

motivations and refreshing plot twists. In all, this is perhaps the finest picture of life among Cochise's Apaches that has appeared in the last decade.

Though there are a few errors, in the main little-known events of Arizona history are described with accurate detail. Some of Mrs. Barry's minor characters are powerfully drawn, notably certain Indian chiefs and Obre, the killer-for-hire, who shows hardly a trace of his stereotyped fictional ancestors. In spots, the author's irony is as deft as a knife thrust between the ribs of the bigoted fools who made massive confusion of our nineteenth-century Indian affairs.

But together with these excellences there are such occasional faults as annoying dialect in the dialogue, literary or modern lingo on the lips of 1870 characters, bits of moralizing and heavy sentimentality, a few strained coincidences, and a hero who is at times embarrassingly existentialist. On the whole, however, the book is solid. The Southwest needs more work of this stature. —BRIAN WYNNE GARFIELD.

HEARTS IN THE HIGHLANDS: A guest home on the banks of Loch Ness (the monster is not a member of the cast) is the setting for Charity Blackstock's "A House Possessed" (Lippincott, \$3.50), a tender, emotional, exciting, humorous little novel that wins the heart. The proprietor of the establishment, Miss Murphy, engages the local priest to exorcise the spirits of a disowned daughter of the house and her soldier husband, who fell at Waterloo. The priest obliges, but the night-bumpings continue, and are eventually, of course, satisfactorily explained and forever silenced. The guests themselves are, inevitably, a mixed bag: a slightly wacky R.A.F. flight sergeant, a female do-gooder who gets off on the wrong foot before she gets back on the right, a young Englishwoman who rediscovers the boy friend she had lost in Athens ten years earlier, an American antique dealer operating out of London, a temperamental maid of all work, a male schoolteacher who is something of a stinker, and, most appealing of all, his nine-year-old son, without whom there would not be much of a story.

—JOHN T. WINTERICH.

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SAPIENT ASIANS

Poetry: The Wine of Wisdom

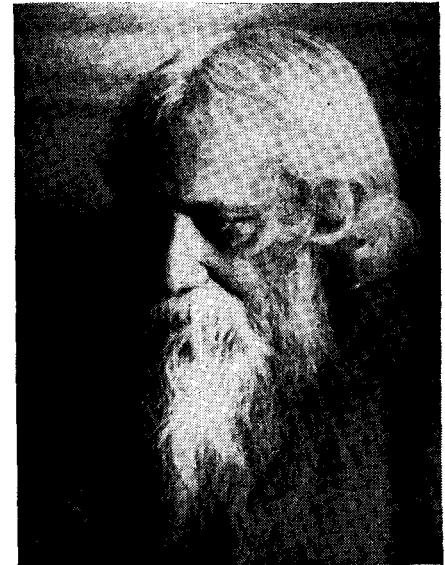
"*Tagore: A Biography of Rabin-dranath Tagore*," by **Krishna Kripalani** (Grove. 417 pp. \$8.75), and "*Social Thinking of Rabin-dranath Tagore*," by **Sasadhar Sinha** (Asia Publishing House-Taplinger. 192 pp. \$6.75), reveal the many-faceted greatness of India's Nobel Prize-winning poet. Edward C. Dimock, Jr., teaches in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Chicago.

By EDWARD C. DIMOCK, JR.

NINETEEN-SIXTY-ONE marked the centenary of the birth of the poet Rabin-dranath Tagore. People will recall the various ways in which the occasion was celebrated in this country: the books and articles, an off-Broadway production of "King of the Dark Chamber," Robert Frost's moving tribute, and the rest. I happened to be in India for a part of that year, giving and (mostly) listening to lectures on the poet and his work. Among other things, that trip was a lesson in the uses of the past.

Sasadhar Sinha, in one of the books under discussion, has written: "Idealization of the past has been the main weapon in the hands of social reaction in India and the chief hurdle in the path of her progress." Bankimchandra Chatterjee, the Bengali novelist, saw in the Muslim conquest the degradation of Hindi India and the destruction of her unity and strength. But Nehru, like Tagore, sees in that same conquest not degradation but an infusion of power. In just such a way people of diverse views seek to claim Tagore. And there is so much in his work, so much a poet was he, that almost everybody can.

Tagore has become a symbol. This is understandable. A poet of India who won a Nobel Prize and an international literary reputation was bound to become a symbol for a nation whose creativity had been turned in upon itself and whose self-respect had withered through generations of contempt. For little minds and talents, the presence of such a symbol is perhaps a "hurdle in the path of progress." Of the speeches I have heard and the books I have read on Tagore, only a



—Martin Vos.

Tagore—"a symbol for a nation."

few dare to assess him as a thinker and a writer, only a few resist the temptation to stand between the poet and his audience, to bask a little in his glory. Among the few, Krishna Kripalani and Sasadhar Sinha stand out.

In Bengali literature there is a phenomenon called *caritāmṛta*, "the nectar of the acts of . . .," a formula used in the biographies of saints, where the greatness of a man is considered timeless, free from the relationship of past to present. This form must have been a temptation for Mr. Kripalani, for writing about a symbol, an image, is a difficult thing to do, especially in India. One can incur the wrath of those who believe in the symbol, who worship the image, by pointing out that it is made of clay; or one can incur the wrath of the iconoclasts by pointing out that it has other meanings. Mr. Kripalani, who has reached his conclusions through thinking, is courageous enough to stand with the majority. He feels that Tagore is a very great poet. And, having been inspired by this book to reread some of Tagore, so do I.

Mr. Kripalani has written a fine biography. He was almost bound to do so: he was for many years connected with Tagore and with the school and university that Tagore founded; he has done excellent translations of two of Tagore's novels into English; he has married into the Tagore family, thus becoming more familiar with the tra-

ditions of this extraordinary line of poets, painters, and reformers; and, most important, he is a writer of skill, insight, and sensitivity. If there is a fault in the book it is, in my opinion, that Mr. Kripalani has been too modest about the value of his own judgment of Tagore's writing. Perhaps he feels that Edward Thompson's previous literary biography ("Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist") met the need. One could wish that Mr. Kripalani had shown us his view of what the poet is, not only how he came to be.

I have been referring to Tagore as "poet." The term in India means not only what it means to us; it also means teacher, thinker, musician, painter, and, as Mr. Kripalani says, "intermediary between human and divine." We are shown that as intermediary Tagore inclines slightly toward humanity, acknowledging the great part that women, especially his sister-in-law Kadambari, played in his life. This accounts, among other things, for the fact that it is the female characters in his novels, stories, and dramas who are almost always the vital ones.

It is hard for us to realize what Tagore meant to India. We know that he burst upon the West in 1912 with Ezra Pound's cable from London to Harriet Monroe, then editor of *Poetry* in Chicago, that Tagore "has sung Bengal into a nation, and his English version of his poems is very wonderful." We are aware of the now seemingly extravagant support of Yeats, AE, and others in London and Dublin; and of "Gitanjali" and the Nobel Prize in 1913. We also know that we soon tired of his beard, his robes, and his "mysticism"—all we knew of his poetry, not realizing that it was also ironic and strong, by turns—until our attitude could be summed up by the skeptical *New Age* of London:

... any of us could write such stuff *ad libitum*; but nobody would be deceived into thinking it good English, good poetry, good sense, or good ethics.

Tagore's popularity in the West was brief, and perhaps, on the basis of what we then knew of him, rightly so. But both Mr. Kripalani's biography and Dr. Sinha's study of his social thought show us just how little of him we knew.

Not many think of Tagore as a social thinker or an educator. But, as Jasadhar Sinha, a scholar of considerable insight, experience, and rigor, points out, education was as natural a function for the poet as was writing. Tagore was not only a theorist; at his school at Santiniketan and later at his

university he put theory into practice. He had learned from his own painful early schooling and from the forest-school ideal of ancient India that the educational process should be through nature—the rapport between a child's own nature and that which he found around him—and that boys should be trained to be men, not merely to parrot irrelevant facts at inopportune times. His university, Visva-bharati, also represented his ideal of the unity of man. In Mr. Sinha's words, it was

... a common fellowship of learning and common spiritual striving for the unity of the human race. The stress was now to be laid upon the ideal of humanity itself.

But in these two institutions and in his experiment in village development, Sriniketan, there was a problem. As Dr. Sinha, whose criticism is both strong and respectful, says, "his approach to educational problems was the artist's intuitive one ... a moral and humanist approach rather than a scientific grappling with intricate problems."

This accounts for many things. It

accounts for the fact that (according to Dr. Sinha, who was educated and who later taught there) that there was in the school a lack of discipline: Tagore simply loved children too much. It may account for his painful misjudgment of Mussolini and Fascism; he had so much faith in man that he could be easily and tragically used as propaganda. He later repudiated both Mussolini and Fascism, but the scar remains; witness the outcry in the press when an eminent Italian scholar was invited to receive a degree from Visva-bharati in 1961. It certainly accounts for his disagreements with Gandhi, for though, with his poet's vision, Tagore saw freedom and loved what he saw, his unanalytic acceptance of the established social order and his lack of appreciation for the function of nationalism never allowed him to agree with Gandhi on the ways by which that freedom was to be achieved.

Both these books show the greatness of Rabindranath Tagore, and show it abundantly. What pleases most is that they demonstrate that he was great because he was a man, and not, as we are used to hearing, in spite of it.

Clouds on Lost Horizons

"My Land and My People," by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama of Tibet (McGraw-Hill. 264 pp. \$5.95), *records without acrimony the seizure by Communist China of an ancient country dominated by Buddhism. Political analyst Stanley Ghosh wrote "Embers in Cathay."*

By STANLEY GHOSH

THE YOUNG Dalai Lama's brief, tumultuous reign, climaxed by the appalling humiliation of his people by the Chinese Communists, is a gripping story. In his book he writes feelingly of his humble origins, the distant village in eastern Tibet where he was born, the splendor of the natural beauty of the land, and its cultural landscape adorned by the many historic shrines and monasteries. Born in 1935, he was two years old when Buddhist monks declared him to be the reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lama. At the age of four and a half, he was formally installed as the fourteenth Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet.

In succeeding chapters he traces his boyhood spent under stern Lamaist

discipline, his quest for enlightenment, and his studies in Buddhist theology. In his simple but attractive literary style he reviews Tibet's early encounters with the Chinese Communists, then flushed with victory in mainland China. He writes with restraint of the unprovoked Red Chinese invasion of his homeland, and of the repression of his freedom-loving fellow-countrymen. His



The Dalai Lama—unique gentleness.