sweet wafers  
Windows are ginger biscuits  
Whilst picking mushrooms  
Filled in vanilla ice cream  
There are so many varieties  
I didn't know what to seek  
Trees are studded with lollies  
I tasted by plucking as free  
Dollies are playing tennis  
With lollipops in their hands  
I pulled a pop from one of 'em  
Annoyed she, stopped the game  
Spectators - ants chased me out  
Nor rescue, frightened had to shout  
Awoke to a sweet kiss of mom  
Sweets are what" Compared to Mom!

- MALATHI PERERA

## Riverside Romance

Close to the river bank  
On a rock surrounded  
The eddying ripples,  
She stood like a mermaid  
Who had just appeared from the water,  
With her wet cloth  
Stuck to her shapely body,  
Which displayed her nicely tapering features  
To their fullest advantage;  
At regular intervals,  
She arched her graceful figure,  
To fill the pot,  
Which gurgled at each fill,  
Was poured over her head  
Slowly, softly and soothingly  
Drenched and freshened her body.  
These were quite a feast  
To the youthful eye,  
Of the young and sturdy boatman  
Who operated at the ferry  
Smartly stood on the prow of his boat,  
With the our grasped in his muscular hands,  
Resembled a nice sculpture  
Of Hercules;  
His curly hair on his shapely head,  
And his muscles glistened  
With drops of sweat, in the bright sunshine,  
At each stroke of his oar;  
All these invited the cupid's arrow  
At the bathing young damsel.  
Beaming smiles were exchanged  
By the young couple,  
Perhaps with their hearts too.  
And it was done coaxingly by them,  
Which spoke volumes  
Of their romance;  
The actions of the boatman  
Made the silent speech  
"Would you be mine?"  
To which, the silvery chimes of the girl,  
Replied almost in a whisper,  
"Aiya!, My parents are at home!"

- S.T. PUSHANANDA

## An Angel

Wondering where you come from  
With that glamorous fortune  
Flown down from the heaven  
With your magnificent beauty  
And the gorgeous wings  
Spreading that soothing blow  
And the fern breeze  
To my whole life

Your sweet, sweet, smile  
And the bright little eyes  
Charming all through  
Always I could see  
A tiny busy bee  
I watch you jump and your crawl  
Then you scribble on the wall  
Trying to walk alone  
Like a ducky dole  
Enjoying the big shuffle  
Of all toys around you  
After all,  
You shine like a jewel  
Through the whole day

You keep pushing my troubles away  
Happiness and variety on its way  
Chasing out that stagnancy  
I hear the sounds of melody  
Life has become a treasure of worthy  
Loads of hopes that keep me alive  
To be around you  
Be blessed, be healthy and sturdy  
You, the little tiny  
Angel of mine

**SUSI ABEYRANDA**  
(This poem is dedicated to my granddaughter Mithindee)

## My Visitors

Cock that struts crows at dawn  
Crow that flaps caws at noon;  
Parrots that flits screeches soon  
Robins that hop chirp their boon.  
Squirrels that hurry in circles squeak  
Cuckoos that flaunt coos at peak;  
The woodpecker that hops about pecks  
To keep the beat of the sound of beaks.  
All the sounds of birds and squirrels speak:  
In such a harmony that makes one awake  
They are my welcome visitors;  
Who entertain me at all hours.

A monitor that glides enters in;  
As an unwelcome guest not wanted in;  
Who scared my entire welcome bevy,  
Also worried the members of family  
Who waited impatiently for help  
To chase the monitor that yelp.  
Finally came some passers-by to help  
To push the guest uninvited with a punch.  
All in the house were relieved with sigh  
At the departure of the innocent guy.

- KINGSLEY

## Grand salute

Nothing in the whole world will suffice  
To pay for our soldiers' great sacrifice  
Their lives did they gallantly lay down  
To save the Nation and the Crown.

Their hearts glow with undying patriotism  
Braving all odds and disparaging criticism  
Fight did they bravely displaying true heroism  
Halting the devil dance of cruel terrorism.

With this wonderful victory they've won  
A new era of freedom has begun  
And the terrorists are now on the run  
With none with them under the sun.

Not for any supremacy did they battle  
Nor for any personal glory did they struggle  
But purely to liberate our oppressed people  
Did they go through all the trial and trouble.

Unique is their achievement without dispute  
Deserve they a grand salute as lasting tribute  
Not only the departed and the martyred ones  
But also the wounded and the disabled sons.

- N. M. L. M. HALEEL

## Punctuality

A managing Director of a  
Company,  
Has been keen about  
Punctuality.  
Watching his Secretary late  
Frequently,  
Advised her thus his  
Policy.  
"If I am not  
In my seat in time,  
There will be a note  
On my table.  
If not,  
Please assume  
As I am dead."  
Advice highly commendable!

- NAZLY CASSIM

## Blinkers Shattered

I bless you  
For the ingratitude you displayed,  
For the change you wrought in me.  
I had never thought  
Foul would give rise to fair.  
Wrapped in ignorance  
I hated you.  
Being blind to the message  
I wanted to end myself.  
Yet here I am,  
Thanks to your demeanour,  
A proprietor of clear vision!

There was time  
You fed me with fury  
Made me burn within  
To make me your like.  
Seclusion or death  
Was the apparent way of escape.....  
I heard a voice  
Leading me to the oasis  
To carve a niche.  
No malice, no hatred, no illwill.  
Love and compassion alone.  
It is rightly said  
You were my better half.

- T.M.J.B. TENNAKOON

