

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)  
announces an Informal Talk

by

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**An experimental investigation on natural degradation of Sanchi manuscripts of Assam**

The indigenous knowledge typically employed in preparation of Sanchi manuscript of Assam, India, has helped to prevent its deterioration over the ages. A pilot survey conducted by the National Mission for Manuscripts found that due to lack of knowledge/facilities, these invaluable archival entities stored in unscientific manuscript repositories are getting rapidly damaged and are thereby on the verge of extinction. Virtually, there has been no scientific study and research conducted for developing a suitable preservation technique or method exclusively for Sanchi manuscripts. In this study, an experimental investigation has been done to understand the natural processes of chronological deterioration of Sanchi manuscripts. The mechanical properties namely stress/strain and chemical properties belonging to different time-periods were studied through various methods like SEM, XRD and FTIR. Results from SEM and stress/strain tests have shown that the cellulose fibres along the fractures are the most vulnerable zones of breakage. The XRD and FTIR tests have indicated a chronosequence of chemical properties suggestive of a gradual degradation.

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