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Sahitya Akademi
(National Academy of Letters)
An Autonomous Organisation of Government of India, Ministry of Culture



SA.16/14/

24 August 2018

PRESS RELEASE

Indo-China Literary Exchange: Multilingual Challenges

Sahitya Akademi, India's premier literary institution, undertakes Cultural Exchange programmes with many countries across the globe. The Akademi undertakes these programmes to promote Indian literature abroad and also to give firsthand exposure to Indian writers of various cultural and literary traditions in different parts of the world.

But it is with China that the Akademi has been undertaking Cultural Exchange programmes sending and receiving writers' delegations to and from China uninterrupted for about three decades.

As part of that continued commitment, Sahitya Akademi organized a Literary Forum on "Indo China Literary Exchange: Multilingual Challenges" at the Akademi premises in New Delhi on 24 August 2018.

Welcoming the participants and audience, Dr K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, SahityaAkademi, talked about literary interactions between the two countries in the past, present collaborations and future possibilities. Dr Rao observed that India and China are two major Knowledge Capitals of the World and when they unite the possibilities are infinite. In the literary front where the opportunities for such unison are plenty, India and China should come together and translate each country's masterpieces into the languages of other country. This is where the multilingualism seems to be posing a problem but if one analyses deeply one would understand that there are not many who know each other's languages on either side of the border. To overcome this, both the governments should come together and expose languages to both the countries through courses and institutions.

Both the Indian and Chinese scholars presented their views in Tandem. Sri JidiMajia, Vice President, Chinese Writers' Association, who led the Chinese delegation, talked about how China's ethnic minority literature is oriented towards the future, thus bringing to table an entirely different dimension to the topic of discussion. There is much that can be learnt from them since they constantly safeguard and continue to promote their language and literature on the one hand and also actively loan and borrow terminologies and techniques from other languages and cultures on the other.

Prof Harish Trivedi stated that India and China are eternal neighbours, because of conditions created by God (or geography). We are also very old friends, because of conditions created by man (or history). He went to elaborate the past interactions between the two countries not only literary but also in other fields and observed that with West on the decline there is no reason why India and China cannot work together to promote multilingual exchanges between our two mighty countries. Such exchanges would not only bring back the Old order but also will be a catalyst in the creation of the New World.

Sri Zhang Qinghua talked about multicultural communities and dialogues between them. He observed that both India and China are multicultural and multilingual from the beginning and we should follow the path of earlier times in overcoming multilingual conundrums which appear to be more fantastic than it actually is. He endorsed the view of Sri JidiMajia in learning from the ethnic minority's processes of overcoming multilingual challenges.

Prof H.S. Shivaprakash highlighted the commonalities between the two nations and stated that the Asian identity which emphasizes the inter-connectedness of humans with the collectivity and cosmos is our shared heritage and this is what is reflected in both our glorious literary pasts whether in great epics of India or Chinese classical poetry. He observed that exchanges like this and enhanced participation of educational institutions and academicians will mitigate the multilingual challenges and also provide for a better future in this front.

Sri Li Xiaoming talked about the oral traditions of both the nations and the exchanges between the earlier communities which were essentially oral in nature did not pose any challenges which we are facing today. The living wisdom as such is capable of overcoming odds and we as vehicles should carry the messages across the border.

Dr. Anamika in her speech talked about the role of translations and translators in overcoming such challenges. She felt that it is better late than never when it comes to carrying best of literature from one region and language to other regions and languages in both the countries. She observed that if we can easily read the snow clad white mountain as the Himalaya, we could also read the birdhole as the aporia of the Himalayan text and the birds flying across as the competent translators for whom the sky is the limit.

Sri Zhang Ruifeng highlighted the amount of translations which are taking place in China and from few languages of India and felt that if more languages are enabled in both the countries, multilingual problem which is essentially our own making would cease to exist.

Dr Chandra Mohan talked about the ongoing project in writing literary and cultural history of China from different perspectives emanating from India and the Indian scholars are making significant contributions to a special chapter of the history in addition to multilingual and multicultural Silk Road phenomenon.

Sri Zhang Jianxin, Cultural Counselor, Embassy of China in New Delhi thanked the Akademi and the Indian delegation for all the cooperation. He informed the audience including participants that Chinese government is always open for exchanges and those who are interested in such exchanges can contact them without any inhibition. Dr K. Sreenivasarao proposed a vote of thanks.


(K. Sreenivasarao)