



Nepali Visions, Nepali Dreams: The Poetry of Laxmiprasad Devkota

By *Laxmiprasad Devkota*

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Although the tradition of serious literature in Nepal extends back several centuries, most of Nepal's major literary works have been written since World War I. This comparatively young literature reached full maturity in the work of Laxmiprasad Devkota (1909-1959), who wrote in all the principal genres of prose and verse, treating contemporary issues, themes from Sanskrit epic and drama, and subjects from Greek mythology including Prometheus and Circe.

At the time of his death, Devkota left behind an immense body of work, much of it unpublished, some of it lost, and some apparently plagiarized by other poets. Untangling many of the ambiguities surrounding the composition of Devkota's poetry, *Nepali Visions, Nepali Dreams* presents an extended essay on the poet's life and career, along with translations of 45 poems ranging from short lyrics to lengthy philosophical and satiric works. David Rubin has drawn upon published works currently in print, privately published works, and poems existing solely in the pages of elusive Nepali literary journals to present the first collection in English of Devkota's complex, vigorous poetry.

Among the poems translated in *Nepali Visions, Nepali Dreams* are "Pilgrim," which satirizes conventional religious ideas; "Memory," a reflection of Devkota's early fascination with Wordsworth; "Crazy," which recalls the poet's four-month stay at a sanitarium recovering from severe mental depression; and "To A Dark Cloudy Night," where Devkota writes: "Great sleep / descending to earth on unmoving feet / shutting in the earth / light's negation from the underworld / before the horror of you / living souls must close their eyes / and swoon away."

The David Rubin Collection seeks to assemble the fiction, non-fiction, translations and poetry of the late American novelist and scholar David Rubin. While best known for his translations of Indian writers Premchand and Nirala, David was also a master storyteller. His 1963 novel, *The Greater Darkness*, won the British Authors' Club award for that year's best first novel. He remained a prolific writer until his death in 2008. His works are archived at the Howard

Gotlieb Archival Research Center at Boston University. For more information please visit davidrubinsindia.com.

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