

Cross Civilizational Interactions in Antiquity: India, Iran, Greece and China - A Report

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The Seminar, held from January 7-9, 2015 in three venues in New Delhi, namely National Museum Institute (Day 1), Ambedkar University Delhi (Day2), and Indian National science academy (Day 3), sought to offer global vistas on the symbiosis and mutual, quadrilateral interplay of the Greek, Indian, Iranian and Chinese cultures. In the wider Indian domain (and even as far as the ancient Bactrian lands) across the changing circumstances of the successive Achaemenid - Alexandrine-Seleucid/Maurya, Indo-Greek, Indo-Parthian and Sassanian/Gupta Periods, this period is seen by many scholars as an intense period of knowledge exchange. Locating broadly along the Silk Route, known for its role as an entrepot centre for knowledge of the time, papers and discussions in this early period of globalisation provided many insights on the materials and processes involved in the areas of knowledge use and exchange. Also, the three days gave a glimpse of the numerous difficulties that faced modern attempts to disentangle the details of the ancient Iranian-Indian-Greek-Chinese dialogue.

The papers and discussions during the seminar once again drew attention to the importance of the period. Despite pre-dating the period by two millennia, it was an international / global site of exchange. Papers presented provided a multidisciplinary look hailing from 4 countries with 18 scholars, looking at legacies from antiquity

in the areas of agriculture, metallurgy, medicine, textiles, artefacts, literatures & texts and so on. The presence of a group of scholars from Iran provided the seminar participants a rare first hand access to a corpus of knowledge about Antiquity that is held in Old Persian sources.

Some presentations showed that a huge amount of source material of the time is available, information about which is not yet widespread. However, for the interpretation of such material, it is clear that scholars from no single country can do justice. To continue the deliberations and follow up on the various research opportunities that have emerged during the discussions the seminar on its part, once again became conscious of the focal role played by the Silk Route as a site and facilitator of knowledge exchange in antiquity. Participants, Indian and foreign, expressed their willingness to forming an International Society for the study of Cross-Cultural Knowledge Exchange in Antiquity.

In order to continue knowledge exchange of a scholarly kind between academics, museum professionals and cultural policy makers, the Iranian participants agreed to host the next session in Iran two years from now. Besides, the *Indian Journal of the History of Science* has agreed to bring out an issue on the proceedings of the Antiquity Seminar held in Delhi.

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Sir JC Bose Trust : An Appeal

Become a Part of the Legacy of Acharya Jagadis Chandra Bose — A Heritage Mission

Acharya Jagadis Chandra Bose was the founder of modern science in India. The house, 93 Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy Road, which he built in 1902, is where he lived and worked. Many of his path breaking experiments on responses of plants to various stimuli, radio waves, etc. were carried out in this house, *Acharya Bhaban*. This house was frequented by many stalwarts who played an active role in the Bengal Renaissance. Acharya Bose and Lady Abala Bose, close to Romain Rolland, George Bernard Shaw, played hosts to many luminaries in this house. At present, *Acharya Bhaban* is managed by a trust (Sir JC Bose Trust) that Bose himself had created in 1931. **However, Jagadis Chandra did not leave much money in the Trust. As a result, the trustees have found it difficult to maintain *Acharya Bhaban*.**

When plans were evolved to convert *Acharya Bhaban* to a museum – just as Albert Einstein’s house in Berne or William Shakespeare’s house in Stratford-on-Avon were converted into museums – no funds were available to execute the plan. *Acharya Bhaban* is a treasure trove of paintings, murals and frescos, including the *Bhārat Mātā* by Nandalal Bose; scientific instruments fabricated by the Acharya himself; timeless furniture; books; and, personal memorabilia.

Because of lack of funds required for maintaining the priceless items in *Acharya Bhaban*, signs of wear and tear are conspicuous. Fortunately, the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, came to the rescue and provided nominal funding to carry out some restoration and prevent irreversible wear and

tear. However, a large quantum of money is still required to convert *Acharya Bhaban* into a museum, which is essential for the preservation of our history of science and society. The total amount required is about Rs. 50 million (Rs. 5 crore), or US\$ 1 million (approx.). If Sir JC Bose Trust is able to raise 50% of this total amount required, the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, has agreed, in principle, to provide a matching grant.

Trustees of Sir JC Bose Trust fervently appeal to you to donate generously to reach the target of Rs. 25 million, so that the legacy of Acharya Jagadis Chandra Bose and an important part of the history of modern Indian science are preserved forever and can be shared with those interested. **By making a donation, you become a part of this legacy.**

Donation, exempt from Income Tax under section 80G of the Income Tax Act (for Indian Donors), may be made by a CHEQUE or ECS transfer to the bank account of the Trustees as provided below.

Account Name: **Trustees to the Estate of J.C.**

Account No: 1114363669

IFSC Code: SBIN0014524

Address: State Bank of India, Kolkata Main Branch, Samriddhi Bhavan. 1, Strand Road, Kolkata-700001

Trustee, Sir JC Bose Trust

Website: www.jcbosescienceheritagemuseum.org

Email: sirjcboset@gmail.com