

Book Review on **WINGED HORSE- 76 Assamese songs- Dr. Bhupen Hazarika**
Translated by Syed Ahmed Shah

Dr. Arunima Das¹

Dr. Rabindranath Sarma²

¹[Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, Gargi College, University of Delhi]

²[Associate Professor, Dept. of Anthropology and Tribal Studies, Central University of Jharkhand]

Title of the Book: Winged Horses, 76 Assamese songs, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika

Translated by Syed Ahmed Shah

Published by Coolgrove Press

Total page: 262

Dr. Bhupen Hazarika is a poet, musician, lyricist, folklorist, dramatist, film producer, director, journalist of twenty first century from Assam, India. His songs are not only a piece of art but at the same time mere reflection of fleeting sensation and a form of knowledge of good, evil, love, sorrow, seasons, labour, crops and philosophy of life and death. Dr. Hazarika's views on westernization, nationalism, global capitalism, despoliation of natural resources, and respect for humanity hold invaluable answers for the malaise afflicting modern Assamese civilization. These are the ultimate reasons with which Dr. Hazarika continues to confront his readers, across time and space. Consequently, in 2019, he is awarded with Bharat Ratna, that is India's highest civilian award for his powerful, impeccable and original body of work. "Winged Horse", is an excellent piece of translation by Syed Ahmed Shah (henceforth, Shah), who endeavors to ascertain the existence Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's songs in the world literature. This review aims at discussing some distinctive features of this exhaustive translation as far as possible.

Shah's "Winged Horses" contains translation of 76 beautiful songs that captures the intensity of Dr. Hazarika's songs. This collection of translation brings together some finest songs, ranging from his romance to philosophy, religion to patriotism. This is certainly a promising work where, Shah has taken the liberty to translate the songs with the help of simple, lucid, relevant terms reproducing equivalent verse pattern in English. Therefore, this piece of translation will definitely stand as a pioneering work meant not only for the educated class but also for the average population having a wide range of readers worldwide. In this context, Tej Hazarika, son of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika has rightly said, "The Winged Horse carries the words of a man who used to show his soul to the world, who believed in common humanity of all..." (2019, Shah). In that case, this piece of translation will be rightly solving the purpose of the great bard who always stands as the voice of the common people.

It was rightly the struggle of Dr. Hazarika who worked for the empowerment of Indian marginalized language like Assamese language. He was a language warrior that tried to enrich the language by thinking, writing in Assamese and continued producing great works. He later successfully translated some of his works to few Indian languages and English as well but that is a very small portion compared to his enormous amount of work in Assamese. His literary monument, power of words, his voice is the strength of one community, which still needs to be

heard, visible in the global context. In that case Shah's "Winged Horses" will facilitate Dr. Hazarika's song to accomplish more intercultural communication in the world. This may further help Dr. Hazarika's work to get translated in other world languages.

In the Introduction to *A Companion to Translation Studies* (2007), Piotr and Karin have said, "Translation thrives in an interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary context." Translation maintains a dialogue between the inside and the outside, not only of disciplines, but of cultures, languages and histories and thus, translation theorizes absolute connection. Translation has been related to the following disciplines "Culture and Translation," "Philosophy and Translation," "Linguistics and Translation," "History and Translation," "Literary Translation," "Gender and Translation," "Theatre and Opera Translation," "Screen Translation," and "Politics and Translation" (Kuhiwczak, Piotr and Karin Littau, eds., 2007). In "Winged Horses", Shah (2019) has converted Dr. Hazarika's songs to a massive intellectual combination of cultural, philosophical, linguistic and historical phenomenon. Hundred percent literal translations are never possible but Shah has maintained a great deal of literal translation which is very difficult especially while translating a lyric. Keeping the rhythm, this translation has been done in such a way that the original meanings have not been deviated and done in strict accordance with the subject matter. Modern Assamese music finds its highest culmination in Dr. Hazarika's songs. His inclination towards liberty, justice, freedom, identity is the result of his concern about Assam which is reflected very much in his songs. These songs have universal appeal that always talks about slavery, racism feudalism and coercion of capitalism. His songs are marked by brotherhood, peace, progress, communalism, universal justice which were composed impeccably. For example, the song "Manuhe Manuhor Babe Jodihe Okono Nebhabe" has been translated as follows:

If Man Won't Care For Man
 If Man won't think about his fellow man
 With a little bit of sympathetic concern
 Just who will, tell me my friend....

This translation shows the grandeur of the original song. They will certainly create room for significant readership outside as they give a picture of universal brotherhood. These songs can be compared to the writings of African leader Nelson Mandela, Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong, who focus on social, racial, moral issues and freedom struggle. Shah's translation will work as a voyage of discovery towards the Assamese history in the global context through Dr. Hazarika's songs. This piece of translation has maintained an insight into the framework of the entire Assamese entity that Dr. Hazarika did kept in his mind while composing, where emotional nuances have been communicated very strongly and effectively. Addition to the translation, a comparative linguistic description of Assamese language with Hindi and English has made the translation easier to understand.

True image and greatness of a poet sometimes distorted through bad translation. On the contrary, to get a universal significance, there is no alternative way but a good translation, mainly to English. Shah's translation will multiply a significant amount of readership which emphasizes mainly on cultural exchange. Bob Dylan created a new expression in the American society and became the first singer, songwriter to win Noble Prize. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika did the same within the great Assamese society and became one of the most important literary and cultural figures in India of twentieth and twenty first century. There are millions of Assamese speakers and thousands of writers, and poets, but Dr. Hazarika has been uniquely placed and first

Assamese who has been awarded with Bharat Ratna posthumously. Rabindranath Tagore was not so popular in the world till his Geetanjali got translated and was awarded with Noble Prize. Undoubtedly, this kind of translation will help Dr. Bhupen Hazarika to get international reputation and possibilities will develop further for prestigious award like that of Noble Prize , the world's most prestigious literary award for the person who has produced so much in the field of literature in an ideal direction.

References

Kuhiwczak, Piotr and Karin Littau, eds., 2007. A Companion to Translation Studies, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Venuti, Lawrence. 2004. The Translation Studies Reader. 2nd ed. New York and London: Routledge.