

Suniti Kumar Chatterji (1890-1977) a linguist of international repute and a litterateur of very high order, studied and researched in Indo-European Linguistics, Origin and Development of Bengali Language, Slav and Austro-Asian linguistics from London University, UK and Sorbonne University in France. Besides his eminence as a linguist, he was a specialist of Bengali Literature, tribal culture of India, and art and culture of Asia. A prolific writer in English, Bengali and Hindi, some of his well known works are: *Origin and Development of Bengali Language* (English), *Bangla Bhasatattver Bhumika* (Bengali), *Bharat Sanskriti Kirata Janakriti* and *Aryabhasa aur Hindi* (Hindi). He accompanied Rabindranath Tagore to the Far Eastern countries and recorded his experiences of the great cultural heritage of the area in his delightful work in Bengali *Dvipamay Bharat*.

Suniti Kumar Chatterji also held many important positions. He became the National professor in 1964 and was appointed as Chairman of the Sanskrit Commission constituted by the Government of India in 1956. He was also the President of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta during 1961 and the President of the Sahitya Akademi from 1968-1972.

Sukumar Sen (1900 -1992) was not only a famous Bengali linguist but also well versed in Pāli, Prakrit and Sanskrit. He joined the University of Calcutta as a lecturer in 1930 and retired in 1964. Sen was the first scholar to explore the Old Indo-Aryan syntax in his book, *Use of Cases in Vedic Prose* (1928) and *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit* (1928). He has published numerous significant articles and research papers. These include the *Bangla Sahityer Itibas* (5 Vols., 1939, 1991), *Bhasbar Itibritta* (1939), *A History of Brajabuli Literature* (1935), *A Comparative Grammar of Middle Indo-Aryan* (1960), *Ramkathar Prak Itibas* (1977), *Bangla Sthannaam* (1982), *Bharat Kathar Granthimochan* (1981), *Bharatiya Arya Sahityer Itibas* (1963) and *Women's Dialect in Bengali* (1923).

He was honoured with several prizes which include the Rabindra Puraskar (1963), Ananda Puraskar (1966, 1984), Vidyasagar Puraskar (1981), Desikottam (1982), and the Padma Bhushan (1990). He was elected as an honorary fellow of Sahitya Akademi in 1973.



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Suniti Kumar Chatterji

Sukumar Sen



Makers of Indian Literature

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The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodhana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From: Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi



Sahitya Akademi

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Foreword

When Sahitya Akademi very kindly asked me to write a monograph on Suniti Kumar Chatterji I accepted with alacrity and enthusiasm. But after a few weeks when I was making myself ready to begin writing I was assailed by doubt and inhibition. I was at first student and then his colleague in the University and was long associated with him in linguistic and other research work. In fact I knew him for fifty-five years, and throughout a half century and more I was always his pupil in spirit and love. Would it be feasible for me to write on him as an impartial surveyor or an official reporter?

The doubt however did not last long and I felt no further inhibition. Many who knew Chatterji well are not unaware of his liking for me. It is also, I am afraid, wellknown that the master and his pupil sometimes in the later days had differences, where the latter would even talk aggressively. So there is no fear of my narration being taken as overestimation. I have tried to keep myself entirely in the background. I have given almost the bare facts. The real man behind facade of the great scholar requires a skilled artist to be brought out in proper tint.

Scholars of the stature of Suniti Kumar Chatterji are of two types. One is the type of *Vālmiki*, a *Muni*, who sits down in a place diffuses knowledge and wisdom. The other is the type of *Cyavana*, a *Ṛṣi*, who moves about and helps himself as well as others. Suniti Kumar Chatterji combined in his self the essence of the both *Muni* and *Ṛṣi* types of ancient sages, but there was no nonsense about him. He did not know what is hostility. He had no real enemy. There

were some people who did not like him for speaking frankly what he knew to be true but one need not take notice of them. Like many Mahatmas my Master was not surrounded by barriers of any sort. He was easily approachable, and one could ask him question. Even at the age of 87 he was not an old man ; there was a boy living within. This real Suniti Kumar Chatterji I have not been able to draw out. I have tried only to give a sketch of him as he was known in the outside world.

I thank my very young friend Abhijit Knmar Dutta for helping me with the manuscript.

Burdwan
June 26, 1978.

Sukumar Sen

School Days

Suniti Kumar Chatterji was born at Sibpur, a suburban village just on the western bank of the Ganga opposite Calcutta, on November 26, 1890. He belonged to a lower middle class Brahmin family settled at Calcutta towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Professor Chatterji's great grandfather had migrated to a village in the district of Hooghly from his ancestral village home in the district of Faridpur in East Bengal, now in Bangladesh. Chatterji's great grandfather Bhairab, like many other Kulina Brahmins of the day, subsisted mainly on polygamy. Bhairab had a few wives, but he lived with the one who had belonged to the village in Hooghly. Bhairab's son Isvarchandra, the grandfather of Chatterji, had served the East India Company in North India during the Mutiny. After retirement he built a modest one storied bouse for himself in Calcutta and shifted there the residence of the family from the Hooghly village. Isvar's son Haridas Chatterji was the father of Suniti Kumar. He also served in a British mercantile firm. Haridas Chatterji made some addition to the modest house built by his father at No. 3 Sukeas Row off Sukeas Street (now re-named Kailas Bose Street) in the Chaltabagan area in North-Central Calcutta. They were four brothers and two sisters, and Suniti Kumar was the second of the sons of Haridas Chatterji and Katyayani Devi.

As usual Suniti Kumar was taught the Bengali alphabet by his mother at home and then he was sent to an elementary school of a *Guru-mahāsāy* who conducted his 'Pāṭhśālā' in the thatched outhouse of a neighbouring well-to-do gentleman. His elder brother was already there in the Pāṭhśālā. The child had taken his early lessons in learning the alphabet from his

mother. Here he learnt his first lessons in writing—on the floor of the school-shed with a chunk of chalk. After a few months the brothers were taken away from the primary school and admitted into the lowest classes of Calcutta Academy a high school not far from home. Here they were for two years and Suniti Kumar here read the Bengali Second Book (“Dvitiya-bhāg”) and the English *First Book of Reading*. The plague broke out in Calcutta in 1898 and the family was sent away to Sibpur where they lived as tenants of the mother’s family. After a year when the plague had subsided the family returned to Calcutta, and the two boys were admitted into Motilal Seal’s Free School called a college) at Burabazar in Central Calcutta. The distance between home and the school was more than a mile. But no one minded walking long distance on regular duty.

Chatterji was admitted in the eighth class and after eight years (1899-1907) he appeared at the University Entrance Examination and came out successful, securing the sixth place in order of merit and winning a First Grade Government scholarship.

Soon after his admission into School he was recognized by some of his teachers as an exceptionally intelligent boy. He was very good, and he topped all the boys, in all the subjects including Drawing, but not in Mathematics. The Superintendent of the school, Brajendralal Ganguli, who taught English and Mathematics in the fifth class (now Class VI) was a very good teacher and disciplinarian. At the half yearly examination in that class Chatterji obtained zero out of the full marks 100. Ganguli was highly disappointed but his displeasure did not give up hope. The boy was taken to task in the heavy way usual in those days and then he was forced to work out repeatedly all the sums given in the exercises in the text-book fixed for the class, Barnard Smith’s *Arithmet̄ic*. Such rigorous training in Mathematics was continued till the last. At the University examination Chatterji satisfied his teacher amply by obtaining 122 out of 160 in Mathematics. The headmaster, Jagabandhu Ghosh, took special interest in him

when he was in the top class. Chatterji remembered gratefully and kindly the teachers that had strenuously taught him in the class and coached him voluntarily after the school hours. He had a very soft corner for the Head Pandit who was uncommonly a human man as well as conscientious teacher. Chatterji had drawn a very fine sketch of this unusually soft-hearted man. (Vide ‘Head Pandit Masay’ in *Path-Calti* vol. i).

When he was in the fourth class (1903) the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) started a branch for School Boys at the junction of College Street and Harrison Road (now Mahatma Gandhi Road). Chatterji became a member of the association and thereby found ample opportunity for education and culture which otherwise would not have been available to him.

College Days

Chatterji passed the University Entrance Examination (1907) in the First class stood sixth in order of merit, thereby securing a first grade government scholarship. This brilliant success paved his way for a good college education. He joined as a First Year Arts student in the General Assembly's Institution, which was near his home. It is a Christian missionary establishment and was soon amalgamated with Duff College and named Scottish Churches College (later to be re-named Scottish Church College). Chatterji read here for two years and passed the First Arts Examination (1909) in the First Division, securing a very high position in order of merit and obtained a first grade government scholarship. He then joined Presidency College where he came in contact with some brilliant teachers who had taught and influenced him. He passed the B.A. Examination (1911) with Honours in English, securing the top position among the successful candidates in the First Class. His close rival was a lady, Miss Regina Guha. He read M.A. at Presidency College but attended some lectures also at the University which was just starting Post-graduate teaching in some subjects. Chatterji chose the option for the language course (Group B) at the M.A. Examination in English and stood first in the First class in his Group. Miss Guha had taken up literature course (Group A). She also stood first in the First class in her group.

The college years (1907-13) were the formative period of Suniti Kumar as a potential scholar and man of letters. In Scottish Churches College he had come in contact with two veteran teachers of History, Bipin Chandra Sen and Adharchandra Mukherji and from them acquired a thirst for

Greek and Roman History. To quench this thirst he took Greek and Latin texts. He did not know Greek and Latin yet but the Greek letters and the reproduction of Greek and Roman sculpture almost captivated him. Chatterji's love for Classical European Culture was doubly enhanced by his contact with some of the eminent teachers of Presidency College such as M.M. Ghose and H.M. Percival.

Young Scholar

On passing out of the University he joined Metropolitan Institution (now called Vidyasagar College) where his close friend Sisir Kumar Bhaduri, who had taken the M.A. degree in English in the same year, was later on employed. The young scholar had already attracted the attention of Sir Asutosh Mukherji who soon recruited him as an assistant to Professor Robert Knox (1914-19) in the university, which had since 1910 started teaching departments in English, Sanskrit and a few other subjects including Comparative Philology.

Chatterji now got the opportunity for research work which was just coming into vogue among the academic-minded students of the University. Chatterji specialized in Old and Middle English and had acquired sufficient knowledge in Teutonic philology. But there was no guide at Calcutta to help him in his research work in the Germanic branch of the Indo-European languages. His father would have liked him to join the Government services as a Deputy Magistrate or the like. But Chatterji's eyesight was poor and so he felt that he had little chance of getting into the service of the Government. Nor had he any inclination for joining the High Court bar as he had not read Law. Naturally Chatterji drifted to teaching and took up research work for attaining further qualifications as a university teacher. The growing feeling of nationalistic enthusiasm was drawing the attention of the young erudites to the importance of the mother tongue and its literature which had just then extended the horizon of its history much beyond the fifteenth century on account of the discovery of the Mystic Buddhist *Caryā* and songs by Mahāmahopādhyay Haraprasad Shastri and of the *Śrīkr̥ṣṇakīrtana* by Basanta

Ranjan Ray. The prestige of Bengali language and literature had at the moment a high explosion as it were by the award of the Nobel Prize for literature to Rabindranath Tagore (1913). Chatterji now began to feel interested in the history of the Bengali language. His researches in the subject won for him Premchand Roychand Studentship in 1916 and Jubilee Research prize in 1917. His three year's work as Premchand Roychand Student produced linguistic essays on the Persian element in Bengali, on the Bengali verb and the verb-root, and on the language of Old Bengali *Caryā Padas*. The University Jubilee Research Prize awarded to him was on a study of the Bengali dialects.

The Post-graduate department of the University was fully organised and established in 1917 and Chatterji was appointed a lecturer in the department of English, which from 1919 was headed by Professor Henry Stephen. In 1919 he was awarded a Government of India state scholarship for studying Sanskrit and allied subjects abroad. In September of the same year Chatterji left for London and was there admitted as a student in the newly established school of Oriental and African Studies affiliated to London University. Chatterji's career in England (1919-21) and in France (1921-1922) is best given in his own words.

In London and Paris

In 1919 I was selected for a Government of India linguistic scholarship for a scientific study of Sanskrit in Europe. My three years' stay in Europe, during 1919-1922, at the Universities of London and Paris, has naturally enough been of the greatest value for me in my work. It enabled me to come in touch in London with scholar like Dr. L.D. Barnett, with whom I read Prakrit, and who supervised my work in London; Dr. F.W. Thomas, who as lecturer in Comparative Philology at University College guided me in my study of Indo-European Philology; Professor Daniel Jones, under whom I studied Phonetics, who was not only my *śikṣāguru* but also a warm friend and helper; besides Sir E. Denison Ross, Director of the School of Oriental Studies, and most sympathetic of men, and Professor R. W. Chambers (of University College), and Messrs. E.H.G. Grattan and Robin Flower (also of University College), whose classes respectively in Persian, Old English, Gothic and Old Irish I attended; and in Paris I had the privilege of sitting at the feet of master like Professor Antoine Meillet for different branches of Indo-European linguistics, and of studying Sanskrit and other Indo-Aryan philology under Professor Jules Bloch, besides meeting other eminent scholars like Professors Sylvain Levi, Paul Pelliot and Jean Przyluski. While I was in England Sir George Grierson took a personal interest in my work, an interest which manifested itself in many ways and which he in his kindness and his love of science still retains. This has benefited me to the greatest degree imaginable ; and the fellowship of common studies with this *doyen* of Indo Aryan Linguistics which has been my great fortune to enjoy, has been, along with my coming in

similar personal touch with Professor Jules Bloch, an inspiration in my studies and my labours; and I may say the same of my coming to know Professor Meillet, the *savant* and the teacher.¹

Chatterji was in Paris fram August 1921 to April 1922. Towards the middle of May 1922 he came to Padua in Italy to participate in the seventh centenary of the establishment of the University there, as one of the delegates of the University of Calcutta. There were other two delegates from Calcutta, both scientists, Dr. D. N. Mallick and Dr. P. N. Ghosh. Chatterji read an address in Sanskrit, on behalf of the delegation from Calcutta. From Padua he went to Venice where he stayed for five days and then to Bologna and Ravenna, where he remained for a couple of days to see the works of art and architecture. From Ravenna he came to Athens in Greece via Brindisi. Athens charmed him. So he wrote to an elderly friend on 7th June 1922²:

I considered myself blessed on visiting the broken temple of Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens. Parthenon is as beautiful as-or more beautiful than- I had conceived from studying the pictures and reading the details. I have seen upto now some lofty temples built by man- the temple at Bhubanesvar, Tajmahal, some Gothic cathedrals in France and England, San-Marco: all these are charming and there can be no comparison. But in the simple form of Parthenon and other Greek temples of the type there is an expression of depth, strength and tenderness which has no parallel elsewhere. And for this reason only I have a partiality for Greek architecture.

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1. Written in 1926, In the Preface to his *magnum opus*.
 2. From letter in Bengali, printed in the *Sabuj Patra*. 1329 B.S. = 1922 A.D.

Young Professor

Chatterji was selected as the incumbent for the newly founded Chair in Phonetics endowed along with some other chairs in other scientific and literary subjects as Physics, Chemistry, Agriculture and Fine Arts by the munificence of Kumar Guruprasad Singh, popularly known as the Rajah of Khaira. Soon after coming home Chatterji fell seriously ill with pleurisy. Sir Asutosh Mukherjee on hearing the young scholar's illness paid him a visit at his home. This illness delayed for some weeks his joining the service of the University immediately after the Pujah vacation. He joined in November 1922. Since then his main occupation was taking classes in the Post-Graduate Department, in various subjects such as English, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit and Comparative Philology. After a few years he was also holding classes in Pali, Persian, Islamic History and Culture, and French. He also taught Phonetics when, in the forties, the Certificate and Diploma Courses were started in the evening.

When Professor Chatterji resigned from the University in 1952 he was holding some ten or eleven periods per week. He could have taken as few as four, as he was a University Professor and Head of a Department. Teaching came so natural to him and he was fond of it.

Sir Asutosh Mukherjee had made arrangements for printing his London thesis at the University Press. It was started in early 1924. Besides holding classes Chatterji devoted all his time and energy in seeing his work through the press. He was very careful and meticulous in proof reading. The work, *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language*, Chatterji's *magnum opus*, was published in two cloth-bound volumes in

September 1926. Only 500 copies were printed and the price of the book containing some thirteen hundred pages was only Rupees twenty, ridiculously low for even those days of cheap production. The stock was sold out in a very few years bringing no profit to the University, as the price did not cover the cost, and therefore no royalty to the author. But the old book-sellers made considerable profit in re-selling the book on an ever increasing price which came up to Rs. 400/- in the fifties. An offset-reprint was published by Allen and Unwin, London, in 1971. This edition has a third volume containing the addenda and corrigenda compiled by the author, embodying material for proper second edition of the great work.

Chatterji was married in 1914 to Kamala Devi (born 1900) belonging to a well-to-do Bengali Brahmin family settled in South Bihar from the late seventeenth century. The marriage was blessed with one son and five daughters. Kamala Devi died in 1964.

In Tagore's Company

Chatterji now came in close touch with Rabindranath Tagore with whom he had some acquaintance before he had gone abroad. He had attended many of the lectures and readings which Tagore held at his house in Calcutta. His organisation was known as *Vicitrā*, which was devoted to the cultivation in literature and thought as well as in Fine Arts. Chatterji also met Tagore while he was a student in London University. There he was instrumental in getting the famous Russian artist Nicholas Roerich acquainted with Tagore.¹ Chatterji's acquaintance with Tagore was deepened into reverence and affection, more so after the tour in Indonesia. He was very popular among Tagore *entourage*. Chatterji had a special attachment to the great artist Nandalal Bose. The tie of heart that grew up between them was caused by love for Art. Bose was a Master of art and Chatterji was an artist in suppression. Chatterji had always been one of the greatest admirers of the works of Nandalal Bose and his master Abanindranath Tagore and of their colleagues and pupils at Santiniketan.

Chatterji accompanied Tagore on his tour in Indonesia and acted almost as a reporter. This experience was very valuable to the young *savant*. Beside Chatterji Tagore's party consisted of leading artists from Santiniketan, Surendranath Kar and Dharendra Krishna Devavarma—(Nandalal Bose had accompanied the poet in his tour in China a few years ago). Ariam Williams (later known as Aryanayakam), another inmate from Santiniketan, had gone earlier to Singapore to make arrangement for the prospective tour. Dr. A.A. Bake and his

1. See 'Roerich as I saw him' in the Roerich Commemoration Volume Simla, 1975.

wife who were for some time at Santiniketan learning Indian music and doing research work had also gone ahead and were then waiting in Singapore for the arrival of the poet there.

Tagore and his party left for Madras by Madras Mail in the afternoon of July 12, 1927. From Madras they sailed for Singapore on the 14th. The party reached there on the 20th of July. Singapore was done in a week, Tagore left Singapore and, stopping for a day or two in Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, Ipo and Taising reached Penang on 13th August. From Penang the party sailed for Bali on August 16 and reached Belawan in Sumatra in the morning. There they changed ship. Dr. Bake and his wife joined the party there. They reached Bali on 26th August. On 8th September the party left Bali and reached Java on the next day. They toured in Java for more than a month. On 30th September Tagore left for Siam via Singapore. Chatterji left on the next day and met Tagore at Singapore in the morning. On the same evening the party left Penang where they arrived on October 5. They left for Siam (now Tai-land) by train on the 7th. Tagore and his party left Bangkok for home on 16th October by train and reached Penang on the next day to board the steamer straightaway. The steamer came to Rangoon on 22 October and left for Calcutta on the morning of the 24th. The party returned to Calcutta on 27 October, 1927.

The tour in Indonesia and Siam in the company of Rabindranath Tagore, although short, was of immense benefit to Chatterji. While he was at Paris he had attended lectures of Przyluski and other scholars who were opening out new horizons in the cultural history of South East India and Far East Asia. He had love for the European, i.e Greek culture and by his tour in Europe and Greece had obtained first hand knowledge in Midaeval Greek and European culture. Now in the tour with Tagore he had the rare opportunity of visiting places and viewing artifacts which present brilliant blending of Indian and Indonesian Culture. A Greater India Society was already established in Calcutta in 1922 by the effort of scholars like Kalidas Nag, Prabodhchandra Bagchi, Upendranath

Ghosal and others. Chatterji also joined the Society after his return from Europe. After the tour in Indonesia and Siam Chatterji became a leading exponent of the mixed but soothing culture of the Far South East where some bits from ancient India were still green. Chatterji kept a detailed diary of the tour and this diary, as we shall see later proved to be a distinct contribution to Bengali literary and cultural history. The self imposed task of keeping a detailed diary of Tagore's movements and activities as well as of his own improved his own style of writing in the mother tongue.

In the course of the tour with Tagore Chatterji delivered many lectures on Indian Art and Culture as well as on Tagore's school at Santiniketan and its ideals. In Batavia (30 September 1927) he read an interesting paper on the Pre-Aryan background of Indian civilisation before the Konninglijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunst on Weten-schapen.

At Home and Abroad

The years 1928 to 1934 were to Chatterji a period of "stagnation" or stay at home as it were. His academic activities besides class teaching in the University were attending learned conferences, giving lectures and addresses here and there and contributing papers to learned journals such as *Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, *Viśvabhāratī Quartely*, *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik*, *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, *Indian Linguistics*, and *Modern Review*, etc. Two books were published in 1927-28, one on Bengali Phonetics, and the other a foreigner's guide book in Bengali.

Chatterji was living with his father. The paternal house now became insufficient for his own growing family. So he purchased land and built a house of his own in South Calcutta and shifted there in 1933. He named the house Sudharnā (the name of the assembly of the Gods in the Puranas). Chatterji's excellent library and art collections are housed in this building (16, Hindusthan Park, Calcutta 701029).

Suniti Kumar paid a second visit to Europe in 1935 on the occasion of the Second International Conference of Phonetic Science in London. He represented the University of Calcutta at the conference and presided over its Indian Section. After finishing his conference in London, Chatterji travelled over France, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. He delivered a lecture at the Oriental Institute of the University of Berlin. The details of the tour are to be found in his diary which was published in 1938.

In the winter of 1936-37 Chatterji was called to Rangoon to preside over All-Burmah Bengali Literary Conference held at Rangoon. He travelled over Burmah and visited Pegu, Touryoo, Pyimmano, Pagan and Mandalay.

Chatterji paid a third visit to Europe in 1938. He was accompanied by Major P. Bardhan a school-friend of his. The occasion was to represent the University of Calcutta at two functions, at the Third International Congress of Phonetic Sciences at Ghent, and at the International Congress of Orientalists at Brussels. He left Calcutta for Bombay by train on June 26, 1938 and boarded a steamer for Europe on the 29th. They left the steamer at Genoa and, passing through and paying short visits in Naples, Genoa, Milan, Lausonna, Geneva and Paris, reached his first destination Ghent in Belgium on July 17. Chatterji read his paper on Evolution of Speech Sound at the conference on July 21. He came to London *via* Ostend and Dover on July 23 and left for Denmark seven days later. Chatterji attended the International Congress of Anthropologists at Copenhagen (July 31 to August 6). Then he went to Oslo (August 6). He left Norway on the 7th and remained in Stockholm for five days. Then he visited Finland, Germany and Poland. From Poland he came to Brussels in Belgium, attended the Conference and returned to India *via* Italy.

From '39 to '47 Chatterji's itinerary was confined in India. He presided over an annual session of the All-Bengal Bengali Literary Conference at Comilla in East Bengal (now in Bangladesh). In '40 he was invited to deliver some lectures before the Gujarat Vernacular Society (now Gujarat Vidya Sabha) Post-graduate and Research Department. He delivered eight lectures on the historical development of the Hindi language. The lectures were published from Ahmedabad (1942) as a book entitled *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*. It is Chatterji's most significant contribution to Indian Linguistics after his *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* (1926).

In '46 Chatterji presided over the National Language Section of the 34th All-India Hindi Literary Conference at Karachi in Sindh. Next year he was asked by the Government of Assam to deliver some lectures for the Pratibha Devi Foundation. He spoke on the contribution of Mongoloid Peoples

in the evolution of Indian Culture (with special reference to Assam). He paid a visit to Imphal in Manipur.

Chatterji visited Europe for the fourth time in 1948. He was appointed a delegate of the University of Calcutta as well as of the Government of India to the International Congress of Linguistics and the International Congress of Orientalists held in Paris in the month of July, and also to the International Congress of Anthropologists held in Brussels in the month of August. On his way back home he stayed at Cairo for a week (September '48).

In December '49 Chatterji visited Europe for the fifth time to attend UNESCO conferences on the Braille Alphabet, in Paris (December '49 and March '50). He travelled over Italy, England, Holland and Turkey (Istanbul) on an educational enquiry tour on behalf of the University of Calcutta (January 50).

In February '51 Chatterji attended a UNESCO conference on the Arabic and Persian Braille at Beirut, Lebanon. He also visited Damascus,

Chatterji was invited as a Visiting Professor in the United States of America. He was attached to the School of South Asia Studies at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia). He also lectured before Columbia University (New York), Yale University (New Hoveo) and Washington. He travelled in Mexico for one month under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation, New York. He attended another UNESCO Conference on Braille in Paris. He returned to India on March 31.

On Fringe of Politics

Chatterji was now urged by some of his friends and admirers to stand for election to a seat in the West Bengal Legislative Council as an independent candidate. He was elected unanimously as Chairman of the Legislative Council (February 1953). He then resigned from the University service. Now he presided over the Seventeenth Session of All-India Oriental Conference held at Ahmedabad (October-November 1953).

In '54 he delivered the Banikanta Kakati Memorial Lectures at Gauhati University in Assam on 'The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India'.

Chatterji had now a chance to visit West Africa (*via* Egypt and Libya)–Gold Coast (Now Ghana), Nigeria and Liberia, for three weeks (July-August 1954). The tour was arranged by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi. After the African tour he went to England to attend the Twenty-third International Congress of Orientalists at Cambridge (August '54) as the delegate from the Ministry of Education, Government of India.

In October-November of the same year he visited Indonesia to attend a session of Congress on Indonesian Language called by the Indonesian Government at Medan in North Sumatra where he represented the Government of India. On his way back to India he visited Bangkok (December '54). In the same year he delivered a series of five lectures on the Development of Middle-Indo Aryan as Wilson Philological Lectures at the University of Bombay.

In January '55 Chatterji received the award of *Padma-bhūṣaṇa* by the President of India. He was awarded the superior order *Padma-bhūṣaṇa* nine years later (January '63).

In the summer of 1955 and subsequent years Chatterji

lectured before the Summer Schools of Linguistics held at Poona, Annamalainagar, Mysore, Coimbatore, Sagar and Madurai. In 1956 Linguistic Society of India in a joint session with All-India Oriental Conference at Annamalainagar presented to him a volume of essays written by scholars all the world over, in his honour.

For two months, September and October '56 Chatterji travelled in China as a member of the Indian Universities Delegation, invited jointly by the University of Peking and the Peoples' Republic of China. He visited Hongkong, Canton, Peking, Shenyang (Mukden), An-shan, Fu-shan, Nan-king, Shanghai and Hongohow. He delivered lectures on cultural subjects at some of these places he visited. As a member of the Official Language Commission in 1955-56 and the Chairman of the Sanskrit Commission in 1956-57 he travelled over India for collection of evidence. In the first commission he could not agree with the majority and submitted a minority report of his own.

At the election of the Provincial Legislature in 1956 Chatterji was re-elected from his constituency and was again unanimously elected Chairman of the Legislative Council for a second term. He was called to visit Soviet Russia from September to November '58 as a guest of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. He lectured in Moscow, and Leningrad and read a Paper before the Fourth International Conference of Slavists held at Moscow where he read an important paper. He visited Kiev, Tbilisi and Tashkent. He took part in the Conference of Asian and African writers at Tashkent and presided over a section of it. In the same year he visited China again for three weeks as a guest of the China-India Friendship Association. In '59 Chatterji visited Australia in his official capacity. He participated in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held at Canberra, as a delegate from India. On the return trip he visited once again Djakarta in Indonesia and Bangkok in Thailand.

In 1960 Chatterji was invited on a lecture and study tour in Europe. Accompanied by his wife he visited Cairo, Rome,

Prague, Bonn, Paris, London and Amsterdam (June and July). Soon he was called to visit Moscow and lead the Government of India Delegation to the Twentyfifth International Congress of Orientalists held there (August 9-16), where he read two long papers at the general and Caucasian sections. After the Congress Chatterji visited Outer Mongolia (Ulan Bator, Erdenitzu, and Khocho-Tsaidom). He presented on behalf of the Government of India, a Seventh Century bronze Buddha from Negapatam to the Mongolian People at the Gandam Monastery in Ulan Bator. He also delivered the books presented by his Government to the Monastery and other institutions in Mongolia.

Chatterji was awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters, *Honoris Causa*, by the University of Rome. He visited Rome to receive the diploma (March 1961). While returning home he visited Teheran and read a paper on Iranianism at the University there.

In 1962 Chatterji made a world tour as it were, rounding the earth. He visited Dublin (in August). He took part in the Ninth International Congress of Linguists organised by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Harvard University and the Permanent International Committee of Linguists and other institutions. He read a paper and presided over a plenary session. He travelled largely in America—Thousand Island Park, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, San Fransisco and Berkeley in California. Then he came to Hawaii and was a guest of the University of Honolulu for five days. From Hawaii he came to Japan. He gave lectures in the University of Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo as well as in other institutions and visited important temples and shrines of Shintoism and Buddhism, in Kyoto, Nara, and in Ise. Chatterji then came to Manila as a guest of the University of Philippines. There he gave lectures and held a symposium with the Faculty of Linguists in the University.

At the end of the year he again faced an election and was returned to the Council for the third term and was re-elected its Chairman.

In the summer of '63 Chatterji visited Kathmandu, Nepal

on special invitation as a guest of the King of Nepal, in connection with the presentation to the King by a Committee of a birthday volume and biography.

In May-June '64 Chatterji again visited the Soviet land and attended the Taras Shevchenko 150th Birth Anniversary at Kiev, Kanyev and Shevchenkova and Morinty. He also visited Vilnius in Lithuania and Riga in Latvia. He attended the Conference of Asian and African Writers in Moscow (June '64).

National Professor

Chatterji was appointed National Professor of India in Humanities while he was on tour in Russia.

In October '64 he was in London to witness the opening of the British Parliament by Queen Elizabeth and visited Jamaica as member of the Government of India (West Bengal) Delegation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Associations' Conference at Kingston. He also visited Port-au-Prince in Haiti (November).

On February 8, 1965 Chatterji resigned from Chairmanship of the West Bengal Legislative Council and took up the new assignment of National Professor of India for Humanities. He was in this National Chair until his demise on May 29, 1977.

In '66 (March to May) Chatterji made a lecture-tour under the cultural exchange programme with friendly countries as sponsored by the Education ministry of the Government of India. He visited Cairo, Addis Ababa, Athens, Bucharest, Paris, London, Prague, East Berlin, Moscow, Riga, Vilnis, and Erevan. He gave lectures before Universities and other institutions at all these places. In the autumn of the same year he was invited by the Government of Iran to take part in the World Congress of Iranologists held at Teheran, and read a significant paper which was subsequently published from the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. He visited Ispahan and Shiraz, Persepolis and Naqsh-i-Rustam. After that he attended the 800th Anniversary of Slotha Rusthaveli, the National Poet of Georgia. On that occasion he read a paper on Rusthaveli's great work, the *Vepkhis-Tqaosani* (or "the Man in the Tiger-Skin"). He visited Erevan once again and met scholars at the Matenadaran in connection with an old Armenian document

of the seventeenth century relating to Indian-Armenian trade. In August '67 Chatterji attended by invitation the Twentyseventh Congress Orientalists a Ann Arbor, Michigan (USA). From America he went to Europe and attended the Tenth International Conference of Linguist at Bucharest, Romania.

In January '68 Chatterji attended the Second International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies held at Madras.

After 1968 when he was 81 Chatterji for some years did not go out of India. In December 1970 he presided over the first All-India Conference of Linguists held at Poona under the joint auspices of Linguistic Society of India and Deccan College, Poona. In June 1971 Chatterji inaugurated the first Conference of Dravidian Linguists at Trivandrura, and in August of the same year he went to Canada to attend the 7th International Congress of Phonetic Scinces held at Montreal, where he read a paper. There he was elected Vice-President of the Organisation Committee for the Congress. A couple of months later he attended, on invitation from the Iranian Government, the celebration of the 2500th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Achaemenian Dynasty by Cyrus the Great. The address he delivered there was later on enlarged into a monograph ready for publication. In April 1974 he went to London as a member of the Templeton Foundation, and in December of the same year he visited Dacca, Bangladesh, to receive the award of a Gold Medal by the Asiatic Society, Bangladesh, for his contribution to Bengali language and literature. In June 1975 he attended the Second International Congress for Sanskrit Studies.

The Second International Ramayana Seminar was held in December 1975. Chatterji delivered there an extempore address on Ramayana. On 15 January 1976 he delivered a lecture on the Ramayana Problem at a meeting held at the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

The Regional Branch of the Sahitya Akademi arranged for a Seminar on the Ramayana at National Library, Calcutta in February of the same year. Chatterji gave a lecture there. He

had the intention of writing a book on the great epic but his failing eye-sight stood on the way. The lectures he delivered at Delhi and Calcutta on the Ramayana has been published posthumously as a monograph.

Chatterji's last public function was the inauguration of the Seminar on 'Fiction in Eastern Indian Literature' held under the auspices of the Regional Branch of the Sahitya Akademi in Calcutta in January 1977.

Erudition

Suniti Kumar Chatterji's erudition was recognised significantly by the conferment of the Doctor's Degree (*Honoris Causa*) on him by some foreign and Indian Universities such as Rome (1961), Delhi (1965), Visvabharati (1966), Osmania (1968), and Calcutta (1969). High academic bodies in India and abroad honoured him by electing him Fellow, Honorary member, Vice-President or President. Chatterji was elected a Fellow of the Asiatic Society (of Bengal) in 1936. He was made a Member of Comité International Permanent de Linguistes (Paris) in 1938, He was elected Honorary member of the following institutions: Oriental Institute of Poland (1938), of the Société Asiatique (Paris) in 1946, of the American Oriental Society in 1947, of the Ecole Française de l'Extrême-Orient (Saigon, Paris) in 1949, of the Provinciale Utrechts Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen (Holland) in 1950, of the Norwegian Academy of Sciences (Oslo, Norway) in 1954, of the Siam Society (Bangkok) in 1957, of the Linguistic Society of America in 1958, of the Italian Institute of the Near and Far East (Rome) in 1961, of the Permanent International Council of Phonetic Sciences (Helsinki) in 1961, of the Ceylon Linguistic Society in 1963, etc.

Chatterji was elected President of the following Academy and cultural bodies : Post-graduate Council of Arts, Calcutta University (1951) ; Asiatic Society, Calcutta (served for four years, on two occasions, 1953-55 and 70-72) ; International Phonetic Association (1969), succeeding his teacher Professor Daniel Jones the Founder President; etc. He received so many medals, plaques and certificates, *Honoris Causa*, from Universities and other learned bodies, home and abroad. He

was elected Vice-President of the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, in February 1968, and its President in 1969. Chatterji died at the age of 87, in double harness as National Professor of Humanities and as President of the Sahitya Akademi. He could have easily gone on for some years more. His death was almost a tragedy—a sudden heart attack a few days after he had gone through a successful cataract operation.

Scholar and Teacher

Suniti Kumar Chatterji was a profound scholar and wide-awake man, but did not belong to the known types of academic world. He was a voracious reader of books but was not book-worm. He was a teacher in profession and by preference but he did not usually bloom in the class-room. His eyes would always flicker to read things outside printed page and he would enjoy teaching outside the four walls of a class-room. An account of his main activities, other than mental, has been given above in outline, which proves that Chatterji was a scholar not of the *Muni* or Hermitage-dwelling type but of the *R̥ṣi* or Itinerant (*Caraka*) type. He had never ceased learning : a real scholar never does. His hunger was for knowing and understanding what man has ever done and is now doing. This hunger gave him a kind of restlessness which periodically, sometimes very often, urged him to go abroad. This itinerant activity probably curbed his propensity for intensive research in his chosen subject, Linguistics, but it made him a unique personality in the academic domain of the mid-twentieth century,—a true ambassador of Indian scholarship and Culture. Chatterji was a deep admirer of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and Radhakrishnan liked Chatterji immensely. It was quite fit that Chatterji would defeat even the renowned philosopher in globe-trotting, as a vendor of culture and scholarship. What Tagore did for literature and thought Chatterji did for linguistics, philology and culture : they helped to put West and East closer together.

Chatterji was not a very successful teacher within the class-room of the University of Calcutta as his lectures were often beyond the grasp of the average student. In other words

he could not bind himself to give to the students only the bare matter of the subject prescribed which would help them to get good marks without headache. Outside the classroom Chatterji was a typical “University Professor”. One could readily draw from him almost any time. Only a few really good research students and some really inquisitive friends could satisfy their thirst at this fountain of knowledge. Towards the end of his service at the University of Calcutta Chatterji had resigned and accepted what appears to be a political appointment. But Chatterji was never a politician and he disliked political appointment. He said to a friend that he accepted the post as he was not sure about getting an extension of his service with the University. Perhaps he wanted to follow in the footsteps of Radhakrishnan.

Achievement

From the day when *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* was published (1926) Suniti Kumar Chatterji was recognised as the leading Indian in the subject of Indian Linguistics. His deep knowledge of the English language, good knowledge of Sanskrit, his training at London in Phonetics under the Master Daniel Jones, and his attending lectures in London and Paris under some of the top men in Philology and Linguistics—all these had combined to make him unique as a young don. Besides, he was equipped with sufficient knowledge of Persian (and Arabic) and most of the prominent Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages made him an all round scholar who could speak confidently on the history of the Indian languages, old and new. As regards the continental European languages he knew French very well and German tolerably well. He could speak Italian, Spanish, and some other languages like a native of the language without knowing much of it. He had also learnt some Chinese.

Chatterji however was more interested in the living speech than in the dead. That is why his forte was Phonetics and Phonology. His earliest piece of significant research work, *A Brief Sketch of Bengali Phonetics* (published in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* Vol. II, Pt. I, 1921) is one of his most outstanding contributions to Indian Linguistics. The history of the Bengali language had been treated by Hoernie, Beames and Grierson, but there were many significant points which had escaped the attention of the European scholars. Rabindranath Tagore repaired some omissions in the comprehensive work of Beames, but although the greatest master of the Bengali language Tagore lacked the training of

an academic linguist. Chatterji did what Tagore perhaps could have done had he seriously attempted. Tagore was aware of this and he was one of the best admirers of Chatterji and his *magnum opus*. Tagore dedicated one of his books to Chatterji by calling him a Master Teacher of Language (*Bhāṣācārya*).

Following the pattern of his teacher Jules Block's *La Formation de la langue Marathe* (1920), Chatterji constructed the history of the Bengali language on a solid foundation. He had some new materials before him—the old Bengali (rather Proto-Bengali) *Caryā* songs discovered by Haraprasad Shastri in Nepal and the manuscript of a lost work by Caṇḍidāsa discovered by Basantaranjan Roy in a distant village in the district of Bankura. These two discoveries supplied him with valuable data that was not available to his predecessors. Towards a proper understanding of the development of the Bengali language Chatterji's definite contribution was the determination of the phonological steps which were missing to the earlier workers in the field. He clearly established the exact operation of the phonological processes known technically as *Epenthesis* and *Vowel Harmony*. His treatment of Bengali phonology also cleared the obstacles to a proper understanding of the relationship between the different dialects of the Bengali language. Chatterji coined the Bengali terms for some of the significant phenomena of phonemic change, such as *Apasruti* (for Ablaut or Vowel Gradation), *Apinihiti* (for Epenthesis), *Svara-saṅgati* (for Vowel-Harmony) etc. These terms created by him have been accepted by Linguists throughout India for the native languages.

Chatterji did not discuss exhaustively the dialect variations of Bengali. Grierson in the *Linguistic Survey of India* had done for all Indian languages including Bengali. It would have required at least ten to fifteen years of strenuous research in order to go beyond Grierson and make out an exact linguistic map of India. He could have done it but unfortunately he did not, perhaps because of his rather heavy teaching load in the University. But the opportunity missed would never appear

again. After the partition of India, and later of Pakistan into two countries there has been heavy and repeated exodus—which has not yet stopped altogether, the historical set up of dialectal areas have been hopelessly disturbed, especially in West Bengal.

Chatterji's treatment of the Bengali Vocabulary is exhaustive and almost final (with the reservation that some of the words indicated by him as of native and/or Austric origin may be proved otherwise by later researches, as his treatment was sometimes conjectural).

Chatterji's contribution to our scientific understanding of some other Indo-Aryan languages are by no means negligible. His philological and linguistic Introduction to the Old Maithili text *Varṇaratnākara* (1940), which he edited with the help of Pandit Babua Misra, is really an historical grammar of the Maithili language in outline. Similarly is his Introduction to *Uktivyakti-prakaraṇa* (1953) is an epitome of the linguistic history of the *Avadhi* (or Kosali, edited by Muni Jinavijayaji) language.

Chatterji's contribution to Hindi and Urdu languages are to be found mainly in his Indo-Aryan and Hindi (1942: second edition, revised and enlarged 1960). The contents of the book were delivered as to courses of lectures delivered before the Research and Post-graduate Department of the Gujarat Vernacular Society (now Gujarat Vidya Sabha) of Ahmedabad. It was translated into Hindi and this translation was published in 1954.

The next Indo-Aryan language which Chatterji treated closely was Rajasthani. On January 27, 28 and 29, 1947 he delivered three lectures before an academic institution in Udaipur dealing with the history of the Rajasthani language. The lectures were delivered in Hindi and they were published under the title *Rājasthānī Bhāṣā* as a monograph, from Udaipur in 1949.

As regards the other Indian languages, Dravidian, Austric and Indo-Aryan, his valuable and original observations are scattered in his innumerable articles and pamphlets written

mostly in English and Bengali but a few in Hindi as well. To mention a few in English : *Recursives in New Indo-Aryan* (1931); *Khāravēla* (1933). *The Pronunciation of Sanskrit* U934, 1960); *The Oldest Grammar of Hindustani* (1935); *A Roman Alphabet for India* (1935; thoroughly revised and considerably altered, 1972); *Non-Aryan Elements in Indo-Aryan* (1936); *Evolution in Speech Sounds* (1938); *Some Etymological Notes* (1939); *Some Iranian Loan-words in Indo-Aryan* (1944), *An early Arabic version of the Mahābhārata story* (1949-50); *Foreigners and Indian Names : the Panjab Speech through the Ages* (1950); *Old Tamil Ancient Tamil and Primitive Dravidian* (1954) ; *The Name 'Assam-Ahom'* (1957); *Dravidian Philology* (1957) ; *Mutual Borrowings in Indo-Aryan* (1960); *Levels of Linguistic Analysis* (1962); *Glottal Spirants and the Glottal Stop in the Aspirates in New Indo-Aryan* (1964); *The correspondence between Sound and Phoneme in the light of Modern Linguistic Theories* (1966); *Some Iranian and Turki Loans in Sanskrit* (1967); "Ganga-ridai" (1968); *The Eloquent of Vagueness* (Linguistic Notes II; 1968); *Orthography and Phonetics : Pronunciation and traditional spelling in languages, particularly in India* (1969); *Background of the spoken word in the speech-lore of India* (1972); etc.

Chatterji had much interest in Indo-European linguistics but he did not venture speculation in it. He was interested more in the Old Indo-European speakers than in their speech. As he wrote in the Introduction to his *Balts and Aryans* (1968), regarding his college days;

The myths and legends and heroic tales of all Indo-European peoples also became my passion...., the deathless beauty of the myths and legends of Greece beginning with Homer and the Homeric, Hesiod, the Tragic Poets and other great writers of Greece;— these were there, easily accessible in the original and in translation As for the early literature of the Balts, I came to know about the Lithuanian *Dainas* nearly 50 years ago, and it was with the help of German and English translations, I could read some of them.

Balts and Aryans (Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1968) is a very remarkable contribution to Indo-European philology. In October 1966 Chatterji delivered six lectures on certain aspects of Indo-European culture and linguistics to the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies in Simla. The book is based on those lectures. In the words of the author. *Balts and Aryans* "is intended to be scientific as well as popular, and aims particularly at bringing some knowledge of the Baltic world to English-reading people in general and to Indians in particular who have some background of Indo-Aryan and Indo-European philology and culture ; and also at presenting some aspects of the Aryan world in India to Baltic persons."

Indo-European linguistics is treated in a few of his papers of which the following are important : *Pre-Indo-European* (1942); *Race Movements and Prehistoric Culture* (1951); *The Word about Igor's Folk* (1960); *Armenian Hero-Legends, and the Epic of David of Sasun* (1961) : *Some Indo-European Tribal Names : Loans and Inheritances* (1967) ; *Veda-Samhitā Baltica* (1968); *Some Linguistic Notes (I) : Eppur Si Mouve* (1968); *Some Linguistic Notes (III) 'The Legacy of the Past and the impact of the Present* (1968); *Sanskrit 'Govinda' : Old Irish 'Boand'* (1970);

Suniti Kumar Chatterji was a linguist by training and profession but in his heart of hearts he was a lover of Art. Art in any form—drawing, paintings modelling, sculpture, architecture, mimic, musical,—in fact in every activity in which man has excelled in course of his long long history. He was a born itinerant at heart, he could not stagnate at any place, It was his thirst for art and culture that impelled him to take the slightest excuse for running out of Calcutta or out of India. Chatterji's writings on art and culture are as numerous as his writings on the science of language.

His first writings, which were in English, appeared in *the Bengal Education Journal* in 1913 while he was still a student; these were 'Student Life in Calcutta' and 'Hostel Life in

Calcutta'. The second article was illustrated with line drawings by the author himself. (Drawing pictures was his life-long hobby).

His first writing in Bengali was published in the *Sāhitya Pariṣai Patrikā* in 1916.

He took up in hand three projects in 1976 : (i) his autobiography in Bengali (entitled *Jīvanakathā*) which he started writing in the beginning of January 1976; (ii) his monograph on the *Ramayana* in English, and (iii) *Rabīndra-Jīvana Devatā* in the first week of December 1976. But he could not proceed much with the writing due to the rapidly worsening condition of his eyesight.

Among his books the following are important:

Kirāta-jana Kṛti—The Indo-Mongoloids : their contribution to the history and culture of India (based upon Pratibha Devi Lectures 1947) published by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1951 ; (second enlarged edition, 1974).

The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India (Banikanta Kakati Memorial Lectures 1954), published by the University of Gauhati, 1955, reprinted 1970).

Africanism : the African Personality (with Foreword by Sarvaepalli Radhakrishnan), Calcutta 1960.

Indianism and the Indian Synthesist delivered as Kamala Lectures for 1947, published by the University of Calcutta, 1962.

Dravidian : A course of three lectures delivered before the Annamalai University, published by the University, 1965.

The People., Language and Culture of Orissa (Artavallabh Mahanti Memorial Lectures), published by the Orissa Sahitya Akademi, Bhubaneswar, 1966.

Religious and Cultural Integration of India : Atombapu Sarma of Manipur (Atombapu Sarma Memorial Lectures), published from Imphal, Manipur, 1967.

India and Ethiopia : from the 7th Century B. C., Asiatic Society Monograph Series No. 15, 1968 (issued 1969).

World Literature and Tagore (Visva Bharati). Santiniketan, 1971.

Select Papers- Vol. One People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1972, compiling 13 papers.

Jayadeva, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. 1973

India : A Polyglot Nation and its linguistic problems vis-a-vis national integration, (Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture Series-3, 1973), Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Research Centre, Bombay, 1974.

The Rāmāyana : Its Character, Genesis, History, Expansion and Exodus : A..., *Prajñā*- Calcutta, 1978.

Select Writings. Vol.1, Vikas, New Delhi, 1978.

The following papers are significant :

The Revival of Indian Art and the Lucknow School of Arts and Crafts, *Modern Review*, April 1927.

The Pāla Art of Gauḍa and Magadha *Modern Review*, January 1930.

Some Problems in the Origin of Art and Culture in India (*Visva Bharati Quarterly*, Vol. 8. Pt. III, 1930-31).

Art in Coins. *The Four Arts*, Annual 1935.

Ruvapati : 'The Master of Form'. Modern Review, June '36.

West African Negro Art : The Bronzes of Benin (The Four Arts Annual, 1936-37).

Andhra Art (Ramalinga Reddy Sasthyabdapurti Volume, Pt. II, Waltair, 1940).

Buddhist Survivals in Bengal, B. C. Law Volume, Pt. I, Calcutta 1945.

Sir William Jones : 1746-94. Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1946.

Islamic Mystician, Iran and India (Indo-Iranica, Vol. I, No. 2, October 1946).

Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa and Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, Asiatic Society, Calcutta 1950.

Al-Bīrūnī and Sanskrit, Al-Bīrūnī Commemorotion Volume, Iran Society, Calcutta, 1951.

Race Movements and Prehistoric Culture (The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. I, 1951).

India and China : Ancient Contacts, Asiatic Society Calcutta 1960 (issued in 1961).

Abanindranath Tagore : Master Artist and Renovator, 'Abanindranath Tagore' Golden Jubilee Number of the journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta, 1961.

Hindus and Turks from prehistoric times— India-Central Asia Contacts and Links.

I (Ksetra Chandra Chattopadhyay Felicitiation Volume, Journal of the Ganganath Jha Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapith, July-Oct. 1971)

II (S. K. De Memorial Volume, Calcutta, 1972)

III (Journal of the Ganganath Jha Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapith, 1973).

With Sisir Bhaduri

Suniti Kumar Chatterji acquired his taste and interest in the mimic art and stage craft from his college days and mainly through his close contact with Sisir Kumar Bhaduri. Chatterji's friendship with Bhaduri who was later recognised as one of the greatest Indian actors and masters of the stage, was deep and life-long. There were other friends too, whom Chatterji has remembered with love and gratitude. In his excellent article (in Bengali) on Bhaduri written after the latter's demise Chatterji has given an account of his early acquaintance with Bhaduri. The relevant portion is quoted below in translation:

Two years in the Intermediate course, two years in the graduate and two years in the postgraduate ; these six years contained my college life. These six years of my student life in early youth I utilized fully by taking part in all sorts of student activity current at the time. The examination results of mine were always excellent, but I had never been a book-worm ; I kept my eyes and ears active and alert. My friends and companions were from all types of students—good, bad, indifferent, simple, clever, crooked, trickstar, moralist amoral, highbrow, understanding, brainless ; and so on. One of the best body and mind, among my friends and companions, was Sisir Kumar Bhaduri. He did not get high grades at the examinations, but he was a goodlooking fellow : his manners were engaging and his talks were brilliant. Among the student community Bhaduri was universally accepted as 'the most brilliant and the most popular student in Calcutta University for

near about a decade'. As a man Sisir was honest and straightforward, truthful and easy in manners. We who had come, to know him closely were easily and unwittingly drawn fast to him. He was the thread as well as the clasp of the thread of our chain of friendship which lasted till the end.

I do not exactly remember when I had first met Sisir. It seems that at the end of the first year class (1908) in our college I met him as a fellow competitor in the contest for recitation held annually by the Calcutta University Institute. Recitation held in five languages, English, Bengali, Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. Sisir was enrolled for recitation in English. I do not remember whether he received a prize or not on that occasion but myself did not. Our meeting at the University Institute soon developed into intimacy between Sisir and myself. On the same year the students of our college staged a Bengali play. *Pratāpāditya* was played by a handsome classmate of mine, Phanindranath Mitra. Sailendranath Basu, another fellow student played the part of the heroine *Kalyānī*. I remember one scene particularly. To save herself from the clutches of two intending ravishers *Kalyānī* had just stood up brandishing a sword when at critical moment *Pratāpāditya* and *Sūryakānta* suddenly appeared, holding toy guns. Just at the moment some bombs made of chlorate of potash were burst behind the stage. The two miscreants fell down as if dead. There was however a miscalculation in the matter of stage direction. The guns were fired three or four seconds after the collapse of the rogues. This provoked ripples of laughter from the gallery. The stage manager felt disgusted.

In the next year we staged Shakespeare's *Julius Ceaser*. I cooperated fully, not however by taking up any role but as a dresser and stage decorator....Sisir played the

part of Brutus ; I designed his dress which suited him finely. After this performance Sisir and I came closer together... For the costumes of a Shakespearian play we approached an Anglo-Indian Opera Company which had their office in the arcade of the Grand Hotel, for hire of the costumes. They agreed to supply on advanced payment of Rs. 150 only. The fellow who was deputed by us to make the deposit absconded, but we did not know anything about it till very late two or three days before the performance...

As a keen student of Greek and Roman history I had an eye for the art and ornaments of those people. Some of my friends knew of this fascination of mine. They pressed me urgently to come to the help. I came forward, and with the help of two of our classmates, Ananda Krishna Singha (who latter became a lecturer in English at Ripon College) and Nihar Mitra I told them 'Never fear ; Roman Costume is a very simple contraption. A length of white silk sheet was readily sewn into a Roman toga, another piece was made into a shirt of the Punjab style. A pair of *Cappal* slippers fitted admirably. A length of coloured cloth was tied round the head. The Roman costume thus easily contrived drew admirations from all. The helmet was achieved by the top portion of a Sola hat (then worn by Europeans and Anglo-Indians) stuck with a crest made of cardboard pasted with gold and silver tinsel sheets. Such sheets were hung also as cheek-guards. Cotton was stuck on the crest as representing feathers or horse-hair of the original. The *glaiives* were similarly made of cardboard ; so also were fashioned the shields inscribed with the letters S. P. Q. R, (*i.e.* Senatus Populus que Romanus) and also with the drawing of the scene of Romulus and Remus sucking the breast of a leopard. The only female part was Portia's. She was more easily garbed, by a long chemise a little modified here and there.

When the actors, wearing, the toga of white silk and white helmet made of pasteboard, and carrying the shield of pasteboard inscribed S. P. Q. R., and putting on, overall, the red Roman martial cloak, made their appearance on the stage all of us were impressed. The audience, which included some European ladies and gentlemen, clapped in appreciation. All this now seems to me but pranks of a late teenager. But the performance of *Julius Caesar* was really a success, and it was mostly to the credit of Sisir playing the part of Brutus. I do not now remember the name of the person who took the role of Mark Antony the counter-hero. He, a fourth-year student, also acted exceedingly well. He was on par with Sisir. The part of Portia was also well played. It was done by Jatin Ganguli, a first year student.

We three, Ananda Singh, Nihar Mitra and myself, made a reputation for designing historical costumes for our stage. The performances in the later days at the University Institutê of *Chandragupta*, *Aśoka*, *Janā* and other well known plays, firmly established our reputation. In still later days when Sisir left college teaching for good and came over to the stage as a professional the renowned historian Rakhaldas Banerji, who was like an elder brother to us, assured our leadership. Banerji helped Sisir in his production of *Ālamgīr*, *Sītā*, *Digvijayi* etc. Girin Sen also was a good help...

It was mainly through Sisir's efforts that a revolution was brought over the stage decor also in the Indian stage...

My association with Sisir in his stage, activities, and the talks that I had with him regarding Bengali, English and Sanskrit literatures' brought for me an equanimity which I regard as one the great gains in my life.

Writer in Bengali

After Sisir Kumar Bhaduri, Rabindranath Tagore and his writings influenced Chatterji the most. Bhaduri's influence operated in his early life whereas Tagore's influence was operative throughout, especially towards the close of his life. Not only as one of the greatest poets and the thinkers world has ever seen Tagore had also a peculiar appeal for him. Chatterji considered Tagore a fellow linguist. Thus says Chatterji, feeling a sort of affinity with the great poet, in the foreword to his *World Literature and Tagore* (1971):

Rabindranath Tagore in his most suggestive book (in Bengali) on the Bengali language, has made an observation about himself which I consider applicable with much greater truth to myself also. In his "Introduction to the Bengali Language" *Bānglā Bhāshā Paricaya*, which is a book replete with many strikingly scientific views and conclusions, he has very modestly all scientific knowledge or accuracy in matters specifically linguistic... But as he rightly claims, he is deeply interested in serious investigation in the domain of learning, and that alone can redeem his approach from bonality or triteness, and make it helpful to create that kind of serious and scientific interest in the minds of his readers, in spite of faults of omission and commission upon which truly scientific experts may frown. In my own case also, as a professor of Linguistics, which is generally considered to be 'dry-as-dust' subject of study, I have had the temerity to set forth my own views on literature ...

Chatterji was a great lover of art and literature. In his outlook on visual art he was partial to the classical no doubt but he was not averse to the modern. For instance he highly admired the Ajanta paintings but at the same time he enthusiastically appreciated the drawings of the indigenous painters of the so-called Kalighat School. In the mimic and the musical art he was almost entirely partial on the classic styles ; the contemporary art in music and histrionics did not appeal to him much. Tansen's *Dhrupad* songs charmed him whereas even the best performance of Kirtana song left him cold. So too in literature. His leaning was entirely to the classical and accepted authors. Chatterji was an admirer of the poetry of Tagore no doubt but his enthusiastic appreciations are all for the poems of classic elegance or timber. He had been all along an admirer of Tagore's songs, but towards the end of his life he was giving more attention to the songs of Tagore written in a lighter style and joyous spirit.

He was specially enamoured with those poems and songs which were concerned with the theme of the God of the Life (*Jivana-Devatā*) Accordidg to Chatterji Tagore's conception of *Jivana-Devatā* is "one of his special and characteristic contributions to the mystic poetry of the world—the cornerstone of his Realisation of the Ultimate through Beauty and Love..."

Chatterji had studied Sufism and the study had helped him to understand Tagore's concept of *Jivana-Devatā* in his own light. So he writes:

The figure of *Jivana-Devatā* in the various forms and environments is appearing again and again in Rabindranath's poetry, and it may be said this is the central conception for the mystico romantic poetry of Rabindranath. A figure comparable to Rabindranath's *Jivana Devata* may be found only in Sufi literature, where the Supreme has been conceived of as the *Ma'shūqah* or the Beloved sweet-heart of the Universe. And yet the Sufi concept has not been so very much individualised and humanised. The lady who inspires

the Knight to deeds of chivalry—to love and service as well as to heroism and fighting—in medieval European romance, has some faint resemblance to the Sufi *Ma'shūqah* and to Rabindranath's *Jivana-Devatā*. We are at times reminded of the incorporeal presence of the Goddess Artemis as in Euripides's drama of *Hippolytos*. Goethe's Helen as the inspirer of Faust, in the second part of his great epic drama, also can be recalled in this connexion. Then there is Beatrice of Dante, both in the *Vitia Nuova* and in the *Paradiso* of the *Divina Commedia* of this medieval poet of Roman-Catholic allegory and mysticism. But Beatrice is the sublimation of an earthly and a living person into something like a spiritual inspirer and guide, whereas Rabindranath's *Jivana-Devatā* is both a cosmic and a mundane force which envelopes the poet's life and being.

Chatterji's treatment of Tagore's theme of *Jivana-Devatā* gives the reader a clear insight into the essentially classical pattern of his own literary and artistic views as well as of his erudition,

Gusto in Life

A scholar and academician is seldom a good table talker. But Suniti Kumar Chatterji was a rare exception. He was a "charming conversationalist". He could talk spontaneously and easily on perhaps any subject on the earth except Science and Philosophy. He was a popular figure in learned gathering as well as among his friends and close acquaintances. One of his friends had once observed that National Professor Chatterji would have made an excellent official Guide-in-Chief to the V.I.P.'s visiting India.

Chatterji was a *gourmet*. But he was not averse to any food that man usually takes in any part of the world. It was often observed that he would eat parched rice with as much relish, as an unexpected guest in a village humble house, as fried rice at a reputed Chinese restaurant.

In one of his significant earlier poems Rabindranath Tagore had said that he did not seek for that type of Spiritual Emancipation which can be obtained only through practice of hard renunciation ("vairāgya-sādhane mukti se āmar nay"). This was the motto of Chatterji's life. He would enjoy life as much as he could without surrendering any of his principle and without doing harm to any person. He wanted good things in life no doubt, but he would not fight for it. He never forgot that he belonged to the Brahmin caste and he was fully conscious of his social duties and responsibilities as a Brahman.

Chatterji observed most of the elementary religious duties prescribed in the Śāstras for a Brahmin. But towards the close of his life he was losing faith in the rituals, and not only approved intercaste marriage among his close relatives and friends but also joined the function of such marriage. Below

is quoted the estimate of his spiritual ideas a few years before his passing away:

Professor likes to describe himself as ‘an agnostic in his intellect, and a mystic in his emotions’ and he seeks to keep the doors and windows of his mind and spirit wide open for the Light from outside to stream in—even for the ‘Spark from Heaven to fall’. In the deep of his being, he confesses to having a great yearning for, to having an unconfirmed faith in the existence of, an Ultimate Reality which is transcendent and immanent in life and being, a Reality which, (as both the Vedānta and modern science say) is also Intelligence or Knowledge, a Reality, the contemplation and the outward manifestations of which in both Nature and Man are, in the words of Albert Einstein, the source of a ‘rapturous amazement’, a Reality that to the contemplative man is revealed as *Ānanda* or Bliss, as *Rasa* or *Rasānubhūti* or a ‘compelling sense of joy’.

His love and appreciation of Europeanism has helped him, as he himself believes, to be firmly established in his inheritance of Indianism, or *Bhārata dharma*—an Indianism which he has sought of formulate in his own way, following, as already mentioned, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, and Sarvaepalli Radhakrisnan—He has the deepest regard for the Philosophy of the Vedānta, but he is also a great admirer of ancient Greek thought, of early Taoism, of Muslim Sufism, both of the Arab-world and of Iran and India, and of Christian mysticism.¹

1. *Suniti Kumar Chatterji : The Scholar and the Man*. Jijñāsa. Calcutta, 1970, Page 9.

A Sum Up

A grammarian is seldom a good writer of the Language he is master of. Suniti Kumar Chatterji was a great grammarian and a master of the Bengali language, and he was honoured by Rabindranath Tagore who dedicated to him his book on the Bengali language *Bāṅglā Bhāṣā-Paricaya*, calling him ‘Master of Language’ (“Bhāṣācārya”). But he was rare exception to the popular maxim. Chatterji wrote Bengali exceedingly well and in both of the current literary styles: the Standard High (“sadhū-bhāṣā”); and the Standard Colloquial (“calita-bhāṣā”). His inclination however was for the colloquial style, and in this respect he may be reckoned as belonging to the school of writers who gathered under the leadership of Pramatha Chaudhuri the greatest exponent of the colloquial style. Chatterji was an admirer of Chaudhuri and he was always a welcome guest in the *soirees* of Chaudhuri and his wife Indira Devi a niece of Rabindranath. Chatterji was a contributor to Chaudhuri’s literary journal *Sabuj-Patra* (‘Green Leaf). His articles, written in the colloquial style was published here from the Bengali years 1325 U918) and up to the close of the journal in 1333 (1926). Chatterji’s admiration for Mr. and Mrs. Chaudhuri is reflected in the dedication of the first volume of his *Path-Calti* (1962), a collection of autobiographical and other essays on subjects gathered from his memory.

Chatterji’s contribution to Bengali literature is not insignificant either in quality or in content. Chatterji did not write verse : he had no aptitude for it. He did not write fiction: he had no special love for fiction. He however wrote about what he saw around him, with an insight and feeling belonging to an artist or a novelist. So his metier was the kind of writings

that are expected in letters, diaries and travelogue. But although Chatterji had written no diary as such he has produced respectable volumes which may be considered as belonging to the category of both diary and travelogue. His best writings are as much enjoyable as a light romantic fiction. At the same time these works are equally appealing to the erudite readers, the readers that are keen students of sociology and culture. The four volumes of the books based on some of his travels are Chatterji's distinct contributions to Bengali literature.

Although Chatterji had produced a very large number of papers on linguistic and cultural subjects and had shown great facility in style, the literary man lying hidden in the keen and perceptive observer under the hard shell of the linguistic scholar came out fully when he had the good fortune of travelling in Indonesia in company with Rabindranath Tagore. Close companionship with Tagore gave him confidence and urge to delineate what he saw and felt around him with keenness, warmth and fervour.

Chatterji's first travel-diary written contemporarily in 1927 was published serially in the monthly *Pravāsī* (where the freshly written poems of Tagore on Indonesia and Indonesian matter were regularly published) from September 1927 to April 1929, under the title *Dvīpamay Bhārata* ('Insular India'). It was published, profusely illustrated, under the same title in 1940. A second edition, with the addition of some new matter was published in 1964, under the title *Rabindrasaṅgame Dvīpamaya Bhārata O Svāmdes* ('Insular India and Siam, in the company of Rabindranath'). This travel account, epistle and diary, as it was being written and read to Rabindranath, pleased the poet and he wrote from Java to P. C. Mahalanabis published in his book *Jabhā-yātrīr Patra*, ('Letters from a traveller in Java')¹

There is Suniti in our party. I knew him to be a clear-cut scholar. That is, I was convinced that he was an expert in the business of slicing a whole into pieces and of joining pieces into a whole. But I have now discovered that the world which always presents perpetual flow of pictures and visions running

in a crowd and never stopping for a moment, could be easily caught by him in complete and fast without losing its rhythm of movement and put down faithfully and quickly in writing. At the root of this gift is his lively interest in the affairs of the world around us. Nothing appears trite or trifling to him, and his pen treats a trifle in such a manner that it assumes significance. It can be said in general that those who have gone deep into the mystery of the science of language the gallery of the art of speech is beyond their reach as the latter belongs to the upper level. But Suniti's perception does not smother the flowing pictures of language to get as the essence of speech. It is marvellous. Suniti's stuffed letters will reach you in due course. You would find them as sheer imperial despatch. Here is Imperialism in epistle writing ; it is all compassing in the realm of description. Nothing is missing from it, neither the big nor the small. Suniti should be given the title of 'Writer Master of Letter' or 'Emperor in Letter-Writing' or the 'Supreme Letter-writer'.

In another letter he wrote:

Suniti is likely to give an entire account of this tour sometime or other. His power of observation and retention in memory is equally strong. His memory does not fall short of his curiosity. Whatever he observes is collected for retention in memory. Not an iota is lost,—neither in retention nor in dispensation.

What is not given is lost. I feel that the accounts of our tour will not suffer in the least from the pen of Suniti ; it will never be lost.

Chatterji's second travel-diary was produced on (he occasion of his visit to Europe 1935. It was first published serially in the *Pravāsī* (1935-36) and the *Bhārata varṣa* (1937-38) and as a book, under the title *Pascimer Yatri* ('Wayfarer to the West') in 1939 (fourth edition 1965).

The third and last book of the *genre* was never serialised in a journal. It was published in two volumes (Vol. i in 1944, vol. ii in 1945), under the title *Europe* (1938). The material was supplied by the next travel in Europe.

Apart from the travel-letter-diary books mentioned above the best of all from a purely literary standard is the two small volumes of sketches or pen-pictures of a casual way-farer, some brilliant like cameos, entitled *Path-Calti* ('By the Wayside') published in 1962 and 1964. In some of the sketches Chatterji reminisced his childhood and early manhood days, and there are also telescopic shots replete with liveliness and warmth. A few—such as *Bhiksuk* ('The Beggar'), *Gāḍoyan* ('The Tanga-driver') and *Kabuliowala Sahayatri* ('The Fellow Afghan Travellers') etc Chatterji's pen has excelled in character-sketching in brief. Especially enjoyable is the short narration of the personality of his school teacher the Head Pandit.³ The piece on one of the elderly and distant relatives of his mother's family, is almost a magnificent story which might have been produced by Bibhuti Bhusan Banerji but perhaps not with so much restraint.⁴

These few sketches in *Path-Calti* have brought Chatterji nearest to the *gallaxy* of our great novelists and fiction-writers. Chatterji missed the literary bus not for incapacity but from a lack of fundamental ingredient. Chatterji was a minute observer and his memory was a snap photographer. What he saw and understood he reproduced faithfully. But what he felt he could not. A fiction-writer has to digest the material from his memory and to shuffle and reshuffle them and add colour from his own cogitation and feeling. Chatterji was not a thinker of the emotional type. His mental make up was more of a recording analyst than of a creative synthesist. Nevertheless Suniti Kumar Chatterji as a man of letters is unique in his own category.

Outstanding men generally have complex personality. Suniti Kumar Chatterji was an outstanding man and he was no exception to the rule. The texture of his mentality and character presented two main aspects,—as a simple man and as a sophisticated scholar. The two aspects however apparently did not bring about conflict but were blended unobtrusively if not always harmoniously. Born in orthodox Brahmin family who had accepted city life and therefore gave up much of the

orthodox duties of a Brahmin, he was practically free from any onus of orthodox humdrum except carrying the sacred thread and muttering the *Gayatri* verse in the morning. But he had not given up the spiritual ideals of his forefathers and thankful to Providence that he was born a Brahmin and in India.

Bengali youngman who visit England and Europe are very often compelled by circumstances to eat beef. (There who tried to keep their orthodox menon did it to the hazard of health and even of life. Take the case of the brilliant mathematician Ramanujan.) On return home they did not confess taking beef, and most of them underwent the ritual of purification or mortification (*prayascitta*) the most ignominious part of which is taking in a globule of cowdung, symbolizing the process of purification of the tongue and the anal channel. Chatterji, on his return from his first visit to the West had to do as his father told him, and he went through the process of *prāyaścitta* but he never lied by concealing the fact that he had eaten beef abroad. The ceremony of *prāyaścitta* however went against his grain. There was a kind of reaction. He claimed before his colleagues in the University that beef is very sustaining and veal is the most delicious of edibles. Such light pleasantry sometime reacted very badly on some of his colleagues who did not understand him, and so he had made himself un-popular for sometime among a section of his colleagues.

He carried the sacred thread throughout his life and was proud to do so. But in urgent social matters he had sobered down considerably. After his return from the West the young Professor Chatterji was drawn to the Hindu Mahasabha which was then rampantly proselytising non-Hindus to Hinduism and arranging remarriage of widows. It is remarkable that contemporary politics did not move him but social reform did.

Towards the end of his life Chatterji accepted marriage between a Brahmin and a non-Brahmin. He also tried to cut down the long drawn Marriage and Initiation rituals to sensible and tolerable size according to the needs of the present time.

Chatterji did not encourage untouchability. Latterly he even approved inter-caste marriage. Minus his sacred thread Suniti Kumar Chatterji was casteless, one can say.

There were some opposing traits in the mentality of Suniti Kumar Chatterji which contrived to make him an attractive person. In his habit and behaviour Chatterji was simple and unpretentious. But in his surroundings he liked to be ornamental and properly decorative. This seems to have originated from two or three different sources. Simplicity in attitude to life in general was a family inheritance. Love for the decorative come out of his innate love for Art. Although a scholar to the marrow Chatterji was intensely human and did not shun the path of social ambition. It was social ambition that prompted Chatterji to give up the University Chair and take up a pseudo-political appointment. But it brought no harm to the scholar in him. He was freely lecturing on learned topics and even holding classes for very short sessions. In his final years Chatterji was restored to the academic domain : he was India's National Professor in Humanities. The job and the title fitted him perfectly.

Chatterji was an enthusiastic lover of Indian culture. In his student days he was a lover of Greek and therefore Of European culture. This love he never gave up nor was it ever lost. But it was superimposed and permeated by an acquired and growing love for native culture. It was first instigated by the Swadeshi movement the brunt of which was felt by him in his student days. The love for the motherland inspired the young scholar to read and learn. Coming in touch with Rabindranath Tagore was his final eye-opener in the matter of Indian culture. Chatterji's wide and frequent travels, practically all over the world, his love for primitive life and of advanced civilization, his passion for artistic creations of men throughout the ages, his love for Sanskrit lore and his understanding of Rabindranath Tagore,—all these combined to consolidate his partiality for Indian culture. Love for Indian culture is but fashion to most of the so-called culture-vultures. With Chatterji it became his faith.

Chatterji had visited many Universities and cultural institutions in England, Europe and America as well as in some countries in Asia and he had delivered addresses in many of these places. Everywhere he was welcome as a cultural amabassador of India. As a matter of fact he was the best, if not the only man to fill up such a post if and when created by the Government of India. But I do not blame the Government. They did the next best thing by appointing him a National Professor in Humanities.

Suniti Kumar Chatterji is the best known scholar in India who had occupied a top rank among the phonetecians, linguisticians and philologists of the later twentieth century. An European admirer of his *magnum opus* had mentioned him as a real successor of Paṇini and Patañjali in their homeland. Many people are curious to know what exactly are the definite contribution to linguistics by Chatterji. The matter is technical and therefore not fully comprehensible to the general reader. But it may be thus indicated briefly.

Chatterji drew out firmly the course of history followed by the old Indo-Aryan language in its development from the tertiary Middle Indo-Aryan stage to Modern Bengali, There were predecessors whose contribution is by no means negligible. What Chatterji did was to point out the errors of his predecessors and fill up the gaps left by them. He utilized much cew material which was not available to his predecessors.

Chatterji was an expert phonetician, one of the best students of Professor Danial Jones. Chatterji's *Brief Sketch of Bengali Phonetics*, his first production in the field linguistics is perhaps the best contribution in the subject.

Incidentally Chatterji solved many problems presented by the Indo-Aryan languages. It helped to reconstruct the history of some of the modern Indo-Aryan languages. A list of such minute is beyond the scope of the present work.

Most of the Brahmin families settled in Calcutta and its suburbs were not Vaiṣṇavas, the predominal form of Hindu faith in Bengal since the late sixteenth century. The Brahmins in Calcutta were either scholars teaching *Smṛti* and *Nyāya* or

Jyotiṣa (Astrology) or were engaged by rich families as the priest who daily conducted the worship of *Śiva*. (It was an usual custom of rich ladies and gentlemen in Bengal to institute the phallic symbol of *Śiva* and perpetuate its worship.)

There were other Brahmans who were devoted to the goddess *Kālī*, who was accepted as the presiding deity of Calcutta. These *Śiva* and *Kālī* worshipping Brahmin formed the bulk of the Brahmin population in Calcutta. Chatterji's family, both on the father's and the mother's side, was *Śiva* and *Kālī* worshipping, Chatterji had no bias on any sect of Hinduism, but his inclination to *Śiva* worship was natural. In his early life he was a believer in God, and his preference was for *Śiva*. He had no special fascination for *Kṛṣṇa* (God in Vaiṣṇavism) and was not particularly interested in Chaitanya and his movement. It was in some respect unfortunate. His appreciation of Vaiṣṇava poetry of which he was fully conversant was peripheral and he could not stand Kirtana song. In his later years he sometimes took to reading Vaiṣṇava poetry and appreciated it. It was also during the latter part of his life that his appreciation of the tender and personal songs of Tagore deepened.

In his later days Chatterji preferred to call himself as an agnostic. That was perhaps a correct attitude. Chatterji lacked in emotional depth, and the conception of personal God would not come to one who is not emotional enough to have some intuition. But in his later days, especially after the death of his wife, Chatterji was detected to be emotionally affected to some extent. Chatterji's intuition was about to skip over the fence of agnosticism.

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1. The original is in Bengali
 2. A popular proverb used in a rather different but accepted meaning
tan naṣṭaṃ yan na dīyate
 3. 'Head-pandit Masay', Vol. I
 4. 'Mani-Kaka', Vol. II

A Select List of Works

A. English

(i) Linguistics

1. *A Brief Sketch of Bengali Phonetics*. Published in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, London, 1921 ; also published as a booklet for the International Phonetic Association.
2. *The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language*. In two parts. University of Calcutta, (1926). Second edition, in three parts, by George Allen, London, (1970, 1972).
3. *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*. Ahmedabad, 1942. Second edition (revised and enlarged), Calcutta, 1960.

ii) Philological

4. *Kirāta-Jana Kṛti*. The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1951. Revised and enlarged second edition, 1974.
5. *Africanism*. Calcutta, 1960.
6. *Dravidian*, Annamalai University, Annamalai, 1965.
7. *Balts and Aryans*, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla, 1968.
8. *India and Ethiopia : from the 7th Century B.C.*, The Asiatic Society (Monograph Series), Calcutta, 1968.

iii) Literary

9. *World Literature and Tagore*. University, Santiniketan, 1971. Visva-Bharati

B. Bengali

(i) Linguistics

1. *Bānglā Bhāṣātattver Bhūmikā*. University of Calcutta. First published in 1929.
2. *Bhāratē Bhāṣā O Bhāsāsamasyā*. Visvabharati. Calcutta, 1944, Second edition 1945.
3. *Bhāṣā-prakāsa Bāngālā Vyākaraṇa*. University of Calcutta.
4. *Bānglā Bhāṣa Prasānge* Jijnasa, 1975.

ii) Cultural

5. *Bhārat-saṃskṛti*. Revised edition. Calcutta, 1963.
6. *Sāṃskṛtikī*. In two volumes. Calcutta, 1962, 1965.
7. *Pascimer Yātri*, Calcutta, 1938.
8. *Europe 1938*, In two volumes. Calcutta, 1944,1945
9. *Rabindra-sangame Dvīpamoy Bharat O Syam-des*. Calcutta, 1964.

(iii) Literary

10. *Path-Calti*. In two volumes. Calcutta, 1962,1964.

C. Hindi

(i) Linguistic

1. *Rājasthāni Bhāṣā*. Udaipur, 1949.

ii) Cultural

2. *Ṛtambharā*. (A collection of eleven papers). Allahabad, 1951. Second edition, 1958.