

Gitanjali

Gitanjali is a collection of poems by the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. The original Bengali collection of 157 poems published on 14 August 1910. The English Gitanjali or Song Offerings is a collection of 103 English poems of Tagore's own English translations of his Bengali poems first published in November 1912 by the India Society of London. However, it contains translations of 53 poems from the original Bengali Gitanjali, as well as 50 other poems which are from his drama *Nchalayatan* and eight books of poetry - mainly *Gitanjaliya* (17 poems), *Naivedya* (15 poems) and *Kheya* (11 poems).

The translations have been often radical, leaving out altering large chunks of the poem and in one instance fusing two separate poems (song 95, which unifies songs 89, 90 of *Naivedya*). The translations were undertaken prior to a visit to England in 1912, where the poems were extremely well received. In 1913, Tagore became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, largely for the English *Gitanjali*.

The English *Gitanjali* became very famous in the west, and was widely translated. The word "gitanjali"

is composed from "git", song, and "anjali", offering, and thus means — "an offering of songs;" but the word for offering, 'anjali' has a strong denotational connotation, so the title may also be interpreted as "prayer offering of song."

Gitanjali gives him worldwide recognition. It is appreciated for its creativity by W.B. Yeats, Ezra Pound and many other European critics. The songs in Gitanjali are the poet's meditation on God, man and Nature. This work Gitanjali expresses his keen sense of observation, his kindly curiosity, his humour, humanity, his philosophic of love, life and God. W.B. Yeats writes in his introduction to Gitanjali:

Rabindranath Tagore, like Chaucer's forerunners, writes music for his words, and one understands at every moment that he is so abundant, so spontaneous, so daring in his passion, so full of surprise, because he is doing something which has never seemed strange, unnatural, or in need of defense. These verses will not lie in little well-printed books upon ladies' tables, who turn the pages with indolent hands that they may sigh over a life without meaning, which is yet all they can know of life begins, but as the generations pass, travellers will hum them on the highways and men rowing upon rivers. Lovers

while they await one another, shall find, in murmuring them, this love of God magic gulf wherein their own more bitter passion may bathe and renew its youth. At every moment the heart of this poet flows outward to these without derogation or condescension, for it has known that they will understand; and it has filled itself with the circumstance of their lives...