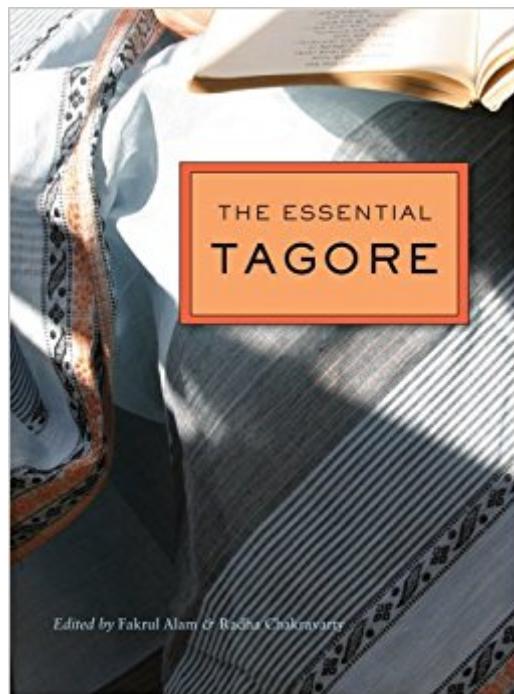


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# The Essential Tagore



## Synopsis

"The Essential Tagore" showcases the genius of India's Rabindranath Tagore, the first Asian Nobel Laureate and possibly the most prolific and diverse serious writer the world has ever known. Marking the 150th anniversary of Tagore's birth, this ambitious collection the largest single volume of his work available in English attempts to represent his extraordinary achievements in ten genres: poetry, songs, autobiographical works, letters, travel writings, prose, novels, short stories, humorous pieces, and plays. In addition to the newest translations in the modern idiom, it includes a sampling of works originally composed in English, his translations of his own works, three poems omitted from the published version of the English "Gitanjali," and examples of his artwork. Tagore's writings are notable for their variety and innovation. His "Sonar Tari" signaled a distinctive turn toward the symbolic in Bengali poetry. The Lord of Life, from his collection "Chitra," created controversy around his very personal concept of religion. "Chokher Bali" marked a decisive moment in the history of the Bengali novel because of the way it delved into the minds of men and women. The skits in "Vyangakautuk" mocked upper-class pretensions. Prose pieces such as The Problem and the Cure were lauded by nationalists, who also sang Tagore's patriotic songs. Translations for this volume were contributed by Tagore specialists and writers of international stature, including Amitav Ghosh, Amit Chaudhuri, and Sunetra Gupta.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There have been a number of attempts, in the century since Yeats made [the] request, to give the

English reader a fuller and more accurate sense of Rabindranath Tagore--through new translations, anthologies of his work, critical studies, and biographies. But "The Essential Tagore", published to coincide with the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Tagore's birth, is the most substantial one yet.--Adam Kirsch "New Yorker" (05/30/2011) As the generously weighty and elegantly produced "Essential Tagore" from Harvard testifies, Tagore wrote in many diverse modes, and quite distinct aspects of his genius often come into play.--Seamus Perry "Times Literary Supplement" (09/16/2011) It is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian poet, playwright, novelist, composer, choreographer, educator and philosopher. So I propose as book of the year the splendid new anthology "The Essential Tagore", edited by Fakrul Alam and Radha Chakravarty, which contains an unparalleled selection of poems, plays, stories, letters and more, mostly in excellent up-to-date translations. Initially known in the West as a mystical poet, Tagore was among India's most important social critics and thinkers; his depiction of the limits of women's lives is especially acute.--Martha Nussbaum "New Statesman" (11/21/2011) This new anthology, edited by Fakrul Alam and Radha Chakravarty, is so welcome, because it starts the process of freeing Tagore for a contemporary audience. The first thing that strikes you about "The Essential Tagore" is the diversity of its subject's talents: In a career that stretched over seventy-three years (he finished his first poem when he was seven, and was composing a story on his deathbed), Tagore wrote novels, plays, literary criticism, political essays on the iniquities of the British Raj, and descriptions of his travels in Persia and Japan. Yet it is to the poems that one turns immediately. The range is dizzying--Tagore composed devotional, patriotic, erotic, and nature verse--and is tackled here by a phalanx of gifted translators, including [Amit] Chaudhuri...["The Essential Tagore"] reintroduces a great writer to the world. The most luminous discovery in this anthology is not any particular poem or essay but the cumulative evocation of the poet's personality...The experience of living in today's India--a country that is agrarian, industrializing, and postindustrial, all at once--still forces a multiplicity of viewpoints on the individual, and Tagore must have some claim to being the prototypical modern Indian.--Aravind Adiga "Bookforum" (09/01/2011) [A] treasure trove...Imagine the task that was before the editors of "The Essential Tagore". They have done a wonderful job, it is almost all gold. Here you can find some of the best of Tagore's Chekhovian stories, as well as his stunningly various poems (many revitalised by Fakrul Alam's translations), plus vivid extracts from the great novels, essays, letters, and travel writing.--Barry Hill "The Australian" (12/17/2011) [While T.S.] Eliot is a major poet for a single era of one literary tradition, Tagore is the most important poet of all eras for an entire culture. It can be said without doubt that Tagore should be compared to the preeminent poets of all cultures: Greece's Homer, Italy's Virgil and Dante, Germany's Goethe,

England's Shakespeare, and--though he is a novelist--Russia's Tolstoy..."The Essential Tagore" is a publication for readers all over the world, for all times.--Mohit Ul-Alam "Kali O Kalam "There have also been a number of anthologies of Tagore's works translated into English over the years...As of this year, a new anthology of Tagore's works in English edited by Fakrul Alam and Radha Chakravorty dwarfs all previous efforts...Because knowledge of Tagore has been so limited for so long, it's especially welcome to see "The Essential Tagore". The anthology contains many fresh translations of Tagore's works, including some excellent contributions by Fakrul Alam himself, and I hope its availability will help to broaden perceptions about Tagore's writing.--Amardeep Singh"Open Letters Monthly" (01/02/2012)Tagore is one of the greatest literary figures of our time, who commands universal admiration from native readers of Bengali, but the excellence of whose work is difficult to preserve in translation. In rising to this challenge, the editors and translators of "The Essential Tagore" have done a splendid job of producing a beautiful volume of selections from Tagore's vast body of writings. The book is also powerfully strengthened by an enjoyable and remarkably far-reaching foreword by Amit Chaudhuri.--Amartya Sen

Fakrul Alam is Professor of English at the University of Dhaka.Radha Chakravarty is Associate Professor of English at Gargi College, University of Delhi.

Beautiful book

Great book from a great thinker.

Tagore is such an essential addition to my library. I adore him. I wished there had been more poetry, but it is a comprehensive overview of his large body of work.

Tagore is brilliant and is the complement to Ghandi in the Indian Pantheon. More practical and in some ways wiser than Ghandi as well. You will thoroughly enjoy this book.

I bought this to add to my collection of Tagore works. It isn't my favourite translation of his work but still an essential for Tagore fans.

In a grad class we studied Tagore, and this book is the best representation of his works, his thoughts, and his creative life. It's a sad mistake that we in the USA don't know more about him

because he wrote prolifically in every genre possible, and his insights and creative force, talent and inspiring way of viewing life, are brilliant. A must read and I highly recommend this to anyone who would want to broaden his perspective and add perhaps new ways of understanding the Indian culture and the people on our planet in all cultures.

I got stuck taking a tagore class in college that used this book. I found to appreciate his works through a concentrated study of his work. Its a great cheap way to learn about the works of one of the most important writers in the worlds history.

I found the book very interesting because I first discovered Tagore about 60 years ago and this book brought me up to date

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