

# Preface

Looking at the enormous volume of the literature produced in both print and the Web space, one can definitely say that early 2016 has been one of Tagore and Ambedkar in the domain of Indian socio-political discourse. It is no wonder that the visionaries are occasionally summoned as per the order of the day. What makes one worried is, rather the context, which compels us to recall Tagore. Like the utterances made by the hero at the very initial phase of *Tasher Desh*, right at the beginning of the year, we have found ourselves grounded on a 'land of cards', where 'we are fenced in with falsehoods. Languishing in the cage of safety, our wings have grown stiff'. The 'king' of the 'yaksha town' sitting inside the 'dark chamber' keeps on weaving glossy dreams of glimmer, but in the darkness, below the misleading lamplight, the 'khyapa' can only tune his mad songs into the concert pitch of savagery, confinement and death. In such a setting, it is quite predictable that 'the harp of India' echoes Tagore for remonstrance and sustenance. However, it is indeed strange to think that we, who are neither seers nor magicians, foresaw the importance of evoking Tagore's critique of nationalism, back in 2015. Retrospectively, it seems that the global scenario had already been upsetting enough to force the sensible souls to contemplate on 'why is the clay vessel of this body flooded by the tears of blood-red delirium?' (No. 5, *Rog Shjay*).

Why is it that under the plea of victimhood, suspicion, sectarianism and chauvinism, the world seems to be getting fragmented by the fundamentalist designer of the narrow walls?

This pursuit led us to organize a three-day international conference on *Tagore and Nationalism*, paving the way for debate on the possibilities of renouncing fundamentalism and otherization, at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. Moreover, we badly needed to be inspired by Tagore's unshaken faith on the essential goodness of humankind that would restore the 'human' to this desolated world of antagonists and combatants. Tagore's essential humanism as an everyday humanitarianism has motivated us to move forward in search of an illuminated positivity despite the looming darkness of majoritarianism in almost every parts of the world. W.B. Yeats, in his introduction to *Gitanjali*, had envisaged that the fellow lovers, while waiting for one another, would wash away all the

bitterness and renew the youthful vigour by immersing into the magic of love embedded in Tagorean notes. We too hope that a passage to this polyphonic response to Rabindranath's reflections on nationalism, by its unprofane flaring touchstone, would buoy up justice and rationality.

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