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| **Bose, Buddhadeva (1908-1974)** |
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| Buddhadeva Bose was a major Bengali poet after Rabindranath Tagore, of an exemplary dedication to modernism. He was also a novelist, short-story writer, essayist, playwright, children’s writer and translator—author of over 150 titles.  Born in Comilla, he grew up in Noakhali and Dhaka (all in Bangladesh now). While at college, he brought out with Ajit Datta a monthly named *Pragati* (‘Progress’: 1927-1929) meaning modernism. At 23 he moved to Kolkata, with a distinctive book of poems and a novel to his credit, *Bandīr Bandanā* (‘Prisoner’s Song’) and *Sādā* (‘Response’), and took up writing as profession. At 26 he married Protiva Som, singer who later became a fiction writer. By then he had begun teaching at Ripon (now Surendranath) College. In a year, with Premendra Mitra and Samar Sen, he began a quarterly solely devoted to poetry, *Kavitā* (‘Poetry’: 1935-1961) which became a vehicle for more than one generation of poets. He also started publishing the new poetry including an anthology of modern Bengali poetry (*Ādhunik Bānglā Kavitā*, 1940 which he later edited himself) and a series of sixteen-pagers, *Ek Paysāy Ekti* (‘Poems a Paysa Each’).  Before long he gave up his college job, though a decade later he joined the newly established Jadavpur University as the founder professor of Comparative Literature. In between he had tried his hand in journalism, had a brief assignment with UNESCO, and been a Fulbright professor in the United States. But whatever the hardships, he had always been the happiest at his ‘enchanted desk’.  Buddhadeva Bose was author of seventeen books of poems and a book of poems for children. He began flowingly, but without compromising skill (witness *Kankābatī*), grew terse before long (*Je Āndhār Ālor Adhik*—‘The Darkness that Is More than Light’—showed it most), and closed with terseness and flow combined (as in his last book *Svāgatabidāy o Anyānya Kavitā*—‘Welcome Farewell and Other Poems’). Part of this output was in prose, he being a champion of the prose poem. In novel which he wrote in a great number, his prime contribution was the stream of consciousness (his masterpiece *Tithidor*—‘Sacred Ties’—was full of it) and a touch of the poetic. This latter was also true of his later short stories. His essays were numerous and of various kinds: belles-lettres, travelogues, autobiography and, above all, criticism. He wrote extensively on his great predecessor, Rabindranath Tagore, and also on his contemporaries, especially Jibanananda Das and Sudhindranath Datta. His last years were largely spent on a book on the *Mahābhārata* (*Mahābhārater Kathā*) preceding which he wrote four verse-plays on themes taken from it (*Kālsandhyā*—‘Darkness at Noon’—being one). He had already written a play on Rishyasringa, *Tapasvī o Taranginī* (‘The Hermit and the Courtesan’), and one on Electra (*Kolkātār* [Kolkata’s] *Electra*).  His main translations were of Kālidāsa’s *Meghadūta*, Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal*, selections from Hölderlin and Rilke. A champion of his mother tongue, he wrote English only occasionally, *An Acre of Green Grass* (on current Bengali writing) and *Tagore: Portrait of a Poet* being two principal instances. Timeline 1927-1929: Monthly *Pragati* devoted to modernism  1930: *Bandīr Bandanā*, book of poems  1935-1961: Quarterly *Kavitā* solely devoted to poetry  1949: *Tithidor*, novel  1958: *Je Āndhār Ālor Adhik*, book of poems  1961: *Charles Baudelaire: Tānr Kavitā*, translation of *Les Fleurs du Mal*  1966: *Tapasvī o Taranginī*, play  1974 (posthumous): *Mahābhārater Kathā*, criticism |
| Further reading:  Dasgupta, Alokeranjan. *Buddhadeva Bose*, MIL Series (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1977)  Sengupta, Samir. *Buddhadeva* *Basur Jīban* (Kolkata: Vikalp, 1998, rev. 2008).  Datta, Jyotirmoy, ed. *Kolkātā: Buddhadeva Basu Samkhyā* (Kolkata: Pratibhas, 2002).  Dyson, Ketaki Kushari, trans., *Selected Poems of Buddhdeva Bose* (Oxford University Press India, 2003).  Dev, Amiya. *Buddhadeva Basu* (Kolkata: Bangiya-Sahitya-Parishat, 2006).  *Svāgata Samlāp: Buddhadeva Basuke Nibedita*, ed. under Buddhadeva Basu Satabarsha Samiti’s supervision (Kolkata: Dey’s Publishing, 2008).  Sinha, Arunava, trans., *When the Time Is Right* (*Tithidore* in English) (Penguin India, 2012).  Dev, Amiya. *Dui Tirise: October-November/ Sudhīndranāth Datta o Buddhadeva Basu* (Kolkata: Ebang Mushayera, 2012), pp. 83ff. |