

BOOK REVIEW: Zufan... and the Flower

by Haymanot Berhanu

Reviewed by Fikre Tolossa, PhD

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Zufan... And The Flower, Haymanot Berhanu's latest children's story book has received a warm welcome so far among American readers. A number of libraries have responded to it positively. This unique book, which is the first of its kind in the world, is in four languages: Amharic, English, French and Spanish. When you open the book, what strikes you most besides the picture of Zufan, the heroine of the story, is the fact that you see four languages in four columns, two in the left and two in the right. Amharic comes into view first, proving that the author has given priority to the national language of Ethiopia, her country of origin. It raises the sense of pride of an Ethiopian to see the Geez letters side by side with the Latin ones appealing to international readers.

The beautiful, colorful pictures which illustrate the stories, in and of themselves, evoke nostalgia of Ethiopia. I, as an Ethiopian, am proud of Haymanot not only for having the potentials of entering the minds and houses of thousands of both Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian children alike world-wide, but also for displaying our alphabets and reflecting a piece of our life in different international languages.

Zufan is a true story of Haymanot's younger sister who lived in Addis Abeba many years ago. In order to please her mother, little Zufan does something which her father has forbidden her to do and suffers the consequence. In the end she learns a lesson and the truth that her parents love her a lot despite her wrong-doings. The story is short; but precise with suspense and culmination, which teaches a moral lesson to children. It is original in substance. This handsome book with hard covers is 36 pages in length and costs US \$17.95.

Haymanot Berhanu is not a first time author. She has demonstrated her talent to write with her first book entitled, *A Man With Integrity*, the life history of her late father. I read that book when it first saw the light of the day a few years ago and my heart was moved while I was getting to know the character of her memorable father. It was depicted with affection. It too, was rare because we didn't often come across the life history of Ethiopian parents written by their own children.

Haymanot Berhanu has proven once again with her latest book, *Zufan And The Flower*, that she is capable of composing even children's story which is not easy to write. I enjoyed reading it though I am not a child, because it spurred the child in me. I commend all to do the same and pass it on to children. They will not only enjoy reading it, but also learn a profound moral lesson. To learn more about the author, view and order the book, visit www.zufan-stories.com

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