REFLECTIONS ON CLINTON B. SEELY'S TRANSLATION OF *MEGHANAD-BADH KABYA*

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This is not an academic paper, nor even a book review. It is a personal meditation on Clinton B. Seely's translation of Michael Madhusudan Dutt's celebrated epic poem, *Meghanad-badh kabya*. The translation was published in the spring of 2004 by Oxford University Press in New York, under the title: *The Slaying of Meghanada: A Ramayana from Colonial Bengal.*

I'm told it happens in science: suddenly several papers appear on the same topic. Having recently read and admired a book called *The Music of the Primes*, by Marcus du Sautoy (Fourth Estate, 2003), I've noticed that at least two other books on prime numbers were published at the same time. So maybe some conjunction in the spheres was responsible for the fact that Professor Seely's book arrived on my desk at SOAS a couple of months after I had finished my own translation of *Meghanad-badh kabya*, and was about to nerve myself up for the Notes, Glossary and Introduction.

His book did not, however, come as a complete surprise, because at least two years ago Clint told me in an email that he was revising for publication the translation of the epic that he had started in the 1970s. In that case, I responded, I would abandon my own translation: there was no point in having two. With characteristic generosity, he wrote saying I should on no account do that: the epic fully deserved more than one translation. I remained doubtful, but as the months went by I realised that I just couldn't abandon mine. I had been too closely and personally involved with it for too long, and it was inseparable from trends and ambitions in my own poetry. Although my work on Madhusudan began with a D.Phil thesis on him at Oxford, submitted and passed (though never really completed) in 1987, and although out of that work had come two quite scholarly articles, the translation of his major work was for me more a literary than an academic project. I made this clear in a poem I wrote in the 1990s, included in my book *Gifts: Poems 1992-1999*. It was an elegy for Nicholas John, a friend of mine who worked as a 'dramaturge' (researcher and writer of programme notes) for English National Opera and who slipped and fell to his death when walking in the Alps in 1996. As well as evoking him and the world of opera he loved so much, it alluded to the composer Param Vir (with whom I had collaborated on a chamber opera based on Tagore), and also to *Meghanad-badh kabya*. The speaker of the poem is an old woman called Maggie, who fantasises about being a great opera singer:

> yes I'd sing on a vast scale Indian grief like
> Queen Chitr- angada not some corny old role not
> Joe Green Wagner or Strauss Puc- cini or Berg great
> stuff true but it's the huge lush sound of the new age
> East West joined that I want grand stories untapped that
> *Megh- nad* epic the bit my nephew read out his
> friend P V as he's known could set it so well yes
>
> Queen Chitr- angada hair loose body without jewels
> wild eyes brimming with tears like lotuses night- dew-
> full half crazy with grief her mighty-armed son good

brave strong Birbahu dead grieves mother-bird-like when
some sly serpent her warm nest entering grabs her
brood grief's storm in the court loose hair of her maids like
black clouds gale of their sighs dense thunderous rain- tears

The reference here is to Book I of Madhusudan's epic, in which Ravana's Queen Chitrangada sweeps into his *sabha* (council-chamber), grief-stricken at the death in battle of their son Birabahu. Here is part of that passage in my (draft) translation:

> Then, suddenly, the sound of feminine weeping flooded in from all sides,
> Mingled with the tinkling of anklets, and the sonorous jingling of girdle-bells.
> Chitrangada-devi came into the chamber,
> With her gold-complexioned attendants. Her hair was unplaited, alas,
> Loose and dishevelled! Her body was without ornament, like a forest-adorning creeper in the snow,
> Bereft of its jewel-like blossoms! Her eyes were full of tears, like petals of a lotus brimming with night's dew!
> The queen was benumbed with grief for Birabahu, like a mother-bird after a deadly snake enters her nest and devours her young! A storm of grief swept through the court!
> Her womenfolk shone with goddess-like beauty; their unbound hair was a bank of clouds; their heavy sighing was a hurricane wind;
> Their tears streamed like a cloudburst; their weeping and wailing boomed like thunder! The Lord of Lanka started in his golden throne!
> Handmaidens dropped their fly-whisks as their eyes moistened; the weeping umbrella-bearer dropped his umbrella; shocked,
> Angered, the guard at the door unsheathed his awesome sword; councillors, Ministers and the rest of the court were all alarmed, all in tears, all weeping noisily!

In 'Writing for the future', an essay which I published in a *Statesman* annual in Kolkata but which I also included in my book *Poetry and Community: Lectures and Essays 1991-2001*, I wrote about how my elegy would depend for its full comprehension and appreciation on developments in the future: on, for example, the full establishment of Param Vir's reputation as a major composer of our time, and on the completion of my translation of *Meghanad-badh kabya.* In relation to the stanzas quoted above, I wrote:

> In the fourth stanza, Maggie's operatic fantasy develops further. The European tradition is somehow not grand enough for her. (Joe Green is the joke English name that is sometimes given to 'Giuseppe Verdi'.) Instead, she has a vision of European opera joining forces with the Indian epic tradition, as interpreted by Michael Madhusudan Dutt, whose works were indeed a marriage of East and West. The 'new age' is one in which Western and Indian traditions will blend, and the best composer for it will be the Indian-born composer Param Vir. Here I'm gambling on two things: firstly, a future awareness in the Western world of the poetry of Madhusudan, which might come about if I complete and publish my translation of *Meghanad-badh kabya*; secondly the future achievement and reputation of Param Vir. This seems reasonable to expect, for his chamber opera *Snatched by the Gods*, for

> which I wrote the libretto, has, with its companion piece *Broken Strings* (libretto by David Rudkin, based on a *Jataka* story), been performed in Amsterdam, Munich, London, Glasgow and Edinburgh, and further performances are planned elsewhere. The operas have entered the modern operatic repertoire, and have even been included in the *The New Kobbé's Opera Book*, a standard reference book that Nicholas John was enlarging and revising when he died. I have great faith in the future career of PV (as he is known to his friends), and my reference to him in this poem is an expression of that faith. I also have faith in my translation of *Meghanad-badh kabya*, though I don't know why I have made myself Maggie's nephew!

Well, Param Vir's career has certainly gone on developing since then,[1] and as for my own I can at least say that my translation of Madhusudan's epic is now complete. But should I, now that Clint's translation has appeared, rush to publish it? Would it in fact offer anything that his translation does not already offer?

My copy of *The Slaying of Meghanada* came from Clint himself, inscribed with a message reiterating his view that I should not be daunted, that I should bring out my own translation regardless: 'For William,' he wrote, 'who understands and appreciates this epic poem and whose own translations of the same will make a wonderful and welcome companion piece to this book. Yours truly, Clint.' You can't get more sincere and generous than that, and everyone who knows Clint Seely will vouch for his kindness and modesty as a man, as well as his excellence as a scholar.

Clint is indeed a scholar of kind that I have never felt myself to be. In terms of the lucidity of its historical Introduction, and the meticulousness of its Notes and Glossary, there are scholarly qualities in his book that I would find hard to match. If I do eventually publish mine, with the apparatus that any translation of Madhusudan's learned and allusive epic requires, I shall certainly be climbing on to Clint's shoulders. I shall be deeply indebted to him, just as an editor of a Shakespeare play, say, is indebted to all the scholars and editors before him. Even in the translation itself, though we can both say with total certitude that our translations were done *entirely* independently of each other, I shall use his translation as a control: checking every line of mine against his, and going to him with queries if I find our interpretations of the literal meaning of a word or line diverge. Indeed, almost the first thing I did on receiving his translation was to tell a Bengali friend who I had been trying to persuade to take on the onerous task of checking my translation from beginning to end, that I would not have to ask her to do that after all. She was very relieved!

Having now read Clint's Introduction, and dipped into his translation, I think I can say that I *will* revise, introduce, annotate and publish mine. But I shan't rush this. He himself found that he had to let his draft translation rest for a good many years before he felt ready to revise and publish it. I don't intend to wait quite as long as he did, but I do not now envisage publication of my translation till 2007 or 2008. Penguin India, from whom I have a contract, are happy to wait, as they themselves recognise that for the next few years Clint's translation should rightfully hold the field.

What are the differences between his way of translating Madhusudan and mine? The most striking difference is technical: we have arrived at very different

[1] For an excellent assessment of his achievements to date, see Bernard Hughes, 'Magical Theatres: The Music of Param Vir', in *Tempo* 58 (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

solutions to the problem of how to render Madhusudan's Bengali blank verse in English.

Let me quote his rendering of that same passage in Book I (ll.322-344):

> Suddenly
> at that time, there drifted in from all directions soft sounds
> of weeping blended with anklets' tinkling, jingling girdles,
> and ominous outcries. Escorted by the golden-limbed
> women of her retinue, Queen Citr_ngada stepped to
> the floor of that assembly – hair, alas, disheveled! Her
> arms, naked, without bangles, like forest-ornamenting
> vines when, in snow, they lack gemlike blossoms! Her tear-filled eyes
> were as the dewy lotus pads at night! The queen was quite
> beside herself, lamenting over V_rab_hu, as
> does a mother bird when some fell snake slips inside her nest
> and swallows up her fledglings. A storm of woe blew into
> that assembly hall! The women folk stood there, appearing
> comely as the wives of the divines, their loose and flowing
> hair seemed a swirl of clouds, their heaving sighs Pralaya-like
> heavy winds, their streams of tears torrential rains, their wailing
> moans the thunder's rumble! Lanka's sovereign on his gold throne
> was startled. Maidens in attendance, tear-soaked, dropped their yak-
> tail whisks; the umbrella bearer let slip the parasol
> and wept; angry and confused, the guardsman unsheathed his dread
> sword; and the ministers, the counselers, and members of
> the court, alarmed, broke down crying, causing utter havoc.

In a section 'On Translation' at the end of his fine Introduction to the epic, Clint explains the principles of Madhusudan's *amitraksara chanda*, the blank verse that was one of his main innovations in Bengali poetry. Comparing it to the fourteen-syllable medieval Bengali *payar* line, he writes:

> Datta took that basic *payar* structure, retained the fourteen-syllable line, discarded end rhyming, and allowed for enjambement. That is to say, his poetic lines flow across the weak boundaries within a line, suppress the sense of a couplet structure altogether by not exhibiting couplet rhyming, and come to an end, meaningfully, anywhere within the line, not just at the end of one.

This is absolutely correct. Clint goes on to say, after setting out four lines of the epic in separate transliterated syllables, 'In my translation, I hold to the fourteen-syllable, unrhymed line displaying enjambment, though I make no effort to force my lines to be coterminous with the original.' In other words, his basic verse principle is to count off lines of fourteen English syllables, making sure, as Madhusudan always does, that all his paragraphs end with a full, fourteen-syllable line.

I have to say that I have problems with this as a defining principle of verse in English. Because (as Clint rightly admits later in this section of his Introduction), English is a stressed language, it is very difficult to base any kind of verse structure on a simple count of syllables. Although in standard, Shakespearean English blank verse, the line normally has ten syllables, this is only because the most common structure for each of the five feet in the line is an iamb – a light syllable followed by a

heavier one. But instead of an iamb you can have a trochee, a dactyl or an anapaest, or even a one syllable foot, so the number of syllables in a line can vary quite a lot. An English ear does not 'hear' syllables: it hears stresses and feet, if the poetry is in traditional metre.

Does an American ear hear syllables more acutely than a British English ear? It is true that in my kind of English, the stressed syllable of a word is perhaps more heavily stressed than in American pronunciation, and the lighter syllables are lighter. I will say 'momentarily', with a heavy stress on the first syllable, and the remain syllables all falling away lightly. An American will say 'momentarily': he will give the third syllable a stress as well as the first, and will give more time and weight to the unstressed syllables too. I was interested the other day to hear an American government spokesman on television saying 'authoritatively', whereas I would say 'authoritatively', with a stress on only the second syllable. So it may be that Clint, when he pronounces his syllabic English lines, hears the syllables more separately than I do.

But does he hear his line endings? In order to maintain his fourteen-syllable structure, he frequently has to end his lines (as in the extract above) with words like 'to', 'as' or 'of'. These are words after which we would never make any kind of pause. Does a line-ending in verse –any kind of verse – necessarily imply a pause? Even in rhymed verse, the sense often requires us to run on without a pause. Clint would be right to argue that there are no pauses at the ends of Madhusudan's lines when the sense runs on, so what is wrong with ending an English line with whatever word comes at the end of fourteen-syllables? He could also cite in his defence poets who have specialised in writing English syllabic verse, notably the American poet Marianne Moore. I've just looked at her poem 'The Steeple-jack' and find that she has lines ending in 'is', 'to' and even 'the'.[2]

So although I personally, as a poet, am resistant to ending lines with 'little words' that have a grammatical, not a lexical function, I have to accept that Clint is perfectly entitled to use a fourteen-syllable line that does not convey itself to the ear as a discrete unit. But as to whether it effectively conveys how Madhusudan's Bengali blank verse works, I have two questions.

Firstly, although Madhusudan's lines are frequently enjambed, and a caesura can fall anywhere in a line, is it true that the Bengali ear does not hear his lines as lines? I myself suspect that they do, partly because the fourteen-syllable *payar* is so fundamental to Bengali tradition, but also because – as Clint rightly points out – Bengali is not a heavily stressed language like English. Syllables are given much more equal weight, though I would not go as far as to say, as Clint does, that 'normally all syllables within an individual word receive equal stress.' He follows that statement by saying that 'if any syllable is going to receive slight stress – and this happens when a word is spoken in isolation from other words – then it should be the first: *ME-gha-na-da*, not *me-GHA-na-da* or *me-gha-NA-da*, or *me-gha-na-DA*.' I myself would say more confidently that there *is* normally a stress on one syllable in a Bengali word, though not as heavy as in English, and that in Bengali poetry you can

[2] This is not the place here for a discussion about how Marianne Moore's syllabic verse actually works, but I find that the often bizarre line-endings act as a fascinating counterpoint to her brilliant sense of phrase. They are the reverse of syncopation in music, where accents fall on beats that the basic bar-structure does not predict. In Marianne Moore's poetry, the 'bar-strucuture' (the count of syllables in a line, which varies from line to line but follows a pattern within the stanza as a whole) is unpredictable, whereas the stresses implied by the phrase structure fall with wonderful precision and logic.

get a counterpoint between those stresses and additional emphases required by the sense – just as in English metrical verse there is that kind of counterpoint.[3] You also get fascinating syncopations in Bengali poetry arising from the 'holding' of syllables. This occurs with conjunct consonants or longer vowel sounds or dropped inherent vowels or consonants followed by 'ya-phala'. In the very first line of Madhusudan's epic there are three such syncopations: *sammukh-samare pari, bir-curamani…*Thus, despite all the enjambment, I think Bengalis hear Madhusudan's lines as lines, in way that I at least cannot hear Clint's fourteen-syllable English lines as lines.

Secondly, does Clint's syllabic method follow Madhusudan's own prescriptions about how to hear and read his verse? In a letter of 1 July 1860 to Raj Narayan Basu that Clint himself quotes, Madhusudan wrote:

> You want me to explain my system of versification for the conversion of your sceptical friends. I am sure there is very little in the system to explain; our language, as regards the doctrine of accent and quantity,[4] is an 'apostate', that is to say, it cares as much for them as I do for the blessing of our Family-Priest! If your friends know English, let them read the *Paradise Lost*, and they will find how the verse, in which the Bengali poetaster writes, is constructed. The fact is, my dear fellow, that the prevalence of Blank Verse in this country, is simply a question of time. Let your friends guide their voices by the pause (as in English Blank Verse) and they will soon swear that this is the noblest measure in the Language. My advice is Read, Read, Read. Teach your ears the new tune and then you will find out what it is.

Let your friends guide their voices by the pause. This, to me, is the fundamental principle, and the one on which I have based my own way of translating Madhusudan's blank verse. Steeped in Milton as he was, he realised that *phrasing* – the length and balance of phrases, the placing of pauses in the line or sentence or paragraph – is just as important in Milton's bank verse (or in any good blank verse) as the metre. He wanted his readers to grasp that the beauty and music of his Bengali blank verse lay in the phrasing, a phrase being defined by the 'pause' or *yati* coming before or after it. Clint's method is to let his voice be guided by the syllable. I do not think that was Madhusudan's way.

My own verse principle in translating *Meghanad-badh kabya* is as simple as Clint's, but is utterly different. My lines are based on a count of three *phrases*, a phrase being defined by the pause before or after it that is indicated by any kind of punctuation mark. I am not interested in syllables, or in metre: translating the epic into English blank verse was an option I never considered, as I knew if I did that it would come out as a bad pastiche of Milton or Wordsworth.[5] I *am* however interested in the line as a recognisable, audible unit, and I believe that if you read my translation

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[3] Shall I compare thee to a summer's day, says the metre, but no one would speak the line like that: '**Shall** I com**pare** thee to a **su**mmer's **day**?' would be one way of saying it, with already a beautiful counterpoint in that the metre predicts a stress on 'to' but the natural speech stress denies a stress on that word.

[4] Madhusudan is referring here to the system of 'long' and 'short' syllables that governs the metres of Sanskrit, Greek and Latin poetry, which is quite different from metres based (as in English metrical verse) on syllable-stress.

[5] A translation of the whole epic into quite competent English blank verse was in fact done by Rajendranath Sen, published in Benares in 1926. It was Clinton Seely who drew my attention to this translation, when I was working on my D.Phil thesis. There is a copy in the British Library, maybe the only one in existence.

of the epic you will quickly build up a sense of a three-phrase line, even though the phrases can vary hugely in length. The extract above has not been well set out on the page: you really need the page to be in the landscape position, so that the long lines can be spread across the page, without breaking them up. Like Clint, I observe the discipline that a paragraph has to end with a complete line. But to my ear, the advantage of my method is that the ear can *hear* the last line of a paragraph – or indeed any line – as a line, just as the Bengali ear hears Madhusudan's lines as lines, particularly at the end of a paragraph, where there is immense aural satisfaction in the way he concludes with a complete line, despite the pauses earlier in the paragraph coming anywhere in a line.

Only time will tell whether my way of translating Madhusudan's blank verse works for non-Bengali readers, or for Bengali readers curious to see (and hear) what I have done. But I have been encouraged from the beginning by Bengali friends saying that when they read my translation it is if they are hearing the rhythm and music of Madhusudan's Bengali blank verse. If that is so, it can only be because I have followed his own prescription and have let my voice be guided by the pause.

Does my translation capture his effects of *metre*? Not in any systematic or formal sense, as I have not used metre. But I do like to think that I have in places captured his syncopations, often by translating his words with surprising literalness. Thus from the opening invocation:

> I adore your lotus-feet, base-minded as I am, I call you again,
> White-armed Bharati! In the same way, mother,
> That you came and sat on the tongue of Valmiki (as on a lotus-seat) when,
> With the sharpest of arrows, in the deep forest, the huntsman pierced the heron when the heron was with its mate,
> Come, chaste one, and do kindness to your servant.
> Who on this planet knows your might? The man who had been the vilest man of the race of men, engaged in robbery,
> Became by your grace immortal, immortal as the lord of Uma! O boon-giver,
> By your boon the robber Ratnakar is the poet who is the mine of the gems of poetry! By your touch, the poison-tree takes on the goodness of the beautiful sandal-tree!

I haven't analysed this fully yet, but it is something to do with alternating patterns of rapid and slow syllables. 'Base-minded' … 'white-armed'… move slowly; whereas to my ear there is a tabla-like rapidity in 'the huntsman pierced the heron when the heron was with its mate'. This is not like the 'held' sounds in *kr<u>aunc</u>abadh-saha kr<u>aunc</u>e nishad bindhila*...but I think there may be an equivalent sort of patterning based on contrast.

Why three phrases per line? Well, this arose from careful structural analysis of Madhusudan's sentences, paragraphs, individual *sarga*s (Books) of the epic and the structure of the epic as a whole. I found – and I explored this at some length in my D.Phil thesis – that groups of three came naturally and repeatedly to Madhusudan. So I based my lines of groups of three phrases. This was a structure that seemed to go deep into the heart and soul of the poem.

My focus in these reflections has been on verse technique, not just because my and Clinton Seely's differing methods offer the most striking divergence between our translations, but because for me so much *else* in Madhusudan's personality and literary achievements stems from the fundamental sound, music, energy – call it what

you will – of his blank verse. And not just the verse structure, but his punctuation and paragraphing too! I ended that sentence with an exclamation mark. Why? Because there is a flamboyance in Madhusudan's verse that his prolific use of exclamation marks epitomises. So crucial are these exclamation marks, it seems to me, that I have based a whole lecture on a discussion of them. Entitled 'Confession versus the exclamation mark: why Rabindranath Tagore did not like the poetry of Michael Madhusudan Dutt', I delivered this lecture at Rice University, Houston, in February 2004. I tried to show that the gulf between Tagore and Madhusudan, in temperament and literary taste, can be closely related to the play-acting, frivolous, flamboyant, exuberant, impious, ambiguous, reckless personality that all those exclamation marks conveyed. Clint in his translation reduces the number of exclamation marks, writing in his section 'On Translation': 'I must admit to diminishing slightly the number of exclamation marks, however. Datta, in his letters, in his poetry, and in life, is exuberantly exclamatory.'

I know why Clint has done that, and I was tempted for a while to do the same. Such a plethora of exclamation marks is a breach of literary decorum of precisely the sort that Rabindranath objected to in Madhusudan. But if Madhudusan was always 'exuberantly exclamatory', shouldn't a translation of his poetry be equally exuberant and exclamatory? Is it fair to put him into more sober dress – especially when he was famous in life for revelling in flamboyant and unexpected dress, whether Western or Indian?

The discipline of Madhusudan's paragraphing, however, I would relate to his mastery of structure in the epic as a whole. Clint says 'I have adhered to Datta's own paragraph divisions'. In the extract I quoted earlier – the description of Queen Chitrangada's grief – he actually departs from this adherence, coalescing this paragraph with the one before (which is why the extract started in the middle of a line with 'Suddenly'). I think that was probably just a slip. But it is a slip that might perhaps reveal some overlooking of the rigour and rhythm of Madhusudan's paragraph divisions.[6] Learning again from that master of the verse paragraph, John Milton, he knew that structure in epic poetry is built up by variations in lengths of paragraphs, just as it grows at an even more fundamental level from variations in lengths of phrases.

I'll end these reflections at a point where my debate with Clint over his translation and presentation of Madhusudan will probably resume, next time I look at *The Slaying of Meghanad*: his lucid Introduction, and the emphases of analysis and interpretation to be found in it. I think, when I do this, I shall find that aspects of the epic that I would want to bring out will all be linked to my different way of reading, hearing and translating his blank verse. For me – related as my study of him has been to my own poetic output – reading *Meghanad-badh kabya* has always been a more emotional and also perhaps a funnier experience than I suspect it has been for Clint. For me, the poem is inseparable from the heights and depths of his life: his ambition, his recklessness, his virility, the tragedy of the adultery that led to the break-up of his marriage, the loneliness of his ostracism by his relatives or of his exile in Madras and France, the alcoholism that led to the deaths, within three days of each other, both of him and his mistress Henrietta. At the core of the epic, for me, is the *kausala*, the

[6] In Dinanath Sannyal's annotated edition of the epic, there is a paragraph division here. In another edition I have to hand – by Ajit Kumar Ghosh – the paragraph is connected to the one before, and this must explain why Clint also connects it. But everything about the way in which Madhusudan organises his paragraphs suggests to me that the paragraph should start here, with *hena kale* ('At such a time/at this moment…').

dastardly trick by which Meghanad is killed by Lakshman in the climactic Book VI of the epic; or the sense of *bidhi* (fate) that torments Ravana; or the recognition of Ravana's *pap* (sin) that brings all the gods eventually on to the side of 'Ram and his rabble'. Clint himself makes some interesting connections between the life and the work (finding, for example, in Madhusudan's projection of Meghanad as a pious and dutiful son, reflection of the guilt that he had not been so dutiful to his own father), but I would want to emphasise the deeper, more tempestuous links that have been explored so compellingly by Ghulam Murshid in his biography of Madhusudan.[7]

I would also want to bring out the humour. For me, Madhusudan is always a witty writer, always hard to pin down to sincerity or seriousness, though he took his vocation as a poet with profound seriousness. Take, for example, his English essay on 'The Anglo-Saxon and the Hindu', in which he dilates on how it is 'the Mission of the Anglo-Saxon to renovate, to regenerate, or – in one word, to Christianize the Hindu.' Clint quotes from this essay when writing in his Introduction of the victory in nineteenth century Kolkata of the Anglicists over the Orientalists. But does he find it as *funny* as I do? Funny in a way that would have exasperated Rabindranath, who was always sincere, always unambiguous, always knew what he meant and said what he meant.

It's easy enough to sketch all this out; much harder to get it all down in a finished, polished, scholarly book such as Clinton Seely's *The Slaying of Meghanada.* I am so grateful to him for completing and publishing his book! It challenges me to complete and publish mine. He was right to tell me not to be daunted. And if I do live to complete it, he will be the first person I shall thank, with an inscribed copy, just as he so generously inscribed and presented me with his.

Lund, July 2004

[7] Now available from OUP in Delhi in an abridged but highly readable English version by Gopa Majumdar, as *Lured by Hope: A Biography of Michael Madhusudan Dutt* (2003).