

BUDDHADEVA BOSE (1908-1974) remains to this very day the most misunderstood author of modern Bengal. He was one for whom prolificity—he published over one hundred works—was the vital sign of creativity. In this he is perhaps our most uniquely versatile author after Tagore.

From the very beginning of his literary career he succeeded in achieving a notoriety and became a permanently 'asocial' object of persecution. Still his works amply show the combination of originality and inexhaustible *elan* he possessed, and also the presence of a creative power we respect and remember him by. There is not a single literary *genre* that he did not try his hand at—poetry and fiction, personal essay and literary criticism, symbolist play and entertaining verse and tales for a juvenile audience.

Buddhadeva built up his own reputation during his life-time. He did not have to wait for it like Jivanananda Das. This reputation has not suffered after his death. On the contrary, he is honoured today, among the practising writers and uninitiated readers alike.

Dr Alokaranjan Dasgupta, who had the privilege of working with Buddhadeva Bose in the Comparative Literature Department of Jadavpur University, has analysed and appraised very competently in an elegantly written monograph.



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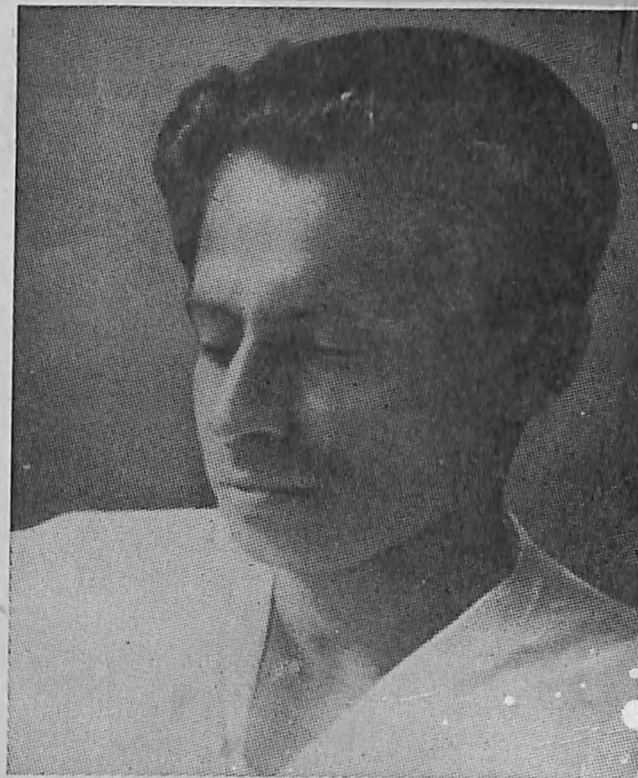
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Buddhadeva Bose

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BUDDHADEVA BOSE

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodhana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

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BUDDHADEVA BOSE

ALOKERANJAN DASGUPTA

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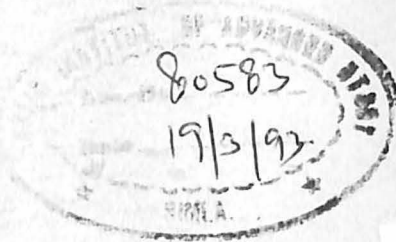
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ALOKERANJAN DASGUPTA

11
12
13

14

15

ONE

*I shall dine late, but the dining-room will be well-lighted,
the guests few and select.*

—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

*It is not a bad idea after all to write for the best and
wait until your reader, X or Y, is mature enough. . .
if I have one hundred readers, that would do for the
time being.*

—BUDDHADEVA BOSE

THE following pages are humbly devoted to the mind and medium of a modern Indian author. They are not primarily intended to cataloguing and enumerating the facts in his life and career, but to provide an exposition of the spiritual act and the creative norm he stood for. The task is, indeed, onerous. For one thing, Buddhadeva Bose remains to this very day, despite his lifelong attempts to desubjectivize his feeling through a beautifully transparent language, the most misunderstood author of modern Bengal. The shadowy depths lurking beneath his apparently accessible, crystalline idiom point to a controversial personality. And what actually might puzzle one even more is that Buddhadeva revelled in being described as a controversial figure. He derived pleasure, to employ Whitman, in contradicting himself, because he contained multitudes. His creative and self-scrutinising intergrity imparted a unifying dimension to all the seemingly contradictory positions he took up. In part this is because of the kind of productive artist he was. He was one for whom prolificness—he published over one hundred works—was the vital sign of creativity, the quantitative dimension invariably accompanying the qualitative. In this he is perhaps our most uniquely versatile author after Tagore. His overt responses to Tagore stemmed perforce from this sense of affinity and personal involvement, alternately characterized by intimate adoration and studied aversion which suited the mood of the Kallolean era.

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

This very psychic ambiguity gave his aesthetic stand a firm consistency. While composing a portrait of Tagore, Buddhadeva himself noticed

Recently, in Bengal, a magazine which claims to be *avant garde* roundly deplored my blind devotion to Tagore. Others, finding me lacking in reverence for the great man, attacked me with exemplary gusto. It did not surprise me that the two charges were contradictory, for many a time before this I have been hauled up as an idolator or iconoclast, or both at one.¹

From the very beginning of his literary career he succeeded in achieving a notoriety and became a permanently 'asocial' object of persecution. The prosecutors were not only the conventional literary critics, but also public penalisers from other walks of life. A colleague of his recorded with a mixed feeling of amusement and delusion how an estranged housewife, on the publication of a short story by Buddhadeva, proclaimed that the wretched author should have been with a lump of salt choked at birth.² The same author, ever since the publication of *Marmabani* (The Inmost Message), his shaky, teen-aged book of verse, in 1924, was attacked continuously for about four decades, by a moralizing editor-cum-reformer of a conservative journal, as convincingly suggested by a noted Bengali critic for the following reasons

- 1 Tagore's admiration for the young poet
- 2 Buddhadeva's undisputed leadership in 'obscene literary writings'
- 3 The juxtaposition of *localization* and 'exotic' (plagiaristic) elements
- 4 The editor's apathy towards the writers of the '*Pragati*' and '*Kallol*' clans in general.³

The same author was, curiously enough, convicted for the last time of 'obscenity', following an incredible seventy-day trial, on 19 December 1970.⁴ His conviction, by a stroke of irony, coincided with the award to him of a very high national honour (*Padmabhusan*).

ONE

The facts referred to above have not been mentioned in order to show that he was always a helpless or lucky victim of some extraneous motivation or other. In fact, they amply show the combination of originality and inexhaustible *elan* he possessed, and also the presence of a creative power we respect and remember him by. There is not a single literary *genre* that he did not try his hand at : poetry and fiction, personal essay and literary criticism, symbolist play and entertaining verse and tales for a juvenile audience. These literary forms did not grow in mutual isolation in him : they penetrated each other, at times infringing respective areas. The plurality of artistic worlds he created thereby are all invested by an ever-awakening experimental awareness. Even then it would be stretching things to suggest that he was capable in the classical manner of effacing the 'egotistical sublime' in his creations. On the contrary, the very presence of an unfettered ego lends his writings an inwardness which one might call romantic. It is remarkable that, contrary to the prevalent notion that Sudhindranath Datta is a poet with a classical bent,⁵ Buddhadeva vigorously maintained that the former was an incorrigible romantic ; there was an element of projection in this. In 1956 he became Professor of the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Calcutta. It is true, of course, that during his tenure he handled a varied gamut of subjects, ranging from the Romantic Revival to the 'Absurd' in modern drama. But his nostalgic adherence to the romantic sounded a refrain throughout the entire performance. During his sojourns abroad, he worried whether his students would be lagging behind in this particular area. On one occasion he wrote to a younger colleague of his, on the eve of his prospective teaching tour in the United States

Could you take the charge of the English part of the paper on Romanticism I have been teaching ? If you do, I feel my students will not be deprived of their legitimate dues during my absence.⁶

It goes without saying that the worry here is not aridly academic. In fact, Buddhadeva Bose acquired a romantic way of looking at life, and can be termed one of the last romantics in his regard for the free traders in novel, luminous ideas of life and

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

living. Therefore his romanticism was shorn of the sentimentalism which it often entails. And is it not an accepted fact that romanticism lies at the base of anti-romantic excursions too? Buddhadeva's balanced undertakings in the *Mahabharata* during his later period remain intensely individualistic in the patterns of felt experiences projected there.

Buddhadeva Bose, a successful columnist once, a co-editor of *Pragati* and the founder-editor of *Kavita* (*Kavita* offered its pages to numerous *avant garde* poets of Bengal in the formative years of the cult of modernity) will also be remembered for his contributions to journalism, to certain aspects of which he was a determined antagonist. At the same time he succeeded in giving the journalism in Bengal a creative touch and therefore a number of distinguished Bengali journalists who are also creative writers can be considered of having been 'schooled' by him. The founder of selective *Kavita Bhavan*, Buddhadeva organized gatherings equally suitable for authors of different socio-political views and popularized rising authors through the inexpensive series 'ek paysay ekti' (at one paisa per copy). In his last years, he proved to be an artist of hermetic disposition. The more he matured, the more he clung to his credo of art which resulted in certain esoteric designs. Exuberance and verbosity tended to give way to a laconic style. The following questionnaire and Buddhadeva's cryptic answers throw light on this

Q. What has been your vocation ?

A. Literature.

Q. The first published poem ?

A. I don't recollect the name.

Q. Where was it printed ?

A. In '*Toshini*', Dacca.

Q. Favourite foreign poets ?

A. Many.

Q. What is the role of a poet in the progress of a culture ?

A. I don't get your question.

Q. Its impact on poetry ?

A. A suitable topic for a research.

ONE

- Q. Which poem is your most favourite among those you have written? When did you write it? Where did you write it and publish?
- A. Not one, but many or more. . .
- Q. What is the place of modern poetry in Bengali literature?
- A. One can only assess it fifty years later.
- Q. What is your prediction about the future of modern poetry?
- A. That can be grasped only in the future.⁹

Buddhadeva built up his own reputation during his life-time. He did not have to wait for it like Jivanananda Das, for whose reputation (along with that of some other eminent fellow-writers of his generation) too Buddhadeva strove equally. This reputation has not suffered after his death. On the contrary, he is honoured today, among the practising writers and uninitiated readers alike. The select literary circle he tried to create is growing and gradually coming to dominate the scene. In this sense he is one among the makers of literature who have come to stay not only in our history of literature but also in our literary history.

TWO

To me Art's subject is human clay

—AUDEN

FROM the first Buddhadeva was concerned with aesthetic values and tried to shun didacticism in poetry. Even for Tagore it was difficult to dissociate the 'aesthetic mother' from the 'utilitarian father', nurtured as he was in the nineteenth century atmosphere of a 'thirst for totality'. It was the fragmentary prism of poetry rather than ideational humanitarian wholeness which fascinated Buddhadeva. Or, to put it in a different way, he was in search of a poetry which refracts mankind into myriads of human beings : 'Neither the *human* nor *humanity*, neither the simple adjective nor the substantivised adjective, but the concrete substantive—man ; the man of flesh and bone ; the man who suffers and dies, above all, who dies' (Unamuno). This concept of man was poles apart from that of Tagore. There is no denying that Buddhadeva too lent his half-hearted support to his fellow-poets who, because of their hasty, though at that juncture necessary, generalizing attitude, branded Tagore as a saint somewhat lacking in 'the subtle knot that makes us man'. Tagore's stress on the divinity of man was judged by his detractors to be a kind of too easily acquired sublimation. The other alternative to them was to subscribe to the more empirical conviction that 'all that lives is holy' (Blake). This intrinsic holiness, however, was everything other than immortal. In this connexion it might be interesting to know about Buddhadeva's views on the worship of the Goddess Durga. He maintained, with a certain sense of exaltation for his cultural milieu, that the *Durgapuja* is a unique phenomenon which is possible only on the Bengali soil and said that this *puja* is nothing but an artistic ritualization, through the medium of perishable clay : a design of death. Whether or not

TWO

this view had any bearing on his poetry, one could say that perishable human clay is the subject of Buddhadeva's poetry.

'*Banker Bandana*' (Hymns from: *Captivity/1930*), Buddhadeva's really first confident work, shows him already as a rebel—without any political design, of course—and an adventurous romantic. It is *dehatmavad*: the concept of the identity of body and soul providing its philosophical base. The book is, indeed, an ecstatic response to this system of thought as well as to the visible beauties of nature. Synaesthetic similes here amply show the young poet as a captive to *eros* not *ethos*, a victim to 'ever-experienced evil', expelled from paradise. The poet croons the monodies of experience splitting the second person into the first person

Wonder-struck, I decipher the script :

'O youth, neither a rogue nor a beast you are, nor a
mere insect—

A god you are, banished from paradise !

A god I am, banished from paradise :

My eyes therefore like a couple of captive birds

Want to snap the bondage of body and soar

(*Shapabhrashta/The cursed god*)

The visual flight is meant for transgression and not necessarily transcendence. It returns to its cherished corporeal frame to 'conduct a marriage between the new moon and the full moon, like a priest'. The priest himself is the bridegroom here, haunted by a fated new moon. It is intriguing to notice that the bridegroom, or the lover, although romantically pining for the ever-receding object, is keen on analyzing and dissecting. It is not the mysterious ignorance, the alluring capital of a yearning youth, that tempts the poet. He would rather know all the characteristics of his beloved and through this specific knowledge he would build up a new sense of mystery

Is your body like freshly churned cream ?

Yes, but an abominable skeleton lies at
its base (*O Kankavati*)

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

It wears a dying yellow hue : rows of bones like dry white
strikes of chalks
I know, what it resembles : a laughter silent, uncouth,
rude—
A ghastly toothless horror.
I know everything, and yet I love,
I love more because I know.

(*Premik/The lover*)

There is a clinical touch in some of the poem which rescues them from too obvious snares of sentimentality.

This collection owes much to Tagore's '*Balaka*' (A Flight of Swans). The debt is pronounced in the liberation of constrained metre *payar*, in the eloquently delivered impassioned passages without that verbose oratory which is mostly regarded as the main pitfall of ambitious poetry. But Buddhadeva's obligation to Tagore has in this work more of a thematic nature. Tagore asserted the supremacy of the artist over nature in *Balaka* in a beautiful stanza :

You have given the bird the song. The bird sings.
It does not offer a bit more.
To me you have given the voice. I contribute more
In my tenor.

His younger contemporary writes

I am a poet, I have composed this song with glowing
rapture
This is my glory—
I have improved upon your version with my toil
This is my glory

(*Bandir Bandana/A captive's hymn*)

The conception of the superiority of the Artist over capriciously incomplete Nature is undoubtedly a Tagore legacy which runs through all his writings, later on becoming reinforced with Schiller's theory of Naïve and Sentimental poetry. *Bandir Bandana*, furthermore, is not expressed in a modern style of language, a feature which was missing in Tagore. It accentuates Tagore's

modernity in a balanced way, which one does not meet in Mohitlal Majumdar. He employed the philosophy of *dehatmavad* in a desperate attempt to say something new that Tagore had not said. Thus Mohitlal's poems, contemporary when they were composed, are no longer modern today, because it was the ideational, and therefore, transitory aspect of modernity that he laid undue stress upon. To Buddhadeva, from the very beginning, modernity lies in intonation, and not in current ideas. Many of his contemporary poems therefore are still modern. In his next book of verse '*Prithivir Pathe*' (Facing the Earth/1933) he subdued his egocentric tendencies and tried to spell out a clear-cut philosophical viewpoint. In this too he did not assume any didactic role, something he found reprehensible in poetry. The Spenserian quality of 'maidenliness' pervades some of the sonnets—discernible also in the stanza-patterns of Ajit Datta's '*Kusumer Mas*' (The Month of Blossoms)—which are memorable for the use of elongated *payar*. The balance between the esoteric and the exoteric which the poet wanted to strike here did not come off very well. But Buddhadeva's self-discipline commands due attention. He came to terms with his amoral aesthetics in *Kankavati* (1937) phase. He did not just chance upon it. There was a sense of preparedness, allied with innate choice, noticeable in the poet who wanted to diverge from the cult of puritanism associated with Tagore. True, Tagore too was attacked by conservative writers like Sureshchandra Samajpati and D. L. Roy in his youth, in their battle against obscenity. But those dissident voices were drowned in the wake of his poetry of the *Gitanjali* period which hailed sublimity as the goal of Art. Ruskin had a hand of it: 'All great art is praise'. Buddhadeva, in his quest for sensuousness, shorn of 'the pangs of conscience', clung to Swinburne during this period. The critics who try to emphasize a leap, and not an evolutionary growth between the Swinburnesque phase of his poetry and the Baudelaireesque one should notice that Swinburne too was heavily influenced by Gautier and Baudelaire in his struggle against the bourgeois scale of morality. Moreover, D. G. Rossetti and Morris, the two picturesque pillars of the Preraphaelite Brotherhood movement, appealed to the Bengali poet because of their robust sensuousness and keen

awareness of details. The healthy admixture of poetry and painting, discernible in the Preraphaelites, gave a new sensitivity to the poet.

The poet of *Kankavati* has often been accused of lurid consciousness, pointless verbosity. This charge is not worth welcoming for two reasons. First, it is the effect of *visuals* through verbalism that was the poet's distinct aim here. Hence, this overflowing, at times annoying, richness of colours. Secondly, the squandering poetic energy returns here now and again to a point of gravitation, a near-domestic, rather easy in the Bengali sense of the term, pattern of thought which sobers it down and in an unpoetical down-to-earth way curbs the romantic flights sometimes at their very inception, as demonstrated in poems like '*Lono meyer prati*' (To a girl).

Have some little time for me? I will sit beside you,
 (In our house there are too many people, much turmoil,
 Mother is in a bad mood, children produce cacophony).

This domestic flavour suddenly dissolves in the dark alleys of everyday life and is superseded by a sense of premonition

Again the eyes became drowsy
 The whole world dark too
 —I will have to die without knowing
 whom the hand belonged to

(*ekkhana hat/one hand*)

In *Kankavati* for the first time a sense of strain was inescapable. What looked spontaneous, concealed the trouble carefully. For instance, the whole of '*Shesher ratri*' (The last night) was not written at a sitting. The poem demanded obstinately a long space of time after the first stanza was written: in the interim, as the poet himself put it, he got married, the first daughter and the poetry magazine '*Kavita*' were born on the same day. Buddha-deva Bose did not hide the difficulties of the entire process he underwent

Till now my poems sprung from the-then momentary flux. I took my sensory impressions or emotive moods

TWO

to be the constituent of my poetry. After composing 'Shesher ratri' I came to comprehend that our imaginative faculty is much more free.²

What did Buddhadeva exactly mean by this free sort of imagination? The answer is not a vague one, but is clearly to be found in *Natun Pata* (New foliage/1940): Not the flowers, nor as yet the roots but the sheer beauty of leaves symbolising yearnings for creativity. The poet defined the Apollonian and the Dionysian energies of the creative principle in his 'devata du' (two gods)

God is not merely merciless
God is not only a thunder
God is not only a death-dealer

God belongs to festivities
God belongs to the springtime
God yields to a kiss

Love poems in this volume assume a kind of orchestral dimension in their quality of counterpoints, crescendos and diminuendos. A Yeatsian crystal-like, uncompromising accuracy of attitude characterizes poems like 'Pandulipi' (a manuscript) not unlike 'Samarudha' (the ascended one) of Jivanananda Das. The insensitivity of society is represented in this poem by a publisher whose sole task is to blot the poet out of his real existence. Undeterred, the poet went on creating a sphere of his own not divorced from nature and life. 'Chilkay sakal' (a morning at Chilka) substantiates this. This is one of the most brilliantly ecstatic, though enormously controlled, poems ever to have been written. The poet himself confessed later on that he took the moment of inspiration 'red-handed' with all its subtle greenish pervasive quality and beautiful moistness with rapt attention, without giving the moment a chance to peter out.³ This result is highly enlightening. The poem reads like a transcription rendered by a receptive medium in a secret understanding with Nature.

Tagore, Joyce and Virginia Woolf died in 1941. The varied

impact of these three personalities on Buddhadeva is a fact beyond dispute. His poetry after this date reveals that the author is closer to Tagore, although this indebtedness is under constant self-surveillance, while his prose bears the intricate beauties of the other two artists. The poems of *Damayanti* (1943), composed between 1935-37, show this new point of departure. In 'Chayacchanna he Afrika' (Over-shadowed Africa), for instance, the poet drew heavily upon a poem by Tagore in *Patraput* on the same subject, painted though with bolder strokes. In another poem 'Calaccitra' (The movies) he metamorphosed the world of Tagore's early poetry through distorted allusion which create a mixed effect of a parody by Jatindranath Sengupta and Samar Sen. Here we come across an artist who knows every inch of the long road lying before him and equally aware that the poet, as an entertainer, should not for a moment sound monotonous despite the stupendous superstructure of a poem he would have to create. He renewed his pledge to youth—almost in the Yeatsian way again—in *Damayanti* which, mythically seen, he chose to be his *objective correlative*, the image of his daughter being reflected there. His use of myth here, although partly influenced by Eliot, is basically different from that of Sudhindranath and Bishnu De who stressed the *Yayati-myth* with the same theme of rejuvenation. But they are more derivative in their approach, while Buddhadeva's poem rings with the immediacy of experience more private in character. In the second movement of '*Damayanti*', which the poet termed as *vicitrita muhurta* (variegated moments), one comes upon a clearer acquaintance on the part of the poet, so far as common sense or social criticism and environmental sensibility are concerned. '*Mal-e*' (On the Mall) comprises three singularly piercing, though executed in the vein of a *vers de societe*, studies of the anglicized society in terms of three sheltered promenades. Side by side, the world of living beings of the animal world lying neglected on the periphery of the human sector—is in poems like *Ilis* (Hilsa), *Bang* (Frogs), *Kukur* (Dogs), *Jonaki* (A glow-worm). The Poem '*Frogs*', a collection of gnomes almost, is quoted here *in toto* to show how the poet endeavoured to integrate self-sufficing parts into a whole without being least showy about it all

TWO

The rains have come, and frogs are full of glee.
They sing in chorus, in loud, jubilant voices.

Nothing to fear today. No drought, dearth of norms,
Nor serpent's jaw, nor stones of wanton boys.

Cloud-like the grass thicken : in the fields the lush
waters stand ;
Louder leaps their hour of brief immortality.

They have no necks, but their throats are rich and
swollen ;
And o, what sleek bodies, what cold gem-like eyes ?

Eyes staring upwards, fixed in meditation,
Ecstatic, lidless, like *rishi's* gazing on God.

The rain has ceased, the shadows slant ;
Hymn-like floats their singing, on the slow, attentive air.

Now dies the day in silence, but a sombre drone
Perforates the twilight ; the thin sky leans to listen.

Darkness and rain : and we are warm in bed :
Yet one unwearied phrase mingles in our sleep—

The final *sloka* of the mystic chanting, the croak,
The creak, croak, croak of the last fanatic frog⁴

In such a poem one notices an extension of the romantic precept of tranquillized recollection of emotion or the re-creation of a past event, observation or occasion, as has been confirmed by the poet elsewhere.⁵

Poems composed between 1944-47 came out in book form with *Droupadir-Sadi* (The Sari of Droupadi/1948) where the poet's over-conscious use of language lends the poems an aura of artificiality. Buddhadeva wanted to unfetter Bengali poetry

TWO

As the blind, implacable boat pursued
The drunken kiss of waves and distance.
Sleep came at last an infinite sleep
Broken, twisted, agonized
By the stupid necessity of keeping awake.
And yet, I know, the small house is still there
Calmly of the earth, among sprouting leaves.
At the doorway, in dim light
Dead ancestors crouch and gently confer
In cautious tones about the doubts and fears
That the smooth, impassive clock conceals.
It's right for them : but I, who still have time,
Have not a thought, or skill, or choice
But to leave you, love, in the hand of God.

(*Samarpan/A Parting*)⁶

The above rendering does not bring out the beauty of the original with its artistically pruned pararhymes and refrains. Perturbing is also the long procession of adjectives which are not so glaringly present in the original. But here is perceptible a new turn. The near-Georgian poet is getting ready to proceed through the frugality of Imagism to Symbolism. This is so ardent here that one is tempted to deduce that the history of modern English poetry (Georgian diction → Imagism → Symbolism) repeated itself in this poet. But while probing deeper one finds that the nature of symbolism in this case was Rilkean, and not basically English. Buddhadeva, in the interim, went through Rilke's *Book of Hours* (*Stundenbuch*), *New Poems* (*Neue Gedichte*) *Duino Elegies* (*Duineser Elegien*), *Sonnets to Orpheus* (*Sonette an Orpheus*) and the narrative *Notes of Malte Laurids Brigge* (*Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*). Rilke, from his 'New Poems' on, transmuted himself in *things* (*Dinge*) and thus gave flitting, volatile aspects of life a stable character. For Buddhadeva there was no sculptor like Rodin who moulded Rilke's life and poetry into everlasting patterns. But our poet hewed these shapes from the block of his personal emotions and charged them with a definite quality of Indianness.

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

- 1 It's you I name the goddess. There's nothing,
but it's your's
Moving by secret paths towards far horizons,
Your sleep is what I called the starting point
or Source
Yet should you flick an eyelid,
flowers begin to bloom
- 2 And bright grapes kiss the earth to laughter.
'Rain-cloud,' 'flower,' 'tree'—they lie inert and poor
Until you raise the curtain ; we see, the sight of yours.
The vine entwines our bodies ;
in a sudden splash of colour
Flowers gild the skyline. Thus we possess the
earth and stars.
- 3 Nothing else is saved
But what you secretly
Within your slumber's cave
Work on, transfer,
And make eternal
(Excerpts from *Smritir prati/To Memory*)⁷

The abysmal drives return to the mystic and there the modern occidental looks Indian. Amnesia activates this invocation of Memory as Muse. One can move further and say that the Upanishadic concept of artistic creation—the inextricable relationship between the psyche poised before the creative act and the act of transformation—wonderfully implied in the *Kathopanishad* (5/8) and *Brihadaranyakopanishad* (4/3, 8/14-18)⁸ is also at work here. In this process Buddhadeva has, like Abanindranath Tagore and Ananda Coomaraswami, emphasized the modernistic aspect of the Upanishads, while Rabindranath, in his attempt to release a good poem from its 'biographical bondage' compared it with 'a dewdrop which is perfect integrity that has no filial memory of its parentage'.⁹ There cannot be a work of Art absolutely free to biographical obligation, nor can there be an artist who can entirely escape walking 'through the fateful labyrinth' which the poet has referred to in this book. This coercion between the element of preordained fatedness and the poetic personality is the subject-

TWO

matter of *Je Andhar Alor Adhik*. The profound uncertainty which dominates in our life, symbolized here as the light-defying dark night, is equally the source of creation. And it is a challenging encounter, for this mass of meaningful darkness makes the responsibility of a poet more and more difficult day by day

Nothing is easy, nothing is easy any longer.
Reading, writing, proof-reading, letterwriting, conversation
Whatever for a moment tends to postpone
the day's burden—
As if everything has turned into a debating forest,
A dextrous mountain complicated with substitutes.
(*Dayitver bhar*/The burden of responsibility).

The statement is nothing new, but the accent perhaps is one. The poet considers in two poems the multiple personalities of Rabindranath and Goethe, but again reverts, unaided, to the private recess of his own and then revels in the non-institutional. He does not have recourse to any personal theism. It is the most inward, private and pure chamber of his own personality which he selects as his point of departure and return

Only the personal is holy. A shaded lamp
When evening deepens : darkness spread like a sky
Around the hidden star of a yellow page ;
Or a letter written in the shy half-sleep of midnight,
Slowly, to a distant friend. Do you think that Christ
was a philanthropist ? Or Buddha, a committee chairman.
Hard-working, venerable, loquacious,
Dribbling vain saliva ? Far from the drums and watchmen
Of the wholesale vendors of salvation,
Softly they walk their ways of vagrancy
I say, let go the world, let go where it will.

Be small, inscrutable, be deafened with delight
That half an hour warmly shared with a woman
Can give much more than the helper's huc and cry.

(*Rat tinter sonnet (ek)*/Sonnets for 3 A.M. 1.)¹⁰

The obvious influence of Jivanananda's poem '*Suranjana*', so far as the non-collective inclination of the thinker or the men of action is concerned, does not detract the poet from his claim for originality. The last two lines have been somewhat loosely translated. More faithful, though prosaic, version would have been : 'You will gain much more from the half-an-hour long laziness of a woman than from the bunch of trite information carried enthusiastically by attendants.' The impact of modern painting can be clearly seen in this portraiture of a recumbent woman. To put it more specifically, the influx of motifs from impressionistic paintings into this poem and some other ones gives the book a unique position in modern Bengali poetry. If the author was particularly indebted to any one painter, it was to Matisse, whose 'still life' painting aimed at ornamental partitioning of surfaces. The following excerpt shows its poetic rendering

What *are* you, O apple, green fruit ? Red lips that part
in kissing
Showing anointed teeth, striking the air with lustre !
Or cool, firm *apsara's Konarak's* heaven,, darkend with
rapture
Of an *apsara's* breasts that yield to the hand where sight
is missing ?

(Still life)¹¹

The cycle in the poet's life seems almost complete. He started from the Preraphaelites and at the vision of Impressionistic perception he came to rest : the connexion, hence, between painting and poetry can be taken as an identifying trait. Furthermore, one might argue that non-poetical subjectmatter of poetry remained unconsidered up to this point. Dogs, for example, in *Damayanti*, were mere dogs, awaiting an emotional charge, but in themselves something unpoetic, themselves. But 'the dog' in this book is the 'coalescence of subject and object'

Do you then fancy I will make
Fantastic flute-like music for your sake
And paint your gazelle-eyes with memory !

TWO

Only half is true, I know a nymph you are,
Cast away from heaven. But not for me to tear
You charmed, accustomed veil. Not yet enough a poet, I.
(*Kono Kukurer Prati/To a dog*)¹²

Up till this point it was feasible to watch Buddhadeva's craftsmanship as something extrinsically, though brilliantly, carried out on poetry. But the best poems do not exhibit any such effort. Here the craftsmanship operates from inside, in conformity with the theme at the core, the essential, as Rilke would have put it. and thereby the poet arrived at his desired goal.

In his next book of poems, *Marche-pada Pereker Gan* (Songs of a rust-coloured Spike/1966), the poet is equally capable of seizing the essence of a mood, particularly when the same is of experience awaiting artistic transformation. The rust-coloured spike symbolizes at the same time the declining physical vitality and the naked edge of the poetic sensitivity. Actually the poems or 'songs' are product of this dichotomous state of body and mind. The poet accepts his aloneness—in view of 'the death of all the friends' and the death of nature and from this too emanates a stream of poems replete with an element of tempered pathos. A subtle note of repatriation¹³ is also imbued there

At the vague rainy night lies abandoned on the pavement
The alien heart
Tactile, slowly sagacious.

(*Bhindeshi/The alien*)

This gradually sagacious, though alien, heart is reflected in the last poetry of Buddhadeva. This poetry, *Ekdin : Chiradin* (A day: Forever/1971) and *Swagata Viday* (Welcome, Farewell/1971), no exception, is chiefly repetitive. It reiterates its refusals to compromise with the outside force. The panorama widens itself and the difference between the indigenous and the international tends to dissolve. 'Poems in prose/Travelogue/Fantasy/Fable',¹⁴ that is how it has been described. This may not be a statement near to the complete truth. In fact, the poet's idiom is no longer as taut as before. The reader is constantly

reminded of the fact that the poet was trying to renew his personality. In this process, Buddhadeva comes to terms with a theme which he wants to reach *via* Baudelaire : the amoral. Here is an example to be remembered for its indelible Baudelairean quality

Evening comes to the city, the others slink back home ;
 Streetlamps wink them, the smell of their lane gives
courage ;

Again on firm grounds the sisters take their stand
 To be scorched in the flames of a lesser hunger
(*Beshyar mrityu/Death of a whore*)¹⁶

Concurrently runs a nostalgic, almost deliberately domesticated sentiment, in search of moorings. But the amoral accent, which was already there, demands more. Actually speaking, what seems to be home-spun is nothing but a projection of the 'anti-self' and there again the texture shows the underlying cravings for experiences pertaining to the cult of flesh. And here again Baudelaire is preferred to D. H. Lawrence. For it is not the ecstasy but the elective affinity which engages our poet. One should, at this point, explore congeniality more here rather than think in terms of a blind imitation on Buddhadeva's part. Buddhadeva's Bengali renderings of 112 poems of *Fleurs du Mal* (*Flowers of Evil*) confirm this kinship between the two poets, and at the same time enrich Bengali poetry enormously¹⁶. This is not the place to discuss the role and limits of translation, particularly of poetry. One can recollect in this connexion the significant maxim that a translator of prose is a slave, while that of poetry is a sovereign regarding the modes of their respective relations to the originals. Buddhadeva has often wrongly been accused of having distorted Baudelaire owing to his lack of French. This kind of accusation may sound right, if only superficially. But Buddhadeva succeeded in creating a parallel world which he left as a deathless legacy for the poets of sixties and later.¹⁷ It has been duly suggested that a new dandyism and advent of hitherto neglected characters are the two features which Buddhadeva added to the given corpus of Bengali poetry *via* Baudelaire. His *Charles Baudelaire : tanr*

kavita (Charles Baudelaire : his poems/1961) definitely proves that Baudelaire and Buddhadeva are inseparable.

Buddhadeva's rendering of Rilke in '*Rainer Maria Rilke Kavita*' (1970) points towards the other end of the former's psyche and personality : a ceaseless search for an unassailable serenity and depersonalization. It has already been pointed out in connexion with *Je Andhar Alor Adhik* that Buddhadeva encountered Rilke in an attempt to dispel the subject-object disparity. His renderings stand, despite certain cases of vagrant departure, as evidence of the Bengali poet's self-renewal. Furthermore, they are a conscious attempt to deepen and widen the nuances of the receptor language, to wipe off the limitations of the latter.¹⁸ In this process Buddhadeva actually evolves an idiom which has been described by certain conventional critics as un-Bengali. In fact, he has never, for a moment, digressed from the basic *structure* of Bengali. At times the *texture* he created seems too rich and varied, to lend the superstructure a unitive character. The same observation applies to Buddhadeva's creative version of *Hoelderliner Kavita* (1967). The translations are sometimes stilted and even a false apprehension on the part of the translator of Hoelderlin's *Kunstwollen* (artistic intention) mars the grace and greatness of the original in renderings like *Heiperioner adrister gan* (Hyperions Schicksaalslied) or *Adrister prati* (An die Parzen) are not translucently clear. But they all make an imaginative debut and therein lies the success of the poet who could be, otherwise, termed a transcreator. Buddhadeva's translations from Ezra Pound, e.e. Cummings, Wallace Stevens and Boris Pasternak, all included in the third edition of *Buddhadeva Basur Srestha Kavita* (Buddhadeva Bose's Best Poems/1969) show his struggling drives at the poetic reincarnation. Similarly his translations from classical Indian literature, specifically from *Kalidaser Meghaduta* (1957), shows clearly the characterization of the poet-translator. Buddhadeva's Kalidasa is neither Dwijendranath Thakur's nor Rajsekhar Bose's : it is poised between attachment and detachment : a risky, yet commendable, undertaking. The translator handles the Sanskrit metre '*Mandakranta*', as skilfully as Rabindranath and Satyendranath Datta, in conformity with breath-pause allowed in the Bengali tongue. Kalidasa in *Uttarmegh* is more mature

than in *Purvamegh* ; so is his Bengali translator. This is because the romantic identification of the poet-translator becomes complete there. A twentieth-century subjective attitude sparkles through the second part of the translation. There is no basic qualitative difference between the translator of Baudelaire and that of Kalidasa. A critic righteously asserts, 'It is exciting to observe how poets like Buddhadeva and Jivanananda, charged with memories of Sanskrit literature, transform elements gathered from poets of the Western world. The death-wish of Keats becomes an almost religious yearning in Jivanananda, Baudelaire's rag-picker thirsts for God instead of wine in a Buddhadeva poem.'¹⁹

This shows also that Buddhadeva as a poet and Buddhadeva as a translator of poetry are the same person, be it in the Western or Indian setting. Buddhadeva's poetry for children does not belong to an isolated compartment. His translations from Hans Christian Anderson (1935) contributed largely to his juvenile poetry. In Anderson the Bengali translator confronted 'an artist, not a mere juvenile literature, nor merely a compiler or oral literature, a real inventor, with originality.'²⁰ The world of fantasy and inventive moods one comes across in Buddhadeva's poems for children in *Baromaser Chada* (Six Seasons' Nursery Rhymes/ 1956) is akin to the fairy-tale kingdom of Anderson. The figures are sometime similar in their enterprising quality. If Buddhadeva's figures are more heedless of danger it is because of the author's perpetual sense of his own Bengali locus. The same applies to the extent and nature of author's debt to Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson's poetry for children exerts its influence on Buddhadeva's. But the latter would never transgress his local limitations. He would be happy to add a note of uneasiness related to these well-defined frontiers of his activity. For, the author himself admits, 'The spirit of an innate truth exists within the Western way of life, and therefore has been reflected in literature in a lovely way : for this spirit is rather contrived, rootless fancy or wish-fulfilment.'²¹ Hence, Buddhadeva's poems, as well as prose pieces, for children, never flinch away from the environmental. The poet's use of gliding para rhymes and echo-words is astounding. This technical smartness reveals profundity which appeals to the adult reader too. In other words, these poems are equally

TWO

meant for listeners who are children and readers who are grown up. The borderline between the two is not fixed. In Buddhadeva's last poems for children the two form a bold unison. The poem entitled *Sabuj bagan* (A green garden),²² for instance, composed shortly before his death, brings out an uncanny landscape of soul, enchanting for the grown-up and the children alike : a cold country plunged into a long pitch-black night, a poet without slumber, a wind tearing dry leaves out of the woods with its wolf-like paws.

'Has the outer form tarnished the inner glow of Buddhadeva's poetry or *vice versa*?' This query is posed by Jivanananda Das.²³ One might answer that the technique of his poetry engaged itself from the very outset on the quest for the *essence* of poetry. It is no preordained philosophy of life which our poet ever adhered to. That does not necessarily imply that he did not offer a point of view. At times he would try with it in such a way that at his most sprightly as *observation* emerges. To him, like Ingmar Bergman, the artist is a magician who is expected to spell out something which he takes to be truth and communicate it. Therein lurks the essence of Buddhadeva's poetry.

THREE

...to erect impressions into laws...

BUDDHADEVA as a literary critic and as a creative artist is one and the same person. For him the functional role of literary criticism is not basically different than that of artistic exploration. As a critic, therefore, he was at times immensely mild-mannered, almost seemingly unassuming, and at times a bellicose presence, not at all subduing his arrogance, driving on and demanding. Both of these modes aim at a certain revelation. In both the cases he is voluntarily deprived of power to injure. A self-imposed discipline is seen throughout his critical speculations and verdicts. It is the relationship between conviction and a sense of order which can be called the major characteristic of his literary criticism. 'Love requiring a language' is the motto he follows. In this context love and language correspond to energy and coherence respectively.

It was through Rabindranath, or the study of Rabindranath, that he found his own critical accent. In this connexion he clearly says, 'The best outcome of Tagore criticism is felt in the sphere of successful Bengali *belles-lettres* : which is neither biography nor criticism and yet comprising features and ingredients of both.'¹ This is a comment made in an attempt to appraise Tagore's *biographia literaria* particularly by Ajitkumar Chakravarty, Pramathanath Bishi and Prabhatkumar Mukhopadhyay. The fourth name of the list can be his. One can say that Buddha-deva's criticism of Tagore, consistently spread over a span over three decades, is basically belletristic in its character. It excels in buoyancy, despises footnotes and annotations, skips the the usual scholarly clichés.² Over the forties he discerns a latent scholastic bent in his personality, tries to employ and conceal it carefully, comes gradually to terms with it which one notices in his excellent editions of *Meghaduta*, *Baudelaire* and *Mahabha-*

THREE

rata. But the fundamental tendency remains in his domain as a personal essayist who would never like wearing the garb of a learned personality.

The following comments on Rabindranath amply show Budhadhadeva's leanings in this direction

- 1 Rabindranath Tagore is a phenomenon. If Nature, manifest in the even light of the sun, forsook the forms of fields and hills and trees, and *flowered in words*, that indeed, were he. There has not been a greater literary force, or a greater force, expressing itself in literature.^{3a}
- 2 I know then that the Nature meant something to him which it will never mean to me, that however much we may quarrel with his view of the world, we cannot deny the validity of the experience which produced it. I also knew that Tagore's God existed—for him—the God whom he called 'the enchanter of the heart', and who in his works may be seen growing out of another and an early enchantress, beautiful, mysterious and terrible—his Muse, the goddess of poetry. If Tagore's God interested us no longer, his poetry should interest us more, and the *best of his poetry is so good that it might induce us to take his God for granted—for the time being*.^{3b}

In both the citations one encounters a mind, intrigued by problems pertaining to elective affinity, articulating a judgement based on delightful personal observations. In fact, it is the *inductive* mode of inference which takes the place of the reasonably calculated *deductive*. The critic's appreciative joy knows no bound and yet this somewhere observes a certain balance or norm. The reader is challenged, moreover, to read between the lines and to notice the author's veiled disapprovals. In the first extract there is obviously an appreciation of Tagore's immense poetic genius and at the same time a note of caution: as if Tagore's genius is more *naive* than sentimental, more timeless than contemporary. In the second excerpt the critic risks the logical fallacy of begging the question and almost like Goethe in the latter's decision on the intrinsic beauty of Indian literature,

separates the artistic value from the values at large, i.e., the total outlook of the poet. It sounds like a conclusion that derives from a subjective bias. But a deeper investigation suggests just the contrary. The critic is too much aware of the pitfalls of insensitive academically 'objective' criticism and therefore takes as much time as possible before he gives his well-weighed opinion. The object of criticism is thus not victimized and also not unnecessarily spared. The critic's concessions and doubts are thus adjusted to each other in a judgement which inspires and instructs us much more than one from a pseudo-deductive, petrified piece of criticism.

It is no doubt Rabindranath's constructive strain of criticism which his successor made his own. And, therefore, Buddhadeva's portraits of Rabindranath, like Peter Haertling's *Hoelderlin*, are constructive and perceptive attempts towards identification on the part of the portrait-maker with his subject-matter and, if need be, an ultimate warm withdrawal from the same.

Buddhadeva's critical insight is first discernible in an impressionistically written survey of Modern Bengali literature, *An Acre of Green Grass* (1948), published the year following Indian Independence; it is divided into six sections, namely, Rabindranath, Pramatha Chaudhuri, Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, Nazrul Islam, Modern Bengali poetry and Modern Bengali Prose. These divisions too tend to look fortuitous. Considering the fact that the critic-cum-creative artist wants to present an intimate view of the *Zeitgeist* of Modernity occasioned and opposed by Rabindranath, the reader comes sooner or later to a conclusion that the former gives his evidence only as pure corroboration of a literary situation already appraised by himself. The very title of the book is Yeatsian and is not free of Yeats' flair for giving a private feeling an air of legislation.

Here is an obvious example

Saratchandra, denuded of orchestral complications, and demanding of the reader nothing but the accustomed responses of domestic life, transforms the Master's (Tagore's) 'subtle underflow' to more tangible and readily identifiable spasms, thus inviting the reader to an emo-

THREE

tional fancy fair where the excitement of adventure is combined with the security of a picnic.⁴

The apathy, albeit couched in an ornate language, does not remain concealed. A presupposition is put forward here as an unverified conclusion. About twelve years later Buddhadeva took up this stand again, although this time he tried to defend Saratchandra

A Bengali born professor living in England permitted himself to say in print that Saratchandra Chatterji, the Bengali novelist, merely imitated cheap English novels. The truth is, though, that Saratchandra, who received no college education, was a very small reader of English novels, whether cheap or elevated.⁵

The premises are misleading here. J. C. Ghosh, the 'Bengali born professor', is not entirely wrong in maintaining that Saratchandra imitated cheap English novels. Saratchandra, in fact, read even minor novelists like Henry Wood and the impact is clearly felt even in his short stories like '*Abhagir Swarga*' (Abhagi's paradise). A closer scrutiny discloses that he read, let alone Victorian novels, even Naturalist authors like Flaubert and Maupassant of French School, and wanted to take lessons from Tolstoy. But the lack of this information to Buddhadeva does not intrinsically falsify his observation regarding Saratchandra who has created a home-spun design for his readership, denuded of any worldview.

Often Buddhadeva was right in articulating his 'bias', because of the validity or genuineness of his feeling. His estimation, for instance, of what is called Indo-Anglian poetry today, though challenged by banner-bearers of the movement, deserves the utmost attention,

As for the present day Indo-Anglians, they are earnest and not without talent, but it is difficult to see how they can develop as poets in a language which they have learnt from books and seldom hear spoken in the streets and

even in their own homes, and whose two great sources lie beyond the seven seas... As late as 1937, Yeats reminded Indian writers that no man can think or write with music and vigour except in his mother tongue! To the great majority of Indian this admonition was unnecessary, but the interpid few who left it unheeded do not yet realise that Indo-Anglian poetry is a blind alley, lined with curio-shops, leading nowhere.⁶

Most of our contemporary critics would encourage this lively argumentation. The conversion of something of an external nature into the organic tissue of the Indian English is a doubtful venture. Those who would not agree with the critic would do so because of their involvement in the trade. In Buddhadeva's case also one expects a logic chiefly stemming from his life-long engagement with Bengali language, despite his being well-versed in continental literature. Sometimes this involvement urged him to err while taking a close-up view, as here

As for the oral tradition, it is just dead and it continues in the deadness; nothing new has come out of it in the last two hundred years, and hosts of anthropologists and sociologists will be able to squeeze a drop of real poetry out of its inert agglomeration.⁷

This kind of statement would legitimately draw voices of dissent from his contemporary writers—shorn of any anthropological or sociological bias—who maintain that the oral tradition is the most vital source for the writers of modern India.⁸ Apart from the fact that the chance meeting between Dinesh Chandra Sen and Chandrakumar De, a compiler of Bengali folktales and the foundation of the Bengali studies in Calcutta University as an academic discipline coincided in 1919, there are abundant testimonies, including that from the role of Rabindranath, to show how many times, in the course of last five decades, the established line of dichotomy between the floating and the fixed, the oral and the written, has become creatively blurred. Even Buddhadeva himself, in his constant endeavour to absorb 'spoken'

THREE

speech-patterns and ethnic archetypes in his fiction, contradicts his theory. But this kind of stray, though intense, conviction of our author does not dent his insight as a critic. What one should take into account is his anti-conventional thrust as also in his piece of verdict on Michael Madhusudan Datta⁹—and his capacity to look with a fresh, unhackneyed view at a time-honoured object.

Buddhadeva's contribution to Bengali criticism is at its best particularly when he attempts a comparative scale of judgement. In this his predecessor was Tagore. It was in 1908 that Tagore spelled out the idea of comparative literature and warned us not to deem literature as a preserve of any particular nation ; on the contrary, he urged 'One should scan the unitive empathy in the variegated literary creations', and concluded, 'the world is neither your private piece of land nor mine. To take it otherwise would be a rustic approach. Literature, accordingly, is neither my preserve, nor yours, nor anybody else's.'¹⁰

Long before holding the chair of comparative literature at Jadavpur University, Buddhadeva took this cue from Tagore. His bold attempts to cultivate Tagore's concept of World-literature are comparable only to those of his two top-ranking contemporaries, Sudhindranath Datta and Bishnu De. His *role* in comparative literature lies somewhere between the other two referred to. Sudhindranath's comparative reviews show the vast range of his scholarship, posing problems for common readers. His application of Freudian criteria or of the Aristotelian theistic principle in evaluating the mental make-up of Tagore¹¹ border rather on rashness. Bishnu De's comparison of Goethe and Tagore,¹² based on the author's Marxist dialectical mode of thought, appears more acceptable because he does not disregard the value of literary genres as such. Buddhadeva, though intent on underlining the greatness of Tagore by placing his name near the equally illustrious galaxy of great poets, was more cautious than De and Datta in drawing analogies. Here is an example

In Tagore there is no cosmic scheme like in Dante or Goethe, nor a gallery of deathless characters as in

Shakespeare. Nor does Tagore's syntax lines up like Milton's.¹³

Through these negations he almost imperceptibly reached his goal to show Tagore in his uniqueness and entirety. Buddhadeva as a comparatist rarely errs in his intricate task. He seldom delocalizes any author from his native soil and at the same time modestly tries to correlate him with the given corpus of world literature, combining the 'horizontal' and the 'vertical' approaches of the comparative mode of criticism.

The influence of the cult of *l'art pour l'art* (Gautier) or 'Art for Art's sake' (Pater) on Buddhadeva's art of criticism is an established fact. True, he was not unaware of the cultural patterns which are bound to penetrate a work of art or literature. But for him the most precious legacy of mankind lies in a literary masterpiece which, a complex product of multiple milieux as it might be, is an end-in-itself. In this assessment of Tagore's genius,¹⁴ Sudhindranath Datta was strongly influenced by Taine's theory of *milieu*. Buddhadeva, on the other hand, is in favour of watching the solitary world-poet,¹⁵ independent of his social or family background. His main objective is to do proper justice to the poet himself without overrating the extraneous influences. In all this he struck a balance between innate leanings and sanity. He did this with a passionate accuracy which is not to be experienced in any other modern Bengali critic. As a critic, therefore, he broke fresh ground and created a new norm, which was essentially a literary one. It should be mentioned here that it was Buddhadeva who, alone amongst all his practising colleagues, launched a systematic drive to collect and arrange the terminology of literary criticism and to find their equivalent expressions in Bengali.¹⁶ In doing this, he gleaned extensively from the synonymous terminology coined by Rabindranath, Rajsekhar Bose, Atulchandra Gupta and Sudhindranath Datta, along with others less famous. He made his own suggestions and the very fact that most of these suggestions have entered the vocabulary commonly used by the present day young writers prove their worth. Buddhadeva took into consideration the relevance of the Practical Criticism of I. A. Richards without mindlessly imitating it. Merely

THREE

to have made an effort in this direction claims unreserved praise. And that the critic succeeded in this endeavour shows that he set a standard of criticism in Bengali which, if not later retained, does not thereby disqualify him.

Buddhadeva's stupendous *Mahabharater Katha* (On the Mahabharata/1974) is a masterpiece of Speculative and Practical Criticism. In this work the author went beyond the so-called limits set by 'literary' criticism and took us into a field of research which he tackled perhaps in a more perceptive way than any of his predecessors. In preparing this volume he was able to draw on the investigations in this area by Indian and European Indologists. What he added to their knowledge was his understanding, supported by a very deep and wide comparative bias. Admittedly, he did not evaluate the *Mahabharata* as an isolated literary phenomenon. And yet in his analyses of the character of Krishna, Yudhisthir and Droupadi, the accent remained essentially aesthetic. They appeared to him in long run, in their authentic entirety of 'round characters', without being overburdened by other than literary predispositions. One might very well say, that, despite the broadening inherent in comparative literary criticism, he did not make literature subserve of knowledge. The whole study actually emerged as a poetic vision, expressed as early as 1959, in his prefatory note to the poem '*Versatility*', based on the *Mahabharata*

Arjun, a hero of the *Mahabharata*, is here regarded as archetype of the versatile artist who makes many conquests, but, lacking a singleness of purpose, cannot escape a sense of frustration. Like Ulysses, Arjun is a habitual exile and wanderer; he is warrior, lover, and dancer, a man of many talents able to disguise himself as an ascetic Brahman or a ladies' maid. Concluding chapters of the *Mahabharata* describe the break-up of a whole civilization and the last "Great Exit" of the Pandavas, Arjun's clan. They do not linger to enjoy the fruits of their work and war; with their common wife, Droupadi, depart for hereafter. This journey takes the form of an ascent of the Himalayas. . . .¹⁷

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

This vision was later enlarged in his study of the subject. It depicts the quest of a versatile artist for versatile artists in life. It shows once more the poet and the critic an inextricably *one* person, the two selves crossing in a continuous series of penetrations, without impinging on each other.

FOUR

The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing

—PASCAL

IT WOULD BE interesting to examine further the nature of Buddhadeva's personal essays and the characteristics of his prose style which pervades his discursive writing. Buddhadeva did not recognize any artificially drawn line between prose of feeling and prose of thought. In other words there is no 'dissociation of sensibility' in his writings, prose or poetry. That does not diminish his importance as a modern writer. For one thing, he was in perpetual search for an emotive totality which eludes philosophical generalizations. That is why none of his personal essays raises series of epistemological notions as Montaigne's '*To philosophize is to know how to die*'. In his 'loose sallies of the mind' he stood much closer to Charles Lamb, a favourite of Tagore's and his.¹ It is style, often slanting towards stylization, which is his mainstay. Pater's dictum that the 'chief stimulus of a good style is full, rich, complex matter to grapple with' has no appeal for him. It is initially the style which sets the matter going and brings a cluster of associations that matter.

It is not the *Prabhusammita* (authoritative) style of Bankim or Birbal, but a pleasant fusion of *Suhritsammita* (friendly) and *Kantasammita* (suiting the beloved) style which intrigued him. In his preference for eighteen-year-old Tagore while writing the *travelogue* entitled *Europe-Pravasir Patra* (Letters From an Alien in Europe) he showed this inclination.

An air of joyous freedom pervades these letters, freedom from the cold formality of *Sadhubhasa*: there is in them a ripple of bright waters, a sunny playfulness of young leaves.²

This reminds one of Tagore's description of Lamb's prose. It is the animate warmth which Buddhadeva espoused. The

reader's acquaintance with it does not insist on any preparedness on the former's part. Actually, starting from his '*Hathat Alor Jhalkani*' (A Spray of Light/1935) through the critical sketches in '*Kaler Putul*' (The Puppets of Time/1946) to the travelogue '*Japani Journal*' (Journals of Japan/1961) the author tends to show how nimble his prose can be. The reader, in that process of comprehension, is made to forget the richness of equipment the author has. Buddhadeva disentangles completely himself from the influences of *Sadhubhasa* after 1930.³ It is actually from this period on that he comes to grips with the medium of personal prose. A word of caution may not be out of place here. Buddhadeva's personal essay, which has been often designated with the help of the blanket-term *belles-lettres*, is utterly different in quality and tenor from what is called *ramya racana* which provides the reader with trivial rambling excursions. To put it more specifically, *byaktigata racana* (personal essay) gently takes to the air and revels in soaring higher and higher, shunning the leaden weight of its given subject, while *ramya racana* (entertaining essay) triflingly rotates around its mundane axis with a view to please an average audience. The masters of the former composition are Buddhadeva Bose, Ajit Datta, Parimal Ray, 'Indrajit' and Bimalaprasad Mukhopadhyay, while Saiyad Muztaba Adi, 'Jajabar', 'Rupadarshi', and perhaps 'Ranjan' represent the other. Buddhadeva's *byaktigata racana* surpasses all the others in its quality of immaculate prose. His nearest European equivalent is Franz Tumlér⁴ who gives similar importance to the triple relationship of language-reflection-subject-matter. With Tumlér and Buddhadeva each reflection—as Rudolf Hartung aptly puts it about Tumlér—a subject-matter is concurrently a reflection on language. Both were basically concerned about the making of prose, or, how prose emerges. Both attached equal regard to a lyrical atmosphere as a prime force and yet sustained their prose from within autonomously. Buddhadeva's *byaktigata* compositions, for example, like *Uttartiris* (On the wrong side of thirty), *Bado restar chhoto flat* (The small apartment on the big road), *Black out, Professor, pada* (Reading books), *Katha O Kathak* (The Word and the Narrator), *Dakghar* (The Post-office), *Sportser biruddhe* (Against sports), *Makeuper biruddhe* (Against

FOUR

the use of make-up), *Adda* (Indulging in idle talk), *Sabcheye dukkher du-ghanta* (The most disastrous two hours), *Noakhali*⁵ are essays which have this quality about them. The whole gamut of subjects dwelt on is at first veiled, and then allowed to come into view. The first essay (1942) apparently lauds youth but covertly, with literary allusions to Shakespeare, the English Romantics and Rabindranath, worships age which presuppose the wisdom to look at life in an unperturbed way. The last essay (1947) ends in a praise, like a hymn, for Mahatma Gandhi for his daring mission in the riot-ridden village of Noakhali. In both of these essays, the themes, by and large, gather pace to strike a position in an extraordinarily unassuming way. The narrator unlocked his heart and yet remained unidentifiable. Humour acts all through as a saving grace. In *Sabcheye dukkher du-ghanta* (1945) the most commonplace experience with a hair-dresser serves as the plea for a perspective that transcends all. *Pada* (1939) is a study of that habit of studying and the essayist strikes an agreeable balance between Montaigne and Bacon writing on the same subject.

'A poet's prose is like the touchstone of his poetry' (*'gadyam kavinam nikasam badanti'*/*Baman*) is a celebrated Sanskrit maxim. Buddhadeva's prose does not only show the virtue of his poetry, but something more. Perhaps it establishes him more as a superb prose writer than as a poet. For Buddhadeva let his prose compete with his poetry and win. Throughout his career as an artist in prose he was profoundly concerned in creating scopes for experimental devices and renewing the given characteristics of the Bengali language. Almost at every juncture he disturbed the academic establishment as also the anti-establishment writers by adducing his observations in favour of his experimentation. But when he told scholars that the presence of the Verb *be* at the end of the sentence denotes the limitation of the Hindi language, he did not sound parochial, because he wanted to release the Indian languages from the conventional grammatical trammels.⁶ He provoked young writers of Bengal by telling them that he wanted to free Bengali from the verbal root of '*Kri*' (to do) and that, unlike English, French or German, his mother-tongue lacks proper expressions for 'the one whom I love' and

'the one who loves me'. In the same connexion he said that his aim was to dynamize, like a new currency, the words that are absolutely outworn.⁷ These remarks may be rejected as bravadoes, but they contain an element of truth. Buddhadeva banished the connecting copula and final verbs to reach his target in the shortest possible time. He charged the overused words with a skill that gives them a brand-new look. But this is not where he stopped. He made his discourse complicated with *parenthesis* and *inversions*.⁸ According to an academic school of critics, he nearly violated the structure of the Bengali language—an observation that is manifestly unjust. Buddhadeva did all this with a sense of proportion and thus the provocation was justified. Naturally the grafting of the English syntax on to the Bengali language may appear, if looked at chauvinistically, liable to cause damage. But a closer examination shows that the author's sole aim is to enrich Bengali with a greater unity which is complex, yet correct. It seems that the author wants to introduce the elements of harmony into the melodious patterns of the Bengali language without marring the basic character of the latter. He riddled the relationship between *protasis* and *apodosis* of a sentence, at times, by way of proliferating, breaking off in speech (*aposis-opesis*), particularly towards the end of his literary career. He tried to acquaint himself with Noam Chomsky's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965)⁹ and tried his hand, reinforced by the latter, at the *deep structure* of a sentence which is not devoid of a surface-structure. The dichotomies between kernel and complex sentences, between the syntactic and the semantic tend to dissolve. It would be futile to suggest that Buddhadeva's claim as a linguist was a formidable one. His debt to Chomsky is a superficial one. What he found in Chomsky was a vague corroboration of his belief that a sentence can be simple and complex in its organic unity, which can easily be broken into meaningful components. Here is an example, in an almost literal rendering, from his later prose

We were happy then, more youthful and carefree :
therefore we could let our Muse win her victory rather
easily ; did not probe enough as to the nature of the
vast and complex law-suit, handed down from centuries

FOUR

to centuries in history, brought against her—not only against poetry, but against what is understood by Art and Culture, at times against higher education and refined taste—which was first (what can be derived from the verbal process available to us) conducted about two thousand five hundred years ago by none other than Plato himself, the progenitor of the entire Western civilization.¹⁰

Here is a sensitive mind thinking aloud, accurate and conscientious, intent on allowing each shade of expression its due importance. The nuances are punctuated meticulously and do not disturb the desired whole.

Jespersen's description of loan-words as 'milestones of philology' can be aptly applied to the later prose of Buddhadeva. Derivative speech-patterns are visible, sometimes with a sort of vehemence, in this prose where frequency becomes the criterion and not the density. He is more and more for a flexible vocabulary. Flexibility in this context does not only involve the retention of the words of the donor languages *in toto* but also their natural integration into the receptor language. Here is an illustration from a reminiscence in the form of a reportage

Dhākā viśvavidyālay (1928)*

- 1 *lambā corridor gambhūr, ṭhāṇḍā snigdha boier*
gandhē bharā library, common/room śabdāmukhar
phenil, classe bose kakhono āse jhimuni,
kakhono kono sahapāṭhinīr cokh cāñcal,ār
 5 *kakhono ek biśāl śabdhatār phānke-phānke*
cordeliar ati komal kanthasvar śudhu cūiye paḍe,
ekṭā bhāri manthar māler train mandākrāntār upor diye
gaḍiye-gaḍiye cole jāy, bāire belā padonta
ār āj śunchi biddvasta sei vidyāpīṭh sab
 10 *minār lutie podlo mātite, sab boi bhasmībhūta hayto,*
prāntarguli kabarer mati hān kore āche—
jouvan ār swādhin mon ār sundar mahān prācīnatāke
grās korbār jonye
satyi? eki satyi hote pāre?

* See, footnote at the bottom of this chapter.

A roughly literal rendering

The long corridor, magnanimous, the library charged with the cool, soothing aroma of books, the common room echoing with foaminess. Sometimes drowsiness in the classroom, sometimes the fickle glance of a classmate, sometimes tricklings of Cordelia's vocal thrill through a vast absence of sound. Drawlingly passes by a loaded goods train, the time of the day declining over there.

And now one hears that the seat of learning is utterly perished. All the minarets have crumbled into ruins, possibly all the books turned into ashes, postures gaping like cemeteries to devour youth and unfettered minds, beautiful and majestic heritage.

True? Can it be true?¹¹

The underlined words denote the direct debt from the donor-languages shown below, while those in italics indicate the assimilation. And it is the second category that intrigues us. The distribution of attributes and transferred epithets in lines 1, 5 and 12—now on either sides of the nominative and now in the form of synaesthesia—are characteristically English. The deliberate confusion of adjectives of nominal power and adverbial phrases in the whole passage, and especially in the 12th line, is typically French, a knowledge of which the author, with his direct acquaintance with Pascal and Baudelaire, exhibits here, without marring the innate genius of the receptor-language. The elliptical style of the lines 8, 10 and 14 are derivative, Joycean in character. But this kind of derivation strengthens the basic Bengali pattern of Subject-Object-Verb. The tendency in Bengali to drop obvious verb-stem is here parallel with parenthetic word-order of modern English.

Another aspect draws our attention here. Most of the Sanskrit or *tatsama* words in the text are imbued with shades which would hardly receive the sanction of a Sanskrit scholar. For instance the attribute 'gambhīr' has an entirely different connotation here, implying 'something very agreeable'. Similarly, a Sanskritist would strongly object to the pronounced inappropriateness of the epithet

FOUR

'singdha'. 'Mandākrāntā' the exalted Sanskrit metre, assumes an entirely different nuance here.

The upshot is that Buddhadeva's prose displays a courage and boldness which does not deny the genius of the Bengali language. It is the inexhaustible pliability of prose which is intended and attained here. It has not been put aside by conservative grammarians as *asyntactical* or something defying the common usage. By making this an adequate tool for the prose of feeling and of thought the author has added a dimension to the language which was not there before.

corridor = E<F<I
library = E<M.E<F<L
common = E<M.E
room = E<O.E<O.F
cordelia = SH.<L
train = E<M.E<O.F
minar = PA.
kabar = PA

FIVE

The Portrait of an Artist.....

— JAMES JOYCE

BUDDHADEVA the story-teller was no less competent than Buddhadeva the poet or critic. The term 'poetic' which has been persistently attached to his fiction by critics has, of course, an element of stigma about it. But this labelling has often originated from the absence of awareness that poetry has played a dominant part in the making of fiction from its very beginnings. Buddhadeva has never shown any discontent about the use of this term, because he consistently delights in blurring the line of demarcation between poetry and fiction. His longish narrative poems like *Bideshini* (The woman of a foreign land)¹ and *Bandhu* (The friend)² clearly invade, like Tagore's prose poems of the last decade, the domain of realism with quasi-poetical feature. In fact in all his novels and short stories he courageously attempted to lift the ban on poetry.

Virginia Woolf's description of the Novel as a mixed form fits Buddhadeva's novels very well. For his novels are a medley of all the genres. Buddhadeva extends his unifying urge at times further and prepares a play out of the *texture* of his novels, or creates a so-called form which could be called *Nabyopanyas*. The question put by conventional critics as to how much of life was revealed and how much was refracted in his novels is based on the wrong presupposition that Buddhadeva failed in both. What he actually aimed at was revelation and refraction both together. His novels exemplify, therefore, indulgences in legitimate sentimentalism and in behavioral manners. He combined the study of psyche and situation. In doing this, he both repeated and revised the devices of the 18th Century English novel which derived from letter-writing, biographies and journalism. He resorted to an epistolary style and memoirs in order to gauge the

FIVE

inner moods which, to his mind, constitute the tissue of reality. With all his abhorrence of naturalism, he records details around him with a unique alertness. He plunges and lays out at full length, searches for a subjective totality in the light of D. H. Lawrence and Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Thomas Mann, James Joyce and Rabindranath, to acquire, the unflinching vision of a man who is *essentially* an artist.

The *theme* that runs through all his novels and short stories is the *Portrait of an artist*. As inevitable corollaries the *leitmotifs* and tendencies that recur are

- 1 The dichotomy of art and life
- 2 The counterpoint between love and death
- 3 The preoccupation with death which lends a look of powerful morbidity
- 4 The repeated returns to Nature to renew the solipsistic attitudes
- 5 A world-view transcending local boundaries

The novels of his formative years are attuned more, at the expense of irritating narrow-minded critics, to the common reader's taste, than are his later ones. The artist here is not yet ready to give up the attractions and diversions of life for the sake of his own vocation. In *Sada* (The Response/1930) the protagonist Sagar is unable to break the umbilical cord. His childhood and adolescence are filled with an attachment with his mother who symbolises a stable refuge amidst the flux of life. His basic aloneness increases, in character and density, with the dislodgement of this fixed refuge as he grows in years. The substitutes, Manimala and Lakshmi, fail to satisfy his desires. Sagar precipitates his death *through* suicide. In fact, the adequate *medium* of death is more important to him than death itself. He equates life with death and pines for an escape into life, at the penultimate point, before *dénouement*, in, as Auden says, the pure existence

Throughout the whole day Sagar's mind was filled with despondency. He moved twice along the margin of the river, in long strides. He perceived something which

he never did before. In the extent of physical exertion his face was beaming with a kind of glow of health. Under the smooth skin of his hands there was blood moving through the vessel of small veins. He felt the very *tenor* of their movement. It struck Sagar that even Tajmahal does not bear such a splendid beauty as a healthy and well-proportioned human physique.³

One hardly comes across such a *breadth* of robust feeling, or call it sentiment, even in Jivanananda Das's novel *Malyavan* which deals with the same problem of a lonesome soul. This sentimentalism, shorn of sentimentality, is almost sculpturesque. The five parts of the novel, technically speaking, have an assigned *purpose*, viz., the mature delineation of an immature artist. Buddhadeva's next work, *Akarmanya* (The Disabled/1931), turned down by Jaladhar Sen, the conservative editor of *Bharat-barsha*, is a sentimental analysis equally powerful in its portraiture

Some say (women), she is the female version of Orpheus,
prepared to enter the temple of death !
What an intemperate excess !⁴

The twelfth and last part of the novel ends with a diary of Rini, the female referred to above, and the whole novel is an attempt to look at oneself from outside. The comment of the celebrated critic Srikumar Bandyopadhyay that in a novel like this 'the characters are aimlessly wading like a bundle of grass in the rushing stream of reflections'⁵ is a failure in observation, in view of the fact that the author is intent upon imparting reflection a quality of action happening apart, irrespective of the life experienced by characters at isolated levels.

His next important novel, *Man-deya-neya* (The Give-and-take of Hearts/1932) incorporates the same purpose hedonistically. Life here gets the upper hand and Art is restricted to the sophisticated drawing-room. Comedy ventures intricately into subtle knots of very human situations. *Jabanikapatan* (The Drop of the Curtain/published in the same year) shows the danger awaiting an aesthete, in the following way

FIVE

Amiya stifled a yawn beneath his handkerchief. He would be relieved if someone would say it were the time to leave. He gazed on Gouri and said, 'You look tired.'

Gouri shrugged and responded, 'I am—rather.'

'To enjoy Art for such a long time—rather exhausting, isn't it so?'

Gouri, with sophistication, said, 'Oh, I've enjoyed myself quite.'

'Yet, it seems to me, you should take some rest now.'

Gouri articulated yet another nobler truth, 'Chivalry—out-of-date.'

'No chivalry, sheer truth.'

'Does anybody spell out truth these days?'

These are all utterances of Gouri, fragments of diamond, indeed, to be recorded in a notebook. Her friends at least say this. She is renowned for such sudden utterances. Gouri repented that her comment was not overheard and recorded by everybody.⁶

One tends to overlook this element of irony pertaining to dandyism, in the early novels as well as poems of Buddhadeva's. The point is, to the author, a basic human situation continually revolves like a kaleidoscope to arrive at the truth in all its facets. The next intriguing novel *Rododendron-guchha* (The Bunch of Rododendrons/1932), frequently criticised on the grounds of plagiarism, is nevertheless a masterpiece of romanticism without sugar. It attempts to verify the validity of personal experience in an objective light. Issues like women's liberation are dwelt upon here in a glare of frankness that stuns. True, the pre-novelist is ambivalent here. But ambivalence leads to the quest for a truth which transgresses all private frontiers. The novel ends with a mystic, near-occult, thought where the personal becomes the universal. Purandar in this novel shows the emergence of an artist who is poised between Art and Life. *Sananda* (1933) also, eccentrically, dwindles between the two. It is a novel remarkable for the author's tendency to escape from a romantic into an ironical sensibility. *Jedin Phutlo Kamal* (The Day the Lotus bloomed), *He Biiayi Bir* (Hailing the Hero), *Dhusar Godhuli* (The Grey

Hour of Dusk), *Asurjampashya* (The Sun-shy Woman), all published in 1933, show the novelist's vacillations between the spells of Art and Love. In all these novels one notices on the one hand the so-called spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings and on the other an awareness of the realistic anti-self. Characters are more and more centripetal and the creator tries to elude the obvious protection of an ivory tower. In *Dhusar Godhuli* the dichotomy of the lover and artist is explored in the character of Nilkantha who himself is the narrator. Nilkantha, something of a *troubadour* or *minnesinger*, embarks on an excursion in quest of Beauty and is made aware of the curbs imposed by life on this pursuit. *Ekada Tumi Priye* (Once O Love/1934), *Suryamukhi* (The Sun-flower/1934), *Rupali Pakhi* (The Silvery Bird/1934), *Lal Megh* (Crimson Clouds/1934), *Paraspar* (Each Other/1934), *Badi-badal* (The Shift of a House/1955) and *Basarghar* (The Bride-chamber/1935), interspersed with tales and stories for the children, do not show any shift of emphasis. The impact of Rabindranath's poetic fiction *Sheser Kavita* (The Last Poem/1929) and drawing-room play *Bansari* (1933) is visible in speech-situations. The author himself also lurks beneath. The urge to de-Tagorise his style and credo is also noticeable, as already in *Sananda*, but the outcome is not convincing. What intrigues us is the author's desire to meet the challenge of the occidental ways of life. In this he became more conscious of his *role* as a Kollolean. It is interesting to note that the Kolloleans looked back to the past, as they assimilated the credo of the *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) period together with the phase of pragmatic romanticism of the Decembrist movement, to assert, the *intelligensia i narod*, i.e., the linking up of the intelligensia and the people.⁷ It is not in his solo novels, but in the novels like *Bisarpil* (The Oblique Way/1341 B.S.), *Banashri* (The Wild Beauty/1934), written in collaboration with the two of his distinguished Kollolean colleagues, Premendra Mitra and Achintyakumar Sen-gupta, that one notices this sense of identification. One cannot expect any semblance of organic unity in these deliberately loosely woven tales. The use of an unconventional idiom and a bold amoral outlook is predominant. But Buddhadeva, despite his elective affinities, chose to remain alone in his singular pursuit.

FIVE

In his *Paribarik* (Familial/1936) he groped for a new departure. The plot he construed is weak, the diction confounded, the tides of moods do not form a meaningful ebb and flow. The same applies to *Parikrama* (A Survey/1938), which portrays the cycles of three married couples in a diffused way. It is the *nucleus* of conjugal life, or say, family structure, that engages our author. The preoccupation takes clearer shape in *Kalo Haa* (The Black Blast/1942). It is a persuasively written story about the slow, but inevitable, disintegration of a seemingly happy family. Arindam, the patriarch, returns home expecting to enjoy the retired life and discerns that the corporate character of his clan or extended family is losing cohesion. His wife Haimanti has been initiated by a vaishnava preceptress and taken to a religious community⁸ which demands an 'emancipation' from familial bondage. Arindam, filled with resentment, attempts to rescue Haimanti and failing this, tries to come to terms with his accepted defeat. His fractured conversations with other members do not bring any element of the togetherness which he once hoped for. His son Arun, who cites Oscar Wilde ('Men marry when they are tired, women marry because they are curious') deserts his wife and heightens the sense of doom. The collusion between Haimanti and her preceptress looms larger and the family bond dissolves. Haimanti, in a moment of frenzy, shoots Arindam dead. Arun takes his mother's place and falls into the hands of her *Guru*. The disastrous end is shown with a 'suspension of disbelief'.

It is not only the folly of religion as an institution but of marriage too that is put to the test in this novel. The author serves his purpose by stripping away the trappings of morality of society at the expense of the 20th century *nouveau riches*. He subdues his natural arrogance and succeeds in depersonalizing his intention. That is why he was encouraged to prepare a dramatic version of the novel in *Mayamalancha* (The Deceptive Garden/1944).

Buddhadeva's next novel, considered his best and most powerful, is *Tithidor* (The Lunar Tie/1949). 'It is an excellent middle class family portrait,' says Srikumar Bandyopadhyay.⁹ This portrait comprises intimate miniatures of family life, its domestic delights and controlled dramatic moments. The somewhat static

family album is stirred by the death of Sisirkana and transformed as if into a fresco panel in its illustration of the six different worlds of five sisters and a brother. Rajenbabu, the father, the solid background figure is also the centre that holds. His liberal education does not allow him to govern these lives. It helps him to let them evolve in their own ways. Swati, the youngest and most enterprising daughter, falls in love with Satyen, her college lecturer, and this relationship leads to happy marriage. It is not only the character of this relationship, but also that of Rajenbabu's inner life, which undergoes a transformation. His latent romantic trait makes itself felt particularly to Swati. Actually the developments of the father and the daughter, initially running in parallel lines, converge in an understanding which was till recently normal in an average Bengali family. The disharmony in Rajen's last but youngest daughter's life is intensified through her husband Harit's political inclination. And this dissonance brings in the novel a kind of gravitational pull because it does not let them be lost in an emotional flight.

In *Tithidor* the author, for the first time, releases himself from the temptation of an easy abstraction on the one hand and on the other aims at a localization of sensitivity. It is in the line of E. M. Forster, who explained the depiction of a mythical ritual in his *Passage to India*

It was architecturally necessary. I needed a lump, or Hindu temple, if you like, or a mountain standing up—the sense of solid mass ahead, a mountain round or over or through which the story somewhat go, is most valuable.

The solid mass in *Tithidor* is the climatic 14-page description (pp. 473-87) of *baise Sravan*, the day of Tagore's death, in a unique way. It is the description of an event which draws the characters into an inescapable vortex. The depiction of the funeral procession gives the novel the quality of a literary epic. The last two pages, remarkable for their Joycean *stream of consciousness* express a primeval sphere, a perennial pattern of life. Here is an untranslatable excerpt, conspicuous for its *apostrophe* and pithy style

FIVE

Swati did not move, nor Satyen, silence, the shadowy lamp of the winnowing bamboo-tray, hidden, shy, unutterable words, the unforsaken spell, the door opens, darkness, none said a word, forgot something, two in a dark room ; two in a darkness, side by side, struck, taut ; did not say, did not forget ; Swati stood up, Rajenbabu raising his hands to the wall ; taut, two lives, animate, heart, throb, no eyes, eyes open, open window black, black outside stars in black sky ; far, further across, beyond the shores ; being, non-being, becoming ; perennial, sky-studded silent stars gaze on.

Tithidor has something Baroque about it, particularly in its decorative emphasis. The novel is filled with colourful details. But this is at the same time the tale of a modern city called Calcutta. Sanjay Bhattacharya openly confessed that the soul of the city is scattered in a myriad points and it would be a herculean task to collect and centralize them. Buddhadeva, on the other hand, maintains that it is a challenge worth taking up, for life in this metropolis running through countless channels offers the artist an enormous scope. In this novel, as well in the next two important novels *Nirjan Swakshar* (The Desolate Signature/1951) and *Shes Pandulipi* (The Last Manuscript/1956) one sees an artist accepting and transforming this challenge against a complex urbanized background. The first novel shows, like Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilitsch*, the disparity between a meaningful vocation and a married life poisoned with secret hatred, but, yet unified by death. Somen Datta commits suicide, which implies the dissolution of his private existence as well as an inevitable solution. The next novel, remotely connected with Eugne O'Neill's *Desire under the Elms*, is the story of an artist with an amoral aesthetic. His illicit relationship with his step-mother (who was once his girl-friend) without any prickings of conscience and the *apotheosis* of destiny in the artist's life give the novel a boldness of purpose. The preference for *living to life* comes to take hold of Buddhadeva's novels henceforth. The artist is free in his range of choices and has to be judged only in terms of these : this is the answer the author postulates. *Moulinath* (1952), its sequel,

is the most subtle artistic version of this postulate. The author commented in this connexion

In *Moulinath* I tried to put a man who has tried all his life and tried very hard at great costs and personal sacrifices to become a total artist. Someone like Flaubert, let us say, . . . this ideal is not really compatible with human nature ; and in the case of another type of artist like, let us say, Tolstoy or Dostoevsky, they lived very intensely in their lives—through war, through gambling, through love-making, through all sorts of things, through sports—and they ran both ardent life. And there is another type, which is more or less the early twentieth century type, which dissociates itself from the external world—something like the idea of ‘Refined in the lager’ poetry of William Butler Yeats—in order to make himself . . . in order to live only for the sake of art . . . this naturally is a terrible strain on any human being, however gifted he may be. And this letter¹⁰ shows his . . . natural reaction of a man who has imprisoned himself in his study for days and weeks and years, and who turned away, who refused to lose, who sent away the girl who—two girls actually—loved him passionately, secured him a husband younger than him and more likeable than him, less eccentric for the younger one . . . when we say it is Rousseauistic¹¹ we would not be wrong historically, but at the same time we should add that it is not just plain Rousseau, but it is the reaction, it is the natural reaction of a man who has tried all his life to live against nature.¹²

This is a brilliant summing-up of the *theme* and the *plot* of the tale, ‘partly autobiography’, as the author himself puts it, and shows the author’s conscious preparedness. This is the story of an artist, one might add here, who like Thomas Mann’s *Tonio Kroeger* and *Tod in Venedig* (Death in Venice), contrasted with the commoner who *lives* life, gives it a form and shape and in this and in this process stays outside what is called life. Nietzsche’s concept of cultural pessimism and the polarity between *spirit* and *life* are also discernible influences here. What strikes us here

FIVE

most is the absence of a solid *agent* and character. Instead there emerges the Keatsian 'poetical character' which confronts and moulds the anonymous, myriad-monadic flux of life without partaking in the same. It is the story about a writer as a receding lover who turns ultimately away even from the object of love to a solipsistic multiverse.

Although the novel reminds us of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, its focal point lies elsewhere. And this one identifies in the author's *localization of time*, much more consciously than ever before. Coleridge informs us, 'our idea of time is always blended with the idea of space.' This *time-as-space* concept is put forward by the author through an urge to find his *rita* (truth) through *ritu* (the cycle of seasons). This is how the chapters are divided

1st part :	A summer morning	1
2nd part :	A monsoon evening	49
3rd part :	The chains of chilly winter	107
Epilogue :	A spring night	163

This division into four clear parts shows the relative incorporeality of character tending to give away to the Nemesis of the passage of Time and the inscrutability of Nature.¹⁸ The author's cherished *solid mass* here lies in the deification of primeval Nature. In the very beginning there is a powerful description of the Sun, which retrospectively seen, reminds one of the Sun-god (*Sin-Cando*) of the aboriginal Santals as a generating power ; in the end the author shows his deep acquaintance with different types of ritualistic functionaries of the outcaste aboriginals of Singhbhum : their totemism, kinship forms and ceremonies which are branded uncivilized. In this insistence on Art *vis-a-vis* civilization the novel acquires a unique significance in Bengali literature.

Dui Dheu Ek Nadi (Two Waves, One River/1958), a revised version of *Paribarik*, repeats the epistolary style. The author returns to civilized society and a rather tame romanticism. *Shonapangshu* (1959), inspired by Tagore's *Achalayatan*, shows the anomalies of a conventional academic institution and the self-

styled resurgence of intellect and love. *Nilanjaner Khata* (The Manuscript of Nilanjan/1966) shows the artist again on his lone quest. This is discernible in *Patal Theke Alap* (Colloquies from the Underworld/1966), the very title deriving upon Dostoevsky, and *Rat Bhore Brishti* (Rain throughout the night), which has been sued by 'the veterans of Society.' *Aynar Madhye Eka* (Alone in a Mirror/1968) and *Golap Keno Kalo* (Why the Rose is Black/1968) intensify the asocial aspect of art and the alienation of the artist who delights in being a misfit in society for a definite cause. The esoteric and initiated artist's sole dedication to a cause is the mission which the author chiefly adheres to, *thematically* and *technically*, in all these novels, to the point of 'exaggeration, though in a singularly persuasive way. Buddhadeva's numerous short stories are also marked with the same thematic characteristics. His first collection *Abhinay, Abhinay nay o Anyanya Galpa* (Dramatic and non-dramatic performances and other stories/1930) already displays the superb craftsmanship of the story-teller. The lyrical and epistolary style of *Pratham o Shesh* (Beginning and End) dominates the plot. The art of conversation is the chief attraction of the other stories, although not at the expense of the story element. *Puraner Punarjanma* (The Re-birth of Myth) is a courageous attempt by Buddhadeva to retell the *Ramayana*, at times ridiculed with parody, in modern terms. The stories of *Rekhachitra* (Sketches/1931) centre around 'a single thought, feeling or situation' and actions are important in as much as they set in motion waves of reflections. The use of a benign *sadhubhasa* is the narration, as contrasted to the smart *Chalitbhasa* of the dialogues, creates a sense of balance which prevents the stories from being sentimental. During this period the author tries his hand at the form of a kind of loosely-woven tale comprising short story, novel and drama in *Era ar ora ebang Aro Aneke* (These and Those Persons and Many Others/1932). He makes this a genre which shows varied perspectives of different characters created out of the author's own personality. The presentation is packed with events and yet action takes only a secondary place. *Adrishya Shatru* (The Invisible Enemy/1933), *Ghum-Padani* (The lullaby/1933), *Premar Bichitra Gati* (The Inscrutable Ways of

Love/1934), *Svetpatra* (The White Foliage/1934), *Asamanya Meye* (The Uncommon Woman/1935), *Gharete Bhramar elo* (The Bee Comes into the Room/1935), *Natun Nesha* (The New Craze/1936), *Sanibarar Bikel* (The Saturday Afternoon/1936), *Pather Ratri* (The Night on the Way/1940) and *Pheriola o Anyanya Galpa* (The Hawker and Other Stories/1941) are stories which show essential human situation kaleidoscopically. In *Baishe Shravan* (1942) *Khatar Shesh Pata* (The Last Page of the Exercise Book/1943), *Haoa-badal* (The Change of Climate/1941), *Ekti Sakal o Ekti Sandhya* (One Morning and One Evening/1945) and *Ekti Ki Duti Pakhi* (A Handful of Birds/1946) and *Char Drishya* (The Four Scenes/1955) the author offers dreamy landscapes of the mind. The lyrical poignancy in these stories at times tends to defeat the story-telling purpose. It is in the three stories of *Hridayer Jagaran* (The Awakening of the Heart/1961) that the author dispenses with the romantic *jalousie* and tries to face the reality of life. The conflicts of an adolescent have been portrayed powerfully in the title-story. *Adarsha* (The Ideal) shows Animesh's quest for loneliness which causes him to turn away from Ramala, his film-star wife. This is a theme which has been reiterated in many novels. But the sharp contrasts of these two characters have been painted here in an unusually compact space. *Sarthakata* (Success), the third story, shows that the author is capable of dealing with the subconscious efficiently. The interaction of lyricism and realism in the author's mind expressed in the interim, more powerfully in his novels than in his short stories. This conflict enters a tragic equilibrium in some of the stories of his later period collected in *Prempatra* (A love letter/1972). The title-story (1969) deals with a philologist who is shown alone in his life and death. Not only does he die alone, but his identity also remains undisclosed. He is shown in his continental reminiscences, in his storms and stresses, and the wisdom he wears points to the futility of life symbolized by the Yeatsian query: 'What then, says Plato's ghost, what then?' *Anuddharaniya* (The Irretrievable/1968) attempts to show the author's life-long quest for the core of romantic beauty, through an encounter between an aged author and his frustrated young reader who shoots the former dead. *Premikara* (The Girl-

friends/1967) dwells upon the author's prepossession with death. It is a story where there is no plot. It is a 'literary' story, full of allusions to the world-art and literature and the residual element is the romantic death-wish of a helpless artist. The inefficaciousness of Science, in *Bhuswarga* (The Earth-paradise/1968), shows the utter failure of knowledge. *Ami, Amita Sanyal* (I, Amita Sanyal/1970) is a story where plot, instead of monologues and dialogues, takes the upper hand. And again this is a story of a poet's love and death. In these stories the triangle of love-death-art develops a dimension and Art emerges as an answer, though perhaps incomplete, to life.

Among Buddhadeva's short stories which have been reasonably widely acclaimed abroad are *Amra Tinjan* (We three lovers)¹⁵, *Sukher Ghar* (the House of Happiness) and *Tumi Keman Achho* (How are you).¹⁶ The first one is written against the author's childhood background of *Purana Paltan*, Dacca.¹⁷ It is again a story woven with elements of love and death in a language which is lyrical. The atmosphere is stronger here than the account of an event. The second story, a fusion of narration and play, ends with the agony of the unborn, Nietzschean in its accent: 'take me back, take me back. I don't want to be born at all!' Dreams are the tissues which constitute the very tangible reality presented here. In *Tumi Keman Achho* the story-teller evokes a sensuous atmosphere where his sensitivity is poised between love and art.

Buddhadeva's novels and stories for children, formidable in number, create often a mixed world of innocence and suspense. When children read his *Chhaya kalo-kalo* (The Black-hued Shadows/1942) and *Bhuter moto Adbhut* (Strange like Ghosts/1942) they are not out for adulterated detective fiction. They pine for a haunting mystery which is built with the fundamentals of home life. And it is 'the sober home-keeping Bengali sensibility'¹⁸ which marks his short stories for children, for example in *Chhotoder Srestha Galpa* (Best Stories for Children/1955). These characters easily enter the world of their grown-up counterparts without transgressing any *taboo*, as in the legends narrated by Miguel Angel Asturias. In these stories also the use of a chiselled language helps refine children's sensibility. Buddhadeva re-told many world famous stories for this readership. These are

FIVE

adapted to children's dimensions with a decency which reminds us of the fact that for Buddhadeva the artistic norm, which he never allowed to be compromised, is the most important part of the story-telling.

SIX

...*The civilization of heart is all that counts—all the other modes of civilizations are of merely secondary nature...*

—DWIJENDRANATH THAKUR

DRAMA AS A genre as such did not, in the beginning, captivate our author. His is essentially a lyrical disposition. One can surmise that this generalization would have irritated him quite a lot. For, he would be last to accept the proverbially polar disparity between the domain of subjectivism and that of drama. 'The *Cenci* is not 'good for the stage and yet it is not deprived of dramatic conflict and tension',¹ he says. One is led, however, to infer that his ambitious experimentations in the no-man's land between the lyric and drama are less professional in character than officially permissible. And still it is in this conviction of his that one should look for the nature of his dramatic talent. For him the civilization of heart is all that counts and this can be found all in the heart of *matter*. His attempts at rendering the idiom of heart into that of matter seldom appear to be succeeding. It would also be wrong to say that he attempts to turn, like Ibsen, the earlier poet into a later playwright. He favours the poet and makes playwright into a loyal partner of his. Buddha-deva's first one-act-play, written in his college days, is *Ekti Meyer Janya* (For a Girl/1930). It is the author's fascination for a girl of the neighbourhood which is expressed here through the obvious aid of 'objective correlative.' In the end, Sibchandra, who is forced to accept his daughter Sandhya's exit with her lover, tells the latter, 'You have a *heart*, Apurbababu. She has not even that.' An unabashed love story, judged by the-then canons of morality, it was recommended by the historian Ramesh Chandra Mazumdar to be acted in the Jagannath Hall auditorium, with, however, 'the single omission of the kissing scene'.

Buddhadeva later narrates this episode with a mixed feeling of humour and embarrassment. Buddhadeva's first mythical play *Ravan* was written on the eve of his departure from Dacca to Calcutta, in the hope that its staging would support him financially.³ The play was, indeed, accepted for the *Srirangam* stage in North Calcutta,⁴ posters were displayed to the effect, but the play was never mounted. Manoranjan Bhattacharya, who was supposed to take the role of *Bibhisana*, confided one day that the language used should have been more 'remote'.⁵ True, the author used a language here which is *spoken*, and not 'mythically' stilted. That exactly is the reason why it was ultimately turned down. *Ravan* remains the first and last instance of the author's compromise with counting for the public stage. The manuscript was not even returned to the author. This indifference of the public stage towards an original playwright was once experienced by Rabindranath himself, and here by Buddhadeva.

The author's *Anekrakam* (The Diversity of Ways) is a medley of play and fiction which shows his conscious departure from the literature of entertainment. The language here is exquisitely poetic. The very next, *Jaltaranga* (A Ripple), is a similar attempt. Both are composed in 1930, are published four years later, the reason being the author's hesitation, or say, diffidence. But this diffidence gradually becomes his very strength, his characteristic. His next work *Mayamalancha*, referred to in the early chapter, is a significant drama in itself. The author takes more than a decade to make up his mind whether he should write a proper drama or not, and achieves a direction of purpose in this work. *Mayamalancha*, a dramatized version of the novel *Kalo Haoya*, is a drama where characters decay as the drama advances. There is not any absence of action whatsoever, and yet this action stems from the use of dialogue. Buddhadeva proves himself a master of dialogue here, as if his characters are born to speak, to articulate what is truth, through their angularities and idiosyncrasies. It is from his poetry, as well as from his 'exotic' adaptations from Baudelaire, that the poet-cum-playwright draws his vitality, in the following two decades. In his *Babu and Bibi* one finds after such a gap of pregnant expanse, a brilliant piece of elusion out of the void of the modern times.

Babu and Bibi, like an unrhymed couplet, touches the fringes of the Absurd, and are, in the Yeatsian way, ready to confront the riddle as to what should they do with this absurdity called life. The playwright does not dare perturb the surface, it seems, and still almost stealthily questions the validity of a complacent life, in the following way

a house—everything there is well-adjusted to our hearts
 desires—where, sitting, we are watching rain. Everything
 measured to our mind, small, soft, sobered down, sweet.
 In the evenings I croon to you, I dance, I gyrate around
 you. You will be my audience, my Rome, Vienna, Paris,
 Munich, New York—and I will be entirely set for you—
 whatever you ordain for me.⁶

Tapasvi O Tarangini (The Mendicant and the Enchantress/ 1966), inspired by Rabindranath's *Chandalika* (The Outcaste Woman), is a profane, yet meaningfully written love-episode. It originates from the poem, *Atchallisher Shiter Janya : 1* (For the winter at the age of forty-eight : 1) in *Je Andhar Alor Adhik*, the last three lines of which present a weird image 'Yet look, like rows of robust ghosts, descend/past and futures on two shores : the labourer, the present age, erects a bridge/in its inscrutable fog dally the mendicant and the young fisherman'. This amorous encounter results in a fertility rite. The background of famine, village women, the exalted moment of the first exchange of glances between the boyish mendicant and a sophisticated prostitute—all these were seized by the author's imagination, in the light of Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*.⁷ Another powerful influence is thematically speaking, Crawling's *The Mystic Rose* which breaks the boundary of 'taboo between the sexual and the spiritual'. This is a drama where Buddhadeva openly conforms to the principles of the poetic drama. In a poetic drama, the exterior reality slowly, but certainly, gives way to the interior. Buddhadeva does not shrink from the reality for a moment, only phases it out into two clear-cut sections. The theme, the descent of the so-called perfect character to the follies of life, is a favourite one with Buddhadeva.

In 1968, Bengal witnesses an invasion of drama by poetry and Buddhadeva is a voluntary contributor to this trend. His *Kalkatar Electra O Satyasandha* (lit. Electra of Calcutta and the Seeker of Truth) is an attempt to narrow the gap between prose and poetry. The plays presented here have the air of reading drama about them. Buddhadeva reverts to Jung's concept of the *collective unconscious* which suddenly explosively, returns to his childhood innocence which is multi-coloured and to aberration which is a mystic mode of revelation.

In *Pratham Partha* (The First Partha/1969) the poet-playwright reiterates his faith in the asocial credo of the individual. *Karna* here confesses to *Droupadi*

The noblest context is without the coercion of self-interest.
 The purest of effort is bound to lose efficacies.
 The *Pandavas*, as well the *Kauravas*, are triumph-lewd, today,
 They are uneasy through aspirations and premonitions—
Panchali, so are you.
 It is only I, who am shorn of desire and fear,
 It is only me whose readiness is without the trace of
 pollution.
 Please know, I am not a medium of *Duryodhan*
 Nobody is my friend, nor one I deem my foe—
 I am independent, alone.⁸

In *Punarmilan* (The Re-union) the absurdity of this aloneness looms larger

I can toy with the Absurd : the mathematical, or say, the temporary Absurd. (*Casting a glance on his wrist-watch*) here it is exactly half-past-one noon. What should it be then *now* in London ? In Moscow ? In New York ? In Timbactoo ? In Venezuela ? Is it today or tomorrow in Tokyo ? Is it yesterday or today in Honolulu ? (*takes out a note-book and a pencil from the pocket*) Let us unwrap these mysteries, then. Let time slide.⁹

Anamni Angana (The Nameless Woman/1970) repeats the world of *Tapasvi O Tarangini*, and provides an expose of the

author's viewpoint. *Satyavati* utters, through her monologue, her ineffable destiny

The mendicant initiated the drawing of the curtain
The river blurred, also the horizon.
Only a boat floats by
This is how the mendicant and the fisherwoman became
one.

The borderline between vice and virtue is blurred. *Satyavati* smiles and says

The filth of sandal-paste is pure
The touch of the *rishi* too is pure, free from blemish,
Who dares denial when the desirer is virtuous ?¹⁰

Sangkranti (The Transition/1970) is a new version of Rabindranath's *Gandharir Avedan* (the Supplication of Gandhari) where the incongruity of existence is expressed through *Dhritarashtra's* utterances

Where ever you go to, to the woods, to other solitudes
There is birth, life, order of life,
Even the children are not without sin, *Gandhari*.
The contamination starts with very weaning
Grows, gets nourished with rice.
Sin, in every *Karma* and *Dharma*, becomes pronounced—
There is no difference between *Duryodhan* and
Judhishthir.¹¹

The playwright uses the form used in Browning's 'dramatic monologues', which, deriving from Shakespearean soliloquies, laid the base of modern poetic drama. Rabindranath used this form in his poetic playlets like *Gandharir Avedan*, *Karna-Kunti Sangbad* (The Karna-Kunti episode) and *Narakbas* (In Inferno) most powerfully. What Buddhadeva contributes is a certain spokenness, an idiom which is to be expected from a prose poem written today. He extends this style to his two adaptations in *Prayaschitta* (The Penance/based on Yeats' *Purgatory*) and *Ikkaku Sennin* (based on a Noh-play).¹² These are all variations of poetic dramas where the speech, first collaborating with the action, carefully extricates itself from the latter.

SIX

What happens is that, despite the efficient use of images, the quality of *Hoerspiel* (radio play) becomes more and more strongly marked. His most accomplished one-act play, which has been also a success on the stage,¹³ is *Pata Jhare Jay* (The Leaves Fall). The following dialogue at the end of the play substitutes speech for action like in a radio-play

Wife : Leaves in the trees.
Husband : The Leaves fall.
W : The cawing of crows.
H : The barking of dogs.
W : The sound of footsteps sometimes.
H : The telephone ringing sometimes.
W : The voice of the radio sometimes.
H : Sometimes utterly still.
W : Seems there is no one anywhere.
H : No sound of footsteps.
W : No swish of winds.
H : No smell of mornings at Hazaribagh.
W : No smell of babies at the breasts.
H : No smell of the pond at Mihijam.
W : No smell of the grass at Ranigunj.
H : Seems we have never lived.
W : We are alive.¹⁴

The grotesque world, created out of cross-knittings of words between the aged couple, reminds us of Guenter Eich's *Traueme* (Dreams). The similar speech-situations, with their variant of *stichomythia*, in both the plays, hasten the onset of something which is uncanny, characters replace the concept of extraneous retribitional justice by a kind of language which itself opens out the pattern of human destiny, without the least help of the outside world.

Buddhadeva as a dramatist shows the ability to evolve designs on an inward journey. But he never goes so far as to make the mystic embarkation. The weakness of the flesh and the faculty of discernment are shown by him as one. He fumbles first, only to find his own way of giving a verbal picture of this juxtaposi-

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

tion of contraries in human beings. He avoids shock tactics or other theatrical devices, stilted with clichés, common to the Bengali stage. He succeeds in shifting 'the voice of the poet talking to himself' to 'the voice of the poet addressing an audience.'¹⁶ If he was not keen on going beyond this to create characters outside his mental locus, this only shows that Buddhadeva remained, till the very end, fundamentally a poet. In one of his last one-act plays, *Charam Chikitsā*¹⁷ (The Radical Remedy), written in didactic-satirical vein, Buddhadeva reiterated his stand as a poet whose vocation is confined to the act of creation from within the domain of the 'poetical character', independent of the prescriptive values of the outside world. Our author demonstrated this allegiance to aesthetic values all through his life, in theory as well as in creative practice.

NOTES

ONE

- 1 *Tagore—Portrait of a Poet*, 2
- 2 Achintyakumar Sengupta, 'Kallolyug', 1950, 194-200. See *Buddhadeva Basur Rachanasangraha* (Buddhadeva Bose's Collected Writings), I, 674-681
- 3 Subir Raychaudhuri, 'Adhunikata banam ruchibikar : Buddhadeva Basu o Sanibarar Chithi' (Modernity versus Perversity : Buddhadeva Bose and 'Sanibarar Chithi') in : *Hinayan*, October, 1974, 37-38
- 4 For the reactions amongst critics see Jyotirmoy Datta, 'Buddhadeva Basur bichar' (The Trial of Buddhadeva Bose) in : *Kolkata*, January, 1971, 59-64
- 5 *Kavita*, Sudhindranath Memorial Number 25/1-2, 76
- 6 Letter to the present author, dated Calcutta, 4 October 1960
- 7 Buddhadeva, like Sudhindranath Datta, was associated with the *Statesman*, later with certain other newspapers/journals and produced quite an amount of creative free-lance journalism which shows his active interest in his time and society.
- 8 Buddhadeva, in an interview with Lothar Lutze confided : 'I think I belong with the *hermetic* writers...as for my works, I have very often been blamed as an 'ivory tower' poet and I am not ashamed. I do not really know what an ivory tower means.'
- 9 *Svanirvachita* (Poet's own choice), ed. Santanu Das and Rudrendu Sarkar, 1970, 34-35

TWO

- 1 For this reason he 'became very passionately devoted to Swinburne' (In the interview with L. Lutze). The mark for FN omitted, page 9, line 30
- 2 'Kavita o Amar Jivan'—*atmajivanir bhagnangsa* (Poetry and My Life—an autobiographical fragment) in : *Kavitar Satru o Mitra* (Friends and Foes of Poetry), 47-48. First published in *Desh*, literary supplement, 1972, 203-208, under the title 'Kavi o Kavita'—*atmajivanir Bhagnangsa*
- 2 *Ibid*, 48
- 4 Tr. Buddhadeva Bose. *An Anthology of Bengali Writing*, ed. Buddhadeva Bose, Calcutta, 1971, 141

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

- 5 *Kavitar Satru o Mitra*, 49
- 6 *Green and Gold*, Ed. Humayun Kabir, 1957, 126, tr. Buddhadeva Bose.
- 7 *An Anthology of Bengali Writing*, tr. Buddhadeva Bose
- 8 Alokeranjan Dasgupta, *The Making of a Poem—The Indian Point of Departure*, in : South Asian Digest of Regional Writing, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, 1973, 2/5
- 9 *Ibid*, 4
- 10 *An Anthology of Bengali Writing*, tr. Buddhadeva Bose, 143
- 11 *Kavita*, International Number 1960, tr. Buddhadeva Bose, 87-88
- 12 *Ibid*, 88, tr. Buddhadeva Bose
- 13 See Ranjit Sen, 'Bibartaner Kavi Buddhadeva Basu' (The evolutionary growth of the poet Buddhadeva Bose), in : *Hinayan*, 1974, 9
- 14 *Kolkata*, June, 1970, 63
- 15 Tr. Jyotirmoy Datta, in : *An Anthology of Bengali Writing*, 145
- 16 See Manabendra Bandyopadhyay's analysis in 'Bangla Kavita o Baudelaire' and Naresh Guha's comments towards *A tentative chronological checklist of Articles on and Translation from Baudelaire done in Bengal* in : Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature, Baudelaire Number, 1967, 41-45, 60-61
- 17 *Ibid*, 46-47
- 18 See Buddhadeva's initial comments in an interview with Jyotirmoy Datta, Manabendra Bandyopadhyay, Subir Raychaudhuri, Amiya Dev, Suddhasil Bose and Kavita Sinha, in : *Dainik Kavita*, 1968
- 19 Jyotirmoy Datta, *A Note on Modern Bengali Poetry*, in : *Kavita*, January, 1960, 145. The wording of the quotation has been slightly altered here.
- 20 See Buddhadeva Bose, *Amar Jouvan*, 1976, 106
- 21 See Buddhadeva Bose, *Sahityacharcha*, 1368 B.S., 45
- 22 *Anandamela*, Puja Number, 1972, 47
- 23 Jivanananda Das, *Kabitar Katha* (On Poetry), 1369 B.S., 32

THREE

- 1 Buddhadeva Bose, *Sahityacharcha*, 1368 B.S., 131
- 2 Buddhadeva's comments in this connexion, made during his discussion with L. Lutze, substantiate this.
- 3a See Buddhadeva Bose, *An Acre of Green Grass—a Review of Modern Bengali Literature*, 1948, 1. Emphasis added
- 3b Buddhadeva Bose, *Tagore—Portrait of a Poet*, 1962, 21. Emphasis added
- 4 *An Acre of Green Grass*, 35
- 5 Editor's Note, *Kavita*, 1960, 147-48
- 6 See S. Dasgupta, *Pritish Nandy*, 1976, 19
- 7 Editor's note, *Kavita*, 148

NOTES

- 3 S. H. Vatsayan's views in this connexion have been acclaimed by distinguished critics in a seminar on the topic in South Asia Institute, Heidelberg, held in June-July, 1976
 - 9 See Michael, in : *Sahityacharcha*, 17-32
 - 10 Rabindra-racanavali S, *Visvasahitya*, 387
 - 11 Sudhindranath Datta, *Rabindrpratibhar Upakramanika* (The beginning of the genius of Tagore), in : *Kulay o Kalpurush* (The Abode and the Orion), 1364 B.S., 5, 7
 - 12 Bishnu De, *Sahityer Bhavishyat* (The Future of Literature), 1969, 87
 - 13 'Rabindranath O Uttarsadhak' (Rabindranath and his successors), in *Sahityacharcha*, 109
 - 14 *Kulay o Kalpurush*, 4
 - 15 *Sahityacharcha*, 127
 - 16 'Samalochanar Paribhasa' (Terminology of Literary Criticism), in *Kavita*, 1355 B.S., 42-61
 - 17 'Versatility', in *Poetry*, January 1959, 209, tr. Buddhadeva Bose
- Buddhadeva's comments made during a colloquy with Lothar Lutze are relevant in this connexion : 'This is a work like of which I've never done before.... I hated footnotes, all my life but in this book I have put numerous footnotes, not quite against my will, but because I am entering a field which is relatively new to me. I wanted to be sure at every step that at least I am not factually wrong, and I wanted the readers to check if my facts are correct, so that if I had made my mistake, they could let me know. And this has taken me to fields, not only to the epics but to the *Puranas*, too, all sorts, so it is altogether a new world for me—to Indian philosophy, I mean its depths, not its deepest depths, but at the same time I find all this congenial and stimulating, it helps me to live.' Emphasis added.

FOUR

- 1 See *Amar Jouvan*, 47, for the author's academic preoccupation with Charles Lamb
- 2 *An Acre of Green Grass*, 21
- 3 The prose of the novel *Sada* was in *sadhubhasa*
- 4 Franz Tumlner, *Volterra/Wie Entsteht Prosa* (Volterra/How prose comes into being), Suhrkamp Texte 12, 27-51
- 5 Buddhadeva Bose, *Uttartiris* (On the Wrong Side of the Thirty), 2nd edition, 1952
- 6 Comments made during a seminar on Modern and Contemporary Indian Literature, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1967
- 7 *Dainik Kavita*, 1968
- 8 Pramatha Chaudhuri did this in his *Sonnetpanchasat* (Fifty Sonnets) in order to instigate conventional linguists.

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

9 His comments on the current trends of linguistics, made in the above-mentioned Simla Seminar, reveal this.

10 *Ekti Khola Chithi* (an open letter/1971), in : *Kabitar Satru o Mitra*, 5

11 *Dhaka Viswavidyalay*, 1928 (Dacca University 1928), in : *Ananda Bazar Patrika Golden Jubilee Annual Number 1972*, 36

In the interview referred to before with L. Lutze, Buddhadeva said, 'I try to maintain a certain rhythm in my sentences. In other words, I think I have tried in my bumble way to introduce the elements of poetry into my prose writing to varied rhythm—I am blamed in some circles of Bengal because of writing extremely long and complex sentences; I do that consciously, deliberately, because I have felt that there is a deficiency in the prose of my mother-tongue that it runs mostly in short sentences. I love to play with the sentences as with lines of verse, by making them shorter or longer by winding or unwinding them, by adding parenthetical clauses. May be the reader feels a little out of breath, but it gives a certain firmness, I believe, to prose—the firmness which good verse acquires because of the strictness of its prosody.'

SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

< = Originated from

/ = separate word with different etymons

E—English

PA—Parso-Arabic

F—French

• SH—Shakespeare

L—Latin

M—Middle

I—Italian

O—Old

FIVE

1 Written between 1941-43, published in 1943

2 Included like the preceding poem, in : *Damayanti Droupadir Sadi o Anyanya Kavita*, 1963, 129-146

3 *Sada* in : *Buddhadeva Basur Rachanasangraha*, ed. Subir Raychaudhuri and Amiya Dev, I, 1975, 163

4 *Ibid*, 259

5 Srikumar Bandyopadhyay, *Bangasahitye Upanyaser Dhara* (The Evolution of the Novel in Bengali Literature), 1380 B.S., 456

6 *Buddhadeva Basur Rachanasangraha* II, 151

7 Alokaranjan Dasgupta, *Response to Modernism*, in : *Transactions of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study*, 1968, 6

NOTES

- 8 *The Adventures of Gurudeva*, 1976, by Seepersad Naipaul are recently written stories which show the obstinate accents of institutional religion, almost in a similar way, though in a different context.
- 9 *Bangasahitye Upanyaser Dhara*, 464
- 10 Moulinath's letter to his second girl-friend—Gita and her husband Bimalendu, 165-72
- 11 See his comments on Rousseau in : *ekti khola chithi, Kabitar Satru o Mitra*, 27-28
- 12 In the colloquy referred to with L. Lutze
- 13 Alokranjan Dasgupta, *Indian Literature Since Independence*, 12-13
- 14 Srikumar Bandyopadhyay, however, finds the story conventional in his analysis, 463
- 15 Included in : *Panchas Bacharer Premer Galpa* (Love Stories of the Five Decades), ed. Subir Raychaudhuri, Calcutta, 1959. The English/German translations by W. A. Oerley and Joseph Kalmer have caused a stir.
- 16 1956/57 ; 1967/68. The most brilliant translations, done directly from the original, are in German by Asit Datta and Manfred Feldsieper, in *Bengalische Erzählungen* (Bengali tales), 1971, 76-96.
- 17 Buddhadeva Bose, *Amar Chelebela* (My Childhood), 1973, 98
- 18 Buddhadeva Bose, *Sahityacharcha*, 63

SIX

- 1 *Sahityacharcha*, 128
- 2 *Amar Jouvan*, 79
- 3 *Ibid.*, 80-82
- 4 Buddhadeva's comments in an interview pertaining to 'Modern poets at work', Jadavpur University, 26/27 April 1968, in : *Kavita o Kavikatha*, 25
- 5 *Amar Jouvan*, 81
- 6 Published first in *Desh*, Puja Number, 1370 B.S. 110
- 7 *Kavitar Satru o Mitra*, 67-68
- 8 *Pratham Partha*, 129
- 9 1376 B.S., 57
- 10 32-33
- 11 70-72
- 12 Published in book form in 1973
- 13 Produced by *Shaubhanik* for a long spell. The musical quality of the language was spelt out in the play with the help of the background music by Bhaskar Mitra
- 14 Tr. Buddhadeva Bose, in : *Anthology of Bengali Writing*, 95
- 15 T. S. Eliot, *Three Voices of Poetry*, 1953
- 16 Written in 1968, revised in 1974, in : *Kavitar Satru o Mitra*, 71-95

TABLE OF DATES

The years shown within the square brackets indicate the period of composition.

Abbreviations : A=Anthology, C=Criticism, D=Drama, E=Essay, J=Juvenile, N=Novel, P=Poetry, R=Reminiscence, S=Story/Short story, T=Travelogue, Tr=Translation

- 1908 30 November : Buddnadeva Bose, son of Bhudebchandra Bose and mother Binaykumari (nee Sinha) born in Comilla (now Bangla Desh)—first schooled by maternal grandfather Chintaharan Sinha—knows his grandmother Swarnalata as his mother in place of Binaykumari who bears him and dies shortly—moves to Noakhali where he finds his 'memories initiated'.
- 1914 'I remember the first world war very distinctly.'
- 1917 The author's first poem composed in English, on his childhood bungalow at Noakhali : 'Adieu, adieu, Deloney House dear,/We leave you because the sea is near,/and the sea will swallow you, we fear,/Adieu, adieu, etc.—prepares a 'drawingly' metrical version of the Ramayana.
- 1923 Publishes his first Bengali poem in '*Toshini*'.
Kallol : literary journal and movement with the cult of modernity.
- 1924 P *Marmabani* (The Inmost Message) 8 + 96 [1923-24].
Completed schooling at Dacca Collegiate School and gets admitted to Intermediate College, Dacca.
- 1926 The literary journal *Kalikalam*, 'a fragment of *Kallo*'.
- 1927 July : *Pragati*, ed. Buddhadeva Bose and Ajit Datta.
Buddhadeva admitted to Dacca University with Honours in English. His controversial *Rajani holo utala* (The Night Becomes Crazy) published in *Kallol* 4/2.
- 1930 Christmas : first decisive sojourn in Calcutta.
N *Sada* (The Response) 8+221 [1928-9] ; *Abhinay, Abhinay nay o Anyanya Galpa* (Dramatic and S Non-dramatic Performances and Other Stories) 12+262 [1334-6 B.S.] ; P *Bandir Bandana* (Hymns from Captivity) 8+58 [1926-9] ; S *Rekhachitra* (Sketches) 8+160 [1928-29] ; N *Akarmanya* (The Disabled) [1929].
- 1931 The journal *Parichay* ('critical, rather the creative, *Parichay* set up a remarkably high standard in book-reviewing, as yet unequalled', *An Acre of Green Grass*, 70) is launched.
- 1932 N *Era ar Ora ebang Aro Aneke* (These and Those Persons and Many Others) [1930 + 31] for which the author is prosecuted Dec. 32 Jan. 33 ; N *Man deya-neya* (The Give and Take of Hearts)

TABLE OF DATES

- 6 + 154; N *Jabanika Patan* (The Drop of the Curtain) [1931]; N *Rododendron-guccha* (A Bunch of Rododendrons) 4+163; P *Ekai Katha* (A Proposition) 16 [1930-31].
- 1933 N *Sananda* 6 + 103 [1932]; S *Rangin Kach* (Many-coloured Glass) [1929-31]; P *Priithivir Pathe* (Facing the Earth) 4+44 [1926-28]; *Adrishya Satru* (The Invisible Enemy) 6 + 184 [1932-3]; N *Amar Bandhu* (My Friend) 6 + 105 [1932]; N *He Bijayi Bir* (Hailing the Hero) 4+222; N *Dhusar Godhuli* (The Grey Hour of Dusk) DN *Anekrakam* (The Diversity of Ways) 162 [1930]; N *Asur-jampashya* (The Sun-shy Woman) 4 + 160, S *Ghumpadani* (The Lullaby) [1931-2], N *Elomelo* (Topsy-turvey) 4+72 [1933]; *Jal-taranga* (The Ripple) [1930].
- 1934 Marries Prativa Bose (nee Som), a noted singer and authoress. S *Mrs Gupta* 8+141 (1933); N *Suryamukhi* (The Sunflower) 8 + 164; N *Ekada Tumi Priye* (Once, O Love) 4 + 141 [1933]; S *Premar Bichitra Gati* (The Inscrutable Ways of Love) [1933-4]; S *Svetpatra* (The White Foliage) 4+129 [1933-34]; N *Bisarpil* (The Oblique Way/co-authors: Achintyakumar Sengupta and Premendra Mitra) 4 + 200; *Banashri* (The Wild Beauty/co-authors: Achintyakumar Sengupta and Premendra Mitra); N *Rupali Pakhi* (The Silvery Bird) 6 + 109; N *Lal Megh* (Crimson Clouds); N *Paraspar* (Each other) 8 + 218 [1932-34]; S *Asamanya Meye* (The Uncommon Woman) 6 + 110 [1933-34].
Joins Ripon College as Lecturer in English.
- 1935 1 October: born first daughter Minakshi—the first issue of *Kavita* (The Bengali Poetry Quarterly *Asvin* 1342 B.S. Founder-Editor Buddhadeva Bose) launched on the same date.
N *Badi-Badal* (Shifting a House) [1939]; S *Gharete Bhramar Elo* (The Bee comes into the Room) 4+107 [1933-4]; N *Basarghar* (The Bride-chamber) 4+224; E *Hathat-alor Jhalkani* (A Spray of Light) 6+164 [1932-4]; JS *Sagar-rahasya* (The Marine Mystery/co-author: Premendra Mitra) 2+67; JS (*The Five Exploits of Kantikumar*); Tr *Aparup Rupkatha* (Fantastic Fairy-tales from Hans Christian Anderson) Vols. I + II.
- 1936 N *Paribarik* (Familial) 4+208 (1935); S *Natun Nesha* (The New Craze) [1932-33]; JS *Ajgubi Janoar* (The Fantastic Animal/co-author: Premendra Mitra); S *Sanibarar Bikel* (The Saturday Afternoon) [1932-5].
- 1937 P *Kankavati* (1929-32, 34); T *Samudratir* (On the Seashore) 6 + 81 [1936-37]; T *Ami Chanchal He* (Restless am I) 4 + 108 [1925-6].
- 1938 S *Galpa-Thakurda* (Grandfather, the Story-teller) [1933-34]; N *Parikrama* (The Survey) 4+203 [1936]; JS *Ek Peyala Cha* (A Cup of Tea) [1932-8]
Buddhadeva's Easter sojourn at Santiniketan

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

- 1939 The Foundation of *Kavita-Bhavan* (The Abode of Poetry), also the poet's residence for several years to follow, in 202 Rashbehari Avenue, Calcutta.
- 1940 9 January : born the second daughter, Damayanti.
P *Natun Pata* (The New Foliage) 8+115 [1933-9]; JS *Pather Ratri* (The Night on the Road) [1936-8]; JN *Dasyur Dale Bhomra* (A Hornet amidst a Band of Robbers) [1939].
Buddhadeva gives up his Ripon College Lectureship.
- 1941 *Pheriola o Anyanya Galpa* (The Hawker and Other Stories) 6+161 [1937-39].
June—Last visit to Rabindranath—7 August : Rabindranath dies.
T *Sab Peyechhir Deshe* (The Land of Heart's Desire : an account of Buddhadeva's Sojourn at Santiniketan) 8+106 ;
JS *Ghumer Ager Galpa* (Lullaby Stories) [1936-8]; JS *Bhadrata Kake Bale* (What is Courtesy)
- 1942 P *Ek Paysay Ekti* (At one paisa per copy) The first booklet of the series [1937-8]; N *Kalo Haoa* (The Black Blast) 4+383 [1939-40]; P *Baise Sravan* (Seventh August) 5th booklet of the series '*Ek Paysay Ekti*'; JN *Chhaya Kalo-kalo* (The Black-hued Shadows) *Bhuter mato Adbhut* (Strance like Ghosts); N *Jivaner Mulya* (The Worth of Life) 4+137
- 1943 P *Bideshini* (The Alien Woman) [1941-43]; P *Damayanti* 6+82 [1935-42]; S *Khatar Shesh Pata* (The Last Page of a Script) 2+181 [1936-43]
- 1944 D *Mayamalancha* (The Deceptive Garden) dramatised version of *Kalo Haoa*; T *Hau* (Rocket/Tr. from Oscar Wilde) 8+109 [1937-44]; P *Rupantar* (The Transmutations); S *Haoa-badal* (The Change of Climate); N *Adarshana* (The Unattainable Woman) 4+236 [1943-44]; Tr *Pirandellor Galpa* (Translations from Luigi Pirandello) 4+206
- 1945 2 October : born son Suddhashil Bose.
S *Ekti Sakal o Ekti Sandhya* (One Morning and one Evening) 4+24; JN *Kalbaisakhir Jhad* (The North-easter) 4+24 [1943]; E *Uttarirish* (On the Wrong Side of Thirty) 8+184 [1937-45]; S *Galpa-sangkalan* (Collection of Stories) 8 + 312 [1928-45]; *Granthapanji* (Bibliography).
- 1946 S *Ekti ki Duti Pakhi* (A Handful of Birds); N *Bisakha* 4+124 [1945]; C *Kaler Putul* (Puppets of Time) 8+186 [1935-45];
- 1948 P *Droupadir Sadi* (The Sadi of Draupadi) 6+84 [1944-47]; C *An Acre of Green Grass* 10+107
- 1949 N *Tithidor* (The Lunar Tie) 8+776 [1946-9];
N *Anya Konokhane* (Somewhere Else) 8+166 [1947];
N *Maner Mato Meye* (The Lass of Heart's Desire) 4+157
- 1951 N *Nirjan Svakshar* (The Lone Signature) 4+211. *Tumi ki Sundar* (what a Beauty You Are/the revised version of *Adarshana*)

TABLE OF DATES

- 4+250; JN *Taser Prasad* (The Castle of Cards) 8+104; S *Srestha Galpa* (The Best Stories) Ed. Jagadish Bhattacharya [1927-46]
- 1952 N *Moulinath* 8+203; N *Kshaniker Bondhu* (Fleeting Friendship) Revised version of *Anekrakam* 4+186+2; P *Srestha Kavita* (Best Poems) 2+136 [1926-52]
- 1953 Buddhadeva, on a Unesco assignment, joins a teachers' Programme in Delhi and Mysore.
A *Adhunik Bangla Kavita* Modern Bengali Poems/Ed. Buddhadeva Bose 20+256.
American lecture tour: Pittsburg, 1953-54
- 1954 N *Basanta Jagrata Dvare* (The Spring Around/co-author: Prativa Bose) 4+166+16; C *Sahityacharcha* (On Literature) 194 [1946-52]
- 1955 P *Siter Prarthna: Basanter Uttar* (Prayers of Winter: Responses of Spring) 144 [1940-53]; S *Char Drishya* (Four Scenes) 4+130; S *Svanirvachita Galpa* (Selected Stories of One's Own Choice) 12+223; C *Rabindranath: Kathasahitya* (Rabindranath: The Art of Narration) 8+204 [1346-59 B.S.]; JS *Chhotoder Shrestha Galpa* (Best Stories for the Children) 8+136 [1930-47]; S *Ekti ki Duti Pakhi* (A Handful of Birds) 6+128
- 1956 Buddhadeva joins Jadavpur University as Head of the Department of Comparative Literature.
JP *Baromaser Chhada* (Six Season's Nursery Rhymes) 8+112 [1925-55]; JS *Ranna Theke Kanna* (From Cooking to Crying) 8+71; N *Shesh Pandulipi* (The Last Manuscript) 8+175; JSTr *Sukhi Rajputra* (The Happy Prince) 4+60+4; JSTr *Svarthapar Daitya* (The Selfish Giant) 4+56+4
- 1957 C *Svadesh o Samskriti* (On Homeland and Culture) 4+137 [1945-57]; Tr *Kalidaser Meghdut* (The Meghaduta of Kalidasa) 8+196
- 1958 P *Je Andhar Alor Adhik* (This Dark is more than Light) 72 [1954-8]; JS *Jnan Theke Ajnan* (From Knowledge to Ignorance) 6+88
- 1959 N *Shonapangshu* 193 [1958]
- 1960 N *Nilanjaner Khata* (The Manuscript of Nilanjan) 6+194 [1956]; N *Duti Dheu, Ek Nadi* (Two Waves, One River/Revised version of *Paribarik*) 191; S *Ekti Jivan o Kayekti Mrityu* (One Life and a few Deaths) 8+184 [1954-9]; Tr *Doktor Zivago* Ed. & Tr. from Boris Pasternak, 8+782; JSTr *Hameliner Bansiola* (The Pied Piper of Hamelin) 6+90
- 1961 Tr *Charles Baudelaire: Tanr Kavita* (Charles Baudelaire: His Poems) 16+285 [1949-58]; J *Kishore-Sanchayan* (Juvenile Collection) 6+227; S *Hridayer Jagaran* (The Awakeing of the Heart) 8+168 [1956-60].
American lecture tour: New York University; delivers lectures at the Universities of Sorbonne, Kioto and Tokyo. Visits Germany

BUDDHADEVA BOSE

- 1962 T *Japani Journal* (Journals from Japan); C *Tagore : Portrait of a Poet* (Lectures delivered in the University of Bombay/1962) 8+114
- 1963 C *Sanga : Nihangata o Rabindranath* (Company, Solitude and Rabindranath) 8+228; P *Damayantir Sadi o Anyanya Kavita* 10+168 [1935-47/54]; S *Bhaso Amar Bhela* (Drift on My Boat) 10+582 [1928-62]; S *Chhotoder Bhalo-Bhalo Galpa* (Saucy Stories for Children) 96.
- Buddhadeva retires from Jadavpur University. States lecture tour : Indiana University, Brooklyn College, Illinois University, Colorado University, Hawai University and some other academic institutions
- 1966 JS *Bai Dhar Diyona* (Dont you Lend your Books) 4+76; T *Deshantar* (A Distant Land) 8+309 [1953-4/1961/1964-5]; E *Prabandha Samkalan* (Collection of Essays) 8+393 [1943-4/62; 1932-65]; C *Kavi Rabindranath* (Rabindranath the Poet) 143 [1965]; (delivered as Saratchandra-lectures in the University of Calcutta/1966), D *Tapasvi o Tarangini* (The Mendicant and the Enchantress) 100; P *Marche-pada Pereker Gan* (Songs of a Rust-coloured Spike) 72 [1958-66]
- 1967 Awarded *Sahitya-Akademi award* for *Tapasvi o Tarangini*. N *Patal Theke Alap* (Colloquies from the Underground) 8+171 [1966]; N *Rat bhore Bristui* (It Rained Throughout the Night) [1963]; S *Tumi Keman Achho* (How are you) 8+229 [1962-6]; Tr *Hoelderliner Kavita* (Translations from poems by Friederich Hoelderlin) 82 [1945-55/66-67]
- 1968 N *Golap Keno Kalo* (Why is the Rose Black) 8+169 [1967]; PD *Kalsandhya* (The Fated Evenfall) 94 [1967-68]; D *Kalkatar Electra o Satyasandha* (Lit. The Electra of Calcutta and the Seeker of Truth) 106 [1967]. Trip to Germany
- 1969 *Bipanna Bismay* (Bewilderment) 271 [1959-69]
- 1970 Buddhadeva Bose awarded national honour '*Padmabhusan*', D *Punarmilan* (The Re-union) 140 [1969]; PD *Anamni Angana o Pratham Partha* (The Nameless Woman and the First Partha) 156 [1969-70]; Tr *Rainer Maria Rilker Kavita* (Translation from Poems by Rainer Maria Rilke) 228 [1940-08]
- 1971 A *An Anthology of Bengali Writing* 12+168; *Ekdin : Chiradin* (One day : Forever) 78 [1952-70]; P *Swagata Vidya* (Welcome, Farewell) 73 [1967-70]
- 1972 N *Rukmi* 169 [1971]; S *Prempatra o Anyanya Galpa* (Love Letter and Other Stories) 70+160 [1967, 68, 69, 70]. Trip to England
- 1973 R *Amar Chhelebel* (My Childhood) 8+116 [1972]; PD *Samkranti Prayascitta Ikkaku Sennin* (The Transition/Yeat's Purgatory Noh-play : Ikkaku Sennin) 115 [1970-71]; JS *Hasir Galpa* (Humorous Tales) 4+76 n.d.
- 1974 C *Mahabharater Katha* (On the Mahabharata) 14+299 [1971-4];

TABLE OF DATES

Miscellaneous *Kavitar Satru o Mitra* (The Friends and Foes of Poetry) 4+95 [1965, 1971, 1973]

Death : 18 March

Published after the death of the poet

1975 R *Amar Jouvan* (My Youth) 6+114 [1973]; *Buddhadeva Basur Rachanasangraha* (The Collection of Buddhadeva Bose's Writings) Vol. I, Ed. Subir Raychaudhuri and Amiya Dev 10+681, *Buddhadeva Basur Rachanasangraha* Vol. II, Ed. Haraprosad Mitra 6+624

