

Dr Joseph Needham, received in 1992—towards the end of his long life, he died in March 1995 at the age of 95—the great honour of being awarded the Companion of Honour. Earlier in his career he had been elected a Fellow of both the British Academy and the Royal Society, in recognition of his great scholarly contributions to the humanities and to science. I have never heard of anyone else who had been elected to both, the Academy and the Society. I thought right that he had been acclaimed as ‘one of the greatest scholars of the century.’ and his *magnum opus*, the *Science and Civilisation of China (SCC)*, of which by 1998, 18 volumes had been published, will rank Needham among the immortals of sinology, history and science. (See also Title 374, \*Joseph Needham 90\*). This obituary was published in June 1995.

I had invited Needham to join the Editorial Board of ISR at its inception in 1976, and I was fortunate enough to publish one of his most philosophically distinguished contributions on \*The Evolution of oecumenical Science\* in which he described the growing together of European and Chinese sciences [See ISR Vol. 1 (3)]. I was also privileged to review *SCC*, volume after volume, as they appeared almost annually from the Cambridge University Press. [See Bibliography, Appendix 2, Reviews, Title 436]. Through this often very difficult, but always most stimulating task, I became fully aware of his outstanding achievement and unique scholarship.

Sir Cyril Hinshelwood, President of the Royal Society (1965-1970), and a distinguished sinologist, reviewing Volume IV of *SCC*, wrote: “... proceed from one branch of the subject to another, then the mosaic of curious and interesting facts, the records of shrewd observations and characteristic comment, gradually build up and blend to a vivid and colourful picture of Chinese life and thought ... The picture receives life and warmth from the sympathetic understanding which the author has for the Chinese people.”

Another of Needham’s great achievements was his foresight and his ability to ensure the continuity of his life’s work by the foundation of an Institute in Cambridge, now called after his death, the ‘Needham Research Institute’. From there the remaining, at least 10 further volumes of *SCC* will be organised, written and published by a team of devoted followers. He himself collected finance for his Institute from both Eastern and Western sources.

Whenever I had the pleasure and stimulation of meeting Dr Needham at his Institute and had enjoyed his warm friendship, I came away with a feeling that it had been a privilege to know him, the greatest of the many scientists I have met in my life. His photograph and my obituary note of him, in June 1995, occupied a whole page of ISR, the only obituary of that length while I was Editor.