art East

JOURNAL 2018

ArtEast 2018

Art and Livelihood, Migration and Displacement

Co-authored by Monica Banerjee and Kishalay Bhattacharjee. Organised by National Foundation for India (NFI) in collaboration with India International Centre, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation and New Imaginations, Jindal School of Journalism and Communication.

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	Khushi Gupta
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Cover Photo	*Standing in his bamboo house, a Nyishi headman checks his traditional headgear (now made of fiberglass and not of hornbill casque) before setting out for a meeting.* Arunachal Pradesh, December 2011 by Arati Kumar Rao
Back Cover Photo	*Umsning village, Mawkynrew, East Khasi Hills district,* Meghalaya 2007 by Sudharak Olwe

February
1-3
2018

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Curated by
Kishalay
Bhattacharjee

© image courtesy: Arati Kumar Rao

Exhibitions • Installations • Workshops • Inter/ Sections • Films • Adda • History • Pottery • Folk • Bamboo • Music • Art • Livelihood • Migration • Climate Change

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India International Centre (IIC)
Gandhi King Plaza; Art Gallery- Kamaladevi Complex; Quadrangle Garden; Seminar Rooms I to III, Kamaladevi Complex; Fountain Lawns; C D Deshmukh Auditorium

Curator's Note

KISHALAY BHATTACHARJEE

1- 7 FEBRUARY, 2018

An Ode To Bamboo

I grew up in Shillong where our house had a bamboo grove in the backyard; tall and imposing grass that provided me the secret playground by day but turned mysterious by night with the culms creaking in the wind making the bamboo music.

The front yard had a different variety of bamboo, much tamer and shorter that provided a half of the natural fence. We used this bamboo to make picket fence for the flowers and often they would double up as wickets when friends came over for a game of cricket.

I never saw bamboo as anything but part of our daily lives.

When we were visualising this edition of ArtEast, a festival of art and livelihood that focuses largely on India's Northeast, we wanted to imagine the region beyond the borders with a completely different lens and while searching for the dots we found the most enduring and resilient connecting thread is bamboo.

Though I spent my childhood with bamboo around me, it is only much later when I realised how life in the region is inextricably connected to bamboo; livelihood, art, craft, dance, architecture and objects of everyday use. While researching on this theme, we encountered the seminal work of designer M P Ranjan who documented bamboo in the Northeast and believed that the people across the states of the region had a philosophy around bamboo. He continued his mission with the grass through a project called Chalo Katlamara in Tripura.

This exhibition is therefore a tribute to M P Ranjan.

Taking off from Ranjan's book Bamboo and Cane Crafts of North East India that he wrote with Ghanashyam Pandya and Nilam Iyer in 1986, we have reproduced some paragraphs and illustrations to introduce bamboo as it were in it's many avatars.

The centre piece of the exhibition is a new-media installation that takes the viewer through a slow ecological degradation and loss of traditional livelihood due to migration and other urban pressures.

We have collated photographs and paintings of how bamboo is used in the region from building the most daunting bridges across rivers and high mountains to even a fishing trap and rice baskets. A story and a poem on bamboo help us look at the grass in a completely different light. The charming story of how dreams can buy you fortunes in Shillong through a game of bows and arrows on a bamboo mast displayed in a multi-media installation.

ARTEAST 2018 IS AN ODE TO BAMBOO

art East

February
1-7
2018

An Ode to Bamboo

Exhibition • Installation • Poetry • Stories

Arati Kumar Rao, Sumana Roy, Sukant Panigrahy, Kaur Chimuk, Parasher Baruah, Pankhi Saikia, Vijay Jodha and Siddhartha Das

Curated by
Kishalay Bhattacharjee

Opening on 1st February 2018, 5 p.m.

2st – 7th February 2018, 11a.m.- 7p.m.

Art Gallery, Kamaladevi Complex,
India International Centre

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M.P. RANJAN
(1950 – 2015)

Design learning started early for Ranjan when he was growing up with his siblings Manohar and Meera in his father's toy factory in Madras called Modern Agencies and their shop Rocky Toys. He used to tell me, "When other children were playing with toys, we were making toys!" Design could go very far, he realized in solving problems. Ranjan then joined National Institute of Design where he would later teach. He loved working with his hands and became involved with the toymakers of Chennapatna.

When his wife Aditi - at that time his colleague at NID - went to the Northeast in 1977, Ranjan was in Ahmedabad developing her photograph rolls. He was hugely excited by what came out of the darkroom. There were a fantastic range of products - bridges, fences, mats, containers and baskets - all made of bamboo; the possibilities that one material could become so many forms was a driving force. Ranjan saw the big picture - how an entire village could subsist by growing bamboo, working with it and selling products. He saw the designer as someone who could intervene and create the linkages for the craftsperson to connect with the world markets by making better products and giving them a platform.

Ranjan envisioned a revitalization of the crafts industry. His documentation of bamboo with Nilam Iyer and Ghanshyam Pandya in the Northeast led him to the realization that traditional wisdom would forever be lost if it was not made relevant in new forms. The designer had to create the complete network and establishment for this transition to happen successfully. We see this in his project at Katlamara in Tripura.

For him, bamboo was a way to bring livelihoods, design and sustainability together. In bamboo, Ranjan found his medium through which he could speak, write, dance and celebrate. He would sow the seeds for a thousand plantations and hundred thousand designs would be churned out fulfilling millions of dreams and rejuvenating billions of lives.

SUJATHA SHANKAR KUMAR
A writer and visualiser based in Chennai, Sujatha is a design graduate from NID with an MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

A faculty at National Institute of Design since 1976, M.P. Ranjan taught and practiced design with rare energy, garnering world recognition as a design thinker. A passionate advocate of democratising resources, MPR walked the talk, relentlessly publishing papers and creating platforms for exchange and knowledge sharing.

Ranjan was instrumental in the setup of the IICD, (Indian Institute of Crafts and Design) Jaipur, acting as Director in its formative stages. He and textile designer Aditi Ranjan, his life partner, compiled Handmade in India, an encyclopaedic 'labour of love', receiving Craft Council of India's Kamala Samman award. Their daughter Aparna Ranjan is a graphic designer.

Ranjan became Head, NID Centre of Bamboo Initiatives foreseeing enormous possibilities for what had been achieved in the crucible of the North East, where relatively isolated, bamboo's creative exploration was pushed to its zenith. From 2000, he was involved with reinvigorating the Bamboo and Cane Development Institute (BCDI) in Agartala, where more than 150 master craftsmen were trained. Ranjan's commitment that design should marry craft to create formidable progeny came through in the project Katlamara Chalo.

SUJATHA SHANKAR KUMAR

BamBoo

Bare-limbed, motionless, prop and protagonist,
it stands, as if mimicking its own sculpture,
holding its breath permanently,
immune to fatigue.
(Occasionally, only occasionally, fugitive leaves –
leaves like bird beaks, open, always hungry.)
(Its node-knots, soft, but only to the eye –
like a girl's first sense of her breasts.)
To be able to reduce a life to two lines
requires the grace of darkness.

||

Only parallel lines are resistant to shock –
anything that is joined will break.
Time bleaches away colour –
hair loses its blackness,
the sky its ceremony,
the greenness of bamboo is taken away.
And when you begin to see it as human,
you look for a flaw, the biography of an accident.
Not finding any, you try to move it,
like parting a woman's legs,
and the question arrives without air –
How would one make love to a bamboo?

SUMANA ROY

Arati Kumar Rao

Siddhartha Das

Vijay Jodha

Did you Dream a Fortune?

Archery in Shillong is not just a sport but also a gaming/gambling livelihood that was banned till the 80s. The conspicuous teer kiosks in every corner of the town are shops many wouldn't enter because of the taboo of cheap gambling.

Teer is indeed about shooting arrows at a target. Designated clubs are selected to shoot on their given days of the week and the arrows counted to arrive at various digits that determine the gambling prize.

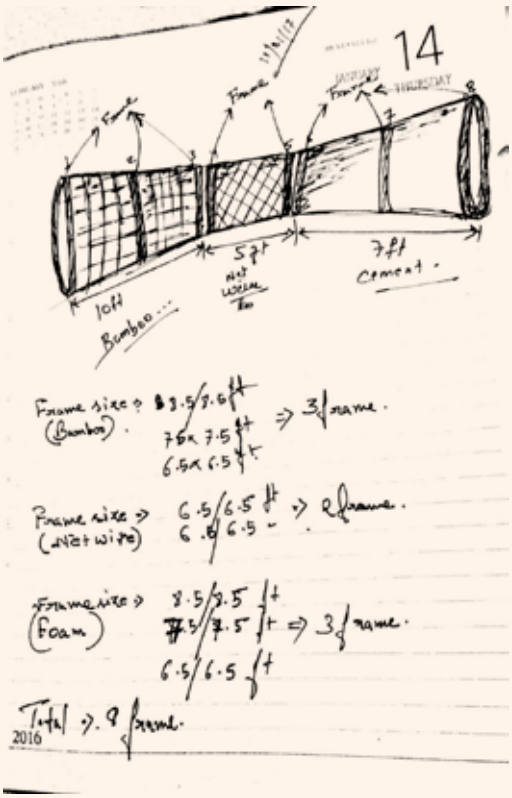
But the gamblers wouldn't hazard a guess without Shillong's own Teer Interpretation of Dreams where a woman is a 5 and a man is a 6!

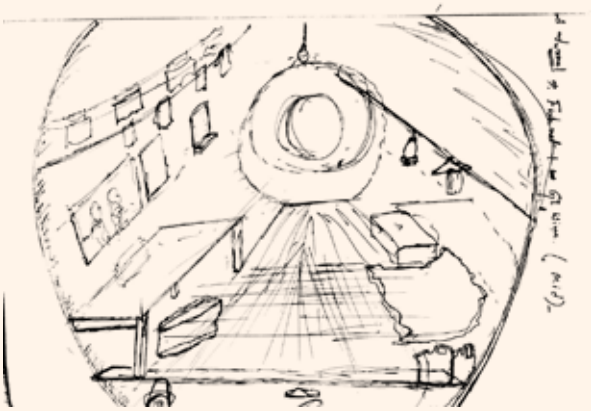
Parasher Baruah conceived this multimedia installation to depict one of the most engaging conversations and activities of Shillong and one where the arrows and the target are all made of bamboo.

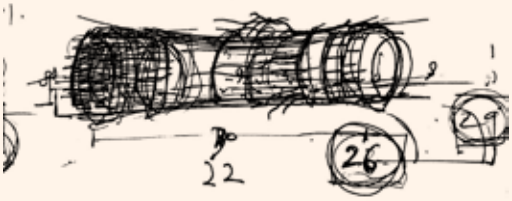
An unseen tunnel inside a displaced proletarian

Sukant Panigrahy & Kaur Chimuk

A mixed media installation combined with the physical experiential object and subtle performative appearance. This installation is a creative way of sharing the crisis of ecological disorder and the unsustained urban pressure. The crisis of internal migration and the displaced ecological site has complex similarities. Viewers can travel through the tunnel and experience the transitional point of green space to grey space. The tunnel is conceptualized with both organic and non-organic life.







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2018

Of Pinecones and Sacred Forests

Lecture demonstration by
Rida & the Musical Folks
11:00a.m. to 1:00p.m.

India International Centre (IIC)
Gandhi Kirti Plaza, Art Gallery- Kamaladevi Complex, Quadrangle Garden, Seminar Rooms I to III, Kamaladevi Complex, Fountain Lawns, C D Deshmukh Auditorium

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Black Clay Pottery of the Sung Valley

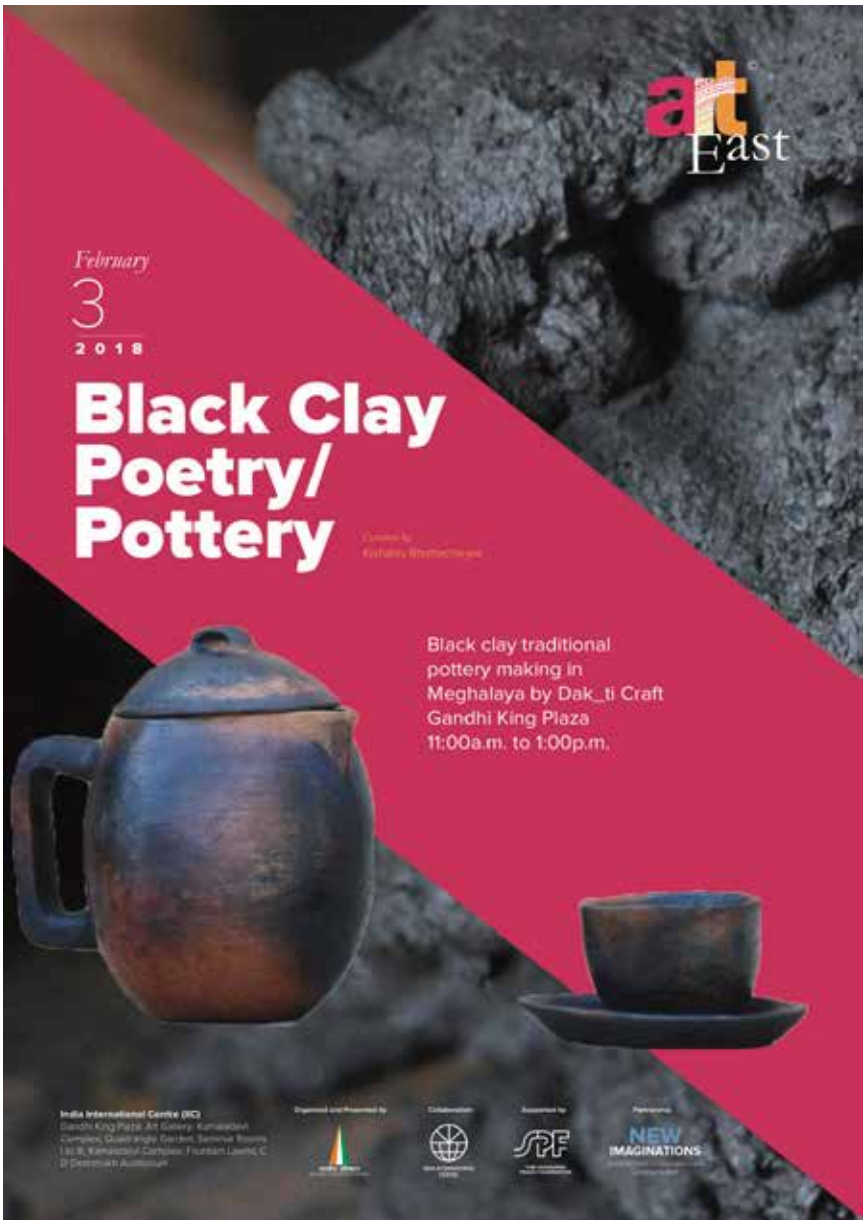
Traditional black clay pottery from the Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya

Potters: **Milda Shylla, Yophie Shylla**

Designer: **Rida Gatphoh**

The word pottery typically conjures up images of artisans bent over a potter's wheel shaping a lump of clay into pots and platters. Many traditions and practices are associated with this ancient art form and in Meghalaya, the Sung valley pottery community still practice the age old tradition of making pots, pans and other tableware. A predominantly female group of potters who work on the clay standing up, shaping it with their hands using techniques that have been passed down generations. Dak_ti Crafts - Impressions of the Hand, led by Rida Gatphoh who has been working with this community says "The technique is not pinching, "it has to do with the way the women stand – their position – as they shape the vessels on a wooden plank".

Dak_ti has been working for a number of years to revive and preserve this dying tradition. The black clay, unlike terracotta is hard to source. The clay lies beneath the terracotta layer under the earth. With limited resources, "we cannot be sure how long we will be able to fetch this quality of clay, as the mix might change due to climatic conditions," says Rida. The number of families practicing this skill has also gone down from two villages to one and the number of families into pottery-making reduced from 15 to five. In order to make the products relevant to the times and to create a market, Dak_ti has worked with the women artisans to create small bowls, glasses, plates and other tableware. "By understanding the market needs and giving them design inputs, we aim to improve their livelihood and sustain the traditional craft. And create a sustainable ecosystem for these craftsmen", says Rida.



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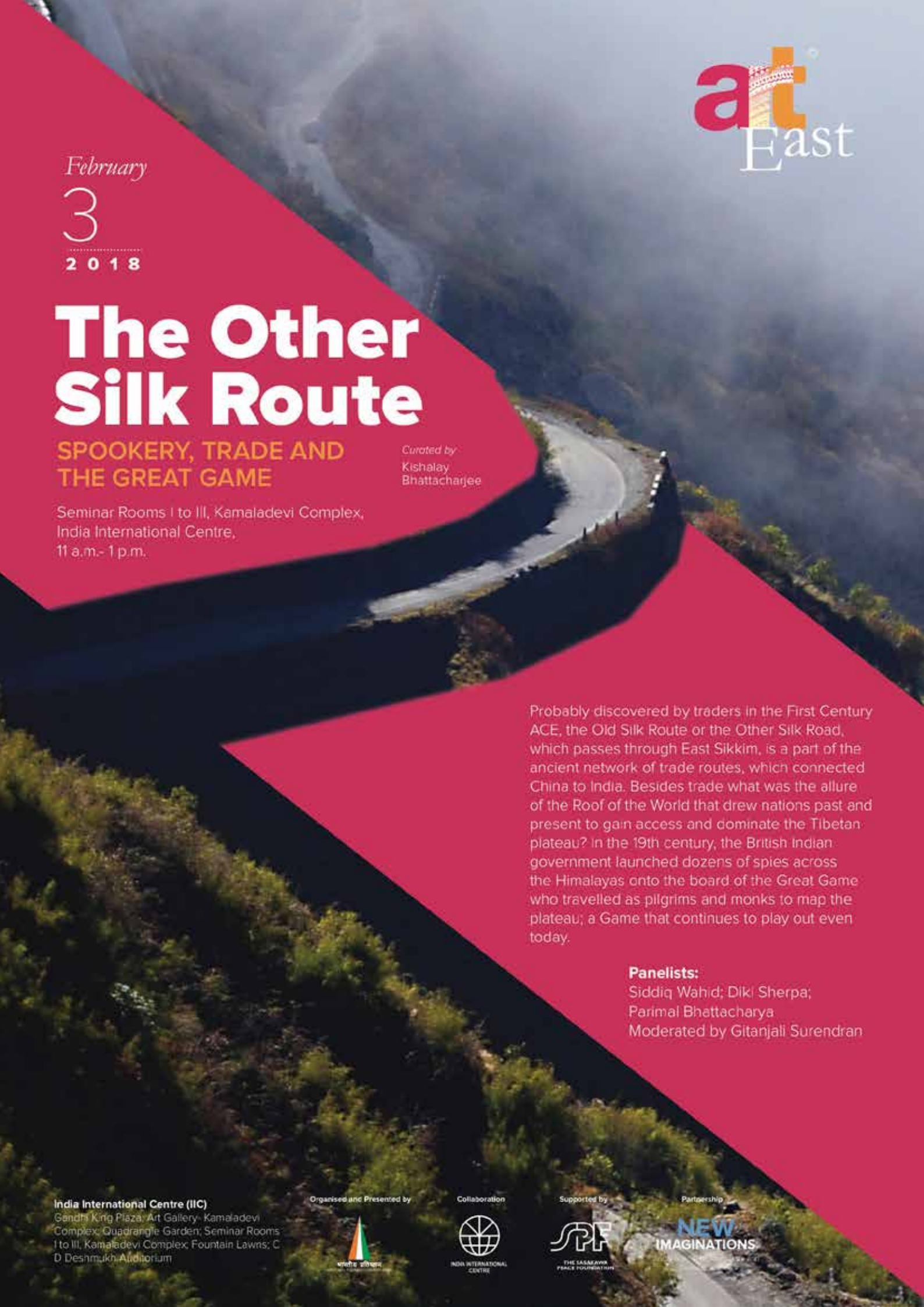

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The Other Silk Route

SPOOKERY, TRADE AND THE GREAT GAME

Curated by
Kishalay Bhattacharjee

Seminar Rooms I to III, Kamaladevi Complex,
India International Centre,
11 a.m.- 1 p.m.

Probably discovered by traders in the First Century ACE, the Old Silk Route or the Other Silk Road, which passes through East Sikkim, is a part of the ancient network of trade routes, which connected China to India. Besides trade what was the allure of the Roof of the World that drew nations past and present to gain access and dominate the Tibetan plateau? In the 19th century, the British Indian government launched dozens of spies across the Himalayas onto the board of the Great Game who travelled as pilgrims and monks to map the plateau; a Game that continues to play out even today.

Panelists:
Siddiq Wahid; Diki Sherpa;
Parimal Bhattacharya
Moderated by Gitanjali Surendran

India International Centre (IIC)
Gandhi King Plaza; Art Gallery- Kamaladevi Complex; Quadrangle Garden; Seminar Rooms I to III, Kamaladevi Complex; Fountain Lawns; C D Deshmukh Auditorium

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The Other Silk Route: Spookery, Trade and the Great Game

The 'Old Silk Route' or the 'Other Silk Road', which passes through east Sikkim, was probably discovered by traders in 1st century ACE. A part of an ancient network of trade routes, for centuries it served as a lifeline connection between China and India. But besides trade, the 'Roof of the World' has held an irresistible allure for many political powers that have fought to dominate the Tibetan plateau. By the 19th century, the Great Game was afoot and the British colonisers of India launched dozens of spies disguised as pilgrims and monks across the Himalayas onto the plateau; in many ways that Game continues to play out today even as some players have endured and others have not.

Kishalay Bhattacharjee: My little excursion to the Silk Route was when the Nathula pass reopened; it was drizzling that morning and for the first time we were doing a live broadcast at an altitude of 18,000 feet. There are anecdotal accounts of people who have traded through these high passes and that interested me but I didn't connect the dots that go back into ancient times.

I am really grateful for a panel of extremely distinguished and interesting people who have worked in this area and are going to be moderated by my colleague Dr. Gitanjali Surendran who teaches in the O P Jindal Global University. We have the academic Dr. Siddiq Wahid, and Parimal Bhattacharya, a teacher and writer. In fact, all of them are writers and joining them is Diki Sherpa, a young researcher. I am happy that Diki comes from that area that we are talking about. Though I reported from the area, I realize I barely knew the history of the region. It's not an area that you can cover well at any point of time and I didn't know many of these stories that are now emerging. I had no idea of the kind of covert operations that have happened out of say Kalimpong. So welcome to a morning of forgotten histories.

Gitanjali Surendran: Thank you, Kishalay, for that introduction which wonderfully summarizes the idea of this panel. Welcome to all of you for our session today on 'The Other Silk Route- Spookery, Trades and the Great Game'. Usually when we think of the Silk Road we are really thinking about the western side of it that includes the fabled lands of Central Asia and so on. We forget that one of the most critical wings of the Silk Road was the part connecting China, Tibet and India. And as we all know, it wasn't just a trading route, it was much more than that. Although trade was a very critical part of it, we will see that the Silk Road's is the story of trade in commodities other than silk, of exchanges of ideas, of the geopolitical maneuverings of empires etc. Without further ado, let me ask our speakers to each present for 10 to 15 minutes their

thoughts on this eastern side of the Silk Route. Let's begin with our first speaker, Dr. Siddiq Wahid, who is a widely published and well-known commentator on Kashmiri affairs. What might be less well known about him is that he is actually a historian of Central Asia and Tibet

Siddiq Wahid: First off, thank you for inviting me. I was delighted to hear about this topic and panel, although my idea of the "Silk Route" is in a slightly different incarnation. My earliest memory of the phenomenon is the story about how silk worms were smuggled out of China in the head gear of traders' womenfolk! Then later, when studying history, Central Asia and the Silk Route, the questions of a graduate student were very different, of course. We had to respond to questions from many colleagues (in other departments) asking "where exactly is Central Asia?". So, you can imagine how pleasantly surprised I was when, ten days ago, I saw the book 'The Silk Roads - A new history of the world' by Peter Frankopan on the newsstands at airports.

It delighted me that this region of the world is part of today's imagination and read popularly, not just by experts. So it was a pleasure to then get this invitation to join in the effort to better understand the Silk Road. It is a field of study from which I have been away for about ten years because of my roles as an administrator of higher education. The last six years have been spent revisiting the scholarship on it. One finds it just as exciting, but now even more so because so many are talking about it.

The question, therefore, is: why and how did this happen? For those of us who studied it and were struggling to define what the region meant to our students, it was a bit frustrating given the vastness of the subject in territory, languages, histories, cultures and so on. Clearly it is because of current political events.

The recent explosion in research on Central Asia and the Silk Road – the two terms are used almost interchangeably these days – can be tracked to the events of September 11, 2001. People started looking at Afghanistan closely and then, almost simultaneously, discovered that there was oil and gas to be had in the vicinity. Apparently, somebody started looking at the map and saying "Wow, this seems like an important place." Unfortunately, because of this Central Asia (or Central Eurasia which is another name for it) is looked at almost exclusively from a security studies point of view. In other words, basically greed for sources of energy and territory. That is alarming because such a perspective provides little room for any kind of historical perspective.

As a historian, I know history can be very boring for people in general if it doesn't affect them directly. But today, it does affect us directly, particularly in South Asia. So, it is back in fashion. But we are still not looking at it from a historian's perspective. I hope you will permit me to be a bit indulgent and try contextualize the history of the area with a review of its geography and history, space and time.

What is the geographical context? Basically, it is easily understood if you picture the Eurasian landmass that begins with the Ural Mountains in the west and ends with the Altai Mountains in the east. In the vertical axis recall in your mind's eye the Siberian Plateau to the north and mountain massif formed by the Pamirs, Karakorum and the Himalaya to the south. From a South Asian perspective (which is mine) this forms the seam between Central Eurasia and South Asia. It is that entire landmass that people over the years have called Central Asia, Inner Asia and most recently (and probably most accurately) Eurasia.

China, South Asia, Iran, Mesopotamia, Europe and Russia form its periphery, an ironic term for it given where the power centers lie today! It is the interaction between this "inner" Asia and Europe and an "outer" Asia and Europe, that the history of Eurasia is concerned with, including of course between the intra "inner" and intra "outer" Eurasian polities. The "Silk Road", the subject of our discussion, traversed this landmass from east to west, with "feeder" trade routes along the way. The very center of this "road" were two regions that were called, by most specialists, "Central Asia". This was what we know today as Chinese Xinjiang and "five stans", a popular name for the collective of states formally known as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and

Turkmenistan after the collapse of the former Soviet Union.

What should be of interest about these regions, apart from gas and oil which we all know about now, is that from the very beginning of time it is from the above region and Eurasia in general that empires have been born and many of them sustained to shape our world of today. I would like to take you through that history very quickly so that you get a general sense of the flow and a historical perspective. This is where history can be "boring" so I ask you to hold on for just a little longer!

In the last two and a half millennia, Alexander the great was the first to be reminded that there is a settled region to the east of his world that had fabulous wealth, so he invaded that area. He was followed by Han China and its incursions into Central Eurasia. This eastern reaction was followed by the Romans, the Sasanians and Byzantium. (I have just recounted a thousand years of interaction between outer Eurasia and in inner Eurasia to you!) What this means is that the "west" and the "east" met well over a thousand years before Christopher Columbus! This interaction continued into "recent" history when, a second spurt in the spread of Buddhism and Islam between the 7th and the 12th centuries, began "binding", as it were, the Eurasian world.

The next important historical phase in the central Eurasian landmass were the conquests of Chinggis Khan (also known as Genghis Khan) who conquered vast stretches of this landmass and built an empire much larger than that of Alexander. His successors were followed by another political consolidation by Temur (also known as Tamerlane) in the 14th century, although it fell apart relatively quickly after his death.

What, then, had all these wars and treaties followed by more wars and treaties resulted in by the time the early modern period rolled in? Just prior to it, the Mongols and Turkic speaking peoples had overtaken the Eurasian landmass to ultimately create a series of small empires, forming something of a confederacy of empires led by Mongols, Turks and, literally, blends of the two. These were consolidated for one last time, as it were, by Tamerlane. Towards the beginning of the sixteenth century they gave way to the "outer" Eurasian empires of the Safavid in Persia, the Mughals in India, Ottomans in middle Eurasia and the Qing in China. Simultaneously, Russia and European expansions (thanks to seafaring trade) also began making inroad into Eurasia with a phenomenon that we came to call colonialism. (Incidentally, it was at the height of this phenomenon that the term "Silk Road" was popularized by Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877.)

From the late modern period (the nineteenth century) to the middle of the twentieth century we have the famous – and I hope we hear more about it during this discussion – colonial "Great Game" that was taking place between Russia, China and British India. The French were also involved as part of a land-sea power struggle) but only marginally. These struggles were extensive and complex, a thought well summed up by Mahbub Ali said to "Kim" in Rudyard Kipling's book of that name: "The Great Game is so big that nobody really knows where it begins and where it ends." It is a thought that we should keep in mind in our understanding of international relations then, and today.

Starting in the early twentieth century, these colonial regimes began to collapse one after the other, eventually giving way to a phenomenon that came to be called the Cold War Regime. This was another political "great game" of its own. But all such formulations collapse – and the Cold War regime was no different. It did so with the unravelling of the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then, we have been awaiting a "new world order" that has yet to emerge after almost three decades now. The world has begun to call it "globalization", but the word is still open to finer definition if it is to mean more than just the process of the familiarization of the world's various power centers to each other, a process that has been taking place since the beginning of time.

Now let me conclude with some observations about globalization,

a process that is connecting us, but not necessarily "familiarizing" us with each other. It is a process that has been happening, if we remember our brief outline of its history, for at least 2,500 years. What has changed is two broad factors. (a) It is happening at an incredibly accelerated pace and (b) the process has been "discovered" more popularly but we have yet to theorize the idea of globality so that we can use the process of globalization to our benefit.

In that context, it is precisely what makes this kind of a conference, exhibition and festival very significant. We are tuning in to global studies or globality as an idea rather than as a process. What should it mean? In that context, historical perspective is important, because we don't need to make the same mistakes all over again.

That said, we still seem to be making them, these mistakes if we look at the current political climate all the way from Washington to New Delhi to the Philippines and Turkey. Instead of the world growing closer it is ironic that we are building bigger and harder walls than we have known until now – during a period of intensified "globalization". They are walls we cannot afford because of the problems we face from environmental and ecological degradation, to climate change and human displacements because of war.

I have my own thoughts on globalization, but that can wait. Here, let me be provocative and say who is thinking about it? In truth, not many. Consider: to say globalization is not much of a statement. As I've just said it's a process that has been taking place for millennia. Technology and communications infrastructure have made it proceed apace. But there are contradictions, as the world is also experiencing unprecedented unrest. It is because although a few people talk globalization, fewer even think globalization but almost nobody does globalization.

Let me close with this thought: there appears to be one state that seems to be talking and doing globalization. The People's Republic of China. And as evidence, I would cite the BRI – the Belt and Road Initiative, also called somewhat less elegantly OBOR. It seems to have an idea of globality. That said, for me there is very little to commend China's politics given its treatment of my culture and civilization, the Tibetan-speaking world. But the actions it has taken in the sphere of globalization is something that needs close attention, analysis and even emulation by the world at large.

However, both New Delhi and Washington seem to be against it. Perhaps there are many ideas of globality. One may be to encompass several categories of it, not just one. Among them could be economic, political, social and cultural globalization. So far, we have focused only on the economic one. We need to inject the discourse with other kinds of "globalization": political, social, linguistic, cultural and others. They will bring us closer, not divide us. Thank you very much for your attention.

Gitanjali Surendran: Thank you, Dr. Wahid. In ten minutes, you have covered a 1000 years of history beautifully! There are many things you spoke of that we could pick up later on in our discussion, For instance, China's One Belt One Road project has generally been viewed with a lot of suspicion here in India but you seem to be saying that if viewed in the context of Kashmir's connections with Central Asia, a different perspective might be had. You have also astutely pointed out that if this region has been the site more recently of the Great Game and espionage between the British and Russian empires, then it has long been the site of more ancient games too for control of its rich resources and trade routes. This is the right moment for me to introduce our next speaker, Dr. Parimal Bhattacharya, who is based in Calcutta. A very well published author, his book No Path in Darjeeling is Straight: Memories of a Hill Station, on the famous British hill station, was published a few years ago, but he has also recently edited Journey to Lhasa by the Bengali British spy, Sarat Chandra Das.

Parimal Bhattacharya: Well, I am delighted to be here among the distinguished panelists. Professor Wahid has given us a very big canvas to work on. My area, though, is limited. In fact, I

am not a historian by training. I am from literature and it is the stories that drew me to this other silk road, or other silk route as we call it.

Actually, I was working on a book on Darjeeling a few years back. I had worked in Darjeeling in the 1990's, it was my first posting as a teacher in the government college there. A few years back when I was working on the book, I came upon an address. There is a locality in Darjeeling -- it's called Lhasa Villa. So I was a little intrigued that Lhasa Villa is actually the name of a villa somewhere in the locality, and I tried to find it out. Very few people knew about it, and then I made some inquiries and discovered a very small and decrepit villa in the concrete jungle that Darjeeling has now become. And I found out that it was owned by a man named Sarat Chandra Das. I knew a bit about him, but not much, and then I began to find out more.

Sarat Chandra was a spy who had gone to Tibet twice, in 1879 and then in 1881. He was sent there by the British, and then he became a Buddhist scholar, a Tibetan scholar. He had lived most of his creative life in Lhasa Villa and had worked there. Then I started to work on these really exciting stories and found out that since the early 19th century, since the Great Game had begun, the British were sending spies into Tibet. These men were called Pandits. Tibet had closed its borders by that time and those impassable mountain passes were closely guarded. There were a few hostile tribes who inhabited the region and fiercely guarded these frontiers.

The Pandits were doing espionage, particularly for mapping the territory of that country. The size of Tibet is huge -- it is ten times the size of England, and at that time the population was about the

same as that of London. So it was a huge thinly populated swathe of land, and completely unmapped. And by early 19th century, when the British were mapping the entire Indian subcontinent and found out this big blank spot, they were uncomfortable. There was this Great Game that was being played out in this region. There were China and Russia, and the British were very suspicious that Russia was building roads into Tibet. So they began to send spies.

These spies were mostly drafted from the local mountain tribes. Only two types of people were allowed to go into Tibet, the merchants and Buddhist monks. Many of these spies were sent dressed as monks. They carried survey instruments, and very cleverly -- they had compasses fitted to their walking sticks. They had prayer wheels inside which they'd keep their instruments and notes. Sometimes they wouldn't even carry papers. They would memorize the survey data as mantras and chant them. And they'd carry unusual prayer beads. Normally, the prayer beads have 108 beads in them, but these had 100; they'd use them to count their footsteps. That way they would measure the distances. They would carry boiling thermometers to record the altitudes. Many of them were marvelous men, very brave men. One name that stands out is that of Nain Singh Rawat. He covered a huge area and even went to Lhasa. In recognition, the British Royal Geographical Society awarded him a gold medal. He was the first Asian to win that medal.

But a problem for the British was that many of these men died on the mission, many were captured and killed, some of them came back. All of them were basically mountain people who didn't have much exposure to western education. All the data that the British were getting were mostly topographical, but they needed more than that. A place is not just its geography, it also has its history and people. So, they needed someone educated and sensitive who would go there and collect sociocultural information and the historical perspectives as well. They found their man in Sarat Chandra Das, a young civil engineer from Kolkata, then Calcutta.

Sarat Chandra had studied at the Presidency College there and he was sent to Darjeeling as the headmaster of a new boarding school. It was called the Bhutia Boarding School, and it had been set up to teach the hill boys survey techniques. It was actually a school for espionage, was built to groom native spies. Sarat Chandra Das was brought there as its headmaster and he soon developed a great interest in Tibet. Unfortunately, we don't know much about this part of the story, except for a very slender autobiography that he had written much later. And he didn't go into the details. But Sarat Chandra

had this great curiosity about this forbidden land across the great mountain ranges of Darjeeling. When he went to Darjeeling in 1774, he was just 25. The British had wanted someone like him in Tibet, and a passport was arranged. So, Sarat Chandra went to Tibet along with a lama from Sikkim and a group of servants and porters. It was a small group. He went there dressed as a Buddhist monk.

He sneaked in through Sikkim and Nepal and went directly to Shigatse, to the great monastery of Tashilunpo and met the Panchen Lama there. He went a second time for an extended stay. That was in 1881. He stayed at Tashilunpo for six months, studying Buddhist scriptures and texts, and he came back and wrote his reports. It was a transformative experience for him, Sarat Chandra was transformed. Spying attracts a lot of suspicion, but there is also an aura of romance around it. Sarat Chandra fell in love with Tibet.

In Shigatse, Sarat Chandra was hosted by the prime minister of Panchen Lama who was a great figure there. The minister was a priest, and not only did he have great affection for this young Bengali from Calcutta, but also a great fascination for the West – the Western science and technologies. On his second visit, Sarat Chandra carried for the minister a telescope, a box camera and a magic lantern – the fascinating gadgets of the western world. And the minister priest began to write a book on photography, on the working of the camera, a technology that was newly emerging. Sarat Chandra was deeply immersed all the time in Buddhist literature and texts. So it was sort of a great cultural exchange.

But he also did his primary job of espionage and then he returned to India. Unfortunately, it had a dark aftermath. It was soon found out that Sarat Chandra was a spy, and all the people who had hosted him were put in prisons. These prisons were actually dungeons, dark caves, where many of these people died. The minister priest was executed in a spectacular fashion -- he was drowned alive in the river Tsangpo. So, that was it.

Sarat Chandra came back, from him detailed reports were obtained. And then, about 20 years later in 1903-4, Francis Younghusband made that military expedition. Tibet was prised open like an oyster carrying pearls. And the mystery that had surrounded the country for so long was gone. There came a full stop on the espionage. The Great Game, too, stopped. Sarat Chandra became a forgotten figure. He even became a figure of caricature, because in Kipling's novel Kim we find him as a comical Bengali called Haribabu or Hari Chandra Mukherjee. This was the end of the fascinating story.

Then I found out that there was another man from Darjeeling who also went to Tibet at the same time. He was an illiterate tailor named Kinthup, and he was sent to map the mysterious course of the river Tsangpo. Now the Tsangpo, which originates at 24,000ft in the western part of Tibet, takes an interesting course and enters into an impenetrable gorge. In fact, it was navigated for the first time in 2002 by a group of kayakers. Before that nobody had successfully penetrated the heart of it. There are sheer cliffs, some of them towering up 15,000 to 18,000ft, very narrow gorges and rapids. Kinthup was sent to map that area.

The story of Kinthup was equally fascinating, but also unfortunate. A Chinese lama who took him to Tibet, sold him there as a slave. Sold and resold as a slave, Kinthup spent four years in Tibet. He returned in 1883, after completing his mission. But because he was illiterate, and the fact that he had carried all the survey data in his memory, nobody took him seriously. Thirty years later, when the Mac Mohan line was being drawn, a British military officer was sent to map these areas again. He found out that Kinthup had mapped them so accurately.

So Kinthup was summoned to Shimla to the conference that took place to map the MacMohan line, where Tibetan and Chinese representatives were also invited. By then Kinthup was an old man. But he reeled out from memory the fascinating story of his adventure in those remote places. He died the very next year. Twenty years after Sarat Chandra's visit, Francis Younghusband's expedition broke open some of the dark cave prisons in Tibet and found out that some of the men who had hosted the spy from Calcutta were still alive.

So, this is the fascinating story that had drawn me to the Silk Roads. This, of course, is the old silk road, the one that goes into Tibet via east-Sikkim and Nepal, not the big silk road that Professor Wahid had drawn. This is a very old one, more than a 1000-year-old route. Actually, from the Bay of Bengal the trade and commerce with China used to take place along this route. In late 18th century, Warren Hasting had sent a Company representative named George Bogle. Bogle had gone to Shigatse and had met the Panchen Lama. A book was compiled from his diary notes and Sarat Chandra was deeply inspired by that book.

So that was it. Not only trade or merchandise, but also technologies were travelling along these routes. That included silk and paper making from China. The British

were desperate about this new market in China. The sea route was difficult because the Chinese king had imposed heavy taxes at the Canton port. So the British wanted to open this route.

As Professor Wahid has noted, these globalizations were going on for so many centuries. And it was a very diffusive kind of globalization, unlike the globalization we know since the1990's, that is so imposing and monopolistic. When we read Sarat Chandra Das's book, we find it remarkable that here is a man with very much an Indian or Asian sensibilities and also western education, looking at a culture not from a positivist objective viewpoint, like earlier Western explorers. He is looking at the architecture, the sculptures of Tibet, their food, their clothes, all aspects of their lived culture with such sensitivity and keenness. These exchanges stopped in 1903-1904, when the military expedition took place.

Gitanjali Surendran: Thank you! You have raised so many interesting questions and issues through a rich telling of the story of Sarat Chandra Das. You mentioned George Bogel, an eighteenth century British envoy to Tibet. The British even at that time seemed to rely heavily, as Bogel did, on Indian interlocutors and spies known generally as 'pandits'

Parimal Bhattacharya: No, actually when Bogel went Tibet was not that closed. Actually, Bogel went in 1774 or 1775 and in 1784 there was a Gorkha aggression in Tibet it continued for four years and initially the Tibetans lost and then China helped them to push back the Gorkha's and after that Tibet became very strict. The business of British and Russian government was there so they just stopped it. After Bogel it just stopped.

Gitanjali Surendran: Kate Teltscher's A High Road to Tibet, recounts some of this history and suggests that in fact, it was through Bogel's expedition that the Panchen Lama of Tibet came to know about the British. In turn it was when the Panchen Lama visited Peking, that the Chinese emperor himself heard about the British for the first time. Let me now introduce our third speaker on this panel. Diki Sherpa is a PhD candidate at Delhi University and also a research assistant at the institute of Chinese Studies there. She is working on the wool trade and the old Spice Route connecting Tibetan traders and markets in India at Kalimpong

Diki Sherpa: Firstly, thank you for allowing me to be a part of this panel. And secondly, I am really intimidated to be here with such great historians. Before I start, I want to discuss a bit about the topic we have today, 'The Other silk route'. Can we call Nathu la a part of the silk route? has it really been a part of the ancient silk route? Because it's been quite some time that I have been working in this area but I have not come across any primary source which informs about Nathu la and its association with the greater ancient network. Since the reopening of Nathu la, it has been difficult to read a newspaper and to visit North Bengal and Sikkim without noticing the multiple references of the ancient silk route. Even the Chief Minister of Sikkim repeatedly uses the rhetoric of the silk route. Using this kind of rhetoric is little problematic because such representation shows that India and China as a nation have existed since the ancient times. Such rhetoric has been used by China as well – quite often. There has been a reference to the Silk route with regard to China and Bangladesh relation as well. However, Bangladesh emerged as a nation state only in the 1900's. There are historians like David Ludden, Prasanjeet Duaar and recently Tansen Sen who have been critiquing such use of the silk road rhetoric as it leads to a presentation of linear, monolithic and the top-down history invoked by the nation-state. Such presentation not only distorts the history but it also inhibits the proper understanding of the particular subversion in a particular period of time. One should study history especially pre-20th-century exchanges without the constraint of the nation-state.

I will give you some of the snippets of the work that I have been doing. My area of research is the eastern Himalayan town of Kalimpong, in North Bengal. This area has a history of being a very important commercial site. It had acted as an entrepot for Indo-Tibetan commerce until the mid-1950s; a place where you can process the raw wool that was imported from Tibet. This place was basically chosen because of its geographical location. During British India, it was the farthest eastern-most post that British India had at that time. Imported raw wool from here used to be flown down to Calcutta and from there it was either sent to woolen mills located in the then United Provinces or was exported to Liverpool and America. And the amount of wool that was coming in this period was huge. Over the period of time it emerged as an important convergent site not only for the goods but for the people and the various activities that were happening during the period. Like commerce, this town itself has a huge history of rise and decline. What makes this trade distinctive is its composition; the economic actors involved. It is not that there are only Indians and Tibetans. There are various ethnic groups all the way from Nepal, Ladakh etc.

Apart from that the commerce had geopolitical imperatives. But then, this has been a common phenomenon in the Himalayan region. Even in 1800's when the claims were made on Tibet was partly because, British thought that Tibet can be used as a backdoor to 'China' to introduce their products and also for the strategic expansion. Even in 1903-1904 when Tibet was thrown open all the commercial institutes that were ostensibly set up for managing commerce was actually set up for preventing Russia, China and later Japan. Commerce and politics were hugely intertwined. British expansion leads to the occupation of Chumbi valley – the present tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan. Once the valley was occupied one thing that happened was despite having Nathu La as the main trade route, Jelep La was made operational. They thought that Jelep La should be the prime route connecting Tibet and India. There are various reasons for that; one is, even though Sikkim was a British protectorate the presence of titular head proved to be troublesome. Second is, Kalimpong was a non-regulation district, it implies that whatever law was passed for Bengal is not applicable here. Hence, all the laws and legislation was at the discretion of the colonial official.

The areas have much to do with the wool rather than silk. In this exchange relation, wool was the major imported commodity as informed by many of the respondent and the archival records. The archival records show that almost everything was sent to Tibet in exchange for wool. The trade was slow in the first 10 years, it picked up only during the 1st world war. The sheer shortage of raw wool suitable for the war material made the wool import from Tibet.

This enterprise in Tibet provided income for many and wealth for a few. This long-distance trade from Lhasa to Kalimpong involved complex networks of actors that transcended territory and ethnicity. The wool that was imported to British India was taken from remote villages of Tibet with the help of trade Intermediaries such as Hui Muslims and Tibetans called Tromo. The Tromos controlled the transport, which was vital for trade. Since they controlled the transport, they were able to make huge profits during this period. Marwaris in Kalimpong acted as business merchants and financiers. Trade along these areas continued even after India became independent. Even after 1947, the trade continued unabated until 1950. But with the Formation of PRC and the occupation of Tibet, trade began to get got cut off. Many traders after 1962 were given a very short period of time to transfer their trade and some of them reoriented towards Nepal because Nepal-China route was opened. When the Jelep La was opened in 1904, what happened was the trade from Nepal to Tibet got reoriented towards India and with the re-opening Nepal-TAR trade, the Indo-Tibetan trade volume decreased.

Gitanjali Surendran: Diki, would like to explain to everyone present, the distinction and significance of Nathu La and Jelep La?

Diki Sherpa: Nathu La and Jelep La both of them are in Sikkim – TAR border but then they are 7 km apart. Nathu La connects with Gangtok, if one travels from Gangtok, Nathu la is nearer but then if one goes from Kalimpong through Jelep La, the distance between Tibet and India is much shorter. The Nathu La route was considered to be longer, so British opened Jelep la route to connect India with Tibet. Jelep la was considered as an 'all-season route' as it was penetrable all throughout the year but not so with Nathula.

Gitanjali Surendran: Thank you for your presentation. The kind of commodity history you are doing of wool is really critical for our understanding of globalization and wider connections over a longer historical period. There are fantastic global histories of sugar and more recently of cotton that reveal the tremendous possibilities of doing this kind of research. I also really appreciate your comment on globalization and how we might think about globalization in the time of nations versus the time of non-nations. Let's open up our discussion. It seems to me that the importance of Darjeeling to the eastern Silk Road cannot be overemphasized. Darjeeling is one of India's oldest hill stations, and

was certainly one of the grandest of the British empire. I believe it was the first town to have electricity...

Parimal Bhattacharya: Sindrapong hydel project in 1880's. It was the first Asian hydroelectric project in India.

Gitanjali Surendran- So Darjeeling enjoyed a certain kind of privilege especially in the late nineteenth century? One of the things that always struck me about Darjeeling is what a fantastic melting pot for different communities and different peoples doing different kinds of things as well, it has always been. It was also a frontier town of a kind, located at the crossroads of major civilizations. I invite our speakers to tell us a little about their experiences of Darjeeling and its historical significance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Siddiq Wahid: I was born in Kalimpong and went to school in Darjeeling, in which district Kalimpong is situated. So, one could perhaps say that for me there is a connection with the region from birth. Of my schooling years, I remember having this magnificent view of the Kanchenjunga range from my dorm window and, to my embarrassing regret, complained about it every single day! I did not know that Darjeeling was settled as a sanitarium. And I am also surprised to hear that it was the earliest hill stations, because that would mean it was created late in the day, and by the British.

I also want to second what you were saying about Diki's careful understanding of the "Silk Road"; of its use as a metaphor in ascribing the name to several trade routes that were feeders or even unrelated to it. When I first got the announcement about the exhibition and festival, I thought to myself, "Wait a minute, Silk Road is a very specific term". But I desisted from saying anything about it because I was afraid it would betray parochialism on my part as a specialist on the subject just being technical for the sake of it. But I am glad that Diki raised it.

Yet the term Silk Road has in fact become somewhat of a metaphor; what is it a metaphor for? We need to see it as a metaphor for cultural exchanges, linguistic borrowings, commercial contracts and more. It was all of them; perhaps even more than anything else. Instead, because today we speak exclusively about states, not nations, so less about people and more about territory, real estate. If we talk about the Silk Road in terms of the peoples who live along these routes it would serve to make them more comfortable in its use as a metaphor. It will allay the possible apprehension among those who inhabit the lands along the road, that they will be dominated even more. Often these societies tend to see their relationship between themselves and the larger powers who ply along the route in terms of dominant and dominated. In that sense, even Nepal or Bangladesh can become "dominating powers" in that they are states. At times these forget what lies between the powers, or "in the middle" as it were.

This is precisely why one possibility is, or should be, fear that the entire Himalayan massif all the way from the Pamirs to Arunachal stands in danger of becoming a conflict zone, located as they are between two of the world's most populated states, China and India, who are fast becoming rivals in the region. So...there's yet another complexity to throw into the bucket!

Parimal Bhattacharya: We were talking about Darjeeling when Professor Wahid shared his marvelous memories of Kanchenjunga. I was also talking to Gitanjali earlier that my memories of Darjeeling is not that standard picture post card that people carry back -- of Kanchenjunga or sunrise over the Kanchenjunga. But it's a soundscape. I was telling her that every hour, at different hours of the day, you can hear in Darjeeling amazing sounds of the temple bells, the church bells, the Tibetan horns in the monasteries and all. It is this fabulous multi-ethnic community living over there for more than a 100 years, which is something very rare and very unique, and very peaceful. All these agitations and statehood movements had never affected this community feeling that people have over there. There have been intermarriages between different tribes, so that is something that's very important. Coming to what Diki had just said, whether we should at all call this silk route. I don't know, after this we might as well call this wool route! But as Professor Wahid had very rightly said, it is actually a metaphor. Not just that, the particulars of these routes also; the trading communities and the spies sometimes took different routes. For example, Sarat Chandra Das went for the first time through Sikkim. He returned through another route. So actually, if you look at it holistically, not just wool or other commodities, there was another thing we are overlooking – that is gold. Tibet had these gold mines. I don't know how commerically viable they were, but the British had a lot of hope that there was a lot of gold in Tibet. Gold used to come to India from there. Between Nathula and Jelep La, I think Jelep La was more popular as a trade route because it remained open throughout the year. But in 2006, Nathula was reopened. When it was reopened another interesting thing happened in geopolitical

history of the region: that China, that earlier didn't recognize Sikkim as part of India, now had to. India also had problems with Tibet as part of China, but when Nathula was reopened, there was a de facto recognition. That is another interesting twist in the history that we should also look at, I guess.

Diki Sherpa: This region has been a trans frontier zone. Being at the border, the area has experienced a drastic and rapid economic fluctuation. The town has experienced the remarkable rise and fall within a short period of time. People in the town still romanticize the pre-1962 as a "golden era" because of the easy availability of job opportunities etc. Now the economy in the hill, especially in Kalimpong, has gone so much down and most of the people are moving out.

Siddiq Wahid: Speaking of Darjeeling and my own experience of living there, it was a different world then: we had a school population of about 350 - 400 students in all from class one to Senior Cambridge, as class 11 was then called. It was an all-boys school and we had students from as far away as Thailand, Burma, Nepal, Sikkim (then an independent kingdom) and Bhutan. It was a melting pot, a globalization process in microcosm in the most amazing way. Now you cannot even dream about such an environment in our schools.

In this context, recently I was involved in a SAARC initiative in Kashmir that was trying to bring people from all the SAARC countries to the University of Kashmir. It was near impossible, thanks to a mood of anti-globalization, not understanding the long-term significance of such an initiative or for some other inexplicable reason. That is what I was talking about when I said a little earlier that we are quick to talk globalization but we absolutely refuse to do globalization. This is for a lot of statist reasons, which does not have anything to do with people.

Gitanjali Surendran: Is this because they couldn't get visas?

Siddiq Wahid: In the case of the University of Kashmir, it was very much the inability to get visas. What is worse, it seemed less conspiratorial and more just bad bureaucracy. For example, we could manage a visa for somebody from Pakistan but not for someone from a country considered "friendly" to us, Bangladesh, as happened in one case at least. It shows you the randomness of it and how we have created unnecessary structures and barriers between neighbors.

Gitanjali Surendran: One wonders if the current political impasse in Darjeeling has anything to do with constricting these flows of people as well? Perhaps, the economic decline springing from this strangling of the free flow of commodities and peoples has been far more damaging that we think. And yet from the earliest times, Darjeeling was politically important too. Didn't the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama at various times in the early twentieth century also flee to Darjeeling on the run from the Chinese, causing headaches for the British? Let's also get into the stories of espionage. Sarat Chandra Das was not the only figure of his kind in Darjeeling. The British were themselves quite suspicious of people passing through. For instance, there was the Hungarian linguist Alexander Csoma Korosi. Here was someone who undertook quite a heroic journey all the way from Europe through Tibet and did a lot of work on Tibetan language in Darjeeling. I think he died in Darjeeling too ...

Parimal Bhattacharya: Actually, Korosi's life was very interesting. He was a Hungarian and he wanted to dig out the roots of his race. And somehow he had a suspicion that these roots originally lay in central Asia, among a tribe. When he came to India he took the long land route, not the sea route. He travelled across Siberia. He learnt about a dozen languages just to cover these places. He came through that old silk route at a time when there were disturbances and troubles. He came to Afghanistan and now what is Pakistan, and then to India. For a few years he did some espionage work for the East India Company. His purpose was to find out the old manuscripts in the Tibetan monasteries.

Another thing we must say when we are talking about Sarat Chandra Das is that when Sarat Chandra was going to Tibet in 1880's, not much of the ancient Indian history was known. Because the excavations had not yet been made. He thought the old manuscripts were destroyed by invasions. So he thought that India's past was preserved in the rare manuscripts that were there in the Tibetan archives, in the monastery libraries in these dry cold places. That's what he wanted to discover. That's what Korosi Csoma also wanted to go there for. And Korosi stayed a couple of years in Ladakh and he was scripting his theory about the origin of his race. His ultimate purpose was to go to Tibet, to the central Asia. He came to Kolkata. He became the librarian of the Asiatic Society there. He worked there for many years, wrote articles. Unfortunately, he had malaria and died in Darjeeling. In Darjeeling, you must have seen in the old cemetery there is a memorial which is maintained very well.

Korosi thought the root of his ancestry lay over there, but later historians have substantiated that it was not true. So there is this perception that a country's past is lying locked up over there, and these explorers were going to unlock it. The Tibetans also looked at Sarat Chandra Das as a representative from the country where Buddha was born. People were asking him about the condition of Buddhism in India, about Varanasi, Bodhgaya and other places. This was as if two civilizations trying to open a dialogue with each other, but unfortunately it was very brutally suspended through military aggression and the earlier Tibet crackdown on these people who had hosted Sharat Chandra Das.

Diki Sherpa: In regard to espionage, in Kalimpong you had a press that used to produce Tibetan newspaper called 'Melong' and they also had an English newspaper called 'Himalayan Times'. Now both these presses are closed but if one reads the publications these presses had then one can have an idea how dynamic these towns were, that there were so many foreigners who wanted to go to Tibet but weren't allowed and who waited so long but at the end the border was closed. Tibetans not only came to do trade but also to get involved in the revolutionary activities regarding Tibet and China. But then China was very suspicious of the Tibetans that went for admission for example to America, they used to go through Kalimpong. So, Kalimpong was the main point. It became so suspicious that Nehru once called it a nest of spies because of the people involved in such activities.

Gitanjali Surendran: In fact, suspicion is something that runs way back but let's talk about 'The Great Game'. Usually what

we think about 'The Great Game' again we are thinking about the Afghanistan side, we are thinking of figures like Moorhead, the veterinarian- turned- spy but we see it play out in a very interesting way on the other side too. Perhaps, as Kishalay suggested the Great Game never really ended and the Silk Road remains the site of more modern games. Let's talk about that. Dr. Wahid, you suggested that it was not that different from the ancient games and yet when you think about the nitty-gritties of it, it is said that modern espionage began with the mid to late nineteenth century Great Game...

Siddiq Wahid: In a sense it is very different, particularly after the 16th and 17th centuries when nations fell into the background and states started to come up front. This changed the whole relationship. But my point was more regarding rivalries that were taking place and that it continued as we famously know Central Asia as the pivot of Asia. In history things change dramatically. One of the things that was happening as a result of the Great Game, was that a lot of state formation that was taking place in the Himalaya and the trans-Himalaya during that period. The most obvious example of that was the state of Jammu and Kashmir, it came out directly as the result of the status of the Great Game in the mid-19th century. Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal – all of them were in the process of early "state formation" at that time. Another less known, but equally important, state that cropped up during this period was Kashgaria, under a man named Yakub Beg. These things were happening as both a resistance to, and in imitation of, colonialism. Ironically, they were creating states of the kind that had facilitated colonialism. Therefore, it is not surprising that we have controversies about sovereignty in many parts of Himalayan South Asia today. Whether, it be in Jammu & Kashmir, Sikkim, Bhutan or further to the east. The sooner these are addressed in the light of history rather than power politics, the better. Otherwise, the worse off we will be.

Parimal Bhattacharya: That is a very interesting point. Could you give us something more on Sikkim? Sikkim had connections with Tibet, Sikkim's princesses had been married in Tibet. These were very loose kind-of kingdom states, unlike the ones that we know now. But how come this Great Game solidified these states?

Siddiq Wahid: The British were very mature and smart about it. They placed the entire Himalaya within the concept of suzerainty, a very undefined term in political science. Essentially they acted as a "chhatra-chaya"

over the various territorial states along the Himalaya, allowing them a huge degree of autonomy as long as they behaved towards the British empire. If you did not you got hammered Nepal, Sikkim and many others, including Tibet, found out. But the overall British policy allowed for a kind of federal relationship in the true sense of the word. We are very fond of saying when the British departed from South Asia there were two Indias, one was princely India and the other one was British India. In fact, there were three Indias; and the third was the entire length and breadth of the Himalaya. We need to think in these terms to solve the current Himalayan border problems.

Parimal Bhattacharya: This is interesting because Darjeeling comes here in a very big way. The British initially got Darjeeling as a gift from the Rajah of Sikkim. They were very smart but they had a shopkeeper's mentality. They said that we will give you 3,000 rupees a year for the tract of land as it was almost uninhabited. 3,000 rupees was a big sum then. But ultimately, they had strained relations with the king of Sikkim. So then Darjeeling became a bowl of contention. As, Diki said, these were frontier towns and when Younghusband was making that expedition it was a very bloody military aggression because the British army were carrying sophisticated weapons like rifles, whereas the Tibetans fought with their primitive matchlock guns and arrows. They were butchered and the whole path was bloody. When Darjeeling was the war headquarters, a telegraph line was laid through these passes to Lhasa. So you can imagine during those times till early 20th century, Darjeeling and Kalimpong were frontier towns of possibilities and exciting adventures, of crucial points in history. When Tibet was closed, the borders were sealed, and then they became marginal towns. A lot of political disturbances that are taking place these days have their roots there. These histories teach us lessons that we tend to forget. For example, when Francis Younghusband went to Tibet and there was a suspicion that Russia had its military base in Lhasa, and they found out a primitive weapons factory. They didn't have the heart to pull it down! Same thing was repeated when there was an aggression in Iraq. The patterns are being repeated and these unresolved parts of history will trouble us.

Siddiq Wahid: I just want to add something to the mention of the telegraph line that the British installed in Tibet. It was during the Younghusband expedition in late 1903 and 1904 and is an amusing story. I read somewhere that the Tibetans saw the telegraph line being constructed with towers to connect them along the way. Today, as you drive from Kathmandu to Lhasa you still see the mud-brick towers to support the telegraph wires along the route. When the British invading force was making the journey, the Tibetans went behind the lines and kept cutting the wire. It was obviously a nuisance for the British troops to have their communications disrupted time and again. Amusingly, the intent of the Tibetans was not to cut off British communications, but to make sure the British troops would lose their way on the way back. They thought that the telegraph wire was being installed to show them the way back to British India!

Parimal Bhattacharya: Something similar happened when in the 1950's, the Indian government sent a political mission in Arunachal which was mentioned in a book by Geeta Krishnatray. She went with her husband. Her husband was a political officer in NEFA. They were carrying wireless boxes to communicate with the headquarters, and after a couple of days the porters refused to carry it. They said – "You are carrying your child inside it, and you are talking to him. We won't carry your child in a box!"

Diki Sherpa: With regard to the state formation, all these areas including Bhutan and Sikkim and also some of the north-eastern areas, we have to understand that these areas during pre-colonial times were confluent territories and had overlapping sovereignties – which British failed to understand.

Even with Darjeeling. British considered Darjeeling to be their soverign territory which they bought from Sikkim through a "deed of Grant". However, in 1975, an article written by Sikkim's princess argues that, according to Sikkimese law, Darjeeling was never sold but was merely given for a rent to the British.

Gitanjali Surendran: The British were notorious for failing to understand land exchanges and land ownership in these areas. I want to come back to what you had said, Dr. Wahid, about the 'One Belt One Road'. I was a part of an India-Pakistan track two initiative a couple of months ago and there was nothing but tremendous suspicion by the Indian delegates about OBOR but you seem to have quite a different take...

Siddiq Wahid: The jury is still out on whether OBOR is a security compulsion or an attempt at regional cooperation. But there have been some errors in its implementation. For example, in the case of CPEC, a major part of the OBOR initiative (it has since been renamed the "Belt

and Road Initiative", BRI, since) it should be clear that India cannot participate in the enterprise when it is called the "China Pakistan Economic Corridor". A different nomenclature for the project would have helped in acceptance of it by India. Instead it has fueled rivalry between the two countries.

An example of this rivalry is that when an Indian diplomat objected to China's growing presence in India's backyard, a Chinese diplomat responded by pointing out that "South Asia is our backyard too", or words to that effect. So regardless of whether the BRI is a commercial or a Chinese strategic project or more palatably a cooperative, I think there is a need for India and China to engage on a project that involves half the world.

If truth be told, there are many positive things that can happen in the border areas and for the peoples along the boundaries if the two countries were to engage. We should recognize that if one were to fly from Kashmir to Kashgar it would take about forty minutes; and from Leh to Yarkand probably twenty-five minutes; whereas to fly from Srinagar or Leh to Delhi, it takes more than an hour. This is part of the reason that the economy of Kashmir, "historically", was connected to the economy of Kashgar for centuries. To understand that is to view the State of Jammu and Kashmir in its entirety, outside of the India-Pakistan rivalry and place it in a potential South Asia and Central Asia paradigm; a zone of commercial and social collaboration. It will help to contemplate solutions which are truly global in nature.

As a resident of this borderland area and prey to the constant creation of new boundaries that isolate peoples from their neighbors and cultural compatriots, I feel it is an attractive proposition. But you need not take my word for it. There are enough brains in India to look at it and see whether it can be positive or negative rather than such a proposal being rejected outright.

art East

February 2nd, 2018

Seminar Rooms I to III, Kamaladevi Complex, India International Centre, 3:45p.m.- 6:00p.m.

Curated by Kishalay Bhattacharjee

BENGAL SHADOWS

A FILM BY JOY BANERJEE AND PARTHO BHATTACHARYA

DOCUMENTARY FILM
RUNTIME: 48 MINUTES
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH AND FRENCH
FORMAT: FULL HD
PRODUCTION: PETITE-TERRE / 2017
CONTACT: JOYBANERJEE@WANADOO.FR

Film followed by a discussion
Moderated by Shiv Visvanathan

The Bengal Famine is considered one of the worst genocides that were plotted by Churchill fearing Japanese advance during the World War II coupled with his utter contempt for Indians. But how much is really known about the famine? Was it only Bengal's famine or did it impact the neighbouring provinces? What was the cost of this holocaust and why is it an almost forgotten episode of history?

India International Centre (IIC)
Gandhi King Plaza; Art Gallery- Kamaladevi Complex; Quadrangle Garden; Seminar Rooms I to III, Kamaladevi Complex; Fountain Lawns; C D Deshmukh Auditorium

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Beyond the Bengal Famine: Film and Panel Discussion

Bengal Shadows

3:45 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

(45min/English) Directed by **Partho Bhattacharya** and **Joy Banerjee**

Screening of Bengal Shadows followed by a panel moderated by social scientist Shiv Visvanathan in conversation with the filmmaker Partho Bhattacharya and historian Rakesh Batabyal.

The Great Bengal Famine of 1943 is considered by many to be one of the worst holocausts in modern history owing to what is perceived as either the willful negligence or the active connivance of the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Yet many questions remain around the famine. Was it even a purely localized Bengal famine or were its effects felt further afield? What was the real cost of these millions of deaths from mass starvation and why is it an almost forgotten episode of history?

Partho Bhattacharya: This movie is a tribute to my mother, my grandmother and to all members of my family. I wanted to find some answers through this movie and i tried to interview some historians. We tried to concentrate our energy to record testimonies from the people.

Shiv Vishvanathan: Rakesh, as a historian would you like to discuss as to why so many official historians were coy on discussing the Bengal Famine?

Rakesh Batabyal: You used exactly the right word which is 'coy'. I started working on the famine in 1990 in my MA seminar paper. I continued working on this but this did not fetch me a job. In every interview this was sidetracked. I initially thought it was just about networking. Then I gradually realised when I heard from the filmmakers that even those who speak on the famine would not speak from a decade back. The famine has remained confined to popular myth and memory but not in Calcutta's University or the history department there. And interestingly when I finished I did not have a job because of this thesis but I realised that my work has been regularly cited by the Irish historians. For them the famine is a huge thing so they sympathised and empathized with this. Therefore, there is a politics of history. Secondly after this work is known, even today when I am speaking, a couple of PhDs and works which come up regularly blackout my work because this is the only work which directly counters them. In fact, in Madhushree Mukherjee's book a large number of factual details have been sighted from my work but she is based in Germany. She is only a candidate in academic history here. When her book came out, Google and Wikipedia, newspapers and magazines trashed saying that this is not history this is trash. So this is the intense politics of history making and history writing

Shiv Vishvanathan: Do the supporters do anything to rescue this?

Rakesh Batabyal: No, some of them go on legitimizing these. Even Lizy Cunningham's book Test of War, supporters would come out and say during the previous 10 to 15 years there is a class which emerged in Bengal which is rich and did not protest about the famine in that sense the colonial position gets legitimized and it also gets defended.

Shiv Vishvanathan: Most historians think that their narrative is about table manners

rather than of genocide. And that bothers me. In fact, that is what worries me about the gentleness of the memory as opposed to say the narratives of the partition. People here are so gentle that it almost feels like the Britishers are still around. Here are Rudranshu and Madhushree who are outstanding historians talking about one of the greatest acts of genocide. The word genocide is not even mentioned in our history. We almost think it's a demographic census. 3.5 million people died which is even more than the partition, then why is the narrative so soft?

Rakesh Batabyal: That is the politics of history writing. History writing is almost like the linkages with colonial establishment. Say you need to have a fellowship in Oxford or you can't write about this. But we also need to think as to why we should write. The partition industry has grown in the sense that with publication and politics, there are also museums in Amritsar. In the case of famine, there are vested interests which do not like Bengal to be together. In that sense, ArtEast is a fantastic move because the reason we are still talking about the national register of citizens in Assam is because of the famines. The famine pushed the people into Assam. Assam was crowded and already demanding some sort of a relaxed situation from 1930s. So if you do not discuss famine you cannot discuss the northeast politics. Northeast also has a vested interest here so there a very few people who will actually come out and say that look this is colonial genocide. Accidentally, Amartya Sen got this after he tried to debate on how many people died during the famine

Shiv Visvanathan: Do you think social science is the language for genocide? When you read Amartya Sen or Madhushree Mukherjee they are sort of antiseptic. If you read some of the narratives on the Israeli concentration camps or some of the new work on Bosnia, there is anger in the narrative. When you read these guys it's sort of a tame. Within Bengali literature many of the scientists and social scientists say and N K Bose even wrote about it in a very different way. Where are those narratives?

Rakesh Batabyal: Again, a social science oriented and very antiseptic narrative, but let me begin with that we have tried to avoid a template of victimhood. We are not the victims like a chunk of Jewish. We wanted to come out of the sense of victimhood that is one notion and therefore they are avoided talking about it. When it comes to Indian Universities and the academic world coming out, what happens with the politics you see is that you have to make Nehru the victim to make Congress the victim to make BJP the victim and so on. So this victimhood system is getting closely stirred inside the country. As a society you need to have aggregate discourse to talk about the genocide. The Roosevelt paper actually shows how Winston Churchill was hated by Roosevelt for all these issues.

Shiv Vishvanathan: Even in folk history, there is a gentleness which is startling. There is no sense of accusation. Why does it almost seem like fatalism?

Partho Bhattcharya: Around the idea of victimization if we say that before 15th August 1947 there was no victim but after that there are many victims of intercommunal violence. According to statistics 1 million people were dead. Around 14 million people were displaced. There was a loss of property for billions of dollars on both the sides including East Pakistan. So I think today many people don't want to recall. That's very strange approach towards history. Even my family has not discussed much. Starvation was a very tough thing so how to recall those situations but I don't know for how many hours do we need to starve before we start feeling the hunger. So yes there is a kind of gentleness as you say. Now it is again a question of our relationship with our past and our history. Are we the same or are we ready to expose our past? Or do you just want to hide up your past? I was going through a piece which was published in January regarding memories, myth and memorial on how we negotiate with history. Probably an Indian does not require a fiction because he is living a fiction constantly.

Shiv Vishvanathan: Partition is a narrative industry. Bengal famine is the history of silence. Also, a history of silence which is supported by historians. Why is it that the new stories are not coming out? There are tremendous records of the Ramkrishna Mission which worked on the Bengal famine but also capture the narrative of carrying dead bodies in bullock carts. Day after day, it reminded them of the concentration camps. Why are the narratives erased? This raises a second question for me, which is Bengal famine triggered a lot of modern ideas of violence, of violence through policy. Is it that the Bengal famine was the real making of the Indian state?

Rakesh Batabyal: A person who died two years back Neeti Sengupta, he was the rationing officer in the 1960s. In fact, I grew up in Bihar and when we used to cross the border into the Purulia district there were constant toll gates. We could not take rice from Bengal to Bihar. This is as late as 1970. Bangladesh got a famine in 1974-75 so you could see Bengal facing crisis. Entire Bengal politics was based on rationing so even Mamata Banerjee has come from the ration queues. Shortage management is

what the Indian state is all about. My book was the first book which connected the Bengal famine to the Noakhali riot or the Calcutta riot. The Calcutta riot saw 6000 official figures. Maybe it is being pre-empted. Whereas in Calcutta riots there are exact testimonies that are coming out. In Bengal, there is politics of riots. 120 Rupees were being taken per body to be taken out of the manhole. So the politics of violence on one hand and the India's state as of crisis or shortage management was poor. The third is the silence. Those who are the vocal historians say that Gandhi's non violence policy was the reason people were non violent. This is when a communist party actually took a decision on a pro war effort. Now with all the effort, all the congress leaders were in jail and had also been very popular in Congress mobilization. One of the districts had a very powerful communist movement coming up. This was the time in the communist working when number of workers actually went for mobilizing more food. All this campaign was against the state. Historians in the state did not come out saying that they took a stand against the state and therefore it will take two or three more generations to come out and say that it was a genocide.

Shiv Vishvanathan: Would you advocate a truth commission on the Bengal Famine? Like a mock trial where there's not only a mention of Churchill but also other people?

Rakesh Batabyal: I would not take such a political stand of naming people here. There was a famine commission and a dissent note was given by Nanavati. And these famine commission reports and papers are all in the national archive. I would support a commission to talk about it for our next generation to know this.

Shiv Vishvanathan: In India a disaster is not a disaster till it is officially recognised. So the moment there is famine you have to send a letter saying please recognise this as a disaster. How did the famine did not remain a memory of the state?

Rakesh Batabyal: Im using an autobiographical reference. My book is cited by the Irish because from 18th century most of the British administrators who actually wrote dissent notes were actually Irish men who were sent here. Many of them had a very gentle and a pro Indian attitude. In the sense what happened to our going to that side was instead we ended up in the other side of history. History writing is an ongoing process and therefore it will come out.

Shiv Vishvanathan: We need new projects which capture the fate of people and populations. A history of the Body. A Feminist history of the Partition. We need a new language to confront violence. Social science is a bit antiseptic now.

art East

February

3

2018

2p.m.- 4p.m.
Seminar Rooms I to III,
Kamaladevi Complex,
India International Centre

Game of Thrones

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA CAMPAIGN OF WW II

Kai Friese
Hemant Katoch
Catriona Child

Moderated by
Kishalay Bhattacharjee

www.arteast.org.in

The jungle war of China-Burma-India campaign was perhaps the most unconventional, colourful and dramatic with internecine squabbles, political intrigues and enormous stakes. From the heroic transport flights over the "Hump" of the Himalayas to the most prodigious engineering feat of the Ledo Road, this war was amongst the fiercest. Who were these mavericks and why were the powers so desperate to control this theatre? What were the stakes exactly?

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The Game of Thrones: China-Burma-India Campaign of WW II

Date: February 3,2018 Time: 02:00pm Venue: Seminar Halls I, II & III

The jungle war that was the China-Burma-India campaign of the Second World War was the most unconventional, colourful and dramatic of battles. Marked by internecine squabbles and political intrigues, and coupled with enormous stakes, neither the Allies nor the Axis powers were willing to let go of this front. From the heroic transport flights over the "Hump" of the Himalayas to drop supplies to the Chinese resistance to the mot prodigious engineering feats of the Manipur and Ledo Roads, this battle was amongst the fiercest and demanded ingenuity at all levels. Who were these mavericks and why were the powers so desperate to control this front? What was really at stake in this, till recently, little acknowledged and yet critical, theatre of war

Panellists:
Kai Friese, Journalist; Hemant Katoch, Author and Researcher; and Catriona Child, Writer

Moderator:
Prof. Kishalay Bhattacharjee, Author and Journalist

Photos:
Kai Friese, Harsh Man Rai and Madhu Kapparath

Kai Friese: This is a personal story and an extra-curricular one for me. An extra-curricular diversion that emerged from another extra-curricular diversion. It's all to do with a type of plane which took me on a long strange journey. It took me back to my childhood and well into my fifties, to Arunachal at least three times and also to the US.

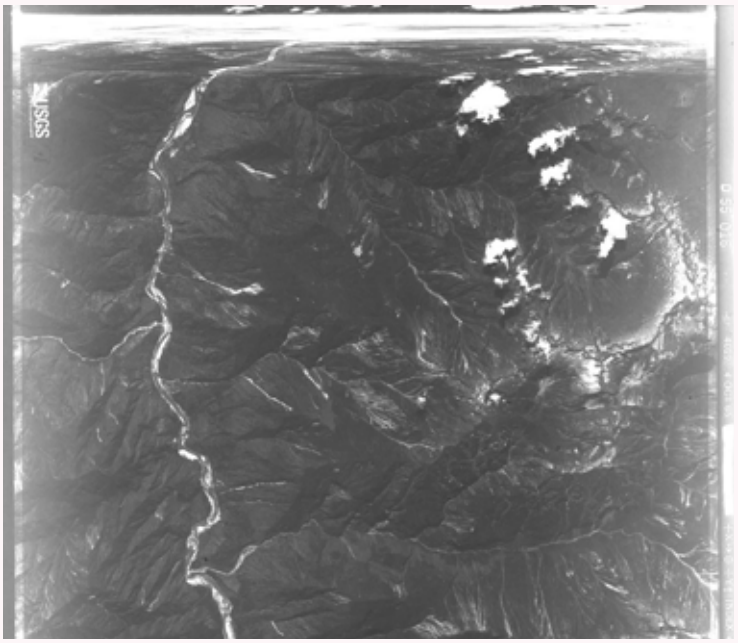
This is a Douglas C-53 Skytrain, a variant of the very famous Dakota or DC-3. It's also in the markings of the China National Aviation Corporation or CNAC, with the distinctive 'Chung' symbol. But my personal journey began in 2001. I was working for a travel magazine, Outlook Traveller. We got an offer from the government of Arunachal Pradesh to do a feature on the state. In a destination of my choice and I decided to go to what was then the expanded Lohit district. I had a reason of my own: because I was fascinated with the India-China war of 1962 and I wanted to visit the battlefield of Walong, which was one of India's more honourable defeats in that war. I travelled with a photographer friend Madhu Kapparath, who took some of these pictures We flew to Dibrugarh and then proceeded to the banks of the Lohit river. At that time, this was where the highway ended and you had to proceed by a boat, or several boats actually, from a place called Alubari ghat to Digaru ghat.

Today there's a bridge which makes it much less romantic but this is how our trip began. And heading to the hills, this is looking

down on the Lohit from a place called Hawa Pass which is now in the Mishmi hills. We did make it to Walong eventually and to Kibithu and the China border.

finding the crash.

But at the end of the same trip we had had another stroke of luck. After reaching Dibrugarh we were



This is the image that I acquired later a U2 spy plane image of the Lohit valley.

allowed to travel in AN-32 transport plane to Bijoynagar which is an isolated town in the middle of Namdapha National Park, unconnected that time by road.

Returning from Walong I was insistent that I wanted to spend a night in a Mishmi village and we stopped at a place called Sarti where I pestered this old man whose name was Mun Thalum for stories about the 1962 war. He was actually fairly irritated by this and said "that war had nothing to do with us," though he had memories of it. Then he started taking about the 'American war' and he said "in those days I had never seen a motor vehicle, I had never seen a truck. But we used to see Tam Tam Gaaris flying overhead." And then he said once there was a crash nearby and and 'our people' actually rescued two American pilots. I was fairly fascinated by the story and it took me back to childhood memories of Commando comics and earlier obsessions with aeroplanes. Then I returned to Delhi and wrote a travel piece in which I mentioned this anecdote, while dreaming already of actually

And here you can see we are approaching the air strip of Bijoynagar which is not a WWII air strip but is constructed with 'Marston mats', perforated steel planks left over from the Second World War.

As I said, I wrote about this story and couple of months after the issue appeared I got an email from an old American War veteran called Fletcher Hanks who told me he was a veteran hump pilot. He was now in his 80s and was involved in locating the crashes in which some of his colleagues had perished and others had survived. And reading my account he said that it sounds very much like a particular plane called CNAC 58, and he told me the story of this crash. It was a crash in which the plane had gone down in the Mishmi hills. It had a crew of three, one of whom, a Chinese Radio Operator named Wong, was killed. But the two pilots, Ridge Hammel and Joe Rosbert had survived the crash and ultimately made their way back to the airbase a month later. He also told me that one of those pilots was still alive—Joe Rosbert. He put me in touch with him and ultimately I was able to call him and speak to him about the story and he sent me a written account of it as well. Basically the plane was flying from Dinjan to Kunming, ice had started building up on the wings—they ran into bad weather. So they turned around and flew into a mountain. In the snow at that time, it was at 16,000 feet, Joe Rosbert was seriously injured, his ankle was shattered but Ridge was substantially okay. Wong of course was dead. Joe told me that they initially stayed in the aircraft to regain their strength. All they had to eat was a gallon jar of coca cola concentrate which they were taking to Kunming to sell. They used to eat this with snow. After a few days they realised no one was going to rescue them, so they used the door of the plane to slide down the snowy slope until they crashed off that and then they followed streams and rivers, walked for several days, slowly with Joe's injured foot, ate a dead crow that they found along the way. But after 3-4 days they came across a hut with people, with smoke

PHOTO: MADHU KAPPARATH

coming out of it. They marched in there and found a family. It turned out to be a community of Mishmis who looked after them and moved them to a larger village. And he remembered a few names in particular: of the head of the Mishmi family whose name was Daino Lamad. He remembered a man who he recalled as Aw Shaw. He said he was a very important man who was in touch with the British. And Aw Shaw ultimately got in touch with a British Army party that was reconnoitring a possible road route into China. They were carried back from here by Mishmi porters.

This is a wartime coca cola advertisement.

This is Ridge Hammel on the left and Joe Rosbert on the right on their return to Dinjan, a month after they went missing. Behind them is a plane with the Chinese CNAC marking.

Joe who was injured went back to America to recover. Ridge Hammel went back to flying and was killed in another crash the next year. Joe found work in America in 1946 as a technical consultant on a Hollywood B movie about Hump pilots in India. It was a movie called 'Calcutta' made by John Farrow (Mia Farrow's father). Joe said it was a terrible movie but what he liked about it was that they actually had a DC-3 Douglas on the sets, which they cut in half, in section, so they could film the interior.

This is a still from the movie.

I was by now quite excited about finding this plane and Fletcher Hanks who originally told me about it said he was trying to raise money to find the crash and retrieve it because apparently the plane was more or less intact at the time it crashed. He said the Chinese were now interested in honouring the Hump operation and it would be worthwhile and we should try and do something. I promised to find out more.

This is a wartime map of the Hump.

I could say a little more about the Hump. It was the largest airlift the world had seen. It was also very dangerous. In the summer of 1944, it was statistically far more dangerous to fly an unarmed transport plane on the Hump than it was to fly a bomber over Germany. Around 600 planes crashed on this route and there were around 1500 casualties. It is also interesting that the airlift that ultimately superseded the hump, logistically, was the Berlin airlift that was based on this experience and run by General William Tunner who was in charge of the Hump operation towards the end.

CNAC, the company or aviation group to which CNAC 58 belonged, was actually a Chinese airline but funded by the American government in a tie-up with Pan Am. It was staffed primarily by American commercial pilots who were effectively mercenaries here. They had a very strong record of safety and success and were more efficient than the army fliers on the Hump, partly because they were more experienced commercial pilots.

As I said I became quite taken by the idea of going to find this plane, 'Ship 58'. And these are some shots to explain some of my sources of fascination. Now that I had dumped the 1962 obsession temporarily. I have a complicated family history in which three of my uncles, or one grand uncle and two uncles, fought in the Second World War in three different armies.

This is my father's youngest and most favourite uncle, Oberst-leutnant Kurt Friese who went missing in the last weeks of WWII in a place called Ortwig which is now on Germany's border with Poland.

This is my uncle Jack Saroff who was the husband of my Khala. He was in the US Navy in the Pacific. He went on to have fairly long and happy life.

This is my uncle Ranbir Bakshi, on his wedding day, marrying my mother's cousin Timmy aunty. He fought in Burma and won a military cross there as well.

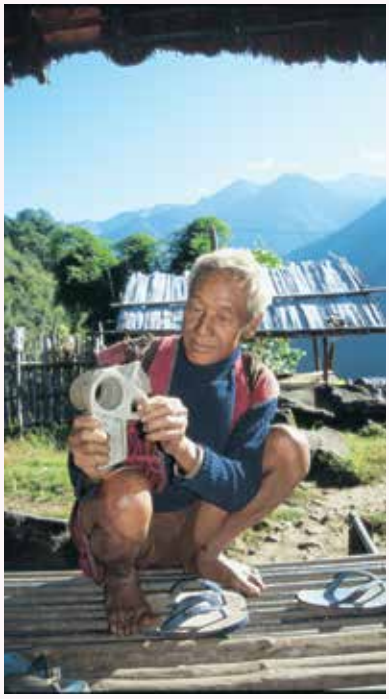
I was also drawing on my childhood fascination with comics. This is the famous frame from Tintin in Tibet. It's a Dakota DC-3. Actually an Air India plane if you remember the story one of these takes off from Safdarjung Aerodrome in Delhi. And in my childhood you could see three Dakotas standing on the tarmac at Safdarjang with their distinctive nose-up, puppy-like stance. Also i remember in Dec 1970, being taken by my father to see my first crash site, when a Dakota that had taken off from Safdarjung crashed behind INA market.

This is one more famous aircraft fantasy, a still from 'Lost Horizon' from which the story of Shangri-La comes.

This is the first picture from my second trip back to the Lohit district. This is taken from the Terai in the middle of crossing the river. The bridge was still not there. It was a lucky clear day just after rains and you can see the snows of the Hump.

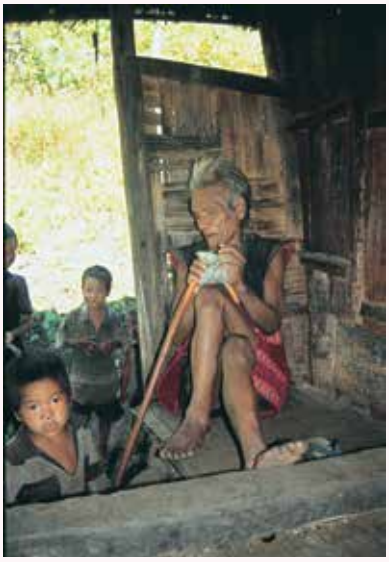
This is near the district headquarters, place called Loiliang which was the home of my friend Jogin Tamai, a man I met on my earlier

trip. It is a beautiful part of the world. Jogin and I travelled up the Lohit by motorcycle asking people more about the story. I had made a useful mistake on this trip in that I had not looked at my notebooks from the earlier visit. I realised later that if I had I would have gone directly to the village of Bhao which Mun Thalum had mentioned to me. I should also have immediately thought of tracing Daino Ramat/ Lamad's family who Joe Rosbert had mentioned. But instead we just followed rumours, which turned out to be a good thing. Here we have left our bike at Lohit and walked up a valley to the right called the Halai valley. We heard that there was a story of a crash there. This is a typical upcountry Mishmi village where we stopped and sure enough people remembered a crash from the war.



This man is holding a piece of cast aluminium from a nearby plane wreck.

But it soon became apparent that this was not a crash we were looking for. By now I recalled the story of the Lamad family.

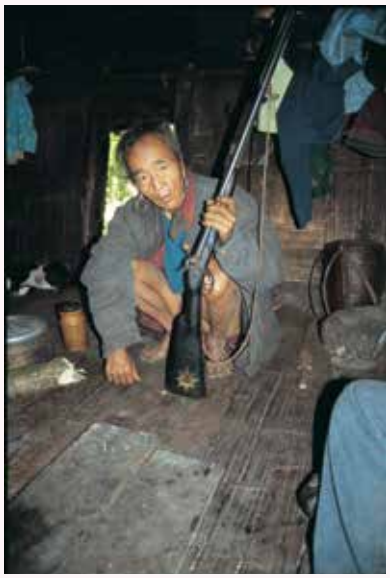


This was another old man who gave me an ultimately very useful piece of information. He said "If you are looking for anything from the Wartime you should find out about a 'Klai Klumfung' a 'big white man' of that time whose name was 'Mingphlai.' He was the government officer who was the in charge here and he knew everything about everything."

Meanwhile we went back to the main valley and continued to the town of Hawai which is now the headquarters of the bifurcated district of Anjaw which is the upper part of the former Lohit district.

This man told me he had actually been to the crash we were looking for. He also told me he had found the body of the dead Chinese radio operator Wong, and that he had taken a wristwatch off that body. He had a very precise memory of the watch: a Westend Watch Company 'Sowar Prima' he said. Nothing I had ever heard of but he said he had later given it to his stupid son who had lost it. But I did find out about the Westend company and it was a Swiss watch company whose marketing was focussed on Asia particularly on the Himalayan region and was popular with pilots.

He was a one armed man He lost his other hand he said in the 1962 war when he found a grenade and was playing with it and it went off. Also in Hawai we went to the compound of the Pul clan who apparently had stories to tell. This was actually the compound of the family of the late Arunachal Chief Minister, Kalikho Pul who sadly killed himself recently.

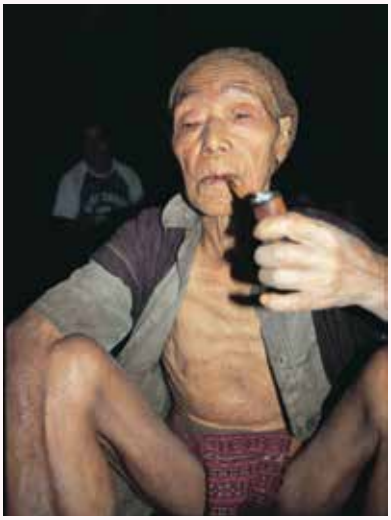


This man showed me this shot gun and said that it had been given to the Pul clan for their part in rescuing two American pilots after the war. We now continued to try and find the Lamad clan. The Lamads lived in a village called Bhao which was further upstream. So we crossed the river and we met this man, and told him what we were looking for. And he said that he was the younger brother of Dino Ramat and that he was there when the pilots came to the village. And then he reproduced that conversation. One pilot said he was "Rigzin" (which sounds of course, like Ridge) and then he pointed at the other one and said "Chau" (which has to be Joe). He also remembered the pilots saying "Wong thumla", which means

'Wong is dead'. This was very exciting because it was an unprompted tale. We hadn't told this man the names of the pilot or anything. We went up to his village Bhao where I met his wife Minga Ramat who was a fabulous old lady and was actually the wife of Dino Ramat. When he died, she married his younger brother who we had just met on the way. She said she was also in the hut when the pilots had first crawled in and she remembered it well.

She imitated the mewling sound Joe made as he crawled in with his injured foot.

This is her son who is also the son of Dino Ramat.



They confirmed that the plane crash was a considerable distance further uphill from their village. They said they went there in their youth and so had other people. They introduced me to another man who said he had spent a lot of time at the plane crash site. Originally the plane was intact and looked like a wounded bird. And they went on hunting trips trying to find musk deer and would often shelter in the plane. But he also said it had later been burnt. There was a lot of debris still to be seen. He gave me some bits and pieces which he had retrieved from that site. Pieces of rubber and a metal box which he said came from the plane. Now I was confident I was going in the right direction. Unfortunately, I did not have that much time and returned to Delhi determined to follow up the story. Since I was working with a travel magazine I was able to go to New York and visit Joe Rosbert. I went and spent a night with him. I told him I thought I knew where the plane was. I showed him the box that the old man had given me. And he immediately said oh that's the interphone connector. It contains the circuitry to communicate between the cabin and the cockpit in the plane. He also said he still dreamt of that trip and the crash and said his favourite part was the Mishmi. "I have a vision of Ridge down on his knees and ahead of us is a hut. And not only there is smoke coming out of that hut, it was a moment of salvation". I was further emboldened and determined to go to the crash site itself. Returning to India and being a cautious fellow I asked my friend Jogin Tamai to ask the people in Bhao to send me a photo of the crash, since hunters went there very often. And about a month later I got a bunch of photos taken by Checheso Ramat. It reminded me of that Tintin in Tibet frame. They also said at the crash site they had encountered a group of Burmese hunters and spent a couple of nights with them. With that confirmation I returned to Lohit, this time with a friend Harsh Man Rai.

PHOTO: HARSH MAN RAI

There I met Minga Ramat again. Here she is doing her routine of imitating Joe's condition when he crawled into the hut. She liked that story a lot. And then we set out from Bhao, uphill of course. It was ultimately a 5 days walk from Chekwinty bridge. For Mishmi hunters it takes 2 days. For me it was 5 days up and 2 days down. We were walking from 5000 feet to 15000 feet, initially through fairly dense jungle. There were tree leeches. I had sixty leech bites in the end. I had an infected foot, considerable exhaustion, I had a bad time with food because my Mishmi friends were basically shooting animals and boiling them and . it didn't taste good. On the fifth day we reached the site. The big thing was that the piece of the wing and there was tons of debris. Some of the cargo was there. Some truly

heavy pipes, cockpit instrumentation, circuitry, two engines were there and the tail.

That's a cockpit dial I picked up from there. Basically, I thought I had cracked it and I was happy to have found the wreck I was looking for. A little later I went to America again to attend a reunion of families of CNAC veterans and families of veterans still alive including Fletcher Hanks. It was a wonderful meeting but I also encountered a lot of scepticism. People were saying, "oh this is just a local story" or "how do you know for sure it is that plane?" I was taken aback because the stories I had heard from the people of Bhao were very convincing for me. But I now became obsessed with nailing it down as precisely as I could with whatever information I could find. One thing was to identify the engines and they turned out to be Pratt & Whitney Twin wasp which were the kind of engine used on the C-53.

That's me holding up another piece of cockpit instrumentation. This is verifiably from the control pedestal of a C-47 which is another variant of the Dakota.

PHOTO: HARSH MAN RAI

I received a lot of information from fellow enthusiasts who I met in America. It turns out that there was a whole community of aviation and hump-nerds who were into this quest.

This was a photo we had taken of the tail without paying much attention to it at the time. It was useful because there were ghost inscriptions and it's discernable that the numbers were 21589. We thought it must be the registration number of the plane before it became CNAC-58. The trouble was that there were two digits missing, the first one and the last one. So there was a lot of debate around it. One argument put to me was that it would be 4215893. But thanks to a collaborator that we found out that 4215893 was another Douglas that has crashed in Tunisia in the war and had been identified.

Ultimately a very useful friend, Michael Little, sent this to me which is a data-card from the Douglas Air Corporation.

It mentions the CNAC-58 which is the plane we were looking for and gives the original registration as 4215890. So the 4 was not discernible on the image we had. And the 0 was missing but we could safely assume that we had found it. I also started trawling the internet and I found out a community of people who log all the information they can find about air crashes and here too 4215890 was listed as a CNAC 58. I also saw references to another plane with the Indian registration VTCZC. Turned out to be another Douglas C-47 of the same batch as the plane I had been looking for. Also 42 meant manufactured in 1942. This was the plane crash I had seen this with my father in INA market. This led them, I think to shut down Safdarjung airport as a civil aviation airport. This plane was also a leftover Dakota from WWII which had been flying in India until 1970.

Remember I mentioned this blind man who told me I must look for 'Mingphlai'? Ultimately I found out that it was a Mishmi pronunciation of 'Mainprice'. I found the archive of the personal papers of FP Mainprice who had been a Political Agent in Lohit in 1943. In them he recounted the story of the pilots. He wrote up the whole story and also mentioned all the names of characters. He spelt the names better. So 'Aw Shaw' turned out to be Osha Pul. From the Pul clan who had the shotgun, related to the late chief minister.

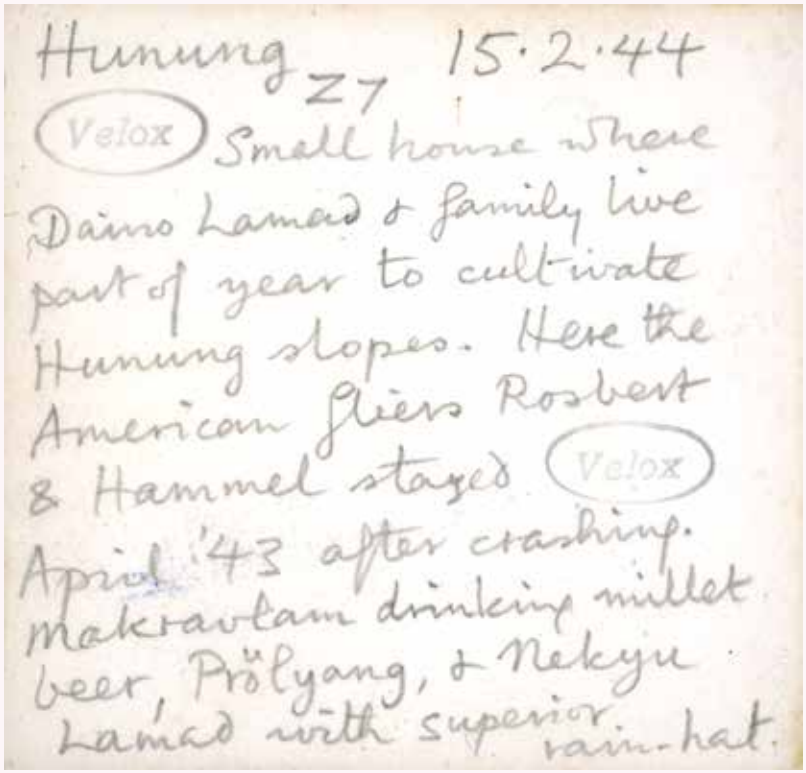


PHOTO: CSAS, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

This was the best thing I found from 'Mingphlai's' archive. This photo of a hut on the back of which he has inscribed, 'Hunung. Small house where Daino Lamad and family live part of year to cultivate Hunung slopes. Here the American Fliers Rosbert and Hammel stayed. April' 43 after crashing.' It was a place I had been to. It's a little above Bhao., we had seen it on our way up to the plane and this is what remains of this hut. It would have been reconstructed many many times over the years, a 'ship of Theseus' of sorts.

PHOTO: HARSH MAN RAI

It's not a great photo but a particularly meaningful one for me. It reminds me that in the midst of this obsession and this fascination with white men in planes crashing into the wilderness, there was also another crash taking place. Which is the story of the encounter of people like the hill Mishmi with modernity and the state. It has put an end to many of their old villages and much of their traditional way of life and economy. Today communities like the people of Bhao are encouraged to come and settle near the roads. The Ramat clan used to get a lot of revenue from controlling Chekwinty bridge which was an important point of commerce from Burma. But that trade has now been extinguished by modern borders.

Kishalay Bhattacharjee: The history that we read out of history books is actually nothing. Hemant, you have walked the battlefields of that area. Why do you think this was such a critical battle for Great Britain? And if it was so critical, why wasn't it acknowledged till recently?

Hemant Katoch: Just to set things in context of what Kai has been talking about, it is Northern Burma, China and Arunachal Pradesh that we have been talking about. He is talking about a period from 1942 to 1945 when pilots used to fly over the Hump from the Dibrugarh area to China. But if you step back on it and look there are various components in it. The key event in 1942 is the Japanese invasion and occupation of Burma. Why were the Japanese so interested in Burma? By the time the Japanese invaded, the last supply route to the Chinese was through Burma. It was through a single road and that was the road the allies were using to supply to China who were also battling the Japanese. Once the Japanese occupied Burma they cut the road and China was isolated. Now the force was isolated and allies were thrown out of Burma. They were ill prepared for the Japanese invasion and were thrown out essentially to the North East India whereas some others were thrown back into China. Now how do you re-establish supplies to the Chinese? The Americans came up with two solutions; one was to construct a Ledo road. So from Assam they started building a Ledo road which went through Northern Burma and then to China. But it would have also taken very long. So they thought we would start flying supplies over the Himalayas and that lead to the flights over the hump. So this process for the Americans had priorities in Burma and upper Assam as they wanted to send

supplies to the Chinese. There were a lot of tensions between the Britishers and the Americans. They were so badly defeated and thrown out of Burma that how do they take their fight back there was the question. So they started reconstructing and rehabilitating North East India. Before they could try and attack the Japanese in Burma, in 1944 the Japanese attacked Imphal. The Japanese were defeated and Imphal and Kohima was a turning point in the battle. Because the Japanese were defeated, the British and their allies used this as a springboard to defeat the Japanese eventually.

So when I talk about stepping back its just to think about North East India during this period. We are talking about more than hundreds and thousands of people in a region which was fairly remote at a time, not very well connected to the war. So we got people fighting here over the land and flying over the Himalayas. There were a lot of people who were crossing borders here further down near the Arakan. Arakan by the way is where Rohingyan problem is now. It is the old coastal strip which is now the Rakhine state of Burma. We still don't know the impact of this on the local people of that area.

That's just the overview of 1942 to 1945. I will bring the discussion back to Imphal and Kohima. Why Imphal? Why were the Japanese so interested in Imphal? It's about geography. The best route out of India whether it is in 2018 or 1944 or 1942, the best and easily accessible route along this entire frontier is Imphal or the Manipur valley. That is the only place where a large force can move from India to Burma. So for the Japanese, that was the main valley from where invasion could come so they tried and blocked it and that is where the invasion came from. I think its numbers. The Japanese sent some 84,000 men and the casualty rate was about 50,000. They lost, about 30,000 Japanese died, and about 24,000 were injured. They lost most of their army in the battle so for them it was their largest defeat ever on land in Japanese history.

Also what were the stakes in 1944? People talk about Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and they talk about Indian National Army but with Japanese there was a very small contingent of the INA. There were only 6,000 men or so. But Imphal was supposed to be the precursor. If the Japanese won Imphal, the INA were being able to bring in more people, if Netaji would have come, Laxmi Sehgal and the Jhansi regiment of INA would have been there, who knows what would have happened. Perhaps, India would have been on stake because if gates were opened at Imphal and Kohima, the forces would have come into Assam and further into Bengal. Then it would have perhaps excited people to join the INA, to the cause of an uprising but these are the 'What Ifs' of history. But why Imphal and Kohima is important is because of the scale of defeat of the Japanese, the potential of what could have happened if the Japanese have won, and the fact that until 1944 in Imphal and in Kohima, the British and the Japanese had only been defeated.

Kishalay Bhattacharjee: I was going from Imphal to Churachandpur and had a flat tyre. There was a Japanese memorial out there on the roadside. We wanted water and walked to a small village, walked there and met this elderly gentleman who was sunning himself. In front of him was a hill, a bare hill. I was talking to him while the car was getting fixed when I found his name was Gourmohan Singh. He told me a story when he was 11 years old and the fateful day Japanese landed at midnight. In front of him was the Red Hill and hence the battle named Battle of Red Hill that turned one of the decisive battles of World War II. Before the Japanese arrived, the entire hill was evacuated. So the 11 year old hid himself because he did not want to run away and waited to see what was happening. When the Japanese arrived he was there and it was too late for him to figure out where to go. So they told him to be a water carrier and yes he carried water to the soldiers. He then took us to a little attic which he thinks is a secret chamber in his house. He takes out a trunk full of memorabilia of little helmets and water carriers and all. Across Manipur and Nagaland you'll come across many people who have seen the war, who have been there and have fascinating tales of the war.

Now Catriona it's your turn for to relate that riveting story of your life. How were you involved in this? You told us you had family who were a part of the Great Game. And now you will tell us of someone who was a part of this battle.

Catriona Child: My family had been in India for generations. We have four cousins living within 2 kilometres of each other in Delhi. So let's go back to 1935 or so. We have a young woman called Ursula Bower who has a dream to go to Oxford. But it is the financial crisis and the depression and she has a brother who also needs to be educated. And in a story that will sound familiar, guess who gets a chance to go to Oxford? It is the brother. My mother never took things lying down. She was sent off to finishing school in Switzerland. Her mother who was a great socialite was desperate for her to find a husband. But my mother had a friend whose brother was going to be a political agent in Manipur, Ronald McDonald. She

said I am going to be bored as hell out there why don't you come along for the winter and join me? At least we could play cottage songs and remember our days walking in the hills. So my mother went, she went for polo, she went to the governor's house, did the entire social stuff for three weeks. Then she got a chance to tour the hills around Imphal. She just fell in love with the tribes and the hills. Then she said, never mind about Oxford and never mind about a husband I am going to settle here and make a career in anthropology. Not surprisingly she encountered a huge amount of opposition from authorities. Women were supposed to sit in the club wearing big hats, play rummy, drink gin and tonic but never to go into the hills. She went back home to make a career. She found some support both from academics and from family friends. The photographs were good and yes she could find a job to do including pottery, stitching and weaving and stuff. She got ready to go back.

There was this one trip where she made a lot of effort to go back and really hoped this would work. The authorities told her that you can not tour the hills and she has this nervous breakdown because she put so much of her heart and soul into this. By then and by good fortune she met an officer who was farsighted and sensitive and a visionary. And there were lot of Nagas who are now actually in the present day Assam. He said there has been a rebellion in this area and it involved a new religion and many other elements. I don't understand what has made these people so unhappy. They won't talk, they wont communicate and they wont accept help. Perhaps, you with a box of medicines as a non-official in the guise of an anthropologist can go and see what is going on. So off she went with various adventures through-out the way. She does understand and she does make good relations with the people. Suddenly after the Japanese advance in the hills, this great mosaic of different tribes who live there looked like the Japanese. What if they turned and went to the Japanese? British had never done very much for them. No infrastructure, no schools. So suddenly my mom gets a visit from an official called Ronald Wright who is an elderly colonel desperate to get out in the field again. So they could go out in sort of an unconventional way to serve people. They are called the We Force. They had the people who led those units and were not always in the army. They were tea planters and other administrators who really understood the tribal people. They said it is better if you are with the allies, the Japanese are pretty nasty. But they were also going out and actively searching for Japanese patrols and leaving some food. The authorities had recognised my mother's relationships with the Zemi-Nagas and she could be useful. So she was recruited in the We Force and was the only woman in the combat on the frontline certainly within that theatre of war. Because a woman could not be on the frontline in a war, as it wasn't allowed, she was in the books as a typist. She didn't talk much about it. There is an awful lot that is not talked about. She was made the captain and there was another officer who came with a platoon of rifles. Since she did not have any rank, so the guy took off some pips off his one shoulder and put it on her shoulder. The Nagas were very happy. Instead of going out they used to go out and hunt birds. They had guns, they had 150 scouts and they had only a few encounters.

Kishalay Bhattacharjee; She also inspired a comic strip character, didn't she? Kai you have your own comic strip linkages. Would you like to tell us a few?

Kai Friese: As part of the aftermath of all this I started trawling internet archives of vintage comics looking for evidence basically of the same story finding linkages of the fantasy of these white men coming and crashing in the unknown. Basically related to the hump. These stories get told in many forms back in the 40s. Another thing I found peculiar in these is that immediately after the war the American adventure war comics suddenly switched to Sci Fi and aliens invading. On one side there are these big bombers flying over Japan and the next issue is the Martians attack. My favourite is where Fletcher Hanks who told me about CNAC 58, his father who was also called Fletcher Hanks was a very famous comics originator in the 1920s. He produced a comic called Fantoma.

Kishalay Bhattacharjee: What was the comic strip that your mother inspired, Catriona?

Catriona Child: The Jungle Queen or something. There were several actually and my mother hated all this stuff. The American soldiers called her the Naga Queen as she always moved around with Naga men who wore the traditional Nagas dress with a shawl and some beads around the neck. So it created a picture which made an impression one could say.

Kai Friese; One of the series I found of 1940s comics was Raja Bill. It involves a pilot who crashes or somehow winds up in a kingdom called Manipur which is at the border of India. This kingdom is weirdly run by a white princess who is trying to resist colonisation by Gandhi and Nehru.

Kishalay Bhattacharjee; Hemant, I know there have been some clubs and some societ-

ies in Britain and Japan and other places, where they have been trying to document or at least find their history. How are historians in India looking at it? Is there any interest in India about this?

Hemant Katoch; It is about the general idea of how we are taught history. History was taught to us in a very dull, drab, dates, names and eras sort of way. So by the time you give your exam it jumbles up and you are just sort of trying to put it down there. From my own experience of how I was taught history in school, it doesn't really get you involved in these parts. Another thing is how much we cover of the Second World War. It is always more about the British and the Americans and so on. And it is only off late that the people who have been writing about it as well, have started to bring out more Indian stories of the Second World War. So they have started to say that it is just not just the British war or the Allied war but also our war. And I think it is the perfect description.

From 200,000 men of India in the army, before the WWII started there were 2.5 million in the army spread out all over the world not only in Imphal, Kohima but in North Africa, Italy and so on. There were also flights over the hump. So we know that India was a critical part of the war. I think we are now starting to acknowledge that and taking ownership of it. The British have always been quite involved in their military histories. We can all learn from how interested they are. In not just remembering their history but also walking the battlefield. You got to go and see the places. Remember the Commonwealth War Graves Commission? There are five cemeteries in the North East of India. Those are immaculately maintained cemeteries that sort of keep that part of history alive. Manipur and Nagaland were cut off from the rest parts for tourism as well. Especially, in the years of unrest and insurgency. It was very difficult to head out unless you were a local, to head out of Imphal or to head out of Kohima even if you wanted to see the main sites of war. That has begun to change now. Tourists have begun to show up, we can actually go outside of Imphal as far as possible safely specially for foreign tourists not that there was ever really a threat against them. You can now really explore the interiors of Manipur and Nagaland in whatever you are interested in whether it is culture or food and so on. That has also positively impacted the interest in the Second World War. You can walk into the cemeteries. So when you talk of crash sites, one can actually head out now and indulge into your interest in the WWII. Also, Myanmar is finally opening up. So increasingly there is a lot of interest on cross border sort of travelling with interest in the Second World War.

Kishalay Bhattacharjee; When we read the history or read these stories of the China, Burma, India campaign, one of the names that still comes up is the maverick rogue General Joseph Stillwell because a road had to be built from what is the Assam-Arunachal border via Burma to Yunan. This road had to be built really fast if the war had to be won. And no one could build it because of impossible logistics. So the task fell on someone the Americans did not like very much. It was Joseph Stilwell who built the road at the rate of one kilometre a day laying a pipeline along it. It continues to be the most daring engineering feats of any war. I have walked that Stilwell road. I have done just 12 Kilometres from the pass from where you see the Lake of No Return. But why don't we hear of the Japanese names? I mean if the Japanese army was there in such strength, Joseph was a much smaller player in that sense. He was not the commander of the whole theatre. We get to hear the stories of the Allied Forces. We don't get to hear the stories of the Japanese. And the Japanese have consistently been coming more than the others actually to visit their graves or to visit the areas where they have war memorials. In fact, I am going to ask Yui Nakamura who comes from Japan and represents The Sasakawa Peace Foundation supporting this festival. She told me about those Japanese survivors who came to Nagaland and asked the Naga war veterans why the Japanese story was never written and now apparently there is an account but in Angami and translated in parts to Japanese.

Hemant Katoch: If you are a Japanese you might've heard of their generals. The problem is what literature do we have to access this history? Almost all the histories that one has access to have been written by the British veterans, military historians and Americans and so on and that's why you get a greater sense of characters involved on their side. But we don't have access to a lot of Japanese material. I have heard from a lot of Japanese people and its not like it is not being written. It is being written. There is a lot of literature apparently on Imphal itself. But it is in Japanese. So if you don't speak Japanese it limits your access to it. So I think its there and we don't always get to hear of it. I'm sure you have heard of General Slim who commanded the 14th army, went on to become a Field Marshall and was there through the campaign and saw defeat in 1942, turns it around, has this fantastic victory in 1944 in Imphal and Kohima and in Rangoon and then gets sacked by his General and then gets him sacked. In 1942 the Japanese themselves stopped at the border. They had already taken

over Burma. There was nothing there to stop the Japanese from coming to Imphal and all the way to Calcutta, there was really no defences to speak of because no one expected an attack to come from that side. The Japanese were already stressed, the monsoon was starting, it's a difficult border we have seen some of the photographs from Kai. The Japanese themselves stopped. Imphal and Kohima had already been going on for two months. It was clear that Japanese were not going to capture any of those two towns. Both General Sato and General Mutaguchi knew it was the time to accept, if not the defeat then a withdrawal and to sort of gather your horses and go away. But there is a great account, which says that they were talking and they both knew what was on each other's mind, they both were hoping that the other person would call off the operation. Neither of them wanted to be the one to say it. When you talk about cast of characters there are a lot of them with huge egos, also very competent men. Also very brave soldiers, some who didn't treat prisoners of war well.

Catriona Child: The dynamic between Mutaguchi and Sato is really interesting. Sato is very cautious. Mutaguchi is sort of more worldly ambitious. These things make for terrific drama for the personalities involved.

Hemant Katoch: General Sato whom she talked about was the division commander who was supposed to take Kohima. Mutaguchi said okay you take Kohima but also aim for Dimapur, which you know today, is at a distance of about 80 kilometres from Kohima. Kai mentioned those flights. Now a lot of those flights were carrying supplies from Calcutta, ferried across the Brahmaputra and then carried along the railway line. That railway line passed through Dimapur. Mutaguchi knew Kohima was important as that is from where road from Imphal passed. Sato did not like Mutaguchi at all. He doubted every intention of Mutaguchi. If they had gone to Dimapur in early April which is when they were trying to, Dimapur would have fallen. The British reinforcements would have not come and history could have been different.

Catriona Child: The other players whose story has not been fully told, of course are the local people. The Allies are pretty well recorded, the Japanese too, but what the local people thought about two great powers beating hell out of each other over their land. And the reverberations of that continue today in many ways. And unfortunately so many of the people who were there, who were children at the time of the Second World War, have passed away. So enormous amount of material has been lost. It grieves me very much. Works can still be done and more work should be done.

art East

February
1-7
2018

In the Neighbourhood

Illustrating life and living in the Northeast by Biscoot and Rain

Quadrangle Garden, India International Centre

Curated by
Kishalay Bhattacharjee

India International Centre (IIC)
Gandhi King Plaza, Art Gallery- Kamaladevi Complex; Quadrangle Garden; Seminar Rooms I to III, Kamaladevi Complex; Fountain Lawns; C D Deshmukh Auditorium

Organised and Presented by
भारतीय अभिव्यक्ति

Collaboration
INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

Supported by
SPF
THE SASAKAWA PEACE FOUNDATION

Partnership
NEW IMAGINATIONS
Jindal School of Journalism and Communication

Sirawon Khathing
and **Ben Ezra Ning**

DOWN THE ROAD

Local shops in Shillong, India

PICKLE STALL
A snack made with boiled potato, puffed rice, tamarind water, masala and mustard oil. Popular with school and college kids, the aloo moorie stand can be found in strategic locations.

ALOO MOORIE
A snack made with boiled potato, puffed rice, tamarind water, masala and mustard oil. Popular with school and college kids, the aloo moorie stand can be found in strategic locations.

FRUIT STALL
Kong (Elder sister in Khasi) sells seasonal fruits. She has a wide variety that includes fresh pineapples, bananas, peaches, sweet plums and other local fruits all grown from the surrounding landscape.

KWAI & HOUSEHOLD TOOLS
Kong (Elder sister in Khasi) sells kwai (betel nut and leaves) with lime paste that is popularly chewed by locals. Also sold is dried bottle gourd loofahs used as scrub and locally grown brooms.

TEER COUNTER
They are spread all over the city. Teer (translates to "an arrow") is a popular gambling sport where several archers shoot arrows at numerous targets. Bookies bet, the archers shoot, points are calculated and cash prizes are handed out. Interestingly, even small or shoddy shops are prompt with dispensing cash even if it's tens of thousands of rupees.

CHANNAWALLA
A coneful right after class is almost a mandate. Much like in North India, channawallas have been in the hills for many generations. Known for his boxes filled with assorted peanuts and grams, he artfully mixes them with chilli powder, onions and a dash of lime and serves in a paper cone. Keep an ear out for his bell or find him near an aloo moorie stall.

EVERYDAY UTOPIA
Northeast India

Cultures as diverse, rich and unexplored lived by simple people. Music ranging from bamboo instruments to rock and roll, dancing in and out of occasion, local food be it on the streets or cafes', hustling for space in the town buses, relentless monsoon rains, clouds that drape the green hills like a shawl, picnics under the trees; just the everyday.

SEEN AROUND TOWN

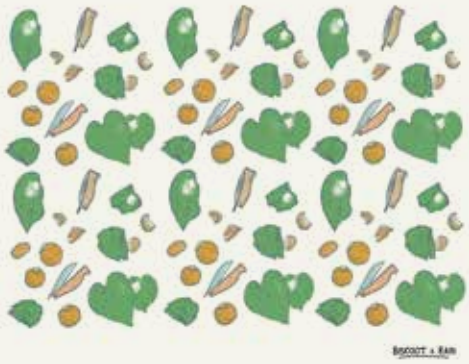
TAXIS
Small yellow and black cabs, mostly Maruti 800s, help cope with traffic congestions and narrow streets. Don't judge it by the appearance, the tiny taxi can often squeeze four passengers in the back seat.

ACCESSORIES
Wooden and metallic smoking pipes. Cloth bags and chappals are made locally while checkered shawls are a popular fashion accessory for the all generation.

BASKETS
Differently shaped, they are largely made of bamboo and cane for various uses. While some are used as sieves, storage, or carrying goods on their back, some are fashioned with large hoods and knitted with leaves to be used as raincoats in farms and fields. Bamboo is grown in abundance in the hills, and is a great resource for multipurpose use.

SHILLONG BUSES
Found on the streets of Shillong, it's easy to mistake them for a truck. Mostly made of wood and metal, these models from the United Assam era used to have exhaust pipes that turn upwards in an attempt to reduce air pollution. You'll find an assortment of art and type design on these vehicles.

PICKLES
Assorted and seasonal, pickles are made from fruits, vegetables, meats and even fish. Chillies and bamboo version are popular among locals who must have a pickle or chutney with every meal.



KWAI
A customary welcome offer, betel nut and leaf (areca nut or supari) is popularly eaten raw with a tiny amount of lime paste for potency and heat. First timers might find themselves red-faced and flushed. Sugar is a quick and effective antidote.

PEOPLE
Locals are bright, friendly and trusting. These are some common clothes and cloth bags worn by the working people of Shillong. Women wear checkered shawls and an apron-like cloth to protect themselves from dirt and spills from working. The menfolk often wear coats or jackets and even interesting hats that have become fashion statements

PINE TREES AND CONES
The scent of pine in the air and the landscape is filled thousands of pine trees heavily ladened with fragrant cones. Surrounded by rolling hills, Shillong is lovingly called the "Scotland of the East".

HOUSES
Typical to ones found on hills, these homes have sloping roofs owing to heavy rains. Walls have a wooden frame and are plastered with cement or mud. And the floors are made of beutiful pinewood, kept polished and clean. Cool in summer and fairly warm in winter keeping the heat in (provided there is a chula going!)

STOOLS/KNIVES
Women of the Khasi and Jaintia clan often carry traditional pen knives with wooden handles as pocket accessories. Used for peeling and cutting of kwai (betel nut) as well as prepping meals. Knitted stools (moodas) made of bamboo and cane. that are an example of the ingenious creativity of the people using local resources to benefit everyday life. Other kitchen accessories include a brush, local soap and metal holders to roast ingredients on the fire.

ORCHIDS
Orchids The Northeast of India is a biodiversity hotspot. Orchids are one of its many treasures. Over 700 varieties of this colourful flower can be found here. You could take a walk in a forest and spot orchids and flora that you won't see elsewhere in the world.

CHULAS
Portable fire stoves, *chulas* use charcoal for cooking food and warming rooms on cold days. During winter, you'll see people huddled around these chulas, at home or on a road side.

WHAT'S IN OUR KITCHEN

Ingredients of North East India

RICE
An absolute staple food, it's found in four colours – brown, red, black and white. Puffed, pounded or dried, used to make sticky rice, pancakes and steamed cakes.

BAMBOO SHOOT
Bamboo shoot is a very important ingredient in Northeastern cuisine and it's used in many ways. Young shoots appears once a year in August and are considered a delicacy. Commonly boiled or used in a curry when fresh, bamboo shoot is also dried, fermented and cooked with meat or fish.

CHILLIES
Found in colours of green, red, yellow, orange and even black, chillies are either dried, powdered or pounded into a paste. King chilli (also known as Bhut jolokia) is the hottest chilli in the world and is grown in the Northeast of India. Eat it plain (if you dare) or use it to season vegetables and meat.

MUSTARD LEAVES & OIL AND SESAME SEEDS
They are used as fresh greens, cooking oil and flavourings.

DRIED FISH
Powdered or whole, tiny dried fish are a local delicacy.

YAM
Fresh, dry, sliced or pounded, it's used in meat and vegetable dishes. In the hills, it's often used as an alternative to daal.

PEPPER
Whole or ground, black, white and red Sichuan pepper is generously sprinkled in vegetarian and meat preparations.

Traditional Recipe: Simple Naga Pork Curry

- ½ kg pork washed and cut into bite size pieces
- 1-2 tbsp dried bamboo shoots
- 5-6 whole chillies (green or dried)
- 1 tbsp ginger and garlic paste (fresh)
- Salt to taste

In a pot, bring 3 cups of water to boil
Add pork, chillies and salt. Cook till tender
Once soft, mash the chillies.
Add dried bamboo shoots and freshly ground ginger garlic paste
Cook for another 10-15 mins
Serve hot with rice

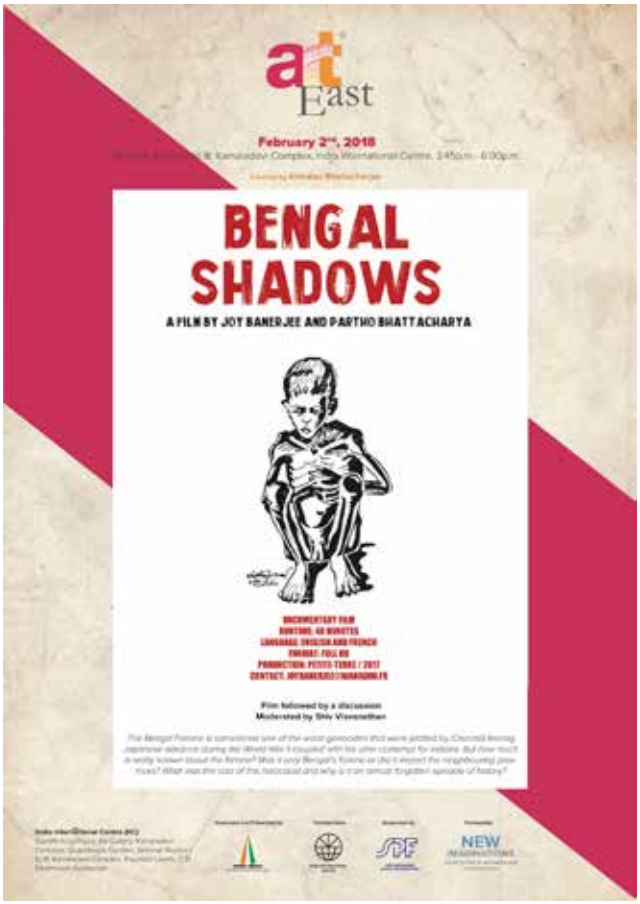
Traditional Recipe: Khasi Style Dried Fish Chutney

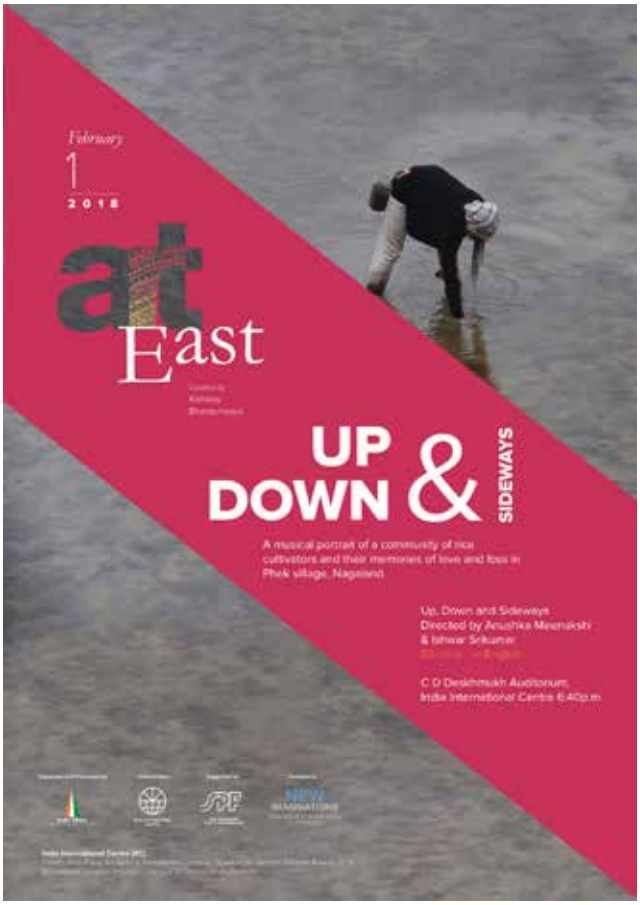
- 6-7 fresh red chillies
- 2 medium size dried fish (roasted dry on the fire or pan)
- 2 whole red Sichuan peppercorns
- 1 small onion (optional)
- salt to taste

Grind all the ingredients to a fine paste on a stone grinder. Eat with rice and curry as a side dish or as a spicy dip with boiled potatoes.

Yum!

Films Catalogue





art East

February
3
2018

Elements

Fountain Lawns, India International Centre,
6:00- 7:30 p.m.

A concert by Mi Ku, a contemporary folk ensemble from Nepal

Curated by
Kishalay Bhattacharjee

India International Centre (IIC)
Gandhi King Plaza; Art Gallery- Kamaladevi Complex; Quadrangle Garden; Seminar Rooms I to III, Kamaladevi Complex; Fountain Lawns; C D Deshmukh Auditorium

Organised and Presented by

Collaboration
INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

Supported by
SPF
THE SASAKAWA PEACE FOUNDATION

Partnership
NEW IMAGINATIONS
Jindal School of Journalism and Communication

Participating Artists

AN ODE TO BAMBOO

A tribute to M P Ranjan, design evangelist and one of the world's top design thinkers. Ranjan was a senior professor and a principal faculty at the National Institute of Design, (NID), Ahmedabad till his death in 2015.

AN UNSEEN TUNNEL INSIDE A DISPLACED PROLETARIAN - YEAR 2018

A mixed media installation that takes the viewer through a tunnel travelling and experiencing the transitional point of green space to grey space

Sukant Panigrahy - New Media Artist

Kaur Chimuk- New Media Artist

PHOTOGRAPHS-PAINTINGS-DRAWINGS-ILLUSTRATIONS-POETRY-BAMBOO OBJECTS OF EVERYDAY USE

Artists: **Arati Kumar Rao**, Photographer & Writer; **Parasher Baruah**, Cinematographer; **Pankhi Saikia**, Painter; **Sumana Roy**, Poet and Writer; **Vijay Jodha**, Photographer; **Siddartha Das**, Designer

IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Illustrating life and living in the North East by Biscoot and Rain

Visual Artists: **Sirawon Khathing** and **Ben Ezra Ning**

OF PINECONES AND SACRED FORESTS

Presented by **Rida and the Musical Folks and Dak_ti Craft**

INSTRUMENT MAKING

by **Bah Rojet Buhphang** & **Risingbor Kurkalang**

Shaun Morehead- Bom (traditional big drum); **Bah Rojet Buhphang- Tangmuri** (traditional shehnai); **Risingbor Kurkalang**- Maryngod (traditional violin) & Sitar (traditional sitar); **Amarnath Hazarika**- Duitara (traditional guitar) & acoustic guitar.

BLACK CLAY POETRY/POTTERY

A display of traditional tableware and cookware range developed by Dak_ti Craft and a team of women potters from Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya.

Potters: **Milda Shylla, Yophie Shylla**

Designer: **Rida Gatphoh**

LECTURE DEMONSTRATION BY RIDA AND THE MUSICAL FOLKS

A musical storytelling session followed by the story of the instruments, the 'skit' (beats and rhythm) and the craft of creating them.

Presented by **Rida Gatphoh**- Singer, Writer, Composer

BLACK CLAY POETRY/POTTERY

An interactive session by Dak_ti Craft with **Milda Shylla** and **Yophie Shylla.**

Conceptualised by **Rida Gatphoh**

SHA SHIAHKROT (TEA CEREMONY)

By Dak_ti Craft

Sha Shiahkrot is an indigenous tea preparation from the root of a wild plant that is found in the forests of Meghalaya .

The part that is used for the tea preparation is the root that is flashing red on the inside and brown on the outside. One single Shiahkrot plant can bear up to 10 of such roots that supply the plant with rich nutrients and medicinal properties.

The major threat to Shiakrot today is the massive deforestation, which is taking place due to large-scale cash crop, coal mining and fire wood exploitation.

Black clay kettles and platters are used to serve the tea and snacks.

Menu:

- Shiah Krot tea
- Putharo – Steamed rice cake
- Pu Maloi – Steamed rice cake made of Khasi red rice
- Pu Sla – Rice and jaggery cake steamed in a leaf

FILMS

UP, DOWN AND SIDEWAYS

Directed by **Anushka Meenakshi** & **Iswar Srikumar**

A musical portrait of a community of rice cultivators and their memories of love and loss in Phek village, Nagaland.

MY NAME IS EEOOOW

Directed by **Oinam Doren**

The film revolves around Kongthong, a hamlet in East Khasi Hills about 60km from Shillong, and a traditional practice called the Jyngwrai lawbei. The tradition is to have musical tunes as names in honour of the clan ancestress. The song names come as an expression of the mother's love for her new born.

IMA SABITRI

Directed by **Bobo Khuraijam**

Film on actor Heisnam Sabitri and her incredible sixty years in theatre.

INTER/SECTIONS

BEYOND THE BENGAL FAMINE: FILM AND PANEL DISCUSSION

BENGAL SHADOWS

Directed by **Partho Bhattacharya** and **Joy Banerjee**

Panelists : **Rakesh Batabyal**, Academic and **Partho Bhattacharya**, Filmmaker

Moderated by **Shiv Visvanathan**, Social Scientist

The Great Bengal Famine of 1943 is considered by many to be one of the worst holocausts in modern history owing to what is perceived as either the willful negligence or the active connivance of the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Yet many questions remain around the famine. Was it even a purely localized Bengal famine or were its effects felt further afield? What was the real cost of these millions of deaths from mass starvation and why is it an almost forgotten episode of history?

THE OTHER SILK ROUTE : SPOOKERY,TRADE AND THE GREAT GAME

The 'Old Silk Route' or the 'Other Silk Road', which passes through east Sikkim, was probably discovered by traders in 1st century ACE. A part of an ancient network of trade routes, for centuries it served as a lifeline connection between China and India. But besides trade, the 'Roof of the World' has held an irresistible allure for many political powers that have fought to dominate the Tibetan plateau. By the 19th century, the Great Game was afoot and the British colonisers of India launched dozens of spies disguised as pilgrims and monks across the Himalayas onto the plateau; in many ways that Game continues to play out today even as some players have endured and others have not.

Panelists: **Professor Siddiq Wahid**, Author & Historian; **Diki Sherpa**, Researcher; **Professor Parimal Bhattacharya**, Author and Teacher

Moderated by **Gitanjali Surendran**, Historian

GAME OF THRONES: CHINA-BURMA-INDIA CAMPAIGN OF WW II

The jungle war that was the China-Burma-India campaign of the Second World War was the most unconventional, colourful and dramatic of battles. Marked by internecine squabbles and political intrigues, and coupled with enormous stakes, neither the Allies nor the Axis powers were willing to let go of this front. From the heroic transport flights over the "Hump" of the Himalayas to drop supplies to the Chinese resistance to the most prodigious engineering feats of the Manipur and Ledo Roads, this battle was amongst the fiercest and demanded ingenuity at all levels. Who were these mavericks and why were the powers so desperate to control this front? What was really at stake in this, till recently, little acknowledged and yet critical, theatre of war?

Kai Friese, Journalist; **Hemant Katoch**, Author and Researcher; **Catriona Child**, Writer

Moderated by **Kishalay Bhattacharjee**, Author and Journalist

MUSIC

ELEMENTS

A concert by Mi Ku, a contemporary folk ensemble from Nepal

Pushpa Palanchoke, vocals; **Kobid Bazra**, sarangi; **Samyog Regmi**, guitars; **Riken Maharjan**, abss; **Bikesh Bazra**, nagara; **Merit Maharjan**, percussions; **Prabin Maharjan** - drums, **Sangam Panta** - sound

SPECIAL THANKS

Yui Nakamura , The Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Lalsawmliani Tochhawng , India International Centre

Vibha Lakhera, Reachout Foundation

Parasher Baruah, Filmmaker

Ipsa Pratibimbita, National Foundation for India

Moon Dutt, National Foundation for India

Santosh Nair, National Foundation for India

Ashima Sharma, Intern

Muskan Mascharak, Intern

Khushi Gupta, Intern

Akshita Chembolu, Volunteer

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