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Seminar on the Mughal and Maratha Period (1500AD-1800AD)

Let us explore India's Cultural History – VI

Saturday, May 4, 2019 | 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Bemis Hall, 15 Bedford Road, Lincoln, MA.

Shall I describe the constancy of the inhabitants or record their benevolence of mind?

Shall I portray the beauty that charms the heart or sing of purity unstained?

Shall I tell of heroic valor or weave romances of their vivacity of intellect and their lore?

The inhabitants of this land are religious, affectionate, hospitable, genial and frank.

They are fond of scientific pursuits, inclined to austerity of life, seekers after justice, contented, industrious, capable in affairs, loyal, truthful and constant.

The true worth of this people shines most in the day of adversity and its soldiers know not retreat from the field.

Ain-i-Akbari (page 8, Vol III in translation), by poet and essayist Abul Fazl, 1580AD, translated by Col. H.S. Jarrett, Royal Asiatic Society, 1948.

O King, you are no more. Your empire has vanished like a dream, your throne lies shattered...
your minstrels sing no more, your musicians no longer mingle their strains with the murmuring Jamuna...
Despite all this, the courier of your love, untarnished by time, unwearied, unmoved by the rise and fall of empires, unconcerned with the ebb and flow of life and death, carries the ageless message of your love from age to age: 'Never shall I forget you, beloved, never.

– Rabindranath Tagore on "Taj Mahal" (translated by Kshitish Roy)
from "One Hundred and One Poems" (pp 95-96).

SEMINAR ON THE MUGHAL-MARATHA PERIOD IN INDIA, 1500AD-1800AD.

PROGRAM

Session I

9:30 – 12:15

Welcome, announcements – Dr. Bijoy Misra

Invocation recitation – *Sant Tukaram Abhang "Sundara te Dhyam"* –

Voice - Ms. Shuchita Rao, table accompaniment by Mr. Yogeesh Bhat; RASA Institute, Sharon, MA.

"Mughal-Maratha Period Geography and People" – Ms. Hardeep Mann

"Mughal-Maratha Period Language and Literature" – Mr. Prem Nagar

"Advent and Proliferation of Islam in Bengal" – Dr. Mawdudur Rahman, Suffolk University, Boston, MA

"Mughal-Maratha Period Art and Culture" – Dr. Krishnakali Dasgupta

Rendering from Poet Tulasi Das – *SriHanuman Chalisa* - Mr. Sudhir Parikh Nd Mrs. Niruben Parikh, Satsang Center, Woburn, MA

Lunch - 12:15 - 1:00

Session II

1:00- 4:00

"Mughal-Maratha Period Economy and Politics" – Ms. Bhavani Vankineni

"Chhatrapati Shivaji and Maratha Empire" – Dr. Mukund Chorghade, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

"Mughal-Maratha Period Philosophy and Religion" – Dr. Satyendra Sharma

"Bhakti Literature in Kannada" – Mr. V. S. Ramapriya, Chinmaya Mission, Andover, MA.

"Mughal-Maratha Period Science and Technology" - Dr. Bijoy Misra

Q&A and Discussion

Saint Tyagaraja Kirtana - Bhakthi Bhikshameeyave - Voice: Aniketh Chilukuri, Ananya Gade, Akshaya Napa Ramesh, Nikitha Arumugam, Srikar Mallajosyula, Sriram Krishnamoorthy, Synthia Kumar, Keshav Desibhatla, Smitha Rajan - Students of Abhyaas School of Music, Director: Ms. Aparna Balaji, mridangam accompaniment by Gautam Giridharan, Billerica, MA.

Vote of Thanks

It should not escape notice that gold and silver, after circulating in every other quarter of the globe, come at length to be swallowed up, lost in some measure, in Hindoustan. ... Let it also be borne in mind that all Indian vessels, whether they belong to Indians themselves, or to the Dutch – or English, or Portuguese, which every year carry cargoes of merchandise from Hindoustan to Pegu, Tenasser, Siam, Ceylon, Achem, Macasser, the Maldives, the Mozambic, and other places, bring back to Hindoustan from these countries a large quantity of precious metals, which share the same fate of those brought from Moka, Bosarra, and Bander-Abassi. And in regard to gold and silver which the Dutch draw from Japan, where there are mines, a part is, sooner or later, introduced into Hindoustan; and whatever is brought directly by sea, either from Portugal or from France, seldom leaves the country, returns being made in merchandise

(Travels in the Mogul Empire 1656-1668, by Francois Bernier, The French Physician to Mogul Court, Translation by Archibald Constable, Oxford University Press)

**My brothers in their love what concord show!
This homeward comes ere that doth journeying go.
That went, and behind him all that my life he bore,
This comes, and coming doth that life restore!
(Poem by Mulla Talib Isfahani in Akbar's Court)**

Contributors:

Guest speakers and Musicians:

Dr. Mawdudur Rahman is Professor-Emeritus at Suffolk University, Boston. He studies knowledge globalization and is active in Bangladesh community with efforts to organize an American Islamic Community Center in Lexington, MA.

Dr. Mukund Chorghade is a Chemist and hails from the land of Shivaji. He is affiliated with many Universities and is active in pharmaceutical research. He has taught Indian cultural history in schools.

Mr. Vrittamani Ramapriya is retired engineer and a student of the scriptures. He is a volunteer with the Cinmaya Mission in Boston and actively participates in activities of India Discovery Center.

Ms. Shuchita Rao is a trained Hindustani vocalist and the founder of music school RASA.

Mr. Sudhir Parikh is a devotional musician and a yoga instructor. He is accompanied by his wife **Ms. Niruben Parikh**.

Ms. Aparna Balaji hails from a family of musicians and is the Founder/Director of Abhyaas School of Music.

Moderator:

Dr. Sonal Jhaveri studied Physics, Mathematics, Psychology and Neuroscience. She is in the Faculty of Brain and Cognitive Science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and with the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute..

Research Presenters:

Ms. Hardeep Mann is a textile designer and a social activist. With family rooting and upbringing, she developed attachment to Indian culture and an interest to understand its diversity. She is an active member of the South Asia Center in Cambridge and participates regularly with the meetings in India Discovery Center.

Dr. Krishnakali Dasgupta is a Postdoctoral Associate in Genetics and Developmental Biology at New York University. Trained in Manipuri, Kathakali and Bharatnatyam dance styles, she has performed around the world through the group Mitradheya of Kolkata, India. She keeps interest in languages, oration, photography and art.

Mr. Prem Nagar is a technology professional and works for the Oracle Corporation. He is a researcher in the field of cognitive science and contributes scientific papers in the field. He is a poet and a scholar in Hindi. He serves as a Director of India Discovery Center.

Dr. Satyendra Sharma comes from a family of scholars in Rajasthan, India. He works as a technical professional in a local company. Bred in philosophy and literature, he is an avid participant in the religious and devotional events in the area. He serves as Executive Director of India Discovery Center.

Dr. Bijoy Misra is a physicist, Sanskrit scholar and a poet. He keeps interest in teaching young children and organizing community activities in culture. He is in the Faculty of Harvard University. He is the Founder and President of India Discovery Center.

Ms. Bhavani Vankineni "Vani" is an IT professional with active participation in Indian scriptural reading, cultural productions and in community service. Empathetic in nature, she helps people in need. She serves as the Treasurer of India Discovery Center.

बहू शास्त्र धुंडाळिता वाड आहे । जया निश्चयो येक तोही न साहे ॥
मती भांडती शास्त्रबोधे विरोधे । गती खुंटती ज्ञानबोधे प्रबोधे ॥॥॥

**Searching for (God) in all the Shashtras will be of no avail as it will only lead you astray. Opposing views in scriptures will be impediment to your path to enlightenment.
(Guru Samartha Ramdas, 17th cent.)**

“Study of the Nughal-Martha Period (1500AD-1800AD)” is the sixth seminar offering in a series entitled “Let us Explore the Cultural History of India”
Synopsis of the tracks in today's seminar:

Geography and People: The Mughals occupied India from the north and gradually expanded to the east and south. Incorporation of new land to agriculture helped spur the economy and brought new areas under control. An intermediary class of Amirs developed. Religious conversion was common and caste system prevailed.

Art and Culture: Persian design and architecture were imported to create a fusion. Massive monolithic constructions were installed to demonstrate the power of the Empire. Miniature drawings were common. Court commissioned music and dance created new style of expression. Bhakti movement took root with many saints in various regions.

Language and Literature: Persian replaced Sanskrit as the court language and a new hybrid language Hindustani developed in popular use. Bhakti movement sprouted creative compositions in all regional languages with new styles of poetics and rhythm. Traditional schools were abandoned in favor of new madrasas. Repressive methods were employed to impose Persian on people.

Philosophy and Religion: Saint Kabir, Poet Ravidas and Guru Nanak called for religious harmony. Various sectarian groups developed through the proliferation of the idea of a personal God. Bhakti movement propagated non-sectarian ideas but the religious freedom was limited. Temples were destroyed. Religious festivals survived under an administrative protocol.

Economy and Politics: The Mughals created an elaborate administrative set up to govern people. All land was usurped to the State and the farmers were made leased land for cultivation. The produce was heavily taxed in an asymmetric fashion, While the economy spiked in the beginning, it collapsed eventually. Lack of political freedom suffocated the country.

Science and Technology: A school of Mathematics and Astronomy developed in Kerala doing innovative work of algebraic series, infinitesimals and trigonometric functions. Observatories were set up in various cities for accurate time measurement and astrological predictions. New medicine was explored. Use of iron and tools helped create structures and naval operations.

Sponsors (Charter members): Dr. Umaballav Mishra, Dr. Dinesh Shah, Mr. Chandramouli Subbaraman Mr. Mahendra S Bakshi, Mr. Sarboday Misra, Dr. Ramaiya Balachandra, Mr. Ram N Gupta, Anonymous.

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ತೋಯಜಾಕ್ಷನ ದಯ ನಮಗೀಗ ದೊರಕಿತು ಇನ್ನೇನಿನ್ನೇನು ||

Maayada samsaara mamakaara hingitu inneninnenu |
Toyajaakshana daya namagiga dorakitu inneninnenu ||

Illusory worldly life (and the) attachment have dried out so what else can happen now?
Lotus eyed Lord's grace is with us what else can happen now?
(Purandara Dasa, Kannada Poet, 16th Century)