

Concise Biography and Bibliography of Yoel Hoffmann

Doron B. Cohen

Yoel Hoffmann was born in Braşov, Romania in 1937 to Jewish parents of Austro-Hungarian culture. When he was one year old the family immigrated to Palestine, then under British Mandate, where Hoffmann's mother died shortly after their arrival and his father later remarried.

Hoffmann studied at Tel Aviv University and at Kyoto University, completing a PhD in philosophy. He spent several years in Japan learning Japanese and Chinese, and studied Buddhist texts with monks in Kyoto temples. He later served as a professor of philosophy and literature at University of Haifa until his retirement.

His career as a writer can be divided into two phases. In the first phase (1975-1985 in particular) he published studies and translations of Zen texts, including *kōan*, *haiku* and stories. Especially outstanding was his book, published in both Hebrew and English, of “death poems” (*jisei*) by Zen monks and *haiku* poets. Some of his poetry translations and Zen-related books were also translated into other languages (Chinese, German, Spanish and Italian).

In his second phase (since 1986) Hoffmann revealed himself to be a gifted author of distinctive poetic prose in Hebrew, carving for himself a unique place in contemporary Israeli literature. He published ten volumes of such writing (as well as one book for children), most of which were also translated into several languages (English, German, French and Italian). His last book so far was published in 2009. Hoffmann has received several important literary prizes in Israel, and his writing has attracted much scholarly interest and debate.



Basic Bibliography

I. Non-fiction

1. *The Sound of the One Hand: 281 Zen Koans with Answers* / Translated, with a commentary by Yoel Hoffmann; Foreword by Zen Master Hirano Sōjō; Introduction by Ben-Ami Scharfstein (New York: Basic Books), 1975

* Republished with an introduction by Dror Burstein (New York Review of Books Classics), 2016

1.a. *Der Ton der einen Hand: die bisher geheimen Antworten auf die wichtigsten Zen-Koans* / übersetzt aus dem Englischen von Margaret Meilwes (München: O.W. Barth), 1978

1.b. 禪門公案秘傳：隻手之聲 / 霍甫曼著；徐進夫譯 (Taipei: 志文出版社), 1983

1.c.

קול היד האחת / תרגום מיפנית, הערות ועריכת הנוסח העברי, יואל הופמן; נוסח עברי, דרור בורשטיין (ירושלים: כתר), 2011

[A Hebrew translation from English by Dror Burstein of selections from numbers 1 & 3; the Hebrew translation was edited by Yoel Hoffmann in 2009]

2.

קולות האדמה: קטעים נבחרים מכתביו של החכם צ'ואנג-טסה / תרגום מסינית עם הערות ופירושים יואל הופמן (גבעתיים: מסדה), 1977

[The sounds of earth: Selections from the writings of the sage Chuang-Tzu / Translated from Chinese and commentary by Yoel Hoffmann (in Hebrew only)]

3. *Every End Exposed: The 100 Koans of Master Kidō : With the Answers of Hakuin-Zen* / Translated, with a commentary by Yoel Hoffmann (Brookline, Massachusetts: Autumn Press), 1977

* Partial Hebrew translation in no. 1.c. above

4. *Radical Zen: The Sayings of Jōshū* / Translated with a commentary by Yoel Hoffmann; Preface by Hirano Sōjō (Brookline, Massachusetts: Autumn Press), 1978

4.a. *Zen radicale: i detti del Maestro Joshu* / A cura di Yoel Hoffmann; Traduzione di Fabrizio Pregadio (Roma: Ubaldini), 1979

4.b. *Rein in Samsara: 333 Zen-Geschichten* / Meister Jōshū; herausgegeben von Yoel Hoffmann; aus dem Englischen von Guido Keller (Frankfurt: Angkor-Verlag), 2002

* Also published under the title: *Der Kreis des Samsara* (München; Zürich: Piper), 2005

4.c.

ספר הזן של ג'ושו / תורגם מאנגלית לעברית בידי דרור בורשטיין (תל-אביב: כתר), 2006
[Translated from English to Hebrew by Dror Burstein; the Hebrew translation was edited by Yoel Hoffmann in 2006]

5. *The Idea of Self, East and West: A Comparison between Buddhist Philosophy and the Philosophy of David Hume* (Calcutta: Firma KLM Private), 1980

6.

לאן נעלמו הקולות? סיפורי זן ושירי הייקו / תרגום מסינית ויפנית, מבוא ופרושים מאת יואל הופמן (גבעתיים: מסדה),

1980

[Where did the Sounds Go? Zen Stories and Haiku Poems / Translation from Chinese and Japanese, introduction and commentary by Yoel Hoffmann (in Hebrew only)]

7.

אומרי שיר על סף המוות: מבחר שירים יפניים ומסת מבוא / [ליקט ותירגם] יואל הופמן (גבעתיים: מסדה), 1985

7.a. *Japanese Death Poems: Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death* /

Compiled with an introduction and commentary by Yoel Hoffmann (Rutland, Vermont: C.E.

Tuttle Co.), 1986

7.b. *Die Kunst des letzten Augenblicks: Todesgedichte japanischer Zenmeister* / Gesammelt

und mit Einleitung und Kommentar versehen von Yoel Hoffmann, übersetzt von Munish B.

Schiekel und Bernardin Schellenberger (Freiburg: Herder), 2000

7.c. *Poemas japoneses a la muerte: escritos por monjes Zen y poetas de Haiku en el umbral de*

la muerte / Antologados, prologados y comentados por Yoel Hoffmann ; Traducción del inglés

de Eduardo Moga (Barcelona: DVD Ediciones, S.L.), 2000

II. Fiction

1.

בפברואר כדאי לקנות פילים (גבעתיים: מסדה), 1988 [לילדים]

[IN FEBRUARY YOU SHOULD BUY ELEPHANTS (for children)]

2.

ספר יוסף (ירושלים: כתר), 1988

2.a. *Das Buch von Josef: Erzählungen* / Aus dem Hebräischen von Stefan Siebers (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt), 1993

2.b. *Katschen & the Book of Joseph* / Translated from Hebrew by Eddie Levenston and David Kriss (New York: New Directions), 1998

2.c. *Il libro di Joseph* / Traduzione di D. Padoa (Napoli: Cargo), 2006

2.d. *À la recherche du troisième œil* / Traduit de l'hébreu par Sylvie Cohen (Paris: Galaade éditions), 2011

3.

ברנהרט (ירושלים: כתר), 1989

- 3.a. *Bernhard: Roman* / Aus dem Hebräischen von Stefan Siebers (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt), 1991
- 3.b. *Bernhard* / Translated from Hebrew by Alan Treister with Eddie Levenston (New York: New Directions), 1998
- 3.c. *Bernhard* / Traduit de l'hébreu par Sylvie Cohen (Paris: Galaade éditions), 2008
4. כריסטוס של דגים (ירושלים: כתר), 1991
- 4.a. *Il Cristo dei pesci* / Traduzione di Alessandro Guetta (Milano: Feltrinelli), 1993
- 4.b. *Christus der Fische: Erzählung* / Aus dem Hebräischen von Anne Birkenhauer (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt), 1997
- 4.c. *The Christ of Fish* / Translated from Hebrew by Eddie Levenston (New York: New Directions), 1999
5. גוטפרשה (ירושלים: כתר), 1993
[GUTTAPERCHA]
6. מה שלומך דולורס (ירושלים: כתר), 1995
[HOW DO YOU DO, DOLORES]
7. הלב הוא קטמנדו (ירושלים: כתר), 2000
- 7.a. *The Heart is Katmandu* / Translated from Hebrew by Peter Cole (New York: New Directions), 2001
8. השונרא והשמטרלינג (ירושלים: כתר), 2001
- 8.a. *The Shunra and the Schmetterling* / Translated from Hebrew by Peter Cole (New York: New Directions), 2004
9. אפרים (ירושלים: כתר), 2003
[EPHRAIM]
10. Curriculum Vitae (ירושלים: כתר), 2007
- 10.a. *Curriculum Vitae* / Translated from Hebrew by Peter Cole (New York: New Directions), 2009

11.

מצבי רוח (ירושלים: כתר), 2009

11.a. *Moods* / Translated from Hebrew by Peter Cole (New York: New Directions), 2015