

About Joseph Needham

Dr Joseph NEEDHAM, F.R.S., F.B.A. Scientist, Humanist and a Great Intellectual

The late Dr. Joseph NEEDHAM (1900-1995) was a prominent biochemist and social activist who dedicated most of his life to the history of science and technology in China. He is well known for his great work, the 26 volumes "Science and Civilization in China" series. His main question, now known as the "Needham Question", asks "why modern science had not developed in Chinese civilization but only in Europe given China's remarkable scientific achievements before the 15th century".

Dr Joseph NEEDHAM, together with his many distinguished collaborators, demonstrated that China and the Near East had made many outstanding contributions in the transformation of ancient to modern science. In all his activities he displayed a broad vision and the courage to pursue utopian projects and entertain nonconformist social views.

About The Joseph Needham Foundation for Science & Civilisation Hong Kong (JNFSC)

website: <https://www.infschk.org/>

Following his retirement as Master of Gonville & Caius College of the University of Cambridge in 1976, Dr. Joseph Needham needed a permanent library to house his massive collections of books (some of rare editions), manuscripts, publications, and artifacts from his lifelong association with Cambridge and his numerous sojourns in China beginning in the early 1940s as well as to other countries. A number of close friends and supporters in the US and Hong Kong began to work with Dr. Needham's brain trust, the East Asian History of Science Trust in Cambridge, which was established in mid-1960s solely to manage his monumental work "Science and Civilisation in China". The EAHST Cambridge was chaired by Mr. Peter Burbidge, Vice President of the Cambridge University Press and publisher of the multi-volumes "Science and Civilisation in China" series since 1954. Mr. Burbidge was one of Dr. Needham's closest advisors in the world of publications.

To support fund raising to build the permanent EAHS library (now the Needham Research Institute, <http://www.nri.cam.ac.uk/>) in Cambridge, the East Asian History of Science Trust Hong Kong (EAHST) was registered in 1979 by Professor F. Peter Lisowski, Mr. T. Y. Lee, Dr. Peter L. Lee under the guidance of Mr. Peter Burbidge, Chairman of the EAHST UK. To facilitate library construction fund remittance from HK to Cambridge, the EAHST HK was renamed EAHSF in 1980. The final addition to the Needham Library was completed in 1991, 4 years before the death of Dr. Needham.

With mission accomplished, the EAHSF HK was renamed JNFSC in early 2018 to reflect the vision and goals to promote the Needham scholarly legacy with the local academic community, such as engaging secondary school students in STEM education series since 2014. The initiation of the Joseph Needham Merit Scholarship program with local tertiary institutions is another of JNFSC's core projects.