A TAGORE CHRONICLE: 1861—1931

The following brief chronicle has been compiled to give some idea of important phases of the Poet's career, and his activities mainly in the literary sphere. Dates of works have been selected with this purpose in view, without giving an exhaustive bibliography. Excepting important publications in English, no mention has been made of the large number of translations of the Poet's works into the other languages of the world.

The Poet took a leading part in all the dramatic performances mentioned here, but no attempt has been made to give a complete list of all performances in which he appeared himself. No mention has been made of the performances in the Santiniketan School in which he often takes an active part, nor of the numerous productions of his plays on the public stage in India and abroad. The dates of composition of Songs—about 2000 in. number—have also been omitted.

It has not been found feasible to include references to Rabindranath's contact with personalities in India and abroad. Neither has it been possible to indicate his active participation in the educational and cultural, social and religious, and economic and political life of his country, and his untiring efforts to promote international good will and peace. In the case of Lectures and Sermons only a few of outstanding importance have been mentioned.

The date of Bengali publications in book form is given within brackets; the approximate date of writing outside brackets. In the case of English translations, the dates refer to publication either in journals or in book-form. Most of the publications in Bengali give the Bengali year which begins in April. Owing to this lack of correspondence with the European year, a discrepancy of one year may have occurred in a few cases in which the month of publication could not be traced.

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The following abbreviations have been used:

- B.B. = Bengali Books
- L. = Letters
- V. = Verse
- B.M. = Bengali Monthly
- N. = Novel
- V.D. = Verse Drama
- R. = Essays
- P.D. = Prose Drama
- Vol. = volumes
- Eng. tr. = English translation
- Pub. = published

In the Bengali names in Italics, it may be noted that a is pronounced as in Eng. all; c as Eng. ch.;
1, 3, s all like Eng. sh; and u as b after a consonant, = w.

The Poet's family belongs to the Sāndiya clan (gōra) of the Rādhya branch of Brāhmaṇas, and his ancestors are believed to have settled in Rādha or West Bengal about the 8th century after Christ. In the 17th century the Poet's family acquired the distinctive appellation Thākur, meaning 'Respected Lord' (Satyavāra), which was Anglicised first as Tagore, and then as Tagore.

The Poet's name in Bengali is Ravindranāth Thākur, the v in Bengali being pronounced as b. The literal meaning of the personal name, Ravindranāth (Ravindra-nātha in the original Sanskrit form, and usually written as Rabindranath in English) is 'Sun-Lord'.

364

1867-74. Irregular attendance at various schools and studies at home with private tutors. First experiments in versification about 1868.

1873-74. Upayana (Initiation) ceremony: first acquaintance with the Gāyatrī prayer. First visit to Santiniketan, and the Himalayas, with his father, Maharṣi Debendranath.

Serada Devi (mother) died March 8, 1874.


1877-78. First appearance in dramatic performance as Alik Bābu in a Bengali Comedy by Jyotirindranath (elder brother). A new B.M., Bhāratī, started in Sāvana, 1284 B.E. (July, 1877) under the editorship of Dwijendranath (eldest brother). In 9 months the Poet contributed about 22 poems, (including some of the poems of Bhānuśimha Ṭhākur, 1884), 2 essays, 6 articles of literary criticism, a long story (Bhikhārini, the Beggar Maid), an unfinished serial novel (Karunā), and a long poem, Kavi-Kāhinī (V., 1878, A Poet’s Story). Sojourn in Ahmedabad, Bombay Presidency, April—September, 1878, First musical compositions.


Contributed to Bhāratī numerous poems and ballads, some of which were collected in Saiv Saṅgīti (V. 1884, Songs of Childhood); literary essays (including articles on Anglo-Saxon Literature, Dante, Petarch, Goethe, Anglo-Norman Literature, Chatterton, etc.), translations from Shakespeare, Burns, Moore, Shelley, Tennyson.


Married Mrinalini Devi, December 9, 1883 (Agrahāyaṇa 24, 1290 B.E.).

1884-90. Poems of Kadi O Komal (V. 1887. Sharps and Flats, includes translations from Shelley, Mrs. Browning, Ernest Myers, Aubrey De Vere, Augusta Webster, P. B.

1890. Second visit to Europe, August-November, 1890: Italy, France, England.

1891-95. Started new B.M., Sādhana, from Agrahāyaṇa, 1298 B.E. (November, 1891) to which he contributed for 4 years numerous poems, stories (collected in Chota Galpa, Vicīra Galpa 2 vols.; Kathā-catuṣṭaya, 1894; Galpa-dhālak, 1895); literary essays, reviews, political articles and topical notes. Foundation Vice-President, Vangīya Sahitya Parishad (Bengal Academy of Letters), 1894.


1897-1902. Appeared as Kedār in dramatic performance of Vaikuṇṭha Khālā (Prose Comedy, 1897, Vaikkāntha's Manuscript). Essays on Ancient India and ideals of civilization: Kaṅkā (V. November, 1899, Sparks), Kathā (V. January, 1900, Stories), Kāhīnī (V. March, 1900, Tales), Kaḷpanā (V. May, 1900, Dreams). Editor, Bhārati (1898-99), contributed in 1 year about 15 poems, 7 stories, 6 social and political essays, 4 religious and educational studies, 12 literary essays, and 1 verse drama, Lakṣmī Parīkṣā (The Trial of Lakshmi). Poems of Kaṅkā (The Fleeting One), 1899-1900. Cīra-kumār Sabhā, prose comedy, 1900-01 (The Bachelors' Club). Poems of Naivedya (V. 1901, Offerings). Essays on the Upanishads (Brahma-mantra, Aṭṭahāśad Brahma, etc.).

Founded the Brahma-Vidyāśaya (Santiniketan School), December 22, 1901 (Pauṣa 7, 1308 B.E.).

Editor, Vaṅga-darśana (B.M., new series) for about 5 years from Vaisākhā, 1308 B.E. (April, 1901). Cokkhor Bālī, novel, 1901-02 (N. 1903, Eng. tr. 'Eyesore,' 1914). Poems
of *Utunga*, 1901-03 (V. 1914, Dedications). Lecture on *Atyukti* (Exaggerations, with reference to the Delhi Durbar), 1902.

Mrs. Devi (wife) died November 23, 1902 (*Agra* 7, 1309 B.E.).


Maharshi Debendra Nath (father) died January 19, 1905 (*Maha* 6, 1311 B.E.).


1911. Fiftieth Birthday Celebrations; Poet as *Thakur-dada* in performance of *Raj* at Santiniketan, May, 1911; Celebration in Calcutta 1911-12: Address presented by the Vangiya Sahitya Parishad.


1921. Returned to India, July, 1921. Lecture on Sikṣār Milan (Meeting of Cultures) and Satyur Āhvān (The Call of Truth). Eng. 'The Fugitive.' Varṣā-maṅgal (Music Festival of the Rainy Season).

Sixtieth Birthday Celebrations: Address presented by the Vangiya Sahitya Parishad.

Inaugural Ceremony of the Visva-bharati at Santiniketan, December 22, 1921 (Pauṣa 8, 1328 B. E.).


Rakita-Karav, 1924 (P. D. Eng. ir. 'Red Oleanders', 1924). 

Seventh Foreign Tour (September, 1924—February, 1925): invited to attend Peru Centenary, but returned from Buenos Aires (Argentine Republic) owing to illness; visited Italy in January.


1926. Eighth Foreign Tour (May—December, 1926): Italy, Switzerland, Austria, France, England, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Turkey, Greece and Egypt.


Lekhan (Writing), composed at various times, published in 1928.

1929. Tenth Foreign Tour (February—July, 1929): Malaya, China, Japan; attended the Triennial Conference of the National Council of Education, Canada; U. S. A.; Indo-China.


Presentation of THE GOLDEN BOOK OF TAGORE, on the 27th December, 1931.

369
Rabindranath Tagore was born on this day in 1861. Philosopher, educator, novelist, poet and painter, he is without challenge one of the greatest and most noble figures of modern times. Today, on the anniversary of his birthday, we do not celebrate merely the thinker and writer. The life of Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) covers the first four decades of his life; these were formative of both his artistic and much of his political thinking. Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali poet, Brahmo philosopher, and scholar. Family background. Tagore was born at No. 6 Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, Jorasanko—the address of his family mansion. Tagore was born on the day in the year 1268, according to the Bengali calendar and 1861 AD, as per the Gregorian calendar. Tagore was also referred to as Gurudev, Kabiguru, and Biswakabi. Nicknamed Rabi, he was the youngest of 13 children and lost his mother in March 1875 when he was not yet 14. * Rabindranath Tagore and Albert Einstein met four times between 1930 and 1931 and mutually revered each other for each other’s contributions. * William Rothenstein, the painter, was a friend of the Tagore family. Tagore gave Rothenstein the translations of his own songs, including the Gitanjali, when the latter travelled to London in 1912.