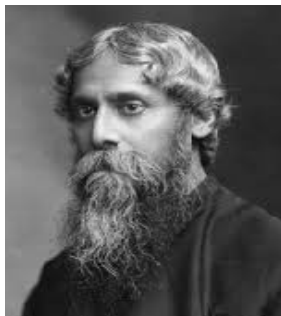


Lesson – 17

My Childhood Days



About the author:



Rabindranath Tagore was born on 07 May 1861 in Kolakata, India. He reshaped the Bengali literature and music as well as Indian art in the late 19th and 20th centuries. He won the Noble Prize for literature in 1913 and he was the first non-European to win it. He got the award largely for ‘Gitanjali’, a collection of his poems. Mrinalini Devi was his wife. ‘*The Golden Boat*’, ‘*Cabuliwalah*’, ‘*The Post Office*’ and ‘*The Broken Nest*’ are some of his notable works. Tagore left this world on 07 August 1941.

Glossary:

1. **Bring up:** (pt, pp Brought up) to look after
2. **Tutor:** instructor; teacher
3. **Constantly:** Always; continuously
4. **Recur:** Come back to one’s mind.
5. **Utterance:** Articulation; pronouncing; speaking
6. **Consciousness:** Awareness
7. **Wit:** intelligent and witty person
8. **Butt:** (here) the target or victim of witty comments
9. **Rattle off:** Read or say aloud something; (here) recite loudly
10. **Delectation:** enjoyment or entertainment
11. **Doggerel:** a silly or ridiculous poem
12. **Glowing:** full of enthusiastic praise
13. **Anticipation:** expectation
14. **Wax intense:** increase the intensity; (wax = grow, increase etc.)

15. **Enthroned:** installed, put on a throne (as a king or queen in a ceremony)
16. **Bedecked:** decorated
17. **Turned older and wiser heads:** attracted or engaged the elder people
18. **Moved:** (here) influence; inspire; motivate
19. **Flit:** move lightly and quickly; flutter
20. **Jingle:** (here) verse; slogan
21. **Linger:** stay; remain
22. **Unduly:** excessively
23. **Dispel:** eliminate; disperse; make a feeling disappear
24. **Slap:** hit or strike with palm or reprimand; rebuke; scold
25. **Disposition:** temperament; qualities of a person's mind and character
26. **Prophecy:** prediction
27. **Conduce:** help produce a particular result
28. **Vogue:** popularity; prevailing fashion; trend
29. **Aphorism:** a short witty sentence which expresses a general truth or comment.
30. **Vague:** unclear
31. **Wretch:** an unfortunate person
32. **Serrated:** saw-like; (having teeth) like the edge of saw.
33. **Relentless:** merciless
34. **Bolted:** tried to escape
35. **Shudder:** shaking movement
36. **Impending:** (something unpleasant) about to happen
37. **Doom:** unavoidable bad situation or misfortune; destruction
38. **Deem:** consider
39. **Venture out:** take risk going out
40. **Sill:** a flat piece of wood, stone, etc. that forms the base of a window or door.

Questions and Answers based on Textual passages

Read the passages 1 and 2 from the autobiography 'My Childhood Days' and answer the following questions.

Q 1-5:

1. When did Tagore's learning actually start?
2. What was that rhythmic line which constantly recurs to Tagore?
3. Why does Tagore think that rhyme is so needful in poetry?
4. Who was Kailash? What kind of a person was he?
5. Who were the special butts of Kailash's jokes?

Read the passages 3 and 4 from 'My Childhood Days' and answer the following questions.

Q 6-11:

6. What did Kailash use to do to entertain Tagore?
7. What moved the young Tagore more than the ornate explanations of heroine in the ballad?
8. What was the infant's classic that lingered always in his memory?

9. Why did Tagore decide to go to school instead of simply staying at home?
10. What did the tutor tell Tagore to dispel his interest and illusion of going to school?
11. What is Tagore's remark about the tutor's advice?

Read the passages 5 and 6 from 'My Childhood Days' and answer the following questions.

Q 12- 15

12. What is Tagore's memory about the Oriental Seminary?
13. What is one of the punishment methods of Oriental Seminary that he still remembers?
14. What were the two main books with which Tagore had his initiation into literature?
15. "A picture of one day's reading of Ramayana comes clearly back to me". Write in a short paragraph about this incident.

Answers

1. Tagore was brought up with other two companions older than him. When they were placed under their tutor, his teaching also began.
2. 'The rain patters, the leaf quivers'.
3. The rhyming words actually do not end in the same moment of their utterance is over. The ringing of rhyme will go on and on in our ears and mind with their game of tossing each other. The charm of a poem lies in rhyme and rhythm.
4. Kailash was an old cashier of Tagore's family. He was a great wit.
5. Recently married sons-in-law were his special butts of jokes.
6. He used to rattle off a doggerel ballad of his own composition to entertain Tagore.
7. The rapid jingle of the frequent rhymes and the swing of the rhythm moved the young Tagore more.
8. 8. 'The rain falls pit-a-pat, the tide comes up the river'.
9. One day his elder brother and his sister's son Satya started off to school in a carriage. On return from school, Satya told him about all the adventures on the way. Moreover, Tagore had not ridden yet in a carriage. So he could not simply stay at home and decided to go to school.
10. The tutor told him that he was crying to go to school in the beginning, later on he had to cry a lot more to be left off.
11. Tagore had never heard a truer prophecy than the weightier advice of his tutor.
12. What he learnt at Oriental Seminary he doesn't remember. But one of its punishment methods he still remembers.
13. The boy who was unable to repeat his lessons was made to stand on a bench with arms extended, and on his upturned palms were piled a number of slates.
14. A Bengali translation of Chanakya's aphorisms and the Ramayana of Kritivasa.
15. It was a cloudy day. Young Tagore was playing about in the long verandah overlooking the road. His sister's son Satya came and suddenly shouted 'policeman! Policeman! He was terribly frightened by this. He was already afraid of policemen. He had no clear idea about the duties of the police. But he was sure of one thing that a person in the hands of the police with a charge of crime was like a prey in the serrated grip of a crocodile. Shuddering in the fright he ran inside to his mother. But she did not take it seriously. Being afraid and thinking it is not safe to go out again, he sat on the sill of his mother's door and started reading the Ramayana. The book with a

marbled cover actually belonged to the mother's old aunt. But Tagore started weeping over one of the sorrowful situations. Seeing this, his great aunt came and took away the book from him.

Let's revisit

Activity 1, textbook page 174

Tagore's recollections of his childhood

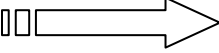
Memories	Place of action	Phrases/sentences that describe the memories
The effect of rhyme and rhythm in poetry	Home	The rain patters, the leaf quivers. The utterance is over, but not its ring.
Kialash, the witty	Home	He was a great wit, and would be constantly cracking jokes with everybody. His wit and humour touched every aspect of human life.
The doggerel ballad of Kailash	Home	Kailash composed a doggerel ballad of his own making Tagore the hero and with glowing anticipation of the arrival of a heroine. But what moved Tagore was the rapid jingle of the frequent rhymes and the swing of the rhythm of the ballad.
Beginning of school life. Words of his tutor	Home	You are crying to go to school now. You will have to cry a lot more to be let off later on.
Oriental Seminary	School	The boy who was unable to repeat his lessons was made to stand on a bench with arms extended, and on his upturned palms were piled a number of slates.
Reading of Ramayana	Home	His initiation into literature had its origin in the books which were then in vogue. The chief among them were a Bengali translation of Chanakya's aphorisms and the Ramayana of Krittivasa. A picture of one day's reading of Ramayana comes clearly back to him.

Activity 2, textbook page 175

Limericks

A limerick is a humorous poem consisting of five lines. The first, second, and fifth lines must have seven to ten syllables while rhyming and having the same verbal rhythm. The third and fourth lines only have to have five to seven syllables, and have to rhyme with each other and have the same rhythm.

Some Popular Limericks

<p>Because he helped bring them to fame, Edward Lear is one of the world's most favorite limerick writers. His limericks often consisted of stories about an old man.</p>	<p>Perhaps one of the most famous limericks of all time is <i>Mary had a Little Lamb</i>, which is actually two limericks in one as a 10-line poem:</p>
<p>“There was an Old Man with a beard Who said, 'It is just as I feared! Two Owls and a Hen, Four Larks and a Wren, Have all built their nests in my beard!’”</p>	<p>“Mary had a little lamb, Its fleece was white as snow. And everywhere that Mary went, The lamb was sure to go. He followed her to school one day, That was against the rule. It made the children laugh and play, To see a lamb at school.”</p>
<p>New limericks are still being written today. For example, the Nickelodeon TV show <i>Spongebob Squarepants</i> featured a limerick that went:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>“There was an old man from Peru Who dreamt he was eating his shoe. He awoke in a fright In the middle of the night And found it was perfectly true.”</p>

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