

Bridges made out of words



By Ali Amiri
Staff writer

There is a well-known story among linguists of how an ill-chosen translation of a Japanese word led to the decision to drop the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima in order to make Japan yield.

In July 1945, during a meeting in Potsdam, allied leaders presented Japan with surrender terms and anxiously awaited their response.

The terms included a warning that a negative answer would result in "prompt and utter destruction." Allied leaders expressed hope that Japan would agree to an unconditional surrender to prevent further devastation.

Japanese Premier Kantaro Suzuki, when questioned by reporters in Tokyo, chose to withhold comment, using the word 'mokusatsu,' which means 'silence' in Japanese. However, this word has various meanings, and international news agencies wrongfully interpreted it as the Japanese government deeming the ultimatum as "not worthy of comment."

This angered US officials, who saw it as a sign of Japan's fanatical spirit, leading to the decision to drop the atomic bomb, resulting in the devastation of Hiroshima.

Since that tragic mistranslation brought about overwhelming destruction and huge loss of lives, there could hardly be any better example to show how immensely important translation is for our world.

Translation should never be considered the mere act of converting words from one language into another. Rather, it should be revered as an intricate art form that requires a deep understanding of not only languages, but also cultures and the nuances present in each and every one of them. Those worthy of the title translator should possess the remarkable ability to capture the essence of a text and convey its meaning accurately, thus allowing true understanding. This very ability ensures that not only political stances, but also ideas, stories, and knowledge can transcend linguistic barriers.

In our ever-more interconnected world, translation is without a doubt a vital tool that makes communication possible. In a way, the work of a translator could be compared to that of a bridge-maker, who allows us to step into a different terrain and explore a different perspective.

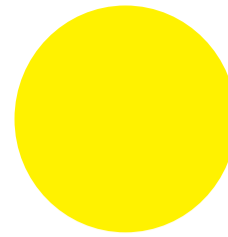
Without translation, we wouldn't be capable of appreciating different cultures or engage in meaningful dialogue across borders and, therefore, remain susceptible to misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

In order to recognize the role of professional translation in connecting nations, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution in 2017 to declare September 30 as International Translation Day.

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Sacred Defense works need to attract greater audiences: *Director*



By Hamideh Hosseini
Staff writer

Hamed Mokammeli, a young theater director, writer, and actor known for his artistic works on various themes, including the Iraqi-imposed war in the 1980s, known as "The Sacred Defense", shared his thoughts in an exclusive interview with Iran Daily. He expressed a deep interest in exploring topics such as identity, culture, homeland, and ideology in his works, emphasizing their significance in exploring the human psyche.

According to Mokammeli, these themes and concepts are necessary because they define our sense of self and unity. Certain factors can threaten the authenticity and unity of these concepts, making it crucial to address issues such as identity disruptions and the deterioration of homelands, often caused by war. To him, war encompasses more than just physical battles; it disrupts matters that are highly important to individuals. Mokammeli stressed that losing any of these core concepts, including identity and homeland, equates a loss of dignity.

He acknowledges that people tolerate hardships and challenging circumstances to survive, even when it means sacrificing their



A scene from 'Jaleh Ambush' CAP

dignity. From his perspective, the meanings of words have become vague and require redefinition in contemporary times. He noted historical eras in Iran when words like war, identity, country, people, and culture were redefined, emphasizing the importance of evolving language to reflect current conditions. This redefinition is particularly necessary when discussing topics like war and the Sacred Defense, in the context of today's world. Mokammeli also explored the genre of dark comedy as a means to talk about bitter subjects like war, believing that humor can make the seriousness of war more tolerable to the audience, even though it ultimately involves life and death. Regarding the engagement

of audiences, he suggested that deconstruction and changes in approach are essential. Exploring new angles and perspectives can lead to a new understanding of topics like war. Mokammeli's portfolio includes works like 'Sweet Soil,' 'This Photo Will Remain,' 'Beyond the Dream,' and 'Jaleh Ambush,' where he offers diverse perspectives on war. For instance, 'Sweet Soil' considers the theme of love amid war, highlighting the choices people make under pressure. He noted that as discussions evolve, audiences gradually come to terms with themes, even connecting with them from the beginning. 'Jaleh Ambush' exemplifies how this deconstruction has allowed younger individuals without direct war experiences

to engage in discussions about war, touching on common human issues like love, success, family, and the future. Mokammeli finds heroism to be a complex and subjective concept, where individuals in ordinary lives, faced with anger, war, and pressure, can be considered heroes when they make courageous choices, even at the cost of their lives. He emphasized recognizing and remembering those who defend their homeland and contribute to its growth and excellence, mentioning figures such as Ferdowsi, Bahram Beyza'i, and Mohammadreza Shajarian among others. Mokammeli is currently working on a project related to Ariobarzanes of Persis, the last Persian general who defended his home-

land against Alexander the Great, emphasizing the significance of this historical defense. In Mokammeli's view, artists must adapt to their current context, redefining traditions and concepts to remain relevant. Sticking to past definitions and words leads to stagnation, making it essential to redefine and evolve with the times. He highlighted the necessity of redefining words and concepts to continue offering meaningful contributions. Discussing challenges in producing artworks, including those related to the Sacred Defense, Mokammeli acknowledges that limitations and personal preferences cannot force all artistic works into a single form. Attempting such uniformity only results in delays and increased challenges.



On Iran's national Firefighting and Safety Day, TFD spokesperson:

Untold heroism of firefighters in Plasco inferno

Social Desk

The spokesperson for the Tehran Fire Department talked about the high number of accidents occurring in Tehran on Iran's national Firefighting and Safety Day, and highlighted a recent incident where a fire broke out in a 500-square-meter warehouse. "Thanks to the quick response of our colleagues, the fire was contained and no one was injured," said Jalal Maleki, according to Mehr news agency. A firefighter for 27 years, Maleki shared his experiences and mentioned that he and his colleagues often take on leadership roles due to their extensive experience. He recalled his early days in the Fire Department,

explaining that he chose this career over a desk job, as he had always been fascinated by the work of firefighters. Expressing his passion for the job, Maleki admitted, "I enjoy being a firefighter more with each passing day." He also paid tribute to the brave firefighters who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty, highlighting the difference in response between the Plasco Building incident in Tehran and the Grenfell Tower fire in England. "I was present inside the Plasco Building until a few minutes before the collapse. My colleagues fought the fire, even to save the citizens' property, but we did not witness such attitude during the Grenfell Tower fire in En-

gland. Although no firefighter would deliberately neglect their duties, we saw that at least 80 people died in that incident. If my colleagues had not acted swiftly in the Plasco Building fire, it would have been likely that around 400 people would have lost their lives. The rescue operation went well, but the firefighters paid the price," said Maleki. Maleki emphasized the physical demands of being a firefighter, especially when tackling fires in tall buildings. "Firefighters have to climb multiple floors carrying heavy equipment weighing at least 20kg, as there are no elevators especially for them. Physical strength is crucial for performing such tasks effectively," he said.



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Maleki also spoke about the issue of insurance for firefighters, explaining that while social security insurance covers most firefighters in the country, those in the Tehran Fire Department are covered by municipal insurance. This presents some challenges, as the law regard-

ing retirement benefits for hard jobs does not apply to them. "Efforts are being made by the mayor, city council, and organization CEO to address this issue," the spokesperson said. When asked about encounters with relatives and friends at fire scenes,

Maleki said that it rarely happens in residential areas, but sometimes he does come across acquaintances in commercial buildings. He also addressed the calls received by the Fire Department to rescue animals, advising citizens to avoid approaching any animals, including wild cats, as they can be dangerous. The Fire Department delivers rescued animals to designated parks and the Department of the Environment. Maleki shared instances where they rescued a monkey and three lion cubs. Finally, he expressed appreciation for the support and understanding of the firefighters' wives and families, who stand by their loved ones in this challenging profession.