A Report

India-China Rock Art Workshop-cum-Exhibition 2016

Exhibition Venue: 11, Mansingh Road, IGNCA
New Delhi
(24th February- 27th March, 2016)

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
New Delhi
An ‘India-China Rock Art Workshop-cum-Exhibition’ was organized at IGNCA, New Delhi in collaboration with Administration office of Helanshan Rock Art, Yinchuan City, China, Rock Art Research Association of China (RARAC) and Minzu University, China on 24th February, 2016. The Exhibition was inaugurated by Shri K. K Mittal, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India who was the Chief Guest on the occasion. Mr. Zhang Zhihong, Cultural Counsellor, Embassy of China in India was the Guest of Honour and, Prof. Zhang Yasha, Director of RARAC, Minzu University, China was the International Guest. The inaugural function was chaired by Shri Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, President, IGNCA Trust.

Both India and China has a very rich and diverse rock art heritage. The present exhibition showcases rock arts from both the countries which help in understanding the first universal creative act of human being.

Chinese rock art, whether realistic or abstract, zoomorphic or simple cupules, can be connected to early human traditions and spirituality. Due to its long tradition of written history in China, it is possible to make spiritual connection further back in time with more confidence than for many other parts of the world. The present exposition of rock art in Chinese section has been categorized in the following four sections: i) Rock Art of Northern China, ii) Pictographs of South-western China iii) Petroglyphs of Eastern China and, iv) Rock Art of Western China.

India houses one of the largest, richest and diverse repositories of rock art traditions. Rock art has been found throughout the length and breadth of the country. Central India has by far the largest concentration of painted rock shelters. In the Central, Western and Eastern parts of the country rock art is found on the walls and ceilings of these rock shelters. In Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh rock art is mainly reported on boulders. Kerala is notable for rock art evidence found in
underground caves. Fortunately, India has one of the world's six major prehistoric rock art concentrations belonging to the Stone Age.

For the present exhibition, exhibits in the Indian section are chosen from the following five regions of India: i) Rock Art of Northern Region, ii) Rock Art of Central Region, iii) Rock Art of Eastern Region, iv) Rock Art of North-east, v) Rock Art of Western Region, and vi) Rock Art of Southern Region.

After the opening of the exhibition on 24th February, 2016 at 11 Mansingh Road, New Delhi, the formal inaugural function of the Workshop-cum-Exhibition was held at the auditorium, C.V Mess, Janpath. In the function, the welcome speech was delivered by Mrs. Veena Joshi, Joint Secretary/Officiating Member Secretary, IGNCA.

On this occasion two books, viz; i) Glimpses of India-China Rock Art and ii) Rock Art of India: Suitable Dating Techniques were released by the Hon’ble Chief Guest Shri K. K Mittal.

The hon’ble Chief Guest in his address on the occasion highly appreciated the work done by IGNCA in showcasing the rich heritage of rock art from both the countries and also congratulated the Chinese collaborators in this significant venture. He stressed on the importance of rock art studies and laid emphasis on conducting such events and cultural exchange programmes between the two countries in the near future. At last, he wished success for the exhibition and rock art workshop.
The Chairperson, Shri Chinmaya R. Gharekhan on the occasion congratulated IGNCA and its Chinese collaborators for organizing such a fascinating exhibition. In his address, the hon’ble chairperson appreciated the contributions by Indian and Chinese scholars while emphasizing on the need for all the countries rich in rock art treasures to come together for more such academic ventures.

A special lecture ‘Exchange and cooperation of China-India Rock Art’ was delivered by Prof. Zhang Yasha on the occasion. In her lecture, Prof. Yasha described the academic contributions, publications of research materials on rock art and academic exchange programmes between the two nations.
The inaugural function was a grand success and was attended by several Chinese and Indian delegates. In the end, Dr. B. L. Malla, Project Director, proposed the vote of thanks.

A souvenir from China was presented by Dy. Mayor of Yinchuan city, China.

The present exhibition also showcases the 'living art traditions' of three communities; the Lanjia-Sauras of Odisha, the Rathwa-Bhils of Gujarat and the Warlis of Maharashtra just to give a glimpse of continuity of artistic traditions in Indian context.

A view of the Tribal Art Section.

This exhibition creates, for the viewer, a degree of experiential contact with prehistoric art. It provides the basis for entering into the changing aspects of the living arts of man. It is believed that man's awareness of the world around came through his primeval sense of sight and sound. These two senses have stimulated artists' expressions; visual and aural in the prehistoric past as well as in the contemporary cultures.
Since its inauguration on 24th February, 2016 the exhibition has been attracting prominent dignitaries and officials, and visitors from in and outside Delhi day by day.

Director and team of Dunhuang Academy Group, China paying a visit to the Exhibition.

Mr. Liu Jinsong, Minister & DCM and Mr. Zhang Zhihong, Counsellor Cultural of China visiting the exhibition.

Visitors to the exhibition are given a guided tour of the Gallery.
Chinese delegates and visitors at the Exhibition Gallery.

A view of the Exhibition Gallery.
The event was widely covered by both print and electronic media.
The exhibition will initially remain open for the public till 27th March, 2016.

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