



RASH BEHARI BOSE: UNSUNG FREEDOM FIGHTER

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ABSTRACT

Rash Behari Bose is well-known in Japan for the Nakamura-ya no Indo Cre (Indian curry of Nakamura shop). Presently they have some chain shops in Japan and it is very famous among the Japanese people. Rash Behari Bose introduced Indian curry in Japan, carrying the real taste of India with it. Presently there are many Indian shops throughout Japan but the Nakamura's curry remains different and unique. Apart from this, his contribution in Indian independence is unforgettable. His connection with many Japanese nationals and high-level officers helped Indian independence movement in various ways. He left India and became stateless until his marriage in Japan. His role in the independence movement is often overlooked in India, but people of Japan still remember him and love to go to Nakamura shop and enjoy the taste of Indian curry.

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INTRODUCTION

Friendship of India and Japan began in the early days of 6th century, not through the direct connection of these two nations but through the introduction of Buddhism which travelled to Japan via China and Korea. Bodhisena can be considered the first Indian, who reached Japan in the year 736 and stayed there until his demise. The Indo-Japan relation became stronger after the Meiji restoration in 1868, when Japan opened herself for all the world after 260 years of isolation. Swami Vivekananda, the Bengali saint visited Japan on his way to Chicago in 1893. He was very much impressed by Japan, and recommended Bengali youths to visit Japan for inspiration. This statement is enough to understand, how much admiration he felt for the nation. Many people from Bengal (undivided Bengal) visited Japan at the beginning of 20th century, for study purpose or cultural exchange. Rabindranath Tagore established his school *Brahmacharyashram* in Santiniketan in 1901 and Hori Shitoku came to Santiniketan and became the first foreign student of Tagore's school. He learned Sanskrit language at Belur Math and Tagore's school. Sureshchandra

Bandopadhyay (1906), Manmathanath Ghosh (1906) went to Japan for study. Hariprabha Mallik married a Japanese National named Uemon Takeda and went to visit her in-laws house (1912). In 1916 Tagore visited Japan for the first time. These exchanges are basically considered as cultural and academic exchanges. On the other hand, Justice Radha Binod Pal, Rash Behari Bose and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, are very prominent faces of India Japan relation in the field of politics and friendship.

Rash Behari Bose in his early life: Rash Behari Bose was Born in East Bardwan district, West Bengal, India, but at that time it was undivided Bengal, in the year 1886, May 25. He is the son of Binod Behari Bose and Bhubaneswari Devi. He was a revolutionary leader of Indian freedom movement. He moved to Hooghly as his father moved there and studied at Duplex College where he became friends with Shrish Chandra Ghosh. He moved to Morton school from Duplex College. Later he received his Medical Science degree. He did not stop there and received Engineering degree from France and Germany. He joined as a head clerk at Forest Research Institute at Dehradun where he met Jatin Mukherjee, who is well-known as Bagha Jatin in Bengal. He was involved with the revolutionaries of Bengal at a very young age. In 1912, December 23 at Delhi, Rash Behari Bose planned to kill the British Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, when the ceremonial procession of transferring the capital from Calcutta to Delhi was taking place.

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Lord Hardinge was attacked near the Lal Kella or Red fort by Basanta Kumar Biswas, but he missed the target and the mission failed. The police started searching for Rash Behari Bose for actively participating in the failed assassination attempt. Rash Behari Bose escaped from India in 1915 and moved to Japan. Due to the possibility of getting captured, he used the name Priyanath Tagore, and identified himself as a relative of Rabindranath Tagore.

Bose, Japan and Indian independence movement activities:

Rash Behari Bose stayed at Shinjuku with Soma family. Aizo Soma and Kokko Soma were the owner of Nakamura bakery. While Rash Behari Bose worked at Soma's bakery, his Indian curry became popular and it was known as Nakamura curry. When Bose saw that the curry that was usually sold in Japan was not like the ones which were usually prepared by Indian households, he started selling the Indian curry in his shop and surprisingly it was loved by the Japanese people. At that time the price of curry in other western shops was around 10-12 sen¹ while the price in Nakamura was around 80 sen but still it was sold out. This curry was widely known as 'Taste of Love and Revolution' carrying a symbolic meaning that connected with the Indian independence movement. Later, with the advice of Mitsuru Toyama, Rash Behari Bose married Toshiko Soma who was the daughter of Aizo Soma and Kokko Soma. They had a beautiful married life of eight years. Bose became the citizen of Japan in the year 1923 after eight years of stateless life. They had two children, Masahide Bose and Tetsuko Bose. Masahide Bose is also known as Bharat Chandra. They were born in 1920 and 1922 respectively. Rash Behari Bose never considered marrying again after the demise of Toshiko Soma, and after his demise he was also buried with her.

He was very much fluent in Japanese and he had good connections with political leaders, which can be found in his works, writings and translations. During the World War II, Bose delivered lectures on India related matters in a conference at Tokyo, March 1942. His second conference was at Bangkok in June 1942. The Indian Independence League was already formed after the first conference at Tokyo. He also wrote in various magazines like 'Kaizou', 'Touhoujiron', and 'Gekkannihon' about the freedom movement of India, with his persevering effort, the wheel of forming army for Indian independence started rolling. 12,000 Indian war prisoners were released by the Japanese army. Indian war prisoners were motivated to join the Indian National Army (INA) for the independence of the mother land. Captain Mohan Singh and Sardar Pritam Singh played a major role to unite the people of British Indian Army to support Rash Behari Bose to form the Indian National Army. In 1942 September 1, the army was formed and the Azad Hind flag was chosen.

Two Bose in the land of rising sun: Rash Behari Bose chose Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to handover the Azad Hind Flag and his Azad Hind Bahini or Fauz (The Indian National Army). He knew that, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was the 'Person of Today'. The historical meeting of the two Bose took place at Imperial Hotel at Tokyo, room no 217, at 5 pm 1943 June 1. Rash Behari Bose introduced Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to the people those who were fighting for Indian independence in July 4, at Singapore. In this public meeting he said,

"I have brought you one of the most outstanding personalities of our motherland. I resign from my office as President of the Indian Independence League in East Asia. From now on Subhas Chandra Bose is your leader in the fight for independence".² This shows his true love for the nation, because he knew that his health was not good at that time and decided to hand over his army to someone who could organize the army and continue his fight for the independence of India. After Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose became the President of Indian National Army, he requested Rash Behari Bose to be his advisor to show his respect for the senior revolutionary. Rash Behari Bose was very much ill in 1944 February and was advised to rest. Tetsuko was with him all the time, and his brother Masahide had returned from a battle of Indian National Army. His health gradually decreased and one side of his body became paralyzed. He did not see his dream of free India fulfilled because, he took his last breath at the age of 58, in 1945 January 21. In the year 1943 the Japanese Government honored him with the Order of the Rising Sun, and in India in the year 1967, special postage stamp in honor of Rash Behari Bose was issued. During his stay in Japan, he met Aiyappan Pillai Madhavan Nair, who is well-known as Nair San in Japan. He studied engineering at Kyoto University. He joined the Indian freedom movement and he also helped Rash Behari Bose to form the Indian Independence League and Indian National Army during World War II. In the year 1949, Nair opened an Indian restaurant at Ginza, Tokyo.

CONCLUSION

We can easily say that Rash Behari Bose gave his life for his mother land. Although later he became a Japanese national but he continued his fight to liberate India. A clear picture of his vision can be seen from his speeches and his writings. It is very sad that he was not able to see the free India but his contribution is always remembered with pride. Even at present people can enjoy the atmosphere of India and its taste with delicious food at the Nakamura shop.

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¹old Japanese currency, 1/100 Japanese Yen

²<https://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/unsung-warriorii-1502765179.html> (12.10.2020)