

## CONFERENCES

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON “KNOWLEDGE AND EAST-WEST TRANSITIONS”

A. K. BAG\*

The National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) organised an International Conference, “Knowledge and East-West Transitions” on 11-14 December 2000 at its Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore. About 60 experts from India, Pakistan, China, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Taiwan, Malaysia, Korea, Japan, Austria, UK and USA attended the conference. Roddam Narasimha, Director, NIAS, inaugurated and Susanta Goonatilake, Centre for the Study of Social Change, New York, USA, gave an overview of the objective of the conference. It was emphasized that dramatic changes have started taking place in the knowledge system, science, technology, information technology, biotechnology and in other spheres of knowledge because of all-pervasive globalisation. As a result, all cultures are being effected and Eurocentric culture has also begun to change in favour of epicentric culture. In such a situation, dialogue and awareness are important. Efforts might be made for the rediscovery of existing knowledge system and its adjustment to the change responding to new social and technological environment. A selective list of papers presented in the conference may be of interest to scholars of history of science, which are given below:

Susantha Goonatilake, “Knowledge, Science and Technology and the West-East Transition”

Daya Krishna, “Issues in Philosophy I”

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- George Gheverghese Joseph, "Past East-West Transmissions in Mathematics"
- Yung Sik Kim, "Some Reflections on Scientific Changes and Scientific Transformation"
- Khalid Mahmood Khan, "Technology and Traditions"
- Soraj Hongladarom, "Growing Science from Indigenous Sources: Science, Globalisation and Cultural Identity"
- Subbiah Arunachalam, "The West Learns from the East for a Change: The Case of Ethnobotany and Drug Development"
- D. L. O. Mendis, "The Interaction between Local Civilisational Knowledge in Irrigation and Modern Transferred knowledge: A Recipe for Ecological, Technological and Social Diaster"
- B. V. Sreekantan, "Ancient Indian Philosophical Insights and Modern Science"
- Somporn Promtha, "A Contribution of Thai Buddhism in Criticising Science-Based Knowledge"
- H. M. D. R. Herath, "Technology and Indigenous Botany in Sri Lanka"
- Min Bahadur Shakya, "Diffusion of Buddhist Ideas in the West through the Internet"
- R. D. Gunaratne, "Language, Logic and Negation: Buddhist Grappling with Existence and Flux"
- C. V. Sundaram, "Pioneering Metallurgical Achievements in Ancient and Medieval India"
- Y. Karunadasa, "The Buddhist Theory of Matter as Presented in the Theravada Abhidhamma"
- Kapila Dhahanayake, "Use of Geological Knowledge in Ancient Sri Lanka"
- S. Balachandra Rao, "Astronomy in Medieval India"
- Wolfgang Hofkirchner, "SANGRAHA Project: Civilisational Knowledge and Information for Sustainable Development in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam"

- Ananta Kumar Giri, "Knowledge and Human Liberation: Jurgen Habermas, Sri Aurobindo and Beyond"
- Fumihiko Satofuka, "From Imitation to Creativity - Reconsideration of Culture and Technology in Modern Japan"
- John Pickering, "Buddhism and Western Science: Towards Global Convergence"
- Yasuto Shimomura, "Technical Transfer in the Development of the Japanese Steel Industry"
- Mohammad Hazim Shah, "Cultural Authenticity and the Quest for Modern Science and Technology: Problems, Dilemmas and Prospects"
- Anwar Nasim, "Biodiversity, Bioprospecting -Economic Potential from Herbal to Molecular Medicine"
- Dhruv Raina, "Can We Approach a Global History of Science? A Reflection on Descriptive and Prespective Social Theory"
- Yi-Long Hung, "Technology Transfer in the Making of History: European Firearms in 17th Century China"
- Navjyoti Singh, "Review of Indian East-West Dialogue on Theoretical Sciences"
- A. K. Bag, "Indian Contribution to World Mathematics in Ancient and Medieval Times"
- B. V. Subbarayappa, "The Transmission of Indian Numerals to Europe"
- C. K. Raju, "The Infinitesimal Calculus: How and Why it was Imported into Europe"
- Navjyoti Singh, "Vision-Enabling Technology for the Blind: Nyaya-Vaisesika Perspective"
- Albert Shansky, "Buddhist Shunyata, Process Theology, and Quantum Theory"
- Susantha Goonatilake, "South Asian Philosophical Resonances and the New Physics: Influence or Resonance?"

B. S. Shylaja, "Observational Astronomical Techniques from India to Africa"

David J. Kalupahana, "A New Theory of Knowledge for a New Conception of the Universe: A New Perspective from the Buddha"

K. D. Gamini Kulatunga, "Science and Technology Education: A Non-Western Perspective"

Inayatullah, "Challenges to Human Survival and the Role of Science"

Fumihiko Satofuka, "Towards Fusion: Technology and Tradition in Japan"

Sunil Goonasekera, "Globalisation and Schismogenesis"

Anis Alam, "The World is One, So is the Knowledge"

Nitin Trasi, "The Science of Enlightenment"

P. K. Mukhopadhyay, "Issues in Philosophy II"

Ganapathy Palanithurai, "New Knowledge for India"

Sesh Velamoor, "The Far Future: Process and Perspective"

## INDIAN HISTORY CONGRESS

(61ST ANNUAL SESSION, KOLKATA, 2-4 JANUARY 2001)

SHABNAM SHUKLA\*

The 61st session of Indian History Congress was held on 2-4 January 2001 at Kolkata. The session was attended by about 1200 delegates and was adjudged the largest in its history. The Congress was inaugurated by Professor Amartya Sen, the Nobel Laureate. Professor Sen urged in his address entitled "History and the Enterprise of Knowledge," that history needs to be studied scientifically, which always requires tolerance of different rational approaches. He cited from history the instance of the development of science in India: "Even though Aryabhata, Varahamihira and

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Brahmagupta were all dead for many hundred years before Alberuni was writing on their controversies and their implication, nevertheless Alberuni's carefully critical scientific history helps to bring out the main issues involved, and in particular the need for heterodoxy as well as moral courage in pursuit of science." Jyoti Basu, as the Guest of Honour, appreciated the fact that Indian historiography has developed considerably, adopting "interesting analytical frame works."

The session was marked by the presence of eminent historians and delegates from India and abroad like Professors A. H. Dani from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan, Said Amir Arjomand, New York State University and many others from Bangladesh, U.K., Hungary and Israel. About 400 papers were presented in the five established sections and in addition there were four special panels on 1. The History of Medicine and Health 2. The History of Banking and Finance, 3. The Mauryan Empire and 4. Contributions to Persian literature in India. These panels were constituted with a view to encourage research in new areas.

The panel on the History of Medicine and Health brought together experts in various branches of medicine, pharmacology, bio-chemistry etc. to interact with historians in order to identify the main lines of further research and to achieve a preliminary reconstruction of Indian medical and health history from prehistoric times. The panel was sponsored by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and CIPIA Ltd., with grants also from ICMR and Handard Foundation. It was held at Alipore Campus of the University on 3-4 January 2001.

The panel was successful in attracting substantive papers on the different periods of history and different aspects of medical systems, diseases and conditions of health. The list of papers are given below.

#### ANCIENT INDIA

Suraj Bhan, "Disease and Surgery in Prehistoric and Protohistoric India- the Archaeological Evidence"

Vijay Kumar Thakur, "Surgery in Early India: the Development Context of Medical Science"

Krishnendu Ray, "Epigraphic Evidence on Institutional Medical System and *Ārogyasālā* in Ancient Bengal"

Nikhil Kumar "Medicinal Properties of *Pān* - India's Ancient Addiction"

D. Balasubramaniam, "The Concept of Synergy in Traditional Medication: Insight from Biology helps enlarge the Paradigm"

#### MEDIEVAL INDIA

Iqbal Ghani Khan, "Medieval Theories of Vision and the Introduction of Spectacles in India"

S. Nadeem Rezavi, "Physicians as Professionals in Medieval India"

Shireen Moosvi, "A Sixteenth-Century Code for Physicians"

Irfan Habib, "Inside and Outside the Systems - Change and Innovation in Medical and Surgical Practice in Mughal India"

Islrat Alam, "Small-pox and its treatment in Pre-Modern India"

Abhay Kumar Singh, "Environmental Evidence in Bengal, c. 1600-1800"

#### DISEASES AND MORTALITY

V. P. Muraleedharan, "Grappling with Malaria in Colonial South India"

Ihtesham Kazi, "Environmental Factors contributing to Malaria in Colonial Bengal"

Simkie Sarkar, "Malaria in 19th-Century Bombay"

Sabhyaschi R. Misra, "An Empire 'de-masculinized' British Colonial State and the Problem of Syphilis in 19th-Century India"

Leela Sami, "Gender Differentials in Famine Mortality: Madras (1876-78) and Panjab (1896-97)"

#### SYSTEMS OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH

Deepak Kumar, "Attaining Hegemony for Modern Medicine in Colonial India"

- Sujata Mukerjee, "Healthcare of Women and Children in Colonial Bengal"
- Sunitha B. Nair, "Social History of Western Medical Practice in Travancore: an Enquiry into the Administrative Process"
- Mridula Ramanna, "Gauging Indian Response to Western Medicine: Hospitals and Dispensaries, Bombay Presidency, 1901-19"
- Amit Misra, "Public Health Issues and the Freedom Movement - Gandhi on Infectious Diseases, Sanitation and Nutrition"

#### POST-1947 AND CONTEMPORARY TIMES

- Mohan Rao, "The World Bank and Issues in Health"
- S. K. Rath, "Evolving Trends in Genotoxic Evaluations in the History of Drugs"

In addition to above, a good number of papers were also presented on history of science in the regular sessions of the Congress covering the areas like mathematics, geography and environment, architecture, painting, industrial history, science and learning, science education, archaeological method, prehistory, technology, press and media and cultural heritage etc. These papers are listed below :

- Swati Sen, "Concerning *Śulva Sūtra*"
- S. C. Parida, "The Site from which Mathematics was carried to Arabia and there to Europe"
- Preeti Sharma, "Concept of Environment in Vedic literature and its relevance"
- Arun Chandra Pathak, "Ancient Reservoirs, Lakes and Irrigation" (on the basis of Archaeological Evidence and Inscriptions)
- Mohd. Afzal Khan, "Environment and Pollution in Medieval India- A Note"
- Mahua Sarkar, "The Colonial Probe into the Fauna of India"
- Subhasis Biswas, "Edward Tuite Dalton and the Colonial World Environmental Perspectives of an Anthropologist"

- Rajib Handique, "British Forest Policy and its Demographic Implications in Assam"
- N. K. Srivastava, "Architecture in Bihar During Aurangzeb's Rule"
- Indrajit Ray, "Emergence of Coal Industry in Bengal: Its initial problems and prospects"
- P. Sharma, "Handloom Industry in the Panjab - 1849-1947"
- M. Sundara Rajan, "Scientific and Technological Information in the Historical Documents of Tamil Nadu Archives (18th Cent.)"
- M. Sunder Pandian, "A Study on the Ancient Maps at Fort Saint George Archives in Chennai"
- Sabyasachi Chatterjee, "Science Movement and a Scientist - The Role of Meghnad Saha in the Science Movement of Bengal"
- Ramaraj Pal Singh, "A Study on Professional and Technical Education in Bihar during second half of the 19th Century"
- N. Athiyaman, "Stone Anchors from Coast of India - A Precursor for Marine Archaeology of Tamil Nadu"
- Nasim Husain Al Jafri, "Technology of Chalcolithic Cultures"
- V. K. Singh, "Lachoro Tank: A Pre-Medieval Water Work at Parangar"
- Arun Kumar Biswas, "Rational Science and Technology in the Mauryan Era."