



THE FUTURE TAGORE
CHAPEL
AS IT STANDS NOW

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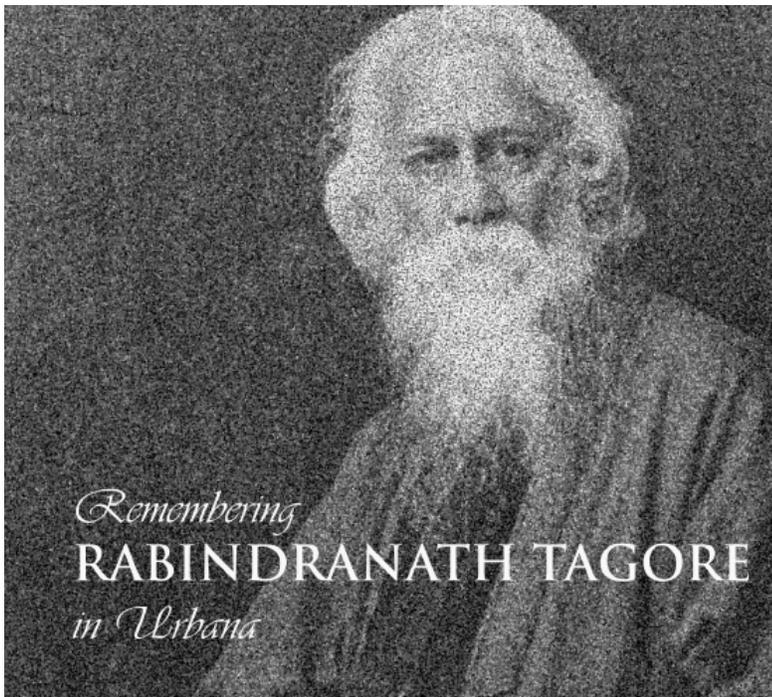
Tagore Chapel at CMF
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CHANNING MURRAY
FOUNDATION
HOME TO THE TAGORE
CHAPEL

TAGORE CHAPEL PROJECT



A Permanent Legacy

We are writing to you to request your help in preserving an important piece of American cultural history, involving the memory and legacy of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), poet and Nobel Laureate (1913) in Urbana, Illinois. The project entails the renovation of the auditorium and meeting space of the first Unitarian Church of Urbana that hosted Rabindranath Tagore's first public lecture in the United States of America in 1912. The space will be named Tagore Chapel upon completion of the renovation project.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Rabindranath Tagore, a versatile and prolific literary genius who composed primarily in Bengali, was also a political activist and social reformer. He lent his voice to the Swadeshi movement in Bengal (1903-08), and despite his later disillusionment with the nationalist ideal, continued to speak out against colonialism, imperialism, and all systemic injustices. In 1913, Tagore became the first non-European/American poet to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature for *Gitanjali* (Song Offerings), a selection of poems translated into English; he donated the money towards the building of Visvabharati University in Santiniketan, India. He returned his title of Knighthood – received in 1915 – to protest against the massacre in Amritsar when British troops opened fire on an unarmed crowd in 1919. 'Crisis in Civilization,' his essay written on the occasion of his last birthday in 1941, is both a scathing indictment of Europe's civilizing mission in Asia and Africa and an affirmation of hope in the future of mankind. The poet's works have been widely translated into other languages; he holds the rare distinction of being the composer of the national anthems of two nations: India and Bangladesh.

The lectern used by
Tagore in 1912 has
been preserved.

TAGORE CHAPEL PROJECT

Rabindranath Tagore in Urbana

Rabindranath Tagore visited Urbana twice, in 1912-13 and in 1916-1917. He had sent his son Rathindranath to study Agriculture at the University of Illinois. When the poet Rabindranath Tagore visited Urbana in 1912, the Unitarians in Urbana invited him to speak at the Foundation that was at that time the only Unitarian Church in Urbana. Tagore delivered six lectures in the same chapel that we plan to renovate. The lectern from 1912 bearing a small commemorative plaque has been preserved, and is brought out every year since 1989 on the occasion of the Annual Tagore Festival. The poet returned to Urbana for a second visit in 1916; he was much more of a celebrity then, and Urbana was one of the venues for a nationwide lecture tour.

Beginning in 1954, the first Unitarian Church of Urbana made the transition into the Channing-Murray Foundation, and in 1991 was given the status of a National Historical Building. Since 1989, the Foundation, in collaboration with various academic units of the University of Illinois, has celebrated Tagore's visit with an Annual Tagore Festival, featuring a keynote lecture by a scholar and cultural program. A special celebration of Tagore's sesquicentennial was held in April 2011.

Our Appeal

We, members of the Urbana-Champaign community, request your support in the continued commemoration of the creative, spiritual, and political genius of India's greatest poet, and his legacy in the current global context. We cannot preserve an important piece of local and global cultural heritage without your help. Rabindranath Tagore – a British colonial subject who in 1912 was virtually unknown to the world outside his native Bengal – had found a community of progressive humanists in Urbana with whom he who shared a spirituality that transcends all religion, a universal empathy, desire for justice for all, and a keen sense of intercultural understanding.

We plan to raise \$75,000 for the renovation project, to be completed before the auditorium is renamed Tagore Chapel in Fall 2016. We welcome donation in any amount. All donations are tax-deductible. Donors of amounts \$1000 and above will have their names listed on the plaque that will be installed inside the auditorium.

BUDGET & PLANNING

PHASE 1

woodwork
stage extension
media cabinet
repair of floor

PHASE 2

audio-visual setup
projection
microphones
speakers
computer for centralized control

seating

chairs
tables

security

lockpad installed on doors

ESTIMATED COST

phase 1: \$45,000

phase 2: \$30,000



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OUR
WEBSITES

