



Bookworm

"The Pen... A Way of Writing"
by Susan M. Griffith-Jones

REVIEWED BY J.S. BHUTIA

After traveling to the Muktinath valley, located high up in the beautiful Annapurna Conservation Park, in Mustang, northern Nepal, Susan M. Griffith-Jones penned a beautiful spiritual travelogue combined with colorful pictures of the place in *The Rainbow Bridge*.

The first chapter of this work is 'The Pen', and after receiving comments from those who read *The Rainbow Bridge*, Susan found that this section had been especially appreciated and decided to mold it into an expanded work, which she entitled, *The Pen, A Way of Writing*.

Writing has been considered as an art form in many cultures since time immemorial, not just regarding the shapes and styles of letters and pictograms, but also as an expression of meaning. 'The Pen' takes this idea further, albeit in a more jovial way, by looking at the in-depth process of the art of writing, showing that the thought behind each word that forms paragraphs and chapters comes from the mind of the writer, who by keeping her mind in an impartial state, could ultimately bridge the gap between the minds of writer and reader.

As an allegory of this, in the text itself, a writer is talking directly to the pen that is about to write something. In this monologue to the instrument that is about to mark the blank paper with many symbols and characters that will be translated by whomever reads it, the writer is warning the pen not to just casually say anything it feels, but to be precise in its language so that it doesn't end up leading the reader astray.

Susan says, "Writing 'The Pen' made me really think about the onus on writers to carefully construct their sentences, so that the ideas contained within would have a positive impact on the reader, rather than influence them negatively. What a responsibility it is to hold a reader's mind in balance!"

*For your words
Have power on perception,
Can influence
Can mould
And mutate it
Into anything at all.
Take responsibility
For such endeavor,
As the ways of perception
Can bring rise to trickery.
Then the essence seems lost
Although it is always there.
(excerpt from 'The Pen', Verse 15)*

Continuing to encourage the pen to thus echo the highest form of ethics to the reader and not to confuse him with anything biased or judgmental, she emphasizes that the sole aim of the pen should be to non-discriminately express its views, rather than sway the reader's mind into one or another camp and interfere with his free will to judge the work at his own level of understanding. If this is kept in mind, what emerges through the pen will be pure and clear rather than fabricated by the point of view of the writer, which is only true to her own impressions.

Since it is our cultures, societies, and environments that shape our individual minds since birth, in the way we communicate, we are not necessarily expounding a greater or holistic truth, but only a part of it. In this way, Susan shows how important it is for us all to respect each other's opinions and not to judge each other. In other words, we should be open to other angles of what is!

The text is written in 32 verses of poetical prose format, plus a Prologue and Epilogue, accompanied by a commentary on each verse. However, there's another sneaky addition to the text here, where inside the commentary on each verse, she cleverly manages to use each of the words from that verse at least once and marks them in bold.

At the end of the book, without punctuation, she includes this new text comprising all the words of the text that are now jumbled into one flow, itself grasping the meaning of the whole text in an uncanny way.

...your natural state that lets (essential perception of anything at all have the power to trick your endeavours for perception can influence bringing rise to responsibility for such words can seemingly lose the way as it is always there moulding and mutating although it can then take on) the blank page...

(the above verse has been cut out of the free flow, re-written text showing where it attaches to preceding and proceeding verses with the verse mentioned here in brackets)

(The Pen... A way of Writing may be purchased online, both in print and e-book format at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and Kobo)



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