

Rabindranath Tagore's literature and its relevance today

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(<http://www.sasnet.lu.se/tagorelund.html>)

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Drawing on the translations of Tagore's poems, stories, plays and songs that he has done over the last three decades – and especially his new translation for Penguin India of Tagore's most famous book, *Gitanjali* (1912) – Dr William Radice discusses what makes Tagore especially relevant to an international readership today. He considers the relationship between Tagore's philosophy and his creative imagination, and asks whether a poet as complex as Tagore can ever be reduced to a simple set of religious or moral ideals. He considers – and illustrates with readings – the rhythmic, musical and dramatic energies that drove Tagore's creative work, and asks whether these were successfully communicated in Tagore's own lifetime. He speculates, in this, the 150th anniversary of Tagore's birth, on future developments in the translation, interpretation and dissemination of Tagore. He was, between his Nobel Prize in 1913 and his death in 1941, the most famous poet in the world. Could he rise to that position again?

William Radice (b. 1951) is internationally known for his translations for Penguin Books of the poems and stories of Tagore. He has been a lecturer in Bengali at SOAS, University of London since 1988, and has been given awards and honours in both India and Bangladesh. His many books include nine collections of his own poems, *Myths and Legends of India*, *Teach Yourself Bengali*, and *The Poem of the Killing of Meghnad* – an annotated translation of an epic poem by Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873). In recent years he has written opera libretti. In May 2011 Penguin India are publishing his new translation of Tagore's most famous book, *Gitanjali*. More information at www.williamradice.com