Benares, Bayly and the Making of World History

6-9 January 2015 at the Jnana-Pravaha Centre for Cultural Studies and Research, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

Participants Include:

- C.A. Bayly
- Susan Bayly
- Shailendra Bhandare
- Sugata Bose
- Anjan Chakraverty
- Chris Clark
- Michael S. Dodson
- Richard Drayton
- Sandria Freitag
- Kamal Giri
- Ruth Harris
- Nita Kumar
- Simon Layton
- Barbara D. Metcalf
- Thomas R. Metcalf
- William Pinch
- Bimla Poddar
- Sunil Purushotham
- Radhika Singha
- Sujit Sivasundaram
- Murat Siviloglu
- Robert Travers

Convened by:

- Kamal Giri
- Bimla Poddar
- Anjan Chakraverty
- Shruti Kapila
- Faisal Devji
- Shailendra Bhandare
Benares, Bayly and the Making of World History

Professor Sir Christopher Bayly is one of the most eminent historians of India and Empire today. Author of a dozen influential and path-breaking books, he has transformed the field of Indian as well as world history. A Fellow of the British Academy and of the Royal Society of Literature, Bayly has been Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History and President of St. Catharine’s College at the University of Cambridge, Director of the Cambridge Centre of South Asian Studies and co-editor of the New Cambridge History of India. He was in addition a Humanitas Visiting Professor at the University of Oxford and is now the first Vivekananda Professor at the University of Chicago.

Jnana Pravaha provides a fitting venue to celebrate Professor Bayly’s remarkable career, not least because his early work focused so closely on the city of Benares during the 18th and 19th centuries, representing as it did the study of India’s passage to modernity. Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars, for example, revised the relationship between emergent capital and colonial society and made visible the central role of merchants and magnates, while Empire and Information (1996) brought the north Indian print milieu to life and again and most recently reconstructing political ideas in Recovering Liberties (2011). It was the Gangetic Plain, including Benares and Allahabad, that first brought Bayly to North India, and so it is only appropriate to mark his scholarly achievement in this city.

This event is the result of an intellectual and institutional collaboration between scholars at Jnana Pravaha in Varanasi and at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. It brings together speakers from India and abroad to make for an international celebration of the city of Benares and the work of C. A. Bayly.
6 January 2015

Arrival and boat trip (setting off from Jnana Pravaha at 5:00), followed by dinner at the Ganges View Hotel at 7:00

7 January 2015

Welcome (9:30-9:45)  
Prof. Kamal Giri and Mrs. Bimla Poddar

Opening remarks (9:45-10:00)  
Dr. Shruti Kapila and Dr. Faisal Devji

Empire of Knowledge

Panel 1 (10:00-11:30)  
Chair: Mrs. Bimla Poddar  
Prof. Sugata Bose, “Reading Empire and Information”  
Prof. Radhika Singha, “India and Empire: Writing a Multi-Sited History”  
Prof. Thomas Metcalf, “Empire or India? Reflections on a Historian’s Career”

Coffee (11:30-11:40)

Panel 2 (11:40-12:40)  
Chair: Dr. Anjan Chakraverty  
Prof. Richard Drayton, “Imperial power and Cultural Syncretism”  
Dr. Sujit Sivasundaram, “The Imperial Meridians of the Indian and Pacific Oceans”

Lunch (12:40-1:30)

Capital, Colony and Nation

Panel 1 (1:30-2:30)  
Chair: Dr. Shailendra Bhandare  
Dr. Simon Layton, “The Piratical Settlement of India”  
Dr. Robert Travers, “Rulers, Townsmen and Razinamas: Benares in the Eighteenth Century British Empire”

Panel 2 (2:30-3:30)  
Chair: Dr. Nita Kumar  
Dr. Susan Bayly, “How to Forge a Creative Student-Citizen: The Challenges of Achieving in Today's Vietnam”  
Dr. Michael Dodson, “The Municipal Landscape of Banaras”

Tea (3:30-3:40)
History, Liberalism and Political Thought

Panel 1 (3:40-4:40)
Chair: Dr. Shruti Kapila
Prof. Chris Clark, “Title TBA”
Dr. Sunil Purushotham, “Recovering Liberties in the Postcolony”

Performance

Fire Play (5:30-6:10)
Banethi, by Mr. Krishna Murari and Group

Dinner (7:00): Ganges View Hotel

8 January 2015

Religion and Public Life

Panel 1 (10:00-11:00)
Chair: Dr. Faisal Devji
Prof. Barbara Metcalf, “Empire and Imagination: Photography, White Socks, and Mughal Costumes in 19th Century Bhopal”
Dr. Murat Sivioglu, “On the Use and Abuse of Andalusian History for Tanzimat Politics”

Coffee (11:00-11:10)

Panel 2 (11:10-12:10)
Chair: Dr. Shruti Kapila
Prof. Ruth Harris, “Anagarika Dharmapala and the World Parliament of Religions”
Prof. William Pinch, “Gosains on the Ghats”

Lunch (12:10-1:30)

Visual Culture

(1:30-3:00)
Chair: Prof. Kamal Giri
Dr. Anjan Chakraverty, “Painting and Popular Art in Banaras”
Dr. Shailendra Bhandare, “Emergence of an Icon: tracking the Origins of ‘Bharat Mata’ in the 19th Century”
Dr. Sandria Freitag, “Pathway to Visual History”

Tea (3:00-3:30)
Public Lecture

(3:30-5:00)
Chair: Prof. Chris Clark
Prof. C. A. Bayly, “Hindu Populism and the Politics of the Peasant, India, c. 1914-24”

Performance

Instrumental Duet (5:00-6:00)
Sitar: Mr. Niraj Mishra
Sarangi: Mr. Anish Mishra
Tabla accompaniment by Mr. Anand Mishra

Dinner (7:00): Ganges View Hotel

9 January 2015

Trip to Sarnath and departure (setting off from Jnana Pravaha at 9:00)

Conference Conveners:

Prof. Kamal Giri
Mrs. Bimla Poddar
Dr. Anjan Chakraverty

Dr. Shruti Kapila
Dr. Faisal Devji
Dr. Shailendra Bhandare