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November – December 2017

A Comic World

FESTIVAL

Delhi Comic Arts Festival 2017

COLLABORATION: Manic Mongol, Max Mueller Bhavan/Goethe Institut, Pro Helvetia, L'Alliance Française de Delhi, Embassy of Norway, Austrian Cultural Forum, Cervantes Institute, Embassy of Spain, Embassy of Brazil and Norla and Hochschule Luzern.

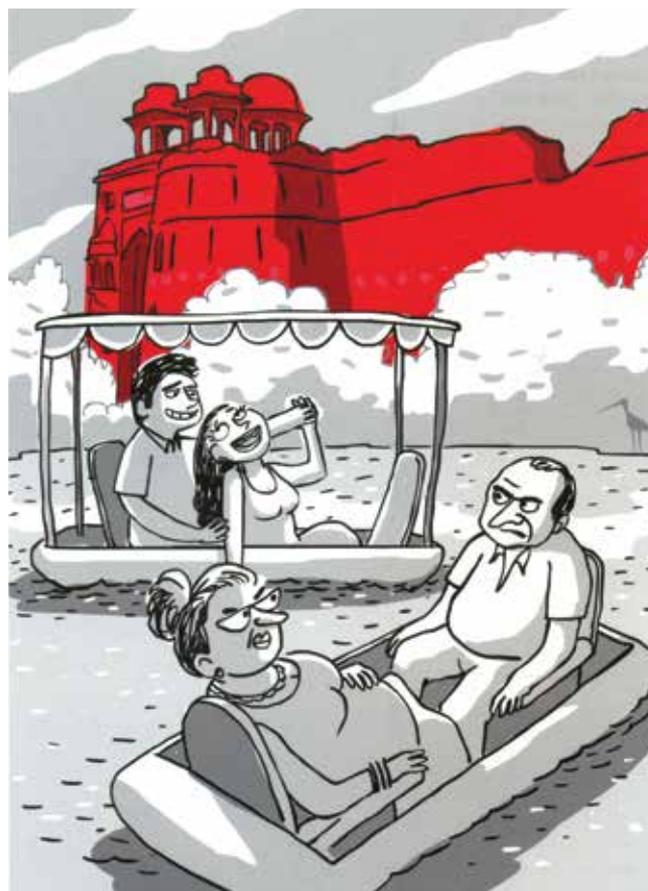
4 to 6 December 2017

This festival brought together comic creators, visual storytellers and professionals in the world of comics and graphic storytelling. The programme included talks and presentations by leading Indian and international practitioners, film screenings and exhibitions.

The festival opened with Appupen regaling the audience with a witty presentation of superheroes created by him. This was followed by Kokaachi's presentation of their well-known Indie-comics. The inimitable Sekhar Mukherjee from NID presented animated films from the institute; Josef Yohannes from Norway talked about his book, *The Urban Legend*; and Jana Jokoubek from Switzerland presented the *Fumetto Festival Lucerne* curated by her.

However, the day belonged to Amruta Patil who electrified the audience with 'Forests of Transformation', a presentation from her work in progress, 'Aranyaka'. She talked about a certain equality, generosity and grandiosity that characters from Indian epics exhibited during the periods in their lives spent in forests, which was transformative.

The book, *The Elephant in the Room: Women Draw their World* (an Indo-German anthology), was launched with presentations by Urvashi Butalia, Priya Kurian,



Delhi Comic Arts Festival

Anpu Varkey and Kaveri Gopalakrishnan. The session concluded with a panel discussion, 'Is Comics Something you can Teach?'

Lika Nuessli from Switzerland instantly got the attention of the audience when, without a word, she began to draw a peanut (an image of herself). She spoke about how, over a period of time, her style changed from that of 'too many details' to 'very minimalist', with the act of drawing itself meditative. Sharad Sharma's presentation of his *Grassroots Comics* had the audience laughing

Continued to Page 2

uproariously, and Vishwajyoti Ghosh's measured but hilarious 'Style vs. Substance' set us thinking about form and content in graphic narrative. After the bouquet of student films from NID, young Kruttika Susarla talked about her work for non-profits—her work being both personal and political.

Bettina Egger from Austria presented a graphic travelogue with photographs and sketches of her journey from Moscow to Vladivostok with her collaborator. Her drawings were enriched by her interactions with fellow passengers on the train.

Reinhard Kleist from Germany talked very calmly about the intensely gripping graphic biography of music legend, Nick Cave.

Priyesh Trivedi's deceptively monotonous voice redefined the ideal and the normal. His takeoff from the Adarsh Balak charts was a fantastic journey for the audience. Bia Bittencourt from Brazil introduced us to an exciting new world of artists and their work from the Latin American region through her presentation, 'Publishing the Universe: The Power of Self-Publishing'.

The festival concluded with Lika Nuessli sketching to live music performed by the band HA! (Abhijeet Sharma, guitar; Gursimran Singh, tabla; Mama Tochwang, bass guitar).

■ UMA N. TANUKU

The Bengal Masters: A Certain Sensibility

EXHIBITION

Evolving Identities—Masters of Bengal

Curator: Vijay Kowshik

Co-Curator: Vaibhavi Kowshik

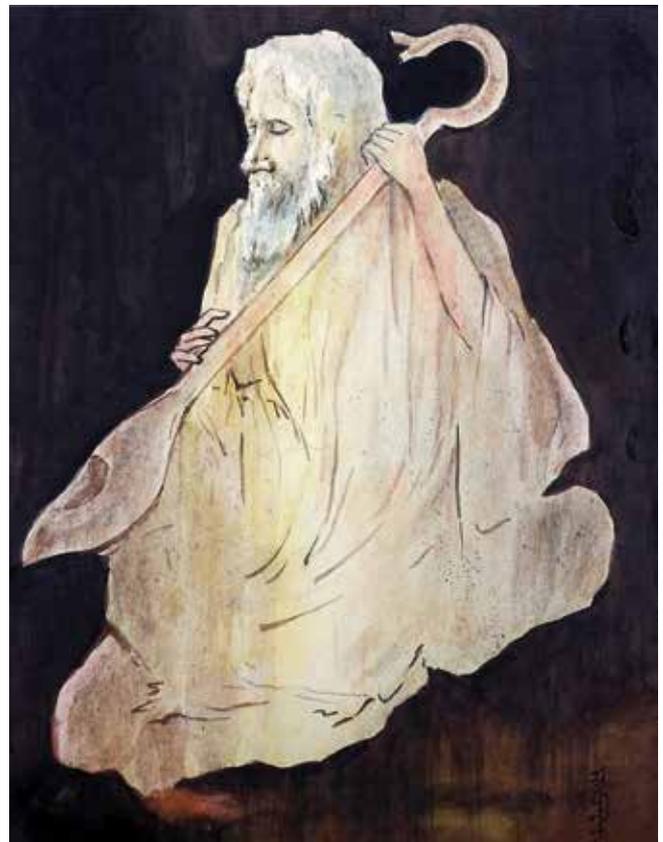
COLLABORATION: *Arts Glacerni*

19 to 30 December 2017

Exhibited at the IIC in the last weeks of 2017 were perhaps the finest works of the Bengal Masters. Collected in the 1970s and '80s, they are originals from the collection and discerning taste of Sushmita Roy Tandan. Credit is due to Vijay Kowshik for accessing this private collection in Allahabad and his painstaking efforts as curator, Sushmita's daughters Tulika and Triansa for their tremendous cooperation, and IIC Programmes for initiative in making this collection open for public viewing.

In the last 14 years of his life, the poet Rabindranath Tagore painted 6,000 pictures outnumbering all his songs. Images poured out of his fertile imagination. On the other hand, his nephew Abanindranath was trained in art and Western techniques, as seen in his portrait drawings. However, a different sensibility is imparted to his exquisite rendering of *Rabindranath Playing the Role of a Blind Mendicant*.

That Sushmita Tandan was a singer is evident from her choices. A clichéd theme of *Baul Singing* by Nandalal Bose surprises us with its angular rhythms as he is attuned to his *ektara*, body and soul. Both these works use the 'wash' technique for which the Bengal artists were later criticised, but which indeed brought *bhava*, an emotive power to their images. This, found in several exhibits, was to become a contribution of the Bengal school. The other impact on their paintings, from Japan, as seen in Nandalal Bose's delicacy of the *Flower Study*, and the vibrancy of *Trees and Foliage* by Ram Kinkar Baij.



Rabindranath Playing the Role of a Blind Mendicant by
Abanindranath Tagore

■ GEETI SEN

Wayang From Bali

PERFORMANCE

*Bima Swarga: Wayang Lemah from Bali:
Pasupati Sastra*

COLLABORATION: *Embassy of Indonesia*

30 November 2017

Wayang Lemah, a Balinese puppet and dance performance, held the audience in thrall. The stem of a coconut tree and the gently arranged foliage on the stage created the atmosphere of a sacred grove, from within which the puppeteer recounted the narrative, chanting the words and interspersing this with passages in different voices. Beyond performance, it is a ritual used for the *yajnya*, and the puppeteer himself thus becomes a holy figure.

Unlike other forms of Indonesian Wayang (puppet plays), the *Wayang Lemah* uses the arts of both puppetry and live dance, adding a rich three dimensional effect to the performance. The story presented was taken from the *Mahabharata*, *Pasupati Sastra: Knowledge is the Key to Life*. This episode describes how Arjuna, guided by Lord Krishna, disciplines himself through renunciation and overcomes all obstacles to acquire the powerful weapon, the *Pasupati Sastra*, from Lord Shiva. The moral lesson is the control of the self which enables control of worldly things.

The performance was presented by I. Made Surya Pradnya and his troupe, with Pradnya himself as the puppeteer. The flow of his voice, emphasised by quick, sharp percussive raps and backed by the deep sound of the *gamelan*, had a mesmerising quality with the narrative encompassing both sacred text and storytelling. His performance ranged from the sinister laughter of demons to humorous pieces spoken in multiple voices, transcending language barriers (though there were some brief sentences in English). The three dances in Balinese style brought a depth and richness to the performance.



Wayang Lemah

■ ASHARANI MATHUR

War Journeys

FILM

Because We Did Not Choose

Directed by Wanphrang Diengdoh

6 November 2017

recountings, letters and other printed material available from those times—and even songs sung by surviving family members.

Replete with lighthearted anecdotes from their personal diaries as the protagonists traverse new lands, new foods and new peoples, the film turns poignant with shots of the War Graves, almost completing the circle of life in our minds. The film succeeds in creating a small space in history for those unknown to us who had participated in the theatres of WWI.

■ UMA N. TANUKU

A Toast to the Brew and a Lost Culture

TALK

Indian Coffee House: Then and Now

SPEAKER: Dr. Bhaswati Bhattacharya

CHAIR: Dr. Narayani Gupta

26 October 2017

memory lane in search of a coffee house that was not just a place that people would visit for refreshments and good coffee, but one where great minds would meet over paid or complementary coffee for intellectual discussions on a range of issues and topics of larger importance.

While Dr. Bhattacharya shared some interesting memories of the iconic Coffee House, some from her book and some from experience—those in the audience became nostalgic about the so-called *addas* of the educated middle class in Delhi, Allahabad and Calcutta that the coffee house was known for.

■ REETESH ANAND

Ecology as Vishvaroopadarshana

SPIRITUAL ECOLOGY LECTURE

Ecology in the Information Age: Negotiating the Unknown

SPEAKER: Sopan Joshi

COLLABORATION: Tibet House

24 November 2017

His lecture really represented the quintessence of that existential vision, which relates and unites diverse ecologically sound and ingenious practices across the country and the world with respect to water, sanitation, agriculture, other livelihoods, rivers and settlements, biodiversity, culture, philosophy, and perspectives on life and the planet. Drawing on this wealth of examples and the profound (and profoundly practical) blueprints they represent, Joshi is able to carry us with him across terrains and ecologies, communities and seasons; through the complexities of the hydrological cycle and its relationships with land, vegetation and livelihoods; and to present all this with the eloquence and felicity of a captivating *sutradhar*. His recent book, *Jal Thal Mal*, is a remarkable work by all accounts, and an excellent contribution to the body of literature on these subjects. Whenever he speaks, one may be sure to be both entranced and illuminated. His guru would be pleased to see that his voice has been carried forward by a worthy successor. His Holiness the Dalai Lama's foundation and the IIC are equally to be applauded for making spiritual ecology lectures an annual feature.

■ MAHADEVAN RAMASWAMY

Combating Sex Trafficking

SEMINAR

Last Girl First: National Conference Against Child Labour and Sexual Exploitation

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Catherine MacKinnon

COLLABORATION: Apne Aap Worldwide

23 November 2017

Catharine MacKinnon, Professor of Law at the University of Michigan and Harvard University, delivered a lecture on 'Sex Trafficking and the Last Girl' at the IIC. It was part of a three-city consultation series on 'Child Labour, Sex Trafficking, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5.2) and the Last Girl' that the Indian anti-sex trafficking organisation Apne Aap Women Worldwide organised in Delhi (23 November), Kolkata (24 and 25 November) and Patna (1 December). The aim of each consultation was to highlight the vulnerabilities of 'The Last Girl' and to advocate for India to uphold its constitutional and international obligations to them.

On the basis of her interaction with The Last Girl all over the world, MacKinnon spoke of prostitution as indicative of gender discrimination and inequality. She said that prostitution would end only when its buyers and prostituted women both are decriminalised. She highlighted the intersectionality of vulnerabilities that women are subjected to which often results in the legal fraternity not taking cognisance of the violence they face as 'criminal'. Hence, she said, it is important for women to articulate the violence against them in legal terms. She also spoke about her long association with Apne Aap, which resulted in a PIL by Apne Aap, on behalf of prostitution survivors. It was this PIL which led to the landmark Patna High Court Order in 2014, which is the first-ever comprehensive judgement to combat sex trafficking in the country.

■ JUANITA KAKOTY

History of Syrian Christianity

TALK

In Search of Ephrem the Syrian: Suriani and the Materiality of Faith

SPEAKER: Jonathan Koshy Varghese

CHAIR: Dr. Anvita Abbi

COLLABORATION: Parzor

17 November 2017

Jonathan K. Varghese's talk took us to a historical and cultural labyrinth. He presented his preliminary report on the history of Syrian Christianity in Kerala. The Syrian Christians or the 'Nasranis' trace their religious genealogy to the South Western country of Syria. This particular way of being and believing evolved out of a non-textual introduction to the religion by St. Thomas. Varghese's interdisciplinary approach to the material manifestations of this unique religious sect explored the syncretism of rituals, the Syriac text and language, and architecture.

It is fascinating to see how the robust continuation of Syrian culture in Kerala exists simultaneously with the dynamic sphere of rituals and beliefs. The Persian cross,

significance of lamps, *marghamkalli* (religious dance), Syriac language and text, and the architectural aesthetic of the churches in Kerala are evidence of their living history.

The technicoloured genealogy and multi-layered history of Syrian Christians also reflect the paucity in our imagination of Christianity in India, where this heterogenous religion is only seen as an unfortunate gift from Western colonisers: the British, the Portuguese and the French. The invisibilisation of Eastern Christian influence in Kerala and its role in wrestling against Western Christian colonies was problematised by Varghese. Like any meaningful research, this discussion raised questions which can potentially expand the discourse of national history and assert the importance of reassessing the relationship between culture, religion and history of peoples.

■ LEKI THUNGON

Mid-Year Review of the Indian Economy

SEMINAR

*Mid-Year Review of the Indian Economy
2017–2018*

CHAIR: Dr. Bimal Jalan

COLLABORATION: NCAER

11 November 2017

The Mid-Year Review presents the most comprehensive, independent assessment of the Indian economy as the Indian government and its Ministry of Finance begin preparation of the FY 2017–2018 Union Budget. The economy is being subjected to a combination of competing forces, affecting key indicators. Economic growth and inflation have been moderate; the recession mentioned was all pervasive; consumption expenditure is down. Private sector investment is lacklustre, with little investment and low appetite for investment credit. The current account deficit was initially helped by falling oil prices, but has since worsened with the hardening of crude prices. Fiscal deficit is higher than the target.

Challenging forces are pulling the economy in tangential ways—the effect of demonetisation was mentioned, as were its noble objectives along with the manner of its implementation. GST, however, is expected to have a positive impact. There are obvious problems arising from oil and gas being exempted from GST. There is an adverse effect of several goods and services outside the GST net. There is also a need to harmonise GST rates into two slabs.

Air Marshal Naresh Verma, Director IIC, gave the welcome address with Dr. Sekhar Shah being present. Dr. Bimal Jalan was in the Chair. Barnali Bhandari and Pinaki Chakravarty spoke on GST reform (NIPFP view), and Manoj Panda and Tushar Arora on select issues in the financial markets.

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Indo-Persian Linkages

EXHIBITION

*Persian Gulf to Indian Ocean
(Indic Heritages in Coast of the Persian Gulf)*

15 to 21 November 2017



Photo from Persian Gulf to Indian Ocean

Dr. Daryoosh Akbarzadeh's academic research has covered centuries of Indo-Persian linkages, some of which was showcased in this photographic exhibition. Trans-cultural images from mythology, architecture, murals, manuscripts, idols and artefacts were on display. Historical information was provided on accompanying textual panels.

Though these links pre-date historic documentation, remains of more recent Indian traditional architectural monuments were displayed. These buildings underwent natural decline as well as modifications dictated by Islamisation, yet testify to deep cultural bonding. Dr. Akbarzadeh claims that the Vedas cannot be understood without studying the *Avesta*; similarly the ancient Iranian language can be understood only through knowledge of Indic linguistics.

Travellers went overland via the Hindukush and from the 18th century onwards, increasingly by sea. British colonisers gave an impetus to this traffic. Displayed were remains of temples with idols of Vishnu (the main one at Bandar Abbas), a Hindu caravanserai (Kerman), a Sikh gurudwara (Zahedan), an Indian Shiite shrine at Chah-bahar, with their original paintings and other ornamentation, as well as curious inscriptions with no simple explanation. For example, 'a person born in Sind (then part of India)' is mentioned at Bushehr burial ground. Today, Sikh traders continue to live in Zahedan.

Captions could have enhanced the exhibits; especially calligraphic images should have been translated. The sites looked heart wrenchingly forlorn. However, as Dr. Akbarzadeh said at the opening, this show offered enough clues to create a need for more information. Perhaps this study will inspire tourists and researchers to breathe fresh life into these sites in Iran.

■ BHARATI MIRCHANDANI

An Evening of Poetry

ALMOST ISLAND

Readings by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra,
Mangalesh Dabral and Joy Goswami

COLLABORATION: *Almost Island*

15 December 2017

rest of the evening saw the three main poets read out from their works (followed by their English translations in the latter two cases), made even more enchanting with their witty, anecdotal interpolations.

■ ANURIMA CHANDA

ALMOST ISLAND

POETRY READINGS: Readings by Vivek
Narayanan, I. Allan Sealy and Bei Dao

COLLABORATION: *Almost Island*

17 December 2017

showcases a discursive style that draws on varied formal techniques to paint a portrait of Jalaluddin Akbar's Fatehpur Sikri as a masque of colours and sound, with its cast of 300 courtesans.

Bei Dao, through selections from *City Gate*, *Open Up*, draws a Beijing of famine and oppression, but seen enchantingly from the perspective of a child growing up.

■ DHRUBA BASU

A Holistic Approach to Security and Development

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

*Strategic Vision 2030: Security and
Development of Andaman and Nicobar
Islands* by P. K. Roy and Aspi Cowasji

PANELLISTS: Ambassador Gautam
Mukhopadhyaya, Nitin Gokhle.

CHAIR: Shakti Sinha

21 December 2017

developing air and sea links; tourism; and fisheries. In conclusion, he said that in a globalised world, national security is as much a function of economic dynamism as it is of military capability.

Gautam Mukhopadhyaya said that it was a timely and comprehensive book whose main point was that the strategic potential of the Islands was neglected. Nitin Gokhle mentioned that the book was heavily biased towards security aspects. The challenge was balancing environment with development. The Islands are a springboard for India's Act East Policy. Overall, a holistic approach is needed.

■ RACHNA JOSHI

When Sharmistha Mohanty founded *Almost Island* many years ago, her wish was to create a space for writers to express themselves without feeling threatened. The journal has since branched out into creating a space for writers from all over the world to meet annually and initiate a dialogue. This year, the event began with poetry readings by A. K. Mehrotra, Mangalesh Dabral and Joy Goswami. The evening was inaugurated with all the writers on the stage, reading small excerpts from their writings. This was followed by a vote of thanks delivered by Mohanty. The

Vivek Narayanan frames his new collection of poetry as a subversive reading of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. Each of the poems highlights aspects of the narrative that draw the reader's attention to the contradictions within the epic, its subtle double life as a paean to the legendary King Rama and his exploits, on the one hand, but as a critique of the ideals it appears to uphold, on the other.

Allan Sealy's most recent prose poem, *Zelaldinus*,

P. K. Roy said that the reason for choosing 2030 in the title was because nothing happens fast in the Andamans. Also, security and economic development go hand in hand. In strategic importance, one discusses geopolitics, security environment, resources, etc. The major resources are forests. Other issues are infrastructure development, shipping, air connectivity and communication. Water and power are issues, too, while tourism is a major industry. Finally, there is a joint approach to the military—air, water, space, etc.

Aspi Cowasji said that policy recommendations included limiting China's challenge; bridging plans for development and their reality; concrete actions towards economic development; scientific study for minimum forest cover; dual purpose infrastructure for civil and military;

Music and Dance Performances

FESTIVAL

Winter Festival of Music and Dance

12 and 13 December

The Winter Festival of Music and Dance presented in the C.D. Deshmukh auditorium opened with a melodious sitar recital by Kalyan Majumdar. A gifted disciple of Pt. Saumitra Lahiri, Majumdar has imbibed the sensitive touch and the no-nonsense approach of his esteemed Guru. The main raga *Shuddha Kalyan* was dealt with in a leisurely manner with detailed *alap*, *vilambit* and *drut gat* compositions set to *teentala*, culminating in the climaxing *jhala*. The *Gaud*



Kalyan Majumdar



Lima Das

Malhar came next, with medium tempo composition in *rupak* and *drut teentala*, reaching the concluding *thumri*-like *dhun* with its soft nuances. The tabla accompaniment by Abir Mukherjee was equally striking.

The vocal recital by Avinash Kumar had the *theheraav* of Kirana and the rhythmic joy of the Agra *gayaki*, since he is trained under Pt. Somnath Mardur of Kirana, and Ustad Aftab Ahmed Khan and Pt. Tushar Dutt of the Agra Gharana. This was evident right through, from his main raga *Jog* to the subsequent *Desh* and the concluding *Bhairavi*. He was accompanied on the tabla by Pt. Vinod Lele and on the harmonium by Shyama Kumar Bharati.

Lima Das, the talented disciple of Guru Jatin Goswamy, opened the concluding evening with the traditional *nritta* aspect of *Sattriya* dance in *Deva-Vandanam*, the invocatory number performed as ritual in the *Sattras* of Shrimanta Shankara Deva. For *abhinaya*, she chose *Draupadi* and *Ekalavya*, two new choreographies of her esteemed Guru, in which the improvised costume and dance movements of the latter piece was impressive.

Moumala Nayak, trained in Kathak under Pt. Birju Maharaj, offered the delicate nuances of the Lucknow Gharana. Opening with *Shiva-Vandana*, she presented the traditional *thaat*, *amad*, *paran*, *pramelu* and *takar*, crisp foot-work in *teentala*, followed by *abhinaya* depicting the *Nava-Rasas* through mythological stories, composed in different ragas according to the emotional content.

■ MANJARI SINHA

The Light of the Moon

DISCUSSION

The Light of the Moon

Illustrated talk by Pawo Choyning Dorji

INTRODUCTION: Dzongskar Khyentse Rinpoche

COLLABORATION: Deer Park Institute

15 December 2017



Photo from the illustrated talk

The introduction by Dzongskar Khyentse Rinpoche, renowned filmmaker and Buddhist teacher, was a concise summary of Buddha's teaching. He stressed the fact that although the Buddha was born 2,500 years ago in India, his words are relevant even today; but unfortunately his teachings, given by foreigners, are forgotten in his own land of birth. Pawo Choyning Dorji, photographer and traveller from Bhutan, spent three years retracing Xuanzang's journey across the ancient Silk Road.

As with many other Chinese travellers, Xuanzang's (602–664 CE) epic 18-year pilgrimage to India was very well documented. However, it only came to light in the early 20th century when Lord Cunningham discovered its translation. This was a turning point, leading to the discovery of many Buddhist monuments in India such as Sarnath and Bodhgaya, among others. Xuanzang's travelogue is exquisite in its details, and the description of monuments and some key elements can only be rivalled by Google maps today.

The impact of Buddhism has been immense: from the earliest known oil painting in Bamiyan; wood block printing; to the development of the Tibetan language with its sole purpose to transmit Buddhism. The talk, accompanied by beautiful visuals, traced Xuanzang's route that began in China, passing through Eastern China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and finally into India. Xuanzang's writings in Chinese first mentions India as 'Yindu', which perhaps was the genesis of the land being called India. It alluded to the fact that the teachings of Buddha came from India, which was like a full moon (Yindu).

The 'Light of the Moon' is an on-going project.

■ RISHI JINDAL

Centenary Tribute to Naina Devi

MUSIC APPRECIATION PROMOTION

Nilina's Song: The Music of Naina Devi

Illustrated lecture by AshaRani Mathur

CHAIR: Partha Chatterjee

20 December 2017

In her well-researched account, Asharani Mathur took her listeners through the entire trajectory of the late Naina Devi's musical journey via a holistic expose, touching upon Naina Devi's geneology as the granddaughter of the late Keshab Chandra Sen and her extraordinary achievement of melding class boundaries that differentiated the upper middle-class connoisseur from the professional *tawaif*. Naina Devi had taken the unprecedented step of reviving her own musical training by inviting performers to her chambers and learning from the *tawaif*-performer of the

evening. The fallout of this gesture had reverberated across the entire musical history of the country as it had liberated the 'behind-the-chilmun' upper-class listener and durbar performer from their respective strictures. Highlighting her life's important milestones, the speaker mentioned Naina Devi's early training under Girija Shankar Chakraborty, moving on to her own brand of teaching her pupils wherein the *thumri* was sung with participatory inputs of colour, fragrance and technique. The talk was further enlivened with well-chosen recordings of the late artist's *thumri* and ghazal renditions.

The evening was rounded off by Partha Chatterjee dwelling on his privileged position as an invitee to the late musician's famed musical *mehfils*, as also her instructional sessions with her disciples.

■ SUBHRA MAZUMDAR

Persian Account of Delhi

DISCUSSION

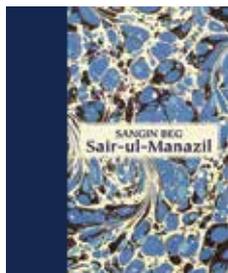
Sangin Beg: Sair-ul-Manazil

SPEAKERS: Professor Amar Farooqui; Sohail Hashmi; Dr. Swapna Liddle, Professor Sharif Husain Qasimi

MODERATOR: Professor Azizuddin Husain

COLLABORATION: Tulika Books

20 December 2017



Liddle, Professor Qasimi, Professor Amar Farooqui and Sohail Hashmi were the eminent speakers. Professor Qasimi opened the discussion with his remarks, expressing his pleasure at the collective diligence of translators in bringing the book to completion. The panel and the subsequent Q&A session proceeded to discuss the nuances and complexities of translating a text such as this, considering the many languages involved and the numerous chronograms and inscriptions. The panellists emphasised the significance of this book finally being made available to academics and students of history, and to anyone interested in reading about the making, unmaking, and the constantly evolving topography of Delhi.

■ AMAAL AKHTAR

Beyond Borders

BEYOND BORDERS—IIC-NFI LECTURE SERIES

An Impossible Dream? Decolonising the History of Borders

SPEAKER: Professor Indrani Chatterjee

INTRODUCTION: Dr. Monica Bannerjee

MODERATOR: Kishalay Bhattacharjee

COLLABORATION: National Foundation for India

8 December 2017

In their seminal work, both authors highlighted the unconscious spatial framework that scholars use to organise their studies in history, sociology, anthropology and much more.

She further delved into the work of another major scholar of borderlands, William Chandler, whose work, she explained, constituted a sort of bamboo screen that has shaped our vision. Her arguments extended Chandler's in four broad directions. The first being sovereignty, the second being her attempt to extend Chandler's arguments in terms of a re-imagined geography or geographies of connections, and the third, by centring these geographies in histories of genealogy and their relationship with governmentality.

Chatterjee was clear in her assertion that family and gender histories are central to the story of foreign policy making or history that is being erased consistently. We thus don't have a history of connectivities but a history of disconnectivities.

The fourth peg of her discussion centred on reconsidering minutely the nature of evidence across a huge length of time and material culture and forms.

■ GAURIKA KAPOOR

India's Botanical Heritage

EXHIBITION

The Botanical Heritage of India

COLLABORATION: Botanical Survey of India; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; and Centre for World Environmental History, University of Sussex

27 October to 7 November 2017

bamboo, lichen and bryophytes. There were stories of later Indians who carried on Hooker's legacy, significantly E. K. Janaki Ammal (whose contributions are once more being recognised).

In the section on Ayurveda, a few mid-1800s manuscripts (*Aushadhi Sangraha, Vaidyaka Grantha*) on handmade paper and a Bengali *puthi* provided a window to the early period. However, it did not tell us where the originals are located, a lacuna noted throughout this digital repatriation. There was a lot to excite teachers and students of Indian botany. However, the photographs from BSI were, mostly, distorted and a large part of the heritage—traditional usages by tribal and rural peoples—was missing in this story.

This exhibition covered two aspects—the ancient (i.e., the records of uses in Ayurveda) and the more recent (the scientific study of plants in the 19th–21st century)—through facsimiles of documents, drawings and paintings.

The highlight was the story of pioneering botanist J. D. Hooker, showing, among other things, his topographic sketches of the eastern Himalaya, the earliest known sketch of Mt. Everest (1848), a map of Sikkim, Tibetan amulets and, of course, the rhododendron.

There were stories of earlier botanical pioneers, and of plants: the oldest herbarium specimen (*Cyperus procerus* Rottb.), alpine plants, rhododendron, magnolia,

■ R. GEETA

■ E. ROSHINI NAYAR

NOTICE

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

The Board of Trustees in its 257th meeting held on 15 December 2017, has approved a marginal increase in the Annual Subscription Fee for all categories of Membership w.e.f. 1 April 2018.

All Members are requested to pay Annual Subscription for the year 2018-2019 accordingly, latest by 31 May 2018.

Do write your Membership number and Annual Subscription for the year 2018-2019 on the back of the cheque. In case you choose to deposit cash or make an electronic/online payment, please inform the Accounts Department that the amount deposited is towards the Annual Subscription for the year 2018-2019.

An extract of Rule 9 of the Memorandum of Association and Rules and Regulations is given below for information:

'Subscriptions towards Membership are payable in advance for each financial year and shall be due for payment on the 1st April of each year. It shall be the responsibility of the Members to ensure due and timely payment of subscriptions.'

Rule 26 (f) of the Memorandum of Association and Rules and Regulations further stipulates as:

'The name of any Member, individual or institutional, who is liable to pay subscription by 1st April of each year but whose subscription falls in arrears beyond 31st May shall be removed from the Roll of Members of the Centre...'

Any request to extend the date or waive penalty to restore Membership would not be entertained.

Please keep your mailing address/email and mobile numbers updated.

Obituary

M-0860 Shri R.J. Agarwal

M-2022 Shri Jamshed R .Desai

M-2542 Justice A.S. Anand

M-2544 Justice S.S. Chadha

M-3398 Brig. (Retd.) B.S. Kaicker

M-3516 Shri Banwari Lal Joshi

M-3631 Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi

M-3955 Shri R.S. Sethi

M-4322 Shri Ravi Kumar

A-2962 Mrs. Jaspal Bahl



Message from the Director

Dear Members,

Wish you all a very happy 2018. May the New Year bring you good health, peace and prosperity.

Since I wrote last, another meeting of the Board of Trustees was held (15th December 2017) to discuss and decide, *inter alia*, issues which had been raised at the last AGM (23rd June 2017). The President also held a discussion with Chairman and Members of the Programme Advisory Group (16th December 2017).

As we move into the New Year, we are focusing on an uptick of the intrinsic quality of programmes and proactively identifying known experts to speak at Seminars and Workshops conducted by the Centre on wide-ranging topics of Foreign Affairs, Cyber Security, Education, Health, Science and Technology, and Environment and Climate Change. To start with, a number of programmes have been worked out in collaboration with the Embassy of Japan; we will soon be starting a series with our neighbouring countries, with special focus on identified themes: Financial and Economic issues, Cultural and Social aspects, etc.

As decided by the President, we are commencing renovation and refurbishing of various venues and hostel rooms. A phased work plan is being drawn up to ensure that all the required work is executed without disrupting the Centre's functioning.

A significant initiative has been taken by the Library to improve its services; the Library has introduced three important e-based services: (i) provision of bibliographical information about the title of an edited volume and its editor(s) and the content of each chapter of an edited book, its author(s) and title(s); to date, about 14,465 such chapters have been included in the Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC); (ii) collection of digital documents has been placed on a platform—'CALIBRE'—in five Internet kiosks of the Library; (iii) IIC Programmes, which are archived in audio/video form in the Library with only bibliographical information accessed through OPAC, can now be heard/viewed online through the IIC Website by accessing Library → WebOPAC → Search Audio/Video.

An on-going series of talks—'Delhi Matters'—has seen a full house during the last two editions. Assisted by Shailaja Chandra, nominated Member of the EC, the series is a launch pad for the exploration of ideas on how the citizenry of Delhi can cope with its myriad problems and how Delhi can restore its past reputation as a hospitable, safe and welcoming city. The first discussion was on 'Coming Face to Face with a Medical Emergency in Delhi and the NCR'. The second focused on 'Delhi and NCR. How's Life?'. Excerpts from both programmes are available on YouTube.

With the dawn of the New Year, members look forward to two annual events in the IIC's calendar, which take place in January: the C.D. Deshmukh Memorial Lecture will be held on Sunday, 14 January 2018, which happens to be the birth anniversary of our founder, Dr. C.D. Deshmukh. This year, Justice Rohinton F. Nariman, Hon'ble Judge of the Supreme Court, will speak on 'Great' Contemporaries: Akbar, Suleiman I and Elizabeth I. It will be chaired by President Vohra.

The second event is the celebration of the Centre's 56th Annual Day on Monday, 22 January 2018. On this day in 1962, the IIC building was inaugurated by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the then Vice President of India. The programme of the Annual Day celebrations this year includes the release of the book, *Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and the Making of Modern India*, which has been brought out jointly by IIC and Delhi Crafts Council. It will be released by Dr. (Smt.) Kapila Vatsyayan, Life Trustee and Chairperson, International Research Division, IIC, in the Fountain Lawns. This will be followed by a programme of Qawwalis by Dhruv Sangari and his troupe, 'Rooh', at 6.30 pm in the C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium.

We hope to see you at both these programmes in large numbers.

Air Marshal Naresh Verma (Retd.)