

Bengal and Germany: Some Aspects of Political, Economic and Intellectual Encounter



Rabindranath Tagore in Germany in 1926 (Copyright unknown)

The 150th birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore and ongoing festivities in India to mark Indo-German friendship have inspired me to revise this article. Many signs of Germany's renewed interest – both, at governmental as well as private levels – in the region of Bengal are visible. Over the last 5-6 years or so I have receiving inspiring feed back. Thus, I am revisiting the subject “Bengal and Germany” in tune with the prevailing mood. In the historical research not much is found on the subject of Germany's relations with Bengal. Bengal today comprises the state of West Bengal in India and the sovereign nation, Peoples Republic of Bangladesh. One should not however ignore the existence of a large number of Bengali speaking people living in various parts of India, as well as across the world. Bengal changed its geographical form at various stages of her history. However, the language, literature and culture of Bengal, as unique as they are, remain a strong binding force not only between West Bengal and Bangladesh, but also between a large number of pockets of Bengali speaking people living in various parts of India world at large. If we follow the history of Bengal from the early years of the Christian era up to the 20th century, we find a confluence of religious ideologies and social practices, co-existence of old and the new, foreign and the indigenous, and most importantly, rejection of orthodoxy – inherent in its tradition. It was perhaps due to this liberal background that Bengal responded to the West spontaneously. In colonial India, it was Bengal which experienced the Renaissance. Those eager to know more can refer to David Kopf's *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The dynamics of Indian modernization 1773-1835* (Berkeley 1969). Nevertheless, this response was also critical and was not restricted to the society of the upper middle class. Certainly, the Tagore house at Jorashako in Kolkata was the nerve centre of this resurgence. But, Bengal and Bengalis in the 19th and early 20th centuries opened its door to all directions. My article draws a lot of methodological inspiration from this truth.

Two towering personalities of Bengal developed very deep emotional contacts with the German people. They are Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. In a way, these two figures have remained as symbol figures of Bengal's relation with Germany. Bengali public look at Germany as the country of Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Marx, Max Weber, Bach, Einstein, Steffi Graf, Boris Becker, Beckenbauer and Günter Grass. In recent years my friend Dr. Martin Kaempchen through his large number of thoroughly researched works on Tagore has brought Bengal and Germany closer to each other – a great mission he has successfully fulfilled.

The subject “Tagore and Germany” was addressed by the renowned South Asia expert Professor Dietmar Rothermund back in early 1960s. The work is entitled *Rabindranath Tagore in Germany: a Cross-Section of Contemporary Reports* (New Delhi 1961). Even very recently the same scholar, who happened to be my teacher at Heidelberg University, Professor. Rothermund, presented in Berlin an excellent speech, the text of which I received from him. The occasion was the release of Dr. Kaempchen’s Tagore Anthology *Das Goldene Boote*. The subject, “Tagore and Germany”, could well be incorporated in to the monograph *The German Intellectual Quest for India*, in which Professor Rothermund discussed the *Indienbild* by great thinkers such as Hegel, Max Weber, Christian Sprengler, Friedrich Schlegel, and, last, but not least, Max Mueller. After all, the enthusiasm that the German people showed to greet Tagore on the soil of Germany demonstrates the German intellectual and emotional quest for India. A quick glance at Martin Kaempchen’s *Rabindranath Tagore and Germany: A Bibliography* (Rabindra Bhavan, Visva Bharati 1997) will reveal the story of enthusiasm for Tagore. Looking back, I remember how excited I was – when, during early 1970s, as a young student of Sanskrit and German at Visva Bharati in Santiniketan I took part in a program of All India Radio on “Rabindranath Tagore and Germany”. Research on the theme has come a long since then.

So far as Subhas Chandra Bose is concerned, unfortunately there has not been adequate research to show that he did much to continue the relation which was already in existence between the people of Germany and India, Bengal in particular. However, a large number of western and Indian scholars have done valuable works on Subhas Chandra’s political career as spent outside his country, particularly in Germany. The most recent contribution Subhas Chandra Bose und die *Indien Politik der Achsenmaechte* (Berlin 2003) is by Jan Kuhlmann. One of the latest works on this great Indian nationalist comes from the pen of Professor Sugata Bose. The book has the title: *His majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s Struggle against Empire* (Penguin 2011).

Some aspects of colonial Bengal’s relation with Germany between the world wars and before the Ist World War will be taken up in this article. The relation itself was complex, though never lacked its charm and originality. If we take for granted that the idea of Nation State is of European origin and is a European experience, we have to see that the German territorial nation was born very late in the 19th century with the rise of Prussia, the reunification of the federated German states. Yet, German nationalism was there before the appearance of a unified nation-state. In Bengal, Bismarck’s name is widely known for bringing the German state in a position of stability. Whatever might have been the state structure, the experience of industrialization and the dependence for raw materials and other compulsions were common factors for all emergent colonial powers. Herein Germany entered the “race” when the “sharing of booty” had already been completed between the French, Dutch, and the British in Asia. Therefore, the best option left for Germany was to act as a trustworthy partner of England, and settled matters of conflict in order to come to a consensus. For general Indian readers I recommend eminent German historian Werner Conze’s book *The Shaping of the German Nation. A Historical Analysis* (London 1970). I had a chance to see this great historian and his wife privately just before my departure from Germany in the summer of 1985. I was deeply moved to see his interest and knowledge in the sphere of Germany’s relation with Asia.

Rapid industrial developments, reconciliations of regional forces and centralization process in course of the late 19th century enhanced Germany’s position among countries of Asia. During the time from the end of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century Germany successfully impressed the Arab world, China, Turkey, Afghanistan, Persia, Siam(Thailand), Burma (Myanmar) and India. Interestingly in none of the regions Germany appeared as colonial power, nevertheless she actively took part in the economic life, and partially involved herself – though in her own way. At the same time, the absence of the factor of direct political control

strengthened Germany's position as an alternative power. Those interested to know more can read Peter Hobkirk's *On Secret Service East of Constantinople: The Plot to bring down the British Empire* (Oxford 2001). In fact, Germany's intellectual and technological assets brought her a kind of indirect dominance over colonized Asia. For example, Siam (modern Thailand), a victim of British and French imperialism in the 19th century, looked up to Germany for economic and technological help, which Siam got from Prussia. The contribution of German engineers in the construction of railways in Siam is a known story (*Southeast Asia and the Germans*, Tuebingen, Horst Erdmann Verlag, 1977). Even today, as one travels across Southeast Asia, one feels the pulse of the people, who have a soft corner for the Germans.

Like Siam, Bengal and Burma were also littoral States on the lap of the Bay of Bengal – a region which attracted the attention of the German merchants, professionals and diplomats. The Germans are known for their quick actions in the field of connectivity within areas of their engagement. Such connectivity projects should be commercially and politically lucrative. Thus, one of the earliest efforts to connect Bengal with Europe, for example, was undertaken by Siemens. Between 1868-1870, the telegraphic communication between London and Calcutta was established. Such connectivity projects led to considerable saving of time; the result became visible: a telegram needed only 28 minutes to reach Calcutta from London.

Calcutta, Chittagong and Akyab (modern Sittwe of Myanmar) appeared to be extremely significant to Germany for two potential reasons. First, all the three urban centers had the presence of good number of people from the urban middle class. They were desperately approaching any other power, including America, who could supply them with arms and ammunitions to fight the formidable power of the British Empire. Second, all the three centers had their ports which could be utilized by the German merchants in their commercial ventures. The position of Akyab between Bengal and mainland Burma, and its close political attachment with British Bengal, also became one of the points of consideration. Chittagong attracted the Germans not only for its port, but also for its ship building industry as early as in 1818. Enthusiasts on the subject of Chittagong's contact with Bremen can refer to Bangladeshi historian Abdul Huq Chowdhury's Bengali book *Chattagramer Samaj O Samskritir Ruprekha* (Bangla Academy Dhaka, 1988). Besides, the entire littoral region appeared to be attractive to the Germans due to its booming rice trade. After all, by the middle of the 19th century, Akyab (modern Sittwe in the Rakhine/Arakan coast) emerged as the world's busiest rice exporting port. The first consulate of the kingdom of Hannover was established in the year 1853 in Akyab. This information is given by Walter Leifer in his book *India and the Germans*. The second consulate of Hannover was opened in Calcutta in 1855, while the third one was opened in Karachi, another port city of modern Pakistan. The Hanseatic port of Bremen had a consulate in Calcutta as early as in 1851. One should not forget that in the course of the 19th century Germany was rising as one of the most formidable naval powers.

With the German victory in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 the position of Germany was enhanced considerably among the countries of Asia. As I have stated, the people of Bengal were closely following the political developments in the heart of Europe: Prussia. Calcutta's importance was already felt by Luebeck, Hannover, Bremen and Hamburg. Prussia gave concrete shape to her plan through the opening of Consulates in Calcutta (modern Kolkata) and Bombay (modern Mumbai) in 1854. There had always been pressure from German business communities to open representative offices in the eastern part of India. From the political point of view, Calcutta's importance was increasingly taken note of by the German Reich towards the end of the 19th century. In 1886, Calcutta-based German Consulate became the most important Consulate of the German Reich. Two other consulates, one in Madras (Chennai) and the other in Bombay (Mumbai) were placed under the jurisdiction of the German Consulate in Calcutta. As a researcher on Myanmar and Bay of Bengal region I may mention here that, it was in the same

year that Upper Burma after annexation was attached to the British Indian Empire. Perhaps this very important political factor played in the minds of the Prussian policy makers, who wanted a closer contact with Bengal, a province which had the closest contact with Burma. It is from Burma that one could enter other countries of what we today call "Southeast Asia". After all, besides Assam, it was Bengal which had the direct land-contact with Burma. At the same time, the Chittagong-Arakan corridor was connecting Bengal with Burma.

Bengal at that time was not only the political centre of the British Empire, but happened to be the strongest military centre of British India. It was the Fort William in Bengal. The three Anglo-Burmese Wars (1824-26, 1852 & 1886) were managed and fought from this military centre. In the last part of the 19th century, the famous cholera specialist and later a Nobel Laureate, Robert Koch, came to Calcutta to continue his research in cholera. The British administrators needed German expertise in various fields to keep their empire well protected in India and Burma. One of the names is D. Brandis, who is widely known for his knowledge in forestry. He was sent by the British to Burma. Like any other traveler, Brandis must have also stopped over in Calcutta en route Burma.

It is in the context of this mutual adjustment policy between the British and the Germans that one may place the most interesting event in the domain of Anglo-German political relations; the visit of the German Crown Prince to Calcutta in the year 1911. It is just incredible that little ahead of the outbreak of the Ist World War, England invited the Crown Prince to confer upon him the Honour of Doctorate (*Doktorwuerde*). Enthusiasts can refer to the book *India and official Germany 1886-1914* by Nirode Kumar Barooah (Frankfurt 1977). The University of Calcutta (founded in 1857), the centre of learning and wisdom, paid its highest recognition to this German guest. It is no wonder that the Crown Prince felt extremely flattered by this act of the British. Ahead of this event, in 1900, India (Calcutta) received half million Mark as an aid to the recovery from a devastating famine. Germany felt highly obliged to have extended this support to the people of Bengal. One sees, how keen Germany was, to build up a steady relation with the people of Bengal.

In the economic sector too, Bengal remained an attractive destination and object of investment. The first Indian branch of a German bank named "German Asiatic Bank" was opened in Calcutta in 1896. This bank was founded in Berlin and Shanghai in 1889. By 1910, Germany, next to England, emerged as the second largest trade partner for India. India exported cotton, rice, jute and wool. India in the late 19th century imported sugar, iron, steel, paper, match sticks and synthetic color. Later, India imported from Germany parts of railway carriages, machines and motor cars. This flourishing trade between India and Germany experienced a sudden break with the outbreak of the Ist World War in 1914. But, Calcutta as an important centre of trade, industry and knowledge still remained attractive for Germany. The British had to accept the status of Germany as a legitimate trade power. In spite of her defeat and the signing of the humiliating Versailles Treaty (*Diktat von Versailles*) in 1919, Germany was allowed to play her previous part in Bengal. Thus, the British, perhaps much to their dislike, had to allow the reopening of the German Consulate in Calcutta in the year 1922.

As a former student of German History at the University of Heidelberg, I can only subscribe to the view that the 1920s appeared to be a very exciting period in German national life. Germany emerged on the world map as a country struggling to overcome the old political orders. New wind in public life started blowing, even as the colonized countries of Asia were amazed seeing the way Germany fought and defeated. But, again rose on her own with her individuality, driven by the spirit of her rich cultural heritage. Though the events and after-events of the World War came as a catastrophe, even then, the territorial nationalism and cultural nationalism adjusted, even complimented each other. In this context of Germany's renewed appearance on the world

map as one of the most powerful nations one may feel excited to look at various developments in India-Germany relations. One of the most impressive among these developments is certainly German scholars' engagement with classical Indian studies, what we call "Indology, Without giving any political motivation whatsoever to the study of Indology, I have nevertheless no hesitation to submit that the development of this line of classical studies opened up new avenues for further engagement at political and economic levels. Bengal with its academic, cultural and economic potential emerged as one of the closest partners of Germany.

Bengal was not only the political capital of India until 1911, it was the most vibrant intellectual and cultural nerve centre of Asia. Two important institutions attracted German scholars: one was Calcutta University and the other was the Ashram in Santiniketan founded by the poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore (K Dutta and A. Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore. The myriad-minded man*, Delhi 2000, Uma Dasgupta, *Rabindranath Tagore: A Biography*, OUP 2009). Tagore had already become a renowned personality as he was honoured by the Swedish Academy with the Noble prize in literature in 1913. This award remarkably enhanced the prestige of the Asian people who were under the European colonial bondage. Such emotion – "see, an Asian can make it" – was in the air. Before his first visit to Germany in 1921, he had already traveled to Japan and British Burma, where he was seen as the cultural ambassador of Asia. Rabindranath Tagore's unprecedented popularity during 1920s in Germany found expression in his interactions with a large sections of German public, institutions and Universities. He visited Germany again in 1926, and, for the last time in 1930. Most impressive aspect that needs to be mentioned here is his mass appeal and wide popularity. There was a tremendous quest among the German academics and elites to know the "East", the Buddhist-Hindu Orient. Tagore became one such figure to the Germans who, as Prof. Rothermund stated in his book on Tagore, the proper "therapy" to heal the wounds of this young nation.

The Germany of the 1920s was a country of pluralist thoughts and left liberal ideas. On the one hand, the flourishing German universities gave the young Indian students opportunities to learn a wide range of subjects, on the other hand, they also involved themselves clandestinely, broadening their path with new ideas to challenge the British power in India. Indeed, from a very early stage of the nationalist movement in India, i.e., from the end of the 19th century onwards, the Bengalis in particular loved to engage themselves with the German thinkers. The youth and intellectuals living in Bengal were also not isolated from this influence. The "Nietzsche Wave", especially the idea of "Superman" (*Uebermensch*), that swept over various countries of Asia (Japan, in particular) in the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, touched the shore of Bengal. One of the leading intellectuals of Bengal, Professor Kalidas Nag, who was a great enthusiast for Pan Asian ideas, was a passionate reader of Nietzsche. But, there were other Nietzsche lovers in Bengal. It may be relevant in this context to mention that Professor Nag was a close associate of Tagore and accompanied Tagore on his travel to Burma and China during 1924. Even today, Bengali academics continue with Nietzsche studies and critically engage themselves, to know about German contributions in the area of human progress. Who knows whether the great Bengali writer Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya while drawing the character of Sabyasachi in his famous novel *Pather Dabi* (proscribed in 1927 within a year after its publication) was not impressed by the idea of "Superman"? After all, he was a passionate reader of world literature.

Before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi in the political platform of India, Bengal had a great share in the nationalist movement. Two major revolutionary organizations who played a pivotal role were the *Jugantar*, and the *Anushilan* Samities. Further, the Ghadr and various pan Islamic groups were maintaining their linkages with these Bengal based extremist organizations. The Bengali nationalists, who were attracted to this extreme line of "revolution" had been maintaining close contact with German diplomats, based in cities like New York, Shanghai,

Bangkok, Manila and Batavia(modern Jakarta)). The mixed population of Hindus and Muslims and their peaceful coexistence in Bengal provided hope for the Germans for a successful revolt against the British in Bengal. It is said that the founding of associations – Sanghas and Samitis – promoting physical strength and armed confrontation with the British – derived a lot of inspiration from Germany.

Enthusiasts can refer to books written by the following scholar cum activist: Arun Guha, Anil Baran Ganguly, Bhupendranth Datta, Kalyan Kumar Banerjee, Jadugopal Mukherjee. In my book *India Myanmar Relations 1886-1948* (Kolkata: K.P Bagchi 2007) I have discussed their writings and activities in considerable details.

From the earlier period we know the names of Narendranath Bhattacharya (M.N. Roy), Jatindranath Mukherjee (known as Bagha Jatin) and Jadugopal Mukherjee. The trio were involved in the affairs of German arms import, which, due to an unknown reason never reached the shore of Eastern India, Balasore in Orissa. It may be mentioned here that around the same time (1915-1916) Germany's involvement with the Indian nationalist movement reached its climax. Under the leadership of Baron Openheimer, the German Foreign office opened a special committee for the Orient (Turkey) and India. Around the same time, Germany got massively involved in Afghanistan. In the *Berlin India Committee*, two Bengalis, Abinash Bhattacharya and Virendranth Nath Chattopadhyay, held the uppermost rank. The later was widely known with his nickname *Chatto*. He was a committed socialist. Virendranth Nath Chattopadhyay enjoyed absolute trust of the then German Government. In this connection scholars could refer to T. Fraser's article 'Germany and the Indian Revolutionaries, 1914-1918', published in the *Journal of Contemporary History*, (1977). Virendranth Nath Chattopadhyay was brother of the famous Indian nationalist leader Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. Around the same time another Bengali revolutionary, Taraknath Das, also came to Germany from his base in America. Equally important is the fact that during 1920s Germany, with its centre in Berlin, turned to be one of the most important hubs of the Indian students – a large number of whom were members of *Hindusthan Association of Central Europe*. The book written by J. Oesterheld and L. Guenther *Inder in Berlin* provides us with the supporting information. Little more details about Germany's involvement with nationalist movements of South and Southeast Asia can be found in my book *India-Myanmar Relations 1886-1948* (Kolkata: K.P Bagchi 2007). Further, a book written by L. Guenther and H.J Rehmer, *Inder Indien und Berlin*, contains a list of students of Technische Hochschule and Friedrich Wilhelm Universitaet of Berlin. A considerable number of them were from Bengal. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, during his visit to Berlin in 1926 felt immensely impressed by Berlin's potentiality in nationalist minded students of Indian origin. The following is a list of the most important Indians in Berlin: M.N. Roy, Tarachand Roy, Benoy kumar Sarkar, Abdur Rahman, Chamapakraman Pillai, Dr. J. C. Dasgupta, Satish Chandra Roy, Hardayal, Debendra Bose, K. K. Naik, V. Joshi, B. N. Dasgapat, J. N. Lahiri, Heramaba Lal Gupta, Dhirendranath Sarkar, A. S. Siddiqui, Abdus Sattar Khairi, and Bhupendranth Datta. The last one is brother of Swami Vivekananda (Narendranath Datta). Among other eminent Indians who lived in Germany were Gangadhar Adhikari, Rammonohar Lohia, Zakir Hussain. The last one is one of the Ex-Presidents of our country. Subjects studied by the Indian students touched various fields; yet, chemistry remained one of the most favorite subjects.

It is presumed that besides the purely academic motivation, another hidden agenda behind the study of chemistry was to learn bomb making devises, while intension to take up learning techniques of textile manufacture was to garner the know how for alternative techniques in order to boycott the British textile goods. Gandhiji had already shown the way. A true spirit of Indianness was visible among the young Indian students living in various parts of Germany. Division along the lines of caste, religion, language and regional differences were forgotten in the greater interest of the freedom of their country. An extremely enlightening discussion on the

Indian students, their academic achievement and their organizational network have been presented quite impressively by Loathar Guenther and Hans-Joachim Rehmer in their book *Indier, Indien und Berlin*.

Little known is the fact that M.N. Roy, revolutionary-turned-communist-turned radical humanist, to whom reference has been made earlier, made Berlin one of his centers of activities. It was from Berlin that his book *India in Transition* was published in 1922. At this juncture, it is significant to reverberate the year of reopening of German Consulate at Calcutta and Tagore's visit to Germany. Both occurred in 1921. M.N Roy developed personal contacts with eminent socialist and communists of those Germany. They were figures like Eduard Bernstein, Karl Kautsky, Rudolf Hilferding, Wilhelm Pieck and August Thalheimer. Here, I cannot but check my temptation to attach importance to Rabindranath Tagore's personal contact with the Reichspresident Paul Loebe, as well as Cultural Minister in the Weimar Republic, Carl Heinrich Beck and other eminent Germans of the early 1920s. There is no reason to think that the general public in Bengal was ignorant of the intellectual and academic progress that Germany had achieved in the late 1920s. This notwithstanding the "defeat" in the political field. One of the articles published in the renowned Bengali journal *Pravasi*, the Germans were praised as intellectually most impressive people, who, between the war years (1914-1918) impressed the world by publishing thousands of books, which enriched remarkably the state of world of knowledge. Quite relevant appears to me here to remember the great Bengali writer Syed Mustafa Ali and his writings on Germany as he saw.

With the advent of national-socialism in early 1930s, the liberal and socialist ideas were crushed. German creativity, rich intellectual and cultural traditions suffered a severe set back. As a result, those Indians who enjoyed the protection and patronage of the German state and German people during the Weimar Republic time (1919-1933) had to leave the country. However, there is no reason to think that the sympathy and love for the people of India from German people disappeared altogether. It remained in both the hearts. It was perhaps due to this people-to-people relation that Subhas Chandra Bose could continue his activities in building up an independent Indian Army and Independent Indian Government in Germany during his sojourn in Berlin (1941-1943). It was not so much the Nazi Government on which he depended, the people of Germany were real source of his real inspiration.

I may mention here the fact that Bengal in the late 19th century experienced an unprecedented renaissance in her "lost" religion, i.e., Buddhism. It goes however to the credit of the Sri Lankan monk Anagarika Dharmapala and his western and Indian mentors. Anagarika Dharmapala traveled around the world. But, he made Calcutta, Colombo, Akyab (modern sittwe) Bangkok, Rangoon, and such cities as centers of Buddhist pilgrimage and brotherhood. With Swami Vivekananda he shared the same platform at the Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893. Swamiji around the same time was engaged in the reinterpretation of Vedantic Hinduism. One of the most exciting events was the encounter between the famous indologist Paul Deussen and Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji, as I have just stated, can be considered as the founder of neo Hinduism, which drew its core spirit from Vedantic thoughts. Swamiji was on his return journey from Chicago. He stopped over at Kiel and had a fruitful dialogue with Professor Paul Deussen. Now that the people of India, and all Vivekananda followers across the world, observe 150 birth anniversary of Swamiji, this little known fact may appear inspiring. It was in Kiel that yet another great Indology Professor Richard Pischel taught Indian languages and Philosophy. As an expert in Prakrit Grammar, Pischel was invited to teach at Calcutta University. Our University was (is still) widely known for Sanskrit, Pali and Buddhist studies. Unfortunately, Pischel passed away in Madras, never to reach the city of Kolkata (Calcutta). His indebtedness to Bengal, Calcutta University in particular, can be substantially proved by the fact that the University of Calcutta proudly possesses his valuable collection, which is kept carefully in the Central Library

of our University (Calcutta University). We see the north German city of Kiel from where Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose started his journey (in 1943) in a German submarine to reach Southeast Asia and Japan, had many contacts with Bengal. I may end this small section on Kiel by sharing with my esteemed reader a personal narrative. While walking along the sea, and enjoying the festivities during Kieler Woche, I told my teacher Professor Hermann Kulke, – how happy I was to be in Kiel! Professor Kulke was my teacher at Heidelberg, but later taught at Kiel University.

No discussion on the subject of “Bengal-Germany Relation” can be completed without mentioning the name of a great thinker of modern India, the renowned economist and sociologist, Professor Binay Kumar Sarkar (1887-1949). Professor Sarkar, taught at Calcutta University in the Department of Economics, for several years, and thoroughly contributed to Bengal-Germany friendship and understanding which should be seen within the broader context of a pro German sentiments among a large section of the Indian people. Through numerous books and articles, written in Bengali, German and English, in the field of economy and social systems, religion and politics, he reminded the people that the solutions of problems of India should be sought in the Indian society itself. However, his indebtedness to the German world of knowledge and his high regard for German work ethic deserve attention. In early 1920s (1922 & 1923) three of his books appeared from Germany: Leipzig and Berlin. One of them is *Die Lebensanschauung des Inders*. Professor Sarkar taught at Columbia, Harvard, California, Iowa, Clark, Pittsburgh, Leipzig, Munich and Rome. The University of Munich however gave him the highest honour, in awarding a decoration. He was actively involved in binding a fruitful relation between Bengal and Germany. With this aim, Sarkar founded in 1933 *Bangiya Germann Vidya Samsad*, – The Bengali Society for German Culture. In the most brilliant way Professor Sarkar defended the Indian religions, rejected orthodoxy in Marxism and worked for a peaceful coexistence of the West and the East, which according to him, could easily be united.

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