Soul of Bengal

Jasimuddin (1903-1976) is one of the most famous poets from Bangladesh. The rendition of Bengali folklore and rural culture in his poetry earned him the name "The Country Poet (Palli Kobi)". He was also a famous songwriter, folklore collector and radio personality. On his 111th (1st January 1903) birth anniversary we remember this great personality of art and culture.



Sketch of Jasimuddin.



Cover of *Nakshi Kathar Math* in Italian.



Jasimuddin with Henry Miller, 1962.

The Field of Embroidered Quilt

- *Nakshi Kathar Math* (The Field of Embroidered Quilt as translated by English Poet EM Milford) and *Shojon Badiyar Ghat* (The Gypsy Wharf) were the most famous of his lyrical works.
- These two were translated into 15 different languages.
- Besides this Jasimuddin authored 20 books of poetry depicting mostly the eternally peaceful, idyllic rural community of Bangladesh

"Field after field run along
Green winds sway tender paddy shoots
That spreads like open hair
In it butterflies ornamented with wings...
Mother earth smiles at her fertile pride"

Poet and Beyond

- Beside 21 poetry books, Jasimuddin also authored 7 dramas, 1 novel, 5 memoirs and 4 travelogues.
- He authored 7 books on Bengali folksongs and composed some evergreen Bengali songs.
- Jasimddin was a passionate collector of Bengali folktales and culture.
- His anthology of rural jokes of Bengal *(Banglar Hashir Golpo)* is a classic.
- As one of the compilers of *Purbo Bongio Geetika* (Ballads of East Bengal) he collected 10,000 folk songs.
- By career Jasimuddin was a teacher of Dhaka University and later joined the Govt Information and Broadcasting Department.

Recognitions

- Jasimuddin was awarded the Ekushey Padak, the highest Bangladeshi civilian award in 1976 and Independence Award in 1978.
- He was conferred D Litt from Rabindra Bharati University, India on 1969.
- He also achieved the President's award of Pakistan named "Pride of Performance, Pakistan (1958).

Death and Legacy

- Jasimuddin breathed his last on 13th March, 1977.
- Many Bangladeshi films and telefilms have been inspired by his works.
- Famous film maker Khan Ataur Rahman made a documentary on the life of this great poet.
- A residential hall of Dhaka University has been named after him to honour this great scholar of art.