India and China
Professor Prabodh Chandra Bagchi  
(November 18, 1898 – January 19, 1956)
India and China
Interactions through Buddhism and Diplomacy

A Collection of Essays by
Professor Prabodh Chandra Bagchi

Compiled by
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CONTENTS

Compilers’ Note vii

Introduction (English and Chinese) ix

Part One 1

1. Ancient Chinese Names of India 3
2. The Beginnings of Buddhism in China 13
3. Indian Influence on Chinese Thought 25
4. A Note on the Avadānaśataka and its Chinese Translation 43
5. Bodhisattva-śīla of Śubhākarasimha 49
6. A Fragment of the Kāśyapa Samhitā in Chinese 75
7. The Chinese Mysticism 87
8. Some Early Buddhist Missionaries of Persia in China 91
9. Some Letters of Hiuan-Tsang and his Indian Friends 95
10. New Lights on the Chinese Inscriptions of Bodhgayā 101
11. A Buddhist Monk of Nālandā amongst the Western Turks 105
12. Political Relations between Bengal and China in the Pathan Period 109
13. Chinese Coins from Tanjore 137
15. Ki-pin and Kashmir 145
16. Sino-Indian Relations – The Period of the United Empires (618–1100 A.D.) 155
Part Two: Short Articles 177

Sino-Indian Spheres of Influences 179
Khotan as the Cultural Outpost of India 185
Indian Sciences in the Far East 191
The Visva-Bharati Cheena Bhavana 199

Part Three: Articles in Bengali 203

Indian Civilization in China 205
Influence of Indian Music in the Far East 209
Indian Hindu Culture and Religion in China 213

Appendix 217

In Memoriam – Prabodh Chandra Bagchi (1898–1956) 219
Suniti Kumar Chatterji

Prabodh Chandra Bagchi (1898–1956): A Model in the Beginnings of Indo-Sinic Buddhist Philology 231
Akira Yuyama

Index 245
It has been our honour to assemble some of Professor Prabodh Chandra Bagchi’s (1898–1956) important articles on the interactions between ancient India and ancient China. The idea emerged during our discussions at a conference commemorating the scholarly contributions of Professor Bagchi and Tan Yunshan (1898–1983) to Sino-Indian studies held in Beijing, China, on 23–24 November 2008. The conference marked the 110th birth anniversaries of these two leading figures in the field of Sino-Indology.

We immediately contacted Professor Rajat Kanta Ray, Vice Chancellor of Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan, India, for permission to use Professor Bagchi’s essays, especially those that were reprinted in the volume entitled *Indological Studies: A Collection of Essays*. Professor Ray quickly responded to our email and allowed us to use the relevant essays from the volume. We also contacted the Monumenta Serica Institute seeking permission to publish Professor Bagchi’s insightful essay on the names for ancient India found in Chinese sources. Professor Akira Yuyama kindly agreed to let us include his article on the contributions of Professor Bagchi to Sino-Indology. Mrs. Ratna Sinha, one of the daughters of Professor Bagchi, supplied some of the short articles and translated those that were written in Bengali. Readers familiar with Professor Bagchi’s seminal work *India and China: A Thousand Years of Cultural Relations* will recognise these writings.

We appreciate the enthusiastic support and encouragement we received from the individuals and institutions responsible for copyright permissions. We would especially like to thank Mrs. Ratna Sinha for her continuous encouragement and support during this project. She was also instrumental in putting together a centenary volume dedicated to Bagchi, where a list of all his publications is appended. The volume is called *India and Asia: P. C. Bagchi Centenary Volume*. It was edited by B. N. Mukherjee and published in 2009 by Progressive Publishers.

The next step of composing this volume turned out to be a tedious process, even though we decided not to make any major changes or corrections to the text. Scanning the articles, reformatting them, and re-inserting diacritical marks and Chinese characters took more time than we expected. Here the team at Anthem Press was most helpful. Indranil Mitra and Anindita Ganguly
worked overtime formatting the scanned documents. The Anthem team in England did the final typesetting for the book. The fact that we could eventually put together this volume owes much to their dedication and tremendous work ethic.

While both of us have been greatly influenced by Professor Bagchi’s scholarship, we decided not to summarise his life and scholarship here in this brief note. A key reason for this is the detailed biographical sketch by the late Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji that has been included in this volume as one of the appendices. Additionally, the essay by Professor Akira Yuyama provides an in-depth analysis of Professor Bagchi’s scholarship. All we can say is that as students of cross-cultural interactions between India and China, we are in awe of Professor Bagchi’s broad knowledge and understanding of Buddhist and diplomatic exchanges between the two regions. We hope the essays by Professor Prabodh Chandra Bagchi collected here will be inspiration, as they have been to us, to a new generation of scholars dedicated to the study of the historical interactions between India and China.

Tansen Sen and Bangwei Wang
30 August 2010
Introduction

IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR
P. C. BAGCHI

Bangwei Wang

The 2,000 years history of interaction between India and China has been an outcome of the immense contributions made by a number of prominent personalities. Among them, from the Chinese side, we know the names of Faxian, Xuanzang and Yijing. From the Indian side, the names of Kumārajīva, Buddhabhadra, Pāramārtha should be mentioned. Of these renowned monks, Kumārajīva was perhaps the most remarkable. Kumārajīva’s father was an Indian and his mother was a princess from the ancient kingdom of Kucha. Since Kucha is now within the territory of China, we may say Kumārajīva was half-Chinese or a Chinese Indian. The various accounts of the life and work of these great historical figures have left deep impressions on our minds.

In modern times, the name that requires special mention in the development of Sino-Indian rapport is Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. His visit to China in 1924 was an important event in the interface between modern China and India. It rekindled the mutual exchanges between these two nations and propelled the development of a new genre of literary writing in China.

It is noteworthy, at this point, that all these personalities, who tried to bring the two countries closer, were extraordinary scholars with great knowledge and wisdom. Their intellectual acumen and academic achievements played a crucial role in shaping Chinese and Indian cultures and their subsequent intermingling.

In this context, we should never forget Professor Probodh Chandra Bagchi, an Indian scholar of Bengali origin. He was a well-known figure in the field of Sino-Indian studies within India as well as in the international arena. As one of the appendices of this book outlines his biography, I think it would be unnecessary to say more on his life here. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the social and cultural environments of China and India underwent
significant changes and greater academic pursuits increased the mutual exchange between these two countries. In 1921, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore established the Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan in West Bengal. With the help of Professor Tan Yunshan in 1937, he founded Cheena Bhavana to encourage the study of Chinese culture. Probodh Chandra Bagchi learned the Chinese language at Cheena Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, and more than 20 years later he became professor at the same place and eventually was appointed Vice Chancellor of the university. During that time, Probodh Chandra Bagchi established the journal called *Sino-Indian Studies* and published a number of his research papers as well as that of other scholars in it. The prime focus of the journal was India-China interactions and it once played an important role in the related fields. Unfortunately, the publication stopped soon after his death. Some of the essays in this book first appeared in the journal.

Professor Probodh Chandra Bagchi also enjoyed a very special connection with Peking University. He was the first Indian scholar who spent two years as a guest professor at the campus. The then-president of Peking University, Dr Hu Shih – one of the greatest scholars of modern China – extended a warm welcome to him. He wrote, ‘To promote the mutual understanding and cooperation between China and India, the government of India has established a Chair of Indology at Peking University. Dr Probodh Chandra Bagchi has been appointed the first professor of it. His job will be to build a steady base for friendship and academic cooperation between our two countries’. These words immediately bring to my mind the story of Master Xuanzang, who was also offered a position as teaching chair at Nalanda, the great Buddhist University, nearly one thousand and four hundred years ago in India. Xuanzang’s achievement was appreciated greatly by his Indian colleagues and friends. Similarly, Probodh Chandra Bagchi’s teaching experience at Peking University is a memorable chapter in the history of Sino-Indian relations.

I was born much later and did not have the opportunity to meet Professor Bagchi. However, in the Department of Eastern Languages of Peking University, Professor Ji Xianlin and Professor Jin Kemu were his friends. They were my teachers from the end of the 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s when I was a graduate student. I heard the name ‘Probodh Chandra Bagchi’ more than once from them. They used to praise the academic merits of Professor Bagchi. The university library also has a collection of some of his works, though not all can be found. His books and papers have been important for my research for many years. We are all grateful to him for his pioneering publications in the field of Sino-Indian studies.

From the viewpoint of academic research, Professor Bagchi’s essays are already well-known. However, these were groundbreaking when they were first published. Some of his conclusions are still valid and frequently used by
modern scholars of Sino-Indian studies. At the same time, some of the topics he touched upon are not well-researched by present-day Chinese and Indian scholars. The research area of Probodh Chandra Bagchi was quite broad. We may say that he was a Sinologist, an Indologist and at the same time a Buddhologist. But these areas are not all he studied. A review of all his works makes us use one term to indicate his area of research: Sino-Indology. This may cover all his achievements; he set an example that we should all follow today in this innovative field of study.

The year 2008 marked the 110th birth anniversary of Professor Probodh Chandra Bagchi. Both in India and China some events were held to commemorate him and his scholarship. For this reason, Professor Tansen Sen of the City University of New York advised me to compile a new collection of Bagchi’s papers. I certainly agreed with him on this good idea. Tansen started the job very quickly and all things went quite smoothly. Tansen completed most of the job, and I am grateful to him for his efforts.

Tansen is also from West Bengal State in India. He arrived in Beijing while he was a high school student. We have known each other over twenty years. After he graduated from Beijing Languages University, he joined our master’s degree program at Peking University; thereafter he went to the University of Pennsylvania and obtained his PhD degree. His area of research interest is Sino-Indian cultural relations. In this field he has published one academic book and a number of scholarly articles. His research has won high praise from the scholastic community. I am happy to see that young promising people such as Tansen are now carrying forward the cause started by Probodh Chandra Bagchi more than half a century ago. The situation is becoming more and more encouraging with the publication of new studies on India-China relations, albeit mostly on the contemporary interactions.

Recently, I had the opportunity to participate several times in the Nalanda Mentor Group (now the Governing Board of the Nalanda University) meetings where we discussed the plan to re-establish a new university at Nalanda, which will follow the brilliant educational tradition of ancient India. Professor Amartya Sen, a well-known scholar and Nobel laureate in economics in 1998, is heading our group. As a friend of Chinese people, he showed much interest in Chinese culture. In his book *The Argumentative Indian*, he discussed and compared at length the characteristics of our two cultures. We appreciate his remarks. Professor Sen also hails from West Bengal; he was born in Santiniketan and spent his teenage years there. So, in our conversation we mentioned Probodh Chandra Bagchi and he admired this great scholar. Bengal is really a wonderful place to connect our two civilizations.

Therefore, the significance of editing and publishing this book will not be confined to the memory to Professor Probodh Chandra Bagchi and/or the
retrospection of his academic achievements. Through this book, we hope to reflect back on the history of friendly exchanges between China and India and the history of academic research on Sino-Indian culture. We hope that following the footsteps of our predecessors, we will also be able to promote understanding and exchange between the scholars and common people of our two countries.

August 30, 2010 at Peking University
在中国和印度两千年的密切交往历史上，曾经出现过许多杰出的人物。在中国方面，法显、玄奘、义净这些名字当然不用说，在印度方面，不可以不提到鸠摩罗什、觉贤、真谛这些名字。尤其是鸠摩罗什，父亲是印度人，母亲是古代龟兹国王的姊妹。龟兹在今天中国新疆的境内，鸠摩罗什因此也算是半个中国人了。中印两国历史上这些了不起的人物，他们的名字和一生的经历，都给我们留下了深刻的印象。

进入近代，到过中国，最有名的，最值得提到的是泰戈尔。1924年泰戈尔对中国的访问，是近代中印文化交流史上的一件大事，中印两个伟大国家的交往就此重新开始。泰戈尔的作品对中国近代新文学的发展也发生过重要的影响。

中印历史上所有这些伟大的人物，有一个特点，不知被人注意到没有，那就是，他们大多都是有学问的人，而且不是一般地有学问，往往都是饱学之士。他们为中印文化互相的交往和品格的形成所做的贡献，很大一部分，就在于他们学术上取得的成就。

说到学问之事，近代与中国有关的印度学者，就不能不提到师觉月教授。

师觉月教授是印度孟加拉人，是上个世纪印度，也是国际上研究中印文化和文化交流史一位著名的学者。关于他的生平和学术成就，收入本书作为附录的文章中已经有详细的介绍，无需我在这里多说。我想强调的只是，十九、二十世纪以来，中印两国的社会文化和环境发生了极大的变化，两个国家的文化交流，更多地加入了学术的成分。二十世纪的二十年代，泰戈尔在西孟加拉邦的“和平之乡”创立国际大学（Visva-Bharati）。1937年，泰翁又在中国去的谭云山先生的协助下，在国际大学里专门设立中国学院（Cheena Bhavana），推动对中国文化的研究。师觉月最早开始学习中文，正是在国际大学。二十多年后，他在国际大学的中国学院任教，后来还作了国际大学的校长。在这期间，他在国际大学创办了《中印学刊》（Sino-Indian Studies），集中发表有关的研究成果。这是世界上唯一一份以中印文化研究作为主题的学术刊
物，出版后在国际上颇有影响，可惜他去世以后，没有能继续办下去。本书中选编的文章，有一些最初就发表在《中印学刊》上。

对于北京大学而言，师觉月教授则更有特别的一份因缘，那就是，他是近代历史上第一位到北京大学担任讲座教授的印度学者。他在北京大学的时候，学校的校长是胡适之先生。胡适之先生是中国近代最伟大的学者之一，他对师觉月的到来，十分欢迎。胡适之先生曾经这样写道：“印度政府为了增进中印两个民族之间的了解和合作，特在北京大学设立一个印度学的讲座，第一任教授就是师觉月博士。他在北大的工作是给中印友谊与学术合作建立了一个有力量的基础。”这段话不禁使我们想到，一千三百多年前，中国的玄奘，也曾经在印度的佛教大学那烂陀担任过教职，也得到了印度的同行和朋友们极高的赞扬。师觉月在北京大学任教的经历，与他一千多年的许多前辈一样，是中印友好交往中一段新的佳话。

我生也晚，没有能见到师觉月教授，但北京大学东语系的季羡林先生和金克木先生当年都与他是朋友。七十年代末，我到北大念研究生，跟随两位先生学习，两位先生不止一次地跟我讲起师觉月。他们对师觉月都很称赞。北大的图书馆里，师觉月的著作，书和文章，能找到一些，不过不全。北大图书馆有的，我大多读过，但还有一些是我一直没有机会读到的。他的书和文章，曾经是我做研究时重要的参考资料。我们所有的人，都感激师觉月在中印文化方面所做的很多开拓性的工作。

就学术研究的角度而言，师觉月的学术论文，已经有相当的影响。其中一些在发表的当时，曾经有着创新的意义。论文中一些结论，至今仍具有说服力，甚至可以说至今仍然还处在研究的前沿，被从事中印研究的学者们所引用。但在此同时，我们也要看到，他文章中涉及的一些题目，在今天的中国和印度，还需要有人去做更多的研究。师觉月研究的范围很广，如果要对他的研究做一个全面的评价，可以看到，他不仅仅是一位“汉学家”，也不仅仅是“印度学家”，他也不仅仅研究佛教，而是跨越于多个方面，只有一个词，“中印文化研究”，大概可以概括他研究的领域。他在这方面研究的特点，其实值得我们仿效和学习。

2008年是师觉月诞辰的110周年，在印度和中国都举行了一些活动来纪念他和他的学术成就。为此美国纽约城市大学的沈丹森（Tansen Sen）教授向我建议，重新编辑一部师觉月的学术论文集，我当然很赞成。丹森很快行动起来，搜集文章，编撰次第，联系出版，承担了大部分的工作。为此我很感谢丹森。

丹森也是印度孟加拉人，读中学时来到中国，我们认识已经有二十多年。他先是在北京语言大学学习，后来进入北京大学，在北京大学获得硕士学位。再后来他到了美国，在宾夕法尼亚大学获得博士学位。丹森的研究兴趣和领域，就是中印文化关系。他在这方面已经出版了一部学术著作和发表了不少学术论文。他的研究，成绩斐然，得到学术界广泛的肯定和称赞。我很高兴地看到，大半个世纪以前师
觉月开始的中印文化研究，现在有了像丹森这样的年轻学者继续地做下去。而且，近年来有兴趣研究中印文化的人渐渐多了起来，这样的形势使人鼓舞。

2007年以来，我有机会数次参加为重建那烂陀大学而成立的顾问小组（Nalanda Mentor Group）的会议，我们小组的主持人，是著名的经济学家，1998年诺贝尔经济学奖的获得者阿马蒂亚·沈（Amartya Sen）教授。阿马蒂亚·沈也是印度孟加拉人，他在国际上被称作“为穷人说话的有良心的经济学家”，这样的经济学家当今并不多见，因此非常伟大。阿马蒂亚·沈对中国十分友好，对中印文化也非常关注。他写过一本书，书名是《惯于争鸣的印度人》（The Argumentative Indian），他在书中讨论到中国和印度的文化，意见非常精辟。他的青少年时代，就在“和平之乡”度过。我们因此也谈到过师觉月，他也认为，师觉月是一位非常杰出的学者。孟加拉真是一个了不起的地方，不仅历史上与中国有许多联系，而且人才辈出，这不能不说是一种因缘。

因此，我的看法，我们编辑出版这本书，其意义其实不仅仅限于纪念师觉月教授以及讨论他一生的学术成就，我们还希望，通过这部书，重新回顾中印友好交往的历史，回顾中印文化研究的学术史。我们要把包括师觉月在内的所有前辈学者开创的工作进一步发展下去，让中印两国人民、两国学者之间有更多的了解，更多的交流，相互学习，永远友好。这是我们今后还会长期努力的一项工作。

2010年8月30日于北京大学