



NAAC ACCREDITED 'A++' GRADE COLLEGE

2022-23

Name of the Department/Society: The English Society

Name of the Event: Lecture on "Civilizational Dialogues: The long 18th Century and the idea of Asia" by prof. Anjana Sharma

Date of the Event: 7th February, 2023

Description of the event: (Include details of Speakers/Experts):

On 7th February 2023, the English Society, Hansraj College hosted a talk titled "Civilizational Dialogues: The long 18th Century and the idea of Asia" by the esteemed Professor and former Dean Anjana Sharma of Nalanda University.

Professor Anjana Sharma, teaches at the Department of English and was Founding Dean, Academic Planning Nalanda University (2011-15). Her research interests span revolutionary print and visual culture, British Literature of the late 18th and early 19th century, and questions of gender. Her other scholarly interests relate to the exhuming the rich stream of inter Asian interactions and resulted in the publication of 'Civilizational Dialogue: Asian Interconnections and CrossCultural Exchanges' (2013). She was also the recipient of the Fulbright Fellowship.

The session began with emphasizing over the idea of the 18th century, which witnessed the interaction of different spaces and cultures by texts and trades. France and Germany, the "first orientalist" directed their ships towards China demarking a partial entry in Asia. The Chinese way of life "Sinomania" and their culture deeply impacted the Europeans. The discussion then focused on the shift of perception as France moved away from the kingship the celebration of "Kingly China" faded away. The Chinese were depicted as cruel and despotic and the knowledge was turned into philosophy.

The professor also discussed the travel texts with a focus on Swift's "Gulliver's Travels". The interactions of different cultures bring home the idea of translations. The translation of Arabic text "One Thousand and One Nights", translated in French became "The Arabian Nights". Professor Sharma labelled it as "The sense of trying to access a culture through interactions, failing miserably, and still feeling connected". The coffeehouse culture and travelogues induced the idea of knowing about worlds other than theirs. The Englishmen attempted to construct their identity being influenced by the other cultures such as Greek and Romans. The concept of "high tea" was originally taken from the east.

The discussion shifted to the realm of Asia and its fluidity in the 18th century, with the rise of Persia, Arabia, China and Hindustan. The Asia via the lens of westerners fascinating

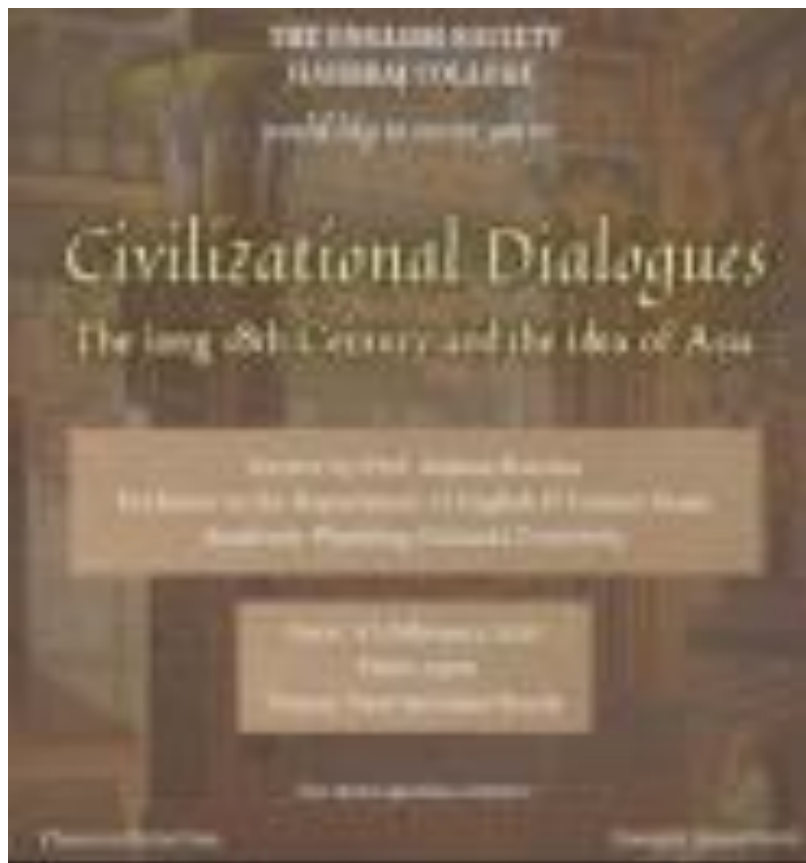


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east can be seen negotiated. Coleridge's Kubla Khan has been portrayed as extremely powerful and despotic. The lecture narrowed down the idea of Asia through European intellect. Professor Sharma took the listeners on a journey from "Sinomania" to "Sinophobia" meanwhile harnessing literature and "exotic" culture.

We sincerely thank everyone for joining the talk with maximal enthusiasm. We really look forward to having you all in another amazing session.

Brochure/Poster:



हंसराज महाविद्यालय

दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय
महात्मा हंसराज मार्ग,
मलकागंज, दिल्ली - 110007
दूरभाष : 011-27667458, 27667747
ई-मेल : principal_hrc@yahoo.com
वेबसाइट : www.hansrajcollege.ac.in



HANSRAJ COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF DELHI
Mahatma Hansraj Marg
Malkaganj, Delhi – 110007
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Glimpses:



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UNIVERSITY OF DELHI
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List of participants:

1. Niharika
2. Pragya
3. Charvi
4. Ananya Girdhar
5. Anoushka
6. Anupriya
7. Ragini
8. Jasmine Das
9. Yash
10. Sharbani
11. Khushi Lakhotia
12. Anshita
13. Ishty
14. Harshita Gaba
15. Ishan
16. Saman