

RABÍNDRANÁTH TAGORE DOCUMENTS IN THE NATIONAL SZÉCHÉNYI LIBRARY



In 1991 NSZL held an exhibition to remember the fiftieth anniversary of Rabíndranáth Tagore's death. Thus the exhibition between 4th May and 24th June 2011 was already the second time to introduce his work in the light of Hungarian-Bengali cultural relations, covering his Hungarian contacts, reception and his visits. The exhibition gave a brief overview of the outstanding representatives of the Bengali Renaissance and the Tagore family background, including his grandfather and father, who were active in the Bengali awakening.

We also selected some travel reports from the numerous Hungarians who have visited Bengal, primarily Calcutta, since the 19th century (e.g. Sándor Csoma Kőrösi, Manó Andrássy, Béla Széchenyi and Tivadar Duka). Hungarian journals reported Tagore's 1913 Nobel Prize. That is when the first evaluations of his work were made, among others, by Sándor Kégl, Dezső Kosztolányi and Mihály Babits, who translated for the *Vasárnapi Újság* periodical some poems from the *Gitanjali*, for which Tagore received the Nobel Prize.

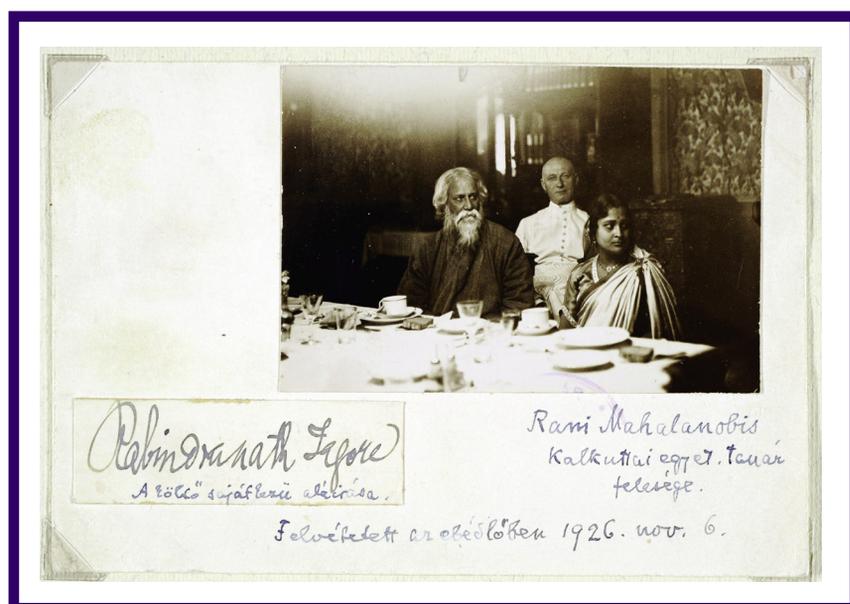
Unfortunately, during his 1921 tour Tagore did not reach Hungary, but from 1920 to 1925 thirty of his volumes, mainly the ones translated into English,

Tagore at the Keszthely Premontrean Secondary School
with Ottó Berkes and Rani Mahalanobis

were available in Hungarian, whereas previously, they could be read in English or German. Several Hungarians attended his talks given in European towns (e.g. Sándor Márai was present at Tagore's lecture on the Darmstadt estate of Count Keyserling in Germany, and subsequently reported the event in the *Kassai Napló* newspaper.) Thus, the great expectations concerning his visit to Hungary between 26th October and 12th November 1926 are not surprising. All leading dailies reported the event, of which we also tried to show a wide selection. At the end of the exhibition, we displayed some accounts, letters, paintings and photos of Hungarians visiting Santiniketan (Ferenc Balázs, Ervin Baktay, Erzsébet Sass-Brunner and Erzsébet Brunner, Károly Fábri and Mr. and Mrs. Germanus).

The exhibition relied primarily on documents, books and periodicals in the NSZL core collection. One of the unique volumes was Tagore's *Lékhan* (Writings), which he completed at Balatonfüred and published in Santiniketan in 1927. He wrote his Bengali and English poetry on special metal sheets, from which the print patterns were made in Berlin. In addition, we selected items from special collections as well: We displayed Tagore's letters to Umrao Singh Sher-Gil and Ervin Baktay, kept in the Manuscript Collection, as well as photos taken in the Keszthely Premontrean friary signed by Tagore, his signature

sent to Rikárd Margittay, with Bengali and English poems attached. The Collection of Posters and Small Prints provided the invitation cards to the Tagore talk at the Music Academy and to the Tagore evening at the Gellért Hotel, while the Music Collection gave us the song "Flower" composed by János Kosáry. Our exhibition was complemented by material leased from associate institutions. We owe the menu card of the dinner at the Gellért Hotel and Tagore's letter to the Balaton Writers' Week to the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Eastern Asiatic Arts, and a yearbook of the





An excerpt from the exhibition

Santiniketan University to the Oriental Collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The exhibition was enriched by Erzsébet Sass-Brunne's and her daughter Erzsébet Brunner's paintings and photos of Tagore and of the Santiniketan University, kept at the

Nagykanizsa Artists' House. Rám Kinkar's bust of Tagore cast in bronze was leased from the Balatonfüred Cardiology Hospital.

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