

**Angela Hondru, *888 Proverbe și vorbe înțelepte din bătrâni. Dicționar japonez-român și roman-japonez* [888 Proverbs and Wise Elders' Sayings. Japanese-Romanian and Romanian-Japanese Dictionary], Constanța, Editura Yume, 2024, 362 p., ISBN 978-606-92755-4-2**

In the circle of Japanese language-related experts in Romania the name of professor Angela Hondru has a special significance. First of all own to her quality as a brilliant translator of Japanese language literature into Romanian, translations that have brought her a series of international awards, the literature translated by her constituting a vast library of old writings, historical novels with great difficulties in the process of transposing them into Romanian (see e.g. Murasaki Shikibu, *The Story of Genji*, Polirom, 2017, translation, notes, glossary and captions by Angela Hondru), a historical novel written by a she-writer at the beginning of the eleventh century and transposed into Romanian with the appropriate adaptations to the sensibility of the reader of the twenty-first century.

The same quality has the other translations of Angela Hondru, who brings to the attention of Romanian readers Haruki Murakami, one of the most well-known Japanese contemporary writers, awarded of many prestigious prizes, whose novels have been translated in over twenty languages. “The Haruki Murakami author series” comprises novels *Chronicle of the archery-bird*, Polirom, 2004, *At the end of the world and in the harsh country of marvels*, 2005, and *Listen the Singing Wind, Pinbull*, 1973, Polirom, 2015. These two ultimate novels encapsulate some of the predilect themes of his works, writes Angela Hondru, “the loneliness of the individual, the need for togetherness, or the ephemerality of existing”.

At the same level of quality has the other works of Professor Angela Hondru who brings into the attention of Romanian readers, the ethnology of the two peoples, in spite, or perhaps more because of the differences between the two cultures, settled in two different cultural areas of the world, with a different historic background, with, apparently, a few cultural accents.

Parallel to his intense concern for translating Japanese literature into Romanian, perhaps equally captivating is the passion for popular culture, folklore, ethnography of the two peoples, despite, or perhaps precisely because of this, the concern to introduce us to the world of Japanese popular culture through intense field research such as *Ema prayers and gratitude*, photographs Silvia Cercheaza, f. a., or *Kagura from myth to reality through dance*, 2014, another field research into the fabulous world of Japanese traditions.

Among the most recent initiatives taken by Angela Hondru is the volume titled *888 Proverbs and Wise Elders' Words* (in which 8 signifies “boundless prosperity”, 888 being a triple “boundless prosperity”). Also in relation to the meaning of the title it should be noted that next to proverbs themselves the author adds “wise words from the elders” that are not proverbs in the proper sense of the word, unlike the Romanian material that includes mostly proverbs, i.e. verbal structures that support certain

truths with universal value. Neither the great collection of Iuliu Zanne comprizes in totality proverbs, in the subtitle being registered kin “species” as *zicători* (sayings), *povățuiri* (advices), truth words, similarities, “idiotisms”, and riddles, everyone of these “species” deserving a special description, a taxonomic re-evaluation.

Angela Hondru opens her book by signing on its first page a very a generous dedication: “To the distinguished professor Nicolae Constantinescu, PhD, with special concerns in the field of paremiology”; and, holographically, “With boundless gratitude, Angela”. The author must have taken into account my own writings on proverbs, especially the introductory studies to some of the ten volumes of the anastatic edition of Iuliu A. Zanne, *Romanian Proverbs from Romania, Bessarabia, Bukovina, Ungaria, Istria and Makedonia*, one of the most valuable achievements of the Romanian Folkloristics from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup>. In just two pages and a half study of the 10<sup>th</sup> volume I mentioned “the mission accomplished” by reprinting, in an anastatic edition, the great *corpus* of the *Romanian Proverbs*.

To realize the enormous amount of work done by Angela Hondru in the achievement of this volume it is enough to enter the author’s “creative laboratory”, revealing an evolved technique of investigating the paremiological repertoires of the two peoples, searching “with a candle”, so to speak, for proverbs with similar content in the two national repertoires. The result is an extraordinary selection, out of thousands or tens of thousands paremic structures, of those that somehow corresponded to each other in the two national paradigms.

The selection and interpretation of Romanian and Japanese proverbs belong exclusively to Angela Hondru, who put at work all her knowledge in the field, offering us a luminous, original, new essay. The 888 *Romanian proverbs* are inventoried in a dictionary of Romanian-Japanese proverbs, in fact a repertoire of proverbs, commented as such like in a concentrated comparative study.

A large-scale cultural and scientific project, which Sensei Hondru carried out, with a lot of work and effort, alone, helped only by the books that were at her disposal, recorded in an essential bibliography: nine titles from which some essential writings could not be missing (such as Iordache Golescu, *Commented Proverbs*, 1973, I.C. Hîntescu, *The Proverbs of the Romanians*, 1985, Iuliu A. Zanne, *Romanian Proverbs*, vol. I-X, Scara Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003 (all brought up to date in critical or anastatic editions).

Beautiful book, honor to the one who wrote you! Not only beautiful, but also long-lasting. Congratulations *Sensei* Hondru!

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