

'Do we have peace now?' poem by Okinawa teen Chinen Masaru Masaru 今は平和でしょうか」 高校三年知念捷の詩

Roger Pulvers

'Do we have peace now?' Poem by Okinawa teen Chinen Masaru

Translated by Roger Pulvers

Chinen Masaru, 17, a third-year student at Okinawa Prefectural Yokatsu Senior High School, recited his poem, "Miruku yu ga yayura" (Do we have peace now?), at an Okinawa Memorial Day ceremony on the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Battle of Okinawa at Peace Memorial Park in Itoman on June 23. He expressed his desire to let neither his great aunt's memories nor the misery of war be forgotten. The following is a translation of the poem's full text.

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"Do we have peace now?" by Chinen Masaru

Do we have peace now?

The old Okinawan song of peace

Sung out by my ancestors

Comes home to me ...

"The world of discord is a thing of the past

The goddess of harmony will soon be among us

Do not lament, for your life

Is the irreplaceable treasure"

-

Just as on that very day 70 years ago

This year too the cries of the cicada

Announce the end of the rainy season

On this 70th memorial day too

The moisture-laden southerly sea winds rush

Through the branches of tropical almond trees

Grown tall in the bounty of the earth

The cries of the cicada grow faint

Vanishing into those winds

Along with the trees I listen intently

To the cries of the cicada

And I ask the winds ...

"Do we have peace now?"

-

My grandfather's elder sister has loved flowers

Has loved dancing, has loved me like a grandson

For 70 years since the end of the war

My grandfather's elder sister has lived as a war widow

Never remarrying

Now over 90, her body lies bent on the bed	"I will wait for you to smile
She lost her beloved husband in the Battle of Okinawa	And come back to me..."
In 1945	-
He died at 22, leaving a wife with a baby at her breast	It is a heartless dispensation of nature that sends
She searched for the footsteps of her husband	Her memories fading into the winds
She sought his warmth	The tears of her grief follow the chiseled lines of her cheeks
From the battle sites of the south	Now as the term of 70 years is passing
To The Cornerstone of Peace	-
All she had was a slip of paper	Some call the soaring dove the symbol of peace
Informing her of his death	But she tells me of the pities of war
And a little rock she picked up	Of how they are vanishing into the air now
To put in his urn in the turtleback tomb	-
-	"Do we have peace now?"
Now in this 70th year she is suffering from dementia	I turn to The Cornerstone of Peace
She sings as all her memories recede	Her husband's name is chiseled into it
Into the lacquer blackness	Together with the names of 240,000 others who fell
She sings of the husband she loved	"Do we have peace now?"
She sings of the happiness of young marriage	I ask the world on June 23rd
Stolen from her by force	With American fighters crisscrossing the sky
She sings in fits and starts	With the leaves of the tropical almond trees dancing above my head
"The Song of the Departing Soldier"	"Do we have peace now?"
Scores of times, hundreds of times	I ask myself, ignorant of the horrors of war
As if to call out to the memories of war	It all weighs too heavily on me
And the husband she loved ...	I just want to let war disappear into the winds

And yet I must not forget her memories
 I must never forget those horrors of war
 I must speak of her grief
 I must speak out of the preciousness of peace
 -
 "Do we have peace now?"
 You cicadas, cry out as loud as you wish!
 You tropical almond trees, grow tall
 Bathe yourself in the most brilliant light!
 You, old Okinawan song, be heard now
 Across all borders of place and time!
 Blow the strains of "Do we have peace now?"
 Into the tidal winds
 For the peace of today, for the peace of all time
 -
 I cling to her memories inside me
 Linking the wonders of peace
 With all that is to come

Poem by Chinen Masaru, translated by Roger Pulvers, special to The Mainichi. Roger Pulvers is an American-born Australian playwright, author, theater director, and translator. He has published over 40 books in English and Japanese.

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◇「みるく世（ゆ）がやゆら」 知念捷

みるく世がやゆら

平和を願った 古（いにしえ）の琉球人が詠んだ琉歌（りゅうか）が 私へ訴える

「戦世（いくさゆ）や済（し）まち みるく世ややがて 嘆（なじ）くなよ 臣下（しんか）命（ぬち）ど宝」

七〇年前のあの日と同じように

今年もまたせみの鳴き声が梅雨の終りを告げる

七〇年目の慰霊の日

大地の恵みを受け 大きく育ったクワディーサーの木々の間を

夏至南風（かーちーべー）の 湿った潮風が吹き抜ける

せみの声は微かに 風の中へと消えてゆく

クワディーサーの木々に触れ せみの声に耳を澄ます

みるく世がやゆら

「今は平和でしょうか」と 私は風に問う

花を愛し 踊りを愛し 私を孫のように愛してくれた 祖父の姉

戦後七〇年 再婚をせず戦争未亡人として生き抜いた 祖父の姉

九十才を超え 彼女の体は折れ曲がり ベッドへと横臥する

一九四五年 沖縄戦 彼女は愛する夫を失った

一人 妻と乳飲み子を残し 二十二才の若い死
 南部の戦跡へと 礎（いしじ）へと
 夫の足跡を 夫のぬくもりを 求め探しまわった
 彼女のもとには 戦死を報せる紙一枚
 亀甲墓に納められた骨壺には 彼女が拾った小さな石
 戦後七〇年を前にして 彼女は認知症を患った
 愛する夫のことを 若い夫婦の幸せを奪ったあの戦争を
 すべての記憶が 漆黒の闇へと消えゆくのを前にして 彼女は歌う
 愛する夫と戦争の記憶を呼び止めるかのように
 あなたが笑ってお戻りになられることをお待ちしております
 軍人節の歌に込め 何十回 何百回と
 次第に途切れ途切れになる 彼女の歌声
 無慈悲にも自然の摂理は 彼女の記憶を風の中へと消してゆく
 七〇年の時を経て 彼女の哀しみが 刻まれた頬を涙がつたう
 蒼天に飛び立つ鳩を 平和の象徴というのなら
 彼女が戦争の惨めさと 戦争の風化の現状を私へ物語る
 みるく世がやゆら

彼女の夫の名が 二十四万もの犠牲者の名が
 刻まれた礎に 私は問う
 みるく世がやゆら
 頭上を飛び交う戦闘機 クワディーサーの葉のたゆたい
 六月二十三日の世界に 私は問う
 みるく世がやゆら
 戦争の恐ろしさを知らぬ私に 私は問う
 気が重い 一層 戦争のことは風に流してしまいたい
 しかし忘れてはならぬ 彼女の記憶を 戦争の惨めさを
 伝えねばならぬ 彼女の哀しさを 平和の尊さを
 みるく世がやゆら
 せみよ 大きく鳴け 思うがままに
 クワディーサーよ 大きく育て 燦燦（さんさん）と注ぐ光を浴びて
 古のあの琉歌（うた）よ 時を超え今 世界中を駆け巡れ
 今が平和で これからも平和であり続けるために
 みるく世がやゆら
 潮風に吹かれ 私は彼女の記憶を心に留める
 みるく世の素晴らしさを 未来へと繋ぐ