

Changing the World:

Community, Science, Engagement and Big History

in collaboration with
Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts
Symbiosis International
[Deemed University]
Pune, Maharashtra, India

Fifth Global Conference of the
International Big History Association
1–10 August 2020



SSLA at Symbiosis International University,
Viman Nagar New Campus, Autumn 2017.

The International Big History Association's Fifth Global Conference, in collaboration with Symbiosis International University, will be held in the summer of 2020 in India: <www.siu.edu.in/>. Its theme focuses on 'Changing the World: Community, Science, Engagement and Big History'. The IBHA has held conferences on meaning, teaching and research, and so now will address issues of community and change around our planet. In other words: How can big history be helpful in its application to world issues?

India is a powerhouse of innovative development, with cultural and intellectual traditions reaching back thousands of years. Symbiosis is an embodiment of

this heritage and enterprise, a truly modern synthesis. Situated along the Mula-Mutha River, its ten campuses are in the city of Pune, on the Deccan Plateau, 600 meters above the Arabian Sea.

Founded in 1971, Symbiosis was begun with the intent of providing a 'home away from home' for African and Asian students studying in India. Its students come from more than 85 countries, so, appropriately, its Sanskrit motto is वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् – Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – 'The World is One Family'. A fee-financed, not-for-profit university, Symbiosis serves almost 30,000 students.



First Big History class at SSLA, Spring 2018.

Our conference will be co-sponsored by and held at the Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts, one of the university's most innovative programmes: <www.ssla.edu.in/>. Launched in 2011, SSLA was the first liberal arts school in an Indian university and

remains the only four-year degree, which is also an Honours programme. SSLA is also home to the India Association for Big History <www.ssla.edu.in/researchcell>, which formed in 2016.

In 2018, the first course in Big History in South Asia began at SSLA. The course grew out of SSLA's Anthropology Department and its core course, 'History of Man: From Ape to Alexander'. Today it is co-taught as 'Humanity and Big History: Our Challenge for Survival' by an historian and a physicist, a required course for all third-year undergraduates. In March 2018, SSLA sponsored the First Annual Conference of Interdisciplinarity and Big History with the Asian Big History Association and J.F. Oberlin University (Tokyo).

The IBHA / SSLA conference will take place during the first and second weeks of August 2020. We have reserved Symbiosis-approved guesthouses for accommodations, which are near to the SSLA campus. Rickshaws as well as cabs are available, and Symbiosis will provide a bus at the start and end of each day. The accommodations, as well as meals and tea, will

be available at a reasonable rate. For example, double-occupancy rooms will run at about ₹1500 (~ €/\$ 20) a night.

Attendees are invited to arrive during the weekend of August 1st and 2nd. The Pune International Airport is less than a kilometre from our campus. You can check into your room, then relax and socialize with friends and colleagues. On Sunday afternoon, we will arrange for a short tour of the city, followed by tea and a presentation orienting you to India.

The conference panels will begin Monday morning and run through Wednesday morning, August 3rd through 5th. On Monday and Tuesday evening, there will be interactive plenary panel presentations and a courtyard dinner. On Wednesday afternoon and evening, there will be an art, music and dance festival on the theme of the engaged creativity of South Asia.



Discussion at the Fireflies Intercultural Centre, Dinnepalya, Karnataka, June 2018.

On Thursday, August 6th, we will break into groups that will fly to different parts of India for theme-based interactions. The three-day seminars that we have arranged thus far with host NGOs are:

- Bengaluru, Karnataka: 'Science and a Changing Society'. [Tata Institute for Fundamental Research](#).
- Bhuj, Kutch, Gujarat: 'Landscape and Adapting Heritage'. [Kachchh Heritage Arts Music Information Resources](#) (KHAMIR).
- Patna, Bihar: 'Agrarian Life and Renewal'. [Tarumitra: Friends of Trees](#).
- Guwahati, Assam: 'Indigenous-Tribal Heritage and Innovation'. [All-India Indigenous-Tribal Federation](#).
- Dinnepalya, Karnataka: 'Eco-Spirituality and new Global Needs'. Pipal Tree / [Fireflies Intercultural Centre](#).

The seminars will take place August 7th through 9th. Each location can accommodate up to about 30 participants. Attendees will stay at a local NGO that is active in local change-making and will learn about their activities, including visits to their field stations. There will also be visits to heritage sites and trekking in ecological areas, in addition to panel presentations with local community members.

The seminars are located in major cities, so participants can fly home from there on August 10th, or proceed to other destinations. Travel into and out of India as well as between Indian cities is reasonably priced, especially if reservations are made well in advance. We will provide links to experienced travel agents.

In addition to the IBHA and SSLA, co-sponsors of the conference include the Asian Big History Association, the India Association for Big History, and the Eurasian Centre for Megahistory and System Forecasting, as well as the seminar NGOs. We will be providing a guidebook about India for conference attendees, sharing information on visas, inoculations,

laundry, and other essential knowledge.

Even though we are eighteen months in advance of the event, we ask that people begin to write Barry Rodrigue, the principal conference organizer (e-mail below). We must begin reserving rooms, arranging transportation, and allocating slots for the seminars. So, please drop Barry an e-mail with your paper's preliminary title and abstract, if you wish to present, as well as indicating which seminar you would like to attend.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2020 IBHA conference in Maharashtra!

Warm wishes, - Barry and *Sulakshana*

Dr. Barry H. Rodrigue, PhD
Professor, Anthropology
Faculty-in-Charge
SSLA Collaborative for Asian Anthropology
<rodrigue@archinets.org>

Dr. Sulakshana Sen, Ph.D. (ABD)
Associate Professor and Head of Department
International Relations, Political Science
Public Policy and Performing Arts
<sulakshana@ssla.edu.in>

Conveners

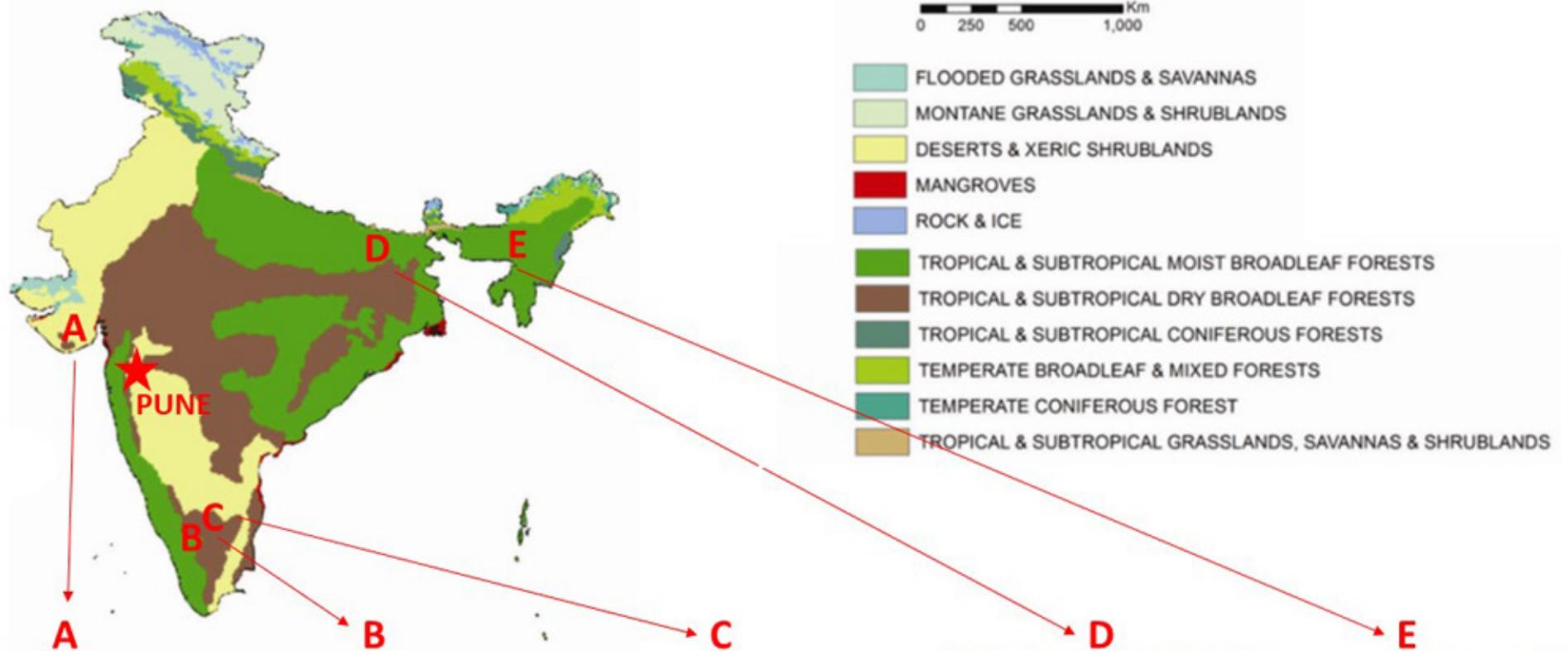
Anita Patankar, Director
Shweta Sinha Deshpande, Deputy Director

Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts
Symbiosis International [Deemed University]
Pune, Maharashtra, India
Web: <<https://www.ssla.edu.in/>>



**Please join us to explore
Big History in India
August 2020**

Locations for Theme Based Interactions



Khamir, Kutch, Gujarat



Fireflies, Dinnepalya, Karnataka



TIFR, Bengaluru



Tarumitra, Patna, Bihar



AITF, North East