

Oak Thuru Arana: Thoughts blossomed in unknown lands

Foreign verses beautifully captured in Sinhala

RUWINI JAYAWARDANA

Oak Thuru Arana
Poet: Amal
Shantha Munindradasa
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At 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.

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. PUSHPANANDA

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 smaries
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
On the youthful eye;
Of the young and sturdy boatman
Who operated at the ferry
Smartly stood on the prow of his boat,
With the oar 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,
"Aiyai, My parents are at home!"

- S.T. PUSHPANANDA

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
Of all toys around you
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 ABEYANANDA
(This poem is dedicated to my
granddaughter Mithindee)

Picture by Saman Sri Wedage

My Visitors

Cock that struts crows at dawn
Crow that flaps caws at noon;
Parrots that flit 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
Hailing 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. TENNAKOO

