

REPORT

CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF TAGORE'S VISIT TO CHINA

A Memorable Encounter: Significance for Civilizational Dialogue in the Contemporary World

24 September 2024

10 AM - 8 PM IST

India International Centre, New Delhi



Rabindranath Tagore (1940) by Xu Beihong

Photo Exhibition, International Conference & Cultural Program

CONCEPT NOTE

This year is the 100th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore's visit to China in 1924. This visit is of great historical significance and is a landmark in India-China relations. Tagore reached China on April 12, 1924 on the invitation of the Beijing Lecture Association and was received warmly by Liang Qichao, one of China's foremost intellectuals of the time, as well as his young hosts and interpreters, Lin Huiyin and Xu Zhimo.

Tagore's works and his visit had a big impact on modern Chinese literature. Poets like Bing Xin and Xu Zhimo were very much influenced by his style. Tagore's works played a major role in shaping the life and thought of Guo Moruo at one stage. Parallel to this literary exchange was an artistic exchange. Tagore was accompanied by the artist Nandalal Bose who incorporated Chinese styles in his works. One of China's foremost modern artists, Xu Beihong visited Santiniketan and stayed in India for about a year. To this date Tagore remains an extremely popular figure in China.

We live in times of a changing world order where the domination of the international order by the West is under decline and a multipolar world is emerging leading to a global process of democratic restructuring of power relations at all levels. That was a vision that Tagore and his contemporaries in India and China wished their people to pursue jointly in their struggle for freedom. India and China are poised to become the two largest economies by 2050 and there is also a global recognition of the phenomenon of the rise of Asia. The relationship of India and China will be important, not just for their own people, but for the future of humanity as such. Tagore was persistent in building cultural links among Asian nations throughout his life and Visva-Bharati University is a monument of that enterprise.

During the past several decades India and China have gone through phases of mutual understanding as well as periods of tension and conflict. After a phase of evolving normalisation and exchanges the two countries are again facing a period of tense relations. As a result, at the moment both the countries have more contact with the West than they have with each other. It is therefore essential that India and China continue to open channels of exchange unmediated by the West. Both countries are engaged in building modern nations on the foundations of their great civilisations to fulfil the aspirations of their people; they have many common challenges and have similar perspectives on many global issues. At this historical juncture the Tagore legacy inspires people of both countries to start a new phase of exchanges and dialogues. Tagore believed that the basis for a friendship between India and China would not be the intellectuals alone, but would involve the ordinary men and women of the two countries. Tagore's ideas continue to be of great relevance and the centenary of his visit gives us the opportunity to revisit his thought. The people of India and China together can form a force for world peace and can ushering in of a new era based on principles peace, justice and equity celebrating the beauty of nature.

CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF TAGORE'S VISIT TO CHINA

A Memorable Encounter: Significance for Civilizational Dialogue in the Contemporary World

Photo Exhibition, International Conference & Cultural Program

24 September 2024

Programme

Photo Exhibition

**Quadrangle Garden, India International Centre,
40, Max Mueller Marg, Lodhi Gardens, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi**

24-29 September 2024

Inauguration of Photo Exhibition: 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM

K. N. Shrivastava, Alka Acharya, Avijit Banerjee, Nandita Chaturvedi

International Conference

**Conference Room II, Terrace Pergola, India International Centre,
40, Max Mueller Marg, Lodhi Gardens, Lodhi Estate,
New Delhi**

Registration: 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

**Inaugural Session
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

Welcome Remarks: Sabaree Mitra, Convenor; Professor, Centre for Chinese & South East Asian Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University; and, Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi

Inaugural Remarks: K. N. Shrivastava, Director, India International Centre, New Delhi

Special Remarks: Patricia Uberoi, Emeritus Fellow and former Chairperson, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi

Special Remarks: Manoranjan Mohanty, Emeritus Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; and, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi

Special Remarks: Archishman Raju, Founding Member, Intercivilizational Dialogue Project; and, Member, Gandhi Global Family, Bengaluru

Keynote Address: Udaya Narayana Singh, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Amity University, Haryana; Tagore Scholar, and formerly Pro-VC, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan

The Quest for Knowledge in the East: Some Remarks

Vote of Thanks: Alka Acharya, Honorary Director, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; and, Chairperson and Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Tea Break: 11:30 AM - 11:45 AM

Session I: Tagore's Writings in Intercultural Context
11:45 AM – 1:30 PM

Chair: Sreemati Chakrabarti, Chairperson, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi, India

Speakers:

Manabendra Mukhopadhyay, Department of Bengali, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, India,

Tagore's 'Mission' of China: Review and Reassessment after a Century

Huang Rong, Centre for India Studies, Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, PRC

Rabindranath Tagore and Tan Yunshan: Sowing the Seeds of China-India Friendship

Wei Liming, Department of Asia- Pacific Studies, Peking University, Beijing, PRC

*The Intersection of Rabindranath Tagore and Peking University: From Cai Yuanpei to PKU
Courses on Tagore*

Xiao Xingzheng, College of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Xiamen University, Xiamen, PRC

Rabindranath Tagore's Inspirational Influence on My Creative Writing

Lunch: 1:30 PM - 2:15 PM

Session II: Rabindranath Tagore's Vision of India, China and the World
2:15 PM – 4:00 PM

Chair: Vinod C. Khanna, Emeritus Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi, India

Speakers:

Uma Das Gupta, Historian and Tagore Biographer, Kolkata, India,

What was Rabindranath Tagore looking for from his dialogue with China?

Huang Yinghong, Jindal Global Law School, O. P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat

*India, "From Interstate Relations to Inter-civilization Relations: A Case Study from
Rabindranath Tagore's Phenomenal Visit to China in 1924"*

Indrani Bhattacharjee, Jindal School of Liberal Arts & Humanities, O. P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, India

Rabindranath Tagore and the Question of a Characteristically Indian Cosmopolitanism

**Session III: Panel Discussion on Tagore's Ideas of Humanism, Nationalism
and Universalism**
4:00 PM – 5:15 PM

Moderator: Samik Bandyopadhyay, Tagore Scholar & Cultural Critic, Kolkata, India

Panelists:

Anita Agnihotri, Creative Writer, Kolkata, India

Mridula Mukherjee, Historian, New Delhi, India

S. P. Ganguly, Spanish & Latin American Literature Studies Scholar, New Delhi, India

Vote of Thanks: Avijit Banerjee, Co-Convenor; and Head of Department, Cheena-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan

High Tea: 5:15 PM - 5:45 PM

Cultural Programme

**C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre,
40, Max Mueller Marg, Lodhi Gardens, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi**

24 September 2024

6.30 PM - 8:30 PM

Rabindra Sangit (Tagore's Songs): Students and Faculty of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, led and directed by **Sri Kajal Ghosh**; accompanied by **Sri Anirudh Chowdhury** (Synthesizer/ Keyboard) and **Sri Dipankar** (Tabla)

Chinese Play Based on Rabindranath Tagore's Short Story *The Postmaster*: Students of the Centre for Chinese & South East Asian Studies, School of Language Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; script adaptation and direction by **Smt. Dayawanti**

Rabindra Sangit (Tagore's Songs) in Bengali, English and Chinese, and Dance (Rabindra Nritya): Students of Cheena-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan

CONFERENCE REPORT

The Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), New Delhi, in collaboration with the India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi; Cheena Bhawan, Viswa-Bharati, Santiniketan; Intercivilizational Dialogue Project (IDP), Bengaluru; Gandhi Global Family (GGF), Bengaluru and the Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies, School of Language Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, organised a one-day special event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore's visit to China, on the theme, *A Memorable Encounter: Significance for Civilizational Dialogue in the Contemporary World* on 24 September 2024, at the India International Centre, New Delhi.

The event brought together distinguished scholars from India and China to commemorate the enduring legacy of Rabindranath Tagore, and explored Tagore's contributions to literature, philosophy, and cultural dialogue between India and China, with a focus on his perspectives on human progress, development, and the interconnectedness of civilizations. The discussions emphasised the continued relevance of Tagore's ideas in addressing contemporary societal challenges, and highlighted the importance of fostering cultural dialogue in today's world. The event concluded with a call to continue exploring these important themes, recognising Tagore's vision of a united humanity remains as a guiding principle for future endeavours in civilizational dialogue and cultural exchange.

Inaugural Session

In the inaugural session, Prof. Sabaree Mitra, Convenor; Professor, Centre for Chinese & South East Asian Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University; and, Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; Mr. K.N. Srivastava, Director, India International Centre, New Delhi; Prof. Patricia Uberoi, Emeritus Fellow and former Chairperson, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty, Emeritus Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; and, Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi; Dr. Archishman Raju, Founding Member, Intercivilizational Dialogue Project; and, Member, Gandhi Global Family, Bengaluru; and, Prof. Alka Acharya, Honorary Director, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; and, Chairperson and Professor, Centre for East

Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, delivered opening remarks that highlighted Tagore's enduring legacy and his contributions to cultural exchange between India and China, and the continued relevance of Tagore's vision in today's global context, with an emphasis on fostering understanding, cooperation, and cultural enrichment among civilizations.

Prof. Sabaree Mitra delivered the welcome remarks. As the convenor, Prof. Mitra inaugurated the event by emphasising the collaborative nature of the conference, which involved events in both India and China, and stressed Tagore's vision of a synthesis between Eastern and Western philosophies, which transcends geographical boundaries.

Mr. K.N. Shrivastava spoke on Tagore's multifaceted personality and his interactions with the Chinese academic community during his visit to China in 1924. Despite facing several challenges, Tagore built valuable connections that furthered cultural exchange between India and China. Mr. Shrivastava highlighted two key themes:

- **Cultural Respect:** Tagore promoted respect for all civilizations, asserting that each culture adds unique value to humanity's collective heritage.
- **Mutual Enrichment:** Tagore advocated for the exchange of ideas, literature, art, and education as ways for civilisations to enrich one another.

Mr. Shrivastava further emphasised the importance of fostering mutual understanding to address contentious issues between India and China, both of which remain significant economic and cultural neighbours.

Taking the proceedings forward, **Prof. Patricia Uberoi** reflected on the complexities of Tagore's visit to China in 1924. She noted that at a time when China perceived India as a subjugated nation, Tagore's visit was particularly challenging. Despite these difficulties, the visit became a milestone in fostering a Global South perspective and promoting Pan-Asian unity.

Addressing the key aspects of Tagore's philosophy, **Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty**, explored his critique of Western modernity. He argued that moral progress often lags behind scientific advancements and that nations like India and China should not follow Western frameworks of

development. Citing Liang Qichao's reflections on Tagore, he noted that Tagore's thoughts remain crucial to human progress and the concept of "Ananda for All". Drawing from this line of thought, **Dr. Archishman Raju**, a scientist and founding member of the Intercivilizational Dialogue Project, discussed making Tagore's philosophies more accessible to a broader audience. He outlined three key aspects of Tagore's thoughts:

- **Modernity and Moral Progress:** Tagore critiqued Western concepts of modernity, advocating for an Asian understanding of progress.
- **Human Experience:** Tagore emphasised unity and inclusivity, countering divisiveness.
- **Pan-Asianism:** Dr. Raju stressed the need to recognise shared historical experiences in Asia, cautioning against imitating Western models of development. He also underscored the urgency of dialogue between India and China in light of contemporary global conflicts.

In his keynote address, **Prof. Udaya Narayana Singh**, focused on knowledge exploration within Eastern traditions. He highlighted Rabindranath Tagore's pivotal role in promoting mutual understanding and respect among diverse cultures, framing Tagore as a beacon of intellectual unity and cultural dialogue. Prof. Singh underscored the importance of transcending rigid disciplinary boundaries, advocating for a synthesis of ideas that fosters creativity and innovation deeply rooted in the principles of Eastern philosophy. Prof. Singh emphasised the importance of transcending disciplinary boundaries to foster creativity and innovation grounded in Eastern thought. He also urged the audience to revisit the wisdom embedded in these traditions, not as relics of the past, but as dynamic sources of inspiration for addressing contemporary global challenges. By integrating the humanistic values of Eastern thought with modern advancements, Prof. Singh envisioned a future where intellectual exchange and cross-cultural harmony lead to sustainable progress.

Acknowledging the significance of the conference in reaffirming commitments to civilizational dialogue, **Prof. Alka Acharya** stressed the need to transcend nation-state divisions and cultivate a shared understanding of human civilization. She also noted the logistical challenges in bringing Chinese scholars to the event and emphasised their valuable contributions to the discussions.

Session I

Tagore's Writings in Intercultural Context

The session was chaired by **Prof. Sreemati Chakrabarti**, Chairperson, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; and, former Professor, Department of East Asian Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Delhi. The Chair introduced the session by focusing on the significance of Rabindranath Tagore's historic 1924 visit to China. She highlighted how Tagore's visit sparked renewed discussions about the long-standing civilizational connections between China and India. Central to the discussion was Tagore's concept of internationalism, which, at that time, did not resonate strongly with the majority in both India and China. This was largely due to the prevailing socio-political contexts in the two countries, where nationalist movements and the struggle for independence from colonial rule dominated public consciousness. The Chair further explored the tension between Tagore's ideas and those of Mahatma Gandhi, who prioritised nationalism over internationalism. Prof. Chakrabarti argued that in India, Tagore's vision of internationalism came in conflict with Mahatma Gandhi's ideas of nationalism, which focused more on India's independence and self-reliance. The Chair also underscored Tagore's deep appreciation for Asia's ancient cultural heritage, which he sought to highlight in the face of growing Western imperialism. However, Tagore's emphasis on Asian cultural unity did not gain much traction during that period, as both India and China were preoccupied with their respective nationalistic and anti-colonial struggles. Over time, however, Tagore's ideas gained greater recognition and popularity.

The speakers were **Prof. Manabendra Mukhopadhyay**, Department of Bengali, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal; **Prof. Huang Rong**, Centre for India Studies, Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, People's Republic of China; **Prof. Xiao Xingzheng**, College of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Xiamen University, Xiamen, People's Republic of China; and, **Prof. Wei Liming**, Department of Asia-Pacific Studies, Peking University, Beijing, People's Republic of China.

The first presentation by **Prof. Manabendra Mukhopadhyay** titled, “**Tagore's ‘Mission’ of China: Review and Reassessment after a Century**” revolved around Tagore's concept of internationalism, humanity, and the cultural complementarity between various civilizations of the world. Prof. Mukhopadhyay highlighted that Tagore's travels to many countries — excluding Australia — were part of an unofficial cultural mission aimed at connecting, sharing knowledge,

and fostering mutual understanding between these nations during a time of Western colonial dominance. Through his writings, Tagore consistently condemned any form of armed aggression against different nations and cultures. Drawing from ancient Indian philosophical thought, his work promoted the idea of ancient Asian cultural superiority over Western imperialism and colonialism. The speaker suggested that Tagore's 1924 visit to China was a step towards nurturing cultural harmony, love, and humanity. The trip, which was also funded by the Birla family, saw Tagore accompanied by Kshitimohan Sen, Nandalal Bose, and Elmhurst. Through his visit, Tagore also sought to bring China's cultural and civilizational knowledge to Visva-Bharati, aiming to transform it into a melting pot of diverse cultures. However, the speaker underscored that many scholars in both India and China were initially sceptical of his ambition to unify the two civilisations, as few people at that time were aware of the ancient cultural and civilizational links between these two civilizations. The speaker concluded that Tagore's primary objective in visiting China was to draw upon the ancient civilizational values of Asia to restore order and provide direction to the turbulent and directionless societies of India and China during that period.

In the second presentation titled, **“Rabindranath Tagore and Tan Yunshan: Sowing the Seeds of China- India Friendship”**, Prof. Huang Rong highlighted the long history of India-China cultural exchange, focusing on the contributions of renowned Chinese Indologists who dedicated their lives to strengthening ties between the two ancient civilizations. Prof. Huang discussed figures such as Ji Xianlin, Tan Yunshan, Jin Kemu, and Xue Keqiao, who carried forward Tagore's vision of love and friendship between India and China. The speaker further argued that Tagore's 1924 visit to China marked the beginning of a renewed cultural and civilizational contact between the two countries. One notable figure, Tan Yunshan, who was inspired by Tagore's ideals of internationalism, love, and humanity, visited Visva-Bharati, at Santiniketan in 1928. The speaker stressed that Tan Yunshan along with Cai Yuanpei played pivotal roles in convincing the Ministry of Culture in China to donate books and other bibliographical sources to the Cheena Bhavana Library at Visva-Bharati. The establishment of Cheena Bhavana and the introduction of Chinese language and cultural studies at Visva-Bharati became instrumental in deepening knowledge of Chinese civilization. The speaker further underscored the key role played by the next generation of Chinese Indologists including Hu Ruji, Luo Haoran, Shen Chen, Dong Youchen, and Yu Longyu, among others, some of whom were also Tan Yunshan's students, and who later initiated several Indic study centres at various academic and research institutions across China. Additionally, Prof. Huang also highlighted the contributions made by prominent Indian Sinologists such as Prabodh Chandra Bagchi who had visited China in 1947, further cementing the cultural ties between the two nations. In her presentation, Prof. Huang

also shared a few glimpses of academic and cultural activities organised by the Centre for India Studies located at Shenzhen University to commemorate and honour Tagore's timeless legacy.

In his presentation titled **“Rabindranath Tagore's Inspirational Influence on my Creative Writing”**, **Prof. Xiao Xingzheng** shared some insights into his poetry, which has been profoundly influenced by Rabindranath Tagore. As a faculty member at Xiamen University in Fujian province, he shared and discussed select pieces from his poetry publications, which included his translations of several notable works such as Tagore's collections, Shakespeare's Sonnets, and Rumi's mystical poems, among others. However, he emphasised that his most significant and well-known translation was *Geetanjali*, highlighting its profound impact on his literary journey. During the presentation, Prof. Xiao spoke at length about his personal journey as a poet and how deeply Tagore's ideas have shaped his creative process. He described his own style as “mystical romanticism”, a term he claimed aptly captures the essence of his poetic expression.

In the final presentation by **Prof. Wei Liming** titled, **“The Intersection of Rabindranath Tagore and Peking University: From Cai Yuanpei to PKU Courses on Tagore”**, she shared her extensive experience of teaching Tagore's works at Beijing University, where she has been engaged in the field for over 20 years. She highlighted that more than 1,000 students and teachers regularly participate in her classes on Tagore's literary contributions. In addition to teaching Tagore's works, Prof. Wei also discussed how she has incorporated Indian yoga into her curriculum, blending physical and mental disciplines with Tagore's literary teachings. During her presentation, she showcased images of Beijing University students performing Tagore's play titled, *The Post Office*, illustrating how Tagore's writings continue to inspire and actively engage young Chinese students. Prof. Wei further emphasised her efforts to implement Tagore's educational philosophy at Beijing University, aligning his vision of holistic education with her unique teaching methods.

Session II:

Rabindranath Tagore's Vision of India, China and the World

The session was chaired by **Amb. Vinod C. Khanna**, Emeritus Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi. The speakers were **Prof. Uma Das Gupta**, Historian and Tagore Biographer, Kolkata; **Prof. Huang Yinghong**, Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonapat; and, **Dr.**

Indrani Bhattacharjee, Jindal School of Liberal Arts & Humanities, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat.

In his opening remarks, **Amb. Vinod C. Khanna** highlighted how Tagore was deeply influenced by his surroundings, from his immediate family background to the developments in India, China and the world, including the Opium Wars in the mid-19th century, the Sino-Japanese War in the mid-1890s, World War I, and the Gandhi-led Indian freedom struggle. Amb. Khanna mentioned that, although Tagore described himself as a poet, he was indeed a fighter. Whether it was denouncing Mussolini's fascism in Italy, or speaking against Gandhi's views, he resolutely expressed his beliefs. Amb. Khanna concluded by noting how Visva-Bharati is the practical culmination of his vision.

In her presentation titled, **“What was Rabindranath Tagore looking for from his Dialogue with China?”**, **Prof. Uma Das Gupta** discussed Tagore's China visit in detail. She stated that although Tagore praised Western democratic values, he criticised Western nationalism and saw it as warmongering for territorial expansionism, making him worried about its adoption in Asia. Tagore considered China as a non-aggressive nation and hoped that China's values would balance the aggressive values of the West. His vision was to bring the best of the East and West together. Prof. Das Gupta traced the events leading up to Tagore's China visit, discussed the details of his delegation and the following outcomes to sustain dialogue between India and China. She argued that apart from his attempt to renew Sino-Indian ties by invoking the strong Buddhist connections between the two states, Tagore wanted the civilizational dialogue to be about avoiding war and violence. Prof. Das Gupta noted that Tagore deemed his China visit very successful.

Prof. Huang Yinghong spoke on **“From Interstate Relations to Inter-Civilization Relations: A Case Study from Rabindranath Tagore's Phenomenal Visit to China in 1924”**. His presentation focused on the shift from traditional inter-state relations to the broader concept of inter-civilization relations, using Rabindranath Tagore's 1924 visit to China as a case study. He underscored the significance of Tagore's visit, describing it as exceptional, and characterised Tagore as a cultural envoy between India and China. Prof. Huang noted that Tagore's interactions with prominent Chinese intellectuals and figures such as Liang Qichao, Hu Shi, Tai Xu, and Mei Lanfang symbolised a moment of deep cultural exchange between the two nations. He highlighted the historical and cultural connections between the Indian and Chinese civilizations, emphasising shared elements such as reverence for Gautama Buddha. However, he also acknowledged the challenges in modern times, noting the failure of the 'Chindia' concept, a notion that aimed to unite

India and China. In Prof. Huang's view, while the state remains the dominant actor in shaping international relations, there is a pressing need to look beyond inter-state frameworks. He proposed that inter-civilisation relations offer an alternative perspective that could foster deeper and more meaningful connections between nations. By restoring historical links between India and China, there is potential for strengthening these civilizational bonds in ways that transcend mere state-to-state interactions.

In her presentation, **Dr. Indrani Bhattacharjee** presented on the topic, “**Rabindranath Tagore and the Question of a Characteristically Indian Cosmopolitanism**”. Her presentation delved into Rabindranath Tagore's distinctive approach to cosmopolitanism, with a particular focus on its uniquely Indian character. Drawing from Shuchen Xiang's recent work, *Chinese Cosmopolitanism: The History and Philosophy of an Idea*, Dr. Bhattacharjee explored the Chinese philosophical conception of harmony among people shaped by diverse value systems. She discussed how, until the 2000s, the idea of cosmopolitanism was often linked to political detachment, veiled ethnocentrism, and elitist aesthetics — an approach that Tagore actively rejected. Tagore, though living a paradoxical life as a privileged Asian cosmopolitan from a colonised nation, developed his concept of cosmopolitanism, which was grounded in a synthesis of philosophical traditions. These included the Upanishads, the Buddhist Tripiṭaka, and the humanist ideals of *Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism*. Dr. Bhattacharjee outlined several key aspects of Tagore's cosmopolitanism, highlighting how her interpretation differed from those of notable scholars such as Martha Nussbaum and David T. Hansen. Dr. Bhattacharjee also reflected on the similarities and differences between Tagore's vision of cosmopolitanism and the Chinese model described by Xiang, providing a comparative lens on both traditions.

Session III:

Panel Discussion on Tagore's Ideas of Humanism, Nationalism & Universalism

The session featured a panel discussion on Tagore's Ideas of humanism, nationalism and universalism. The session was moderated by **Prof. Samik Bandopadhyay**, Tagore Scholar and Cultural Critic based in Kolkata. The panellists were **Prof. Mridula Mukherjee**, Historian, New Delhi, India; **Ms. Anita Agnihotri**, Creative Writer, Kolkata; and, **Prof. S.P. Ganguly**, Spanish & Latin American Literature Studies scholar, New Delhi.

Prof. Samik Bandyopadhyay began the session by explaining what is the essence of Tagore's Idea of humanism, nationalism and universalism. He recited the poem "Satabdir Surjo" which Tagore wrote on the last day of the year 1899. Through the poem, Prof. Samik Bandyopadhyay explained how farsighted Tagore was that he foresaw a human-created worldwide catastrophe like World War I. He expounded that the root cause of the War was the extremely nationalistic behaviour of Western capitalism and colonialism, which is totally in contrast to Tagore's idea of humanism, nationalism and universalism. Tagore's ideas were based on absolute love towards the human civilisation. Tagore, throughout his life, through his numerous writings vehemently opposed Western and Japanese aggression on other countries and civilisations.

Prof. Mridula Mukherjee highlighted that Tagore was opposed to the idea of nationalism, but at the same time, he was also an active participant of the Indian *Swadeshi* movement. Tagore severely criticised the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919, but was opposed to Gandhi's nationalist ideas. Prof. Mukherjee explained that Tagore's idea of nationalism was a substitution of western capitalism, imperialism and colonialism. Prof. Mukherjee explained that Tagore's ideas of humanism, nationalism and universalism are rooted in ancient Indian thought, and were very different from Gandhi's idea of nationalism. Tagore was against colonialism, imperialism and capitalism, but was a supporter of civilisational bonhomie and mutual learning.

Ms. Anita Agnihotri emphasised that the foundation of Tagore's ideas of humanism, nationalism and universalism was his profound love for mankind. She supported her argument by referring to some of Tagore's most renowned short stories such as *Khata*, *The Postmaster* and *Shasti* as well as his celebrated novels such as *Gora* and *Ghore Baire* which exemplify Tagore's humanism, nationalism and universalism. Tagore envisioned Indian society to be true to its essence, which he believed lay in the love for mankind.

Prof. S. P. Ganguly, who has worked extensively on the reception of Tagore's ideas in the Hispanic world argued that it is the Hispanic world where Tagore's ideas of humanism, nationalism and universalism survived in a comprehensive manner. He also emphasised the fact that different aspects of Tagore's ideas have been a topic of in-depth discussion in the USA and Europe. Prof. Ganguly further discussed Tagore's visit to Peru in 1915, where he met Victoria Ocampo.

Vote of Thanks

The Vote of Thanks was delivered by **Dr. Avijit Banerjee**, Co-Convenor; and Head of Department, Cheena-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan. In his address, Dr. Banarjee expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the partner institutions — Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), India International Centre (IIC), Intercivilizational Dialogue Project (IDP), Gandhi Global Family (GGF), the Centre for Chinese & South East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, media partner, The Print, and Cheena Bhavana, Visva-Bharati for making the conference a tremendous success. Dr. Banerjee extended his special thanks to Professor Sabaree Mitra for her dedication and leadership in organising the event and acknowledged the contributions of Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty, Dr. Archishman Raju, Prof. Udaya Narayana Singh, Prof. Alka Acharya, Prof. Uma Das Gupta, Prof. Sreemati Chakrabarti, and Dr. Snigdha Konar. He also expressed deep appreciation to Mr. Sudheendra Kulkarni for his financial support. Finally, he thanked all participants for their presence and contributions, which enriched the discussions and helped honour Rabindranath Tagore's legacy, and emphasised the importance of continuing to foster civilizational dialogue and collaboration in future endeavours.

Image Gallery

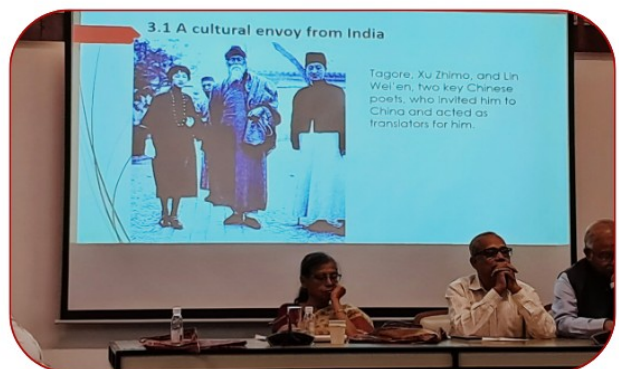


Image Gallery



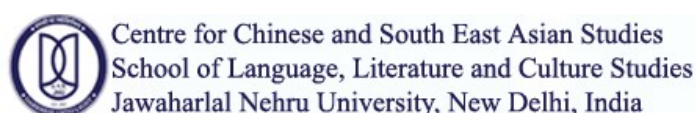
INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE



The **Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS)**, New Delhi is engaged in and committed to interdisciplinary research on China. Apart from the annual All India Conference of China Studies (AICCS), the Institute undertakes various collaborative research programs and multilateral initiatives with prominent institutions in India and abroad, and brings together leading and upcoming scholars through multiple fora. Among its many legacies, it has been conducting the iconic Wednesday Seminar for over 50 years and publishes the *China Report*, a peer-reviewed quarterly journal on China and East Asia, currently in its 60th year of publication.



The **India International Centre (IIC)** is a non-government institution widely regarded as a place where statesmen, diplomats, policymakers, intellectuals, scientists, jurists, writers, artists and members of civil society meet to initiate the exchange of new ideas and knowledge in the spirit of international cooperation. Its purpose, stated in its charter, is ‘to promote understanding and amity between the different communities of the world’. In short, the Centre stands for a vision that looks at India as a place where it is possible to initiate dialogues in an atmosphere of amity and understanding.



Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies (CCSEAS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi was established in 1996. The CCSEAS offers a full-time three-year BA (Hons.), two-year MA, and PhD in Chinese language, literature, culture, civilization and Sino-Indian studies. The Centre offers an intensive specialised training in modern Chinese language with particular emphasis on the commonly spoken language (putunghua) in present day China. Apart from developing proficiency in the language, the students are gradually exposed to the cultural and literary heritage of China through both classical and contemporary texts.



Cheena Bhavana, established in 1937 at Visva-Bharati in Santiniketan, is a renowned centre for Sino-Indian cultural and academic exchanges. Founded with the support of Rabindranath Tagore and Chinese scholars like Tan Yun-Shan, it has played a significant role in promoting Chinese language, literature, philosophy, and history in India. The institution has served as a bridge between Indian and Chinese civilizations, fostering scholarly research and collaboration. Over the years, it has hosted numerous distinguished scholars and contributed to the understanding of Chinese culture in India.



Gandhi Global Family (GGF) is a Peace NGO which propagates the ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela among youth. It works toward enhancing friendship at the grassroots level, and establish people-to-people contact throughout the world. GGF engages youth to participate in various activities including debates, quizzes, leadership programmes and mini-democratic sessions at the State Assemblies and the Parliament. GGF tries to identify local peace messengers throughout the country and recognise their efforts in promoting communal harmony and spreading interfaith beliefs. The NGO undertakes a wide range of social awareness programmes in collaboration with the United Nations India.

Intercivilizational Dialogue Project

The **Intercivilizational Dialogue Project** is an organisation committed to dialogue between civilizations. It regularly facilitates dialogue between people and intellectuals representing different countries and civilizations. The organisation is committed to the struggle for peace, democracy and the elimination of poverty. The Intercivilizational Dialogue Project also publishes a journal titled, *Vishwabandhu*, or "Friend of the World".