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January – February 2018

The Philosopher King

LECTURE

*Dr. C. D. DESHMUKH MEMORIAL LECTURE
2018: 'Great' Contemporaries: Akbar,
Suleiman I and Elizabeth I*

SPEAKER: Mr. Justice Rohinton F. Nariman

CHAIR: Shri N.N. Vohra

14 January 2018

Mr. Justice Rohinton F. Nariman expressed his thoughts on the three great contemporaries of the world: Akbar, Elizabeth (I) of England, and Suleiman (I), the Magnificent. He began by saying that the 5th century BC was a remarkable era, not just for India but for the world, as it was adorned by great thinkers and philosophers. In India, Buddha and Mahavir played a great role in influencing the thoughts of the masses; in China, Lao Tzu and Confucius created ideologies; and Socrates, Aristotle and Plato shaped philosophies in Greece. He described how Plato's idea of the utopian city of Kallipolis, ruled by philosopher kings, came true 2,000 years ago when the first ruler, Emperor Augustus, governed Rome, after which only lunatics ruled until General Vespasian brought about a stable empire. Narrating the timeline of the rulers, he stated that the best period for Rome was the time when the masses appointed Nova, a senator who began the trend of appointing the best ruler, or a philosopher king, to take the throne and not leave it to dynastic politics. This was a time when there was stability, peace and good governance in the empire.

With this background, Mr. Justice Nariman highlighted the importance of a philosopher king. He said, 'A ruler when he is merely a ruler does not carry the entity of his people with him. A philosopher king on the other hand carries the

entity of his people with him.' He further spoke about why Akbar, Elizabeth and Suleiman became 'Great', and how they carried the 'entity' of the people within them. Akbar was the third in power in the illustrious Mughal dynasty which ruled this country for about 250 years. Akbar, as a young exuberant 18-year-old, established his rule in Delhi at a time when he was faced by 144 rebellions. Unlike others, Akbar successfully conquered the country piece by piece. Starting from Malwa, Bihar, Chittorgarh, he conquered all of north-west India—not to accumulate wealth, but to rule the nation as a beneficent ruler. He was the first to start the Ibadat Khana, or Council of World Religions, which was visited by people of all religions and faiths. He was open-minded, inclusive of faith and a peace-loving emperor. Suleiman, the tenth ruler of the Ottoman Empire who ascended the throne at the age of 25 was a liberal philosophical prince. Again, like Akbar, he was a great conqueror, conquering Hungary, Belgrade and Rhodes Island. But his greatness is in the name 'Suleiman the lawgiver', as his law lasted for 300 years after his death. His law was liberal, punishments were reduced, and minorities were treated well.

Elizabeth was a knowledgeable woman, who was clear that she had to rule over her subjects, both Protestant and Catholic. One of her key contributions was giving the Catholics free reign and bringing about peace between the communities. She ruled England with strong foresight and vision. He quoted her words, which, he said, describe her personality: 'I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too'; 'You may have had many greater rulers than me but none who have loved you well and none who have tried to keep this nation together.' He concluded by saying that the world needs better leaders, and a sense of fraternity, equality and peace are key requirements to live as a cohesive society.

■ M. SHAHID SIDDIQUI

Celebrating with Qawwali

IIC ANNUAL DAY 2018

Qawwali by Dhruv Sangari (Bilal Chishty) and Rooh Sufi Ensemble.

22 January 2018

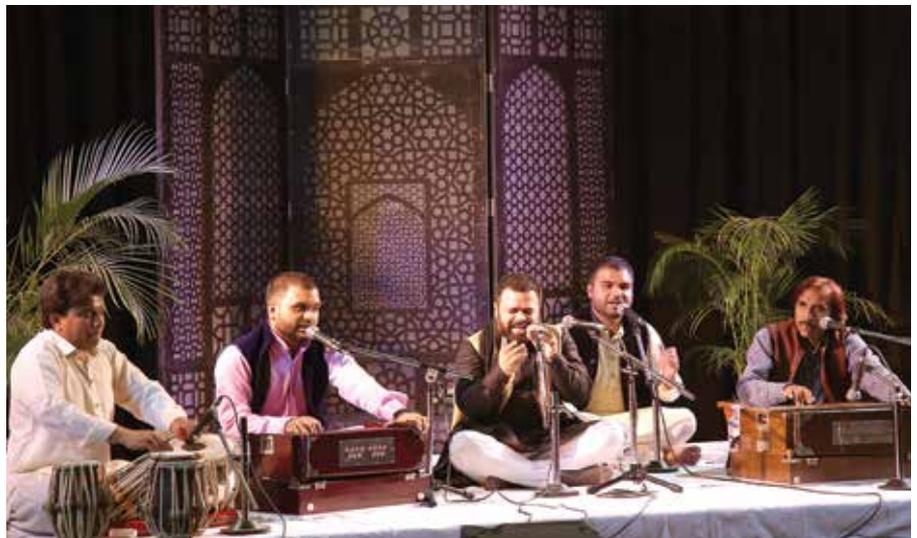


good vocal support. Dhruv also had another harmonium, tabla, mandolin and keyboard for support, but the indispensable *dholak* was conspicuously missing.

There was *Avirbhav* and *Tirobhava* of ragas like *Kedar* to *Miyan Malhar* and *Sargam* to Western chords interspersed in between the couplets to adorn his renditions. He also sang compositions of Sufi poets like Sheikh Farid. Dhruv was nearly half way through when he remembered to sing the long awaited *Man kunto Maula.....*, the devotional piece a Qawwali mehfil is conventionally opened with, and confessed that the *Sama* (a Sufi musical mehfil) is incomplete without the name of the almighty 'Maula Ali'.

This was followed by a composition of Hazrat Shah Hussain, a romantic ghazal *Bekhud kiye dete hain*, and a composition of Baba Bulleh Shah. He concluded with the *Dhamal Dama dum Mast Kalandar* and the audience joined him, clapping along in joyous abandon.

■ MANJARI SINHA



IIC Annual Day 2018, Qawwali

Music to Heal the Soul

CONCERT

Folk Music from Hungary

Presented by the Muzsikas, Hungarian Folk Music Ensemble

COLLABORATION: Embassy of Hungary; and Hungarian Information and Cultural Centre

30 January 2018

The Muzsikas created a fascinating evening imbued with the folk music, song and dance of the villages and countryside of Hungary. A group of ageless men played indigenous instruments, like the *contrabass*, *koboz*, *utogardon* and the long flute. Some of the instruments date back more than 200 years, but that didn't take the wind out of them. In the first piece, we were regaled by the energetic folk dancer, Istavan, who, while dancing to the tune of the Muzsikas, seemed to defy gravity as he leaped enthusiastically into the air clicking his heels, while simultaneously slapping his boots with his hands rhythmically. This was followed by more compositions from a collection of 200,000 folk songs, a staggering number initiated by the famous Bela Bartok.

The earthy rendition of folk songs by the young Hanga was either replete with pathos or celebration, as the music demanded. Interestingly, the flutes produced dual sounds as the flutist sang while playing the instrument. In this medley of song, music and dance, the appreciative crowd experienced the call of the shepherd to his flock, the lamentation at someone's passing, calling a loved one, and a celebration of life.

The Muzsikas returned to India after 30 years and one can only hope they come back much sooner for their next visit. As the evening drew to a close, the artists sportingly performed a last piece to the shouts of 'encore', with the energetic dancers looking resplendent in their traditional national costumes.

■ RIMA ZAHEER

Greek Raga: A Legacy of Friendship

CONCERT

Greek Raga

COLLABORATION: IGNCA and Embassy of Greece

4 February

Celebrating a legacy of friendship between two countries becomes a celebration of joy when it's a collaboration of love and music influenced by translations of ancient Sanskrit texts into Greek by the famous 18th century Greek Indologist, Dimitrios Valenos. As part of a longer programme of Indo-Greek exchange, under the auspices of the Embassy of Greece, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Banaras Hindu University and the Indo-Hellenic Friendship League, four brilliant young gifted Greek musicians brought the India International Centre auditorium alive with soulful renditions of soulful music from the Greek islands.

Using instruments as diverse and traditional as the *Oudi*, flute, *kamancha* and the tympanic *daf*, the ensemble presented a variety of melodies and exciting harmonic exchanges which transported, effortlessly, the imagination of its rapt audience to the land of blue waters, white sands and olive trees. The music they played came from the Greek islands, and was representative of the people's daily sorrows, struggles, triumphs and celebrations. It was the music of people who live simply and yet nobly. The expressive overtones of the *Oudi*, a 13-stringed musical instrument of medieval times, bound together the importance of a sense of community and a deep sense of belonging. Refreshingly traditional in character, the musicians retained the original essence of the sound.

Songs of passion and pathos sung beautifully by Avgerini Gatsi (who also played the *daf*) left the packed audience spellbound. What an excellent tribute to the legacy of Dimitrios Valenos who lived and worked in Varanasi for almost 40 years!

■ DEEPAK CASTELINO

Monteiro–Jayasankar: A Retrospective

RETROSPECTIVE

*Anjali Monteiro and K.P. Jayasankar
Retrospective*

February 21 to 23 2018

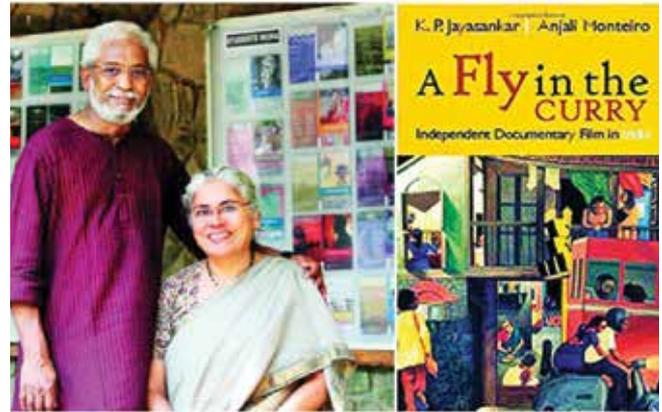
The Anjali Monteiro and K. P. Jayasankar Retrospective of documentaries was an eye-opener. The two directors have come to documentaries via academics. They are Professors at the School of Media and Cultural Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. In these troubled times, they show a rare ability to express complex emotional and intellectual ideas simply to the lay viewer.

YCP (1997) is about the Yervada Central Prison where four prisoners serving life imprisonment talk about their lives and crimes poignantly. The exercise strikes a near perfect balance between the visual and the audio.

Saacha (*The Loom*, 2001) is an abridged 31-minute version of the original that ran to 48. It is centred on the gifted communist poet, the late Narayan Surve, who grew up on the streets of what was then Bombay. Surve was abandoned by his mother when only a few days old. A cotton mill worker found the bawling baby by a dustbin and took him home. The man and his wife became his parents for the next 10 to 11 years till they left for their village. The child got a small job in a cotton mill and grew up amidst the trade union movement, continuing to learn from the school-of-hard knocks and from books as well.

So Heddan so Hoddan (*Like Here Like There*, 2011) and *Jheeni Bini Chadariya* (*A Delicate Weave*, 2017) are both about the Sufi and Bhakti traditions in medieval times, respectively, and in essence, speak wisely about the necessity of a syncretic tradition today.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE



Anjali Monteiro and K.P. Jayasankar

Remembering Lotika

SYMPOSIUM

Symposium in Honour of Dr. Lotika Varadarajan

GUEST OF HONOUR: *Dr. (Smt.) Kapila Vatsyayan*

COLLABORATION: *Textile and Clothing Research Centre and Craft Revival Trust*

6 January 2018

Lotika Varadarajan (1934–2017), historian, international textile authority, inspirational teacher and intrepid traveller was no stereotype or single-minded, strait-laced academic. Many described her passion, drive and dedication, coupled with her esoteric knowledge and interest in diverse subjects, yet her sharp precision.

After introductory remarks by Anamika Pathak and Ritu Sethi, Surajit Sarkar's illustrated lecture on map-making with the cartography of the Indian Ocean revealed that it is a customised process with the legends and notes showing all points of interest to the persons making the journey, bringing out welcoming ports of entry and inhospitable or

unfriendly ports for stop. It showed a variety of one-dimensional maps from across the world, from India, Europe and Tibet.

The next session, presented by Bijan Pal, was on the Ashavalli Tanchoi and Brindavan textiles. These are lost traditions, and no samples of the Brindavan textiles can be found in India today! Charu Smita Gupta covered a session on the diverse range of natural fibres used in textiles from the *Kapok* (the short, cotton-silk fibre), the lotus stem fibre, and the

banana stem fibre. The concluding themes were the evolution of the throne *Asandi to Sihasana* by Anamika Pathak, who revealed the origin of the word: only that individual who has the temperament and majestic bearing of a lion has the ability to sit or mount such an *asan*, called *sinhasana*. 'The Shoe Story of British India' by Toolika Gupta revealed that shoes and watches accompanied Indian clothing, and that even the Begum of Bhopal wore European shoes of leather. Boots and shoes with laces, despite their impracticality, were the first footwear to be adopted by colonies.

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

A Taste of the Northeast

ARTEAST FESTIVAL 2018

Conceptualised by Dr. Monica Banerjee

Curated by Kishalay Bhattacharjee

COLLABORATION: National Foundation for India; Sasakawa Peace Foundation; and New Imaginations, Jindal School of Journalism and Communication

1 to 3 February 2018



'Ode to Bamboo'

ArtEast 2018, a three-day long festival, included 11 events that focused on the culture, tradition, music, art and livelihood of the Northeast.

The festival opened with an exhibition entitled *Ode to Bamboo*, which was a tribute to M. P. Ranjan, a design evangelist and one of the world's top design thinkers. One of the main attractions of the exhibition was a multimedia installation on the sport of archery gambling in Shillong. *An Unseen Tunnel inside a Displaced Proletarian* was a mixed media installation, taking the viewer through a tunnel, travelling and experiencing the transitional point of green space to grey space. This was followed by a screening of *Up Down and Sideways*, a musical portrait of a community of rice cultivators and their memories of love and loss in Phek village, Nagaland.

Day two drew our attention to *Of Pinecones and Sacred Forests*, a display of traditional tableware and cookware developed by Dak_tī Craft and a team of women potters from Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya. A musical storytelling session by *Rida and the Musical Folks* was followed by the story of the instruments, the 'skit' (beats and rhythm) and the craft of creating them. The second half of day two was a screening of the film, *Bengal Shadows*, which was on the Bengal Famine of 1943, followed by a panel discussion on the same. *Ima Sabitri*, a film on the life of actor Heisnam Sabitri and her 60 years in theatre, concluded the second day of the festival.

Day three started with an interactive session on 'Black Clay Pottery/Poetry', followed by a panel discussion on 'The Other Silk Route: Spookery, Trade and the Great Game'. Next was a panel discussion, 'The Game of Thrones', which focused on the jungle war that was the China–Burma–India campaign of the Second World War which was one of the most unconventional, colourful and dramatic of battles. *My Name is Eeooow* was the last film of the festival that centres around a traditional practice called the *Jyngwrai lawbei*. It focused on a tradition of having musical tunes as names in honour of the clan ancestress of the East Khasi Hills in Shillong. The finale of the festival was *Elements*, a concert by Mi Ku, a contemporary folk ensemble from Nepal.

The effort of 40 participants and curator Kishalay Bhattacharjee created a very successful event. It is festivals like these that give a platform to artists and help preserve and present art in all its glory.

■ MUSKAN MASCHARAK
■ ASHIMA SHARMA

In Tribute

READINGS

The Collected Poems of Keshav Malik.
Release of works in five volumes published
by Author's Press.

CHIEF GUEST: Dr. Lokesh Chandra

SPEAKERS: Dr. Sitanshu Yashaschandra
Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar; and Professor Aditya
Malik

Readings from the collection by Dr. H.K. Kaul,
Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar, Professor Aditya
Malik and Subroto Bondopadhyay

COLLABORATION: The Poetry Society, India
19 January 2018

Padma Shri Keshav Malik (5 November 1924–11 June 2014), poet, writer, critic, first president of the Poetry Society (India) and the Poetry Club (India), worked as the Literary Editor of *Thought*, *Indian Literature*, and published 20 volumes of verse, besides a book of short stories.

Dr. H.K. Kaul, President of the Poetry Society (India), introduced the late Keshav Malik and his magnificent contribution to literature.

Dr. Lokesh Chandra formally released the five volumes of his verse, after which Professor Sitanshu Yashaschandra, President of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, spoke about Keshav Malik, describing him as the Mozart of Indian poetry. According to him, five essays included in the five volumes form a journey.

For noted poet Sukrita Paul Kumar, the distinct features were that the essays are at the end and not in the beginning of the collection; and that the poems are placed in alphabetical order rather than chronological. Professor Aditya Malik said that Keshav Malik's words 'startle'.

The participants read out some of Keshav Malik's significant poems. Dr. Lokesh Chandra concluded the session and said that it was not an accident that he was named Keshav; he can be considered to continue the poetic grandeur of poet Jayadev.

■ MANDIRA GHOSH

A Nostalgic Journey

ANNUAL LIBRARIANS' MEET

Light in the Library

COLLABORATION: *The Ariels: The English Theatre Society of Miranda House*

7 February 2018

On the occasion of the Annual Librarians' Meet at the India International Centre, *The Ariels: The English Theatre Society of Miranda House* in collaboration with the IIC, had the unique opportunity to perform the play, 'The Light in the Library', which has been scripted by Kevin Stone. This is the first time this play has been staged in India.

The play follows the whimsical story of two best friends, Paige and Gabby. They hide in the library after it closes and discover that it's haunted by a silent ghost who leads them to a book containing a cryptic poem. As Paige and Gabby decipher the poem, they find clues that enable them to bring fictional characters like Jim Hawkins, Alice, Snow White, Romeo and others to life. Things run out of control as the library is overrun by denizens of the literary world, and the girls have to send them back before the library opens. Full of adventure, mystery and laughs, the play managed to successfully take everyone on a nostalgic journey back to their childhood.

The script was extremely engaging and fun-filled, and productions like this by students are a wonderful avenue for learning.

■ SHIMONA AGARWAL
■ ARUSHI BHASKAR



Light in the Library

Teachings from the Mahabharata

DISCUSSION

Life is as is: Teachings from the Mahabharata.
Launch and discussion of the book by
Dr. Kavita A. Sharma and Indu Ramchandani

SPEAKERS: Professor Malashri Lal, Professor Molly Kaushal and Professor Alok Bhalla

CHAIR: Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe

COLLABORATION: Wisdom Tree

6 February 2018

She rightly stated that from the enlightened sages to the ordinary people, all have vulnerabilities resulting from myriad desires and emotions, as we have seen with the key characters in the *Mahabharata*.

Although the end goal of every human is to evolve and reach the zenith of excellence, often one can't overcome moments of weakness and is overwhelmed in the face of trials. But the astounding fact, Sharma said, is that the humblest of humans are at times better equipped to face adversities in life than the most exalted sages.

■ GAURIKA KAPOOR

Chinese Culture in India

SEMINAR

Complex Belongings: The Chinese Indian Community

PANELLISTS: Tansen Sen; Lawrence Liang; Jayani Bonnerjee; Rita Chowdhury; Severin Kuok; Piya Chakraborty; Binny Law

COLLABORATION: Institute of Chinese Studies; and O.P. Jindal Global University

15 January 2018

Indo-Sino war added to the complex relation that this 'minuscule minority' shared with the rest of the country.

The panellists presented the lives of Chinese Indians (cultural, legal and political) in India through the concept of belongingness. They walked us through the cultural diversity found within the Chinese population based on sub-dialects; many also alluded to the memories of forced deportation in 1962, about notions of belonging and home; and about the cosmopolitanism that is reflected in the 'Chinese' food culture in India. It is clear that much is to be documented about this small minority's cultural and historical presence in India, but as one panellist suggested, these questions also need to be framed within the larger question about the meanings of citizenship in India.

■ LEKI THUNGNON

An authority on the epic, *Mahabharata*, Kavita Sharma's latest book, revealed yet another fascinating interpretation of this great work. It is a well-known fact that both epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, are much beyond religious texts, containing the highest spiritual thoughts of seers and sages. It is in fact a way of life for millions of people even today, its message and relevance never waning.

Co-author Indu Ramchandani said that the duo were on a journey of exploration of the teachings of the *Mahabharata* as a commentary on 'Life is as is', without any value judgements as the *Mahabharata* opens itself to several interpretations, concepts and disagreements.

Kavita Sharma's own take on her latest work was extremely insightful and highlighted simple truths, though embedded in the *Mahabharata*, but overlooked by most.

Citizenship is arguably the most contested site in the global discourse of rights today. India presents its own unique history of citizenship by engaging in questions of minority rights and multiculturalism. However, the national discourse has rarely acknowledged the existence of a minority group which has informed its cultural diversity—the Chinese-origin Indians.

The Chinese in India are present in several pockets of the country like Kolkata, Bombay and parts of Assam. Their arrival in India can be traced to colonial times as workers for tea plantations and as circus entertainers. Since then, they have made a mark in India's cultural sphere, especially in terms of cuisine. They have unfortunately remained outside the national imagination. The 1962

Intrepid Explorer

TALK

Pundit Nain Singh Rawat—The First of the Pundits of the Tibetan Explorations

An illustrated lecture by Professor Shekhar Pathak

CHAIR: Deb Mukharji

COLLABORATION: Pahar

1 February 2018

of Nain Singh was seminal and unveiled many hitherto unknown details of the Himalayan and Trans-Himalayan region.

The talk recounted the story of a humble, resourceless person who started his journey as a mere coolie along with the early European explorers. When he hung his boots, he was awarded the highest and most prestigious award conferred in surveying by the Royal Geographical Society as the Patron's Medal in the year 1877.

■ INDRAJIT

Empire, Ideology and Symbolism

TALKS

Alexander the Great in India: Towards a Transcultural Understanding of Cultural Encounter;

Comparing European and Indian Empires in Antiquity: How, What and Why

Speaker: Professor Sitta von Reden

Chair: Professor Anil Bhatti

15 and 16 February



Alexander the Great

Juxtaposing the particular with the general, von Reden's twin lectures addressed the symbolic afterlife in distant Egypt of the specific encounter of Alexander with India, and whether the history and development of the Roman Empire provides a paradigm to study empires elsewhere, specifically the Mauryan Empire in India.

After Alexander's death and the subsequent scramble for empire, his general, Ptolemy, established rule over Egypt and legitimised himself by snatching his bones for burial in Alexandria. He subsequently wrote a history of the campaign, foregrounding his own achievements in the wars against India, and minted coins depicting a deified Alexander wearing an elephant scalp headdress or riding an elephant quadriga.

Elephants symbolised the conquest of India and gained ritual significance for an Egyptian audience familiar with elephants coming from Africa and lands beyond. Though being geographically distant, India unwittingly became a symbol of legitimacy for the Ptolemaic monarchy.

From a detailed study of the Roman Empire as an archetype, the speaker highlighted the unique relationship of Rome and its provinces. Leading from this arose several speculative questions in the Mauryan context.

■ AJAY JAISINGHANI

Two Nations: India and Indonesia

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

India and Indonesia: Exploring Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Pluralities and Inclusive Identities

INAUGURATION: Shri N.N. Vohra

ORGANISED BY: IIC—International Research Division

February 19–20 2018



Seminar on India and Indonesia

The IIC—International Research Division, under the auspices of Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, held an international seminar on India and Indonesia, two large, diverse ancient civilisations, separated by a short geographical distance.

Shri N.N. Vohra, President IIC, inaugurated the seminar, which was followed with an address by H.E. Mr. Sidhartha Reza Suryodipuro, Indonesian Ambassador to India, and an address by eminent scholar Dr. Lokesh Chandra.

Prof. Chandra put the relationship between the two countries most succinctly: ‘The thousand vicissitudes of our cultural sharing with Indonesia are the evolution of Indonesia’s verse and vision, literature and philosophy, temple and palace, development and creativity, nobility of the sky-kissing *chandis*, and melodies of the *kakawins*.’

For over two millennia, there have been movements, to and fro, of traders, scholars, artists, weavers and priests enriching the trade, literature, architecture, religious philosophies or textile traditions of the two countries. Both countries lived through and fought for freedom from colonial rule; both countries lay great emphasis on unity and diversity; both countries have experienced wanton acts of terrorism; and both promote an organic connection between religion and culture.

The sessions of the seminar focused on: ‘Celebrating Plurality, Embracing Diversity—The Experiences of India and Indonesia’; ‘Framing a National Identity’; ‘Preserving Social Harmony in a Multi-religious—Society’; ‘Role of Religion in Politics’; ‘Oral Traditions and their Relevance to the Preservation of Plural Cultures’; and ‘Managing a Globalised World—Indonesian and Indian World-view Derived from their Plural Traditions’. Some of the issues dealt with by the participants were religious fundamentalism and women’s rights in India and Indonesia; reflections on nation building; Islam and nation building; and the Shiva–Buddha coalition in Indonesia.

Conference of the Spices

PERFORMANCE

The Conference of the Spices/ The Masalaa Chronicles

4 January 2018

Varun Narain’s whimsical play with puppets was a mix of history, culture, botany, ecology, ‘peppered’ with humour. It opened with the protagonist, a budding botanist, accidentally meeting Dr. Hara, part-plant, part-human product of a botched experiment, with bulging eyes, wispy hair and trailing attire, all in fresh green. Since he photosynthesises, he’s never hungry. He rescues ‘plant refugees’ that can no longer grow where they did before.

The story builds as Dr. Hara injects Varun with *photoblast* so that leaves grow on him, curtailing his need to eat so many plants. Varun can now communicate with Dr. Hara’s ‘refugee’ spice plants, large puppets with multi-faceted personalities: cardamom, queen of spices, who’s flavoured many kisses, from Shahjahan’s to Majnu’s! Garlic, who can see that ‘there is much more to life than this brief moment in a body;’ turmeric, ‘very religious, very beautiful,’ that ‘India just cannot do without’; clove, that began the spice trade; red chili, ‘the original hippie!’ who moved from America to Spain and then to Goa with Vasco da Gama. We also meet cumin, child of the earth and sun; asafetida, without whom ‘there would be much less gas!’; black pepper, King of Spices, who loves salt, totally ignoring Queen Cardamom; and saffron, sad because so much blood has been shed for her. A happy childlike evening.

■ BHARATI MIRCHANDANI

European and Jewish History

TALK

The French Revolution, Napoleon and the Jews

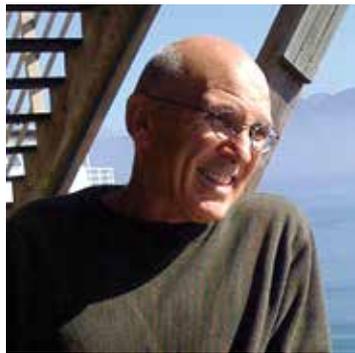
SPEAKER: Dr. Michael Nutkiewicz

February 27

by financial grievances originating in the money-lending and capital accumulating practices which aroused popular resentment, especially when Jews operated as tax-collectors on behalf of rulers.

The French Revolution, guided by its ideology of human individual equality, outside the bounds of creed and corporatism, undertook to 'regenerate' [sic] the Jews by emancipating them from age-old restrictions and assimilating them as full

citizens of the Republic despite many misgivings among the new political leaders.



Napoleon in turn sought to bring the Jews into the mainstream by encouraging

them to adopt structures and customs similar to the Christian churches and giving

official recognition to the Jewish faith. Dr. Nutkiewicz explained how Jewish leaders,

summoned in a Sanhedrin by the French Emperor in 1807, worked out a compromise

between reform and tradition by accepting the primacy of state law over biblical

precepts and religious injunctions. They kept their new status and liberal outlook in

France while in the rest of Europe they only gained it gradually from the second half

of the 19th century onwards. He ended by reflecting on the controversial concept of

a Jewish nation—racial or religious, territorial or confessional? and on the uncertain

future of Jews in Europe in which age-old conflicts and ideas are making a comeback.

■ **COME ALEXANDRE CARPENTIER**

Ancient Cultures: India and Iran

DISCUSSION

Travel, Thought and Trade from Khorasan to Khotan: Indo-Iranian Heritage during Late Antiquity

SPEAKER: Dr. Burzine Waghmar

CHAIR: Dr. Romila Thapar

11 January 2018

This illustrated talk was a voyage into an enchanted world

of old trade routes and empires across Persia, India and

China. It invoked fresh insights to ancient pre-Christian

and pre-Islamic times across Shamanism, Zoroastrianism,

Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, Manichaeism and Islam.

The names of Darius, Xerxes, Alexander, Megasthenes

and Seleucus Nikator; references to Gandhara art and the

Behistun and Persepolis inscriptions; the Achaemenian,

Parthian, Sassanian empires of the near East; the Magi

priests; Kanishka, Patliputra, Magadha, the Mauryan,

Kushana, Pahlava and Gupta empires—all show the

syncretism and confluence of races, faiths and commerce,

which allowed the abstract in thought, art, culture, politics and architecture to flourish.

Trade was established between Indians and Persians as early as 975 BCE. Khorasan is part of north-eastern Iran from

the Hellenistic and Parthian times, and is the last pre-Islamic Persian Iranian empire before the Arab conquest in the 7th

century. Before the nomadic tribes migrated into Iran and India, the Vedic and Zoroastrianism religions were based on

sacrifice and worship of the sun and fire.

Achaemenian art and architecture had a significant influence on India, as also the administrative and political

nomenclature taken from Western and Central Asia. Dr. Waghmar also mentioned the influence of Roman and Persian

elements in Buddhist Iconography.

■ **MEKHALA SENGUPTA**

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

The Centre has installed an Interactive Voice Recording System (IVR) to enable Members to ascertain the programmes of the day and get in touch with important Departments promptly and with ease. This is in addition to the already existing MTNL No. 24619431 (12 lines in hunting facility) dedicated for **only incoming calls**.

Details are as follows:

- Interactive Voice Recording System (IVR) can attend 8 incoming calls simultaneously. Subsequent to this, the call will land on the operator console who will connect it to the desired extension. Facilities provided in IVR are as follows:-
Press '1' Day's Programme // *Press '2' Programme Division // *Press '3' Room Reservation
*Press '4' Centralised Booking Office // *Press '5' Accounts Division // Press '6' Reception (Annexe)
Press '9' Operator // *Between 10 am to 6 pm only (except Sundays and holidays)
- Members can interact directly with the desired official on the following fixed direct landline numbers during office hrs. i.e., 10 am to 6 pm (except Sundays and holidays)
 - 24616947 CPD (ii) 24609315 Sr Finance & Accounts Offr
 - 24609432 Catering Manager (iv) 24641462 Room Reservation
 - 24641465 Main Reception (vi) 24641463 Annexe Reception
 - 24617572 CBO
- In addition to the above, members can directly contact **without the intervention of the operator or IVR** by dialing **MTNL Nos 24609xxx** (desired extension number) during office hrs. The extension numbers of the frequently contacted officials are given below:

Programme Division	322, 323, 342, 406	Reception (Annexe)	411, 412
Information Desk	311	Dining Hall (Main)	373, 374
CBO	377, 378, 379, 369	Dining Hall (Annexe)	391
Hostel/Room Reservation	477,329	Membership	317, 404
Reception (Main)	471, 481	Accounts	315, 316, 319,424, 442, 443, 448
- Members can also interact with the following officials directly on their official mobile numbers.
 - Programme Division CPD 9871372854 (Ms. Premola Ghose)
Prog. Suprv. 9810651607 (Mr. Sumit Katoch)
 - Catering Main Catering Mgr 9871137915 (Mr. Rajiv Mohan Mehta)
 - Catering Annexe Asst. Mgr (C) 9910333937 (Mr. Rahul Bisht)
 - Hostel Dy. Mgr (H&HK) 9871372876 (Mrs. Anita Sharma)
 - Accounts Sr. F&AO 9999101645 (Mr. IPS Butalia)
 - Membership Membership Offr 9818461406 (Ms. Seema Kohli)

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. 1st April 2018.

All members are requested to pay annual subscription for the year 2018-2019 accordingly, latest by 31st March 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 electronic/online payment, please inform accounts department that amount deposited is towards annual subscription for the year 2018-2019.

An extract of Rule 9 of the Memorandum of Association and Rules & 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 Memorandum of Association and Rules & 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 off penalty to restore membership would not be entertained.

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

Obituary

M-0715	Shri G.S. Mann	M-2830	Shri Amrit Lal
M-0862	Shri S.P. Bawa	M-3081	Shri Naresh Raj Sachdev
M-0913	Shri Dina Nath Malhotra	M-3449	Dr. M.C. Maheshwari
M-1096	Shri T.V. Rajeswar	A-3111	Shri Ajit Mozoomdar
M-1223	Shri Gireesh Mohan	A-4108	Smt. Santosh Sudan
M-2065	Mrs Lucy Hubbard Haugh	A-4249	Ms Leela Y. Shah
M-2425	Justice D.C. Tewatia	A-5275	Dr. Sunita Jain
		A-7101	Cmdr. (Retd.) Samir Banerji



Message from the Director

Dear Members,

The year began with two annual events: the C.D. Deshmukh Memorial Lecture and the Centre's Annual Day. These annual Lectures are a tribute to our Founder-President, Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, and each of them has been delivered by eminent persons who have spoken on diverse subjects. This year's lecture was delivered by Mr. Justice Rohinton F. Nariman, who spoke on 'Great' Contemporaries: Akbar, Suleiman I and Elizabeth I.

Following a long established tradition, the Centre's Annual Day began with brief remarks by Mr. N.N. Vohra, President of the Centre. An IIC publication, entitled *Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and the Making of Modern India*, was released by Dr.(Smt.) Kapila Vatsyayan, Life Trustee and Chairperson, IIC-International Research Division. The book is a collection of talks and an exhibition which was held in 2016 to remember Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay's outstanding services to the nation. In the evening, we had a performance of Qawwalis by Dhruv Sangari (Bilal Chishty) and the Rooh Sufi ensemble. The day concluded with a contributory Members Dinner.

We recognise the valuable contribution which is made by our staff in running the Centre. We hosted Tea for the entire staff in which the President and several Trustees participated. Poet Ashok Chakradhar's performance enlivened the Staff Annual Day.

The highlights of the past two months included: 'ArtEast Festival,' a three-day programme which focused on the culture, tradition, music, art and livelihood of the Northeast Region; 'Ghalib ki Dilli—Words in the Garden', a tribute to the great poet, was a continuation of the programme held last year on 'Meer ki Dilli'; the third programme, organised by Dr. Vatsyayan's International Research Division was an important conference on 'India and Indonesia: Exploring Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Pluralities and Inclusive Identities'.

One of the focus areas of the Centre's programmes has been Science and Technology. Apart from the continuing Talks and Seminars, we have initiated a series entitled 'Metamorphosis—Tech Talks' to promote awareness of the new digital technologies such as AI and the use of social media and their impact on society. We have also been in discussion with experts to advise us on how best to re-design the Centre's website to make it more user-friendly and interactive.

The Open House Meetings of the Library and House Committees, held in February, witnessed extensive interactions between the Members and the Management in an amiable atmosphere. Valuable suggestions were offered by Members in both the meetings. Meetings of the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees, chaired by Mr. N.N. Vohra, also took place in February.

Members may have noticed that there are new carpets in the Auditorium and Seminar Rooms, which enhance the ambience of these venues. Presently the Centre's gardens are glowing with a variety of flowering plants. The winter regulars—Petunia, Larkspur, Impatiens, among others—are in full bloom.

Air Marshal (Retd.) Naresh Verma

Erratum

In the article 'Combating Sex Trafficking' by Juanita Kakoty on the programme 'Last Girl First: National Conference Against Child Labour and Sexual Exploitation' held at the IIC on 23 November, 2017 and covered in the November-December 2017 IIC Diary, Catharine MacKinnon actually said that buyers need to be criminalised and prostituted women need to be decriminalised. It was erroneously written that prostitution would end only when its buyers and prostituted women both are decriminalised.

This issue of the Diary has been assembled and edited by Omita Goyal, Chief Editor; Ritu Singh, Deputy Editor; Rachna Joshi, Senior Asstt. Editor. Published by Rohit Khera, for the India International Centre, 40, Max Mueller Marg, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi - 110003. Ph.: 24619431. Designed and printed by Facet Design, D-9, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024; Phone: 24624336.