

Collected
POEMS
and
PLAYS
of
Rabindranath
TAGORE

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE



A TAGORE READER

Edited by Amiya Chakravarty

Hailed by Mahatma Gandhi as "The Great Teacher", known to others as "India's Poet Laureate", "The Soul of India", and "The Sentinel of the East", Rabindranath Tagore was at once the living embodiment of modern Indian culture and its greatest spokesman in the West. Recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, the great poet and philosopher, artist and educator, was a man whose spiritual personality and unswerving efforts in the arena of international understanding inspired the entire world.

As a tribute to this complex and courageous man, we are proud to offer a centennial edition of selections from Tagore's most significant writings. Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, the editor of this anthology, feels that Tagore's creative power has not been properly assessed outside of Bengal and India because of a lack of careful editing and clear arrangement of the poet's work. Literary secretary to Tagore for a period stretching over almost a decade, Dr. Chakravarty is eminently suited to his self-assigned task. Here, for the first time, English-speaking readers have available, within a single frame of reference, a manageable yet fairly comprehensive offering from the most important writings of this many-sided genius.

ONE HUNDRED POEMS OF KABIR

Translated by R. Tagore assisted by Evelyn Underhill

On its original publication in 1915, this book provided for the first time in English, a selection from the songs of the poet Kabir, one of the most interesting personalities in the history of Indian mysticism. Born about the year 1440, he was a simple and unlettered weaver who early in life became a disciple of the celebrated Hindu ascetic Ramanaundra, who brought a religious revival to Northern India. Kabir himself became a great religious reformer, being the founder of a sect to which nearly a million northern Hindus belong. Yet it is supremely as a mystical poet that Kabir is remembered today, mainly through his wonderful songs.

One hundred examples of these are contained in this present volume, and they illustrate nearly every aspect of Kabir; all the fluctuations of the mystic's emotion, the ecstasy, the despair, the still beatitude, the eager self-devotion, the flashes of wide illumination, and the moments of intimate love. Rabindranath Tagore's own mystical genius makes him a peculiarly sympathetic interpreter of Kabir's vision and thought, an interpretation backed by the profound knowledge and authority of Evelyn Underhill, who, apart from her collaboration in the poems, also contributed the long Introduction.

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