

'Do we have peace now?' poem by Okinawa teen Chinen

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.

"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 And come back to me..."
Okinawa
-
In 1945 It is a heartless dispensation of nature that
He died at 22, leaving a wife with a baby at her sends
breast
Her memories fading into the winds
She searched for the footsteps of her husband
The tears of her grief follow the chiseled lines
She sought his warmth 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 I turn to The Cornerstone of Peace
dementia
Her husband's name is chiseled into it
She sings as all her memories recede
Together with the names of 240,000 others who
Into the lacquer blackness 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
"The Song of the Departing Soldier" dancing above my head
Scores of times, hundreds of times "Do we have peace now?"
As if to call out to the memories of war I ask myself, ignorant of the horrors of war
And the husband she loved ... It all weighs too heavily on me
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.

June 25, 2015 (Mainichi Japan) The Asia-Pacific Journal and the translator would like to thank the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum for permission to reprint the poem.

Recommended citation: Chinen Masaru (author), Roger Pulvers (translator), "'Do we have peace now?' poem by Okinawa teen Chinen Masaru", The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol. 13, Issue 27, No. 2, July 6, 2015.

The translation was originally published by The Mainichi [here](#).

◇「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	彼女の夫の名が 二十四万もの犠牲者の名が
南部の戦跡へと 礎（いしじ）へと	刻まれた礎に 私は問う
夫の足跡を 夫のぬくもりを 求め探しまわった	みるく世がやゆら
彼女のもとには 戦死を報せる紙一枚	頭上を飛び交う戦闘機 クワディーサーの葉のたゆたい
亀甲墓に納められた骨壺には 彼女が拾った小さな石	六月二十三日の世界に 私は問う みるく世がやゆら
戦後七〇年を前にして 彼女は認知症を患った	戦争の恐ろしさを知らぬ私に 私は問う
愛する夫のことを 若い夫婦の幸せを奪ったあの戦争を	気が重い 一層 戦争のことは風に流してしまいたい
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	しかし忘れてはならぬ 彼女の記憶を 戦争の惨めさを
愛する夫と戦争の記憶を呼び止めるかのように	伝えねばならぬ 彼女の哀しさを 平和の尊さを
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	みるく世がやゆら
軍人節の歌に込め 何十回 何百回と	せみよ 大きく鳴け 思うがままに
次第に途切れ途切れになる 彼女の歌声	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
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	古のあの琉歌（うた）よ 時を超え今 世界中を駆け巡れ
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	今が平和で これからも平和であり続けるために
蒼天に飛び立つ鳩を 平和の象徴というのなら	みるく世がやゆら
彼女が戦争の惨めさと 戦争の風化の現状を私へ物語る	潮風に吹かれ 私は彼女の記憶を心に留める
みるく世がやゆら	みるく世の素晴らしさを 未来へと繋ぐ