

ICOMOS INDIA

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2021



Navin Piprani, President of ICOMOS India at Scientific Symposium 2021; Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari

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From the Secretariat

The October-December quarter saw the 10th Executive Committee Members meeting (ExCom 10) being held on 20 November 2021 between 6.00 - 8.30 PM (IST). ExCom 10 meeting took place in Lucknow and Zoom platform in hybrid mode, with presence of several Executive Committee members and the Secretariat staff in Lucknow as well as other members of ExCom present via Zoom. Post COVID onslaught, ICOMOS India tried to keep up with its members through varied online activities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1 1st Prequel Event to Scientific Symposium – ‘Legislation and Nature-Culture Links within the Broader Discourse of Heritage in India’

Central Zone of ICOMOS India and Emerging Professional Working Group (EPWG) organized the 1st prequel event to Scientific Symposium, ‘Legislation and Nature-Culture Links within the Broader Discourse of Heritage in India’ on 16 October 2021 with Richa Mishra, member of EPWG and a Conservation Architect, acting as a moderator for the session. The panel discussion drew focus on the interconnection between nature, culture and Indian legislation as well as safeguarding natural-cultural heritage as need of the hour. [For more details, refer to page 11.](#)

2 2nd Prequel Event to Scientific Symposium – ‘Learnings from the Field: Case Studies of Cultural Landscapes’

Central Zone of ICOMOS India and Emerging Professional Working Group (EPWG) organized the 2nd prequel event to Scientific Symposium, ‘Learnings from the Field: Case Studies of Cultural Landscapes’ on 12 November 2021. The session presented case studies from across India relating to the theme of Scientific Symposium 2021. [For more details, refer to pages 11-12.](#)

3 Annual Scientific Symposium 2021

Central Zone ICOMOS India in collaboration with the Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow (FoAP, AKTU) and ICOMOS India Emerging Professional Working Group organized the ICOMOS India Annual Scientific Symposium 2021 from 19 – 20 November 2021. Due to the oscillating tides of the pandemic, the symposium took place in Lucknow in a hybrid mode with esteemed speakers and participants joining in person and over zoom. The central theme of the discourse was on ‘Cultural Landscapes: Transformations and Emerging Ideas’. 32 selected participants presented their papers partly online and partly at FoAP campus in Lucknow. The symposium saw presence of esteemed ICOMOS India members and notable pioneers like Ar. B.V. Doshi, recipient of the Padma Bhushan and the Pritzker prize, Dr. Jyoti Hosagrahar, Deputy Director, World Heritage Centre, UNESCO and a musical performance by Mr. Askari Naqvi, a Lucknow-based dastango and singer. [For more details, refer to pages 14-17.](#)

4 NSC Conclave 2021

NSC Conclave 2021 was conducted from 10-11 December 2021 on web-based platform. 1st day of the conclave saw discussions on techno-administrative matters regarding NSCs, WGs and NSC Research Grants 2021, with Research Grant proposals given by NSCs, namely NSC-20C, NSC-HTV and NSC-Education and Training. The second day saw a riveting Round Table on the theme, ‘Mainstreaming Conservation: As a Critical Determinant in Developmental Projects - The Role of ICOMOS India’ which was moderated by Prof. Sanghamitra Basu, Scientific Council’s Steering Committee Member and had several experts of the field as panelists. [For detailed report, refer to page 6.](#)

5 ICOMOS Universities Forum Initiative

Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), on behalf of the ICOMOS University Forum Initiative invited Dr. Jigna Desai, Associate Professor at CEPT University to a workshop held on 25 November 2021. The objective of this meeting was to re-initiate activities of ICOMOS Universities Forum and to propose possible topics of current interest around the theme "Cities, universities, heritage". This was seen as a preparatory action for the organization of a subsequent international meeting of the University Forum, to be held in 2022 in Madrid, organized by ICOMOS and the UPM. The last such meeting was organized in March 2017. Two sessions were planned: one that discussed the initiatives of the University Forum, and another that discussed possible themes for next year's meeting. In the meeting, Dr. Desai, along with various educationists from around the world presented key themes taken up as a part of their curriculum. Visit this [link](#) for further information.

6 Online Lecture Series ‘Industrial Heritage in India: Knowledge, Condition and Significance II’

National Scientific Committee on Industrial Heritage (NSC-IH) organized a series of lectures under the banner ‘Industrial Heritage in India: Knowledge, Condition and Significance II’ from 1 November to 7 December with four public lectures in its stead with Ms. Moulshri Joshi, Coordinator of NSC-IH as the principal moderator for all sessions. The first lecture, ‘Defining Industrial Heritage in Asia - Subjugation and Development’ was organized on 1 November, second lecture ‘Producing Modern Heritage in Asia’ organized on 6 November, third lecture, ‘India’s Transport Heritage: Talking Roads and Rivers’ organized on 21 November and the fourth lecture, ‘Memory of Work: Industrial Archives as Heritage’ organized on 7 December. The lecture series focused on exploring different facets of industrial heritage. [For more details, refer to pages 7-9.](#)

7 Webinars organized by North East Zone in association with ICICH & NSC ICH

North East Zone of ICOMOS India in association with ICICH & NSC ICH organized two webinars exploring North-Eastern cultural facets. The first webinar was in collaboration with Sangit Satra, Guwahati and Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva, Assam on the theme ‘Borgeet - the Lyrical Songs of Assam set to Ragas in Vaishnavite Tradition’ on 5 December 2021. The webinar saw a riveting discussion on origin, evolution and development along with different procedures of performing Borgeet and the economies behind the performers & performance. The second webinar was in collaboration with Mayong Village Museum & Research Centre, Raja-Mayong and Mayong Anchalik College on the theme ‘Magical Art Form and Tantric Literature of Mayong’ on 12 December 2021. Amidst the esteemed panelists, an engaging discussion ensued about the knowledge tradition in practice and tiger lore of Mayong along with many other facets. [For more details on both webinars, refer to pages 4-5.](#)

8 Training and Capacity Building Program in Collaboration with SMEF’S BRICK School of Architecture

West Zone of ICOMOS India and NSC-HTV collaborated to organize ICOMOS India Training and Capacity Building Program in collaboration with SMEF’S BRICK School of Architecture, Pune. As a preparatory engagement for the program, pre-activity webinar was undertaken on 29 December 2021 titled ‘A Comprehensive Study of Heritage Settlements in the Western Ghats’, which discussed the study of Kudase village in Maharashtra along with human and environment interactions in Tillari region of Western Ghats. Further webinars are scheduled on 4 and 5 January 2022. This will be followed by field activity from 7 – 10 January 2022. The first pre-activity webinar included a session by Mr. Raman Kulkarni, a wildlife researcher and photographer followed by a session by Mr. Girish Punjabi, a conservation biologist. [For details, refer to page 12.](#)

9 ICOMOS India EPWG Participation in ‘Culture, Heritage, and Climate Change’; UNESCO - ICOMOS - IPCC Co-Sponsored Meeting

Three emerging professionals from EPWG volunteered as rapporteurs for UNESCO-IPCC-ICOMOS joint series of co-sponsored meetings that took place virtually between 6 and 10 December, 2021. The meetings were arranged around three thematic areas- Knowledge Systems, Impacts, and Solutions. Rapporteurs for the sessions were Nityaa Lakshmi Iyer and Priyanka Panjwani, EPs from West Zone (Mumbai) along with the National Representative of EPWG ICOMOS India, Saranya Dharshini. Collectively, they covered almost 25% of all the sessions. [For details, refer to page 18.](#)

10 Announcement of 2nd and 3rd Cycles of ICOMOS India Memberships for the Year 2022

On 30 October 2021, ICOMOS India announced opening of the Second Cycle of New Memberships and Renewals for the year 2022 from 1 November 2021 till 30 November 2021. Subsequently, the Third Cycle of New Memberships and Renewals for 2022 opened on 15 December 2021 and will remain open till 15 January 2022.

11 Announcement for the post of Research Intern & Appointment of Research Intern

An appointment call for the post of Research Intern at ICOMOS India Secretariat Office was sent out on 8 November 2021, for which the applications were expected by 15 November 2021. The Executive Board of ICOMOS India selected Ms. Simran Deshpande for the position of Research Intern at the Secretariat. Ms. Simran Deshpande commenced work at the Secretariat from 20 December 2021. Simran is a post-graduate in Archaeology with experience of working in museums.

Zone News

NORTH-EAST ZONE

Borgeet: The Lyrical Songs of Assam set to Ragas in Vaishnavite Tradition **5 December 2021**

In the zonal meeting of ICICH in the month of July 2021, Expert members Dilip Changkakoty & Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti proposed to organize two webinars under the auspices of ICOMOS India North East Zone in association with the ICICH & NSC ICH ICOMOS-India. The proposal was verbally accepted and they were requested to precede accordingly. The webinars were planned & implemented by the efforts of ICICH expert member Dilip Changkakoty. During the Vaishnavite movement of India in 15th–16th centuries, these spiritual songs ‘Borgeet’ were composed by Polymath Srimanta Sankaradeva & Polymath Madhavadeva of ancient Kamrup Region, which included present-day Assam & North Bengal. Polymath Srimanta Sankaradeva carried on the music tradition of the Prabandha Geet and composed these spiritual songs in classical form called Borgeet. Borgeet are used to begin prayer services in the Than/Sattra/Namghar of Assam, the devotees’ residences as prayer, starting of social meetings as Mangalacharanam and others.

NE-Z

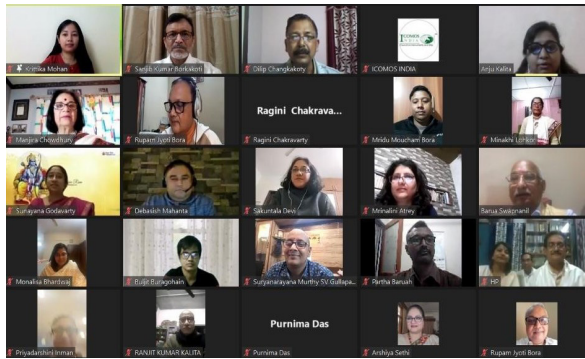


Image Credit: Dilip Changkakoty

Munish Pandit, President of ICICH delivered his welcome address and said “This is something important because the primary idea of having this kind of association is to not only promote to ICH but also to have better connect with the experts and the people who are working in the field of Intangible Cultural Heritage and develop a kind of wider spectrum in the field of Intangible Cultural Heritage across the globe. I must say this is something which is very important as people may know that similar kind of songs and lyrics are already been registered in UNESCO, by Mauritius also and they have taken up the local Bhojpuri Geet-gawai as element in UNESCO list for recognition and it is very important we need to revive and support the traditional ways of and other Intangible Cultural Heritage elements in the future also.”

Dr Reema Hooja, Vice President of ICOMOS said, “The Borgeet tradition is well-known and respected, but it is needed to be better known, better analyzed.”

The three panelists of the webinar were Dr Pabitrafran Goswami, former Principal of Jorhat College, Ms Khana Das, teacher of Sangit Satra, and Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti, Expert Member, ICICH, ICOMOS-India. The panelists discussed origin, evolution and development; different procedures of performing Borgeet and the economies behind the performers & performance.

Dr Pabitrafran Goswami explained as to why this ICH is of global value and said “It is indeed a good sign that the people should gradually realize the

necessity of practicing Borgeet in its traditional prasangiya style. In fact, by doing so we may be able to establish Borgeet as the last reminiscence of Prabandha Gan in entire India”. On the other hand, Ms Khana Das said "According to the customs and traditions of Indian classical music, the musical purity and resources of Borgeet have also been preserved by the elders and known people of the society. The integral and selfless relations between the ‘Guru’ and ‘Shishya’ have also been carried forward since ages".

Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti presented his views as an economist and said “There must be awareness to respect the Borgeet performers as professional artists. Event organizers must pay the artists for Borgeet adequately. Borgeet has to be brought out of the shadow of other music”.

Two national level observers Prahlad Awalaskar, Mumbai & Sunayana Godavarthy, Carnataki Vocalist were present in this webinar and offered their views. Mr Awalaskar said “The tradition of Borgeet form in North East appears to be very close to Drupad Gayakee”. Ms Godavarthy talked about having studied about Prabandha only in theory, but was delighted to witness the talas and ragas in person, as Prabandha doesn't exist in South Indian music.

Mridu Moucham Bora, Secretary of Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva said "We hope today's webinar will make Borgeet known all over". Swapnaneel Baruah, President of Sangit Sattra said “Research on Borgeet has to be systemized and made available in such way so that the development made available to each and every one at the click of a button that everyone to see it." Gullapalli SVSN Murthy, Dr Mrinalini Atrey, and Dr Monalisa Bharadawaj of NSCICH thanked ICOMOS India North East Zone for organizing this webinar on traditional spiritual music and expressed their shared view of registering the same in UNESCO.

In the webinar a prayer Borgeet was performed by Minakhi Lohkor of Jorhat, Assam. It was anchored by Kirttika Mohan & Anju Moni Kalita of ICOMOS India North East Zone.

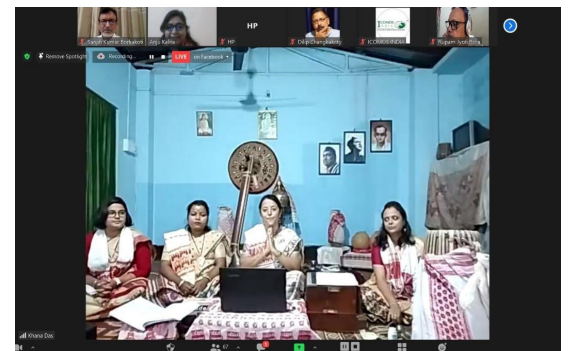


Image Credit: Dilip Changkakoty

Magical Art Form and Tantric Literature of Mayong 12 December 2021

The second webinar proposed under the auspices of ICOMOS India North East Zone in association with the ICICH & NSC ICH ICOMOS-India was about Mayong and its art form and tantric literature. The webinar was planned & implemented by the efforts of ICICH expert member Mr. Dilip Changkakoty.

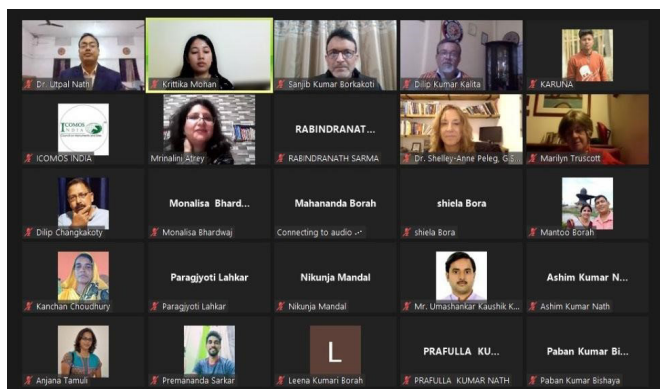


Image Credit: Dilip Changkakoty

The early magicians of Mayong were proficient in black-magic practices and performed surprising feats by employing the power of their traditional knowledge system. Though the practices of black magic have disappeared, the white magic is still widely prevalent among the inhabitants. There were incantations practiced by the early magicians of Mayong which were only used to perform some virtuous feats.

Dr. Reema Hooja, Vice President of ICOMOS delivered her welcome address and said “What is amazing is that the human mind has been so creative through the centuries. Not only has it looked at the natural world around us and modified it to shoot our own living condition but the creativity has come forward in ways of painting, poetry and oral tradition. Mayong brings us to wonder about the world and often about how humans thought of the natural, unknown and the supernatural world.”

The two panelists of the webinar were Professor Mr. Dilip Kumar Kalita, Director ABILAC, Guwahati, and Dr. Utpal Nath, Assistant Professor, Mayong Anchalik College, Raja-Mayong. They discussed the magical knowledge tradition in practice and the Tiger Lore of Mayong.



Image Credit: Dilip Changkakoty

Dr. Utpal Nath presented his wide knowledge of the subject and explained the importance of safeguarding the same. He also said “It is an important part of intangible cultural heritages of a society. Since the possibility of vanishing of this intangible heritage is assumed to have occurred in its birth place in the coming days, the need of the hour is to take some bold initiatives to safeguard it and to revive these centuries-old practices as soon as possible”.

Professor Mr. Dilip Kumar Kalita focused his observation on the Tiger Lore practice and herbal medicine in the Mayong region. He mentioned it as “Medical beliefs and practices still prevail in Mayong and I believe that this will continue for quite a long time.”

In this webinar Dr. Marilyn Truscott, Vice President, and Dr. Shelley-Anne Peleg, General Secretary, ICICH presented their views as observers. Vice President Dr. Marilyn also highlighted the importance of carrying your tradition with you and understanding the chain of continuity in cultures and traditions.

On the other hand, General Secretary Dr. Shelley warned about losing more and more intangible heritage every day and community being an essential factor to ponder upon.

Professor Mr. Rabindra Nath Sarma, Jharkhand University, Ms. Daizi Hazarika, Department of Anthropology, Oregon University, USA; Mr. Swapnaneel Baruah and Dr. Mahananda Bora, Principal, Mayong Anchalik College also gave their valuable comments as observers of this webinar.

Dr. Mrinalini Atrey, Dr. Monalisa Bharadwaj of NSCICH thanked ICOMOS India North East Zone for organizing a webinar on the traditional practice of magic of Mayong and expressed their views by saying that it would be an element to register in UNESCO.

This webinar was anchored by Ms. Kirttika Mohan of ICOMOS India North East Zone.



NSC News

NSC Conclave
10-11 December 2021

**A REPORT BY NSC COUNSELLOR,
DR ARUN MENON**

NSC Conclave 2021 was conducted in a web-based mode on 10th and 11th December from 02:00 to 06:00 PM IST on both days, the second NSC Conclave being conducted fully online due to the pandemic.

The President, ICOMOS India, Dr Navin Piplani in his address sought to bring attention to thoughts and actions on the future of ICOMOS India that can be articulated through its scientific activities at ICOMOS India in the 75th year of Indian independence.

The Conclave was an opportunity to educate the membership of the applications received, review processes, outcomes, and financial aspects of the NSC Research Grants 2021-22 by the NSC Counselor and the Treasurer. Presentations on four selected research proposals were made by the respective NSC/WG teams, namely “Identification of 20C Heritage Buildings in Goa” by NSC-20C, “Identification of 20C Heritage Buildings in Kolkata” by NSC-20C, “Understanding Planning and Management Procedures of Heritage Areas in Indian Cities” by NSC-HTV and “Review of the Status of Heritage Education and Training in India” by NSC – Education and Training. These presentations were made by Ar. Saranya Dharshini, Ms. Indrani Sarkar, Ar. Aditi Rai, and Prof. Vishakha Kawathekar, respectively, with the selected teams discussing conceptualization of the research problems, objectives and expected outcomes.

19 NSC and 3 WG coordinators and focal points made presentations on how activities in the last one year that align with the strategy document were planned and executed by the NSC/WG. EPWG FP, Ar. Saranya Dharshini presented the EPWG’s master plan for ICOMOS India in response to Heritage Conservation in India @75 years.

The Conclave also witnessed a Round Table on “Mainstreaming Conservation: As a Critical Determinant in Developmental Projects in India – Role of ICOMOS India.” The round table discussion was moderated by Scientific Council’s Steering Committee member, Prof. Sanghamitra Basu. The panelists Prof. Neelkanth Chhaya, Ar. Parul Zaveri and Ar. Benny Kuriakose, deliberated on how a paradigm shift will be necessary in the education and in the profession to ensure a conservation-led regenerative and sustainable design and development in a fast-growing country like India, where the infrastructure requires renewal, and the aspirations of a young population must be addressed.

Several fresh thoughts came to the fore, such as how a conservation professional should reimagine heritage as a tool for development and is the only way forward for a sustainable future. The need to challenge monetary aspects as a basis for measuring development and carry the focus to long-term benefits of conservation-led approaches.



Image Credit: Arun Menon

The National Scientific Conclave 2021 concluded with the following resolutions during the Open Forum:

- Change of name of NSC-Training to “Education and Training” and NSC-Heritage Towns and Villages (HTV) to “Heritage Cities, Towns and Villages (HCTV)”.
- Develop terms of reference (ToRs) for the Steering Committee (SCOM) of the Scientific Council and its members, and the Joint Committee (JCOM) of the ICOMOS India Board and the Steering Committee of the Scientific Council and define the role of Co-Coordinator for NSCs.
- Examine the feasibility of an NSC on Materials Conservation to encompass objectives of NSC-MP (Mural Paintings), NSC-SC (Stone Conservation), and possibly NSC-EAH (Earthen Architectural Heritage). Begin with a discussion with members of these NSCs.
- Examine collaborative exercises between NSCs-Cultural Landscapes (CL), Cultural Routes (CR) and Cultural Tourism (CT).
- In order to make the general membership on important activities that the NSCs are engaging in, NSC-ICH and HSC-HTV have been requested to present their experiences with the Draft ICOMOS-ICH Charter and the Delhi Master Plan 2041, respectively.
- To conceive a workshop on writing proposals to assist NSCs/WGs to prepare research proposals.
- Examine data storage and management at the Secretariat in order to ensure seamless access to previous reports, minutes, member data from one coordinator to the



next at the NSCs/WGs.

- Examine the intent and configuration of the two NSC programs, namely the NSC Open House (held prior to commencement of the financial year) and the NSC Conclave (held typically at the end of the calendar year).

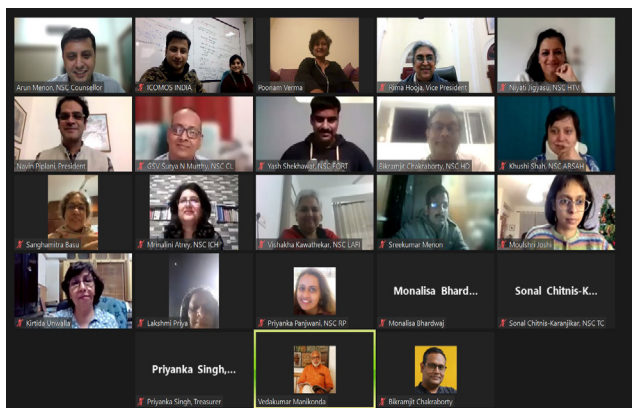


Image Credit: Arun Menon

NSC INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

Public Lecture Series on 'Industrial Heritage in India: Knowledge, Condition and Significance II'

National Scientific Committee on Industrial Heritage (NSC-IH) organized a public lecture series 'Industrial Heritage in India: Knowledge, Condition and Significance II' between November-December 2021 comprising four lectures with varied discussions on aspects of Industrial Heritage.

Session 1 - Defining Industrial Heritage in Asia - Subjugation and Development 1 November 2021

NSC-IH First session of the series, 'Defining Industrial Heritage in Asia - Subjugation and Development' was held on 01 November 2021 with attendance of heritage professionals, scholars, practitioners and like-minded individuals from across the world. The session consisted of two talks on the theme of industrial heritage by experts in the field and was moderated by Moulshri Joshi, Coordinator, NSC-IH with an introduction by Priyanka Panjwani, Coordinator, NSC-RP.

The first talk 'Industrial Heritage in Nepal : What industrialisation? Whose heritage?' was delivered by Mr Kai Weise, Architect, Planner and former President, ICOMOS Nepal. Kai Weise, who is an architect and planner working in Himalayan Region for three decades raised the question what is meant by 'heritage' and which context are we to refer to when defining the multi-faceted industrial heritage of Nepal. Weise focused on the dilemma of defining industrial heritage in Nepal as a 'non-industrial setup' and with evidence of traditional industries such as paper, pottery, mustard oil industry etc. The early industrial activities in Nepal included production of arms and ammunition as a result of the British in India which was also highlighted by Weise. Other areas of emphasis included the industrialization and 'crypto-colonialism' in Nepal, an indirect industrialization of Nepal impacted by British colonization of India. Weise discussed neo-colonialism and a publication on inventory

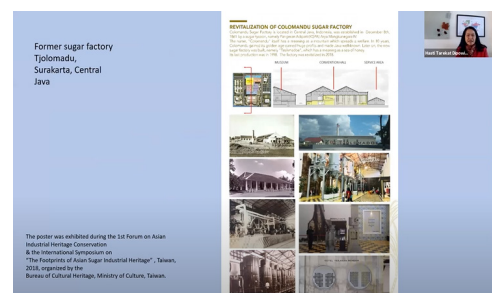
of industrial heritage in Nepal which was compiled and published by ICOMOS Nepal in April 2020 titled 'Inventory of 19th and 20th Century Architectural and Industrial Heritage of Nepal'.



Presentation slide by Kai Weise

The second talk 'Industrial Heritage in Indonesia: Balancing Content and Packaging' was delivered by Ms Hasti Terakat. Hasti Terakat is an independent cultural heritage professional based in Amsterdam, co-chair of Asian Network of Industrial Heritage (ANIH) and co-founder of Sumatra Heritage Trust. This session explored the industrial sectors in Indonesia and the built heritage primarily owned by the government. Hasti also talked about the conservation projects of the industrial assets in Indonesia, namely in plantation, mining and railways with a focus on the sugar industry where efforts were made to revive the sugar heritage trail in the Eastern part of Java. According to Hasti, industries can create a multicultural society which is depicted by the traces of vernacular architecture of the Chinese as well as the Malay locals in Indonesia.

Moreover, she stressed on finding a balance between interpretation, storyline and narratives, a balance between periods and geographical representations as well as between the local, national, regional and international contexts as heritage professionals. The informative session ended with Hasti pointing out the importance of conserving heritage, and the loss of heritage if it is oversimplified to an 'aesthetic purpose'.



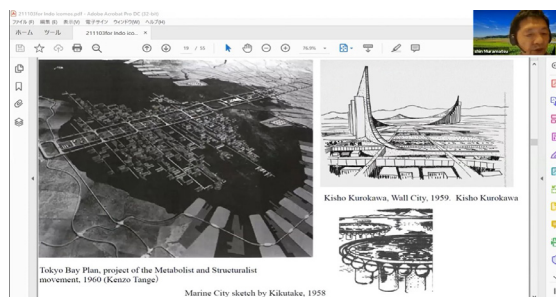
Presentation slide by Hasti Terakat

NSC-IH Coordinator and Moderator of the session Ms Moulshri Joshi stressed on the need for networks that enable sharing of Asian experience, unique in its experience and challenges. The inaugural session of the public lecture series was created to highlight the experience of Nepal and Indonesia that resonate with the experience of Industrial heritage in India. The session concluded with an active question and answer session. The session received 93 registrations from across the world.

Session 2 - Producing Modern Heritage in Asia 6 November 2021

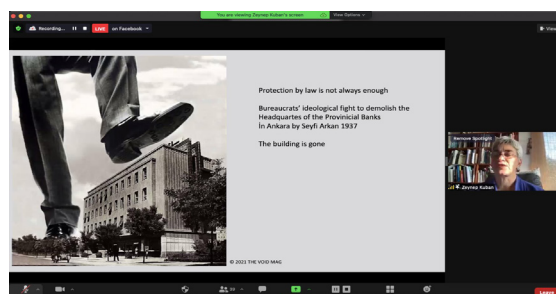
NSC-IH Coordinator and moderator of the session Ms Moulshri Joshi delivered the welcome note and shared that this session was created as a response to two questions that NSC-IH is concerned with - One, why is it so difficult to make a case for the preservation of modern heritage? Two, where is new thinking taking place to respond to the widespread neglect and destruction of Asia's modern heritage? For this session, the two invited speakers were protagonists for the protection of modern heritage, a significant category within Industrial Heritage and were involved with mAAN – modern Asian Architecture Network. NSC-20C member Ms Nityaa Lakshmi Iyer introduced the speakers and the various NSCs involved in the creation of the session.

The first lecture 'Why was the Miyakonojo Civic Hall, a Metabolism Building, Destroyed? The Roles of Experts and Citizens' was delivered by Professor Emeritus Shin Muramatsu from The University of Tokyo. Prof Muramatsu presented five hypotheses – political tools, metabolism ideology that concern itself with the changing needs of the people, change in Japan's economy & society, difficulty in maintaining the building and experts who could not engage with the citizens – which he believed were the reasons for the hall's demolition. He contrasted this against the case of Gunma Music Center which could be conserved. Prof Muramatsu presented his evaluation theory of 'Heritage Butterfly' that combines the perspectives of experts and non-specialists.



Presentation slide by Shin Muramatsu

The second talk was presented by Prof Dr Zeynep Kuban, Archaeologist and Professor, Istanbul Technical University. Prof Kuban responded to the issues presented by Prof Muramatsu and shared examples of Industrial Heritage from Turkey. One such example was the construction of the Grand Theater in Istanbul which has more than 30 years of construction timeline and 30 years of use, and was later demolished. She also presented examples of a former electricity power plant from the early 20th century and a shoe factory which is now a working business model. The session concluded with an active question and answer session.



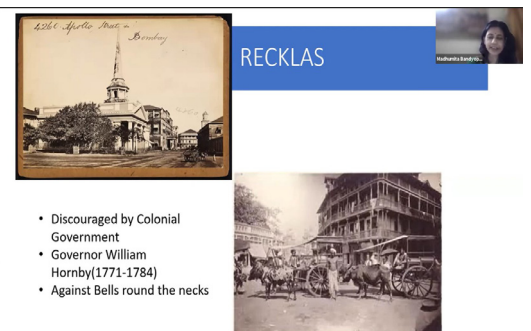
Presentation slide by Dr. Zeynep Kuban

Session 3 - India's Transport Heritage: Talking Roads and Rivers 21 November 2021

The third session of the lecture series 'Industrial Heritage in India: Knowledge, Condition and Significance II' took place virtually on 21 November 2021. It was organized by the National Scientific Committee on Industrial Heritage (NSC-IH) and was titled 'India's Transport Heritage: Talking Roads and Rivers'.

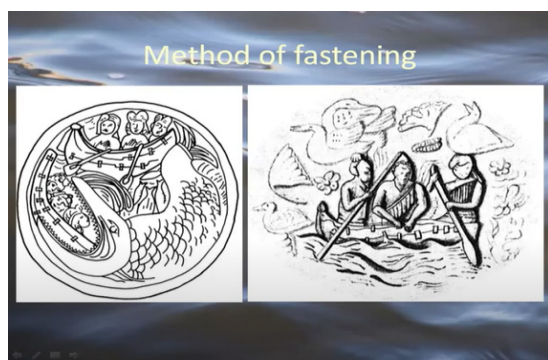
This session explored transport heritage in India through the lens of road and river transportation and was informed by the expert speakers and insights of the participants. The session was moderated by NSC-IH Coordinator Ms. Moulshri Joshi. The webinar consisted of presentations by two experts Dr. Madhumita Bandopadhyay, Historian and Associate Professor at Smt. PN Doshi Women's College, Mumbai and Swarup Bhattacharyya, Anthropologist and Former Curator at Maulana Azad Museum, Kolkata.

The lecture titled 'Modes of Road Transport of Mumbai: A Historic-Panoramic View' was delivered by Dr. Madhumita Bandopadhyay who shared her research with an eager audience on the timeline of road transport in Mumbai presented through archival photos, sketches and videos. The talk focused on public means of transport and traced its road transport history from when the cosmopolitan city was not quite Mumbai, but Bombay. Dr. Bandopadhyay elucidated on the British preference of road transport as opposed to the local preference, as Bombay was at its colonial peak, and the multiple effects that Western influence had on the same. Through visual imagery, Dr. Bandopadhyay showed examples of the types of road transport earlier in Bombay, like palanquins, Victoria, country carts, Shigram, Reckla, Buggy, etc which gradually changed to Omnibus, Tramways, B.E.S.T. tramways and then buses, which led to the modern-day transport of air-conditioned buses, taxis, etc. Dr Bandopadhyay insisted on the need of conservation and documentation of this living heritage.



Presentation slide by Madhumita Bandopadhyay

The second session offered an anthropological insight into traditional boats, specifically hulk-fashion boats based on immersive research conducted by Anthropologist and Museum curator Mr Swarup Bhattacharyya over decades. The talk was titled ‘Hulk Fashion Boats of Bengal: Living Fossil’ and documented the traditional variety of boats in East and West Bengal. The informative session shed light on the concept of ‘hulk boats’ and the reason for their tag of ‘living fossils’ which is due to the uninterrupted usage of medieval technology. Mr Bhattacharyya explained the division of boat variety depending on the construction of hull and three types of built technology and methods of fastening planks like stapled, sewn and nailed. He illustrated the long history of these techniques through panels at Sanchi Stupa, paintings at Ajanta and Ellora etc. Mr. Bhattacharyya brought the participants’ attention to the similarity between Viking boat style ‘clinker’ and Indian boat style ‘patia’ and the boat-makers who belong to the fishing community. The session concluded with a reminder on the importance of labor history in the study of industrial heritage which is often overlooked. The session received a total of 95 registrations from across the world and concluded with an active question and answer session.



Presentation slide by Swarup Bhattacharyya

Session 4 - Memory of Work: Industrial Archives as Heritage

7 December 2021

NSC-IH Coordinator and Moderator of the session, Ms. Moulshri Joshi quoted three ideas from the UNESCO’s Memory of the World program set up in 1992 as the motivation for this session - to facilitate the preservation, through appropriate techniques, of the global documentary heritage, to assist in access to the documentary heritage and to create awareness worldwide about its existence and its significance. This frames the importance of memory work in the study of industrial heritage.

The session brought together representatives of Godrej Archives and Indian Railways responsible for spearheading efforts to preserve the documentary heritage of these institutions.

Through her talk titled “Archiving memory of work and preserving industrial heritage at Business Archives: A case study of Godrej Archives” Senior Archivist Vrunda Pathare, Godrej Archives presented the process of recording the history of Godrej — its products, plants and people — and making it available for research. She began her presentation with the definitions of heritage for a layperson and why fading memories of the past needs to be archived.

She described the whole process of Godrej archives in managing organizational knowledge in six steps: Survey & transfer of old records, Chronicling and preserving the present, Creating resources in form of oral history, Cataloging, Storage and Care of artifacts. Various case studies such as one of how the manual typewriter ceased to be in operation illustrated her talk and connected the everyday objects of use to a larger history of communities and nation-building.



Presentation slide by Vrunda Pathare

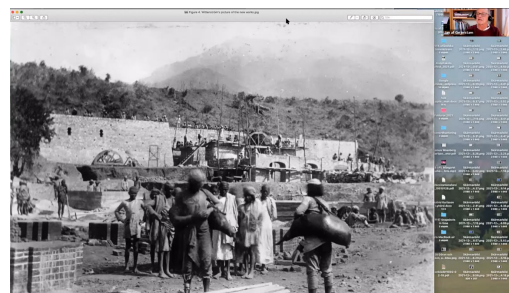
Executive Director (Heritage) Vinita Srivastava delivered the talk titled “Reading between the lines : Archives of the Indian Railways” that chronicled the project to archive and digitize records of Indian Railways. She cited how the massive institutional effort to preserve millions of documents could aid research in Railway Heritage and make multiple narrations of history possible.

In her talk, she put forward the need of archiving the railways with the service mindset for all and described the role of Archives at National Rail Museum, which is a principal repository of Indian Railways related to books, documents, photographs and maps & drawings. She also spoke about the positive outcomes of a digital archive and future heritage studies related to railways.



Presentation slide by Vinita Srivastava

NSC-IH member Priyanka Panjwani introduced the various NSCs who supported this public lecture series and introduced each speaker. The session concluded with an active question and answer session. Participants from across the world joined the lecture.





Events Calendar

October to December 2021

DATE	NSC / ZONE / INSTITUTE	POINT OF CONTACT	NAME OF THE EVENT
16/10/2021	Central Zone & EPWG	Nishant Upadhyay, Central Zone Representative Saranya Dharshini, EPWG National Representative	Legislation and Nature-Culture Links within the Broader Discourse of Heritage in India
1/11/2021	NSC IH	Moulshri Joshi, Coordinator, NSC-IH	Defining Industrial Heritage in Asia - Subjugation and Development (Session 1)
6/11/2021	NSC IH	Moulshri Joshi, Coordinator, NSC-IH	Producing Modern Heritage in Asia (Session 2)
12/11/2021	Central Zone & EPWG	Nishant Upadhyay, Central Zone Representative Saranya Dharshini, EPWG National Representative	Learnings from the Field: Case Studies of Cultural Landscapes
19/11/2021 to 20/12/2021	Central Zone and EPWG in collaboration with Faculty of Architecture and Planning, AKTU Lucknow	Nishant Upadhyay, Central Zone Representative	Annual Scientific Symposium 2021
21/11/2021	NSC IH	Moulshri Joshi, Coordinator, NSC-IH	India's Transport Heritage: Talking Roads and Rivers (Session 3)
5/12/2021	North-East Zone	Sankar Das, Coordinator, N-E Zone	Borgeet: The Lyrical Songs of Assam set to Ragas in Vaishnavite Tradition
7/12/2021	NSC IH	Moulshri Joshi, Coordinator, NSC-IH	Memory of Work : Industrial Archives as Heritage (Session 4)
10/12/2021 to 11/12/2021	NSC Counselor	Arun Menon, NSC Counselor	NSC Conclave 2021
12/12/2021	North-East Zone	Sankar Das, Coordinator, N-E Zone	Magical Art Form and Tantric Literature of Mayong
29/12/2021	West Zone and NSC HTV in collaboration with SMEF's Brick School of Architecture, Pune	Poonam Trambadiya, West Zone Representative	Comprehensive study of heritage settlements in the Western Ghats at Kudase village -Tillari

Collaborative Activities

CENTRAL ZONE AND EMERGING PROFESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

Prequel Event 1 to Scientific Symposium 2021 - Legislation and Nature-Culture Links within the Broader Discourse of Heritage in India 16 October 2021

As a precursor to the Annual Scientific Symposium, Central Zone and the Emerging Professional Working Group of ICOMOS India organised a panel discussion on ‘Legislation and Nature-Culture Links within the broader Discourse of Heritage in India’. This event was held on October 16th, 2021. This discussion was moderated by Ms. Richa Mishra in the presence of many expert panelist including Dr Shikha Jain, Director, DRONAH; Dr Harsh Pathak, Advocate, Supreme Court of India; Dr Vishakha Kawathekar, Associate Professor & Head SPA Bhopal and Dr Gautam Talukdar, Faculty in-charge, WH-C2 Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region. Ms. Nityaa Lakshmi Iyer was the Rapporteur of the session.

A large quantum of India’s architectural heritage and sites are unprotected and require adequate legal protection. The formal protection and management are not only required to protect the built heritage/intangible/urban heritage but also the cultural landscapes, historical urban landscapes, sacred landscapes and meta-physical landscapes. The relationships between nature and culture in the Indian paradigm need to be identified and sustained by means of legal measures. This pre-symposium event was organised to discuss how legally equipped we are as a country to save our rich natural-cultural heritage.

The session called attention to the intertwined relationships between nature, culture, and Indian Legislation, and questioned whether we are truly equipped with respect to the legislative framework to safeguard our rich natural-cultural heritage or not. It focused on reviewing the current challenges and future opportunities that professionals face while dealing with the nuances associated

with different heritage sites in India. The panelists further shed light on the need to engage and include local stakeholders while drafting guidelines and policies to regulate, protect and manage heritage sites. This was identified as a keep learning.

Overall, it was unanimously agreed that existing and future frameworks need to be flexible by design and should enable progress without compromising the innate dynamic quality of Indian heritage sites. Finally, it reinforced the need to encourage multi-disciplinary collaborations. That further encourages an attitudinal change to facilitate a proactive approach to the implementation of different laws especially with regards to conservation of nature in the country.

The event also led to building up enthusiasm among the larger membership of ICOMOS India through knowledge sharing activities and encouraged participation in the technical discourse scheduled to occur at the Scientific Symposium 2021.

Prequel Event 2 to Scientific Symposium 2021 - Learnings from the Field: Case Studies of Cultural Landscapes 29 December 2021

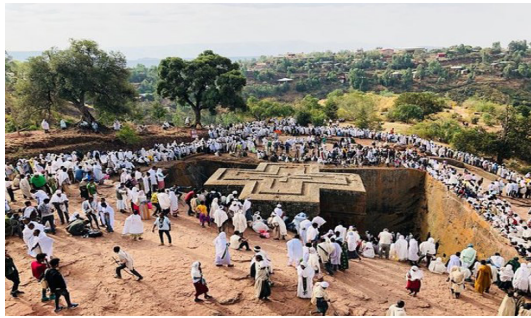
The second prequel event to Annual Scientific Symposium 2021, organized by Central Zone and EPWG, invited papers on the theme ‘Learnings from the field: Case Studies of Cultural Landscapes’. The event took place via Zoom on 12 November 2021. Spanning four sessions with presentations of different case studies, the open note was delivered by Mr. Nishant Upadhyay, ICOMOS India Central Zone Representative followed by sessions with the respective session chairs, Mr. Juwairia Qamruddin, Mr. Rishabh Sharma, Mr. Nishant Upadhyay and Ms. Nirzary Pujara.

List of case study presentations and the presenters:

Session 1:

The session has brought light and focus on multiple cultural landscapes of central India. The narrative of a cultural landscape is majorly derived from myths and folklore that revolve around the settlement, and it is the belief of the settlers and visitors that strengthens the legacy of any narrative.

- Cultural Landscape of Deogaon: A paradigm of mythological and spiritual insights by Mr. Amulya Dixit and Dr. Tanashree Redij
- Configuration of Public-Realm in a Religious Precinct: Case of Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh by Ms. Tithi Mishra
- Protected Shelters in Archaeological Sites: The Case of Rock hewn Churches of Lalibela, Ethiopia by Mr. Bayenew Melaku
- Exploring the Unexplored Segment in Indian Railways by Dr. Deepakshi Sharma & Ms. Vinita Srivastava



*Protected Shelters in Archaeological Sites: The Case of Rock hewn Churches of Lalibela, Ethiopia by Bayenew Melaku
Image Credit: Rishabh Sharma*

Session 2:

This session took the participants to studies of different regions of India in context of cultural landscapes.

- Planning for a Proposed World Heritage Site: Case study of Bishnupur, West Bengal by Ms. Krithika Sridharan
- Re-uniting Fragmented Communities in the Valley through Spatial Design Strategies. Case – Mattan, Anantnag by Ms. Ambica Wakhlu
- Conservation through Transformation: Cultural Landscape of the Lepcha Tribe of Sikkim by Ms. Prarthana Narendra Hosadurga
- Cultural Landscape Development of Damdama Lake, Gurugram (Gurgaon) Haryana, India by Ms. Vidya Rajbhoj Pimprale and Ms. Sonal Pandey Tiwari
- Journey of Cultural Landscape from Haveli to Mohalla: A Case of Shahjahanabad by Ms. Chandni Thadani and Mr. Abhishek Jain from Shahjahan Foundation



*Cross-Sectional View Sketch of Traditional and Newer Houses in Dzongu region
Image Credit: Postcards from Dzongu*

Session 3:

This session brought out very interesting areas of focus for conservation and management of cultural landscapes in the southern part of India. The mix

of styles and communities over years lead to a specific cultural landscape which may continue to evolve in times and years.

- ‘Calicut’ to ‘Kozhikode’ – Historic Evolution of a Planned Port City by Mr. Akshay Rajeev and Ar. Gadhi. M
- Understanding the Sacrality of Thirukalukundram: Conjunction of Intangibility with Tangibility by Ms. Sharmila Ashokan
- Water as a compound is relegated to support a role in civilizations as a life-sustaining reserve—an example from Hyderabad city by Ar. Afreen Fatima Ar. Pragati Srivastava, Ar. Mazed Basha, Ar. Rashmi Bhatt



*Understanding the Sacrality of Thirukalukundram: Conjunction of Intangibility with Tangibility by Sharmila Ashokan
Image Credit: Harikumar, 2018*

Session 4:

The event threw light on the fact that all of us have a different understanding of a cultural landscape, the context being the most important factor. Also, it was noticed that, as we move from one zone to another in India, the nature of cultural landscapes varies vastly and showcases the diversity of it all.

- The Dwelling in the Samrangana Sutradhara- an Interpretive Analysis by Ms. Neena Zutshi
- Aarey Forest- The Flora, Fauna & the Tribals | Mumbai, India by Ms. Urjasvi A. Mokashi
- Analyzing through the Lens of Time - Socio Cultural Transformation of Sanganer town, Rajasthan by Ms. Aakriti
- Reviving Traditions: A Case of Vernacular Architecture in Southern Gujarat by Mr. Navneet Savaliya, Mr. Naresh Chhatwani
- Debras: Thriving Landmarks of Continuity by Ms. Hiteshree Das and Mr. Abhijeet Karwa
- Creating a Visual Vocabulary for Heritage-Sensitive Redevelopment- in the Parsi community: A Case of Bazaar Gate Fort, Mumbai by Ms. Parama Mitra, Ms. Taruna Aiyar, M Divya and Ms. Palak Gupta



Saturday Service at a devra in Udaipur
Image Credit: - Hitesree Das

but also between experts and youth.

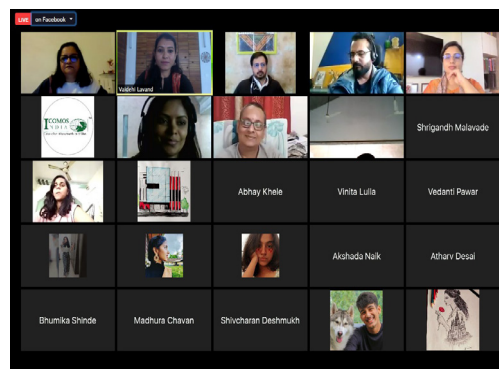


Image Credit: West Zone

WEST ZONE AND NSC HTV

ICOMOS India Training and Capacity Building program in collaboration with SMEF'S BRICK School of Architecture

The activity of ICOMOS India Training and Capacity Building program in collaboration with SMEF'S BRICK School of Architecture is aimed at enhancing students' knowledge on settlements that are rich in living and cultural heritage. The area of study is situated in the Tillari region of Western Ghats, one of the eight biodiversity hotspots in the world.

W-Z & NSC - HTV

ICOMOS INDIA TRAINING PROGRAMME

TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME
MR. GIRISH PUNJABI & MR. RAMAN KULKARNI

COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF HERITAGE SETTLEMENT OF KUDASE VILLAGE IN WESTERN GHATS



Mr. Girish A. Punjabi
Conservation Biologist

He is a professional Conservation Biologist. Associated with Wildlife Conservation Trust. He is Member of Dhole Working Group and IUCN SSC Canid Specialist Group. Through his scientific research and advocacy, he has contributed for the conservation of the Western Ghats.



Mr. Raman Kulkarni
Wildlife researcher, Photographer

He is a commercial artist specializing in Photography from Kalaniketan Mahavidyalay, Kolhapur. He is the director of Pugmark Art Gallery, Commercial Advertiser, Wildlife Photographer, and Eco-tour Organizer.

Day 1 - Date: 29th December '21 Wednesday | Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Activity initiated by ICOMOS India Westzone, National Scientific Committee Historic towns & Villages (NSCHTV) and supported by National Scientific Committee Cultural Landscapes (NSCCL), Emerging Professionals Working Groups (EPWG) in collaboration with SMEF'S Brick School of Architecture, Pune

This activity was proposed by Ar. Poonam Trambadia, West zone representative and Ar. Niyati Jigyasu, NSC HTV co-ordinator and supported by NSC CL, NSC Education and training, and EPWG, in collaboration with the SMEF's BRICK School of Architecture, Pune. The activity is being coordinated by Dr. Vaidehi Lavand, HTV member with support from Ms Sali Palande Datar (Member of ICOMOS West Zone) and Ar. Ramiya Gopalkrishnan (Member of ICOMOS West Zone).

The activity will be conducted in 3 stages which includes preparatory webinars, onsite study and concluding post-event session and output in the form of publication. The publication will include a guidance document on undertaking studies in the context of historic settlements in such regions. Also, it could open up more possibilities for collaborative works and capacity building simultaneously. This is not only bridging the gap between culture and nature,

The first session on 29th December 2021 was moderated by Dr. Vaidehi Lavand. This session included talks by Mr. Raman Kulkarni, wildlife researcher and photographer who introduced the Western Ghats and discussed its significance as a UNESCO World Heritage site and Mr. Girish Punjabi, a conservation biologist who explained the category of natural heritage and discussed the management challenges in the context of Western Ghats. Ar. Niyati Jigyasu and Ar. Poonam Trambadia introduced ICOMOS India and the role of West zone and NSC HTV to the participants.

Biogeographic Zones of India

- Trans-Himalayan Region
- Himalayan Zone
- Indian Desert Zone
- Semi Arid Region
- Western Ghats
- Deccan Plateau
- Gangetic Plain
- North East Region
- Coastal Region
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Presentation slide by Raman Kulkarni

What is a Natural World Heritage Site?

Presentation slide by Girish Punjabi

The webinar was attended by the 76 students from the second year, who are taking part in the activity along with other members of ICOMOS India. Further webinars are scheduled on 4-5 January 2022 followed by on-site visits from 7-10 January 2022.

ICOMOS India Scientific Symposium 2021

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES: TRANSFORMATIONS AND EMERGING IDEAS

19 - 20 November 2021



Image Credit: Khadeeja Arshad

The ICOMOS India Annual Scientific Symposium of 2021 was organized by the Central Zone ICOMOS India in collaboration with the Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow (FoAP, AKTU) and ICOMOS India Emerging Professional Working Group, during 19-20th November 2021. The event was organized in hybrid mode and was hosted at the campus of FoAP, AKTU in Lucknow. The central theme of the discourse was on 'Cultural Landscapes: Transformations and Emerging Ideas'. This hybrid mode of the event allowed many notable speakers and participants to join and share their invaluable knowledge with the wider membership.

A cultural landscape can be understood as a spatial fabric spread over a geographic region, reflecting human adaptation and the use of natural resources. It is often expressed in the way land is organized and divided, patterns of settlement, land use, systems of circulation, and the types of structures that are built. The process of experiencing this cultural landscape is affected not only by what is seen and sensed, but also by what is experienced emotionally or imagined through social knowledge or collective memory, making it larger than a sensory perception. Therefore, cultures that are entwined by these landscapes are often dynamic in nature.

The ICOMOS India National Scientific Symposium 2021 delved into the idea of 'cultural landscapes' - their evolution and manifestations, reinforcing the idea of dynamism of cultural landscape and its future pathways through case studies from India and around the world. A special focus of the symposium was the exploration of this theme in the Indian context; highlighting archeological,

anthropological, ecological, spiritual, mythological and cultural dimensions. In terms of contemporary relevance; the philosophy, practice and management of cultural landscapes was assessed in terms of performance in relation to the impact of climate change, sustainability and development.

Following the momentum that was built up by the two prequel events, the symposium received a total of 157 abstracts in response to the call. The abstracts underwent a meticulous screening process including a double-blind peer review by the scientific committee of the symposium. The Scientific committee comprised of:

1. Dr. Anuradha Chaturvedi
2. Dr. Arun Menon
3. Dr. GSV Suryanarayana Murthy
4. Mr. Nishant Upadhyay
5. Dr. Nupur Prothi Khanna
6. Dr. Rima Hooja
7. Dr. Ritu Gulati (FOAP, AKTU)
8. Dr. Vandana Sehgal (FOAP, AKTU)



Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari

Out of the 157 abstracts received, 56 abstracts were shortlisted and were asked to submit the full paper. 32 full papers met the submission deadlines and were presented under 8 sub-categories in the symposium. Presentations by the speakers were done partly online and partly at the FOAP campus which was streamed online for all the attendees. A total of 121 registered participants engaged very enthusiastically throughout the symposium. As part of the event, 6 fellowships for the emerging professionals were also announced to acknowledge their volunteered support in management, abstract review and communications.

The recipients of the EP Symposium 2021 fellowships are:

1. Khushi Shah
2. Nirzary Pujara
3. Nityaa Iyer
4. Richa Mishra
5. Rishabh Sharma
6. Ruchita Belapurkar

The two-day symposium which was moderated by Dr. Anjaneya Sharma, witnessed several interesting discussions on themes related to cultural landscapes, their architectural language, the role of communities in their conservation, their management, sustainable practices associated with them, the role of sacred and historic landscapes in heritage led community development, etc. The presentations provided fascinating insights into the significance and management of these cultural landscapes.



Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari

On the first day of the symposium, the opening addresses were delivered by Dr. Navin Piplani, President ICOMOS India; Dr. Vandana Sehgal, Dean & Principal, FoAP, AKTU and Ar. Nishant Upadhyay, Central Zone Representative and coordinator of the Symposium. The event was inaugurated by Prof. Vineet Kansal, Honorable Vice Chancellor, FoAP, AKTU.

This was followed by a conversation between the recipient of the Padma Bhushan and the Pritzker prize, Prof. Ar. B.V. Doshi, and Dr. Navin Piplani. Dr. Doshi shared his thoughts on how India has witnessed immense change over the last 20-30 years and that we should reflect on these landscape level transformations and their impact on the lives of the local community. He remarked that we should turn to our traditional practices unlike current planning and design practices that are nonchalant about ecology and cultural landscapes, failing to integrate nature within development. The conversation focused on overall urban planning and how community-based knowledge systems can be incorporated in them to work towards a sustainable future.

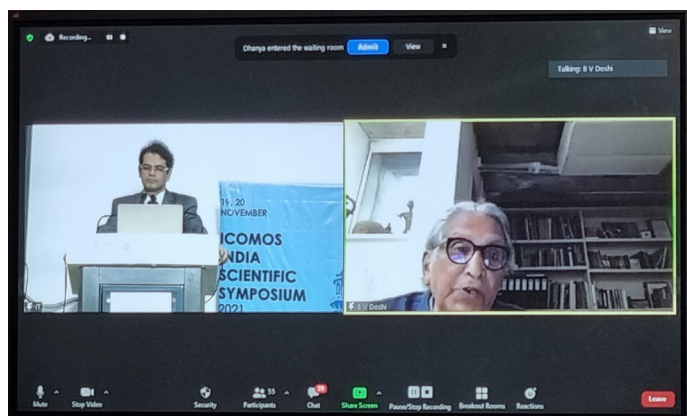


Image Credit: Khadeja Arshad

A keynote by Dr. Jyoti Hosagrahar, Deputy Director, World Heritage Centre, UNESCO followed in the second half of day one, talking about UNESCO's 2011 Recommendation for Historic Urban Landscapes and UNESCO's global efforts to understand and conserve cultural landscapes. The global implementation strategy of the recommendation as well as post-covid recovery and resiliency were elaborated upon in great depth. Along with a kind appreciation of

ICOMOS India's efforts in organizing such activities that help raise critical questions, Dr. Hosagrahar emphasized the need for acknowledging ground-level findings and later engaged with the audience in the Q&A session as well. This was followed by the paper presentations, Ar. Saranya Darshini and Ar. Rishabh Sharma presented on behalf of EPWG ICOMOS India and shared findings from the two prequel events of the symposium.



Image Credits: Vishnu Kesari

At the end of day one, a cultural evening and networking dinner, 'Mehfil e Tarannum', with a special performance by Mr. Askari Naqvi, a Lucknow based dastango and singer, was organized by the Faculty of Architecture and Planning, AKTU Lucknow at their campus. Askari is a trained vocalist, artist & performer and is the first person in the country to introduce Soz Khwani (songs sung during Moharram gatherings) to a larger audience. Fitting to the local tradition of mehman-nawazi, the evening concluded on a thrilling note of music, Awadhi gastronomy and folktales.

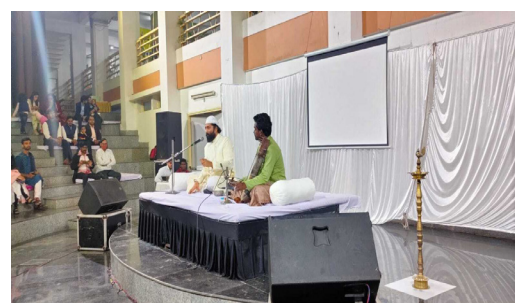


Image Credits: Fo.AP, AKTU and ICOMOS India

The next and the final day of the symposium started with an early morning heritage walk led by Mr. Samir Kher, a local walk leader and history buff.

Participants visited the Chattar Manzil, Kothi Farhat Baksh and the British Residency at Lucknow with a very immersive experience of the Awadhi historical landscape. Samir elaborated upon various aspects of regional socioeconomic politics and how it played a

role in the global politics of the 18th and 19th century.



Image Credits: ICOMOS India

After an intense series of paper presentations and discussions, a panel moderated by Prof. A. G. K. Menon with all the session chairs and rapporteurs was organized. The panel discussion revolved around understanding the significance of these symposiums and their contribution to the practice.

Prof. Menon along with tremendous contributions from the session chairs summarized what has transpired over the last 50 years in the field of cultural landscapes, their conservation and management, the profession, and most importantly, reflections on the way ahead.



Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari

The discourse of the entire symposium was then summarized by Prof. Sanghmitra Basu for the benefit of all the participants.

A dialogue was then organized between Dr. Elizabeth Brabec, Secretary-General of the International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes, and Prof. Rana P.B. Singh, coordinator of National Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes, moderated by Prof. G.S.V. Suryanarayana Murthy, South Zone Representative & Co-Coordinator: NSC CL.

Both the speakers gave a brief presentation on the workings of the respective scientific committees and areas of possible collaborations and exchanges to locate the Indian cultural landscapes within the global paradigm.

The symposium concluded with closing remarks by Dr. Rima Hooja, Vice President, ICOMOS India, and congratulatory remarks by Prof. Vandana Sehgal, Dean and Principal, FoAP, AKTU.



Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari

A vote of thanks was delivered by Ms. Shalini Dasgupta, Secretary of ICOMOS India to all the volunteers, session chairs, rapporteurs, secretariat staff, organizers and participants which officially marked the end of a successful symposium.

The full program for the symposium along with the book of abstracts can be accessed at the ICOMOS India website. The whole symposium had remarkable online presence and the management of registration and website content was very smoothly managed by Ms. Lipika Khanna and Mr. Karan Joshi under the able guidance of Ar. Priyanka Singh, Treasurer ICOMOS India.



Image Credits: ICOMOS India

The final publication of the full papers is in the process of being prepared and is aimed to be released in the coming months with the help of the core publication team comprising of members from ICOMOS India and FoAP, AKTU.

Glimpses from Scientific Symposium 2021

(A glimpse into captured moments of Scientific Symposium 2021)



Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari



Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari



Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari



Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari



Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari



Image Credit: Vishnu Kesari

ICOMOS INDIA SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM 2021

News from Working Groups

EMERGING PROFESSIONALS WORKING GROUP (EPWG)

Culture, Heritage, and Climate Change; UNESCO-ICOMOS-IPCC Co-Sponsored Meeting **6-11 December 2021**

E PWG International was approached by the ICOMOS Climate Change WG Focal Point (Dr. Will Megarry) to rapporteur for the UNESCO-IPCC-ICOMOS joint series of co-sponsored meetings that were scheduled to take place virtually between the 6th and the 10th of December, 2021.

EPWG The meetings were arranged around three thematic areas- Knowledge Systems, Impacts, and Solutions. Each day had five sessions spread across different global time zones for ease and accessibility of 100 researchers and practitioners that participated in the meetings. The expert meetings were held on zoom through breakout rooms with 8-10 experts and 1 rapporteur in each session.

The organizers - Dr. Hana Morel and Dr. Will Megarry - familiarized the rapporteurs with this unique format and created focused questions for every breakout room to allow for free flow of discussion on focused topics or areas of concerns gleaned from the white papers prepared by the organizing team. Out of 17 international rapporteurs, 3 volunteers were from ICOMOS India and together they were able to cover almost 25% of all the sessions.

Ms. Nityaa Lakshmi Iyer, an EP from the West Zone (Mumbai), participated to take notes during meetings that focused on thematic areas of impacts and solutions. She discovered the meetings to be thought-provoking, with lively discussions that gave an insight into challenges and opportunities associated with climate change and heritage. Ms. Nityaa is grateful for the opportunity to have attended such a timely discourse and knowledge sharing exercise with contributors from various geographic locations and diverse disciplines.



Nityaa Lakshmi Iyer

Ms. Priyanka Panjwani, an EP from the West Zone (Mumbai), participated in the meetings on all days and covered 8 sessions as a rapporteur. Her focus was to be able to grasp ideas on climate and culture (which forms one of her core research interests) from global experts. During the sessions, she was amazed at the trajectory of the discussions, many of which did not have a silent moment to ponder. Post the exhaustive week, Ms. Priyanka spent over 160 hours to record the meetings in detail and extract relevant data for the record sheet questions, which would be further analyzed in the approaching months. Ms. Priyanka is

grateful for the opportunity because she believes that this experience taught her a great deal about various perceptions of people, their biases and initiatives in the climate movement globally.



Priyanka Panjwani

Ms. Saranya Dharshini, the National Representative of EPWG ICOMOS India, participated on all three days covering back-to-back sessions on Knowledge Systems, Impacts, and Solutions. Being one of a kind co-sponsored meeting, Ms. Saranya reflected that this cross-collaboration is one of many important steps taken by ICOMOS towards climate action. From her experience, Ms. Saranya felt that the exchange of dialogue among policymakers, heritage professionals, cultural practitioners, architects, planners, indigenous people, historians, conservation professionals, and climate scientists, among others, addressed critical climate issues and solutions.

Ms. Saranya was a rapporteur for 7 sessions detailing the conversations which will be used for the meeting report. She mentioned that the conversations were from multi-view perspectives related to anecdotes or work experience on migration patterns, lost civilizations, flying serpents, the commons, existential crisis, and funding scarcity among others. Ms. Saranya reflected that this event gave her a glimpse into the working of IPCC — Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and she looks forward to their next report. As a rapporteur, she was glad that she had this opportunity to engage with various climate experts and emerging professionals on a topic that is critical for our planet.



Saranya Dharshini

Members' Corner

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

CEPT UNIVERSITY, AHMEDABAD

Online Poster Session and Roundtable Webinar - Heritage Sample Archives Initiative

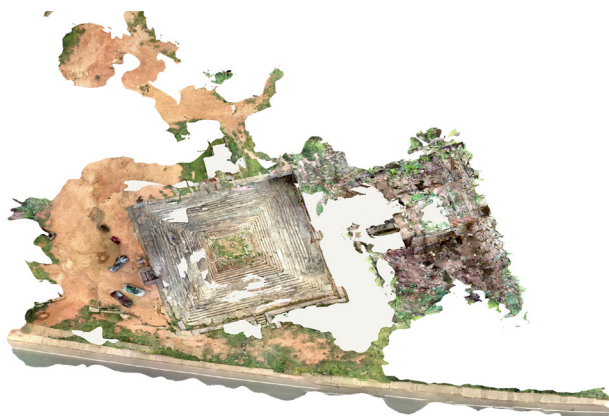
CEPT University is supporting ICCROM as one of the associate partners through the CEPT Conservation Laboratory in the Heritage Sample Archives Initiative. On November 29th and 30th, 2021 a two-day Online Poster Session and Roundtable Webinar showcasing heritage samples collections from around the world and involving all partner institutions was conducted. This was an opportunity to discuss the challenges with managing and preserving these diverse and valuable archives and share ideas for future research and conservation.

In September 2021, a call for submissions for an online poster session on heritage samples archives as part of the Heritage Samples Archives Initiative (HSAI) was launched. Over 40 posters from 22 countries were accepted for publication, one of them being the poster submitted by CEPT Conservation Laboratory, and a few select posters were presented during the two-day Poster Session.

R V COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE, BANGALORE

Activity to Explore the Appropriate Design Language in an Existing, Historically Significant Built Layer of Chikkajala Fort, Bangalore

Morphosis, a studio initiative of R V College of Architecture, Bengaluru (the institutional member of ICOMOS INDIA) as part of the VII semester Architectural Design Course, is an attempt to explore the nuances of meta-architecture in an existing, historically relevant built layer of Chikkajala fort, Bengaluru.



LIDAR Scanning image of Chikkajala Fort, Bangalore
Image Credit: R V College of Architecture, Bangalore

The narrative of Chikkajala fort, its timeline, the transformation over time, the relevance of its footprint in the village and with the community were explored.

The suffix attached, i.e., fort comes with the idea of a 4.7m high enclosure wall encompassing elements such as the Kalyani (temple tank), a temple shrine and pillared structures. The idea of a fort in this case has been under debate since it appears to have been privately owned by a rich landlord in the past.

The collapsing of a part of the enclosure wall for the development of National highway rendered the Kalyani or the temple tank with a small shrine as the focal point, exposing the entire site as part of the 'public'. The two sides of the Kalyani (South and the East directions) consist of grids of stone pillars as ingenious trabeated structures with hints of habitation – rooms, a courtyard with a well, kitchen elements such as the mortar and pestle and niches in the wall for lighting.

The politics attached with the site (ownership), the impositions of development, materiality, the negotiations to preserve while intervening for future demands, led to multifaceted explorations in the works of the students. The images attached are selected works of students bringing about place making strategies through time - connecting the past to the future. The four experienced studio mentors, Prof. Dinesh Rao, Prof. Suman Paul, Prof. Hiranmayi S. and Prof. Bikramjit Chakraborty, conducted the experimental exercise which was supported by NSC-HD.

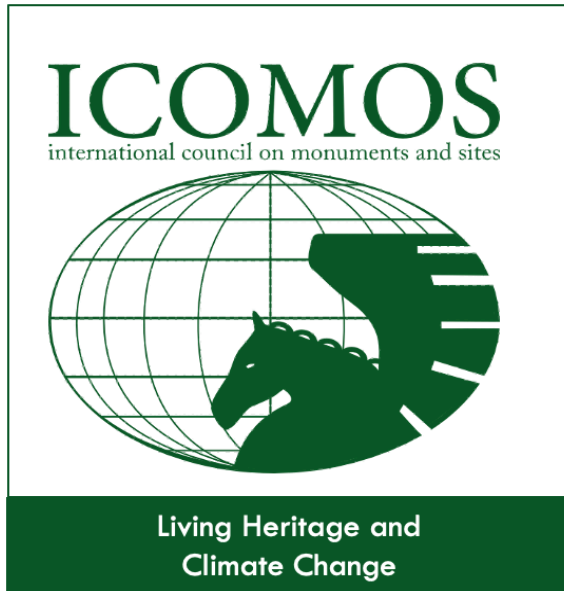


Image Credit: R V College of Architecture, Bangalore

GENERAL MEMBERS

MS ANANYA BHATTACHARYA

Keynote Speech at 2021 International Scientific Symposium on Living Heritage and Climate Change



As the keynote speaker, Ananya Bhattacharya spoke on Living Heritage and Climate Change: Interconnections & Possibilities. Ananya pointed out that ICH is still missing in mainstream dialogue and discourse on actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

COP has recognized the need to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change. Communities must be included in socio-ecological monitoring and climate change hazard impact assessment to leverage their traditional knowledge and capacity to understand the impact on climate change.

Climate research and policy platforms need to integrate cultural heritage - traditional knowledge systems, tools and governance mechanisms on biodiversity, managing landscapes and seascapes. Frameworks for ethical engagement and use of local and indigenous knowledge within the context of climate change policy and action should be established. Traditional storytelling and folk art can integrate local cultural belief systems and leverage heritage values into risk communication and mitigation measures to urge people to adopt much needed changes in lifestyles.

Responsible and sustainable cultural tourism sharing about ICH and cultural landscape can become powerful conduits of awareness and advocacy. Potential of integrating traditional knowledge and skills for developing green and resilient livelihoods needs to be fully utilized.

Ananya suggested that heritage professionals need to work together to work towards appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures to identify, enhance and promote effective systems as well as practice, conserve and protect natural spaces whose existence is necessary for expressing the intangible cultural heritage.

Workshop on Polycentric and Participatory Governance in Cultural Tourism for Community Resilience

As focal point of ICTC on climate change and heritage and SDG working groups, Ananya Bhattacharya coordinated a workshop as part of 2021 ICOMOS Scientific Symposium on how community and stakeholder inclusion in the governance of cultural heritage and tourism could strengthen resilience and adaptive capacities.



Image Credit: ICOMOS International

The 2021 Charter for Cultural Tourism to be adopted at the ICOMOS GA in 2022 calling for a regenerative development paradigm that recalibrates the perpetual economic growth-based approach to cultural tourism, was shared.

Experiences were shared on convergence with traditional management systems from Kenya and China (cultural landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces). Innovative approaches like the VMAST - the UNESCO World Heritage Visitor Management Assessment & Strategy Tool and WHETS - the World Heritage Exchange Trading System were shared. Another interesting example was how the Mediterranean Diet plays a role in reducing food waste thus highlighting the role of traditional practices in tackling climate change.

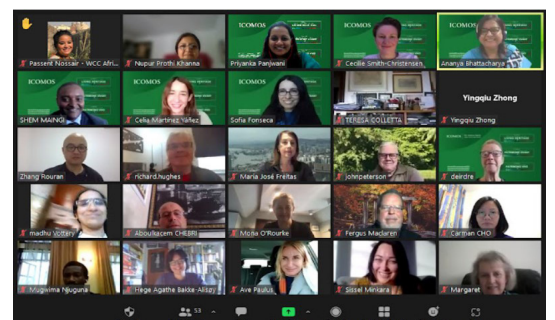


Image Credit: ICOMOS International

MS PRIYANKA PANJWANI

'Historic Lighthouses of India: Beacons of Resilience' - Article in Bulletin Number 94 of TICCIH: The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage

The TICCIH Bulletin concentrates on different themes of industrial heritage across the world and it is published and distributed electronically to members. Ms. Priyanka Panjwani's article, 'Historic Lighthouses of India: Beacons of Resilience' was published in 2021, and it explores the risks and resilience of Lighthouses in India, which have been integral to the maritime industry in the country.

India's coastline is dotted with rich industrial heritage including 189 lighthouses across nine lighthouse districts. The lighthouses of India have confronted cyclonic winds, sea level rise, coastal salinity, humidity and erosion for several centuries and stood resilient, while being in use for guiding the transport vessels; today the lighthouse sites are proposed for upgradation and have the potential to serve as examples of sustainable development.

To access the article, click on this [link](#).



Historic Lighthouses of India
Image Credit: Priyanka Panjwani

'Together-Our Common Heritage': Artwork at the 2021 Venice Biennale in Italy

OurWorldHeritage (OWH) initiative under the theme of 'Heritage in Conflict' invited participation to help raise awareness amongst the public on safeguarding heritage during conflict across the globe. Ms. Priyanka Panjwani's painting in mixed media titled, 'Mumbai's Splendour and Spirit in Stone' was selected among works from Africa, the Arab States, Asia and Europe. A video titled 'Together-Our Common Heritage' with the artworks was exhibited at the 'Together' exhibition in the Olivetti Showroom, San Marco Piazza, from October 1st to November 11th, as part of the Venice Biennale 2021.

The World Heritage Site of Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) and the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel are two cultural edifices that mark the Mumbai city's exemplary spirit. In her painting, Ms. Priyanka attempts to communicate the ruptured heart and pride of Mumbai during the 2008 terror attacks on its iconic domed heritage structures. The injuries and damages due to the conflict must be recuperated by the people's love, unity, peace and respect for each

other. The exhibition note (including selected artist names) was published in the Italian news site of 'Giornale Diplomatico' on October 12th 2021.

This [link](#) can be visited for more information.



Mumbai's Splendour and Spirit in Stone
Image Credit: Priyanka Panjwani

ICOMOS Scientific Symposium 2021: Living Heritage and Climate Change

The 2021 edition of ICOMOS Scientific Symposium on Living Heritage and Climate Change, had a session that covered "News around the world".

This session aimed to provide an opportunity to reach out to individual members, to invite them to personally be a part of the international cultural heritage response to the climate emergency, to remind them of the significance of all of the peoples and communities behind the heritage that we care for, and to share the latest updates on important ICOMOS news and happenings that members should be aware of.

As an EPWG member, Priyanka Panjwani's video on Coastal Heritage: Seaweed Farming in Tamil Nadu was a part of these sessions (presented twice) during the Opening on Day 2.



ICOMOS ScSy21: Day 2 Opening Session: News Around the World

Priyanka Panjwani also volunteered as a Technical Support for the Session 5 Workshop, ‘Polycentric and Participatory Governance in Cultural Tourism for Community Resilience’ which was held on Day 2 of the Symposium, and was convened by ICOMOS ICTC working group on climate change and tourism.



Image Credit: ICOMOS International

COP26 Resilience Hub: Cultural Heritage, Resilience & the Built Environment

Hosted by Climate Heritage Network (CHN) and Historic England, the UN COP26 Resilience Hub (Blue Zone and online hybrid) event on 9th November 2021 was titled ‘Cultural Heritage, Resilience & the Built Environment’.



Image Credit: Priyanka Panjwani

Drawing on expertise from around the globe, this session discussed how traditional knowledge can support climate resilience for our built environment, and most importantly communities who rely on it. This was an intergenerational dialogue and Priyanka Panjwani, a CHN Youth Forum member, chaired a panel on ‘What can we learn from our traditional and historical built heritage? How is this knowledge relevant to climate resilience?’ -for which the speakers were Ibrahim Tchan (Executive Director of the Corps of Benin Volunteers) from Africa and Morwenna Slade (Head of Historic Building Climate Change Adaptation, Historic England) from the UK.

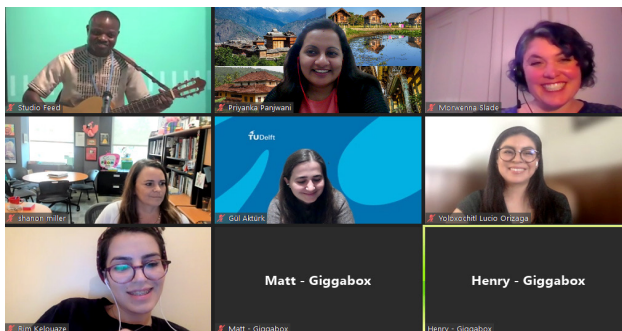


Image Credit: Priyanka Panjwani

DR SANJIB BORKAKOTI

Webinar Series on Different Facets of Sankaradeva Studies

Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva, a leading organization promoting the legacy of Srimanta Sankaradeva, conducted a series of webinars on different facets of Sankaradeva Studies starting from the month of December 2021.



Scholars from India and abroad took part in the webinars. All the webinars were moderated by author and researcher Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti, an expert member of International Committee of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICICH) and also the President of Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva.

The inaugural lecture was held on 19th December, 2021. It was delivered by Dr Arshiya Sethi, independent dance scholar, author and columnist from New Delhi. The topic of her lecture was “Going Global: Sankaradeva and the Living Arts of the Sattras”.



Image Credit: Sanjib Borkakoti

The second lecture was delivered by Ms. Geetha Sivangala Thandi, a Kuchipudi dance practitioner, California, USA on 9th January. She shared her views on “Comparison between Sattriya dance and Kuchipudi dance”.

DR SUDAKSHINA KUNDU MOOKERJI

Raja Ram Mohan Roy Memorial Museum

The Raja Ram Mohun Roy Memorial Museum, located at 85A Raja Ram Mohan Sarani, (erstwhile Amherst Street), Kolkata – 700006, the Simla House of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Father of Modern India. The museum is looked after by a trust managed by Ram Mohan College, the morning section of City College, North Calcutta which is a reputed women’s college founded by the Brahmo Samaj Education Society (BSES). It is believed that Ram Mohun Roy purchased this house from Mr. Francis Mendes/Members for Rs. 13,000/- probably for residential purposes. This house was then known as Simla House as the locality was known as Simla in the early nineteenth century. Ram Mohun College has converted this house to a museum in memory of the great doyen of Bengal Renaissance.



Erstwhile Simla House; Now Raja Ram Mohan Roy Memorial Museum
Image Credit: Sudakshina Kundu

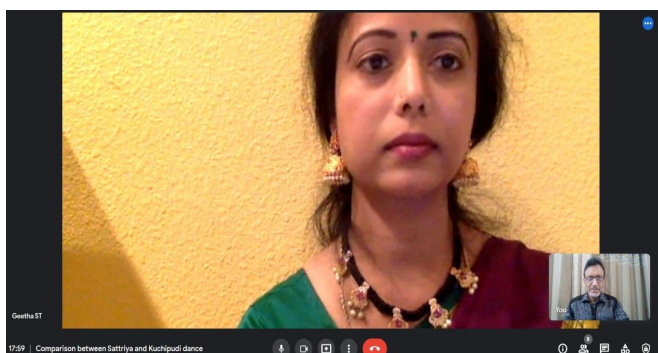


Image Credit: Sanjib Borkakoti

Subsequent lectures planned in this series were “Sankaradeva as a pioneer of mass communication”, “Comparison between Christianity and Eka Sarana Nama Dharma”, “Comparison between Sankari music and Western music”, “Rhythm in Sankari music” etc.

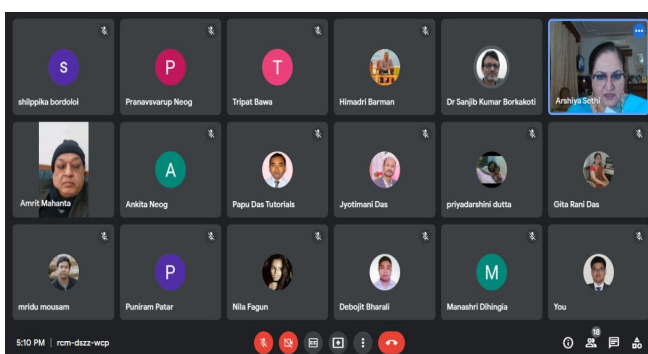


Image Credit: Sanjib Borkakoti

The webinars were held on the Google Meet platform. Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti managed the overall supervision of the webinars. There was an appreciable feedback as well as good media coverage of the webinar series.

The Assam Rising

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2021

Webinar on Sankaradeva and the Living Arts of the Sattras held

Assam Rising Guwahati, December 21: A webinar series on different facets of Sankaradeva studies, organized by Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva was started with the maiden lecture programme by Dr Arshiya Sethi, dancer scholar and Fulbright fellow from New Delhi on December 19. She talked on the theme “Going Global: Sankaradeva and the Living Arts of the Sattras”. The programme was moderated by Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti, author and

scholar of Sankari culture. Dr Arshiya Sethi referred to the recognition of Sattriya dance on national level on 15th November, 2000 and spoke about the challenges coming after that in her lecture. She gave special reference to the devotees residing in the Sattras, the Vaishnav monasteries of Assam. The recognition was accompanied by a change in its practising population, a re-gendering of its performers, a change in its location, from sacred to secular, as well as a change in its agenda and content, she

said. Flushed with new patronage since 2000, it has developed along diverted aesthetics, Dr Sethi said. However, in the context of the monasteries that produced and nurtured the dance, the receptivity was high. Thus, the first impetus of the global valorisation of Sankaradeva came from the living arts of the Sattras, particularly its dance called Sattriya. Whether in France, UK, USA, Mexico or New Zealand, audiences around the globe embraced its rarity and “authenticity”. This has kindled an interest in

Sankaradeva and his philosophy, Dr Sethi opined. Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti in his comment said that many aberrations have been seen in the aftermath of the new recognition by ill-trained performers. Over experimentation is also a menace as it will hurt the original features of the art form. It is the need of the hour to have a controlling body with teeth in order to prevent such distortions. The authenticity of the entire Sattriya culture will be at stake, he warned. Among others Dr Ratul Chandra Bora, former Registrar of

Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Vidyavidyalaya, Shilpika Bordoloi from Jorhat and Priyadarshini Dutta from USA, gave their observations on the lecture. They highlighted the pressure coming on the performers in the wake of recognition of Sattriya as classical dance and stressed on preservation of the originality in the dance form. The role of academicians was also stressed upon. Mridu Moucham Bora, Secretary of Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva offered vote of thanks.

Image Credit: Sanjib Borkakoti

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022

The Assam Rising

Webinar on comparison between Sattriya and Kuchipudi dance

Assam Rising, Guwahati, Jan 10: As part of the international webinar series on Different facets of Sankaradeva Studies, organized by Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva, Geetha Sivangala Thandi, a Kuchipudi dance practitioner, California, USA delivered lecture on “Comparison between Sattriya dance and Kuchipudi dance” on January, 9. Author and scholar of Sankari culture Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti gave a brief idea about both the dance forms in his introductory comments. Dr Borkakoti said that there are some significant similarities between Sattriya dance and Kuchipudi dance. They both belong to the devotional genre. Earlier female roles were played by male dancers in both. But there are also some differences like worship of Shakti in Kuchipudi dance, which is not seen in Sattriya dance. Srimanta Sankaradeva created his own music for the dance form, which is not the case in Kuchipudi dance. Dr Borkakoti said that there is a necessity for more such comparative study, especially from practitioners with academic orientation. There was interaction with the audience of both academicians and practitioners. Dr Ratul Chandra Bora from Jorhat, Seema Savita Das from Nagaon and Rupam Jyoti Bora from Guwahati gave their observations on the lecture. They appreciated Geetha Sivangala Thandi for highlighting the distinctive features of two classical dance forms. Earlier Mridu Moucham Bora, Secretary of Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva, welcomed Geetha Sivangala Thandi. It may be noted that Society for Srimanta Sankaradeva is known for reviving Sankari crafts like manuscript painting and preparing Aharya of Ankiya Bhaona. It runs a website www.sankaradeva.com about Sankaradeva’s legacy. It also organised a conference on Borgeet with maestros some years ago to prevent distortion in this music form.

Image Credit: Sanjib Borkakoti

Born in an aristocratic ‘kulin’ Brahmin family, to Ramkanta Roy and Tarini Devi, on May 22, 1772, at Radhanagar, Hooghly district, in the erstwhile Bengal Presidency of the British India, Ram Mohun was a rebel from his early years.

Details of his earlier education are not clear. He perhaps started in his village school or Pathshala to learn Bengali and Sanskrit, before moving to Patna to study Persian and Arabic, the court language of his days. He later shifted to Benaras (Kashi), to acquire greater proficiency in Sanskrit. Ram Mohun had such fluency in all these languages that he read the Holy Koran and the Sanskrit scriptures of the Vedas and the Upanishadas in the original.

This empowered him with sufficient depth of knowledge in the religious compendiums to question the existing religious practices of the institutional religions that harboured much dogma and superstition.

From his early youth Ram Mohan started writing tracts in support of monotheism for which he earned the wrath of his father, who was a devout Vaishnavite. Ram Mohan left his ancestral home to live on his own as a private clerk or Munshi to the Registrar of the Appellate Court at Murshidabad, Mr. Thomas Woodroff of East India Company. During this tenure from 1803-15, Ram Mohan started learning English, and also Latin and Hebrew in order to master the old and new Testaments of the Bible in their original form. He resigned from the services of Mr. Woodroff, and secured employment with Mr. John Digby, a Company Collector, with whom he became very close. After spending many years with Mr. Digby at Rangpur and other places, Ram Mohan Roy finally settled in Calcutta (Kolkata) where he started his own independent business of lending money to the Company officials, buying Company shares and landed property.

Ram Mohan had four properties in Kolkata at different times while residing in the city. He inherited a house from his father at Jorasanko and bought another one at Chowringhee in 1814 from Mrs. Fenwick for Rs. 20, 317. The two houses cannot be identified presently. He then got a Garden House built in Manicktala by his cousin Mr. Ramtanu Roy as per his own taste which was furnished in the Western style to entertain his European guests. Presently this house at 113 Acharya Prafulla Chandra Road in close proximity to the Shimla House serves as a Police Museum.

By this time Ram Mohan had gained much renown and respect as a scholar and a crusader against social evils. As he gained admirers and friends among both his countrymen and the British, he also incurred the wrath of the ultra-conservative sections of society - the Hindu patriarchs, the Muslim Moulavis and the Christian Missionaries for criticising their dogmatic practices. Ram Mohan started writing his polemic tracts in 1804. He published the Tuhfat-ul-Muahiddin, (A Gift to the Monotheists) which had an introduction in Arabic although the main tract was in Persian. He later started translating the Upanishadas in Bengali and English and propagated the ideals of Unity in God enshrined in these corpuses. When Ram Mohan started the Atmiya Sabha (Society of Kindred Spirits) a society of like-minded people who supported Ram Mohan's idea of worship of one true God, the central theme of all different faiths, he used his two houses to convene the meetings. The Manicktala House was the venue for hosting most of the meetings of the Atmiya Sabha, which later came to be known as Brahma Sabha or Brahma Samaj. He led his fight for the abolition of the heinous custom of 'Sati-daha' from this house. There is a doubt whether Ram Mohan ever lived in this house. However contemporary reports indicate that the Simla House was indeed his family residence. It is also a fact that for a while he used this house to host the weekly meetings of the Atmiya Sabha. On the eve of his departure to Europe in 1930, Ram Mohan sold off all his properties except the Simla House, which passed on to his sons Radha Prasad Roy and Rama Prasad Roy, who used to live in this house. The house continued to remain with the family till it was sold off. The new owners failed to maintain the property.



The Outhouse
Image Credit: Sudakshina Kundu

With time and neglect the Simla House became dilapidated and abandoned, a hideout for criminals. As the house fell into disuse, it got vandalised; many of its teak wood panels, doors and windows, Italian marble tiles and other artefacts were stolen. According to Dr. Pratap Chandra Chandra, who was a Union Minister in the sixties, he was approached by Mr. Sushovan Bandyopadhyay, a local social worker, for acquiring the building. A meeting was called which was attended by Mr. Prafulla Kumar Sen, the ex-Chief Minister of West Bengal. The decision to acquire the building was unanimously accepted but nothing really matured. After decades of neglect, in 1972 at the initiative of the then Principal of Ram Mohan College, Smt Sadhana Sarkar and other eminent personalities, steps were taken to acquire and restore the crumbling mansion. This was the year of the Raja's Bi-centennial birth anniversary.

It was an uphill task. With financial support from both the State and Central Governments, the final acquisition was completed in 1986. The massive task of restoration as far as possible from its decrepit state was started with grants from the Central Government, the Victoria Memorial Hall and donations received from members of the Brahma Samaj and others. Ram Mohan College dedicated this building to the memory of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the Memorial Museum was started with the intent to document the life and times of the great reformer. The museum started functioning in its full-fledged form from 2000 with the inauguration of an exhibition on the life and works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy during his 229th birth anniversary. It was to become a repository of notes, photographs, contemporary furniture and more related to the great personality and his times. This was the first step towards turning this grand edifice into a national monument.

This three storied building is fashioned in the colonial style of the Georgian era. The museum stands in a 76 Kotta plot which includes a water body. The annexe building of the Science Departments of Ram Mohan College stands in the southern part of the plot. The gate and the wide pathway lead to the main building which is the original Simla House and now the Raja Ram Mohan Roy Memorial Museum. There is an outhouse with an ornate balustrade behind the main building that is now being used as a skilling centre for women called Aparajita. The water body has an old flight of stairs leading down from a beautiful curved pavilion.



*Pavilion beside the waterbody
Image Credit: Sudakshina Kundu*

There is a stone bust of Raja Ram Mohan Roy with a marble plaque bearing the family name at the entry to the museum. There is also a large statue of Rabindranath Tagore on the ground floor with praise for the greatness of his hero inscribed in it. The large central hall is made magnificent by its beautiful chequered floor and colonial arches where the various memorable events of his life are displayed through portraits and sculptures. There is a library attached to the museum which is a repository of rare and invaluable books. The library is open to the public as a study centre.



*Central hall of the museum
Image Credit: Sudakshina Kundu*

The items on display include old books, commemorative items, photographs, paintings and sketches related to the Father of Bengal Renaissance, panels and dioramas relating to his life and times. Excerpts from his writings, letters written by him and his treatises on Hindu mythology and Vedanta in the original are displayed. There is a large collection of stamps and special day covers along with many historical documents related to him.

Replicas of period furniture and dresses have been kept as exhibits to reflect the style of eighteenth-century Bengal. There is also a reproduction of the original death mask of Ram Mohun. This replica has been created by sculptor Niranjan Pradhan after the original one which was brought by Acharya Shivanath Shastri from Bristol. The exhibits can be classified in six different categories. These are commemorative items, books, paintings and sketches, period furniture, panels and dioramas, and the death mask.

This extraordinary museum offers a glimpse of the days of Bengal Renaissance ushered in by the vision of the great Reformer.



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ICOMOS India wishes you a Happy New Year!

We look forward to your valued and continued support.

Follow us for more updates on the forthcoming ICOMOS India newsletter.

HAPPY READING ☺

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COMOS (ICOMOS India) December 2021

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Council on Monuments and Sites (COMOS)

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