

International Conference on *New Perspectives on Intercultural Studies* in honour of Prof. Tan Chung to be held in IGNCA in collaboration with Institute of Chinese Studies on 5th & 6th December 2008 at No. 5, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi

An International Conference on *New Perspectives on Intercultural Studies* in honour of Prof. Tan Chung will be held in IGNCA in collaboration with Institute of Chinese Studies on 5th & 6th December 2008. For more than half a century, Prof. Tan Chung, a historian by profession and training, has been a doyen of Chinese Culture Studies in India. Greater part of his career has been spent in imparting knowledge of Chinese Language and Culture to Indian scholars of successive generations. As Prof. Tan's (b.1929) eightieth birthday will be celebrated in 2009, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS) have considered it appropriate for his colleagues, students and other scholars to come together to honour him for his enormous contribution to Intercultural Studies.

Prof. Tan was with the IGNCA as Professor-Consultant from 1989 to 2000 and established the Sino-Indian Studies Unit in IGNCA. Prof. Tan Chung (b.1929) is an Emeritus Fellow of the Institute of Chinese Studies. He followed the footsteps of his illustrious father, Prof. Tan Yun-shan (1898-1983) of Shantiniketan, who was the pioneer of Chinese studies in India. Prof. Tan contributed in building up the Chinese studies programmes in Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University from 1964 till 1994, when he finally retired from JNU as Professor of Chinese language and later joined IGNCA.

He has authored many books, among which **China and the Brave New World** and **Triton and Dragon** are textbooks for history courses in Indian and foreign Universities. **He edited Dunhuang Art Through Eyes of Duan Wenjie**, which is a reference book for art courses on the US and other English language campuses. His other works include **Across the Himalayan Gap: Tan Yunshan, In the Footsteps of Xuanzang and, India and China: Twenty Centuries of Civilizational Interaction and Vibration** (Co-authored with Prof. Geng Yinzeng).

Prof. Tan has all along held that civilizations are best defined as "historical societies", and, civilizations like India and China have had beneficial long lasting and harmonious dialogue throughout history. In other words, contrary to some discourses of civilization, Prof. Tan has been of the view that through civilizational interactions, the "parallel histories" of different countries and regions have influenced each other to form multi-sided and multi-coloured motifs, and hence, have left indelible imprints on each other.

Prof. Tan Chung opines that holistic wisdom is the quintessence of Indian cultural heritage. Without its transcendental dimension, it looks beautifully modern and futuristic in any academic forum. The holistic perspective includes all and excludes none. It is not in conflict with the true wisdom of modern research, with Enlightenment, positivism, scientism, with historical and dialectic materialism. But, it rejects cultural chauvinism,

cultural hegemony, and the White, Yellow, Brown, Black Man's Burden. The holistic eye sees the unity of all parts, all nations, all cultures, all disciplines. It looks at China as a part of the total human development of this our earth. It looks at the 19th century (or the 20th century) as an aspect of China's total development – hence a segment of the total development of our earth planet. It is this understanding that has shaped the unique perspective of Prof. Tan that aims to discern, discuss and assess inter-cultural interactions and heritage.

Broad Themes of the Conference

- Representation of Cultures: Parallel, interacting and distant cultures (Methodological Questions).
- Journeys through Cultures: Travels, Travelers and Travelogues – (New researches, New insights)
- Cultural Interaction and Cultural Creativity: Learning, Exchange & Appropriation
- Civilization and Modernity – India, China and the World
- Gender & Cultural Interaction

Papers during the seminar will be presented mainly on Methodology and Conceptual issues in cross-cultural or inter-civilizational processes drawn from Asia as well as other regions of the world.