

# Timeless treasures

PHOTO: SAI MADHAVA DAS



## HT City Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

It was yet another event to mark Rabindranath Tagore's sesquicentenary, but this time, the venue lent it additional dignity. The Western Quadrangle of Victoria Memorial Hall (VMH), beautiful as ever on a warm evening, was witness to the launch of *Something Old, Something New: Rabindranath Tagore 150th Anniversary Volume* (Marg, ₹ 2,500).

In 1961, an issue of *Marg* magazine featured an article on Tagore the painter by then editor Mulk Raj Anand to celebrate Tagore's birth centenary. The current book, edited by Dr Pratapaditya Pal (general editor, *Marg*) contains that essay, two more from *Marg* archives and nine new essays on a range of subjects revolving, of course, around Tagore.

"It has been written for non-Bengali readers. This book will be known for generations as the most sumptuous book produced on Tagore," said Pal.

Also present on the occasion were Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, chairman, ICHR, New Delhi and trustee of VMH; Justice

Chittotosh Mukherji, trustee of VMH; and Chitta Ranjan Panda, secretary and curator, VMH.

"The thought crossed my mind that these silent artefacts are eloquent," said Bhattacharya. "These pictures speak to us of a time when Santiniketan kept its arms open to nature."

A copy of the catalogue was officially released, followed by Mukherji releasing the book itself. Next, the exhibition, Hoppé's Santiniketan, was inaugurated at the Portrait Gallery. Emil Otto Hoppé had taken photographs in 1929, of the university buildings; the Bengal landscape in and around the place; Tagore with students, guests etc; open-air classes, women art students and a music student. There is also a photo of Abanindranath Tagore.

Rabindranath is also seen with granddaughter Nandini, as well as alone in a quaint drawing room, clearly posing for the camera. Not all the photos are remarkable in themselves, but they provide an insight into the world of Tagore's Santiniketan.

*On until May 30, 10 am-5 pm, except Mondays and national holidays*

