

Translation Challenge: The Sugar Fairies

This translation challenge is based on a text a member of the ZBB¹ has recently come up with about a trickster god who fools some fairies into believing that a stick of sugarcane is a honey plant – with unfortunate consequences on the fairys’ part. The story was short and funny and gave me an opportunity to play a little with topicality.

1. The original text

As I read it, the author has originally written this text in his constructed language, Baranxe’i, however, here it is in English – which is also what I have translated from.

“

Baranxi, the cunning god, took bamboo and pushed it into honey. He gave it to the fairies and said to them, “Well, honoured sisters, this is the honey plant. Till the soil, plant it, and you shall harvest an abundance of honey!”

The fairies went away, planted the honey-bamboo in the soil, and it grew and grew and flourished and flourished. After the harvest of the plants, the fairies ground them into a paste, and tried to sell it. But the first man they tried to sell it to laughed and said to them, “Oh, sisters, someone tricked you! This isn’t honey!”

The fairies became furious, chopped the man into pieces, dipped him into the paste, and ate him. Baranxi, the god of justice, came and said to them, “Oh, sinners! Had you been angry with me, you would have been in the right. But you sinned. The plant I gave you is sugar, and you shall always crave it, but you shall never get it.” He went away, and the cursed fairies wept.

2. Translation into Ayeri

“

Ang paya Baransyi, pangal depangati, bateyтарas nay ya brasyāng biling. Yam ilyāng dimayvinimye nay narayāng: “Ganye diyatisu! Edanyāng nakabilingas. Uru ibangjas vana, nay kongu nakabilingas avanya, nay ang kadava bilingas ikaneng, ming sitang-kondvāng pang koncanya kay!”

¹ You can find it at his blog: <http://constructedvoices.wordpress.com/2011/10/04/baranxei-the-sugar-fairies/> (2011-10-07).

Da-sarayan dimayjang, nay ang uryan ibangjas tan, nay sa kongatang bateytar biling avanya: Ang na-nakasyo nay mi-migryo naka. Ya peralyan dimayjang nakajas pang kadān, nay linktang napayam. Ang apaya nārya menan ayonena siyām linkyan napayam dimayjang, nay narayāng, “Ah ganye! Ang depya arilya vās! Adareng voy bilingley.”

Da-tavyan krito-ikan dimayjas, nay sa vistang ayon nernan-nernanyam, nay ya brastang yās pata, nay ang konjan yās. Da-sahaya ang Baransyi, pangal kaytanati, nay narayāng, “Ah horamayaye! Vāng krito yām: sa tahavāng tenuban kayto. Nārya sa pavāng hora. Pasonoreng nakās si ang ilay vās kolunya kay sarisa. Sā mya tunasavāng asayam hora vana, nārya tavisavāng tadoy.” Da-saraya ang Baransyi, pangal sikatu, nay ang teryan dimayvinimye simbeyley samang.

3. Interlinear glossing

Ang pa-ya Ø Baransyi, pangal depang-ati, batey-tar-as nay ya bras-yāng biling-Ø.

AF take-3SM FOC Baranxi, god fool-maker, stick-tube-P and LOCF bathe-3SM.A honey-FOC
Baranxi, the foolster God, took a bamboo stick and dipped it into honey.

Yam il-yāng dimay-vinim-ye-Ø nay nara-yāng:

BENF give-3SM.A spirit-forest-PL-FOC and speak-3SM.A:

He gave it to the forest spirits and said:

“Gan-ye diyatisu! Edanya-ang naka-biling-as.

“child-PL worthy! this_one-A plant-honey-P.

“Dear children! This is a honey plant.

Ur-u ibang-ye-as vana, nay konga-u naka-biling-as avan-ya,

dig_up-IMP field-PL-P 2P.GEN, and plant-IMP plant-honey-P soil-LOC,

“Dig up your fields and plant the honey plant into soil

nay ang kada-va-Ø biling-as ikan-eng, ming sitang-kond-vāng pang koncan-ya kay!”

and AF harvest-2P-FOC honey-P much-more, can self-eat-2P.A after month-LOC three!”

“and you will harvest more honey than you can eat yourselves after three months.”

Da-sara-yan dimay-ye-ang, nay ang ur-yan ibang-ye-as tan,

so-leave-3PM spirit-PL-A, and AF dig_up-3PM field-PL-P 3PM.GEN,

And the spirits left and dug up their fields

nay sa konga-tang bateytar-Ø biling avan-ya:

and PF plant-3PM.A stick-tube-FOC honey soil-LOC:

and planted the honey bamboo into soil:

Ang na~nakas-yo nay mi~migr-yo naka-Ø.

AF REDUP~grow-3SN and REDUP~flower-3SN plant-FOC.

The plant grew and grew and flourished and flourished

Ya peral-yan dimay-ye-ang naka-ye-as pang kada-an-Ø,

LOCF grind-3SM spirit-PL-A plant-PL-A after harvest-NMLZ-FOC,

After the harvest, the spirits ground the plants

nay link-tang napa-yam.

and try-3SM.A sell-PTCP.

and tried to sell them.

Ang apa-ya nārya men-an ayon-ena si-y<ā>m link-yan napa-yam

AF laugh-3SM though one-NMLZ man-GEN REL-BEN<EMPH> try-3PM sell-PTCP

The first man the spirits tried to sell them to laughed, though,

dimay-ye-ang, nay nara-yāng:

spirit-PL-A, and speak-3SM.A:

... and said:

“Ah gan-ye! Ang dep-ya arilya-Ø vās! Ada-reng voy biling-ley.”

“oh child-PL! AF fool-3SM someone-LOC 2P.P! that-A.INAN not honey-P.INAN.”

“Oh children! Someone has fooled you! That isn’t honey.”

Da-tav-yan krito-ikan dimay-ye-as, nay sa vis-tang ayon-Ø nernan~nernan-yam,

so-become-3PM angry-very spirit-PL-P, and PF cut-3PM.A man-FOC REDUP~piece-DAT,

And the spirits became very angry and cut the man into small pieces

nay ya bras-tang yās pata-Ø, nay ang kond-yan-Ø yās.

and LOCF bathe-3PM.A 3SM.P mash-FOC, and AF eat-3PM-FOC 3SM.P.

and dipped him into the mash and ate him.

Da-saha-ya ang Baransyi, pangal kayt-an-ati, nay nara-yāng:

so-come-3SM A Baranxi, god right-NMLZ-maker, and say-3SM.A:

And Baranxi, the justice-creating god, came and said:

“Ah hora-maya-ye! Vāngkrito yām: sa taha-vāng tenuban-Ø kayto.

“oh sin-AGTZ-PL! 2P.A angry 1S.DAT: PF have-2P.A motivation-FOC just.

“Oh sinners! If you are angry at me, you have a rightful motivation.

Nārya sa pa-vāng hora-Ø.

but PF commit-2S.A sin-FOC.

“But you’ve committed a sin.

Pasono-reng naka-as si ang il-ay-Ø vās kolun-ya kay sarisa.

sugar-A.INAN plant-P REL AF give-1S-FOC 2P.P month-LOC three ago.

“Sugar was the plant that I gave you three months ago.

Sā mya tun-asa-vāng asayam hora-Ø vana, nārya tav-isa-vāng tadoy.”

CAUF be_to desire-HAB-2P.A forever sin-FOC 2P.GEN, but get-CAU-2P.A never.”

“Because of your sins you are forever to desire it, but never receive it.”

Da-sara-ya ang Baransyi, pangal sikatu, nay ang ter-yan dimay-vinim-ye-Ø

so-leave-3SM A Baranxi, god victorious, and AF spill-3SM spirit-forest-PL-FOC

And Baranxi, the victorious god, left and the forest spirits shed

simbey-ley samang.

tear-P.INAN myriad.

a myriad of tears.