

Synopsis

A Poet for the World Rabindranath Tagore

Purpose of the Exhibit

This two-frame thematic exhibit explores the cultural impact of Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), the first non-European Nobel Laureate in Literature (1913), as reflected in world philately. Tagore was a polymath who transcended national borders and spoke of universal experiences advocating universal humanism. By showcasing philatelic items issued by eighteen nations—including India, Bangladesh, the former USSR, Argentina, Brazil, Romania, Sweden, Bulgaria, and Vietnam—the exhibit highlights the manner in which the world honored his ideals and vision.

Importance of the Exhibit

Philatelic issues related to Rabindranath Tagore are abundant. He has been the subject of many an exhibit, usually directed to feature such material in an exhaustive way. The present exhibit is different, because it aims to correlate events of Tagore's life, particularly his journeys abroad, with official commemorative philatelic materials supported by items that provide a more in depth understanding of those travels. By relying in such correlation, a clearer picture of the breath of his continuing influence is revealed, as well as interesting facts grounded in philately, including how only one Western European country – Sweden – has honored him with official stamp issues. His continued fame in Latin America and East Europe is also demonstrated.

Exhibit Plan

This stamp exhibit is organized in chronological order, following a sequence of key events in Rabindranath Tagore's life, with particular emphasis on his travels around the world.

Observations

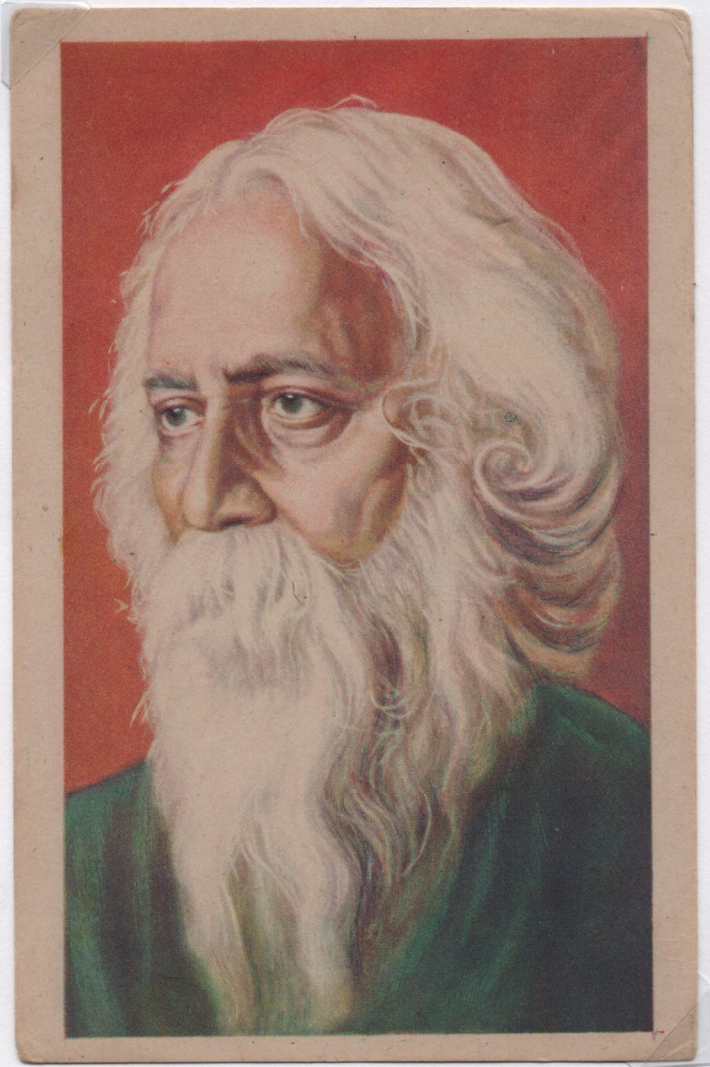
The stamps and first day covers included in this exhibit are all issued by the postal authorities of their respective countries, with the express intention to officially celebrate Rabindranath Tagore. Accordingly, I have chosen not to include any stamp or FDCs designed by individuals or by private companies, printed within personalized postal programs such as TuSello (Correos of Spain), or Smilers (Royal Mail of the United Kingdom.) This exclusion is based on the understanding that even if such material can be used as regular postage, it does not reflect a governmental intention to commemorate Tagore's legacy.

Difficulty in Material Acquisition

This exhibit showcases some material that is unique and very difficult to acquire. The India Poets and Saints 1952 first day cover is one of a kind. A number of items related to worldwide issues are rare, including RPPCs and full stamp sheets from Brazil and Bulgaria. The mailed European postcards bearing Tagore's verses are unique, particularly the Austrian postcard, which seems to be one of a kind – no other copies appear to exist bearing a full translation of Poem 35 from Gitanjali "Where the Mind is Without Fear". I have been able to purchase these materials after careful and extensive research on online websites, as well as in dealer booths at stamp shows.

A Poet for the World: Rabindranath Tagore

Purpose and scope: This two-frame thematic exhibit explores the cultural impact of Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), the first non-European Nobel Laureate in Literature (1913), as reflected in world philately.



Postcard depicting Tagore, Ahmedabad, India, circa 1940. Divided back with New Year message in Gujarati.

Background: Rabindranath Tagore was a polymath who transcended borders and spoke to universal experiences. His contributions to literature, music, philosophy, and art continue to influence people to this day. Through his life and in his works he promoted the notion of universal humanism, and took upon himself to foster connections between cultures. This exhibit correlates key events of his life with official philatelic tributes, to provide a better sense of the worldwide impact of his legacy.

Exhibit Plan

- Part I: Life in India
- Part II: Works and the Nobel Prize
- Part III: The Global Traveler and Cultural Ambassador

Organization: This exhibit is organized in chronological order, following events of Tagore's life. Important pieces are highlighted in **red**, and original research in **blue**.