

We reproduce, on the occasion of 22 Shraban, Tagore's anniversary of death, two of the Tagore Songs translated by Md. Anisur Rahman from our 7th May issue.



Megh bolechhe jabo jabo

The cloud says
"I will go."
The night says
"I am going."
The sea says
"I have found my shore—
I am no more."
Sorrow says
"I stay, silent,
as a mark of His feet."
"I" says
"There is nothing more
for me to long."
The world says
"There welcome-bouquet awaits Thee."
The sky says
"Million stars are shining for Thee."
Love says
"Age after age
I stay awake for Thee."
Death says
"I row Thy Life-boat."



Tagore's funeral procession before the then Senate House of Calcutta University. Courtesy : DESH

Ami shraban akashe oi

There, in the clouds of the shraban sky,
I have laid my tear-washed eyes.
Awake are they, blinkless, all night,
Gazing beyond the horizon of separation,
Staring for the one gone beyond sight,
Dreaming of the mass of her hair
flying with the gust of the east-wind.
In the green Tamal wood,
On the pathway along which she departed
At the setting cow-dust hour,
Pain is entwined in its grass,
Trembling with the breath of its blades,
Those backward looks, again and again, of hers
Cling on to its shadow.

Photos: M. Hartsuddin

Thoughts on Tagore's Views on Education

by Abdur Razzaque Khan

RABINDRANATH Tagore is the name of a great poet, novelist, dramatist, short story writer, music composer, essayist, artist and philosopher to us. We know him as a genius with all such versatile creative faculties. Therefore, most of our discussions on Rabindranath has been confined on these subjects.
This will perhaps help us know Rabindranath partially, not fully. One of the identities of Rabindranath was that he was a great teacher and educationist. It is quite surprising to think that even many of our scholars not to speak of the educated sections of the society know little about this aspect of Rabindranath.
Some of us are perhaps too eager to call Rabindranath the universal poet. Kabitguru, etc. Some perhaps may have read just a few poems or novels or short stories by Rabindranath and hence claim that they know Rabindranath quite well. But how many men of letters know that Rabindranath not only wrote poems, but also told very fundamental things about education and got his ideas printed in the book titled "Education".
Rabindranath realised that under colonial education system man can never get real education and grow up to be a perfect man. He tried, during his lifetime, to educate the nation in the real sense of the term, by freeing the people from the clutches of the colonial education system.
He wanted to build really educated men who, instead of exploiting the society, would build it up. With this end in view, he established an institution, "Viswa Bharati", the system of education of which was quite novel compared to those of traditional education.
He commented on the traditional education system, "What we mean by school is in fact a tool to give education. The teacher is a part of this factory. With the ringing of bell the factory opens at 10.30. The machine starts working, the teacher's tongue is also pressed to work. The factory closes at 4 o'clock, the teacher-machine also shuts his mouth then. The students return home with a machine-made knowledge of

two or four pages. Afterwards this education is measured with marks allotted on them." (Education Problem).
Those who are educated in this machine-made education system can never grow up to be perfect human being. Because, their mental faculty and intellect cannot develop freely.
For, the aim of this education is not to educate a man perfectly; this education does not broaden man's mind and enrich his heart. Hence, one does not really believe in what education one receives. So it is observed that the message of science does not reach the doorway to one's mind even after reading volumes on science. As a result, there arises a big dissimilarity between their acquired knowledge and its application.
Rabindranath has explained the matter thus, "The education that we receive all our life makes us fit for a clerical job or for doing some other trivial business only, we keep all our learning and education locked up in the same box in which we keep our office-gown and wrapper folded; that is of no use in our daily life. It will be wrong for us to blame the student community for this. Their world of books is at an end and their world of residence is at another, with only a bridge of grammar and dictionary between them. So we are not at all surprised to find a man well acquainted with European philosophy and logic nursing in his bosom superstitions; orally preaching the vivid ideals of freedom on one hand and binding himself and others with hundreds of cords and threads of subordination on the other; enjoying literature full of diverse feelings and not believing in these values — to be engaged in massing wealth and attaining worldly prosperity. Because, there is a real impenetrable difference between their knowledge and its use and the two can never be united together properly."
The greatest fault of our education system is joylessness. We forget that education is a matter of joy. Truly speaking, we are made to forget this. As a result, we get neither joy nor

education from our textbooks. Still we memorise them, against our will — what is essentially required. This makes us mobile or fit for doing anything but the development of our mental faculty. In this respect Tagore regrets that there is no joy mixed with the education that we have been receiving since our boyhood. Taking air does not fill one's stomach, eating food does; but taking air is necessary to digest food properly. Reading with pleasure helps to grow the reading habit; power of reception, power of assumption and our imaginative faculty get strengthened quite easily and in the normal course.
The basic aims of education should be to know one's land and its people. But our present education system segregates the educated person from the society. Not to speak of knowing his homeland, a man quite frequently lives in self-exile being separated from his motherland and near relatives. That is why it is observed that when a brilliant student from an interior village, after passing the secondary school certificate examination, comes to the city for higher education, he does not hesitate to leave his country for good if he can get better opportunities abroad. Tagore has attached special importance to the matter.
So he has stated again and again that the precondition of loving one's motherland is to know one's homeland and its people well. Otherwise patriotism will turn to be artificial. He has, therefore, said that the principal motive of education should be to know one's own land. Do we, who speak of our patriotism aloud, ever think about it?
Rabindranath compared our system of teaching and the method of examination introduced by the Britishers with the art of stealing. He regarded the so-called system of engaging private tutors, taking notes and passing the examination only by memorising, as an offence. He saw the act of passing the examination by means of learning by heart is an act of theft. The boy who carries a book to the examination hall secretly is

driven out; and the boy who carries more secretly than this, that is, carries it in his mind instead of carrying it under the wrapper, commits no less a crime. What really should matter is the implication of this education in real life.
This act of 'subtle theft' is even accepted in the university which is the central place for freethinking and knowledge; and to make brilliant result by this method is often a very praiseworthy matter. Hence, everyone is more interested not in acquiring knowledge, but in acquiring the degree. And the heavier one's degree weighs, the more intelligent, brilliant and wiser one is deemed to be. His price is much higher in the field of education, job and of late in the market of matrimony. And owing to this, a trend has been observed among the students to secure by any means a good result and not to acquire knowledge. On the other side the great teachers are busily engaged not in real teaching or encouraging the students to acquire true knowledge but in reaping their own benefits. Many of the teachers are so busy with 'private tuition' or working in various projects under various NGOs that they forget that they have a duty towards the society. The society expects many things from them. Thus both the groups, teachers and students, are gradually drifting away from the true path of providing and acquiring knowledge, respectively.
Trying to find out the root cause of it, Rabindranath said that everybody knows, our universities are in the pattern of London University. Its aim is not to build man but to identify him. It has helped the trade by turning men into market-commodity and fixing their price accordingly.
We have also considered receiving certificates of that mint of degree to be a thing of great honour. It has become our habit. Education in its real terms matters least to us. The trouble with us is that we are worshippers of the age-old pattern. Isn't it time we broke loose from this age-old educational system and worked our way out to the realm of real education?

Quest for an Acceptable Peace Zone

BOOK REVIEW
Superpowers & Security in the Indian Ocean:
A South Asian Perspective
by Syed Anwar Husain
Academic Publishers, Dhaka, 1992
Pages 206, Price Tk195/-

Reviewed by:
National Professor, Muhammad Shamsul Huq

The concept of Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace represents an area of major concern to the South Asian region and the international community. As the concept has evolved since the 1971 Declaration of the UNGA, a fairly extensive literature on the IOZP dwelling on the various aspects of the concept has also grown.
The special value of the present study lies in the new dimension it adds by concentrating on a particular region of the Indian Ocean, namely, South Asia and linking superpower

power presence and exposing their security to sources of threat lying within the region.
The quest, as pragmatically pointed out in this study, for a positive and acceptable peace zone must continue until a peace regime is evolved ensuring the security of the region from both external and regional threats.

This is a challenge not easy to meet. It opens up a new horizon of cooperation for the SAARC to explore and create within the broader frame of a neighbour friendly environment a peace zone in the Indian Ocean region acceptable to all the concerned nations.
The study is remarkable for its lucid presentation and the insights it provides into the concept of the IOZP and the problems surrounding its implementation at the regional as well as international level. I wish it a wide circulation.
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Crop Diversification to Increase Irrigation Efficiency

BOOK REVIEW
Irrigation Management for Crop Diversification
in Bangladesh
Edited by M R Biswas and M A S Mandal
Published by University Press Limited, Dhaka
Pp 236, Price Tk 400.00

Reviewed by : Muzaffer Ahmed

BANGLADESH is primarily an agricultural economy and would remain so for some time. Economists agree that without a break-through in agriculture, sustainable development of non-agricultural sectors would not be feasible. Further, the planners agree that increased productivity in agriculture would create additional employment opportunity, marketable surplus, additional income and help to break the vicious cycle of below poverty level underdevelopment. Attempts to raise agricultural productivity through extension of water-fertiliser technology have been in the field for three decades and the primary focus has been on paddy. Though technological limit of this strategy has not been reached, field research has brought forward new questions with respect to this approach.
The questions relate to unbalanced emphasis on a single crop management of input distribution including water, appropriate irrigation technique, effective extension service, local level institutionalisation of technology related activity including planning etc. The book addresses itself to technologies for growing non-rice crop profitably and methods of managing irrigation properly. Thus, the delimitation of the subject itself is a constraint but possibly inevitable. The contributors include agricultural economist, agronomist, horticulturist, sociologist, marketing and cooperative specialists. The list itself is a testimony to the depth of the diverse aspect of the two dimensions that the book man-

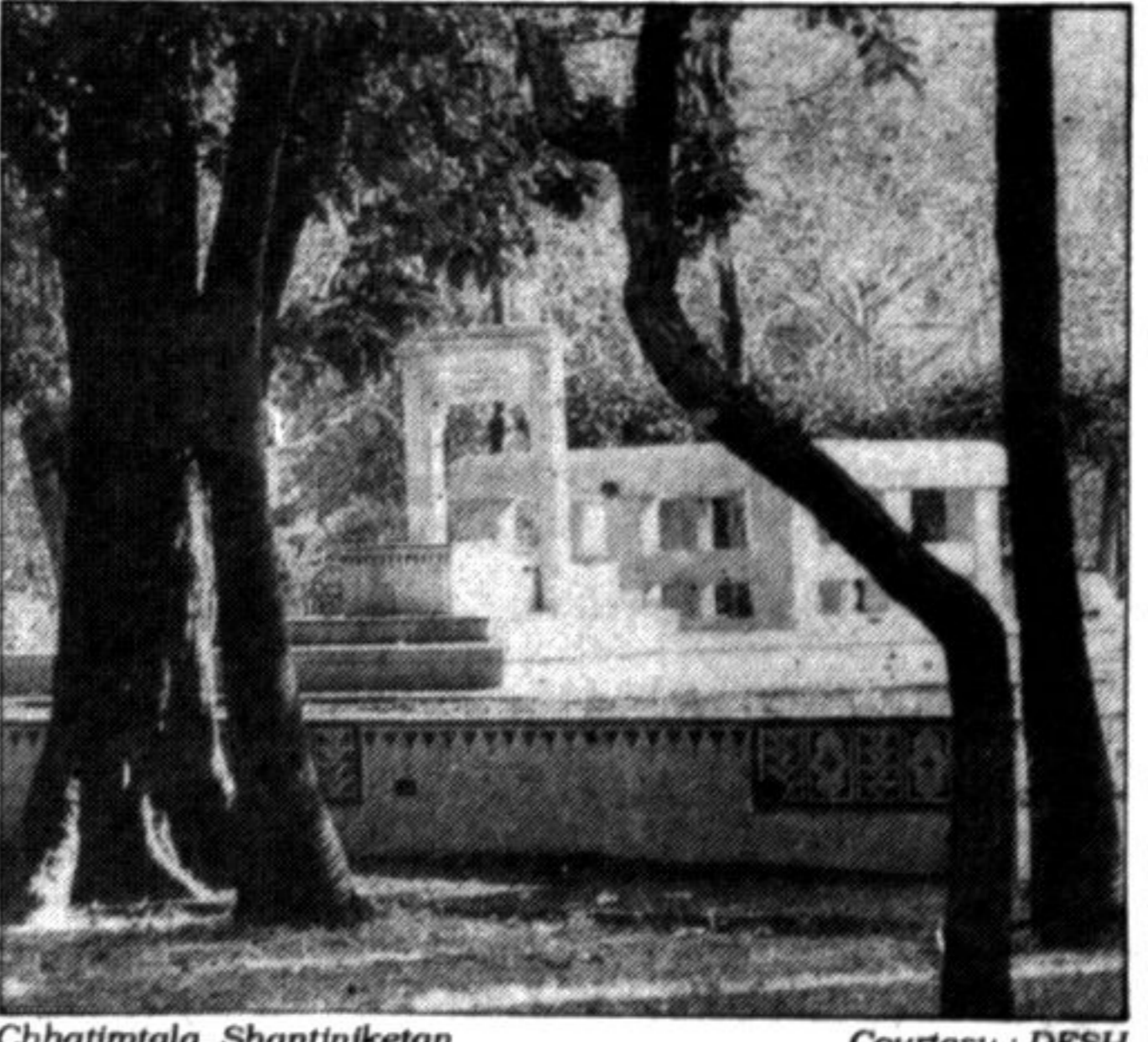
ifests. The planners, researchers and the donors have been concerned about low productivity of irrigation. To remedy this, the policy of privatisation of irrigation equipment supply and management of irrigation system as well as credit for such purposes was implemented. This, as the authors point out, has given rise to waterlords who control water market for irrigation. This market operation raises equity and efficiency issues as the market is imperfect. The condition for economic efficiency requires equitable access to inputs i.e. credit, machinery, water, seed etc. Researchers found that the irrigation equipments are underutilised and benefits from irrigation are inequitably distributed. The inequity of access to input due to socio-economic conditions on the ground were found to be responsible for slow growth of water market. The recommendation is that the remedy lies in removing socio-economic inequalities and institutional rigidity so that competition in the water market force the owners of irrigation equipment to operate them competitively and efficiently. Good neoclassical economics is not necessarily good socio-political prescription.
The researchers rightly found that as our irrigation system developed around the con-

cept of self sufficiency in rice, the performance of water market is directly related with the efficiency of rice production effort. The HYV rice strategy has resulted in many adverse effects including those on horticulture, pisciculture, livestock and thus nutritional standard, on the output side, the political need of a urban based elite regime for containing a vast majority of poor was to keep the rice price low which did not help to improve production efficiency in agriculture in economic terms despite the fact that pushing the intensive and extensive margin in agriculture has helped to achieve near self sufficiency in food grains. But the benefit realised in this way has inflicted a cost and the opportunity as well as private cost is increasing overtime.
The deliberation in the book advocates crop diversification as an alternate strategy as they believe such diversification will increase efficiency of irrigation management, improve farm level productivity, reduce farmers' risk, improve nutritional standard etc. Can this be achieved quickly and easily in a poverty ridden economy with small farms cultivated mainly for subsistence? The authors recognise that there are problems but their focus is on availability of inputs efficiency of related institutions and markets. Thus the basic constraint

One Hundred Years of Peter Rabbit

Continued from page 10
five years her junior, was a good companion but he was sent away to school and Beatrix had no other friends. By the age of 15, she was being given a basic education by a succession of governesses. One, Annie Carter, was only three years her senior, and when Annie left to get married they kept in touch.
Annie went on to have eight children and one of them was to play a part in the eventual publication of Beatrix Potter's stories. Beatrix, with long lonely days of having to make her own entertainment, enjoyed drawing and painting. And she had built up quite a menagerie, from caterpillars and beetles to lizards and bats.
Delightful Countryside
The Potter family spent long summer holidays in Scotland and the English Lake District, which gave her the chance to roam in delightful countryside, alert always for birds' nests, ponds with the chance of newts, and frogs, and even the occasional snakeskin. For her this was paradise, so different from

the city.
Her teenage years were not particularly happy. She has spells of illnesses. Her efforts to get out into the world were not helped by the restrictive attitude towards women at that time.
She made a considerable study of fungi, and an uncle of hers, Sir Henry Roscoe, tried to get the prestigious Kew Gardens to take an interest in her work. But the august gentlemen of that establishment held up their hands in horror at the idea that a young woman could seriously contribute to scientific research.
However there was some light. Her uncle, impressed by her sketches, persuaded her to send some to a firm, who developed as Christmas cards.
Now Annie Carter, her ex-governess, comes back into the picture, or rather Noel, one of her many children, does. In 1893 Noel was ill in bed, and Beatrix wrote him a letter. In it she said: "I don't know what to write to you, so I shall tell you a story." It was about four little rabbits, Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail and Peter, and was copiously illustrated by pen-and-ink drawings. Noel was enthralled and kept the letter. In the course of time, other children in the family received letters with whimsical tales about Squirrel Nutkin and other characters.
Seven years later Beatrix asked Noel to let her borrow back the letter. She rewrote the tale and re-draw the illustrations sending it to six publishers in turn. All sent it back.
Privately Printed
Far from losing heart, Beatrix had 250 copies privately printed. Some she gave away to friends, the rest she sold. Before long she had to have another 200 copies printed. A well-known publishing firm, Frederick Warne and Co, then showed interest. Beatrix knew how she wanted she wanted her work presented: books small enough for a child to hold, low in price and yet of presentable quality.
She got what she wanted, and within a year 50,000 copies of "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" had been sold. The unknown, timid Beatrix Potter had arrived.
Her particular contact in the Warne firm was Norman Warne, a pleasant and hard-working member of the family. In 1905 the two planned to marry but Norman suddenly fell ill and died. Just when Beatrix was about to escape from the stultifying world in which she had been brought up, her hopes for a happy and fulfilled future seemingly collapsed.
But publication of her tales and continued, including such gems as "The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin", "The Tailor of Gloucester" and "The Tale of Two Bad Mice", and the public loved them. Beatrix thought of the Lake District, scene of childhood holidays, and could now afford to buy Hill Top Farm, at Sawrey, by the lakes. It was a working farm and plenty needed to be done.
Putting aside her grief, she threw herself into the task, and found what she had rather expected: by instinct, and maybe by ancestry, she was every inch a farmer.
Lively Tales
Still the stories came. The farm was infested with rats, but, far from recoiling with horror, Beatrix could visualise two of them as characters for a book and she featured them in "The Tale of Samuel Whiskers". More tales followed, as lively as she had ever written. For the benefit of US readers, her story "The Tale of Tommy Tiptoes" introduced chipmunks and a black bear.
As if she were not busy enough, in 1909 Beatrix bought a second farm. A local solicitor, William Heelis, arranged the purchase. Four years later, William and Beatrix married.
Beatrix supported a number of benevolent charities, particularly the Invalid Children's Aid Association. She also contributed generously to the National Trust and bought land for it which she rightly considered worthy of preservation. Farming continued to be a very real occupation for her. She died in 1943.
Licensed Manufacturers
The characters she created still bring pleasure, and not only in her books, they also appear on stationery, soap, biscuits, baby clothes and a whole range of other items, with 80 licensed manufacturers in Britain and 250 elsewhere. Annual retail sales of such merchandise exceed £250 million. The books themselves are still published by Frederick Warne and Co.
The end of 1992 saw the production of the first official Peter Rabbit cartoon films. In a world in which children's tastes and ideas of what may be a "good read" have changed wildly from those far-off days, the charm of Peter Rabbit and Mrs Tiggly-Winkle manages to survive — and means big business.



Chhatimtala, Shantriketan Courtesy : DESH