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INTRODUCTION

1. Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore (Bengali: রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর; 7 May 1861 – 7 August 1941) was a Bengali polymath who reshaped literature and music of Bengal. Author of Gitanjali and its "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse", he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. In translation his poetry was viewed as spiritual and mercurial; his seemingly mesmeric personality, flowing hair, and other-worldly dress earned him a prophet-like reputation in the West. His "elegant prose and magical poetry" remain largely unknown outside Bengal. Tagore introduced new prose and verse forms and the use of colloquial language into Bengali literature, thereby freeing it from traditional models based on classical Sanskrit. He was highly influential in introducing the best of Indian culture to the West and vice versa, and he is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of modern India.

A Brahmin from Calcutta, Tagore wrote poetry as an eight-year-old. At age sixteen, he released his first substantial poems under the pseudonym Bhānusinṭha ("Sun Lion"), which were seized upon by literary authorities as long-lost classics. He graduated to his first short stories and dramas—and the aegis of his birth name—by 1877. As a humanist, Universalist internationalist, and strident anti-nationalist he denounced the Raj and advocated independence from Britain. As an exponent of the Bengal Renaissance, he advanced a vast canon that comprised paintings, sketches and doodles, hundreds of texts, and some two thousand songs; his legacy endures also in the institution he founded, Viswa-Bharati University.

Tagore modernised Bengali art by spurning rigid classical forms and resisting linguistic strictures. His novels, stories, songs, dance-dramas, and essays spoke to topics political and personal. Gitanjali (Song Offerings), Gora (Fair-Faced), and Ghare-Baire (The Home and the World) are his best-known works, and his verse, short stories, and novels were acclaimed—or panned—for their lyricism, colloquialism, naturalism, and unnatural contemplation. His compositions were chosen by two nations as national anthems: The Republic of India's Jana Gana Mana and Bangladesh's Amar Shonar Bangla.

If there’s one thing that the Indian poet and writer Rabindranath Tagore stood for, in the minds of Europeans in the nineteen-tens, it was the possibility that saintliness could still exist in the modern world. William Butler Yeats’s introduction to “Gitanjali” was the booster rocket that launched Tagore’s name into worldwide orbit, and its whole premise was that Tagore’s poems were more than literature. They were sacred wisdom, an ancient Indian cure for a modern Western sickness. Tagore does seem to present himself in just these terms: a holy man living in a timeless world, communing ecstatically with nature and God. Tagore’s works have in them simplicity and profoundness together.

2. Confluence of Cultures

Rabindranath did come from a Hindu family—one of the landed gentry who owned estates mostly in what is now Bangladesh. But whatever wisdom there might be in Akhmatova’s invoking of Hinduism and the Ganges, it did not prevent the largely Muslim citizens of Bangladesh from having a deep sense of identity with Tagore and his ideas. Nor did it stop the newly independent Bangladesh from choosing one
of Tagore's songs—the "Amar Sonar Bangla" which means "my golden Bengal"—as its national anthem. This must be very confusing to those who see the contemporary world as a "clash of civilizations"—with "the Muslim civilization," "the Hindu civilization," and "the Western civilization," each forcefully confronting the others. They would also be confused by Rabindranath Tagore's own description of his Bengali family as the product of "a confluence of three cultures: Hindu, Mohammedan, and British".

Rabindranath's grandfather, Dwarkanath, was well known for his command of Arabic and Persian, and Rabindranath grew up in a family atmosphere in which a deep knowledge of Sanskrit and ancient Hindu texts was combined with an understanding of Islamic traditions as well as Persian literature. It is not so much that Rabindranath tried to produce—or had an interest in producing—a "synthesis" of the different religions (as the great Moghul emperor Akbar tried hard to achieve) as that his outlook was persistently non-sectarian, and his writings—some two hundred books—show the influence of different parts of the Indian cultural background as well as of the rest of the world.

3. East and West

Given the vast range of his creative achievements, perhaps the most astonishing aspect of the image of Tagore in the West is its narrowness; he is recurrently viewed as "the great mystic from the East," an image with a putative which some would and still others find deeply this Tagore was the West's tradition of message-particularly from India, had "existed for millennia in Europeans." Friedrich and Schopenhauer were who followed the same first, that India was the Schopenhauer at one stage Testament "must somehow attested by its completely transforms morals into its avatar," in "the they rejected their own vehemence, sometimes up to their unfounded imagine that Rabindranath's handsome, bearded, clothes—may, to some extent, have encouraged his being seen as a carrier of exotic wisdom. Yasunari Kawabata, the first Japanese Nobel Laureate in Literature, treasured memories from his middle-school days of "this sage-like poet".

His white hair flowed softly down both sides of his forehead; the tufts of hair under the temples also were long like two beards, and linking up with the hair on his cheeks, continued into his beard, so that he gave an impression, to the boy I was then, of some ancient Oriental wizard. That appearance would have been well-suited to the selling of Tagore in the West as a quintessentially
mystical poet, and it could have made it somewhat easier to pigeonhole him. Commenting on Rabindranath's appearance, Frances Cornford told William Rothenstein, "I can now imagine a powerful and gentle Christ, which I never could before." Beatrice Webb, who did not like Tagore and resented what she took to be his "quite obvious dislike of all that the Webbs stand for" said that he was "beautiful to look at" and that "his speech has the perfect intonation and slow chant-like moderation of the dramatic saint." Ezra Pound and W. B. Yeats, among others, first led the chorus of adoration in the Western appreciation of Tagore, and then soon moved to neglect and even shrill criticism. The contrast between Yeats's praise of his work in 1912 and his denunciation in 1935 ("Damn Tagore") arose partly from the inability of Tagore's many-sided writings to fit into the narrow box in which Yeats wanted to place—and keep—him. Certainly, Tagore did write a huge amount, and published ceaselessly, even in English (sometimes in indifferent English translation), but Yeats was also bothered, it is clear, by the difficulty of fitting Tagore's later writings into the image Yeats had presented to the West. Tagore, he had said, was the product of "a whole people, a whole civilization, immeasurably strange to us," and yet "we have met our own image, or perhaps, for the first time in literature, our voice as in a dream."

Yeats did not totally reject his early admiration (as Ezra Pound and several others did), and he included some of Tagore's early poems in The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, which he edited in 1936. Yeats also had some favourable things to say about Tagore's prose writings. His censure of Tagore's later poems was reinforced by his dislike of Tagore's own English translations of his work ("Tagore does not know English, no Indian knows English," Yeats explained), unlike the English version of Gitanjali which Yeats had himself helped to prepare. Poetry is, of course, notoriously difficult to translate, and anyone who knows Tagore's poems in their original Bengali cannot feel satisfied with any of the translations (made with or without Yeats's help). Even the translations of his prose works suffer, to some extent, from distortion. E.M. Forster noted, in a review of a translation of one of Tagore's great Bengali novels, The Home and the World, in 1919: "The theme is so beautiful," but the charms have "vanished in translation," or perhaps "in an experiment that has not quite come off."

Tagore himself played a somewhat bemused part in the boom and bust of his English reputation. He accepted the extravagant praise with much surprise as well as pleasure, and then received denunciations with even greater surprise, and barely concealed pain. Tagore was sensitive to criticism, and was hurt by even the most far-fetched accusations, such as the charge that he was getting credit for the work of Yeats, who had "rewritten" Gitanjali. From time to time Tagore also protested the crudity of some of his overexcited advocates.

He wrote to C.F. Andrews in 1920: "These people are like drunkards afraid of their lucid intervals." Yeats was not wrong to see a large religious element in Tagore's writings. He certainly had interesting and arresting things to say about life and death. Susan Owen, the mother of Wilfred Owen, wrote to Rabindranath in 1920, describing her last conversations with her son before he left for the war which would take his life. Wilfred said goodbye with "those wonderful words of yours—beginning at 'When I go from hence, let this be my parting word.'" When Wilfred's pocket notebook was returned to his mother, she found "these words written in his dear writing—with your name beneath."

The idea of a direct, joyful, and totally fearless relationship with God can be found in many of Tagore's religious writings, including the poems of Gitanjali. From India's diverse religious traditions he drew many ideas, both from ancient texts and from popular poetry. But "the bright pebbly eyes of the Theosophists" do not stare out of his verses. Despite the archaic language of the original translation of Gitanjali, which did not, I believe, help to preserve the simplicity of the original, its elementary humanity comes through more clearly than any complex and intense spirituality:
“Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads!

Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?

Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path maker is breaking stones.

He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust.”

(Translation from “Dhulamandir”)

An ambiguity about religious experience is central to many of Tagore's devotional poems, and makes the poems appeal to readers irrespective of their beliefs; but excessively detailed interpretation can ruinously strip away that ambiguity. This applies particularly to his many poems which combine images of human love and those of pious devotion.

Tagore writes:

“I have no sleep to-night. Ever and again I open my door and look out on the darkness, my friend!

I can see nothing before me. I wonder where thy path lies!

By what dim shore of the ink-black river, by what far edge of the frowning forest,

Through what mazy depth of gloom, art thou threading thy course to come to see me, my friend?”

Yeats explains, "The servant or the bride awaiting the master's home-coming in the empty house" is "among the images of the heart turning to God." But in Yeats's considerate attempt to make sure that the reader does not miss the "main point," something of the enigmatic beauty of the Bengali poem is lost - even what had survived the antiquated language of the English translation. Tagore certainly had strongly held religious beliefs (of an unusually nondenominational kind), but he was interested in a great many other things as well and had many different things to say about them.

Some of the ideas he tried to present were directly political, and they figure rather prominently in his letters and lectures. He had practical, plainly expressed views about nationalism, war and peace, cross-cultural education, freedom of the mind, the importance of rational criticism, the need for openness, and so on. His admirers in the West, however, were tuned to the more otherworldly themes which had been emphasised by his first Western patrons. People came to his public lectures in Europe and America, expecting ruminations on grand, transcendental themes; when they heard instead his views on the way public leaders should behave, there was some resentment, particularly (as E.P. Thompson reports) when he delivered political criticism.
踉踉跄跄地跑了一阵子，突然发现自己已经来到了一个陌生的地方。这里是一片茂密的森林，树木高大，枝叶茂盛。阳光透过树叶的缝隙洒在地面上，形成斑驳的光影。空气中弥漫着泥土和树叶的清新气息。

随着日光的移动，影子也在不断地变化着。抬头望去，蔚蓝的天空中飘着几朵白云，显得格外宁静。在这片森林里，似乎一切都显得那么和谐而美丽。

正当我在欣赏这美丽的景色时，突然听到远处传来了一阵轻微的响声。循声望去，只见一只小鹿从草丛中探出头来，好奇地望着我。

我不禁被它的可爱模样所吸引，慢慢地向它走去。小鹿似乎并不害怕我，反而显得很轻松自在。

就在这时，一只小鸟从树上飞了下来，落在我的肩膀上。它张开翅膀，似乎在向我展示它的美丽。

在与小鹿和小鸟的互动中，我深深地感受到了大自然的奇妙和美丽。这片森林，宛如一个神秘而宁静的世界，让人流连忘返。

日落时分，我收拾好行囊，继续踏上征途。虽然前方的道路充满了未知和挑战，但我相信，只要我们怀揣着一颗敬畏之心，就一定能够战胜一切困难，找到属于自己的那份宁静和美好。
POEMS, PLAYS, SHORT STORIES AND NOVELS

PAPER BOATS

Day by day I float my paper boats one by one down the running stream.
In bid black letters I write my name on them and the name of the village where I live.
I hope that someone in some strange land will find them and know who I am.
I load my little boats with shiuli flower from our garden, and hope that these blooms of the dawn will be carried safely to land in the night.
I launch my paper boats and look up into the sky and see the little clouds setting thee white bulging sails.
I know not what playmate of mine in the sky sends them down the air to race with my boats!
When night comes I bury my face in my arms and dream that my paper boats float on and on under the midnight stars.
The fairies of sleep are sailing in them, and the lading in their baskets full of dreams.

-Rabindranath Tagore
Critical Analysis

Rabindranath Tagore is an outstanding poet of modern India. Primarily he was a Bengali poet. But he was equally a master at writing in English. He translated many of his works into English. His poetry shows his deep humanism. His is a universal message of peace, love and joy. He transcends the barriers of space and time. So his poetry has a universal appeal.

'Paper Boats' is a nice poem of Tagore, taken from his collection, "The Crescent Moon." This poem is on a childhood experience. Like Wordsworth and Walter de la Mare, Tagore also found in children a mystic quality. The poem narrates the child’s, experience of floating paper boats down the stream. The child imagines that some other child tries to compete with his boats by sending clouds down the air in the sky.

The poem shows the child’s peculiar psychology.

The child loves the worlds of playfulness and fun. Day by day he floats paper boats down the running stream. He sends them with the intention that they would reach some distant lands. Out of curiosity he writes his name and address on those boats. He fondly hopes that somewhere someone will find them and know him:-

“I hope that someone in some strange land will find
Them and know who I am."

The child has always a deep sense of love. He wishes to present the unknown friend with valuable gifts. So he loads his boats with flowers from his garden. He hopes that the boats will carry the flowers safely to the distant land in the night-

"And hope that these blooms of the dawn
will be carried safely to land in the night."

When the child looks up, he sees the white clouds sailing in the sky-

"See the little clouds setting their white bulging sails."

He imagines that he has a friend in the sky. He thinking that the other child sends white clouds down the air to compete with his boats-

‘I know not what playmate of mine in the sky sends
Them down the air to race with my boats!’

At night he sees dreams in his sleep. He dreams about his paper boats. In the dream he is happy to know that angles are sailing in his boats.

Thus the poem shows Tagore's keen insight into the child's mind.
‘My Song’ is a poem by the acclaimed poet Rabindranath Tagore. It takes the form of advice from a mother to a child. As she sings the song, the child gets enchanted by the sweet tune which seems to caress and fondle him just as the loving arms of his mother. Like a mother lovingly kisses her child on the forehead as a blessing, the song too is akin to a blessing which will ward against all danger and strife. When the child feels lonely, his mother’s song will give him the much needed company and friendship, and when he is one among the teeming masses, the song will be a protective barrier making him similar to the others, yet different in subtle ways. The song will give the child confidence and the inspiration to dream and make him believe that he can scale the unscalable, defeat the undefeatable and know the unknown. The song will be his guiding light, as constant as the Pole Star, which will keep him on the right road during dark and dangerous times and not allow him to stray. The song will be the light of truth which will give the true picture of the world to him rather than shielding it behind a facade. It will empower him with a clean perception which will allow him to see the world in true light. And when the mother’s material presence is no longer there, the song will reside in his heart forever, embodying her spirit.
WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR

The poem “Where The Mind Is Without Fear” written by Kaviguru Rabindranath Tagore speaks about his dream about an ideal world, a world where everyone holds his head high, is brave and true at heart. They are not cowed down by the burden of superstition and age-old rituals and practices which have no relevance in today’s world. Theirs is a world where the gift of knowledge is not restricted to a chosen few, either by purpose or due to the vagaries of circumstances. Instead, everybody is illuminated by its pristine light. In that world, there are no petty feuds and people do not discriminate amongst themselves. Instead, they work towards the improvement of a larger global fraternity. Each person in that world has an ocean of truth in their hearts from where the pearls of wisdom in the form of words emerge. When it comes to speaking the truth, they are as constant as the needle of a compass. The population in the poet’s ideal world does not carry the burdens of fear and superstition of countless generations. They look at the world and arrive at their own decisions and instead of being shown a biased opinion based on unfair practices. They have utmost belief in themselves and they dare to dream. Reason governs their ideals and it shines through every action of theirs. They are not locked in a groove of useless habits which have no relevance in the modern world. These people, says the poet, have an unshakable belief in God who governs each and every action of theirs and leads them through the path of truth, honesty, integrity and development. Thus the poet wants India to wake up from the nightmare of discrimination, poverty, illiteracy and bondage, and develop into a world where its people would enjoy true freedom.
POSTMASTER (Short Story)

Summary and Critical Analysis

In the small village of Ulapur, an Englishman who owns an indigo factory near it manages to get a post office established. A postmaster from Calcutta gets separated from his family and transferred to this village. From the noise of the city, he comes to a deserted village with just scattered glimpses of people. Tagore, a lover of nature, uses it to describe the surroundings. The postmaster's office has a green, slimy pond, surrounded by dense vegetation. The way he describes this shows that postmaster is not in a position to appreciate his closeness to nature.

There are three central themes to this story. Firstly, the story revolves around 'longing and separation'; starting and ending with this. The postmaster is taken away from his family and brought to a remote village. He was in a village, where its busy people were no company, and he was left with not much work to do. He tries to pacify his longing emotions by writing poetry. However, the fact that he tries to write something external to him, like nature, makes it an impossible venture. An orphan girl of the village, Ratan, helps him with his daily chores. He speaks to her about his mother and sister in the evenings, and would keep enquiring about her family. He would speak with sadness of all those "memories which were always haunting him".

Secondly, 'companionship', and thirdly 'dependency' can be seen through how the relationship between the postmaster and Ratan grows through the course of this story. Ratan did not have many memories of her family to be recalled. There were only fragments, like pictures, of her father coming home in the evening, and her little brother whom she played with, fishing on the edge of the pond. Once she met the postmaster, 'Dada', she spent her days with him. She would sit outside his shed, being only a call away from him, and doing all the small chores. Dada would share his meals with her. Then in the evenings, she would listen to him talking about his relatives and in imagination make them her own. Tagore translates the longing ringing in Dada's heart to nature, when he says, "A persistent bird repeated all the afternoon the burden of its one complaint in Nature's audience chamber." A man, who initially failed his attempt at verse, thinks of this as parallel to his emotions. Poetry is something that comes from the inner overflow of emotions. He hopes for the presence of a loving human being he could hold close to his heart.

The postmaster can't stand the quietude of Ulapur. He longs for the noises of traffic and life in Calcutta. One evening, he tells Ratan that he is going to teach her to read. She grows closer to him. She sees him as her only relative. She grows dependent.

But, as the season's rain seemed like it would never end, like the constant patter on the roof, Dada was troubled by his heart's exile. He falls sick in his solitude. Ratan takes care of him, and he recovers just taking her presence for granted. But, he then decides that he has to leave this village. He writes an application of transfer, based on the unhealthiness of the village. The transfer is rejected. He tells Ratan that he has resigned and will be leaving the village. She asks him to take her with him. He thinks of it as an absurd idea and is haunted by his reaction. Next morning, she fills a bucket of water for him. He bathes and waits for the next postmaster to arrive.
He consoles Ratan saying that he would inform the postmaster about her. He even offers her some money to keep. She refuses both and expresses that she doesn't want to stay there anymore.

Ratan has lived a life of loneliness. Dada was her only companion, and the only one who seemed to understand her. She is broken, when he has to leave without her. He leaves as soon, as the new postmaster arrives. He hesitates for a moment as the boat leaves, but it is too late for him to take her with him. Tagore illustrates the two ways a human mind works. The postmaster uses the element of philosophy to console himself. He tells himself that meeting, attachment, and departing are all part of life. It will all settle with the passage of time. The wind that fills the sails of the boat indicates the reason the postmaster fills his heart with, as he separates himself from the village. However, Ratan stands outside the office "with tears streaming from her eyes." She has succumbed to a common human folly, as Tagore expresses, of hope. She has been separated from her only bond and now longs for it to return. Tagore ends by saying that humans often fall into hope than seeing the reason, and long before we realize, disappointment becomes too hard to handle.
I had gone a-begging from door to door in the village path, when thy golden chariot appeared in the distance like a gorgeous dream and I wondered who this King of all kings was.

My hopes rose high and me thought my evil days were at an end, and I stood waiting for alms to be given unasked and for wealth scattered on all sides in the dust.

The chariot stopped where I stood. Thy glance fell on me and thou camest down with a smile. I felt at last that the luck of my life had come at last. Then of a sudden thou didst hold out thy right hand and say ‘what hast thou to give to me?’

Ah, what a kingly jest was it to open thy palm to a beggar to beg was confused and stood undecided, and then from my wallet I slowly took out the least little grain of corn and gave it to thee.

But how great my surprise when at the day’s end I emptied my bag on the floor to find a little gram of gold among the poor heap. I bitterly wept and wished that I had had the heart to give thee my all.
Critical Analysis

This poem is an integral part, along with the other compositions of the “Gitanjali”, a time worn creation of Rabindranath Tagore.

In this poem, the narrator is a unfortunate and impoverished beggar who has never visualized light in his life. He wandered about in villages begging so as to keep himself going. On one such day, he had gone out as per his daily routine when suddenly a magnificent chariot, constructed of gold, approached towards him. Since he had never seen anything other than grief and poverty, it seemed to him that the king of all king had arrived. At last luck had favoured him and there might be a drastic change in his life. Thus his hope began to raise high and for all that fortune which was to be scattered on all sides of the dust so that he could collect it all.

The chariot came to rest beside him. The king’s eyes moved towards him and he descended with a magnanimous smile. Then, out of a sudden, the king placed his hand before him and requested him to give him something. This was totally unexpected and surprising. For the beggar as he had expected the opposite incident to occur. He thought that this incident was actually a demonstration of the wit of the king which he thought was a kingly jest. He was a bit confused by this occurrence and could not decide what to do. After some time, he donated the least little grain of corn.

Now comes the most crucial part of the poem, when his daily wandering were completed he opened his wallet and was stunned by what he saw. He noticed a small piece of pure gold among the other collections. He wailed out, sobbed bitterly and wished that he had the mentality to give him all.

In this poem, Rabindranath has artistically exhibited a characteristic trait, common to almost all human beings. It is by character that human beings have the ardent desire to receive things from God or others but not to give others. It is a universal truth that if we give our full service to God we will also be gifted handsomely by him. So we must give our full effort in doing any kind of work for the welfare of mankind as “Service to man is service to God”.
THE POST OFFICE (play)

Summary

The Post Office (Bengali: Dakghar) is a 1912 play by Rabindranath Tagore. It concerns Amal, a child confined to his adopted uncle's home by an incurable disease. The play "continues to occupy a special place in [Tagore's] reputation, both within Bengal and in the wider world. It was written in four day.

Amal stands in Madhav's courtyard and talks to passers-by, and asks in particular about the places they go. The construction of a new post office nearby prompts the imaginative Amal to fantasize about receiving a letter from the King or being his postman. The village headman mocks Amal, and pretends the illiterate child has received a letter from the king promising that his royal physician will come to attend him. The physician really does come, with a herald to announce the imminent arrival of the king; Amal, however, falls asleep (or dies) as Sudha comes to bring him flowers.

Reason behind writing Dakghar

It would be interesting to go through a letter Tagore wrote to Monilal Gangopadhyay (an author of short stories) about the urge of emotions he felt that made him write Dakghar. He writes that he felt that it was time for him to go and before that he would have to travel round the world to know the feelings of happiness and joy and all the exuberance of living that the people have all around. He said that one night when he was all engrossed in the work of his school, he felt that something was coming his way, may be death, and he had to go. And he speaks of expressing this sense of going ....this death...in his Dakghar. But he says he felt no sorrow or no pangs of bereavement and instead there was a peculiar joy that one feels at the time of separation or leave-taking. These words of Tagore very well sum up the philosophy behind his creation of Dakghar.

Influence

W.B. Yeats was the first person to produce an English-language version of the play; he also wrote a preface to it. Juan Ramón Jiménez translated it into Spanish; it was translated into French by André Gide and read on the radio the night before Paris fell to the Nazis. A Polish version was performed under the supervision of Janusz Korczak in the Warsaw ghetto.

Tagore's Dakghar: The Play in the Ghetto

There are innumerable instances of Rabindranath Tagore influencing the lives and thoughts of people all around the world with his writings, songs and paintings. On his 150th birth anniversary it would not be out of place to recollect how one of his most powerful dramas, Dakghar, did wonders to a group of children who were fated to be gassed by the Nazis in Poland by identifying their world with that of Amal. Tagore wrote this drama in 1912 which falls in the beginning of a period which is known as the post-Gitanjali period. During this period of his life one finds spiritualism gradually taking the centre of the stage. Some have classified the play as allegorical while others call it symbolic, but the theme of the play written in a language which he himself called lyrical prose, is the celebration of life and the acceptance of death as a call from beyond. The abstraction is so intense yet so placid that the reader or the viewer
experiences the emotive power that the playwright had brought in the play. The play was translated into English by W.B. Yeats as *The Post Office*, and this brought the play to the world. The translated version was staged in London the next year by an Irish group. It is interesting to note that Juan Ramón Jiménez translated the play into Spanish. The French translation was done by André Gide and was read on the radio the night before Paris fell to the Nazis.

A Polish doctor of Jewish origin, Henryk Goldszmit (1878 - 1942) who was better known as Janusz Korczak, his pen name as a children's author did wonders with this play of Tagore. The following is a brief account of the doctor’s work.

In 1911–1912 Korczak built *Dom Sierot*, an orphanage of his own design for Jewish children in Warsaw. When the Nazis created the Warsaw Ghetto in 1940, his orphanage was forced to move to the ghetto. Korczak moved in with them. It was the typical German Ghetto that treated the Jews as creatures fit for the gutters. There were regulations enforced that condemned the inmates to lives of indignity and humiliation. Terrorizing the residents was the only authoritative governance they could employ. The basic amenities and supplies were dearer and the inhabitants depended on the smugglers to bring them supplies especially bread from across the walls. Things deteriorated fast and in the month of July in 1942 the administration in the name of eliminating smugglers slaughtered people who helped the ghetto inhabitants to get their life sustaining supplies from across the walls. The ambience that prevailed in the ghetto was one of gloominess and despair. This had also percolated into the orphanage that teemed with almost 200 bubbling Jewish kids of all ages.

The doctor was tormented and thought out ways of providing strength of mind to the children so that they can bear any unpleasant eventuality that would come their way. He knew that the children could also confront Death that may come in any guise. He believed that if the kids could be provided with something they could get comfort from they would be ready for any contingency. He planned to present them a metaphysical world which would help them transcend their present state of things. He wrote a fantasy, *Strange Happenings*, which he dedicated to one of the youngest boys in the orphanage, Szymonek Jakubowicz. Here, he tells the story of an astronomer, Professor Zi, who lives on a planet called Ro. The astronomer could develop moral power with which he could bring joy and tranquility everywhere in the universe except on this Earth where people though living together were fighting amongst themselves. He knew that it would not be judicious to coerce them and force them to change their ways and so he let them develop on their own. He believed that the young Earth would learn when time comes.

The doctor devised other methods, too, to involve everyone around to uplift their spirits. He asked the children to write diaries that would act as a catharsis for their inner feelings and also to work for each other. He knew that these were not enough and was in search for more ideas. He knew he needed superhuman power to save the children and ultimately he found the solution in the play, *The Post Office*, by Rabindranath Tagore. The story of the play was about a dying orphan, Amal, who enriches the lives of those who comes in contact with him. Korczak found the content so close to what he had thought about all these days. Yeats in his preface to the play had mentioned about the deliverance sought and won by Amal.
Why Dakghar shook the fascist rulers during World War II

The play — in Bengali and English — travels down history, revealing surprising details about how Tagore's work had touched lives down the years. For instance, French author André Gide had read out a French translation of Dakghar on radio the evening before Paris fell to the Nazis during WW II. At the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland, a doctor and teacher Janusz Korczak had staged the play with orphans, three weeks before they were to be deported to the gas chambers. “When Korczak was questioned, he responded, ‘Eventually one has to accept serenely, the angel of death’. That’s what the play does; it makes one powerful by humbling death.

Critical Appreciation

In Dakghar, young Amal, the protagonist, bonds with numerous strangers with the spontaneity of a child. The play cleverly unravels Tagore’s thoughts on freedom. Being ill, young Amal is confined to his bed by the kaviraj's orders and isn't allowed to step out of the house. Lying on his bed, he watches the world go by, as he makes friends with passersby—a curd seller, a watchman, a flower girl, and an old man.

Even though Amal is physically bound, he isn't a prisoner in the spiritual or creative sense. His flourishing imagination, coupled with his disarming affability, connects him to the hearts of seemingly disparate people. For as Tagore writes in his foreword to S Radhakrishnan’s The Philosophy of Upanishads. “When our self is illuminated with the light of love, then the negative aspect of its separateness with others loses its finality, and then our relationship with others is no longer that of competition and conflict, but of sympathy and co-operation.” Young Amal is an embodiment of the child heart that has not yet been contaminated by man-made divisions of social or economic class. Thus Amal can mingle with his fellow humans with complete ease and no sense of separation.

Yeats’ Interpretation

In days long gone by […] I can see […] the King's postman coming down the hillside alone, a lantern in his left hand and on his back a bag of letters climbing down for ever so long, for days and nights, and where at the foot of the mountain the waterfall becomes a stream he takes to the footpath on the bank and walks on through the rye; then comes the sugarcane field and he disappears into the narrow lane cutting through the tall stems of sugarcanes; then he reaches the open meadow where the cricket chirps and where there is not a single man to be seen, only the snipe wagging their tails and poking at the mud with their bills. I can feel him coming nearer and nearer and my heart becomes glad.


“[…] but the meaning is less intellectual, more emotional and simple. The deliverance sought and won by the dying child is the same deliverance which rose before his imagination, […] when once in the early dawn he heard, amid the noise of a crowd returning from some festival, this line out of an old village song, "Ferryman, take me to the other shore of the river." It may come at any moment of life, though the child discovers it in death, for it always comes at the moment when the "I!", seeking no longer for gains that cannot be "assimilated with its spirit", is able to say, "All my work is thine" […]"
**SHESHER KOBITA (novel)**

*Shesher Kobita* (Bengali: শেষের কবিতা) is a novel by Rabindranath Tagore, widely considered a landmark in Bengali literature. The novel was serialised in 1928, from Bhadro to Choitro in the magazine *Probashi*, and was published in book form the following year. It has been translated into English as *The Last Poem* (translator Anandita Mukhopadhyay) and *Farewell song* (translator Radha Chakravarty).

**Summary**

The novel recounts the love story of Amit Ray, a barrister educated at Oxford, whose virulent intellectualism reveals itself in its opposition to all forms of tradition. He meets Labannya in a car accident and the romance builds up in the misty hills of Shillong. Though the novel is primarily set in Shillong, it was written when Rabindranath was in Bangalore. Amit's iconoclastism meets Labannya's sincere simplicity through a series of dialogues and poems that they write for each other. The novel also contains a self-reference of significance in Bangla literature.

Even the theme was novel - after building up their affair and obtaining the blessings of Labannya's employer Jogmayadevi (Labannya served as her daughter's governess but they shared a very close relationship and she was considered Labannya's real guardian), the lovers decide to marry other suitors, without the air of tragedy. In the text, the reason appears to be that they feel that daily chores of living together will kill the purity of their romance:

Most barbarians equate marriage with the union, and look upon the real union thereafter with contempt.... Ketaki and I - our love is like water in my *kalsi* (jug); I fill it each morning, and use it all day long. But Labannya's love is like a vast lake, not to be brought home, but into which my mind can immerse itself.

**The Background**

By the late 1920s, more than a decade after his Nobel Prize, Tagore had become a towering presence in Bengal, and was facing criticism:

A younger group of writers were trying to escape from the penumbra of Rabindranath, often by tilting at him and his work. In 1928 he decided to call a meeting of writers at Jorasanko and hear them debate the issues.

Shortly after this meeting, while writing this novel, Tagore has Amit railing against a much revered poet, whose name turns out to be Rabi Thakur - Rabi is a common short form of Rabindranath, and Thakur is the original Bangla for Tagore. Amit remarks: "Poets must live for at most five years. ... Our severest complaint against Rabi Thakur is that like Wordsworth, he is illicitly staying alive." These remarks aroused much mirth among the reading public, but the novel is also a serious attempt at demonstrating his versatility, at age 67.
Critical Appreciation

NOBEL LAUREATE Rabindranath Tagore (May 7, 1861 – August 7, 1941) finished writing *Shesher Kobita* (*Closing Poems*) in Bangalore on June 25, 1928, presumably around the beginning of an Indian monsoon in that city.

It’s a word puzzle, a labyrinth constructed with words, words, more words. Like laughing children we touch the insubstantial walls which at once collapse like *Inception*’s dream masonry but the tumbling words arrange themselves into new paths.

It’s hard to imagine a poet, thrifty and picky with language, having so much fun leaving us stranded in this deluge of words. It’s even harder to imagine flesh and blood people inhabiting this ‘waking dream’. But people there are, and Shillong, where the slumbering prince is inspired to live, encloses them like a cocoon fashioned in Nature’s inimitable style.

So one fateful day in Ashada, with *Meghadutam* very much on his mind, but quite unlike Kalidasa’s exiled yaksha, Amit meets the love of his life, Labonyo. A strangely modern accident, considering the time (the late 1920s, and 5th century in Amit’s free-ranging mind) and the place (a hilly, winding, deserted Shillong road with old forests sloping down on one side), involving two cars brings about their first meeting. A strangely modern accident that sets the tone for a timeless story.

Amit, of course, has his own views on the importance of time and timeliness:


(Only those with time on hand should be punctual. God has infinite time, so the sun rises and sets punctually. We mortals can’t be wasteful enough to spend time being punctual. When Amaravati’s questioner asks, “What did you do on earth?” can I unblushingly reply, “I was so busy working with one eye on the clock that I let all of life’s timeless moments slip by”?) [My translation]

Amit’s instant philosophy earns him some seventy days forever caught in amber. A busier, punctual man would have hurried home after meeting a quiet, not very interesting woman on a dirt road in Shillong.

Amit is a very wealthy twenty-something barrister, educated in Oxford and London, who does next to nothing professionally in Calcutta, but is content to be a social gadfly. Silver-tongued, he finds endless opportunities to throw people with contrary views. His inherited wealth, voracious reading, individuality and willingness to be urbanely attentive all make him attractive to women - but men tend to be hostile.

Labonyo is a few years younger than Amit. She was brought up by her widower father, the principal of a college in western India, to be as well educated and independent as any man. (She is also a willowy, good-looking woman with a beautiful voice. On their second meeting, after a very brief, light-hearted conversation with her, Amit knows why he likes her: more than her physical beauty, it’s her calm, steady, meditative intelligence that endears her to him. Now here the author is smiling – Labonyo, we know, did not exhibit this calm intelligence to the other young man who was smitten with her.) A series
of events led to Labonyo finding work as a resident tutor. She is spending the summer in Shillong with her employer and the employer’s two children, of whom the daughter is Labonyo’s pupil.

Labonyo and Amit chance upon each other at points in their lives during which they are secretly passing through crises. Amit is reckless, feckless, having nothing in his life that has a prospect of longevity. He loves to talk but lacks a listener capable of comprehending the seriousness behind his endless verbal showmanship, a listener who can even inspire or discover that vein of seriousness. His life lacks meaning and purpose; the business of doing nothing except arguing and judging the caprices of his society leaves him with nothing to savor and no cause to pursue. Labonyo has started her new life after alienating the very man (the other suitor, the shy and scholarly Shovanlal) she was used to regarding as her contender (for academic honors), her enigmatic, infuriating punching bag (Shovanlal was so shy he never mustered up the courage to talk to her and – the author says – his very timorousness gave Labonyo an unrealistic sense of her own superiority) and also, in the odd manner of girls – barely acknowledged even to herself – her future husband. In a fit of pique and obtuseness (meditative calm!) she also engineered her father’s remarriage and refused his monetary support. Fortunately, she likes her work and her employer, Jogomaya. She fills her free hours with diligent study of English literature and Classical history. The adoring, endlessly talking, charming, intelligent Amit now arrives like a force of nature, and far from the madding crowd in Shillong’s unspoilt Eden, the artificial restraints of Labonyo’s life fall like ninepins.

“Na-chena jogote bondi hoyechhe, chiney niye tobeyi khalash pabo,” (“I’m now a captive in a world I don’t know. Only when I can read this world will I be set free.”) Amit says during one of the funniest conversations in Shesher Kobita. He hasn’t uttered the name “Nibaron Chakrabarty” yet to Labonyo, but professes to quote his “special poet”. He offers the quoted line in explanation after the opening lines of a poem he possibly composes extempore (you never know with Amit, he carries a long, slim, canvas-bound notebook in his pocket – he’d have an ipad today) “Nibaron Chakrabarty” is an alias of Amit. Although the poem turns out to be a declaration of love, and Labonyo is identified with the Unknown who the poet will go to war to unravel, it is also symbolic of what Amit goes through in those two months in Shillong. He finds in himself wishes and habits completely different from those that used to be his trademark. His new self is foreign to him. His freedom lies in self-recognition, at whatever price.

Amit ravages the uneasy peace of Labonyo’s life like a force of nature, but it is Labonyo who bewitches his mind with her naturalness. In the shocking, perilous circumstances of their first meeting it had seemed to Amit that Labonyo had “apparated” (to use Potterese) rather than simply got out of the car she’d been riding, as if white-hot lightning had etched her against the massive gloom of the hillside. The two whittled-down names Amit finds for her, “Bonyo” and “Bonya”, respectively meaning “wild” and “flood”, as well as when he later compares her to a ‘jhorna” or “nirjhorini” (waterfall), also point to her link, in Amit’s thinking, with his deepest and most sincere nature. Shillong, Labonyo and Jogomaya together comprise a vivid contrast with the painted faces and stilted conversations of Calcutta drawing rooms of the time. Wading in the narrows, Amit meets the raging waters of a river in spate. Fortunately, the meeting is symbolic and Amit immediately knows it’s a life-changing moment in his life.
There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on
to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* IV, iii, 217

Labonyo’s education, from books and from life, has brought out and polished her essential personality. It has taught her no airs and graces, no artifice. As a result, she is now uniquely herself. Amit, for whom all new knowledge takes the form of fascinating detours from his own vaguely defined center, finds her such, and says so:

“*Doibat ek-ekjon manush ke dekhte paowa jaye jakey dekhei chomke bole uthi, e manushti ekebare nijer moto, panchjoner moto noī.*” (By happy chance we sometimes come across a person who makes us start and say, ‘This person is uniquely himself/herself, not like anyone else.’) [My translation]

Amit has no hesitation in proposing marriage to Labonyo, but she draws back, fearful of being one passing fancy of a man who actually considers marriage “vulgar”. In response Amit says, “*Manusher choritro jinishtao choley.*” (“Character evolves too.”) In other words, Labonyo may have made five accurate observations about his character, but that hardly means she knows the whole story – because human character is not a static thing. He presents other persuasive arguments, but Labonyo is not ready to grant him steady motivation beyond his eloquence. Interestingly, we find Labonyo at a bend in her life when she has rejected dumb adoration and is rejecting love overwhelmed with words. And poor Amit, who twice quotes Donne’s famous lines from ‘The Canonization’ “For God’s sake hold your tongue, and let me love,” cannot hold his tongue or make her believe. Labonyo is already thinking of entombing the memory of Amit’s love as one perfect thing, like the Taj Mahal. At the end of chapter 7, Amit himself questions his intentions – he feels he is expressing his most deeply felt emotions through words, but are the words all he has? As if to stoke this suspicion in our minds he goes into a dispiriting comparison of men and women. Men, he thinks, are creators who keep demolishing the old, whereas women use all their strength to protect what exists. This sort of gender ideas are difficult to match with the men and women of today. Amit thinks he knows Labonyo really well, and sometimes we too are persuaded that he does, but this superimposition of a supposed gender divide on Labonyo’s views makes us do a double take. It is true that Labonyo fears both that Amit will and won’t change. She fears that Amit’s infatuation won’t last and this is based on her assessment of his essentially feckless character that, she also fears, won’t change. Therefore she believes that Amit continually needs to move on to be true to his character. She has merely caught his eye as the new thing. Eventually he’d need to reject her to keep being Amit. Does this show that Labonyo wants to keep pristine the love she is now given by Amit? Does this show also her reluctance to have it destroyed by and by? It could well be, but surely this desire to protect what she considered perfect and precious was not a gender motivation but a human one.

In a later conversation with Jogomaya Labonyo clarifies her fears: she knows Amit loves her, but the person he loves is not Labonyo, an ordinary woman, but someone imbued with the glamour of Amit’s own extravagant imagination. (This view also comes across in the poem she writes to Amit at the end.) If they are married, she won’t long remain a novelty, and lose her luster. In order to sustain his love in real life, Amit’s nature must change; but she doesn’t want to change him in any way.
Labonyo refuses him, but Amit doesn’t leave Shillong and eventually she does the easy thing, accepts him. Amit is to return to Calcutta and Labonyo sets the condition that they wouldn’t meet again till their wedding in November-December. But Amit doesn’t leave because his sister Shomita (“CiCi”) arrives in Shillong with her friend Ketaki (“Katie”). For a few days, he leads a strange dual life: he sleeps at the hotel where his sister has put up, but every afternoon he goes to the dilapidated little house he had first rented and then bought. There he changes his Western wear for the traditional Indian clothing that Labonyo and Jogomaya are used to seeing him in, and presents himself to them at tea-time. Why does Amit behave in this strange way? Why doesn’t he disclose his wedding plans to his sister and Ketaki and introduce them to Labonyo? The secrets Amit and Labonyo keep from each other spoil their idyll. It’s odd that while they talk so freely and so much to each other, they fail to mention, even when the topic arises, times in the past when they may have made or been on the brink of making emotional commitments. In a different context Labonyo once tells Amit, “Thik moto jante parai to chai, ta holey keu omorjada korte shahosh kore na.” (The exact truth must be known, only then people don’t dare disrespect.” But this transparency does not show in her behavior, not even when Shovanlal’s name comes up. Nor does Amit tell her about the love of his youth, who still holds a torch for him and wears the ring he gave her. However, Amit still fully expects to spend the rest of his days with Labonyo. She, on the contrary, never frees herself of doubts. Cocooned in magical words, neither shows the will to cut a clear path for the future by bringing out in the open secrets that are like “thorns”, “lightening”, and “neuralgia pain” – the very type of flinty, hurtful disclosures that Amit boastfully claimed his avatar “Nibaron Chakravarty” (as opposed to poor old “Robi Thakur”) had the poetic valor to say.

At last the day arrives when Ketaki and her ring break the spell. Like Kalidasa’s Shakuntala, she revives her waning fortunes with the memories girded by the ring. Unlike Shakuntala, she never lost her ring, but like Dushyanto, Amit had lost his memory of her eighteenth summer. Simultaneously, Labonyo drops her ring into the river, in other words, she returns it to Amit. She urges him to take a trip to Cherrapunji for a few days. When he returns, Jogomaya’s Shillong home is empty. In Calcutta, however, Amit is in touch with Jogomaya’s college-going son, Joti. It is always possible to reach Labonyo, but he will not. Ordinary people like us may imagine him incapable of breathing without her, we may imagine him finding her once again with the promise of a never-ending future. But Labonyo and Amit have persuaded themselves that their love is not for the real world.

In a way, at the end, Labonyo has created the new Amit, he speaks like her. At their last meeting, in Shillong, she had told him: “Amake tumi angti diyo na, kono chinho rakhbar kichhu dorkar nei. Amar prem thak niranjan; Baierer rekha, bairer chhaya tatey porbe na.” (Don’t give me a ring, no reminder is necessary. Let my love be pure, seen never before by the world. The world outside won’t write on it.”

[My translation]

Labonyo’s reluctance to test her love and Amit’s in the dusty, thorny road of ordinary life sets the stage for their farewells. Dust and thorns are as natural as floods, lightning and waterfalls, so finally what keeps the two apart is their fear of facing all the wear and tear and lack of freedom their fully discovered natural selves will inflict on their perfect love. Their love released both from their not-fully-self-aware existences, taught them to take on the glorious burden of living; but they won’t risk losing their one, most precious, most necessary source of the purest joy and keenest grief. Amit marries Ketaki and Labonyo is to marry Shovanla next summer on Ramgarh hill (where Kalidasa’s yaksha had been exiled).

Two poems are exchanged.
Dear [Name],

Your letter has been very much in reaching me owing to my absence in India earlier than the time I had hoped in my mind. During the last six months of my stay in Europe, I suffered from loneliness and my confessions to care very.

I know it for certain that you are very much busy in Paris, but for a long time you have been working for peace and still are broadly in life. How like yourself to work...
LETTERS, ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES BY TAGORE:

RACE CONFLICTS

Race conflict and racial conforarity are two significant phenomena; the former brings social change, social disharmony and a state of disorder whereas the latter brings social equilibrium. When we analyze different historical events we find a number of instances of race conflicts for example, between England and France, France and Germany, between China and Japan or between India and Britain. Most of these conflicts have emanated from a desire of expansionism and colonialism. With the end of Second World War in 1945, this trend has, however, been minimal as expansionist tendencies have ceased to exist.

There was a period till 1840s where races of the world looked down upon each other with feelings of superiority and inferiority. The white race or the Caucasoid considered themselves superior to the blacks or the people belonging to the yellow race; in a similar way the European races considered the Asian and African races inferior to them in wisdom, intellect and motivation. In 1930s, Adolf Hitler of Germany declared that the Germans were the only pure Nordic. He looked down upon the non-Nazis (of Germany), especially the Jews and the Polish people, with contempt and ridicule. Racial conflicts are based on a craze to dominate upon other races. When we look into the conflict between India and Britain, it is clear that this conflict has been due to colonial exploitation and domination of India by the British race for about one hundred and ninety years. The ‘ruler and the ruled’ relationship between Indians and the Englishmen gave rise to animosity to such an extent that when India started functioning as a republic, many of the Indian leaders decided not to join the British commonwealth – a move that set aside by our first prime minister and first home minister.

Rabindranath Tagore in his essay “Racial Conflict” has touched upon these things. He has also sighted the case of India. Here races from central Asia and Europe had entered this wonderful country as conquerors, as colonial powers or with the intention of ruling this country. For centuries various races have confronted the Indians, comprising the Autochones, the princes as well as the commoners. Racial conflicts have often taken place that has temporarily led to social disequilibrium. But ultimately, all the cultural and social strains have combined to form the Indian civilization of today. Thus racial conflict and racial cohesion, according to Tagore, have been seen as a vehicle that has ultimately led to cultural synthesis.

Today, there has been conceptual change. We no longer bother about racial conflict. The contemporary world is now concerned about the concept of ethnicity. As 2nd world war ended, decolonization process started and the concept of ‘ethnicity’ came to existence.
"The Meeting of the East and the West" written by Rabindranath Tagore was published in the year 1918. It talks about the political situation of India when she for over a century and half had borne a foreign rule which was western. Whether she had benefited from it or not, was a matter very controversial, for people are made to remember all facts except in privacy, thereby giving it an imperfect value when it comes to historical curiosity. But even after all those years of relationship, there is no doubt that the east and the west have never seemed to meet because in their quest making a deal as they have not been able to form a true bond of union thereby making the relationship a burden, whatever benefit may have been accrued from it. It is a problem that has affected mankind at large, for it inspires our mind to think that the world is a civilization which has not the spiritual power to unite but can only exploit and destroy at its benefit. This reveals that this civilization may have reached great heights of scientific richness but lacks in minimal amount the truth of life that is of highest importance to all humanity, the truth that was felt by man as early as during the birth of mankind. That is why in today’s world when something goes against them, people start agitating for a change in organizations rather than uniting to solve the problem together- a close resemblance of which can be drawn with the political situation in India. The author draws similarity of the situation to a game of chess where people just play to win without considering that their win might even result in a greater loss to mankind.

When the first Aryans immigrants came to India, with their Gods, faiths and beliefs there were conflicts with the local inhabitants that were bound to happen. However in the process, there developed some great minds that conceptualized the notion of ‘Universal Soul’ that led to a settlement thereby building the foundations of unity. In the medieval period, great rulers like Asoka and Akbar also envisioned spiritual unity with some great Hindu saints and Mohamedan Sufis of this time engaging themselves in building a kingdom that was ruled by one God, common to all. In the modern times, the author feels that, Ram Mohan Roy’s contribution to this field has been the major sign of spiritual activity that India still strives for, for he found the basis of union of the East and West.

Men of intellectual eminence who have borrowed lessons from the West in the past have been made intensely conscious of the separateness of our people giving rise to patriotism fiercely exclusive and contemptuous. It has roused up a universal spirit of suspicious antipathy inciting each person to strain all resources for taking advantages of others by force or by cunning. In the different occasions where the West has come in contact with the other races of the world, their moral adjustment has not been true to make the meeting a tremendous experience for the only reality they are conscious of is the reality of the Nation thereby making them boisterously selfish, pugnacious and inconsiderate towards the others.

The author states that we forget the truth for our own convenience but truth does not forget us, so after having tolerated negligence to a certain limit, she is sure to put in her appearance, so as to exact her dues. That is why when calamity strikes the West, she cannot understand why it should happen to them, without even thinking of why it should happen to the other people either. But the truth of nature is that one cannot escape the laws of nature, which the West often seems to forget and when they have to face it, it comes as a shock to them. Tagore also feels that the modern civilization should not be judged by the balance sheet of imports and exports, luxuries of rich men, lengths of dreadnoughts,
breadth of dependencies, and the tightness of grasping democracy, but should be judged by its history for which the people of the east, the principal witnesses, should speak the truth, however difficult it may be for the others to accept, for our voice is not the voice of authority with the power of arms behind it, but the voice of suffering with the power of truth to make itself heard.

However a time had come when Europe had started on her search for the truth of soul, because for once she had felt that wealth was not merely subjective but one could become wealthier by being true to one’s soul. But that is when science revealed its greatness creating a diversion for those materialistic minds that set out on a mission to prove that they could cooperate with the nature’s laws to create a new world governed by the morals that were sure to fulfill their purpose that is to rule over the world, without any intervention made by nature. The idea seemed lucrative but those who have trust in human nature cannot but feel that the West will come out triumphant.

Europe is fully conscious of its greatness and that itself is the reason why the author feels that she does not know where her greatness may fail. But through the present war between the East and the West, she has received the warning that her materialistic gains have been getting the better of her truth and in order to be served she must find her soul and her God and fulfill her purpose by carrying the ideals across the globe.
"At the Cross Roads" written by Rabindranath Tagore in the year 1918, talks about the political situation in India around that time. Having been subdued under the political dominance of the west, the people in India, Tagore thought, had lost their power to think and reason for themselves, thereby losing the power to realize the dream of self government. However not having received proper training of governing a country was a major drawback and therefore if India were left to evolve all by herself, she would have been strangled at birth itself, for it was impossible for the people to foresee what tremendous power was to come their way, and when it would eventually come, there would have been tremendous unrest over its distribution.

But, even if they were to receive lessons of political wisdom from the Englishmen, for whom the author had great admiration, the abnormality of the situation would prevent it from happening. It would rouse the desires of the strong to accumulate power in their hands in the name of making the weak to be responsible enough. Hence it is the responsibility of the weak; the author feels, to prevent themselves from being conquered by the strong, for this would arouse moral degeneracy in men to exercise habitually authority over them, a scene that can be pictured in the callous arrogance of the bureaucracy. All this will lead to the formation of a vicious cycle- the helplessness of the governed sapping on the moral manhood of the governors, and that again reacting upon the governed, prolonging and deepening their helplessness. This lack of trust between the governed and the governors has been the sole reason for providing only little consolation when our countrymen are told that the power of the country will go to them gradually as they are made fit for it. This is because it is quite hard to find a donor, not over-enthusiastic, who is also a good critic and a good judge and will dole out this gift of empowerment cautiously to its rightful owners, a quality that was certainly not envisaged by the Indians in the Englishmen. But as long as the country was under their dominance, it is needless to say, that the countrymen could expect the fragmentary crumbs of benefit rather than the whole bread of life. It would be easier for them to find arguments to keep the real power in their hands and prolong the state in which the arguments could not be effectively refuted, for the ideal of the Nation was an immoral one based on “selfishness with a capital S” and is built for their own convenience not taking into consideration the widespread misery caused.

The dubiousness of the situation makes the search for a solution difficult. Charity on one side is self-congratulatory and superior while humble acceptance of small favours on the other side is laudatory and grateful. But this cannot be the ideal solution to the problem for the power belongs to our countrymen and that cannot be unjustly taken away by someone who is alien. It must be gained through victory or never otherwise for that would establish the fact that the countrymen are responsible enough to fight like unity and establish the triumph of the weak over the strong, the first step but a giant leap towards the role of acquisition of power. But before the victory comes war, which to the Nation-worshippers is a festival of limitless sacrifice of lives that brings glory in their lives. However, in India, not many find natural pleasure or pride in massacres for the sake of glory, other than a few modern disciples of the West. Even if our men are properly trained to fight a war against the Europeans without excelling at it, which obviously is against our moral, it will serve no better purpose than bringing us major benefits and instead might be productive of evil. Hence it is absurd to ask a man to lay down his life for a political cause than for a good, moral cause. That is why the author urges not to seek the power of killing but the moral power to stand against it, the power to suffer-not merely in passive apathy but in the enthusiasm of active purpose.
In this age of transition, the seeking of spiritual strength by shunning immoral activities might be seen as a sigh of ignorance of word politics, but it will help in breaking the obstruction to the growth of spiritual humanity. The modern day Civilized Man suffers from moral senility and is too obsessed with material possessions; he knows too much but does not believe. Faith is of the future; it may lead us to danger or apparent futility; but truth awaits there for us to be courted at the risk of death or failure. The time for this prudent man has come to an end. The world is awaiting the birth of the Child, who believes more than he knows who is to be crowned the King of future, who is daring enough to explore his inner being.

Tagore eventually feels, if India must have her ambitions, let it not be to scramble for unholy feast of barbarism of the past, but to take her lace in the procession of the future going on the pilgrimage of truth-the truth of man’s soul.
WAY TO UNITY

An axiom tells ‘united we stand, divided we fall’. This reminds us that unity is strength; disunity has detrimental effects on social life. But what is UNITY? Are the members of a crowd united? Are all those who witness a street accident united? Probably not. They may have the similarity of purpose but no emotional integration. Saints and social reformers have for decades, tried to remove religious barriers among people, among different creeds. Unfortunately, their efforts have to develop unity among people. Akbar’s “DIN-ILAHI” did not materialize and failed to unify India. Similarly, the attempt of the proponents of Brahmo Samaj to introduce universal religion by adopting the essence of Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam did not materialize at all. We all know Rabindranath Tagore and his family were ardent followers of the Samaj. Rabindranath Tagore has constantly talked about world brotherhood in the essay titled “Way to Unity”. He has also mentioned world fraternity. The twin dimensions of “Viswaprem” and “Viswa-Vratitya” have been emphasized. His philosophy has upheld the concept of “Sarva-Samata”; that every man is equal and God exists in every human being. It is due to this reason that during the Indo-Pakistan partition in 1947, he introduced the concept of tying “rakhis” to our fellow Indians, signifying brotherhood and fraternity among the people of India. The song “Aksi suthre bandhiyachi” speaks of this concept.

According to Tagore, unity rests on individuality. Let’s see what that means. A functionally important individual can co-exist with others. Society comprises individuals. An individual is a significant part of the society. French sociologists find individual as a ‘social man’--- an integral part of the society. When we think of a piano or a sitar, we can see the real picture of unity. Each reed of a piano or each string of a sitar contributes to bring the tunes of music. Each reed or each string retains its individuality but contribute to the creation of music, united as group. When we perform an event or sustain a structure together, we find the real way to unity. Co-existence, co-operation and interdependence can only bring unity. The Hindu pantheon accommodates a host of male and female deities—each looking after one aspect of life or the other. But the deities, united, lead the Hindus to follow a philosophy, a value system that forms a guide for the Hindus.

Needless to say, domination and subordination cannot bring unity. The British tried to unite the people of the colonies but failed to do so. The Russian Republic endeavoured to unite its constituent parts but the effect was superficial. The countries under SAARC, NAM, ASEAN are not really united. They only work together to get certain things done. These relationships are purely formal and contractual. We again go back to Tagore to find out the real reason on why they are not actually united—unity does not come from the barrel of gun, but from the core of the heart. This has very much been emphasized by Tagore. Both Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore have conceptualized that love for humanity is the best way to worship God. Once, we can accept this philosophy that every human being is the abode of the Divine; we can enjoy emotional unity and remove all kinds of disunity and disparity. I strongly feel that Tagore’s concept of world brotherhood can lead us to real unity—a unity that is very sublime.
A CRY FOR PEACE

After a lot of blood shed and exposition of muscle power, a new wave for establishment of peace in the world was prevailing. The west has constituted a league of powers. Is it possible to reestablish power by forming a league of powers totally neglecting weak nation’s plight? Rabindranath’s essay titled “A Cry for Peace” answers these questions.

According to Rabindranath, the holders of superpower forget that wielding absolute power over the powerless nations does not restore peace. On the contrary it creates a negative force among the weak nations and by the balancing act of the providence the so called “weak” drag down the powerful forces. The powerful nations keep the weaker nations subjugated under them using the vast resources and money power. The weaker ones retaliate using the notion of God as their will power. So this machine made peace is not the answer to create uniform peace in the world in true sense. Two great religious teachers Buddha and Christ both wanted to make a peaceful world with the help of selfless love, which Tagore felt to be the only solution to make perennial peace in this world.
TAGORE AND WESTERN MUSIC

Tagore was surrounded by music since his childhood. Tagore says in his autobiography *Jibonsmriti* that he cannot recall the time when he could not sing. In his time, wealthy families kept troupes of young male actors. One of his uncles was a patron and indeed trainer of such a troupe. Performances of musical plays would take place in Tagore’s house from time to time. Tagore heard much reciting and singing in his home. His father had numerous musicians as friends. They would come by and often stay, playing classical Hindustani music on a wide range of musical instruments. Tagore was very musical. He could easily pick up a tune or song and fix it in his head. He also took singing lessons as a boy, learning many Bengali and Hindi songs. This learning was not very methodical always. He would hum songs from *Panchali*, *Kirton*, old Bengali songs as well as *Brahmasangeet*. In the evening, the family would sit out on the veranda facing the garden, and his father would get Tagore to sing. This was very much like families in Victorian England gathering in their parlour to entertain themselves, singing and playing music. Abanindranath, Tagore’s nephew recalls that Jyotirindranath would play the piano while Rabindranath would sing aloud to his heart’s content.

In 1878 at the age of seventeen, he and his second eldest brother Satyenendranath set sail for England. He became a student in a public school in Brighton. A year later, he went on to study law at University College London. Whilst in England, Tagore first heard opera and the Western singing style. He wrote in his diaries that he was very struck by the Prima Donna’s powerful voice, and he was amazed at how perfect the performance was. Although he admired the singer’s vocal ability, he did not like the soprano voice but preferred the tenor voice. He began listening to and learning more about European music. Satyendranath’s wife Gyandanandini Devi was a constant inspiration for Rabindranath to regularly practise music.

During the Victorian period in England, parlour song (or drawing room song) was a popular form of music. Parlour songs began from around the 1850s and the music came mainly from ballads or songs that were performed on stage at the Music Hall or the opera. Sheet music was an effective way to spread the songs. In the second half of the Victorian period, pianos were cheaper to buy. They were commonly found in the drawing room and parlours of rich and middle class homes. As people had more leisure time, parlour songs became a very popular form of home entertainment. As parlour music was very fashionable during the time Tagore was in England, he must have heard many parlour songs apart from opera. Being very musical, Tagore quickly learned the Irish, Scottish and English tunes he had heard in London and Brighton. Indeed, when he returned to Kolkata two years later, he enthusiastically sang some Irish melodies to his family that he had learned. They thought he sounded funny and foreign.

Soon after Tagore returned from England to Kolkata, he began composing his first musical play, *Valmiki Pratibha* (The Genius of Valmiki). For this, he adapted some of the parlour songs he remembered and set Bengali texts to their tunes. The play’s success encouraged him to compose another musical play entitled *Kalmrigaya* (The Fatal Hunt). Just as in his first musical play, Tagore also used some well-known British parlour songs in Kalmrigaya. As he was very familiar with many different types of classical Hindustani music and Indian folk songs, he also composed and adapted these to his plays. His brother Jyotirindra who played the piano composed some songs for both Tagore’s plays. Tagore himself also took a leading part in the performance of these musical dramas, both of which were very well received. On his second visit to England he received much of critical acclaim and the critics of Western music were amazed to learn that Tagore could compose such wonderful songs without knowing the grammar of music.
SONGS INFLUENCED BY THE WEST

1. PHULE PHULE DHOLE DHOLE/YE BANKS AND BRAYS

Robert Burns (1759-1796) set his poem Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon to the melody first published as The Caledonian Hunt's Delight in Niel Gow's Second Collection of Strathspey Reels (1788). Burns' song was first published in the Scots Musical Museum. In Early Scottish Melodies (1900), John Glen relates that, according to a letter written by Robert Burns to George Thompson (editor of Select Scottish Airs); the rudiments of the melody were composed by James Miller and finished by Stephen Clarke (music editor of the Scots Musical Museum). Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon is in fact pentatonic and can be played only upon the black keys of the piano.

The Original Song: Ye Banks and Brays

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chaunt, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care.
Ye'll break my heart, ye warbling birds
That wanton through the flowery thorn,
Ye mind me o' departed joys,
Departed, never to return.
Oft hae I roved by bonnie Doon
To see the rose and woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its love,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree
But my fause lover stole my rose,
And Ah! He left the thorn wi' me.

Phule Phule Dhole Dhole :

Phule Phule Dhole Dhole
Bohe kiba mridu baay
Totini hillol tule kollole choliya jaay.
Pik kiba kunje kunje
Kuhu kuhu kuhu gaay,
Ki jaani kishero laage
Praan korey haay haay.
The Notations of the Song

*[Notation of the song]*

About the Original Song

Burns first wrote the song "Ye Flowery Banks" but extensively revised this, for inclusion in Johnson's Scots Museum, into Ye Banks and Braes.

The subject of the song, Peggy Kennedy, (see also Young Peggy Blooms) was a niece of Mrs Gavin Hamilton, a born heiress to a considerable estate in Carrick, to which she ultimately succeeded. At the age of seventeen she was the betrothed bride of Captain Maxwell, the M.P. for Wigtownshire. However she had an affair with McDouall of Logan (see last verse):

Ten years after the birth, the lady was advised to raise an action against the father of the child. She died shortly after the process was instituted, probably the victim of anguished feelings. The case continued on her daughter's behalf. In 1798 the Judges pronounced in favour of the marriage, but the Court of Session reversed the decision and ordered a payment of £3000 to the daughter.

Tagore's adaptation

"Phule Phule" is based on a Scottish tune "Ye Banks and Braes" which Tagore heard as a young man on his first visit to England. It was adapted by him for his work "The Fatal Hunt "(Kalmrigaya). It was used for the goddess’s song Phule Phule Dhole Dhole in Scene 2 (The flowers! They slumber). The story is based on an excerpt from the epic "Ramayana" where Ram’s father, Dasaratha shoots down a young man, the only possession of an old blind couple and their daughter, with bows and arrows while hunting. He does this unintentionally as he mistakes the young man to be an animal drinking water from the river and shoots the arrow on hearing the rippling of the river in darkness. The incident fills Dasaratha with repent and the old couple is wrapped up in the shroud of grief, loss and lament. The song was composed by Rabindranath at the age of 21 and is set to Taal "Khemta".
The Song in Charulata

Later Satyajit Ray, the Oscar winning film-director from Bengal used this song beautifully in his film “Charulota” based on Rabindranath’s play “Noshto Nir”. The film tells the story of a lonely housewife, known as Charu who lives a wealthy, secluded and idle life in 1870’s Calcutta. Her husband spends more time at work than with his wife. However, he notices that Charu is lonely, and asks his cousin, Amal, to keep her company. Gradually a strong bond of affection develops between Charu and Amal. Andrew Robinson says “The relationship refers more to the melody than to the words Tagore set to it.” The song is first sung by Amal casually while he unpacks his baggage. Later Charu sings it swinging in the swing while Amal sits under a tree nearby, thinking of writing poetry. The swaying of the flowers as mentioned in the song can be compared to the swinging motion and also the upheaval in the hearts of two people falling in love with each other without their knowledge. Later still in the single long piece of music in the film, the tune provides the magical atmosphere yet again. Ray’s application of the song I feel, is brilliant.

The link is as follows: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcUHbTBEiO0

My illustration
Critical appreciation

The context of the two songs may be different, but the harmony of the music is universal. In the original Scottish song it’s the lament of the forlorn lady. In “Kalmrigaya” the song is sung by the goddesses who are moved by the beauty of nature. Critics of Rabindranath will say that is a song about nature. I agree, but I don’t feel that it’s only about the flowers, the river and the sweet breeze. The last lines of the song speak of the beauty of nature, touching us so deeply that the soul heaves. As it says:

\[\text{Ki jaani kishero laage}\]
\[\text{Praan korey haay haay.}\]

The humanitarian side of Rabindranath comes alive here as he relates Human Nature with Mother Nature. I also feel that the melody surpasses the lyrics to convey this feeling and also sets up the mood of “Kalmrigaya”.

In the illustration, therefore, I have not gone for the visual imageries used by the poet. Rather I have tried to capture the “Landscape of the Soul” as it swings in the wind in midst of flowers. The painting is done with soft lines and colours, often merging with each other signifying the emotional upheaval.

The link is being given as below

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxYS71Dt9oE
2. SOKOLI PHURALO SWAPONOPRAYE/ROBIN ADAIR

Robin Adair is an Irish song about a young Irish medical doctor named Robin Adair, and that he song was written by a Lady Caroline Keppel circa 1750. But beforehand, the song was preceded by another song called “Eileen Aroon” (Ellen, the treasure of my heart), from where Robin Adair borrowed the melody. Eileen may be based on a real person as well, and this is the story of Eileen Aroon from Fitz Gerald’s book. There have been several versions of the song with people like Burns Beethoven and later Bob Dylan adding their magical touches.

The Original Song: Robin Adair

What's this dull town to me?
Robin's not near;
What was't I wish'd to see?
What wish'd to hear?
Where all the joy and mirth,
Made this town heav'n on earth,
Oh! They've all fled wi' thee,
Robin Adair.

What made th' assembly shine?
Robin Adair.
What made the ball so fine?
Robin was there.
And when the play was o'er,
What made my heart so sore?
Oh! it was parting with,
Robin Adair.

But now thou'rt cold to me,
Robin Adair.
And I no more shall see,
Robin Adair.
Yet he I lov'd so well,
Still in my heart shall dwell,
Oh! I can ne'er forget,
Robin Adair.

Welcome on shore again,
Robin Adair!
Welcome once more again,
Robin Adair!
I feel thy trembling hand;
Tears in thy eyelids stand,
To greet thy native land,
Robin Adair!

Long I ne'er saw thee, love,
Robin Adair;
Still I prayed for thee, love,
Robin Adair;
When thou wert far at sea,
Many made love to me,
But still I thought on thee,
Robin Adair!

Come to my heart again,
Robin Adair;
Never to part again,
Robin Adair;
And if thou still art true,
I will be constant too,
And will wed none but you,
Robin Adair!

Sokoli Phuralo Swapono Praye:-

*Sokoli phuralo swaponopraye,*

*Kotha se lukalo,kotha se haay.*

*Kusumokanon hoyechhe mlan,*

*Pakhira keno gaay na gaan-*

*O sob heri shunyomoy-kotha se haay!*

*Kahar tore aar futibe phul,*

*Maloti-madhobi kende akul.*

*Sei je asito tulite jol,sei je asito parite fol,*

*O se aar asibe na-kotha se haay!*
The Notation of the Song

Robin Adair

\[
\text{www.abcnotation.com/tunes}
\]

About the Original Song

The Songs “Eileen Aroon” and “Robin Adair” were both composed to express the pathos of a lover separated from their dearest one. Fitzgerald’s book tells of Dr Robert Adair falling in love with Lady Caroline Keppel. Keppel’s parents and relatives tried to dissuade her but failed at the end. When she was at Bath, she wrote the verses now so popular, and adapted them to the melody of "Eileen Aroon," which Robin Adair had doubtless often sung to her. At last the separation from Adair and the importunities of her relatives caused her to become so dangerously ill, that, upon the doctors despairing of her life, and seeing the disease was more of the heart and mind than of the flesh, the union of the faithful pair was consented to. The event was duly notified in the "Grand Magazine of Universal Intelligence" thus: "February 22nd, 1758, Robert Adair, Esq., to the Right Honourable the Lady Caroline Keppel." This was the culminating point in the pretty love story.

Tagore’s adaptation

Very much like the first song this song too was used by Tagore used this song also in “Kalmrigaya”. The song is there right at the ending scene as the goddesses lament the loss of the youth. The song here conveys the same pathos that “Robin Adair” conveys. Tagore composed the song on his return from his first journey to England in 1881. On his second visit to England in 1890, he grew close to a certain Miss Mulei. They used to practise together for long hours and the lady was drawn to Tagore’s mellifluous voice and to him as a person. Tagore by then had got married. And Miss Mulei often called him “Robin Adair” and would sing aloud the song to him.
Critical Appreciation

The song conveys a sense of loss and separation; death and decay. The lament and mourning of the Goddesses can be compared to the lament of the lover separated from the dearest. My painting shows the thread of life reaching highs and lows and finally disappearing into the state of eternal slumber.

Rabindranath is here influenced by “Robin Adair”, but the theme is universal. Death spreads its dark shroud over life everywhere on the earth irrespective of the linguistic and land barriers, leaving the near ones devastated. The devastation is likewise in the case of a lover severed from his or her soul-mate. Every minute the person lives separated from the loved one is like Death itself. Only the union of the souls can breathe lives into their souls.

The links are being given as below

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9XYKHU4aeY

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQEd0Qv_-f4&feature=related
3. PURANO SEI DINER KAUTHA/ AULD LANG SYNE

The words of “Auld Lang Syne” were written in 1788 by the famous Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796) and set to the tune of a traditional folk song. It is thought to be originally a tune for the strathspey, a type of stately Scottish dance. Today, this song is frequently sung in Scotland (and now everywhere in the world) at reunion and farewell parties and particularly at midnight on Hogmanay (New Year’s Eve) to welcome in the New Year.

The Original Song: Auld Lang Syne

Chorus.
And for auld lang syne, my jo,
For auld lang syne,
We’ll tak a cup o’ kindness yet,
For auld lang syne,

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o’ auld lang syne.

And surely ye’ll be your pint-stowp!
And surely I’ll be mine!
And we’ll tak a cup o’ kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes
And pu’d the gowans fine;
But we’ve wander’d mony a weary foot
Sin auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl’d i’ the burn,
Frae mornin’ sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar’d
Sin auld lang syne.

And there’s a hand, my trusty fiere!
And gie’s a hand o’ thine!
And we’ll tak a right guid willy waught,
For auld lang syne.
Purano Sei Diner Kautha:

Purano sei diner kotha
Bhulbi kii re
Hai-o shei chokher dekha, praaner kotha
Shaykii bhola jaaye.

Aaye aar ektibar aayre shokha
Praner majhe aaye- mora
Shukher dukher kotha kobo
Praan jorabe tai.

Mora bhorer bela phuul tulechi, dulechi dolaaye
Bajiye baanshi gaan geychi bokuler toalai
Hai majhe holo chadachadi, gelem ke kothaye,
Abaar dekha jodi holo shokha, praner majhe aaye.

The Notation of the Song

Auld lang sync

anon. (Scotland)
About the Original Song

Robert Burns sent a copy of the original song to the Scots Musical Museum with the remark, "The following song, an old song, of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript until I took it down from an old man. Some of the lyrics were indeed "collected" rather than composed by the poet; the ballad "Auld Lang Syne" printed in 1711 by James Watson shows considerable similarity in the first verse and the chorus to Burns' later poem, and is almost certainly derived from the same "old song". It is a fair supposition to attribute the rest of the poem to Burns himself.

There is some doubt as to whether the melody used today is the same one Burns originally intended, but it is widely used in Scotland and in the rest of the world.

Singing the song on Hogmanay or New Year's Eve very quickly became a Scots custom that soon spread to other parts of the British Isles. As Scots (not to mention English, Welsh and Irish people) emigrated around the world, they took the song with them.

Canadian band leader Guy Lombardo is often credited with popularising the use of the song at New Year’s celebrations in America. Singers like Jimi Hendrix, Elvis Presley and Mariah Carey all have had their own versions. The song has been used in numerous films in diverse languages. The song has been translated to many languages and is popular almost all over the globe.

The ties of friendship and old memories related to friendship are such a universal topic that people of all parts of the world can connect to it.

Tagore's adaptation

Tagore composed this song after he came back from England (in 1885) where he heard the Celtic song “Auld Lang Syne”. He has captured the pathos of parting, and used the same notes as were used in the original song with amazing grace and dexterity of imagination. “Purano sei diner kotha”- is about the beauty of days gone by. A nostalgic tune that brings you back your childhood, takes you through down memory lane.

Critical Appreciation

This is one of the rare songs where the Bengali version is lyrically so similar to the original version. Keeping alive the main theme, how Rabi Thakur weaves up the typical elements of the landscape of Bengal is notable.

Humming this tune each one of us is wrapped in a nostalgic mood. The fond memories spent with our near and dear ones return to us and the song evokes in us the universal longing to go back to the “good old days”. Through the illustration I have tried to capture the very feeling of nostalgia that is common to all, all over the world transcending the barriers of nationality and language. The predominant use of gray in the painting intensifies this feeling.
My Illustration

The links are being given as below

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMZm229k_7M

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVo81yQU35c
"To Celia" is a lyric love poem. It is one of the most frequently quoted poems in English literature. Undoubtedly, most literate persons are familiar with the opening line, “Drink to me only with thine eyes.” Indeed, many people think of that line as the title of the poem. Ben Jonson (1572-1637), a celebrated playwright and poet of the Shakespearean age, often receives full credit for composing those words, as well as the lines in the rest of the poem; instead, he should receive credit for translating or paraphrasing them. It was a Greek named Philostratus who originated the words in his own language.

**The Original Song: Drink to Me Only (To Celia)**

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss within the cup
And I'll not ask for wine.

The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be;
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells,
I swear, not of itself but thee!
Kotobaro bhebechhinu:

Kotobaro bhebechhinu apono bhuliya
Tomaro chorone debo hridoyo khuliya.
Chorone dhoriya tobo kohibo prokashi
Gopone tomare sokha koto bhalobashi
Bhebechhinu kotha tumi sworgero debota
Kemone tomare kobo pronoyn o kotha.
Bhebechhinu mone mone dure dure thaki,
Chirojibon songopone pujibo ekaki.
Keho janibe na mor gobhiro pronoyn,
Keho dekhibe na mor osrubarichoy.
Aponi ajike jobe sudhaichho ashi,
Kemone prokashi tobo koto bhalobashi.

About the Original Song

"To Celia" was published in 1616 in a collection entitled The Forest. The theme of "To Celia" is transcendent love. So intense is the poet's feelings for Celia—and hers for him, he hopes—that she need only drink to him with a loving gaze. For his turn, the poet says, he needs no wine to inspirit his love, for it is his soul that thirsts. Only the transcendence of divine love can quench his thirst. The first line has eight syllables; the second, six syllables. In each line, the first syllable is unstressed; the second is stressed and so on. Thus, the first line below is in iambic tetrameter; the second is in iambic trimeter. The first stanza centres on love as an ethereal, insubstantial elixir. The second centres on a wreath sent to Celia by the poet with the hope that the love of Celia and the poet will thrive, like the wreath, which continues to grow and send forth fragrance.

Tagore's adaptation

Rabindranath Tagore adapted the tune in his poem "Kotobaro Bhebechhinu." According to Geetobitan, the poem falls in “Prem o Prokriti Porja” (Love and nature). The song is based on Teora (Saat Taal). This song was also composed in 1885. The influence of Western music can be clearly seen from his works of this period.
The Notation of the Song

Drink to me only

Or leave a kiss with thine eyes, and I'll not ask for wine.

Drink to me only with the cup and

I will pledge with thine.

The thirst that from the soul doth rise doth ask a drink divine.

But might I of Jove's nectar cup, I would not change for thine.
Critical Appreciation

Once again, the theme being similar in both the songs, Rabindranath’s Bengali version throws light upon the Indian philosophy of love. One may argue that the profoundness of love here surpasses the erotica of the original Scottish version. May be, this is why the West associates his writings with spirituality rather than just literature. Lyrically, Tagore is more subtle here and speaks of what he feels within rather than just expressing his love. Rabindranath’s depth of understanding and vastness of knowledge helps him replace the Biblical and Greek mythological allusions with Hindu and Brahma philosophy in so sweet a style.

For the illustration, I have not gone into any complexity. Rather through it I wanted to express the strong unexpressed affection and love, a feeling that the song evokes in me.

The link is being given as below:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8raz3co7BY
5. TUI AAYE RE KACHHE AAYE/ THE BRITISH GRENADIERS

The “British Grenadiers” was a marching song of the grenadier guards of the British army from 1706. The tune of this song is thought to date back to the 1600s, to a song entitled “The New Bath” published in dance books printed by the music publisher John Longford. It was also suggested that the tune of this song was derived from the Dutch march “The Young Prince of Friesland” as the first notes of this tune are similar to that of the British Grenadiers. It was a popular tune throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it is still played at Trooping the Colour today.

The Original Song: The British grenadiers

Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules
Of Hector and Lysander, and such great names as these.
But of all the world's great heroes, there's none that can compare.
With a tow, row, row, row, row, row, to the British Grenadiers.

Those heroes of antiquity ne'er saw a cannon ball,
Or knew the force of powder to slay their foes withal.
But our brave boys do know it, and banish all their fears,
Sing tow, row, row, row, row, row, for the British Grenadiers.

Whene'er we are commanded to storm the palisades,
Our leaders march with fusees, and we with hand grenades.
We throw them from the glacis, about the enemies' ears.
Sing tow, row, row, row, row, row, the British Grenadiers.

And when the siege is over, we to the town repair.
The townsmen cry, "Hurrah, boys, here comes a Grenadier!
Here come the Grenadiers, my boys, who know no doubts or fears!
Then sing tow, row, row, row, row, row, the British Grenadiers.

Then let us fill a bumper, and drink a health to those
Who carry caps and pouches, and wear the loupèd clothes.
May they and their commanders live happy all their years.
With a tow, row, row, row, row, row, for the British Grenadiers."
Tui Aaye Re Kachhe Aaye:-

Tui aaye re kachhe aaye,

Ami tore sajiye di-

Tor haat e mrinal-bala,

Tor kaan e chanpar dul,

Tor mathay beiler sinthi,

Tor khonpay bokul phul.

About the Original Song

The British Grenadiers is a traditional marching song for units of the British and Commonwealth armies whose badge of identification carries the grenade, the tune of which dates from the 17th century. A song entitled "The New Bath" from the 17th century is thought to be the origin. However, it is also suggested that it was derived from the Dutch march "Mars van de jonge Prins van Friesland" ("March of the young Prince of Friesland"); the first notes of this tune are similar. The march was introduced to Britain during the reign of the King William III. Today it is played at special events, as a musical tribute to the Ministry of Defence.

The first known association of the tune with the regiment is in 1706 as 'The Grenadier’s March', and the first version printed with lyrics from around 1750. It was a popular tune throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and remains so until this day. In the UK, it is played at Trooping the Colour.

The tune has been widely used ever since in Marching Songs around the world, in movies as well as in animated T.V shows and PC and mobile games. The University of Liverpool Medical Student's Society's anthem, 'Jack Leggate's Song', is set to this tune. The song is also the regimental song to the Fort Henry Guard, a generic military regiment representing a British regiment of 1867 in British North America.

Tagore’s adaptation

This is yet another song form the play Kalmrigaya. Tagore used the song in the first scene as we see the two siblings play, singing merrily. Another song influenced by The Vicar of Brays, “O Dekhbi Re Bhai”, follows this song. Another important thing to not is how Tagore converts a song with six stanzas to a six-line song, this simplification is significant in the context. The translation of the eulogy to a sweet and romantic theme is also noteworthy.
The Notation of the Song

The British Grenadiers

Critical Appreciation

The British Grenadiers is a marching song for the army, who risk their lives for the nation; whereas the Bengali version is in a much lighter and a merrier mood. Also the feelings are softer. The bagpipes can be replaced by the sweet music of harmonium or piano. The bond between the siblings is beautifully expressed through the song. Leela’s (the sister) love and concern for her brother is seen in the sixth scene when the youth doesn’t return from his errand. I feel the tune here is far more important the lyrics. Rabindranath’s application of the western tune into the poem breathes life into the brother-sister relationship.

Tagore had been influenced by numerous other songs. The following link might be informative in the context:

Baul’s influence on Rabi Thakur

“Rabindranath Tagore called himself ‘Baul Rabindranath’. The poet portrayed his images in Baul forms several times. In his song collection, Geetobitan, Tagore mentioned 13 songs as Baul songs. So, it is evident that the life of a Baul had inspired the poet. Apart from his songs, Tagore’s essays, poetry and short stories—all are highly influenced by Baul songs.”

Rabindranath Tagore came to Shilaidaha (Shahbazpur) to take care of their estate in that area at the age of 22. In this rural neighbourhood he could make the difference between the rural Bangla and the concrete urban life of Kolkata. He living style and simplicity of rural life captivated him greatly which also influenced his literary works. He was highly impressed by Gogon Horkara, through whom he became familiar with Baul Lalon Shah, whose folk songs greatly influenced Tagore. Tagore worked to popularise Lalon’s songs. The period 1891–1895, Tagore’s Sadhana period, named after one of Tagore's magazines, was his most productive; in these years he wrote more than half the stories of the three-volume, 84-story Galpaguchchha. Its ironic and grave tales examined the voluptuous poverty of an idealised rural Bengal. Inspired by these songs, Tagore composed his great songs Bhengey mor ghorer chabi, niye jabi ke amarey. Jodir tor daak shune keu, Amake paray paray khepiye beray kon shey khepa, Ami jokhon chhilem, Mati toder daak diyechhey and Tomar khola hawa lagiye paal-e—these songs were also influenced by Baul songs.

Rabindranath Tagore was greatly influenced and inspired by Bauls. Here is a famous Rabindrasangeet (Tagore song), heavily influenced by Baul theme:

\[
\text{\underline{Amar praner manush achhé prané}} \\
\text{\underline{Tai heri taye sakol khane}} \\
\text{\underline{Achhe shé nayōntaray, alōk-dharay, tai na haraye--}} \\
\text{\underline{Ogo tai dekhi taye jethay sethay}} \\
\text{\underline{Taka-i ami jé dik-pané}} \\
\text{The man of my heart dwells inside me.} \\
\text{Everywhere I behold, it's Him!} \\
\text{In my every sight, in the sparkle of light} \\
\text{Oh I can never lose Him --} \\
\text{Here, there and everywhere,} \\
\text{Wherever I turn, right in front is He!}
\]

He met Gagan Harkara, through whom he became familiar with Baul Lalon Shah, whose folk songs greatly influenced Tagore. Tagore worked to popularize Lalon's songs. The period 1891–1895, Tagore’s Sadhana period, named after one of Tagore's magazines, was his most productive; in these years he wrote more than half the stories of the three-volume, 84-story Galpaguchchha.
RABINDRANATH, THE PAINTER

Rabindranath had always wanted to paint but he eventually found himself as a painter only when he was 63. After doodling in his manuscripts and turning his textual deletions into decorative motifs for over two decades almost all of a sudden in 1924 on the pages of the Purabi Manuscript it began to proliferate and assume more representational and expressive intent. Victoria Ocampo who spotted these during his stay in Argentina as her guest was impressed and found artistic merit in them. This in turn made him aware of their artistic potential. Compared to his early doodles it is clear that these were not entirely spontaneous but inspired by the examples of Primitive art he had been looking at. In these the decorative is conjoined with the non-Western art gathered under the rubric of 'Primitive art'.

These doodles of 1924 mark the beginnings of Rabindranath's artistic career and Rabindranath himself recognised them as such and wrote: 'The only training I had from my young days was the training in rhythm in thought, the rhythm in sound. I had come to know that rhythm gives reality to that which is desultory, which is insignificant in itself. And therefore, when the scratches in my manuscript cried, like sinners, for salvation, and assailed my eyes with the ugliness of their irrelevance, Switching from writing to giving finality to his doodles he sometimes erased an entire page of writing and turned it into a page of drawing. This freed the image from the text and made it independent but he did not take to doing independent paintings until 1928. His initial paintings of imaginary animals and birds and mask like faces were akin to the doodles. They exist half way between the real and the possible, the primeval and the surreal. While some of his imaginary creatures have an organic unity that suggests an anatomical probability, others have forms composed from decorative motifs as in Chinese ritual bronze vessels or ancient Peruvian carvings, and yet others have forms that break up into geometric units or bodies and are pure inventions with animation borrowed from of real animals. He achieves this largely though the creation of composite forms and cross-projections of movement or expression.

Imagination and serendipity played a greater role than planned execution in the early works and his innate sense of rhythm that structured the forms introduced an element of abstraction into his paintings. Commenting on it, he wrote: 'It is the element of unpredictability in art which seems to fascinate me strongly. The subject matter of a poem can be traced back to some dim thought in the mind... While painting, the process adopted by me is quite the reverse. First there is the hint of a line, and then the line becomes a form. The more pronounced the form becomes the clearer becomes the picture to my conception. This creation of form is a source of wonder. If I were a finished artist I would probably have a preconceived idea to be made into a picture. This is no doubt a rewarding experience. But it is greater fun when the mind is seized upon by something outside of it, some surprise element which gradually evolves into a understandable shape.'

But painting also opened him to the world of visual sensations and made him see the world anew. He wrote, 'when I turned to painting, I at once found my place in the grand cavalcade of the visual world. Trees and plants, men, beasts, everything became vividly real in their own distinct forms. The lines and colours began revealing to me the spirit of the concrete objects in nature. There was no more need for
further elucidation of their raison d'être once the artist discovered his role of a beholder pure and simple.' He also wanted the viewers to approach his paintings as they approached nature and know them through empathy and sensibility. And so he refused to name his paintings, and to come between them and their viewers.

In his paintings meanings did not exist separate from form; to him the painted image was more like nature than language and this gave it greater claim to permanence and a communicativeness that transcended cultures. Comparing the relative permanence of the arts he wrote: 'All kinds of poetic works die with language... But there is no such hassle with nature. The Krishnachura gave us Krishnachura flowers yesterday, so it does today and so it will tomorrow. Every difficulty is with language. In a way paintings are much more enduring. The difference between what is grasped by the eyes and what is grasped by language lies here.' Painting awakened him to the evocative power of forms in nature and in his painting too he wanted to express through the sensory aspects forms. In this he was in tune with the approach adopted by modern artists who believed in the aesthetic autonomy of mediums. The most recurring form in his paintings was the human face; his interest in it remained constant but his approach to its rendering did not remain fixed. The earliest ones are more mask-like. Some of these remind us of Peruvian or Indonesian masks, but more often they reflect an effort to turn a seen face into a social or universal type. Without any reference to the body, of which the face is a part, they usually float on the page, and like actual masks they represent the face as a form complete in itself.

Yet within a short period his faces begin to function as a formal synecdoche for the whole body. Etched into their lineaments are the signs of the absent body and we can see them with our mind's eye if we pay attention to the painterly, materiality of these painted faces. As his repertoire of skills grew the faces became more individualised as in portraits. Shadows of people he had seen and known began to fall across his painted faces. But for Rabindranath who believed that the self was always evolving and who was ever unravelling his self, portraits did not mean likeness but something deeper and truer than likeness, more akin to what writers call character. And, amalgamating the social and individual, it is in this direction that his representations of the human face finally moves.

Discovering the human body was for Rabindranath a part of discovering nature afresh through painting. Considering that he was to the world the white-beard, long-robbed, serious-minded poet his figures are surprisingly agile, light and sometimes acrobatically animated. That his involvement with dance took a definitive turn about the same time as he was beginning to painting perhaps explains this. In 1927 while visiting Java he was greatly impressed by their dances and felt that their life expressed itself through dance; he wrote: 'Here, when their life seeks utterance, it sets them a-dance... I have seen their plays; it is movement from the beginning to end... In this dance the tongue is silent, but they speak with their whole body through signs and gestures.' In his paintings too the tongue is silent and the figure speaks through movement and gesture. Committed to expressing himself through visual and sensuous means such as movement and gesture, Rabindranath kept narration out of his paintings and instead imbued his figures with a character or bhab (mood) that could be expressed formally. He gave expression to it in two different ways. He sometimes condensed the sensations or the bhab aroused by a figure into a motif, or a single iconic image. In such images the figure assumes a denser, non-anatomical decorative shape; undergoes an expressive metamorphosis comparable to the transformation of a hand into a fist. The process remains the same even when there is more than one figure; the figures are then fused in to a single motif and seen as constituting an individual biomorphic shape. And when a figure is seen in relation to an object, they are similarly amalgamated into a single entity with the object assuming human overtones.
He also sometimes transforms a group of figures into an engaging moment. In paintings conceived as a moment he does not condense or fuse figures, but retain their discreteness and individuality; it revolves around turning the picture into a gestalt of gestures. Like other modernist painters while trying to free painting from literature he recognised that two or more figures brought together paved the way for painting’s own kind of narration. But unlike in literature where a story is unravelled through characters developed through successive events, in painting a gestalt of gesturing figures leads us towards a theatrical moment. In these paintings where he explores the narrative and expressive potential of the body in movement and gesture Rabindranath uses insights gained from theatre just as he brought a writer’s sense of character into his rendering of faces. Dramatically pregnant as these moments are, their meanings are tantalisingly ambivalent; they lend themselves to partial unravelling when they are read experientially from within, but becomes intractable as soon as we try to read them.

Like these dramatic scenes his landscapes too are soundless. Devoid of human figures and with very few suggestions of human presence in them, to him landscape represents a one to one intimate encounter with the world. There are echoes of an old habit that bordered on the spiritual in these pictures. In The Religion of Man Rabindranath wrote: ‘Almost every morning in the early hour of dusk, I would run out from by bed in a great hurry to greet the first pink flush of the world... The sky seemed to bring to me the call of a personal companionship, and all my heart my whole body in fact used to drink in at a draught the overflowing light and peace of those silent hours.’ Only in these pictures painted in his mature years the scene and the twilight silence is not that of dawn but of dusk. With trees ominously silhouetted against iridescent skies or dense woodlands patiently mapped in dim evening light, those familiar with old Shantiniketan will recognise experiential elements in these landscapes, but they are more archetypal than descriptive and with enchanting pools of light and shadow they draw us.

Art was for Rabindranath self-expression, or more precisely an expression of the artist's personality. Though as a painter he was no virtuoso and possessed limited representational skills, his graphic skills and rhythmic sense were commendable. He was by his own admission an artist who found rather than one who created according to a pre-defined idea but once the image surfaced the richness of thinking and imagination gained from creative work in other fields took over and guided it to its expressive finality. Perhaps there is a late Tagore both in his paintings and poems who was more personal in expression. And if there is darkness in his paintings there is also playfulness in them and unlike the Expressionists with whom he is often compared he did not cease to feel a deep empathy with nature even in his darkest moments.
REXCHANGE OF IDEAS

MUKTI

- Udita Ghosh, Calgary, AB, Canada

Rabindranath Tagore wrote the national anthem of India and Bangladesh: something that no other poet in our world has had the privilege of. He gave the Bengali culture a new dimension, something that all cultures inside the Indian subcontinent had but the Bengali culture lacked. He gave the Bengalis in India, Bangladesh and now all over the world a history, a culture and a sense of nationalism and pride. He not only gave us culture, he gave us entertainment that is so decent and divine.

Rabi Thakur...what shall I say about him?! His name gives us a sense of pride, identity and evokes the sense of patriotism in all Indians. His appearance evokes a feeling of transcendental happiness and a sense of calm and purity. His songs, poems, novels, short stories, musical dance and drama bestow us with heritage, culture, tradition, history and entertainment. To the western world, Rabindranath Tagore is a symbol of sophistication and eastern excellence. The generations from the Indian Subcontinent living in North America and all over the world celebrate Rabindranath Tagore very much and his influence in their lives is just very great. People here teach Rabindrasangeet, teach Rabindrik dance and many Indian American or Indian Canadian students travel to Shantiniketan and Viswa Bharati just to learn about Rabindranath and his works. They do a PhD on Rabindrik literature as if he himself is a vast and very interesting subject to the Western World. Every year in different places in Canada and the US, a huge cultural festival goes on called “Bongo Sammelan” and it takes place every year without fail. In this festival all people celebrate, mainly, Rabindranath by local artists singing his songs, performing to his plays and dancing to his songs. Big artists from India and Bangladesh also come to entertain people and give us a better and original taste of Rabi Thakur.

Every year, on the last week of May or the first week of June, the Bengali Association of Calgary celebrates the Rabindra-Nazrul Sandhya where we sing to Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam’s songs; we perform their musical dance shows and act to their dramas. I am one of the dance performers, every year, to his songs and it’s a real joy in our lives to perform as a tribute to him and he, even today, brings us all together and helps us create sweet memories of the show and the rehearsals. Rabi Thakur is a thread that keeps us connected to our origin, our culture, our heritage, our tradition, our history and our motherland.
Rabindranath Tagore and Rakta Karabi in the Netherlands

-Paramita Paul

In 2011, Indian expat communities across the world commemorated Rabindranath Tagore’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In the Netherlands, the Indian embassy organised a week of celebrations in May, including poetry readings, the screening of a documentary, dance and music performances, a debating competition, and the performance of a play. The Netherlands was one of the countries that Tagore visited during his travels through Europe, and in 1920 he was received in the capital, the Hague, by the Dutch author Frederik van Eeden (1862-1932). In the same year, Van Eeden translated Tagore’s *Gitanjali*, which he published in Dutch as *Wij-zangen*.

Before last year’s events, Tagore was well known among members of literary and artistic circles in the Netherlands. However, most people only knew him as a poet and Nobel Prize Laureate, and did not know about his other work as an artist, author, composer and playwright. The cultural program in May introduced people to these different aspects of Tagore’s life and work. The embassy donated two busts of Tagore to the municipality of The Hague, and to Leiden University, the oldest university in the Netherlands. Also, the debating competition between two teams of high school students raised awareness among Dutch children of Tagore’s philosophy. The Indian embassy requested *Kalloi*, a Bengali organisation in the Netherlands, to perform Tagore’s famous *Rakta Karabi* as part of the celebrations. The director, Mr. Saumya Sengupta, chose this play because he believed its theme had a contemporary feel. The problems discussed in this play were problems that could still be seen in the world today.

I was chosen to play the role of Nandini, and I thought this was a unique experience. Rehearsals took place during several weeks in March and April, as we tried to recreate the atmosphere of the play. We performed in English, and with the help of an artist, the director designed a modern set. There was a door in the middle of the stage. Nandini was dressed in a green sari and she wore and carried oleanders. The other actors and actresses were dressed in dark colours. Everyone was on stage throughout the play covered in a dark cloth, except for the king, who was backstage so that the audience could only hear his voice.

I enjoyed the rehearsals very much and liked meeting the other actors and actresses, who were all from India and were living in the Netherlands for several years. I believe that to each of us Tagore and *Rakta Karabi* meant something different, and to me it symbolised a special connection to the country and culture of my family.

Our first performance was in the Diligentia Theater in The Hague, and the second performance was in the Compagnie Theater in Amsterdam. The audience was mixed: there were delegates from different embassies, government officials, members of the business community, artists, and friends and family. There were Indians, Dutch people, and foreigners from many different countries. Both performances were very well received, and people could relate to the story very easily. This shows how Tagore’s ideas can impress and inspire people even today, so many years after they were first published and performed, and how important his legacy is all over the world.
CELEBRATION OF 150th ANNIVERSARY

When Tagore won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 he was the first non-European to win it and is still the only Indian with the honour. Praise for the man has come from far and wide. Yasunari Kawabata, the first Japanese Nobel Laureate in Literature, described Tagore as "this sage-like poet". And Irish poet WB Yeats wrote: "These prose translations from Rabindranath Tagore have stirred my blood as nothing has for years... These lyrics -- which are in the original, my Indians tell me, full of subtlety of rhythm, of untranslatable delicacies of colour, of metrical invention -- display in their thought a world I have dreamed of all my life long. The work of a supreme culture, they yet appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the rushes."

May 7, 2011 marked the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, one of India's, as well as the world's most important cultural personalities. To mark the occasion many notable events took place around the country, and even outside of it.

First-ever compilation of all Tagore's paintings in a book

Tagore set up a university in 1901 – Viswa Bharati, which planned several national and international collaborations, on account of his 150th birth anniversary. The most awaited one happened to be an exhaustive collection and study of his paintings and notes, which were showcased in a four volume anthology called “Rabindra Chitravali”, published by Pratikshan Books, in association with Viswa-Bharati, and prices at Rs.20,000. The paintings were sourced from Rabindra Bhavan, Kala Bhavan, National Gallery of Modern Art, Academy of Fine Arts and Rabindra Bharati University, and the collection was published in 2011.

Paris: Tagore's first international exhibition

UNESCO also played a major role in the celebrations of Tagore's 150th birth anniversary, with the hope to "build up a conception of the universal reconciled with the particular, now that peace is being jeopardized nationally, regionally and internationally by identity-related and spiritual tension". International readings, seminars and performances of Tagore's works culminated with a major event on May 7, 2011, which marked the actual birth anniversary of Tagore. UNESCO and the National Gallery of Modern Art also put together an exhibition of Tagore's paintings which travelled to Paris, London, Berlin, Rome and New York.

The inaugural event "Waves of Joy" -- a presentation of music, dance and poetry in Bengali, English and French organised by UNESCO - was held in Paris in May at Maison de L'Inde City University. A collection of rare iconography of Tagore was also on display including a photograph of Tagore with Mahatma Gandhi and another with Albert Einstein. It was perhaps fitting that the launch of the year-long commemorative celebrations took place here as the first international exhibition of Tagore’s paintings was held in Paris in May 1930.
Tagore and Burns Night

On the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, American Alumni Association (AAA), Dhaka is paying homage to the Nobel laureate poet. The programme will be held at the auditorium of American International School, Dhaka (in Baridhara) on May 19.

AAA is an association of graduates of American Colleges and Universities in Bangladesh. Launched in 1998, the organization has been serving as a platform for promoting fellowship among its members.

Through live music, dance, recitation, narration and visuals, the programme will present Rabindranath Tagore and a particular aspect of his impact in the west during a rather short period of time and conclude with his global relevance in the present day. The production will include Tagore's experience in the U.S. where he travelled five times. He had lectured extensively at the Harvard University. In New York Tagore said, “America has the figure of youth and all that is best in Western civilization will eventually find lodgement here.”

The American Alumni Association, Dhaka

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Tagore and Philately

“In the philatelic world Tagore is still an endless curio and has commemorative stamps as far as Bulgaria and Brazil.”

Works by Tagore are rare to the auction market, so when a collection of 12 rare paintings by the Bengali poet came under the hammer at Sotheby's in the United Kingdom they sold for over £1.5m ($2.2m). "The rarity and distinguished provenance of the 12 Tagore paintings - in addition to the fact that they have never appeared on the open market before - made their auction debut a once-in-a-generation opportunity for collectors in the field," a Sotheby's statement said.
A limited edition A4 stamp sheet, designed in India, was commissioned by the British Royal Mail. The 10 stamps feature images from Tagore’s life. Only 1,000 sheets have been released, making this a collectible item. The sheets will be on sale for Rs 1,000. While in India in May, Union Finance Minister, Pranab Mukherjee (former) released a set of two special commemorative coins in the denominations of Rs 5 and Rs 150 issued by the Reserve Bank of India.

Influence on contemporary Rabindrasangeet practioners and dancers: Rabindrasangeet practioners are no longer practising the art just as a ‘co-curricular activity’. Singers are a lot more educated, compared to before, and the audiences that indulge in this art form are reasonably educated too. When Bengali artistes perform abroad, it serves as a source of inspiration for foreign artistes, irrespective of being trained or untrained, and they in turn work towards raising the standards of Indian Classical music abroad.

Tagore had spent a lot of time in England during his ‘Gitanjali Days’, and England still seems to respect and adore him, so much that the English organizations and individuals still work in accord with the English Scholars to promote Tagore’s genii. Scholars and reciters such as Ketaki Kushari Dyson and William Radice, play a significant part in reaching out to the lay audience as does Piyali Roy of Sampad, who organised programmes around Tagore’s bust at Stratford-Upon-Avon.

But the most successful influence was the prestigious Tagore Festival in Dartington, Devon, in May 2011, with groups such as Ishirini, Cambridge, performing. To performers abroad, often a financial and commercial factor comes into play as the popularity of Rabindrasangeet is uncertain on unknown terrains. But with the restrictions of Viswa Bharati withdrawn on Tagore’s work, international artistes are now free to experiment with different kinds of fusion. Rabindrasangeet oughtn’t to be confined within Indian Boundaries anymore.
Conclusion

The greatest among poets, composers, playwrights and novelists, Tagore has influenced artistes all over the world, over the ages. His songs, each in a flavour of its own, apply to various situations of life and inspire us to break open the doors of our minds, and let our imaginations run azure, in order to create a culture which is not identified by any specific language, to appreciate the beauty of different regional cultures all over the world. It is thus only fitting to have celebrated so lavishly Tagore’s 150th birth anniversary.

Those familiar with Tagore’s works, thoroughly enjoyed the celebrations; Rabindrasangeet, had a jolly time reaching out to larger audiences, and those who practised his works, could identify this modern world of technology, it surely is unjust to keep such inspiring works confined within museums and galleries and effort has been made using different forms of communication to allow his works reach audiences all over the planet.

We can only hope that in the years to come, the global platform for Indian Classical Cultures and Tagore’s works expands, so much that every educated person in the world may be able to relate to a Rabindrasangeet or a poem from the Gitanjali, or even with one of his paintings.
REACHING OUT

For the purpose of the project a Facebook Page was created. Entitled 'Rabindranath and the West', statistics show that the page has reached over a 1000 people with certain posts. People from around the world have shown their support by liking this page and providing feedback. The link of the page is as given below:

http://www.facebook.com/RabindranathAndTheWest
The page is regularly updated with interesting facts and paintings made by our team. Comments of praise and encouragement have been received from people all over the world.
Several people have praised the artwork and our depiction of Tagore’s poems and plays.

Apart from this, people have also expressed their hurt at seeing Rabindranath’s image being vandalized and his accolades stolen:
Several people have provided feedback on the topic, on what Rabindranath means to them and how they have been inspired by him.
THE CORE TEAM

The Project has been done under the supervision and guidance of Mrs. Chitralekha Mukherjee, (H.O.D Bengali Department).

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<td>X</td>
<td>1. Kisholoy Banerjee</td>
<td>Poem</td>
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<td>XI</td>
<td>1. Souptik Gupta</td>
<td>Poem and Short Story</td>
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<td>2. Sagnik Bhattacharya</td>
<td>Essay</td>
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<td>XII</td>
<td>1. Abhirup Sengupta</td>
<td>Essays and Compilation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Archan Krishna Mitter</td>
<td>Novels, Essays and Play</td>
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<td>3. Pradripta Mondal</td>
<td>Addresses and Lectures, Pictures and Compilation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Pronoy Chakraborty</td>
<td>Western Music, Illustrations, Painter Rabindranath, Editing and Compilation</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Souvik Chakraborty</td>
<td>Facebook page (Reaching out)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Suryoday Basak</td>
<td>Celebration of 150th Anniversary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Tanuj Mandal</td>
<td>Facebook page (Developer), Cover Pages, Compilation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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THE CORE TEAM

(Photograph)
LINE OF ACTION

- Under the advice and supervision of the project guide all relevant information was gathered by the team members. Books from school as well as public libraries and the internet were the sources of information.
- The team members had discussions over the gathered information and decided on the topics to be covered.
- The Project was divided into the following sections:
  1. Introduction
  2. Poems, Short Stories, Plays And Novels
  3. Essays and Addresses
  4. Rabindranath and Western Music
  5. Rabindranath, the Painter
  6. Exchange of Ideas
  7. Celebration of Rabindranath’s 150th birth anniversary all over the world.
  8. Reaching Out (Facebook Page)
- The team members worked both individually at home and together in school.
- Interactive sessions with students from abroad about their thoughts regarding Rabindranath and his works form an integral part of the project.
- The entire project was finally compiled by the team members under the guidance of the project guide.
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11. Our family members for their constant support during work, even at odd hours.
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