

Book on birth of Bangladesh as told through cinema

New Delhi, Oct 25 (PTI) An Australian writer and an Indian publisher have come together to provide what veteran director Buddhadeb Dasgupta describes as a "very original work interpreting the story of" the birth of Bangladesh as told through cinema.

"The cinema of Bangladesh is not as well known as it deserves to be outside of its own country," runs the opening sentence of Dasgupta's blurb for Australian writer John W Hood's forthcoming book "The Bleeding Lotus: Notions of Nation in Bangladeshi Cinema" published by New Delhi-based Palimpsest.

This is for the first time that a book in English on the subject has been written by a non-Bangladeshi and published by an Indian firm which not coincidentally began its journey three years ago by publishing the English translation "Freedom's Mother" of Bangladeshi writer-journalist Anisul Hoque's popular novel "Maa".

"The Bleeding Lotus" traces the evolution of nationalism leading to the emergence of Bangladesh and discusses in great detail the works - feature and documentary films - of all top directors of meaningful cinema of that country like Morshedul Islam, Chasi Nazrul Islam, Tanvir Mokammel, Shameem Akhtar, Tareque Masud, Humayun Ahmed, Kowser Choudhury, Sajjad Bokul, A Sajib Ashiq and Toquir Ahmed who have used the liberation war as the backdrop for their films.

Many of these directors' works have been shown in international film festivals across the world, with a few them winning awards. Overcoming the problems funds in making technically high quality films and often struggling lack of screening outlets, these directors have nonetheless stuck in their own ways to make the world take note of meaningful cinema in Bangladesh.

One, therefore, cannot but concur with Dasgupta when he says, "Hood has done Bangladesh and its filmmakers a great service in giving us this very original work interpreting the story of a nation's birth as told through cinema" and that "'The Bleeding Lotus' is an important contribution to cinema studies as well as to an appreciation of the agonies endured by a nation not even half a century old."

Palimpsest CEO Bhaskar Roy says, "Lovers and students of cinema now look at Bangladesh the way we discovered Latin America through it 25-30 years ago. There is a new focus on Bangladeshi cinema; the world wants to know more about its films and their makers. For the West, Bangladesh is still undiscovered and therefore has a lot to offer. John Hood is one of the foremost authorities on parallel cinema in both India and Bangladesh.