

Needham Research Institute Newsletter

李約瑟研究所通訊

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Joseph Needham Memorial Lecture by Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd



On Friday 28th October, Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd delivered the first in the new series of Needham Memorial Lectures, sponsored by the Jing Brand Co. Ltd., China. The lecture, which was attended by over one hundred people, took place at the Riley Auditorium, Clare College, Cambridge.

This annual event is a joint initiative involving several institutions in Cambridge, including Gonville and Caius College, the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (FAMES), the Department of History and Philosophy of Science (HPS), the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, and the Needham Research Institute. Established to honour Dr. Joseph Needham for his monumental contributions to the study of science and civilisation in China, it aims to enhance public understanding of the history of science, technology and medicine in East Asia, to promote the integration of this subject into the wider academic community in Cambridge, and to reflect upon Needham's intellectual heritage and its impact on the understanding of the history of knowledge circulation.

The lecture, under the title *'After Joseph Needham: the legacy reviewed, the agenda revised. Some personal reflections'*, was introduced by Prof. Roel Sterckx, Joseph Needham Professor of Chinese History, Science and Civilization in the University of Cambridge. Prof. Lloyd began the lecture with memories of personal exchanges with Dr. Needham. Whilst acknowledging the immense debt which Needham is owed for discovering Chinese science and technology for Western scholars, Prof. Lloyd reflected upon aspects of Needham's methodology which could be revised, with reference to his 'grand question' in particular. Drawing on examples from the ancient Chinese and Greek traditions, Prof. Lloyd illustrated how Needham's discussion relied on categories (such as 'mathematics', 'engineering' and 'physics') which are now considered anachronistic. As to tackling 'the question', some unravelling is required by asking what the 'modern' scientific method amounts to. Indeed, the complexity of the societies under study requires the detailed analysis of the different social, political, economic, institutional and intellectual factors at work. Prof. Lloyd concluded the lecture by discussing how comparisons of the varying factors that enabled innovation to flourish in the ancient Greek and Chinese worlds might offer invaluable insights for contemporary society.

The lecture can be viewed via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/VPOhbE0wkro>

Honorary Fellowship for Lady Youde

In recognition of the outstanding contribution made by Lady Youde over many years, both as a trustee and Chairman of the Trust (2002—2008), we are delighted to announce that she has been made an Honorary Fellow of the NRI. A small ceremony took place on 28th October, at which Lady Youde was presented with a framed certificate. The Present Chairman, Sir John Boyd, and former Chairman, Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd, each gave a speech noting Lady Youde's valuable contribution to the activities of the Institute over many years.



Photo: Lady Youde (centre front) with Mrs Elizabeth Wright and Sir John Boyd. Back row: Prof. Roel Sterckx, Prof. German Berrios, Dr. Christopher Hughes, Mr. Michael Womack.

Director's Visit to Singapore

During his trip to Singapore in June 2016, to attend the first Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) conference to take place in Asia, Professor Mei was pleased to take the opportunity to visit a few old friends of the Institute. Professor Mei visited Dr. S. T. Lee at his office and joined him for lunch with a group which included Ms. Elaine Tan, Secretary of the Lee Foundation, and his personal assistant, Mr. Chan Tong Meng. Dr. Lee is a long-term benefactor of the Needham Research Institute, and Professor Mei was pleased to be able to update him with news from the Institute, including the successful Needham Workshop which had taken place in July 2015. Professor Mei also had the pleasure of meeting again with Ms. Chew Gek Khim and Dr. Yap Su-Yin, Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation. Professor Mei also spent a very pleasant evening with long-term friends of the Institute Mr and Mrs George Hicks, who were pleased to receive news of the Institute's development.

ISF Fellowship and Visit

We are pleased to report that the Institute has signed a new agreement with the International Schools Foundation Academy, Hong Kong, renewing the ISF postdoctoral fellowship at our Institute. The present ISF Fellow, Dr. Wu Huiyi has had her fellowship extended for a further three years, and will continue to run the very successful Summer School visit from the ISF Academy. The new agreement testifies to the great success of the cooperation between the NRI and the ISF.



This year, the ISF academy students visited the Institute from 20th June to 8th July. There were eight students in the group, who, with the help of Dr. Wu Huiyi, carried out research on a number of interesting topics, such as acupuncture in Han Dynasty China, modernization of traditional Chinese Herbal Medicine, the Manchurian Plague, Hadrian's Wall and the Great Wall of China, the impact of American silver and American food crops on the Ming Dynasty economy, and the transmission of Chinese porcelain technology to 18th century Europe. Dr. Wu also led the students in carrying out an historical GIS project, which helped the Institute to produce a spatial visualization of Joseph Needham's wartime trips on the basis of his diaries. This year, two guest talks were organised: by Mary Brazelton (HPS) on the notion of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Christos Lynteris (CRASSH) on the use of scientific photographs as historical sources.



Dr. S.T. Lee and the Director, in Dr. Lee's office

Lloyd-Dan David Fellowship

This term we have been delighted to welcome Dr. Jingyi Jenny Zhao, who has been awarded the Lloyd Dan David Fellowship at the Needham Research Institute and Darwin College for three years 2016 - 2019.



Dr. Zhao completed her doctoral thesis, titled *'Aristotle and Xunzi on shame, moral education and the good life'*, at the Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge, in 2015. Alongside revising her doctoral work for publication, she is undertaking a new comparative project on representations of infancy and childhood in ancient Greece and early China, with a philosophical focus.

Continuation of Xingzhi Fellowship

We are delighted to announce that following the success of the programme in previous years, the Beijing Xingzhi Exploring Culture Development Co. Ltd have agreed to extend their sponsorship of the Xingzhi Fellowship Programme for a third year.

Thanks ...

Our thanks go to former SBFT Fellowship holder Dr. Zhang Maolin from the Institute of Ancient Ceramics, Jingdezhen, for creating a special porcelain mug for our retiring Trustee, Lady Youde. Dr. Zhang visited us in 2015 to pursue his research on the history of ceramic technology.



Workshops and Seminars

Throughout the year the Institute has held a rich variety of workshops and seminars that highlight our close co-operation with Departments in the University and institutions elsewhere. Our *Friday text-reading seminars* have continued into their 24th year, covering their customary array of topics from ancient times through to the modern era. In addition, we are delighted to report that 2015 saw the start of a new seminar series – the *Historiography of Non-Western Science Reading Group*. Held every 2nd Wednesday during term, this Group was co-organised by Dr. Mary Brazelton from History and Philosophy of Science, Mujeeb Khan from Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, and our ISF Fellow Dr. Wu Huiyi. The Group discusses issues in and approaches to the historiography of science, technology and medicine in East Asia. Special lectures were also held during the year, including one on 15th Oct., 2015 in conjunction with the Department of History and Philosophy of Science by Floris Cohen (Utrecht University) on the Scientific Revolution. On 29th April, 2016, the NRI was particularly delighted to host a talk by Prof. Donald Harper (University of Chicago), introduced by Dr. Michael Loewe, entitled “Carmen Blacker and Fukuhara Gogaku's *Haku-taku* scroll (1785)”.

Technology in Modern East Asia History Workshop

Our annual *Technology in Modern East Asia History* Workshop took place from 19-20 May, 2016. Organised by Dr. Aleksandra Kobiljski (CNRS, France) (*third from right*), and supported by SHOT, the Max Planck Institute, CNRS and the NRI, this workshop is designed specifically for the mentoring and development of junior scholars in the field. Presentations were made by five scholars from Europe, the USA and China. In depth commentary and critique was provided by senior scholars including SHOT delegate Mats Fridlund (Aalto University), Associate Editor of *Technology and Culture* Barbara Hahn (Texas Tech University/Univ. Leeds), Liliane



Hilaire Pérez (University of Paris Diderot), David Wittner (Utica College) and Grace Shen (Fordham University). After a couple of days of intensive activity, the workshop concluded with the customary punting tour along the ‘Backs’ on Saturday morning.



Material Culture, Bodily Practice and Medical Textuality Workshop

The workshop *Material Culture, Bodily Practice and Medical Textuality: Current Issues in Chinese Medical History* was held on June 13, 2016, organised by Lena Springer (NRI Jing Brand Scholar), Leah Ya Zuo (Bowdoin College) and Chen Hao (Renmin University /NRI Li Foundation of New York Scholar), and sponsored by the Wellcome Trust. Eight speakers from the UK, USA, China and Australia presented on aspects of the history of medicine in China, followed by extensive discussion. The workshop was also intended as a first step in building an intellectual and social network for this new generation of historians.

A third half-day workshop - *Medicine in Modern Japan* - was held on 22nd April, 2016, co-organised by Mujeeb Khan (University of Cambridge/NRI Soon-Young Kim Fellowship holder) and Bernhard Leitner (University of Vienna).

Further afield, Professor Mei attended the annual conference of the **Society for the History of Technology (SHOT)**, which took place in Singapore on 22-26 June, 2016, where he presented a paper on Needham's intellectual heritage. We are pleased to note that at this conference there was a total of three sessions with a focus on the long-term impact of Joseph Needham's *Science and Civilization in China* on the history of technology.



Library News



The Library has received a number of very generous donations throughout the year, both from individuals and institutions. In April 2016, at a ceremony attended by Mr. Xiang Xiaowei, Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the UK, Mr. Lei Fengyun, Chief Representative of the China Association for International Exchange and Personnel presented the Library with the 32 volume 2nd Edition of *The Encyclopedia of China* published by the Encyclopedia of China Publishing House. We also received a generous donation



of books and dissertations from the School of Architecture, Tianjin University, as well as nearly 100 Korean volumes from the Korean Research Institute of Science, Technology and Civilization, Chonbuk National University, South Korea. We are, as always, immensely grateful to all those who contribute to the ongoing development of our wonderful resources here. Amongst other day-to-day work, we have also recently brought all of Dr. Needham's nearly 450 traditional East Asian thread-bound books together into one, secure, room (right). They make quite an impressive sight!

Joseph Needham Archives on the Cambridge Digital Library

In May 2016, archive materials relating to Dr. Needham's work in China from 1943-1946 as Director of the Sino-British Science Cooperation Office were made available for the first time on the prestigious Cambridge Digital Library <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/needham>

These include newly scanned images of more than 1000 photographs taken by Dr. Needham, as well as his travel diaries detailing his 4 main investigative journeys across the length and breadth of unoccupied China during World War II. The site includes fully searchable transcripts of the diaries, as well as descriptions of each photograph. A page providing further information and resources has also been added to our own website at http://www.nri.cam.ac.uk/JN_wartime.htm

We are very grateful to the many people and institutions that have contributed to and supported the work that has gone into making these resources available, in particular Dr. Gordon Barrett (Oxford University), and the staff of the Digital Content Unit of Cambridge University Library. This is just a first step in what we hope will become a major resource for the study of Dr. Needham's life and work as well as those who worked alongside him.

Important Visitors and NRI Scholars

Throughout the year the Institute has received a constant flow of visitors, both individually and in groups. These have included Mr. Jiang Sunan, Minister Counsellor for Science and Technology and Mr. Wang Yongli, Minister Counsellor for Education, Chinese Embassy, Ms Xia Hua, Chairwoman, Eve Group, and Mr Cai Quan, Chairman of China Investment.

We have also been delighted to welcome more medium- and long-term visiting scholars than ever before, mostly funded by the various research grants that we administer. See <http://www.nri.cam.ac.uk/researchers.html> for details.

Right: Some of our visiting scholars for 2016-17. LI Yan, WU Huiyi, QIN Chunxiao, JUN Yong-Hoon, XU Bin, SHEN Yubin, KIM Sungjo, TANG Quan, SHI Hongshuai, Peter VAMOS, Justin CHOI, Lena SPRINGER and LIN Shing-ting.

