

Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India Presents

In The Land of Chhinnopatro

The film is based on Poet Rabindranath Tagore's (Nobel laureate- 1913) collection of letters, known as 'Chhinnopatro' and 'Chhinnopatraboli', which he wrote during his days as zamindar (Landlord) in eastern part of undivided Bengal, India (Now Bangladesh). Rabindranath then a twenty-nine year old handsome man, full of creative passion and dreams used to move around in a boat named PADMA through various rivers in the then districts of Kusthia, Rajshahi, & Pabna of East Bengal between the years 1889-1900.

Born and brought up within a progressive environment of Jorasanko Tagore house of Kolkata, Rabindranath never had the opportunity to see the life of ordinary village folk of rural Bengal or experience its natural beauty, which gave him a new dimension in his outlook towards life in general. This part of Bengal acted as a catalyst in shaping Tagore's literature much the same way as Startford-on-avon did for Shakespeare or Lake District for Wordsworth.

Rabindranath himself narrated these experiences in a series of letters (252 to be exact) written to one of his nieces Indira Devi, back home in Kolkata between 1889 & 1895. The letters were more like a travelogue describing the life and nature of rural Bengal as witnessed by him. Sometimes narrating his profound feelings of agony and ecstasy and thus unfolding the process of making of a great mind. Later Tagore compiled these letters in a book and named it 'Chhinnopatro' (Pieces of Letters). It contains the first stroke of all that Rabindranath created in later years. It naturally reminds us of the letters of Vincent Van Gogh to his brother Theo.

While sailing down the river to visit various kacharis (managerial office) at Shilaidaha, Sajadpur, Potisor of Tagore estate as zamindar, the scenes on the riverbank attracted his immediate attention. Sitting quietly on his boat and looking through windows Tagore for the first time observed the life of ordinary rural people of his country. Their daily life chores appeared to him as part of a big family of Mother Earth. Their moment of joy and sorrow, despair and agony all seems to have given Tagore a unique sense of togetherness. As a writer he was undoubtedly at his creative best during this period. The mother earth created a bond between a poet, a river and people. Tagore wrote songs, poetry, and stories to internalise his experience. To him it was a formative period, like a twilight zone before the dazzling break of dawn.

The film is a journey through these letters to a zone that can be called as 'Tagore Zone' of Bengal. After a careful study of the clues available in these writings more than a century later the film enters the zone to discover the land, the rivers and the moments that created Rabindranath.