

Report of the Event

Name of the Event: 30th Annual Conference of Indian Art History Congress (IAHC)

Theme of the Conference: 'Environmental Representation in Indian Art'

Venue: Nalbari College, Nalbari, Assam, India

Organized by: Nalbari College, Nalbari, Assam, India

Sponsored by: Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), New Delhi

Date: 7th to 9th January, 2023

Name of the Local Secretary: Dr. Kamal Nayan Patowary,

Principal, Nalbari College, Nalbari, Assam

Total Registered Participant: 85

Total Paper Presented: 66

Report of the Event:

The 30th Annual Conference of Indian Art History Congress (IAHC) was held at Nalbari College, Assam from 7th to 9th January 2023. The event was hosted by Nalbari College, Nalbari, a premier college of Assam with the financial assistance of Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi. The theme for the 30th Session was 'Environmental Representation in Indian Art'.

The Inaugural Session which was scheduled on 7th January 2023 from 10.30 AM to 12.30 PM was graced by Smt. Nandita Gorlosa, Minister for Power, Cooperation, Mines, Minerals, Indigenous and Tribal Faith and Culture Department, Government of Assam as the Chief Guest and Shri V. B. Pyarelal, IAS (Rtd.) Chief Commissioner of PRANAM Mission as the Guest of Honour along with other dignitaries of Indian Art History Congress (IAHC). The session started with Asom Sangeet, the state anthem of Assam and followed by the lighting of lamp by the dignitaries present in the dais. Dr. Kamal Nayan Patowary, the Principal of Nalbari College delivered the Welcome Address. Release of four research volumes marked the auspicious beginning of the event. Dr. Haripriya Rangarajan's Commemorative Volume Edited by Dr. Githa U Badikillaya, Prof. D. S. Somashekhar, Prof. Nanditha Krishna & Prof. Sudipa Ray Bandopadhyay was released by Smt Nandita Gorlosa, the Chief Guest of the session. *Kala*, the annual Journal of IAHC which was edited by Prof. Durga Basu & Prof. Sudipa Ray Bandopadhyay was released by Shri V. B. Pyarelal the Guest of Honour. *Art and Architecture of Eastern India*, a book edited by Dr. Paromita Das was released by Dr. Srinivas V. Padigar, Retired Professor & Chairman, Department of Ancient Indian History & Epigraphy, Karnatak University. Dr. Rakesh Tewari, the General President of the 30th Session of IAHC released the Proceeding of the 29th session of IAHC, edited by Dr. Preeta Nayar. Presidential Address was delivered by Prof. Maruti Nandan Pd. Tiwari, Chairman of IAHC and

Retired Professor Emeritus of the Banaras Hindu University. Vote of Thanks was offered by Dr. Gautam Kr. Handique, President, NCTU.

The inaugural session was followed by the Presidential Lecture by Dr. Rakesh Tewari, General President of 30th Session of the Indian Art History Congress & Director General (Rtd.), Archaeological Survey of India on the topic *Indian Art: Observations of an Explorer*. Prof. Maruti Nandan Pd. Tiwari, Chairman of IAHC graced the occasion as the Hon'ble Chairperson. Parallel academic sessions were held after the lunch break. A short cultural programme showcasing assortment of Assamese culture was also organized in the evening in the honour of the delegates and dignitaries.

The Day 2 of the conference started with Prof K D Bajpai Memorial Lecture delivered by Dr. Sreenivas Padigar, Fellow, Infosys Chair for Indology, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune on the topic *Revisiting Early Narrative Sculptures from Karnataka*. The Memorial Lecture was Chaired by Prof. A. P. Jamkhedkar, Rtd. Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) and Rtd. Chancellor of Deccan College Post-Graduate & Research Institute (Deemed to be University), Pune. Thereafter parallel academic sessions continued through out the day.

Dr. R D Choudhury Memorial Lecture marked the beginning of the 3rd and final day of the conference. Prof. Maruti Nandan Pd. Tiwari, Former National Tagore Fellow & Former Professor Emeritus, Department of History of Art, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi was invited as the resource person. He delivered a resourceful presentation on the topic *Ancient Indian Art and Its Social Relevance Today in Reference to Environment*. Prof. Nanditha Krishna, President, The C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation, Chennai discharged the responsibility of the Chairperson. After completion of the parallel academic sessions, the Valedictory Function was held in the afternoon at the Prabhat Chandra Goswami Auditorium of the college. Smt. Geetimoni Phukan, the Deputy Commissioner of Nalbari was present as the Chief Guest of the event.

Scholars, academicians and researchers across the country thronged this grand conclave of art historians. All together 85 delegates registered themselves for this event and 66 research papers on different aspects of art history were presented during this three day long conference. After the completion of the academic proceedings, a day long field trip to the *Madan Kamdev* archaeological site and the sacred township of *Hajo* was also arranged on 10th January 2023. An online feedback form was mailed to the participants and exalting reviews from them had been received. A summary of the feedback has been attached in a separate sheet.

Report on the Presidential Lecture
Date: 7th January, 2023

Speaker: Dr. Rakesh Tewari,

**General President of 30th session of the Indian Art History Congress &
Director General (Rtd.), Archaeological Survey of India.**

Topic : *Indian Art: Observations of an Explorer*

Chairperson: Prof. Maruti Nandan Pd. Tiwari

The speaker, Dr. Rakesh Tewari began his lecture by mentioning his own experience during his exploration which were later documented on Indian art. It included the Himalayan regions, paintings of different temple found across the country, interaction of India with South East Asia through art and importance of florals of different sculptures.

He discussed about the challenges faced by the art historian in chronological studies of paintings in depicted in rock shelters and caves.

He also mentioned about the importance of documentation of the paintings found in these rock shelters through photographs.

He put emphasis on the preservation of the rock shelters which represent a vast treasure of art history. It has been observed that most of the preserved shelters were destroyed by human interference. Some places which were declared as tourist places ultimately led to the degradation of the rock shelters.

The speaker also put forth his explorations of the sculptural art of Himalayan Region which showcased its influence in the arts of other parts of the country. He also discussed on the temple sculptures of South East Asia particularly Vietnam and compared to the present day temples such as the origin, antiquity and iconic parallels of Kirttimukha motif, popularly depicted in South Asian art.

Moreover the flora depicted in Indian sculptures of pre- Columbian period, not native to India as identified by Gupta (1996) played a significant role in tracing more evidences regarding cultural influences from abroad. The depiction of flora gave an insight on the geoclimatic and floral variations within the area.

Dr. Tewari ended his lecture on the note that proper documentation and presentation of rock shelters and temple sculptures is a must which will benefit the art historians for further explorations.

Report on the Prof. K.D. Bajpai Memorial Lecture

Date: 8th January, 2023

Speaker: Dr. Sreenivas V. Padigar,

Fellow Infosys Chair for Indology, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune.

Topic : *Revisiting Early Narrative Sculptures from Karnataka*

Chairperson: Dr. A.P. Jamkhedkar

The speaker , Dr. *Sreenivas Padigar* discussed about the early narrative sculptures of Karnataka with the following objectives:

- i. To trace the evidence of narrative sculptural art in Karnataka from the Satvahanas to the Early Chalukyas.
- ii. The specialities of some Buddhist narratives from Kanaganhalli stupa.
- iii. The themes in Early Chalukya context: Cave and Structural Monuments: Vaishnava, Shaiva, Buddhist and Jaina, non-sectarian legend.
- iv. Temporal changes in context of myths within Chalukya period, in respect to change in royal sectarian inclinations from Vaishnava (543-659) and to Pashupta (659-757).
- v. Observations on Early Historic Period:

He included the Ashokan edicts bearing slabs at Sannati (3rd century BCE) and stupa remains in Kanagarahalli , Kalaberi district, 1st century BCE.

The speaker gave an illustration on different wall frames in caves and temples that were used for narratives. Temporal differences was observed in myths: Vamana Trivikrama (Namuhi to Garuda - Shukra) and Krishnacharita (Bakavadha).He also gave a meticulous details of Ramayana (Suparshva) and Mahabharata (War details) through his observations. Moreover, Ramayana and Vaishnava myths in

Pashupata fold: Shiva shrine and Krishnacharita was also discussed. The sculptures were narratives that defines Ramayana and contemporary social ethics and social morals. Most of the temples of that period were royal temples. The Yashodhara story as narrated by the sculptures in temples were folk tales which later became sectarian.

Thus , through his lecture, the speaker provided an insight on the importance of temple sculptures and how it can be narrated by revising narrative sculptures of Karnataka.

Report on the Dr. R. D. Choudhury Memorial Lecture

Date: 9th January, 2023

Speaker: Prof. Maruti Nandan Pd Tiwari,

Former National Tagor Fellow and Former Professor Emeritus ,

Department of History of Art, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

Topic : *Ancient Indian Art and Its Social Relevance Today in Reference to Environment.*

Chairperson: Dr. Nanditha Krishna

The speaker Prof. Maruti Nandan Pd Tiwari began his lecture by reinforcing the fact that nature has been omnipresent and without nature everything becomes nonexistence. Human life has evolved in intimate connection with nature in the form of water, fire, earth and wind. He mentioned the important signs of connection with nature be it religious. Virtually Bhartiya Kala since its existence has its relation with the nature.

He also mention that the intangible hand of nature is seen everywhere be it the past, present or the future. The representation of nature in Indian Art is very significant such as in the Lion Pillar Capital found in Sarnath, U.P depicts the presence of lotus, the four lions and other animals. The whole identity of the Pillar will be lost if the nature (i.e the flora and fauna) is removed.

Moreover, an intimate connection of nature to the Divine world also exist which is intimate to our survival. Motifs that show how it has imbursed the nature suggesting an inseparability of human and the divine.

Ecofriendly image of nature as seen in Pandava of Indian Art is the best representation.

The speaker emphasized the importance of nature in Indian Art specially sculptures in Indian Temples and Indian Art. Without nature existence of Indian Art and the existence of human is impossible.

The speaker ended his lecture on the note that we should understand the importance of the natural world present in and around us and we should respect and preserve them.

Few photographs of the 30th Nalbari Session of IAHC









