Translation Review

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/utrv20

Qum Basqan Sheher
Memtimin Hoshur & Joshua L. Freeman
Published online: 21 Aug 2012.

To cite this article: Memtimin Hoshur & Joshua L. Freeman (2010) Qum Basqan Sheher, Translation Review, 80:1, 135-136, DOI: 10.1080/07374836.2010.10524034

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07374836.2010.10524034

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the “Content”) contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions
is a dire imagining of post-war Bangladesh of easy money, elaborate corruption, a burgeoning middle class bent on grabbing opportunities provided by “public sentiment.”

Khoka’s detachment is destroyed when he loses his sister to war; life leaves none untouched, despite our illusory distance. We don’t know how Ronju dies, for Khoka’s recollection lacks clarity. All we know is Khoka’s mistake: “All he had wanted was for Ronju to survive...His sad country could never have given Ronju the right to live.”

The novel’s power lies in its uncertainty: if Khoka’s choice allowed no escape, what is the value of that choice? But in post-war Bangladesh (a fearful vision culminating in his later novel Matir Jahaj, or The Earthen Ship), what difference could any choice make? The book leaves the reader with a deep sense of discomfort and no answer; perhaps in the world that Mahmudul Haque constructs, there can be none.

— Shabnam Nadiya

Qum Basqan Sheher
By Memtimin Hoshur

Memtimin Hoshur (1944–) grew up in Ghulja, in the northwest of China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Educated at Xinjiang University in Ürümqi and “reeducated” near Ghulja during the Cultural Revolution, Hoshur published his first story in 1965 and over the last three decades has become one of the most prolific and acclaimed writers in the Uyghur language. In his 2003 novel [The Sand-Covered City] (Qum Basqan Sheher, Ürümqi: Shinjang Yashlar-Ösmürler Neshriyati), perhaps his most ambitious work to date, Hoshur allows his narrative gifts a broader canvas than the tight, vibrant short stories for which he is best known.

[The Sand-Covered City] takes place in an unidentified region which any Uyghur reader will nonetheless immediately recognize as Xinjiang, specifically the dusty roads and oasis towns along the fringes of southern Xinjiang’s Taklamakan Desert. The book is divided into three novella-length parts, each self-contained but collectively chronicling the downfall of the City of the Carefree, an unwalled, unguarded, happy city
which falls prey to a rapacious king’s army, and to the avarice of those whom the city would trust to save it.

The narrative is driven by a succession of vividly drawn characters, each with ties to the others both known and hidden. The first third of the book follows the wanderings of Jahankezdî Süpürge, a kind-hearted but crafty traveler who returns home to the City of the Carefree after long years traversing the desert roads on his old donkey, only to find his hometown under attack by a powerful neighboring kingdom. The attacking troops take hostage the City’s head elder and his sons, imprisoning them in the kingdom’s capital. The sons eventually escape, and the remainder of the book relates their tortuous journey back to the City of the Carefree. The brothers’ adventures are grippingly recounted and suffused with dark humor; the unexplained and the magical are woven unobtrusively into the story in a way that owes something both to magical realism and to the Thousand and One Nights.

Hoshur’s facility for maintaining atmosphere with pungent description and convincing dialogue keeps the narrative moving at a brisk pace throughout. And while this allegorical novel ostensibly tells of a mythical place, that very fictional device allows for the uniquely clear and compelling expression of widespread Uyghur perceptions of history and the present day. That Hoshur manages it with such a light hand is yet another credit to this wonderfully readable, finely executed novel.

— Joshua L. Freeman

Duniya Filin Daga
By Salisu Sa’adu

*Duniya Filin Daga* [The World: A Scene of Struggle] (Niamey, Republic of Niger, Edition Albasa, 2002, 85 pages) is a bilingual Hausa-French collection of thirty-four poems. The book is unique for a Hausa poetry collection in the sense that it was written by a Nigerien, Niger Republic being something of an “outsider” in modern, canonical Hausa poetic tradition. (Hausa is one of the languages with the largest number of users in Africa. It is spoken primarily in northern Nigeria, Niger Republic,