

Special events – China, India, and Iran

Trust holds joint workshop with Needham Institute and FAMES

Bill Mak

On 8–9 October 2021, the Needham Research Institute, the Ancient India and Iran Trust and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge, jointly organised a workshop on ‘China, India, and Iran: scientific exchange and cultural contact through the first millennium CE’. The event was first proposed by Bill Mak in 2019 when he was the Ho Peng Yoke Fellow of History of Science at the Needham Research Institute, and was due to take place in October 2020 after receiving the support of the three organising partners and the generous sponsorship of the Glorison Network and the Tsz Shan Monastery in Hong Kong. Postponed for a year because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the two-day workshop, held at the Needham Research Institute and the Ancient India and Iran Trust on its first and second day respectively, revived the convivial, social atmosphere that is an integral part of the identity of the two institutes. This was aided by the bright and warm weather, which enabled participants to enjoy both the garden and the lecture venues.

The workshop began with a keynote lecture by Professor Sam Lieu FBA: ‘From Qin to Cathay – names for China and the Chinese on the Silk Road’. Over the two days, 15 speakers from Cambridge, Oxford and SOAS covered a wide range of topics from religion and ancient codices to astronomy and the transmission of metallurgical recipes and aromatics across Eurasia. (Regrettably Nicholas Sims-Williams was unable to participate due to a recent injury). The cross-disciplinary, plurilingual and transcultural content, the discussions facilitated by the six discussants (Jianjun Mei, Imre Galambos, Erica Hunter, Bill Mak in lieu of Nicholas Sims-Williams, Tim Barrett and François de Blois), and the collaborative organisation of the event contributed to its richness, offering new insights to its participants in terms of the interconnectivity of the three ancient, neighbouring cultures. Due to space limitations and consideration for social distancing, both venues accommodated no more than 30 participants. However, nearly 100 online participants from over 20 countries, mostly researchers and students at universities around the world, were able to join the event at some point through Eventbrite and Zoom live-streaming of the lectures.



The full workshop programme with abstracts can be viewed at: <https://bit.ly/3jcajja>



China, India, and Iran

Scientific Exchange and Cultural Contact
through the First Millennium CE

October 8-9, 2021
Cambridge, UK

Workshop jointly organized by
Needham Research Institute (NRI)
Ancient India and Iran Trust (AIIT)
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (FAMES), Cambridge University
with support from Glorison Network and Tsz Shan Monastery

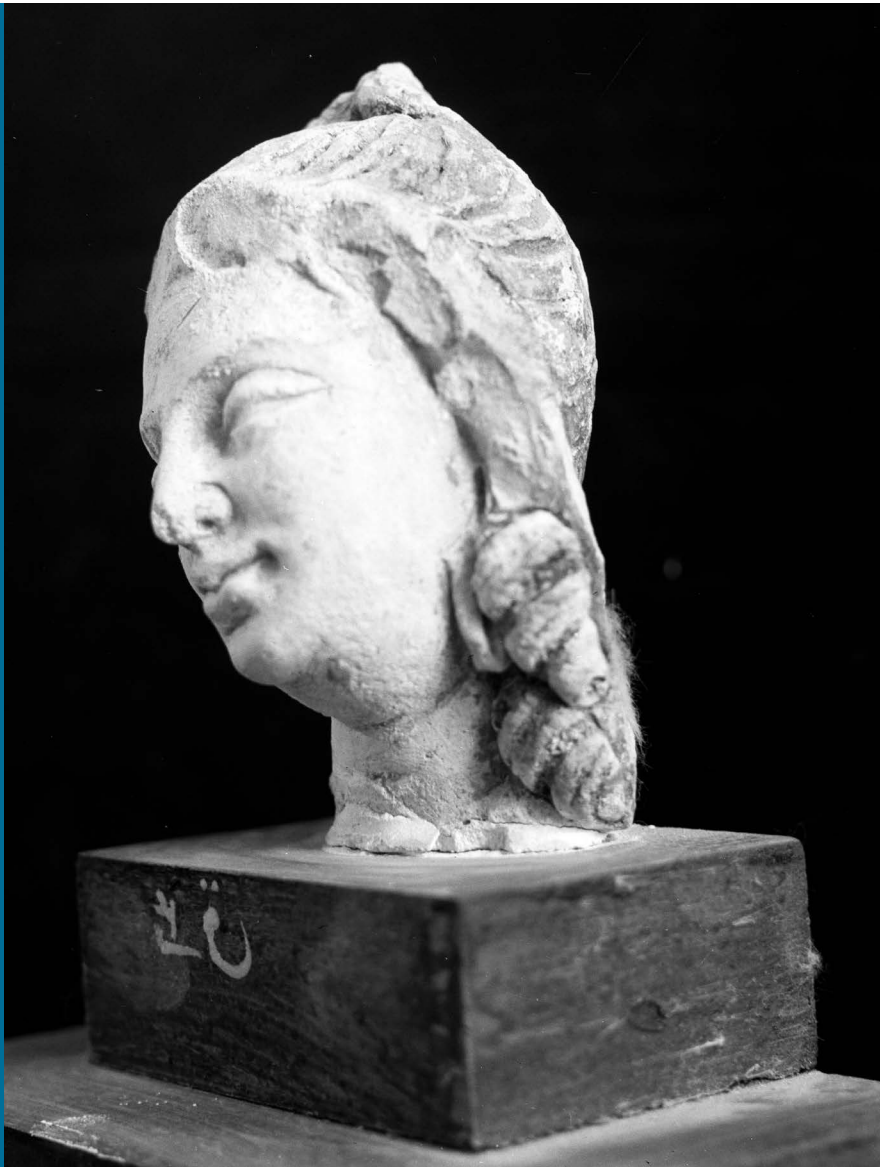


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