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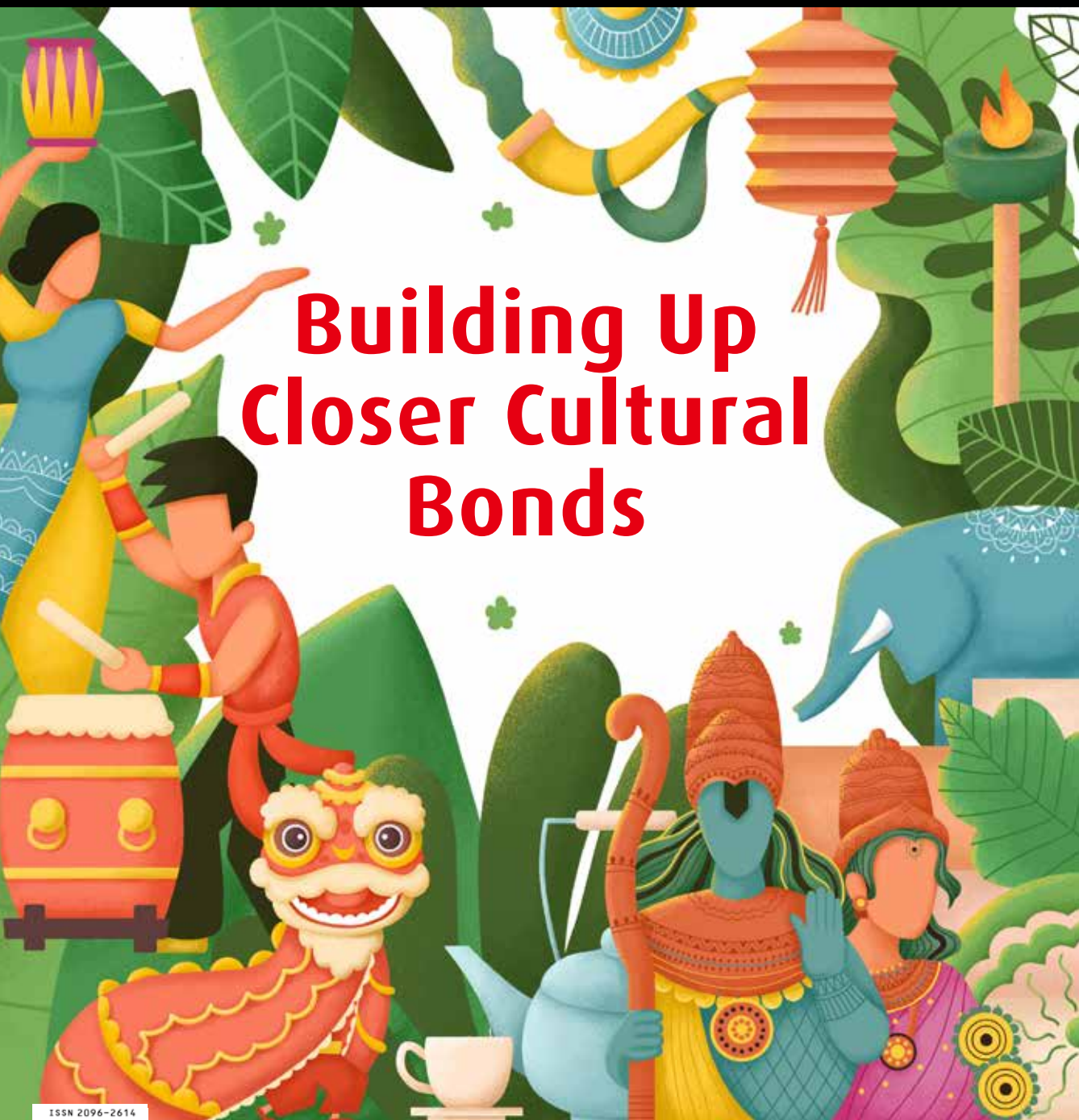
Profound Dynamics

# CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

The Leaves of Mutual  
Learning between India  
and China

Vol.13 No.1 | January - February 2019

## Building Up Closer Cultural Bonds



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# 塞罕坝

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半个多世纪，三代人耕耘。

沙地变林海，荒原成绿洲。

寒来暑往，

塞罕坝机械林场的森林覆盖率

已达80%。

栽种树木按二米株距排开，

可绕地球赤道二圈。

Saihanba is a cold alpine area in northern Hebei Province bordering the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. It was once a barren land but is now home to 75,000 hectares of forest, thanks to the efforts made by generations of forestry workers in the past 55 years. Every year the forest purifies 137 million cubic meters of water and absorbs 747,000 tons of carbon dioxide. The forest produces 12 billion yuan (around US\$1.8 billion) of ecological value annually, according to the Chinese Academy of Forestry.



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## Tourism Revenue of China and India Leads in Developing Countries in 2018

On January 16, the World Tourism Conference Forum (WTCF) and the Tourism Research Center of China's Academy of Social Sciences (TRC-CASS) released the *Report on World Tourism Economy Trends (2019)* in Beijing.

In 2018, the tourism revenue of China and India ranked second and sixth respectively in the world, leading the developing countries. According to the report, inbound tourism in emerging economies represents nearly half of the world's tourism revenue. In 2018, the total tourism revenue of emerging economies accounts for 15.4% of their GDP, and this ratio is only 4.0% in developed countries. In 2018, the total number of tourism-related trips of BRICS countries accounted for 79.7% of tourist travel in emerging economies.



## The 13th Meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs Held

The 13th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs was held in New Delhi on January 29 and 30.

The Chinese delegation was led by Yi Xianliang, director general of the department of boundary and oceanic affairs in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while the Indian delegation was led by Pranay Verma, the joint secretary (East Asia) in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

The two sides reviewed situational

developments along China-India border areas since the last meeting and exchanged in-depth views on boosting mutual trust and pushing for early harvest consultations.

The two sides agreed to follow the guidance of the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries as well as the mandate of the special representatives of both countries on the boundary issue, to further strengthen communication and coordination in a constructive manner, and step up the building of mutual trust measures so as to jointly maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas and promote the sustained and sound development of Sino-Indian relations.



## The Chinese Department of Jawaharlal Nehru University of India Celebrated Chinese New Year

On February 18th, the Chinese Department of Jawaharlal Nehru University of India celebrated Chinese New Year. Nearly 100 people, including Chintamani Mahapatra, professor and Rector-I/ Transparency Officer, and B. R. Deepak, professor and Director of the Chinese Department, as well as teachers and students from the department and some Chinese students, attended the celebration.

During the activity, Indian students gave performances in

Chinese, including part of *A Madman's Diary* and the Chinese version of the Bollywood classic *Sholay*. The students also sang Chinese songs and performed Chinese dances.



## Chinese Spokesman Answered Question on the Attack in Indian-Controlled Kashmir

On February 19, the spokesperson of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Geng Shuang, answered a question related to the attack at Indian-controlled Kashmir. Geng said that "Pakistan and India are both important countries in South Asia. A stable Pakistan-India relationship is crucial to regional peace, stability and development. The situation in South Asia is generally stable, which is hard-won and should be cherished and upheld by relevant parties. China hopes that Pakistan and India can exercise restraint, engage in dialogue and realize an early 'soft landing' of this issue."

## NASA: Thanks to China and India, the Earth is Greener than Two Decades Ago


A recent survey by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) shows that over the past 20 years, more than two million square miles (about 518 million hectares) of vegetation have appeared on the surface of the Earth, equivalent to an Amazon rainforest. One third of the increase in vegetation area is attributed to China and India—owing to China's afforestation project and the agricultural management of both two countries.

Since 2000, the area of arable land in China and India (around two million square kilometers) has not changed much. But the two countries greatly increased the coverage of vegetation while ensuring grain production.

## Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi Met with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj of India

On February 27, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj held the 16th meeting of the foreign ministers of China, Russia and India in Wuzhen in eastern China's Zhejiang Province. After the meeting, the three countries released a joint communiqué.

Wang Yi met his Indian counterpart the same day. Wang Yi expressed that the Chinese side has always highly prioritized China-India relations in its diplomacy with neighboring countries. Last year, President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi successfully held an informal meeting in Wuhan, ushering China-India relations into a new stage of mature and stable development. Cooperation between the two countries in various fields has been carried out smoothly, and the expectations of all sectors of society and the international community on China-India relations have become more active. In the new year, both sides should carefully implement the important consensus of the leaders, prepare for high-level exchanges between the two countries, plan commemorative activities for the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, explore in-depth the potential for practical cooperation, create highlights for people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and properly manage differences in the meantime so as to promote China-India relations for stable and long-term development.

Sushma Swaraj said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping held an informal meeting in Wuhan last year, which promoted bilateral relations to realize rapid development. The two sides should work together to well implement the important consensus reached by leaders of the two countries, strengthen strategic communication, deepen practical operation, enhance people-to-people and cultural exchanges, well plan the commemorative activities for the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries next year, and jointly safeguard peace and tranquility in the border areas in a bid to promote the stable and forward-looking development of India-China relations. 

# China and India: Torches of the East

By Luo Zhaohui



The tide of China-India cultural exchange seems unstoppable. Further infrastructure connectivity has facilitated a heavier flow of interaction between China and India, and even the seemingly insurmountable Himalayas can do little to impede passionate exchange between the two Asian neighbors.

**T**his winter, the temperature in New Delhi dropped to a record low of recent years. However, the chilly weather did little to inhibit the heating up of China-India cultural exchange. Co-chaired by Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma

Swaraj, the first meeting of the China-India high-level people-to-people and cultural exchange mechanism was held in New Delhi in December 2018. As the most recent diplomatic event to implement the consensus reached by Chinese and Indian leaders during their Wuhan informal meeting in 2018, this meeting stirred a wave of cultural exchange

between China and India.

First, the meeting was a high-level event. The establishment of the China-India high-level people-to-people and cultural exchange mechanism was an important consensus reached by Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during their meeting in Wuhan, and both

leaders sent congratulatory letters to the meeting. Alongside State Councilor Wang Yi, seven Chinese vice ministers from ministries of culture, tourism, education and other affairs attended the meeting and conducted in-depth communication with their Indian counterparts.

Second, the meeting included a multitude of activities. The two sides organized eight fruitful sub-events involving think tanks, the media, museums, language and culture, a vocational education cooperation forum, a photography exhibition, a film week, and a book release, among others.

Third, the meeting achieved fruitful outcomes. The two sides agreed to focus on “ten pillars” and “eight priorities” to increase people-to-people and cultural exchanges. Universities and media organizations of the two nations reached five cooperation agreements. Two Indian colleges agreed to set up Chinese language teaching centers and two vocational education centers.

Fourth, the meeting exerted far-reaching influence. The establishment of a high-level people-to-people and cultural exchange mechanism was unprecedented in the history of China-India relations and represented an innovation that conformed to the will of the general public of both countries. The mechanism helps stimulate interest in cooperation between government departments of the two nations, enhances the



December 21, 2018: Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi (left) and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj co-chair the first meeting of the China-India high-level people-to-people exchanges mechanism in New Delhi, India. VCG

importance of people-to-people exchanges, and accelerates comprehensive development of China-India relations.

### HISTORY AND REALITY

Historically, China and India led the world economy for a long time. British economist Angus Maddison wrote in his book *The World Economy* that the combined GDP of China and India accounted for half of the global total for 1,600 years during the last 3,000 years. Moreover, China and India continue to represent two major ancient civilizations of the East. The two nations learn from each other as they make remarkable contributions to human progress. The first meeting of the China-India high-level people-to-people and cultural exchange mechanism was a huge success. Standing at a new historic starting point and eyeing further development of bilateral relations, the two nations are inheriting a profound

legacy of historical exchange and preserving the general trend of communication between different civilizations as they move toward the “Asian Century.”

The Xi-Modi meeting in Wuhan laid a solid political foundation for people-to-people and cultural exchange between China and India. Last April during their meeting in Wuhan, President Xi and Prime Minister Modi visited an exhibition of cultural relics at Hubei Provincial Museum, enjoyed a performance of chime bells, and conducted in-depth discussions on mutual learning between the two nations with ancient civilizations. The Wuhan summit moved China-India relations into the “fast lane.” Subsequently, the two leaders met three times on multi-lateral occasions, and three Chinese state councilors visited India. In 2018, bilateral trade volume reached a record high of US\$95.5 billion, and



nearly 1,000 Chinese companies operating in India created more than 100,000 jobs. The positive trend in China-India relations bolstered the success of the first meeting of the high-level people-to-people and cultural exchange mechanism.

An eon of mutual learning between Chinese and Indian civilizations has invigorated cultural exchange between the two nations. Through peaceful coexistence and communication that transcends the limits of time and space, Chinese and Indian people have created brilliant cultures and set a pristine example in the history of cultural exchange. The origin of China-India cultural exchange can be traced back more than 2,000 years. During his expeditions to the western regions, Zhang Qian, an envoy of the Han Dynasty (202 BC – AD 220), kept records on Shu cloth and bamboo sticks imported from India. Originating in India, Buddhism thrived in China. Eminent monks such as Faxian, Xuanzang and Bodhidharma made long, arduous journeys to spread Buddhist culture between China and India. During his seven voyages, Chinese explorer Zheng He visited India six times. China's papermaking, silk, porcelain and tea were introduced to India, and Indian songs and dances, astronomy, architecture, perfumes and other items were exported to China. Surviving artifacts from these activities



December 13, 2018: Indian guests perform a dragon dance at the collective wedding for two pairs of Indian couples in Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province. In recent years, Yunnan has attracted more people from South Asian countries including India to travel and work in the province. VCG

evidence mutual learning and interaction between the two nations along the ancient Silk Road. Both Eastern civilizations, China and India have always learned from each other and are inclusive in nature. Both nations attach great importance to ethics, morality and self-improvement and advocate harmonious coexistence between man and nature, peace, benevolence and familial kinship, demonstrating the charm of ancient Eastern philosophy.

In modern times, the two countries have furthered their interactions. Chinese revolutionaries like Dr. Sun Yat-sen voiced support for the Indian independence movement. Famous Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore visited China twice, established the Cheena Bhavan (China College) at India's Visva-Bharati University, and called for spreading Eastern philosophy alongside Chinese

educator Tan Yunshan. Their efforts enabled the emergence of Indian studies in China and Chinese studies in India, which have since been further expanded. Chinese translator Xu Fancheng spent 33 years in India translating the Sanskrit scripture *Bhagavad Gita*. During the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, India sent a medical team to assist China. Indian physician Dwarkanath Kotnis even sacrificed his life during the medical mission to China. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, India became the first non-socialist country to establish diplomatic relations with China. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru jointly developed the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which have made great contributions to the construction of the new international order.



“Hindi-Cheeni bhai-bhai” (“Indians and Chinese are brothers” in Hindi) became a catchphrase that has inspired generations of young people to commit to consolidating China-India friendship. Even when political relations saw setbacks, cultural exchange and interaction between the two nations continued unabated.

People-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and India conform to the general trend of exchange between different civilizations around the world and meet the practical needs of the two peoples. Since the turn of the 21st century, economic globalization, social informatization and cultural diversification have prevailed. In this context, the world is increasingly flat, and various cultures are clashing and integrating with each other. In a century of shared civilization, building a community with a shared future for humanity should be a common aspiration for people of all countries. People-to-people and cultural exchanges have become unstoppable trends advancing faster and faster. Further infrastructure connectivity has facilitated wider interaction between China and India, and even the seemingly insurmountable Himalayas can no longer block passionate exchanges between the two Asian neighbors. Yoga, Darjeeling black tea and Bollywood films have gained popularity among Chinese young people. The Indian movie *Dangal* grossed an astonishing US\$190 million in China, about twice the revenue it

earned in India. Chinese food, acupuncture, martial arts and movie stars are also popular among Indians. Currently, more than 14 sister city and province relationships have been established between China and India, and more than 20,000 Indian students are studying in China. Annual mutual visits between the two countries have exceeded a million. China’s Yunnan Minzu University is the only university outside of India to offer a master’s degree in yoga. The two nations’ curiosity toward each other is enhanced through broader interactions, which further stimulates cultural exchange between the two nations.

### PROMISING PROSPECTS

It is easy to sail when the sea is smooth. China and India have a combined population of 2.7 billion, accounting for 40 percent of the global total, and contribute 20 percent of the world’s total GDP. Promising prospects for cultural exchange between the two nations have emerged across the board. The first meeting of the China-India high-level people-to-people and cultural exchange mechanism marked a good start. Seizing the opportunity, China and India need to leverage the mechanism as a platform to implement the consensus reached by leaders of the two countries and mobilize people from all walks of life to commit to the great cause of strengthening long-term China-India friendship.

First, the two countries need to take concrete actions to implement outcomes of the

meeting, accelerate negotiations on seven cooperation agreements in fields like culture, sports and museum management, and improve the high-level people-to-people and cultural exchange mechanism to accumulate more consensus and outcomes for the second meeting.

Second, the two countries need to focus on priority work. With the “ten pillars” and “eight priorities” designated by both sides in mind, we need to establish culture centers in each other’s countries and join hands to produce films and organize activities to achieve sustainable cultural exchange.

Third, the two countries need to formulate medium- and long-term plans to create a new cultural exchange framework featuring both governmental and non-governmental cooperation and extensive participation to ensure that cultural exchange is “rooted in the people and benefiting the people.”

As two ancient civilizations that form their own *yin* and *yang*, China and India have carried out diverse and colorful cultural exchange for ages. I believe that the two nations will certainly achieve more extensive exchange, friendly cooperation and harmonious coexistence and make greater contributions to world prosperity and stability as long as they continue to learn from each other and respect each other’s culture.🌐

—  
The author is the Chinese Ambassador to India.

# Learning from Neighbors

By B. R. Deepak



Both China and India need to establish new mechanisms for dialogue while improving or replacing the old.

**T**he first-ever India-China High-level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges was launched on December 21, 2018 in New Delhi by Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and her counterpart State Councilor Wang Yi. This mechanism is the product of the “Wuhan Spirit” and the consensus reached between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping during the unofficial Wuhan meeting in April. The

meeting marked a rebalancing of India-China relations after a 73-day military standoff at Donglang (Doklam).

Why is such a mechanism at the highest level necessary? At first, it was to promote unhindered circulation of ideas, technology, objects and people that enriched the Indian and Chinese civilizations. From the birth of Chinese Buddhism and the dissemination of ancient Indian and Central Asian astronomy, literature, music and languages into China to the

introduction of technologies such as sugar making, paper making, steel smelting, silk, porcelain and tea from China to India and other countries, trade and communication between China and India have enriched knowledge systems around the world. Moreover, these developments were possible because of the unimpeded flow of people. The translation industry, for example, was created in China but involved people from India and many Central Asian states. Hundreds of Chinese scholar

monks gave it support.

First and most importantly, these people were responsible for creating the entire repository of Buddhist literature in China and Northeast Asia, which preserved many sutras that were lost in India. Another fact that most Chinese may not realize is that Buddhist and Sanskrit vocabulary have enriched the Chinese language by adding at least 35,000 terms. The core of these exchanges has been ‘mutual learning of civilizations’ rather than Huntington’s thesis of the ‘clash of civilizations.’ Such information has been reiterated by Indian and Chinese leadership recently, and the ‘Silk Road Spirit’ of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusivity, mutual learning and mutual benefit advocated by President Xi Jinping accurately illustrates the point. Presently, a yearly flow of one million people between India and China brings exchange to new heights, especially in the fields of trade, tourism and education.

Secondly, Chinese and Indian studies of each other’s countries need to be enhanced, encouraged and strengthened to expand the capacity of government and private sectors in promoting better understanding. A telling figure might be the number of China experts India has produced since its independence: Some measures were taken in the wake of the border conflict, and a decade back in 2009 an act of Parliament intending to establish new central universities was passed, but still only around 20 universities in India offer Chinese

language programs, of which most are only a minor certificate, including Delhi University where such courses started in 1964. Comparing the situation of Chinese learning in the U.S., as many as 227,086 students were enrolled in Chinese language courses ranging from kindergarten to grade 12, according to the National K-12 Foreign Language Enrollment Survey Report of 2017. It is projected that the number will rise to one million by the year 2020. These numbers, however, do not include college and university students and could reach three hundred thousand.

Although Chinese universities offering programs on Hindi have increased to about 16, that number remains paltry considering the large populations of India and China. Furthermore, student exchange between India and China is highly asymmetrical. Indian students studying in the Chinese universities (around 20,000) are mostly in the field of medicine, whereas the presence of Chinese students in Indian universities is miniscule (2,000). Jawaharlal Nehru University, one of the premier institutes in the country, has never had more than 25 Chinese students at a time. The number of students on official cultural exchange programs between the two is ridiculously few—it increased from 12 during the 1990s to a present 25! Thanks to scholarships offered by the Confucius Institute, almost 500 Indian students

have been able to enroll in Chinese universities for various programs. The number may increase significantly if Indian universities or educational institutes start collaborating with Chinese universities in building capacity in their respective languages. About 800 Indian universities and 150 think tanks have signed MoUs or agreements with their Chinese counterparts. The biggest hurdle, in my opinion, is lack of recognition of degrees from each other’s country. Other bottlenecks include living accommodations and acceptance of various schools’ credit systems. The removal of such bottlenecks would increase the flow of students and the number of joint researches and seminars between the two countries while at the same time enhancing mutual understanding.

Thirdly, bonding between researchers and the publishing industry is an area that has not received adequate focus. Not many books from China and vice versa are translated and disseminated in each other’s countries. Remember—translators from India, China and Central Asian countries built a huge repository of Buddhist literature in China and were responsible for changing the entire socio-cultural landscape of East Asia in ancient times. I believe that there was a specific movement and that a similar movement is required to make our contemporary relationship strong and benevolent. A memorandum



on mutual translation of classics and contemporary works was signed between India and China in 2013, which I am coordinating, is a good example. The memorandum envisages translation of 25 representative Chinese books and authors into Hindi and vice-versa. The works include Confucian Classics of Four Books, *Journey to the West*, *The Romance of Three Kingdoms*, *Dream of the Red Mansion*, *The Scholars* and the works of modern and contemporary writers such as Ba Jin, Mao Dun, Lao She, Moyan, Jia Pingwa and A Lai. It is indeed heartening that my Hindi translations of *Analects*, *Mencius*, *Great Learning* and *The Mean* are finally available to Indian readers—the first time in recorded history of two millennia of exchanges between India and China. Through building small bridges between the Indian and Chinese publishers, we

are finally reaping some fruit, and both Indian and Chinese publishers are waking up to a wide variety of writings coming across the Himalayas. A connection between the publishing industries of both countries offers an excellent dialogue mechanism, which will have a huge impact on either side. The industry brings together intellectuals and think tanks from both sides. It not only broadens the scope of the people-to-people exchange, but also creates consciousness for long-term understanding and friendship between the two peoples.

Fourthly, tourism and pilgrimages will renew the bonding and nostalgia that historically existed between the civilizations. These pilgrimages and journeys enabled the spiritual and material civilizations of Asia and elsewhere to benefit immensely from each other. A multilayered approach

to building better bonding would involve expanding the establishment of sister municipalities, cities, and provinces. Today, only 14 sister cities agreements have been signed for places in India and China and seven more are likely to be signed soon, as compared with the 214 agreements on friendly states and sister cities signed between the U.S. and China. India and China share cultural heritage such as frescoes and rock-hewn Buddhist iconography of Ajanta and Ellora with Mogao, Yungang, Longmen, Dazu found in China. Buddhism presents huge scope for cooperation. For example, a Buddhist corridor could be established and further connected to other South Asian countries such as Nepal and Sri Lanka. These measures would be conducive to building a solid foundation for connectivity, trade and commerce, and, above all, robust bilateral relations.

Because both India and China are members of many multilateral forums such as BRICS and the SCO, they have already joined in many important people-to-people exchange mechanisms. For example, a comprehensive Action Plan for the Implementation of the Agreement Between the Governments of the BRICS States on Cooperation in the Field of Culture (2017-2021) was signed in 2017. The action plan envisages establishment of a BRICS alliance on art museums, national galleries, libraries, media and publishing industry. The plan encourages international



June 20, 2018: Nathu La Pass in Tibet welcomes 38 official pilgrims from India, the first group in this year. by Liu Dongjun/Xinhua



January 1, 2019: Students from India and Sri Lanka take part in sampling the quality of agricultural products at wholesale market for agricultural products in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. VCG

cultural and art festivals, joint programs on archaeological research, cooperation across creative and commercial sectors including performing arts, visual arts, audiovisual, music, gastronomy, fashion, literature, yoga, animation and games, new media, cultural and creative merchandise development and training people to become involved in these fields. The plan is ambitious, and similar action plans need to be implemented at a bilateral level. The increased presence of media personnel and objective reporting by

both sides should improve understanding.

Finally, people-to-people dialogue must be accompanied by resolution of thorny issues which include abandoning the Cold War mentality and avoiding zero-sum games. Both must negotiate mutual, equal and sustainable security as envisaged in some confidence building mechanisms. Both India and China need to be mindful of the fact that the bilateral security boundary is not just limited to the border issue but has sprawled into various other fields such as

ocean travel, river water, cybersecurity, counter-terrorism and various other non-traditional security domains. Considering the environment, both need to establish new dialogue mechanisms while reinforcing or replacing the old. Both must agree that the India-China relationship is one of the most important relationships in shaping the future international order. 

*The author is a professor of the Centre for China and Southeast Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University of India.*

# A New Day of China-India Relations

By Lan Jianxue

Only if the two sides maintain trust instead of suspicion and manage their differences through dialogue can they create a brighter future through cooperation.

As the two most renowned ancient civilizations in the East and the two largest developing countries and emerging markets, not to mention the only two countries with populations of more than a billion each, China and India have become two important forces in promoting global multi-polarity and driving Asia's economic growth in the 21st century.

The global environment is now undergoing profound changes, the international order is becoming more balanced and the trend of peaceful development has become irreversible, but instability and uncertainty persist. Peaceful, stable and balanced relations between

China and India are an important and positive factor for world stability.

The leaders of the two countries met four times in 2018, effectively promoting a “closer partnership for development” between China and India and significantly enhancing strategic mutual trust. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held an informal meeting in Wuhan in April 2018, which ended up as a major event in the history of China-India relations. The two leaders conversed with each other for a long time, conducted in-depth strategic communication, made major political decisions, and created a new mode of high-level communication between China and India.

The “closer partnership for development” between China and India is now moving forward steadily, but that is not enough. The two countries should also commit to building a higher-level strategic and cooperative partnership. As Prime Minister Modi said, “To describe the potential of India-China ties most succinctly, it’s an INCH (India and China) towards MILES (Millennium of Exceptional Energy).”

## CORE OBSTACLES

First, political consensus have yet to become political realities. During their meeting in Wuhan, President Xi and Prime Minister Modi reached important consensus. For example, China-India





August 23, 2018: Indian Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman holds a welcome ceremony for visiting Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister Wei Fenghe (right, front) before their meeting in New Delhi, India. VCG

cooperation outweighs the differences between them, as the two countries are neighbors, friends, and partners. Development of the two countries is a necessity and presents reciprocal important opportunities for both. It would be vain to hope to curb the national revival of either China or India—instead, our two countries should promote wide-ranging cooperation, build a closer partnership based on the principles of equality, mutual benefits and sustainable development, and properly handle the differences by managing them as

part of bilateral relations.

In the wake of the meeting, relevant authorities of the two countries should resolutely make the leaders' political consensus a reality. The relationship between China and India is full of hope and forward momentum. Only if the two sides maintain trust over suspicion and manage their differences through dialogue will they be able to create a bright future through cooperation.

Second, the potential for economic and trade investment needs to be further tapped. China and India

employ different economic structures that complement each other in terms of software and hardware. As of November 2018, China was India's third largest export destination and largest import source. According to Indian Business Information Agency statistics, from January to November 2018, bilateral trade volume between China and India totaled US\$83.26 billion, up 8.5 percent. India's export volume to China was US\$15.04 billion, up 31.8 percent, and the figure accounted for 5.1 percent of India's total exports,

increasing by 0.9 percentage points year-on-year. Meanwhile, the Indian import volume from China was US\$68.22 billion, up 4.4 percent, and the figure accounted for 14.5 percent of India's total imports, dropping by 1.5 percentage points year-on-year.

As for two-way investment, by the end of March 2018, India had invested in a total of 1,636 projects in China, amounting to US\$861 million. China's non-financial direct investment stock to India was US\$3.46 billion. Clearly the potential for economic and trade investment cooperation between China and India has yet to be fully tapped considering the economic size of the two countries. India should further expand its exports of goods and services to China, and China should further facilitate the process of investment in India.

Third, the foundation for people-to-people exchange is weak. Considering that China and India are ancient countries with great civilizations, the written history of China-India communication spans more than 2,000 years. The introduction of Indian songs and dances, astronomy, calendar, literature, architecture and sugar manufacturing technology—just name a few—to China and the introduction of Chinese papermaking, silk, porcelain, tea and music to India preserve evidence of a lengthy history of mutual exchange and mutual learning between the two peoples since ancient times.

Unfortunately, in an era



September 18, 2018: An exhibitor showcases unique Indian travel programs at the first India Tourism Mart in New Delhi, India. Through the three-day event, India's tourism authority aimed to promote its quality tourism resources to the world. by Zhang Naijie/Xinhua

of information and communication technology, a huge cognitive gap persists between Chinese and Indian peoples today. For instance, before visiting India, many Chinese tourists worried that they wouldn't like Indian cuisine, that the drinking water would be contaminated or that their personal security would be at risk. Similarly, before departing to China, first-time visitors from India often worried whether they could access the internet and travel without limitations in China. Today, most reports on China from India's mainstream English media outlets remain gloomy and pessimistic, with ongoing extensive bilateral cooperation ignored.

Misunderstandings, rumors, and even hostility will melt only when the two peoples get to know each other better. Fortunately, the top leaders

of both countries are aware of this and have agreed to establish a mechanism to advance people-to-people exchange.

Fourth, third-party factors and historical issues are sabotaging bilateral relations. The intrinsic value of China-India relations makes the development independent of third-party factors. However, third-party factors such as the United States and Pakistan have at times impacted relations between the two countries. For example, when India falls into conflict with Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute and "cross-border terrorist attacks," the Indian media tend to blame China. Meanwhile, the Chinese media usually overstates the United States' influence on India's policymaking, is a little bit too sensitive about reporting on interactions between the United States and

India, and lacks confidence in India's "strategic autonomy." Other historical issues such as the boundary question and the Dalai problem still sour bilateral relations from time to time and hamper the upgrading of strategic mutual trust between the two countries.

### MINIMIZING THE TRUST DEFICIT

First and foremost, unswervingly adhere to the consensus that China and India are partners presenting development opportunities for each other. Disagreements between neighbors are inevitable, but they can always be resolved through peaceful consultation. At the same time, we cannot just focus on differences while neglecting friendship and cooperation, and we must not leave our countries' revival and the overall situation of bilateral relations vulnerable to third-party interference. As two ancient civilizations, China and India should maintain strategic communication and explore ways to increase friendship across the continent. The belief that China and India are natural partners needs to be widespread throughout the general public of both countries in addition to leadership.

Second, make good use of economic complementarities between the two countries and expand common interests. We should improve market access to each other, promote trade liberalization and investment facilitation, and sign trade agreements to promote free trade. We also need to emancipate our minds


to broaden the bilateral trade relationship. The year 2018 marked the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening up. Over the past 40 years, Chinese experience can be summarized as: "Becoming open and inclusive leads to national long-term prosperity." Sometimes, everything falls into place when minds are broadened. Freeing the mind can be a huge productivity booster.

Third, solidify the foundation for friendly public opinion through closer people-to-people exchange. Our two countries have had rich material and spiritual legacies fueled by people-to-people exchange for thousands of years. The China-India relationship is a historic model for communication and mutual learning between civilizations. Even during periods of setbacks in political relations, people-to-people exchange and non-governmental exchange between China and India have never been interrupted. China and India are fundamental pillars of Oriental multiculturalism, which highlights experience and intuition with focus on long-term perspectives, comprehensiveness, ethics and morality, self-examination and self-reflection, and harmony between nature and humanity. People across Asia uphold peace and love and cherish "harmony with differences" and "strength in diversity," among other values.

China and India are fully capable of cooperating to optimize the charm of Oriental civilizations and

cultures for the world. We can create equal, two-way, and mutually beneficial cultural exchange and build a stable and reliable relationship of strategic mutual trust based on profound people-to-people exchange.

Fourth, eliminate negative impact from third-party factors by remaining strategically determined. Facing a rapidly evolving and complex domestic and international situation, China and India must stay strategically focused. We should not let short-term ups and downs cause tunnel vision. Both China and India have firmly adhered to the policy of independence and peaceful development and cherish their strategic autonomy. India enjoys great prestige in the Non-Aligned Movement, has a strong independent national character, and upholds its own values and principles in foreign exchange without following others blindly. These national characteristics are greatly appreciated by the Chinese people and form an important cornerstone for India to build its place in a multi-polar world.

Those who attempt to leverage India as a pawn for their own interests should recall carefully the magnificent history of the Indian people's indomitable struggle for national independence. 

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# China-India People-to-People Exchanges: Status Quo and Future Trends

By Luo Shaoqin

As a communication conduit between China and India in the field of 'low' politics, cultural and people-to-people exchanges are easier to develop than political and security cooperation.

Since the Modi government came into power in 2014, China-India relations have gone through many ups and downs. India was first apathetic about the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, and then fell into disagreement with China over its attempt to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and blacklist Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed chief as a "global terrorist" by the UN Security Council. The border standoff in the Dong Lang (Doklam) area and the Dalai Lama's visit to the so-called "Arunachal Pradesh" made bilateral relations drop to a record low in recent years. However, their frosty relationship thawed after the leaders of both countries met

at the ninth BRICS Summit in Xiamen and held an informal meeting in Wuhan. In the process, cultural and people-to-people exchanges have played an increasingly important role in deepening China-India relations, and have become the fastest-growing realm for cooperation between the two countries.

## FOUR MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES

So far, cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and India have formed a relatively complete framework, showing the following special characteristics:

First, the scope of bilateral exchange has increasingly expanded, and the topics

of bilateral communication have been constantly broadened. In September 2014, when Chinese President Xi Jinping paid his first visit to India, China and India published a joint statement on building a closer development partnership, according to which both countries launched a cultural exchange program aiming to promote communication in fields like tourism, youth exchange and museum exchange, establish a ministerial-level consultation mechanism for cultural exchange, perform mutual translation of classics and contemporary works, exchange movies, broadcasting programs and television shows, and teach Indian languages in China and

Chinese language in India. Subsequently, communication in media, healthcare and other realms further broadened cultural and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries.

Second, cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and India are increasingly institutionalized. The establishment of such mechanisms as the China-India Think Tank Forum, the China-India Forum on Local Cooperation, the China-India University Leaders Forum, the China-India Media Forum, and the China-India Forum has regularized the conduits for cultural and people-to-people exchanges between both countries, and to some extent guaranteed their stability and further development.

Third, after years of effort, China and India have formed an organic framework of cultural and people-to-people exchanges, in which top leaders guide the overall direction, specific departments take the responsibility for coordination, various mechanisms provide institutional guarantees, business enterprises play a leading role, and people from all walks of life participate. Co-chaired by Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, the first meeting of the China-India high-level people-to-people exchanges mechanism was held in New Delhi on December 21, 2018. It was not only to implement the consensus reached during the informal summit in Wuhan, but also to review cultural and

people-to-people exchanges between China and India and outline plans for future development. As Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at the meeting, the mechanism is expected to play a guiding role in cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and India, urge the two sides to mobilize all kinds of resources and give full play to their respective advantages, and push cultural and people-to-people exchanges between both countries to achieve new breakthroughs and developments in this new historic era.

Finally, cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and India are increasingly integrated into multilateral mechanisms. With the increased interactions between China and India in those multilateral mechanisms such as BRICS summits, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and China-India-Russia trilateral mechanisms, multilateral cultural and people-to-people exchanges have also developed rapidly. Under the framework

of BRICS, a number of multi-lateral people-to-people communication platforms such as the BRICS Youth Forum, the BRICS Wellness Workshop, the BRICS Legal Forum, the BRICS Urbanization Forum, and the BRICS Academic Forum have enabled China and India to carry out cultural and people-to-people exchanges in wide-ranging areas.

### OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Thanks to the continual improvement of bilateral relations and the efforts of both governments in promoting dialogues, cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and India have improved in both quality and quantity, and shown intentionality. However, some challenges still lie ahead.

First, mutual personnel visits remain negligible, considering the massive combined population of both countries, and the two peoples still lack mutual understanding and a strong willingness to communicate with each other. In 2017,



January 10, 2019: Indian medical students, who work as interns at a local hospital, experience traditional Chinese folk customs such as papercutting at Dagang Community in Lianyungang City, Jiangsu Province. VCG

only a million mutual visits were made, and the number of Chinese travelers to India was less than 200,000, about one-fourth of Indians visiting China that year. As early as 2016, a total of 500,000 Chinese tourists visited Myanmar. This demonstrated that outbound Chinese tourists show little interest in India.

Second, over a long time, the population of Chinese in India and that of Indians in China have been extremely limited, so in the two countries there are few who have insight into each other's customs, folklore and culture. Consequently, the two peoples cannot understand each other's rationale for action, resulting in misunderstandings in bilateral interactions. In 2017, the number of Indian students in China reached 20,000, but the number of Chinese students in India was only about 2,000. Partly because of India's strict visa policies, only a few Chinese have obtained Indian work permits.

Third, media outlets of both countries, especially those of India, are eager to report negative news about each other's countries for the purpose of winning fierce market competition. Sometimes they even resort to fake news, which distorts the public's awareness of each other's countries. Of 3,030 reports published by China's major online news portals on the border standoff in the Dong Lang area from June 26 to July 25, 2017, about 15 percent aimed to rebuke the Indian media's false reporting on this incident.

Fourth, Chinese and Indian think tanks pay insufficient attention to researching on each other's countries and conducting exchanges between the two countries. Only a few scholars are willing to engage in the relevant academic research and field surveys. After the first China-India Think Tank Forum opened on December 11, 2016, think tank exchange between the two countries boomed, which enhanced mutual understanding between Chinese and Indian scholars. However, the number of scholars with deep insight into each other's countries remains negligible.

Fifth, due to their victim mentality and great power sentiment, the negative recognition of Indians on China is likely to increase. Even in 2016 when the two countries saw close high-level interactions, as I searched the 15 most popular English books on China via Amazon India, I found that three of them were different English versions of *The Art of War* (an ancient Chinese military treatise by Sun Zi), three about the 1962 Sino-Indian border conflict, four about China-India competition in the 21st century, two about Chinese internet giant Alibaba and its founder Jack Ma, one about China-Pakistan relations, and the final two were polemical. This carries a clear implication for the Indian public's feelings about China.

Despite so many challenges, there are also plentiful opportunities for cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and India.

In the Wuhan consensus reached by the leaders of both countries in 2018, cultural and people-to-people exchanges occupied a large proportion, showing that top leaders of China and India attach great importance to such exchanges. The consensus on building a China-India high-level people-to-people exchange mechanism had been implemented by December of that year. This demonstrates the strong willingness of both countries to promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges. As a communication conduit between China and India in the field of 'low' politics, cultural and people-to-people exchanges are easier to advance than political and security cooperation.

Moreover, as two neighbors separated by the Himalayas, China and India are both major countries in Asia. In the future, cooperation between the two countries in domestic development and regional and international affairs will become more frequent. This will, to some extent, deepen mutual understanding and promote bilateral cultural exchange. More importantly, as two ancient civilizations, China and India have learned from each other over the past more than 2,000 years, and left countless literary and artistic masterpieces that provide fertile soil for continuing their millennia-old friendship. ■

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# Lasting Bonds

By Sreemati Chakrabarti

Relations built through cultural contact tend to be more solid and benefit not only India and China but the entire global community.

International relations and interactions among countries today are primarily focused on geopolitical considerations. This began with the emergence of nation-states in Europe which were characterized by fixed borders, thus dividing humankind. The emergence and creation of nation-states in the non-Western world was an affront to culture and civilization, worsened by colonialism. By internalizing the nation-state system and the mindset that comes with it, the world has done more harm than good for itself.

Being neighbors, India and China, which are considered the two Asian superpowers today, also share rich cultural links dating back centuries. Even in the face of modern-day political hurdles, this aspect of the two nations' relationship has continued to strengthen, fostering great people-to-people contact and cooperation.

Indian poet and Nobel

Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, a great admirer of Chinese culture and civilization, has been credited for a commendable effort to revive cultural links between India and China—links that had tightly bound the two civilizations in the past. After his first visit to China in 1924, Tagore decided to found an institution to play a role in enhancing and promoting cultural exchange between the peoples of India and China. Later in 1928 in Malaysia (then called Malaya), the poet met Tan Yunshan, an outstanding Buddhist scholar. At Tagore's invitation, Tan Yunshan came to India and stayed on the campus of Vishwabharati, Tagore's international university located in Shantiniketan, West Bengal. The subsequent scholarly discussions between him and Tan Yunshan on the historical, cultural and civilizational aspects of India and China led to a concrete plan to build an institution. In 1937, with monetary support from

the Chinese government, a center for Chinese language and cultural studies was established. Named 'Cheena Bhavan,' it eventually became a university department where teaching and research on Chinese language, literature and culture was conducted.

Said Tagore in his speech at the opening ceremony of Cheena Bhawan: "This is indeed a great day for me, a day long awaited, in which I can revive on behalf of our people and the people of China, discourse with a foundation laid 1,800 years ago by our ancestors with infinite patience and sacrifice." An intense believer in the power of culture to influence relationships between peoples of different lands, Tagore declared in the same speech, "Cooperation and love, mutual trust and mutual aid make for strength and real merit of a civilization. We were for over a century so successfully hypnotized by the prosperous West behind its

chariot that, though choked by the dust, deafened by the noise, humbled by our helplessness, overwhelmed by speed, we still agreed to acknowledge that this chariot-drive was progress, and that progress was civilization.” Tagore advocated intense cultural interaction between India and China and strongly opposed those who blindly worshiped Western cultural traits and values. It is important for us to give due consideration to his views.

In the pre-modern borderless era, travelers, mostly monks, freely made trips to each other’s lands. They gained knowledge about the various aspects of the lives of people who lived in distant lands. In his 2018 book *India, China and the World: A Connected History*, Tansen Sen showed that in the first century CE, Buddhist ideas and images from India first reached Han China through merchants and traders. The cultural impact was so strong that drawings were engraved on the boulders of Mount Kongwang in northern Jiangsu province. The popularity of Buddhism in China, which peaked in the Tang dynasty, inspired major cultural interactions between Indians and Chinese. This exchange continued with varying intensity throughout the medieval period too. However, with the dawn of colonialism, we have witnessed a dominance of geopolitics at the cost of cultural bonding. But this does not undermine the fact that a robust cultural relationship has existed between the peoples of India and China.



November 3, 2018: A vendor displays electronic firecrackers made in China at the Moonlight Market in New Delhi, India. Diwali, one of India’s biggest and most significant traditional festivals, fell on November 7 that year. Firecrackers are a highlight of the festival celebrations. In recent years, traditional firecrackers haven’t sold as well as before, while electronic firecrackers produced in China have become increasingly popular. by Zhang Naijie/Xinhua

India’s independence in 1947 and China’s Liberation in 1949 created a new opportunity for the two new nations to restore and rejuvenate goodwill through people-to-people relations. The first decade, ending with 1959, witnessed a reasonable volume of interactions between the two countries, considering that both were weak and with limited resources. Unfortunately, political flash-points such as the 1962 border war greatly obstructed and curtailed the growth and development of a healthy relationship. The once smooth trajectory of overall Sino-Indian relations was affected.

After this rough patch, restoring trust between the two peoples became a crucial issue. Relations began to show progress after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s visit to China in 1988. And with the liberalization of the Indian economy and rapid growth of the

Chinese economy in the early 1990s, economic relations expanded quickly as trade and investment grew rapidly, the trust deficit notwithstanding. This economic exchange has continued to steadily grow and deepen over the years. However, broad consensus holds that fostering people-to-people relations through cultural contacts remains imperative. Better relations will help the two countries as well as the rest of Asia and the world. A robust cultural relationship will most certainly reduce the trust deficit significantly. The India-China example can then have the potential to serve as a model for other states. On the Asian continent with its many flash-points, ties between peoples can make a big difference. This may sound unrealistic and impractical but an attempt—a serious attempt—towards this end would not harm anyone.


One cannot exaggerate the

ever-growing popularity of the Chinese language in India. Of course, this development has a lot to do with China becoming an economic powerhouse which led to wider trade, investment and other commercial contacts between India and China and new job opportunities for many. Many universities in the public sector and some in the private sector have introduced Chinese language courses, which have attracted many students. Primarily intended for training people to work for Chinese companies and Indian companies doing business with China, the positive side effect of these language courses has been that they also introduce Chinese culture—its literature, drama, art, cinema and everything else. Although the number of people learning Indian languages is not as high in China, many Chinese, particularly the young ones, seem to be greatly attracted to Indian culture. Yoga is gradually gaining popularity. In Kunming, Yunnan Minzu University has a department exclusively devoted to the learning and teaching of Yoga. Most remarkable, however, is the popularity of Bollywood films and music. Last April, while I was a visiting faculty at Central China Normal University, I was pleasantly surprised to find out that many students watch Indian movies fairly regularly and love to talk about them. In India many filmmakers have a high opinion of Chinese films of this century as well as contemporary Chinese directors.

Enhancing cultural relations between nations, particularly

ancient civilizations, will have a positive impact on people, but needs to be conducted on a wide scale. A positive and meaningful step in this direction was taken by the two governments of India and China when they agreed to publish an Encyclopedia of India-China Cultural Contacts. The idea of releasing this volume was introduced in December 2010 in a joint Communique issued by the Indian and Chinese governments at the end of Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to India. Later, the Institute of Chinese Studies was identified by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs as the resource center for this project. According to the Institute's website: "The objective was to bring the history of many centuries of India-China cultural contacts into the public domain, making it easily accessible to people of both countries. The goal is to reinforce connected histories and pinpoint encounters and links that have facilitated mutual enrichment and growth of both cultures and societies. As an initiative between two governments, it was expected to provide a much-needed boost to the effort to build popular consciousness and confidence in the shared cultural experience of India and China." Over three years, a group of scholars from both countries worked tirelessly to produce the massive work comprising extremely useful information not just about events and places but also about individuals who made efforts to bring

India and China closer to one another from early times down to the present. In 2014, the encyclopedia was released and remains a very useful source material for scholars from all over the world.

The Ministries of Culture of both the countries need to launch measures to promote greater cultural understanding and appreciation of one another. For starters, translation projects need to be undertaken with seriousness and sincerity. All historians in India know that in pre-modern times, many Chinese scholars who visited India wrote detailed accounts of their experiences after returning home. Such writings exist in great volume, but no major effort has taken place to translate them into English, Hindi or any other Indian language. From the Indian perspective, these accounts will shine considerable light on the lives and ideas of Indians in ancient times. Such translation projects can lead to or expand into bigger projects undertaken by UNESCO or similar organizations and include inter-cultural studies of the whole of Asia as well as the entire world. In other words, an India-China connected history project can merge into a global academic endeavor which in turn can benefit all of humanity in the form of knowledge. This will lead to mutual understanding and appreciation and ultimately to peace and harmony. 

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# Think Tank Exchange: Brain Food for Cooperation

By Gao Peiyong

It is crucial for China and India, the world's two largest emerging economies, to optimize think tank exchange and ensure timely communication between "masterminds" of the two nations.

Chinese President Xi Jinping proclaimed in his speech at the opening ceremony of the first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation that "friendship, which is fueled by close contact between people, is key to sound state-to-state relations." In May 2015 when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China, leaders of the two countries reached important consensus on organizing the China-India Think Tank Forum. Thanks to the joint efforts from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, the first China-India



August 20, 2018: Participants of the 24th World Congress of Philosophy in Beijing. More than 6,000 philosophers, scholars and amateur philosophers from 121 countries and regions around the world attended the event themed "Learning To Be Human." This was the first time that participants of the event conducted philosophical discussions with traditional Chinese philosophy as the fundamental academic framework. VCG



Think Tank Forum was held in New Delhi in 2016. Already, it has become a regular communication mechanism and an integral carrier of cultural exchange between China and India.

### HUGE POTENTIAL FOR COOPERATION

As key representatives of developing countries, China and India have also hosted the fastest-growing major emerging economies in recent years. Many have dubbed the 19th century the “European Century,” the 20th century the “American Century” and the 21st century the “Asian Century.” China and India are the two main pillars bolstering the revival of Asia. Consequently, the two countries shoulder the main responsibility of leading the development of emerging economies and share a multitude of common interests. They have reached consensus to safeguard the current international order and push it to become fairer and more rational. They also hold identical or similar stances on many international and regional issues. There is no reason China and India should not carry out close cooperation in making new historic contributions to people of developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

China-India cooperation should not only focus on forging strategic mutual trust, but also pay attention to practical outcomes. Based on actual conditions, the two sides need to continuously seek new growth points for



November 21, 2018: Participants of the Global Think Tanks Forum visit the planning exhibition hall of Tianfu New Area in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province. VCG

cooperation and inject new vitality into bilateral relations. The biggest highlight of bilateral ties is economic and trade cooperation, which is also a key growth point for their relationship. Trade volume between China and India grew from US\$2.9 billion in 2000 to US\$84.4 billion in 2017. Against a backdrop of sluggish global economic growth and rising protectionism, China and India have set a good example for the world's major economies to maintain and solidify economic connection. In 2017, trade volume between the two countries increased by 20 percent year-on-year, the biggest growth rate over the past five years. Presently, China is India's largest import source and fourth largest export market. Meanwhile, India has also occupied an increasingly important position in China's foreign trade

landscape and is expected to rank among the top 10 trading partners of China. This testifies to the necessity and importance of strengthening trade cooperation between China and India.

In addition to tapping potential in economic and trade cooperation, China and India also need to jointly explore the international market, especially markets of developing countries. Moreover, Chinese and Indian enterprises greatly complement each other and should work together to explore markets in regions like Southeast Asia, South Asia and Africa through mutually beneficial cooperation. By so doing, the two countries will not only create opportunities for their own development, but also inject momentum into the modernization of developing countries.

## **CURBING CHALLENGES TOGETHER**

Human society is entering an era of great development, reform and adjustment. Alongside increasing world multi-polarity, economic globalization, social informatization and cultural diversification, peaceful development remains a robust trend, and mankind has been constantly accelerating the pace of reform and innovation. Countries have never been closer, people around the world have never been hungrier for a better life, and human beings have never before enjoyed such diverse methods to overcome difficulties.

peace, development and governance pose severe challenges to mankind.

China and India need to work together to address such challenges. The Chinese highly commend the remarkable achievements India has made in promoting its economic development and social progress and admire the foresightedness and pragmatism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In the process of realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation, China is open to marching forward shoulder-to-shoulder with India, a country embracing a similar dream of national revival. In this multipolar world, China supports the idea of both

now face unprecedented challenges. As two rising developing countries, China and India must participate in and integrate into economic globalization to achieve national rejuvenation. Although the existing global governance system remains imperfect, China and India still need to safeguard globalization and fight for it to become more inclusive while unswervingly upholding the general trend of economic globalization to enhance developing countries' responsibilities, rights and interests in the global governance system.

In the autumn of 2013, President Xi Jinping first announced the idea of jointly building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (collectively known as the Belt and Road Initiative) during his visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia, respectively. Over the past five-plus years, over 100 countries and international organizations have joined in the Belt and Road Initiative. Moreover, the Initiative has been included into the resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council. So far, the Belt and Road Initiative has shifted from vision into reality, with fruitful achievements realized.

The ancient Silk Road crossed areas along the Nile, Tigris, Euphrates, Indus, Ganges, Yellow and Yangtze rivers, nourished ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian and Chinese civilizations, and

## **Chinese and Indian think tanks need to promote effective dissemination of methods and ideas learned through research on accelerating economic development and improving governance and people's livelihoods to domestic government departments and the people of both countries in a timely manner.**

However, we need come to terms with the fact that today's world is full with challenges. Global economic growth requires new drivers, development needs to be more inclusive and balanced, and the wealth gap should be narrowed. Some regions are still plagued by instability, and terrorism remains a prevalent threat. Deficits in

countries speaking on behalf of developing countries on the international stage with their wisdom as ancient civilizations.

China and India need to work together to stand up to rising protectionist sentiments worldwide and guard against attempts to roll back the economic globalization trend. Multilateral trade mechanisms which underpin economic globalization



November 20, 2015: The 6th World Forum on China Studies is held at Shanghai International Convention Center. Themed “China’s Reform, Opportunities for the World,” the event attracted more than 200 experts and scholars from over 30 countries and regions to discuss topics concerning China’s reform process against the backdrop of globalization. IC

traversed habitats of people from different countries and races with diverse religious beliefs such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Over millennia, the ancient trade route that extended thousands of miles fostered the Silk Road Spirit characterized by “peace and cooperation, openness and inclusivity, mutual learning and mutual benefit.” A precious legacy of human civilization, it provides a significant solution and guideline for addressing new challenges faced by economic globalization in the 21st century.

### MEETING OF MINDS

Think tanks are an integral part of the soft power of a modern country. They have great value in the national governance system and play

a crucial role in promoting public diplomacy and mutual learning between different civilizations. It is particularly crucial for China and India—the world’s two major emerging economies—to build a think tank exchange and cooperation mechanism from the governmental perspective, strengthen state-to-state cultural exchange and achieve timely communication between “masterminds” of the two nations.

Think tank exchange between China and India should set its sights not only on communication on international and regional issues concerning respective national interests to coordinate foreign policy of the world’s two biggest developing countries, but also commit to effectively discussing and

controlling old and new problems concerning bilateral ties to make greater contributions to stabilizing their relationship. More importantly, Chinese and Indian think tanks need to spread effective methods and ideas on accelerating economic development and improving governance and people’s livelihood in each other’s countries that have been learned through research. Such concepts must be distributed to domestic government departments and personnel in a timely manner to help solve similar problems plaguing both countries.

Both China and India have fostered many think tanks. As China’s highest academic institution and comprehensive research center of philosophy and social sciences, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is enthusiastic about leveraging its research capacity and its influence on the Chinese government and public to carry out policy and pioneering research with its Indian counterparts on an equal footing. This research should focus on facilitating policy coordination and people-to-people communication between China and India, providing intellectual support for the two countries to realize their respective dreams and creating a favorable atmosphere for mutual understanding, trust and cooperation between the two nations. ■

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# India and China: Profound Mutual Understanding

By Srikanth Kondapalli

The Wuhan meeting has provided rich dividends to India and China in terms of charting a new course to improve bilateral relations across the board.

To promote better mutual understanding, India and China have launched several initiatives including an agreement signed by Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on high-level people-to-people exchange and cultural interaction in December 2018. The agreement aims to enhance mutual interaction between the two peoples, which is expected to improve mutual understanding down the line.

Many nagging problems continue to plague bilateral relations such as the unresolved territorial dispute, Tibet, trade deficits, mutual perceptions related to relations with Pakistan or the United States, the Indian

Ocean and others. However, since the Wuhan meeting between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2018, several initiatives have been undertaken to reduce the influence of such problems and adopt a forward-looking posture on improving bilateral relations.

The Wuhan meeting resulted in emphasizing “strategic communications” between the two sides, enhancing stability in border areas through confidence building measures (CBMs), reducing trade deficits, supporting a multipolar world and exploring possibilities to work on economic projects in war-torn Afghanistan.

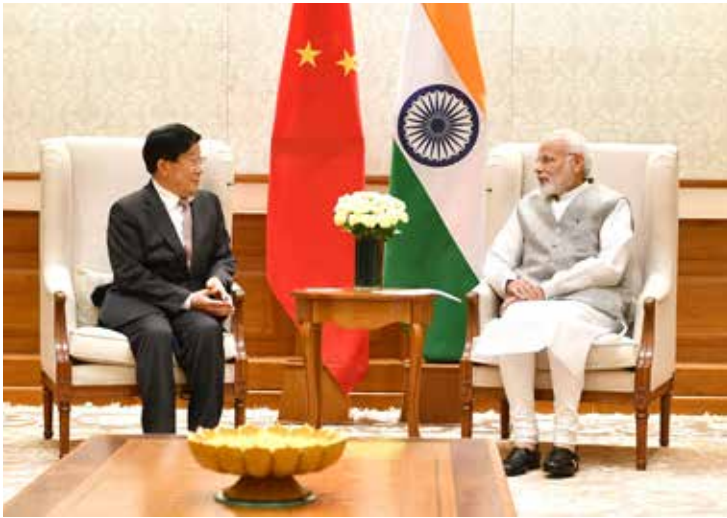
## HIGH-LEVEL INTERACTION

Since the Wuhan meeting, a series of high-level

interactions have happened in the realms of foreign affairs, defense, public security, national security establishments, armed forces, finance, trade representatives and others, in what seems to be an unprecedented wave of interaction at all levels. In the words of China’s foreign ministry spokesperson, these efforts aim to “constantly accumulate positive energy.”

First were visits by foreign affairs and defense ministers to attend preparatory meetings in the run up to the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Qingdao. Prime Minister Modi visited Qingdao in June 2018 and signed two agreements with President Xi on hydrological data exchange and non-Basmati rice exports to China. They also agreed to





October 23, 2018: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Chinese State Councillor and Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi in New Delhi, India. VCG

raise bilateral trade to over US\$100 billion by 2020. Modi's observation on "inclusivity" in the emerging Indo-Pacific architecture was well received in Beijing at the Shangri-La Dialogue a week earlier.

General Wei Fenghe, China's defense minister, visited New Delhi from August 21 to 24, 2018, and discussed ways to establish a hotline between the two military commands, implement CBMs, re-commence counter-terror Hand-in-Hand joint operations between the two armies (later held successfully from December 3 to 23, 2018 in Chengdu) and open two more border personnel meeting points (in addition to the current five already existing in border areas).

Another high-level meeting was held by China's Public Security Minister Zhao Kezhi and his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh during the former's visit to Delhi on October 23, 2018. Both agreed

to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation, improve institutional mechanisms to counter organised crime and drug and human trafficking and further exchange of information.

Chinese State Councillor and foreign minister Wang Yi also made a major visit to Delhi. During the visit from December 21 to 24, 2018, a "ten pillar" agreement was signed with his counterpart Sushma Swaraj on furthering high-level people-to-people and cultural exchange. The pillars include youth exchange, tourism promotion, museum management, film and TV joint production and sharing, expanding the sister cities network, increasing language education, enhancing professional translation and interpretation and promoting educational exchanges, sports, medicine and Yoga.

As civilizational states, India and China know the importance of soft power.

However, the visit provided a new twist to enhance mutual understanding at the popular level. Many such issues are not new to the bilateral relations. Indeed, several MoUs have been concluded over the last three decades between India and China including on 1,000-plus youth exchanges, 32 annual scholarships, "friendship year," book fairs, film distribution, yoga and Gandhi centers, Nalanda University, sports and other sectors. Bollywood movies, specifically Aamir Khan's recent blockbusters, have carved out niche market in China. Despite the introduction of e-visa facilities, tourism between the countries remains relatively low with 240,000 Chinese visiting India (mainly to Buddhist sites) in 2017 compared to 1.4 million Indian visitors to China.

In the current round of discussions between the foreign ministers, over 40 items on which some progress had been achieved in the past were merged in the new format to provide a new boost for the bilateral relations.

### INFLUENCING MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS

Alongside frequent visits, a second recent trend has been expanding institutionalization of sectors with mutual understanding. Mutual perception matters. This pertains to the media and think tank forums that both started seeing more emphasis. In the light of the intensification of globalization, specifically in terms of new technologies, human

communication has increased exponentially. Digitalization, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, e-commerce and other technologies have opened new vistas for large countries such as India and China. Indeed, with massive numbers of consumers and ever-expanding markets, India and China are at the cutting edge of the information and communication technology age.

Also, the sinews of these communications—the discourse systems—are predominantly shaped by Western discourse with most countries left with no option but to either follow such discourse or evolve their own voice on several emerging issues. The latter, sometimes dubbed “Eastern” discourse, is informed by Asian values, resolution of issues through dialogue and consensus, multipolarity and other traits.

Certainly, India and China have pursued their own methods of building such discourse systems but find it mutually beneficial to collaborate on such issues. China operates Confucius Institutes around the world while India has Tagore chairs and Gandhian centres alongside the popularization of Yoga.

In the media industry, the structures of ownership, operation and dynamics are different in India and China. Today, along with thousands of print and electronic media outlets, China has burgeoning social networking sites that have become popular and indispensable due to integration with e-commerce trends.

Globalization is also affecting the Chinese media in many ways. In December 2016, China Global TV Network (CGTN) was launched. To mark the occasion, President Xi Jinping declared: “The relationship between China and the world is undergoing historic changes. China needs a better understanding of the world, and the world needs a better understanding of China.” Then, in late 2018, China Central Television, China National Radio, and China Radio International were all united under the “Voice of China” banner.

Indian media has not been immune to the winds of globalization either. Print, electronic media and social networking sites in India have all recently experienced major transformations. With its federal, multiparty democracy and negotiating with each constituency, Indian media is self-supportive and regulated by the professional Press Council and Broadcaster’s associations.

Nevertheless, despite these differences, the roles of traditional and new media in both countries are changing fast with globalization. Both India and China are entering uncharted waters and plan to synergize their advantages as economic growth rates in the eastern hemisphere continue to far eclipse those of the western hemisphere. The Media Forum is a result of this deep thinking in India and China.

The first India-China media forum was held in New Delhi on September 16,

2013 with participation from 40 media organizations and 80 professionals from both sides. Speaking on the occasion, Indian foreign minister Salman Khurshid stated that this event would go a long way in enhancing communication, exchange, mutual understanding and cooperation between media of the two countries to create a sound public opinion that fosters further development of bilateral relations.

The second India-China media forum was held on February 1, 2015 in Beijing. Jiang Jianguo, minister of the State Council Information Office of China, and foreign minister Sushma Swaraj addressed the gathering.

The third forum was held in New Delhi on December 21, 2018. India’s External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj stated that “until we enhance our people to people relations, it will be hard to further intensify our cooperation.” Three themes emerged from this meeting: enhancement of media understanding, promotion of a closer development partnership and brainstorming a roadmap for future media cooperation. Joint film production, content sharing and other potential activities were discussed.

A second initiative launched to address mutual perceptions has reached the think tanks level. Both China and India now have hundreds of tanks that provide policy options to various powers. Their role in shaping perceptions of the elite cannot be underestimated. While think tanks in both countries have been

interacting with each other, such networking has been predominantly on a one-to-one basis.

Flowing from the agreement between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping at their meeting in Beijing in May 2015, the first think tank forum was held in New Delhi from December 9 to 10, 2016 under the theme “Towards a Closer India-China Developmental Partnership.” According to the agreement, these forums are intended “to provide structured advice and recommendations to governments on both sides.”

The second India-China think tank forum was held in Beijing from June 24 to 25, 2017, under the theme “India-China Strategic Cooperation and Developmental Partnership.” Chinese Academy of Social Sciences President Wang Weiguang emphasized building a multipolar world order.

The third think tank forum was held from December 20 to 21, 2018 in New Delhi under the theme “Civilization Connecting Towards an Asian Century.” For the occasion, foreign minister Swaraj stated that the event would reinforce “our belief in the inherent intellectual connection between our two countries. With our relations deepening and our regional and international role evolving, the world expects our two countries to lead Asia and usher in an ‘Asian Century.’”

### THEMATIC APPRECIATION

If high-level visits and enhancing mutual perceptions

through building elite consensus are to be effective, India and China also need to work concretely on certain themes closer to them. The commonality of interests is emerging as seen in joint statements and positions of these countries on a number of issues.

Today, India and China are key advocates of globalization. As beneficiaries of globalization in terms of market access, investment flow, exports and imports over the course of reform and liberalisation, India and China have articulated such positions in G20, BRICS and other international forums. Their emergence coincides with threats of increasing tariffs and potential restrictions on markets and financial access.

Since the 1990s, both have been advocating a multipolar world considering the uncertainties in international politics following the outbreak of the Gulf Wars and the Afghanistan campaign. The resultant missile strikes, deployment of troops, regime changes and emerging “borderless” phenomenon in North Africa and the Middle East were major concerns for India and China. Both were also concerned with the potential for a spill-over effect of such incidents in their domestic situations. On this issue, both have coordinated their positions in the United Nations and other multi-lateral institutions such as Russia-India-China triangle, BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and others.

Through BRICS, both India

and China have highlighted the need to reform and reorganize the Bretton Woods institutions to reflect changed times. Since 2010, their efforts have succeeded marginally in enhancing their voting shares in the International Monetary Fund.

India and China, as with Brazil and South Africa (in the BASIC format), have articulated “common but differentiated responsibilities” in addressing climate change. Despite the intransigence shown by developed countries in addressing the cumulative emissions over two to three centuries of industrialization and despite the 1997 Kyoto Protocols, BASIC countries rallied positively by capping their own emissions albeit in a cascading manner.

The outcomes of the Wuhan meeting have provided rich dividends for India and China to chart a new course of action to improve bilateral relations in several fields. The direction of such cooperation has been positive as reflected in several high-level visits in quick succession and the recent expansion of the cooperation agenda. “Permanent peace” between these nations is possible if they resolve core issues, and they are trying to move in that direction by influencing mutual perceptions. ■

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# Profound Dynamics

By Nazia Vasi

Fueled by cash flows and expanding channels of communication, China and India are awakening to a third round of bilateral brotherhood, focused on cultural exchange.

I was living in Shanghai and working as the Indian head of an Asian tax and legal consultancy in 2008 at a time when cultural exchange between China and India left a great deal to be desired. Indian art and cultural performances touring China's major cities attracted mostly Indian spectators, who enjoyed wallowing in song and dance from their motherland because of homesickness. Chinese people tend to be rare at these cultural events.

Many reasons could be blamed for the phenomenon—familiarity with India was low at the time. Most Chinese didn't know India as the software superpower it is today. Its economy was only making 3.9 percent annual growth. Most Chinese hadn't traveled to India, were not particularly interested in it and hadn't heard much about it. India

was a poorer, slower and smaller neighbor and mostly inconsequential to China, which then had GDP growth at 9.7 percent.

However, in 2017, an influx of investments led by Alibaba and Tencent, who announced or closed deals valued around US\$2 billion, heralded renewed Chinese interest in India's flourishing soft power.

China and India have had a rich tradition of exchange dating back centuries. The first wave was led by Xuanzang's journey to the West and the spread of Buddhism across China. The second round was fueled by business, initially through the trade of cotton and tea and then opium. Today, fueled by cash flows and expanding channels of communication, China and India are waking up to a third round of bilateral brotherhood focused on cultural exchange.

## FILM AND TELEVISION COOPERATION

Aamir Khan's movie *3 Idiots* grossed US\$3 million in China just a few years ago, helping cement India's image as an enchanting, colorful nation capable of fascinating the Chinese.

Today, film cooperation between India and China is booming. *Inchin Closer*, a China-India language and cultural consultancy I founded in 2010, is in the middle of translating an animation script for a 5D film that was written in and will be produced in India but shown in 5D theaters in China. This project is making the most of India's film production skills and China's infrastructural abilities.

Also in the works is a pilot for a Chinese TV series, exclusively created, scripted and produced in India solely for a Chinese



audience. Considering that China is home to the greatest number of screens worldwide, the content consumed by the country's story-hungry consumers has skyrocketed, media producers in Beijing are bending over backwards to meet the rising demand. Unable to keep up with the demand themselves, domestic Chinese producers are commissioning Indian production companies to make TV shows specifically for the Chinese audience. A trend never imagined before, China is now looking to India for rich storytelling, film-making and the production abilities to create world-class content that can be seamlessly sold to audiences from Shanghai to Kashgar.

Concurrently, Chinese content is also being created for Indian audiences. Translated from Chinese to Hindi, a Beijing-based TV series of historical Chinese stories will be subtitled and dubbed for airing on Indian networks. Stories from the Qin Dynasty will be soon shown on Indian TVs, highlighting ancient traditions and customs—similarities our two nations share. Indian audiences will witness the parallels between Indian and Chinese historical dramas, mythology and epics.

The secret to making Bollywood movies so spicy is creative chaos, an element that China's films seem to lack. India's film industry functions in a mad sync that only its insiders understand. Until China's film industry can harness its creative power and

flow with passion, storytelling will remain India's strength.

The cultural similarities between China and India have proven a big advantage for the latter when creating content for the mobile-screen-toting, binge-watching Chinese viewer. Modern twists on love stories and mythological epics are especially high in demand, and just what Indian production houses—skilled in the genre—are being commissioned to write by Chinese media companies. Beijing is now looking to Mumbai, the capital of India's film industry, to emulate and accelerate its storytelling and film production capabilities.

Recently, a high-level government delegation led by Mr. Feijin Du, member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee, visited Mumbai and New Delhi. Delegates met film producers, the head of the Mumbai Film Festival and

government officials to work out plans to host bilateral film festivals. The agenda was designed to facilitate sharing the secrets of Bollywood.

5D films and TV series are not the only carriers of the cultural collision between China and India. Interest in both nations' literature has also swelled. A translation of Amar Chitra Katha's graphic novel on Mahatma Gandhi is now in the works. The novel has already been translated into Chinese and will soon be available at bookstores and for online download, enabling Chinese readers to understand how India fought for independence against the British with non-violent means.

### MIXED MARRIAGE

Alongside the media, other technology has enabled Indians and the Chinese to traverse cultural barriers. Many have fallen in love, married and moved to the



December 18, 2018: Famous Indian film actor Aamir Khan takes a selfie with students at Xidian University in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province, during a trip to promote his movie *Thugs of Hindostan*.

other country, adapting to family values, traditions and a new way of life. Sing Ming is one example: Now a mother of three children, she married Gautam, a software engineer from Bangalore, India's Silicon Valley, nine years ago. Today, she makes a lucrative living translating documents between Chinese and English, the business languages of China and India.

"Xiao Ming" is a member of a constantly growing WeChat group of Chinese wives who are married to Indian men. The group, with almost 200 members, was started about six years ago when a few women came together to support each other in a foreign land. Although few have met each other, the group is an extremely strong support network to help the newly married settle in India's chaotic cities. The most discussed topic in the group is food. The women help each other recreate dishes from home in Indian cities where Chinese ingredients aren't readily available. One woman even figured out how to make tofu from scratch since Indian paneer (cottage cheese) never came close in taste or texture. Other topics of conversation range from how to deal with in-laws, experiences growing up as only children in China, and raising kids in a multicultural home.

Many enjoyed boisterous Indian weddings. Marriages in India, like in Bollywood movies, are colorful and peppered with song and

dance. However, traditional Hindu weddings involve the couple circumambulating around a fire to the tempo of a priest chanting 'mantras', blessings for the couple. Inchin Closer was recently called to translate these mantras for a Chinese bride's family who had travelled from Hunan Province for their daughter's marriage to a man named Prashant. The Chinese side of the wedding party was enthusiastic about understanding the meaning behind the customs and rituals.

### SINGING IN CHINESE


Jankee, a professional Indian singer, was recently invited to sing a Chinese song at a traditional Indian wedding. The groom's family had some important Chinese clients at his wedding and wanted to impress them. So Jankee was enlisted to learn and sing Mandarin pop songs to impress and entertain the Chinese clientele at the wedding.

Because Mandarin remains China's primary language, producers must make content in Mandarin. Additionally, because of its vital role in bridging relations in business, the number of Indians interested in learning Mandarin has skyrocketed. Businesspeople, traders, merchants, entrepreneurs and professionals all want to learn the language so they can do business in China. Speaking Mandarin gives them a big advantage. They can communicate easily with clients, which establishes a channel of trust and camaraderie which translates into better

prices and profits in India.

China is also attracting Indian youth with opportunities to experience the country and culture firsthand through programs such as those offering attractive scholarships to study Mandarin. In 2010, approximately 80 Indian students were offered scholarships to study Mandarin and by 2018, the number had almost doubled to 150. Studying, living and working in China not only offers Indians firsthand experience in the country, but also helps them make friends and build a lasting relationship with their neighbor.

The volume of Chinese tourists to India is growing as well. Per 2017 India Tourism Statistics, the number grew by 12.5% between 2008 and 2017. As an increasing number of Chinese experience India firsthand, our similar cultures, commonalities and brotherhood are becoming more and more apparent.

Through these various channels, strengthening of cultural relations between peoples of the world's two most populated nations is on the upswing. This third wave of cultural camaraderie is fueling stronger relations between China and India. And through the intermingling of the threads that bind our people, our nations will weave a tapestry of love, respect and a deeper mutual understanding. 

*The author is founder and CEO of Inchin Closer, an India-China language and business consultancy.*

# High Road to India-China Partnership

By Sudheendra Kulkarni

The 'Holy Water Diplomacy' initiative organized in China's Tibet Autonomous Region presented a unique example of promoting cultural-spiritual cooperation between China and India.

**I**n my experience, the most important thing to remember about diplomacy between India and China is that it should not be left only to government leaders and diplomats only. Such people are vital, but far more important are the breadth, depth, strength and continuity of contacts and exchanges between the peoples of both countries. Indian and Chinese civilizations have historically interacted to their mutual benefit. But even today, as has been the case with the relationship since ancient times, interactions in the cultural-spiritual sphere have forged the strongest bonds. A striking example of such interaction has been the India-China Holy Water Diplomacy initiative. Jointly conceptualized in early 2015 by Zheng Xiyuan, then-Consul General of the People's

Republic of China in Mumbai, and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in Mumbai, it was a unique undertaking in fostering greater people-to-people contact between China and India.

At the core of the initiative was faith, mythology and a snow-clad mountain on the border of the two countries, with a sacred lake nearby.

First, a brief background. I am writing this on Mahashivratri, an important day on the Hindu religious calendar. It literally means 'Big Night', when prayers are offered to Lord Shiva, one of the three manifestations of god in Hindu mythology, also known as Trimurti. The three are Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Sustainer and Shiva the Destroyer. 'Tri' (in Sanskrit) or 'Teen' (in Hindi) stands for three, and 'murti'

(in Sanskrit) connotes an icon. Incidentally, the official residence in New Delhi in which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first, also longest-serving, prime minister lived is called 'Teen Murti Bhavan'—literally, house of the three-faced supreme divinity.

I was struck when Nehru's great-grandson Rahul Gandhi, president of the Indian National Congress, took to social media to express his prayers to Lord Shiva on the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri. The image he used to illustrate his message was that of Mount Kailash, a holy mountain located in the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. Hindus believe that Shiva resided at the summit of this mountain, where he sat in a state of meditation together

with his wife Parvati. The perennially snow-clad peak touching the sky presents a stark meditative look, quite in line with the ascetic appearance of Shiva himself. This mountain is sacred not only to Hindus but also to Buddhists in Tibet and beyond.

Close to Kailash is Manasarovar, which literally means ‘Mind Lake.’ It is a vast water body that presents an image of prayerful serenity. The lake is sacred for Buddhists too, since Buddha himself is believed to have visited it and meditated on its shores. Hindus believe that a pilgrimage to Mount Kailash and Manasarovar at least once in a lifetime is spiritually beneficial.

Seeing the image of Mount Kailash in Rahul Gandhi’s message on Mahashivratri inspired me to recall the unforgettable pilgrimage I undertook to this abode of the divine nearly four years ago. This was not an individual journey, but one made with the team behind the ‘Holy Water Diplomacy’ initiative between China and India. Significantly, the Chinese government, through its consulate in Mumbai, actively facilitated and participated in this undertaking which was jointly sponsored by the Chinese consulate and ORF Mumbai, which I was then heading. Holy Water Diplomacy also received accolades from External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.

The idea behind this event was to supplement ongoing efforts to promote better understanding and cooperation between India



One of the major Hindu festivals, the Kumbh Mela is celebrated once every 12 years in Nashik, India. Xinhua

and China, guided by the conviction that developing friendly relations with China is the most important foreign policy task for our country. No one can deny a certain “trust deficit” between our two nations. Economic and business cooperation, though very important, are insufficient to eliminate this deficit. It is of utmost importance to re-discover and strengthen civilizational exchange and cultural-spiritual kinship between India and China.

Out of this belief came the idea that we should re-establish links between things and places that both Indian and Chinese people regard as “holy.” It so happened that the once-every-12-years ‘Kumbh,’ one of the biggest religious congregations of the Hindu community, had begun in July 2015 in Nashik, on the banks of River Godavari, which is revered as Dakshin (southern) Ganga. Therefore, it occurred to us that bringing holy water from

Kailash-Manasarovar, located in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, and offering it to the holy waters of River Godavari during the Kumbh would kindle the imagination of millions of common people in India. It would also create enormous goodwill for China in the minds of Indian people. We called it ‘Kailash Mansarovar-Kumbh Pavitra Jal Sangam Yatra.’ (‘Pavitra Jal Sangam’ means a confluence of holy water.)

Thus, both the symbolism and substance of ‘India-China Holy Water Diplomacy’ represented a “Triveni Sangam”—a three-way confluence. First, it produced a sangam (confluence) of the holy waters of Lake Manasarovar and River Godavari. Second, it connoted the sangam between Hinduism and Buddhism, since Kailash and Manasarovar are sacred for both Hindus and Buddhists around the world. Lastly, it represented a sangam of the spiritual, cultural and civilizational traditions of India and



China.

When Consul General Zheng and I first met Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, he enthusiastically welcomed the idea. Afterwards, the Chinese consulate and ORF Mumbai together formed a delegation comprising a dozen eminent personalities from different walks of life. They included Dr. Vijay Bhatkar, a nationally renowned computer scientist, Anjali Bhagwat, the world's best in rifle shooting in 2002, Popatrao Pawar, who is internationally acclaimed for his work in rural transformation and poverty alleviation, Dr Anand Bang, a champion of pro-people and affordable healthcare and Ramesh Haralkar, a neo-Buddhist follower of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and an activist who has been working for the welfare of sanitation workers in Mumbai.

Following an agreement between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping, China opened a second route to Kailash Mansarovar through Nathu-La in Sikkim in June 2015. Of course, we took the sky route. We flew from Mumbai to Chengdu, and then to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. Although the two-day stay in Lhasa was meant to enable us to acclimatize to the high-altitude and low-oxygen atmosphere, it gave many of us a rare opportunity to take in the matchless beauty and spiritual richness of Tibet.

From Lhasa, a small plane took us to Ngari Gunsa airport. Luckily, the afternoon was clear and sunny. The climate in

Tibet was literally breathtaking, but the aerial view of the Himalayas, silhouetted against the bluest of blue skies, took my breath away figuratively. The mountains and the sky seemed engaged in a perennial and intimate conversation, undisturbed by anything human. The sight set the mood for the rest of the trip.

A three-hour road journey brought us to Kailash. The Chinese government has kept pilgrimage destinations admirably clean after building excellent supportive infrastructure.

Mount Kailash is unlike any other mountain in the world. Its most remarkable feature is that it often seems utterly unremarkable at first glance. However, for those in a meditative mindset, a long gaze at its austere appearance facilitates inspiration from its mystical power.

In the presence of Lake Mansarovar, mythological legends of how the lake was formed are hardly the point. Even atheists are likely to be touched by the purity of the mere sight of the lake and the gentle sound of its waves as they caress the white pebbles on the shore. That is where our delegation performed a ceremonial prayer ritual in the presence of locals, representatives of the provincial government, and the consul general and his wife. Later we collected holy water from Lake Mansarovar in ceremonial brass pots ('kalash') and carried it back to India.

A letter noting completion of the ceremony was sent to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, who replied, "I

commend the creative manner in which you have made efforts to build goodwill and better understanding between the two ancient civilizations of India and China by joining water from Kailash Mansarovar with that of the river Godavari."

The idea behind the undertaking was simple: to stress that China-India relations run much deeper than politics. Those who think otherwise are either unaware or dismissive of the 2,000-year-old cultural-spiritual bonds that connect the people of India and China. My many visits to China have convinced me that there is tremendous goodwill for India at various levels of Chinese society. Unfortunately, widespread anti-China propaganda in India coupled with a shocking level of ignorance among Indians about Chinese history and civilization, has made many decide that "hard strategy and realpolitik" are all that matters. The Holy Water Diplomacy undertaking is only one of several possible methods of strengthening cultural-spiritual bonds and promoting people-to-people contact. This, in turn, will help fill the trust deficit and inject new life into the India-China strategic partnership, which is needed for peace in Asia and the world. ■

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*The author is a political and social commentator based in Mumbai. He was an aide to India's former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and recently founded 'Forum for a New South Asia,' which advocates India-China-Pakistan cooperation.*

# The Leaves of Mutual Learning between India and China

By Wang Bangwei

In the new century, let the 'Nigrodha' tree of Sino-Indian friendship grow deeper roots and more luxurious leaves.

In world history, India and China are the only countries to share both proximity and similar historical experiences. Both China and India are ancient civilizations with long history and uninterrupted cultural development. Both are Asian and world giants with vast territory and large populations. The combined population of the two accounts for about a third of the world total. We are neighbors with only the natural boundary of the Himalayas between us. We share many commonalities, and we have maintained a history of friendly contact for over 2,000 years. Across two millennia, only in the early 1960s did the two countries engage in an unfortunate but

very brief conflict. Looking at the world around us, can we find such an example in Asia, Europe or America whether in the remote past or present? Probably there are none. The history of mankind has seen many civilizations, but their traditions only live in distant memory after they have long been discontinued. From ancient times to the present, countless protracted conflicts, big and small wars between various countries or regions, have come to pass, and some conflicts continue to rage on today. Looking at the big picture of world history, the legacy of contact between China and India is indeed very different from anywhere else.

'Zhongguo' is translated as "China" in English. The origin of the word is the

Sanskrit word Cīna [Cheena]. The word 'China' in Western languages was mostly drawn from Sanskrit. What does this indicate? This, at least, evidences that most people around the world understood China through Cīna—it would not be wrong to assert that India has played a key role in the world getting to know and understand China.

The English word for the nation of India also originates from Sanskrit—the word 'Sindhu,' meaning 'River' or the 'Indus River.' Persian people were the first to use this word for India. Later, it spread to Greece, and distorted pronunciation finally made it 'India'.

To this day, although the Chinese call China 'Zhongguo,' and Indian people



May 29, 2010: Then-President of India Pratibha Patil (second left) attends the completion ceremony of the Indian-style Buddhist hall at the White Horse Temple, dubbed the “first Buddhist temple in China,” in Luoyang City, Henan Province. VCG

call their country ‘Bharata,’ people in most countries of the world know our two countries as China and India. We say the globe is big, but the world is also shrunken because communication and exchange between people and countries is more frequent and intimate today, and now ‘China’ and ‘India’ have been the most frequently used terms for the two countries globally.

Many concrete examples help illustrate this point, but I believe that Buddhism is a central and probably the foremost one, followed by language and art. Obviously, many more convincing cases could be presented.

Buddhism originated in India and spread to China, where it was accepted by

many Chinese people about two thousand years ago. If India is the root of Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism could be considered as the trunk and leaves that sprouted from the Indian roots. However, this does not properly illustrate the issue. A story from the history of Chinese Buddhism may further illustrate this point:

During the mid-Tang Dynasty, a Buddhist monk named Amoghavajra, who was called Bukong in Chinese, traveled to China from India. Amoghavajra propagated Esoteric Buddhism in China and became highly revered by Chinese people. Among the Buddhist monks who came to China from India during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), there were three monks who were revered as the “First Three

Great Buddhist Masters of the Kaiyuan Era,” and Amoghavajra was one of them. Amoghavajra had a Chinese disciple named Han’guang. When Amoghavajra returned to India, Hanguang went with him. The Biography of Han’guang was found in the 27th volume of Biographies of Eminent Monks of Song Dynasty (Song Gaoseng Zhuan). According to the text, upon returning from India, Han’guang went to Wutai Mountain during the reign of Tang Emperor Taizong. On Wutai Mountain lived an eminent monk called Zhanran who asked Han’guang about his experience in India. Han’guang told him the following:

*There was a monk from some county of India who was well versed in the School of Emptiness. He asked*

me about the teaching of Zhizhe. He said: 'I once heard Zhizhe's teaching can judge right and wrong, discern flat and round, understand Samatha and wisdom, being reinforced by his merit.' He repeatedly pleaded, 'If you have chance to come to India again, please translate Zhizhe's work from Chinese into Sanskrit so I can learn it.' He held my hand and repeatedly begged for this.

Traditionally, it was Chinese people who learned Buddhism from India. But as time passed and after understanding China's conditions, Indian monks showed enthusiasm for learning about Chinese Buddhism. This is a very interesting development to consider. Although some doubt the credibility of this anecdote, the story as whole is solid. Zanning, the compiler of Biographies of Eminent Monks in the Song Dynasty, commented as follows after recounting the previous story:

*While Buddhism was being preached and developed in China, did anyone hear about Buddhism going back to the western regions? It is said that during the time of Liang Emperor Wu, Kulu Khan, the King of Tuyuhun, dispatched an envoy to Liang and sought Buddha's Statue and 14 Buddhist Sutras and Abhidharma works. Emperor Wu gave them his commentaries on the Sūtras of Parīṇirvāṇa, Prajñāpāramitā and Suvarṇaprabhā, a total of 103 volumes. Because the envoys were well versed in Chinese, after they went back, they translated the texts into*

*Hu languages so they could be understood by the people. Buddhist monks in their kingdoms were tasked with translating and disseminating the texts to various kingdoms ranging from Qinghai to northern tribes to the Pamir. Subsequently, these texts were certainly disseminated into India. So in Cheshi, today's Turfan, the Songs of Mao, Analects of Confucius and Classic of Filial Piety were taught in schools. Translations of Chinese texts were readily available in Hu languages.*

*And the people of the western region during the Tang era revered the Book of Changes and Daode Jing. The emperor ordered Buddhists and Taoists alike to translate them into Sanskrit. An intense debate was sparked between Buddhists and Taoists over whether the Daode Jing could be translated into Bodhi. Eventually, the project was abandoned. How nice it would have been if these classics had been translated and sent to the western regions!*

*If China's western regions are like the root and trunk of Buddhism, and Dongxia, eastern China, is like its branches and leaves. The branches and leaves are more known to humans than the root and trunk, but branches and leaves cannot be planted in the soil to grow a root and trunk, which is what happened with the Nigrodha tree.*

*Chinese people are agile. How do we know this? They like things brief, fewer words and more understandable. People of the western regions are simple and honest. How*

*do we know this? Indian people like things complicated, more words and final enlightenment.*

The elements of the Nigrodha tree are "branches and leaves planted in soil, root and trunk growing up from branches and leaves." Zanning used the root, branches and leaves of the Nigrodha tree as a metaphor to illustrate the relationship between Buddhism and the cultures of China and India. He discussed the commonalities and differences quite profoundly. The words of Zanning made me think of the experience of Xuanzang in India. Xuanzang went to India with the objective of learning Buddhism from the Great Masters of India, but at the same time he contributed greatly to the development of religion and culture in India. Xuanzang studied the text of Yogācārabhūmi from Śīlāditya at Nālandā. Moreover, he travelled far and wide in India and acquired vast knowledge.

In Nālandā, Xuanzang wrote Huizong Lun (Integrating the Doctrines of Two Schools) and Po Ejian Lun (Refuting the Fallacy) in Sanskrit. While the former reflects on the fusion of the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra School of Mahāyāna Buddhism and expounded Xuanzang's personal views on the subject, the latter argues in favor of the theory of Mahāyāna and received considerable appreciation from Indian scholar monks. Śīlāditya (Harṣavardhan), the Indian king at the time, held the highest esteem for Xuanzang's moral character





May 17, 2017: A visitor at a photo exhibition of India's Buddhist cultural heritage in Beijing. VCG

and knowledge. When he organized a mass assembly at his capital of Kanyākubja (present day Kannauj), he invited Xuanzang to be the key speaker. He also invited twenty Kings and more than four thousand Buddhist Monks from across India, in addition to more than two thousand disciples of other religions participating in the assembly. Xuanzang presented a paper at the assembly with arguments that no one could refute for eighteen days. Therefore, the monks of Mahāyāna Buddhism dubbed Xuanzang “Mahādeva.” The monks of the Hīnayāna faith named Xuanzang “Mokṣadeva.” Xuanzang was the only Chinese monk to go to India and earn the title of “Deva” for his scholarship.

Over the course of two millennia of interaction between China and India, many instances of “roots” and “branches” can be found as well as examples

of “branches” changing into “roots” and vice versa. In Sanskrit, some words like Cīnī (sugar), Cīnaja (steel), Cīnaputra (pear), Cīnanī (peach) are all related to China. Using Zanning’s metaphor, the cultural interaction between India and China could be described as a big “Nigrodha’ tree, the roots crisscrossing, with luxuriant foliage, and emitting vitality even today. Actually, both Chinese and India people are living under the same big tree.

In China, the ancient scholars had a great debate on world peace and harmony just before the Warring States period (475-221 BC). However, the people at that time had limited sense about the world and its scope. Subsequently, China and India came into direct contact with each other. As far as Chinese people were concerned, the scope of the world gradually widened, especially after frequent contacts with India were established. China and

India coexisted peacefully until modern times. For two thousand years, China and India avoided the unceasing conflict that has plagued many regions in favor of peace and friendship as the main theme of relations between the peoples of China and India. The pursuit of peace and harmony globally has always been the goal of the peoples of the two countries.

Today, peace and tranquility are hard to come by in many places around the world. Discordance and tension are all around. Fortunately, in Asia, classical common understanding between Chinese and Indian people has been strengthened of late. Peaceful coexistence, friendly contacts, mutual learning and common development are all that is needed. Today, if India and China can handle their affairs well, almost a third of world affairs will have been managed properly. So, what is preventing the people of India and China and peace-loving people around the world from making joint efforts to set such an example?

I believe that all friends in China and India hold unanimous consensus on this point. In this new century, let the ‘Nigrodha’ tree of Sino-India friendship develop deep roots and luscious leaves. Under the big tree, China and India can come together and make a historic contribution to world peace. 🌳

The author is a professor of Peking University.

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# Buddhist Caves: Traces of China-India Cultural Exchanges

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By Zhao Shengliang

Both India and China preserve ancient Buddhist grottoes, or caves, demonstrating the deep history of China-India cultural exchanges and representing different Eastern philosophical modes of thought.

**C**ultural exchanges between China and India go back thousands of years. One of the most influential is the introduction of Buddhism to China from India, which forms a key cultural tie between the two countries. Both India and China preserve ancient Buddhist grottoes, or caves, demonstrating the deep history of China-India cultural exchanges. China and India share abundant similarities in culture, representing different Eastern philosophical modes of thought.

## **DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO CIVILIZATIONS**

Dunhuang Academy, an institution responsible for the management and research of the Mogao Caves,

also known as the Thousand Buddha Grottoes, which form a system of 492 well-preserved cells and cave sanctuaries southeast of the center of Dunhuang in China's Gansu Province. As early as the 1980s, the academy carried out a series of exchange activities and co-hosted academic seminars with Indian cultural and arts centers such as Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts (IGNCA). In 2004 and 2005, exchange visits of scholars from both sides have been successfully conducted. During this period, two scholars from Dunhuang Academy spent one month in India for academic research, and three IGNCA researchers also conducted a one-month

academic investigation in China. Later, Dunhuang Academy sent researchers in succession to India to study subjects such as the origin of Chinese Buddhist art. Indian researchers also came to China for academic activities.

In September 2018, Dunhuang Academy and IGNCA signed a memorandum of cooperation. The two sides will carry out cooperation across fields including cataloging, studying, and authentication of Indian documents, comparative studies of Indian and Chinese Buddhist art, joint exhibitions, exchange visits of scholars, book publication, and jointly building "cultural corners." In November 2018, "From Ajanta to Mogao,"



December 23, 2018: The seminar “Dialogue of Civilizations Between India and China” was held in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University (BAMU), Aurangabad. by Chen Gangquan

an advanced seminar on Buddhist art, was held by Dunhuang Academy in Mogao Caves, and Indian experts were invited to give lectures. In December of this year, “Dialogue of Civilizations Between India and China” organized by Dunhuang Academy and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University (BAMU) was successfully held in BAMU, Aurangabad.

BAMU is located in Aurangabad, Maharashtra of India. The city is a tourism hub, surrounded by many historical monuments, including the Ajanta Caves and Ellora Caves, which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Thus, hosting “Dialogue of Civilizations Between India and China” seminar in this city held great significance. Professor

B. A. Chopade, vice-chancellor of BAMU, and Li Bijian, minister counselor of the Chinese Embassy in India, attended the seminar and delivered speeches at the opening ceremony.

This high-level academic seminar also attracted many well-known scholars from both China and India. Quite a number of renowned Indian scholars such as Professor Lokesh Chandra, Professor B. R. Deepak from Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Dr. B. R. Mani, director-general of India’s National Museum, made speeches at the seminars. Dunhuang Academy’s art history expert Zhao Shengliang, Su Bomin and Chen Gangquan, experts in grotto cultural relics protection, archeologists Wang Huimin and Zhang Xiaogang, historian Zhao Xiaoxing,

Professor Wang Bangwei with Peking University, and Professor Huang Xianian with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences participated the event. Chinese and Indian scholars carried out in-depth discussions on the history, culture and art of Buddhist grottoes.

During the seminar, Dunhuang Academy also signed a memorandum of understanding with BAMU. The two sides will establish a communication mechanism to encourage exchange of professionals in history, geography, and archaeology, and to carry out cooperation in the protection and restoration of artistic and cultural heritage, and share experience on cultural relics protection, archaeological excavation, digitization of cultural relics, publishing and education.



Pictured is artist Du Yongwei (right) teaching students on the restoration of painted sculptures in Dunhuang on May 20, 2018. VCG

## **COMMUNICATION, INTEGRATION AND EVOLUTION**

Buddhism used to be the state religion of India. It was in the mainstream of Indian culture from the 2nd century BC to the 7th century AD. At that time, Buddhism was popular throughout India, and was introduced to China via Central Asia and to Southeast Asia from the southeast of India, becoming the largest religion in Asia. Buddhism came to China during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220). It began to flourish in the country after Southern

and Northern Dynasties (420–589) and reached its peak during the Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) dynasties, profoundly influencing Chinese culture. Over the centuries, Buddhism has become an indispensable part of the traditional Chinese culture. In India, however, Buddhism gradually went downhill after the 7th century AD, and eventually declined. Today, a great number of Buddhist relics can still be found in various places throughout India, such as the Great Stupa at Sanchi, the Mahabodhi

Temple, Ajanta Caves, and Ellora Caves. Because of the complexity of religious development, Buddhism actually showcases the exchange, integration and evolution of different regional cultures during its process of development and propagation throughout the world. In Buddhist art from all parts of China, people can not only see the influence of Indian culture, but also cultural elements from Central Asia, West Asia and even Europe. Thus, studying Buddhist culture can illuminate the contacts between the



civilizations of India, Central Asia, West Asia, ancient Greece, and China.

The Mogao Caves are the product of cultural exchanges between China and other parts of the world via the ancient Silk Road. Mogao Caves, containing some of the finest examples of Buddhist art in China, were greatly influenced by India from the very beginning. People can see the close relation in such features as architectural form, murals and stone carving between Mogao Caves and Indian Buddhist caves such as Ajanta and Ellora Caves. Caves constructed at Mogao during the 4th to 6th century showed a strong foreign influence. People can find sculptures of Greek and Indian styles, structures of Central Asian styles, decorative patterns such as a honeysuckle design influenced by plant patterns from Mesopotamia (historical region of Western Asia) and ancient Greece, as well as a linked-pearl pattern and a hunting pattern influenced by Central Asia. In the process of communicating with foreign cultures, Chinese artists constantly adapted these cultures to the Chinese soil and eventually formed a native tradition of Chinese Buddhist art.

Thus, the spirit of Dunhuang art represents a spirit of openness, inclusivity, communication and integration. The splendid Dunhuang art shows that there is no development without communication, and no influence without inclusivity. Without the continuous cultural

exchanges via the Silk Road, the glorious achievement of Dunhuang culture would have been impossible. Today, the Dunhuang Academy also adheres to the spirit of openness and inclusivity, striving to promote Chinese culture represented by Dunhuang art to the world, and make Dunhuang culture better understood to the world. The academy spares no effort to make the spirit of the Silk Road play a better role to further the Belt and Road Initiative and promote the exchange and development between Chinese and Indian cultures.

Some Indian scholars at the “Dialogue of Civilizations Between India and China” said that while there are abundant Chinese scholars studying the Mogao Caves, there are too few researchers focusing on Indian Buddhist culture such as the Ajanta Caves and Ellora Caves. Indeed, for historical and cultural reasons, the Indian academic community has a relative dearth of research on Buddhist culture. More than a decade ago, when art history expert Zhao Shengliang from Dunhuang Academy visited IGNCA, he found only one scholar there who was studying Buddhist art, while many scholars were studying Hindu culture and art. In recent years, an increasing number of Indian researchers began to focus on Indian Buddhist art, including studies on grottoes, relics, and museum collections. And they are doing

quite a lot of work. In 2005, when Zhao visited Ajanta Caves and Ellora Caves, he could only find simple leaflets about the caves, with almost no specialized books in sight. Now, books on these caves by Indian scholars, even some in-depth publications, are available. This demonstrates the changes in Indian academic circles. BAMU has opened up courses on Buddhist history and art and has begun to promote research on Indian Buddhist culture as an important research and teaching project. This reflects the fact that India’s local academic and educational institutions have begun to attach greater importance to the study of Buddhist culture.

It is believed that with India’s social and economic development, more and more people will attach great importance to its traditional culture, including Buddhism, and pay attention to the influences that traditional culture brings to modern society.

Buddhist culture is an important aspect of China-India cultural exchanges. India has a large number of cave relics such as Ajanta and Ellora. China also has large-scale Buddhist art heritage such as Mogao Caves and Yungang Grottoes. These cultural heritages and their origins will be important topics to explore for the cultural exchange between both countries. ■

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*The author is the vice director of Dunhuang Academy.*

# Next-Level China-India Literary Exchange

By Yu Longyu

With support of both governments and wide-ranging participation from cultural enterprises, Sino-Indian literary exchange will soar to new heights on the wings of science, technology and capital.

On September 17, 2014, President Xi Jinping was invited to Gujarat, the hometown of Indian Prime Minister Modi. During their meeting there, Modi likened China and India to “two bodies with one spirit.” At the Indian Council of World Affairs the following day, President Xi remarked in his speech entitled *In Joint Pursuit of a Dream of National Renewal* that Modi’s words showed the kind and peace-loving nature shared by our two great civilizations and the intrinsic connection between them. “Two bodies, one spirit” inspires broad prospects for Sino-Indian spiritual and cultural exchange.

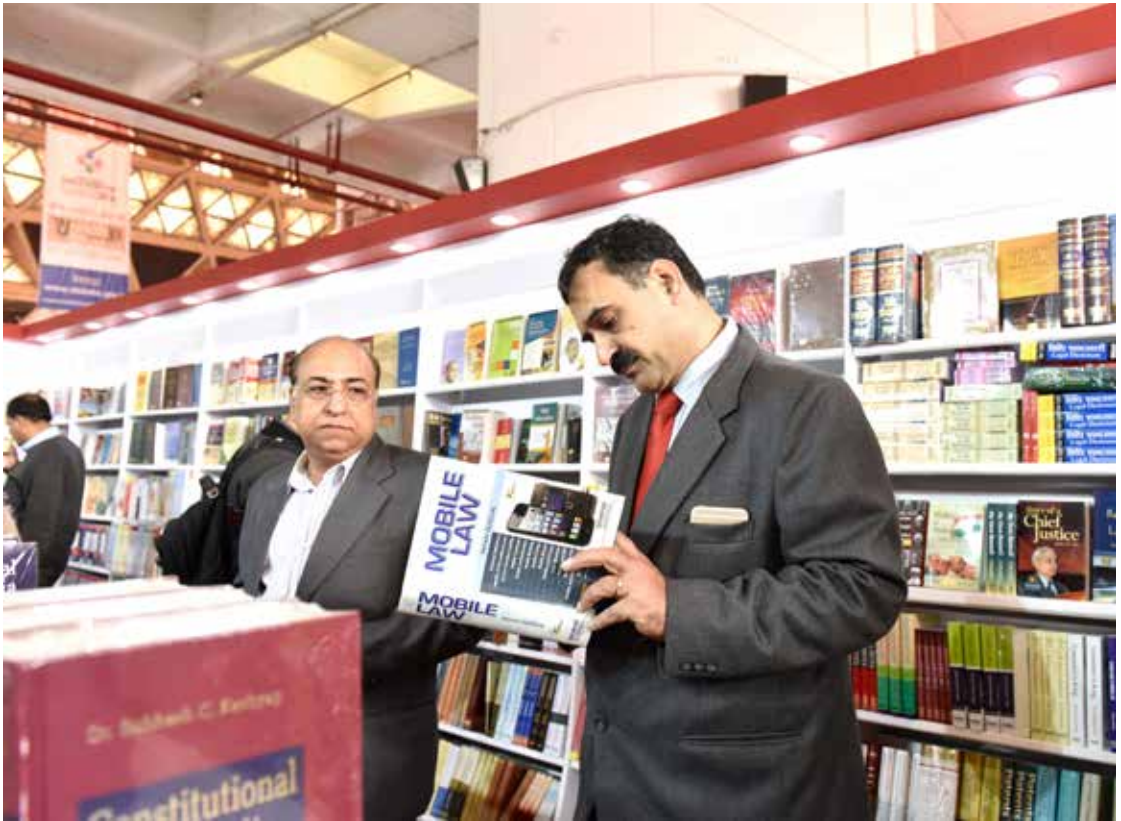
Culture connects many fields, with literature as the core and most powerful. Literature has always been the

pioneering and key driving force of communication and exchange among cultures. China and India share a long and colorful history of literary exchange. Leading modern Chinese literary figure Lu Xun once offered a concise and insightful summary: “China has interacted with India since ancient days, and this process provided prosperity, thoughts, beliefs, morals, arts and literature. How much closer can two be than blood brothers?” In contemporary days, Indian literature, especially Tagore’s works, still exert far-reaching influence in China.

In April 2018, President Xi Jinping met Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India in Wuhan. Modi was in China for an informal meeting that produced several important points of consensus. On

December 21, 2018, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi co-chaired the first meeting of the China-India High Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchange in New Delhi, India as a follow-up to the agreement made by Xi and Modi during their informal summit in Wuhan. By all accounts, literary exchange between China and India has entered a new stage. If we were engaged in “Version 1.0” Sino-Indian literary exchanges in the past, from now on, we should strive to build “Version 2.0.”

In the 1.0 era, Sino-Indian literary exchange was often spontaneous, one-way and only occurred between individuals. Confined



January 9, 2016: The 24th New Delhi World Book Fair opened in India. China participated as the Guest of Honor. IC

by traditional means of communication, translations of literary works were done upon the initiative of individual translators. Members of translation groups were restricted to acquaintances. The two governments and scholars lacked dialogue. The only works available were paper publications translated without modern efficiency. Ongoing since the turn of the 20th century, it took 100 years for the *Collected Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* to be translated and published in Chinese.

Such roadblocks should be completely lifted in the

2.0 era, as the two governments increase support of literary exchange. Cultural enterprises have also pitched in on a large scale, and Sino-Indian literary exchange will soar with the new wings of science, technology and capital. Thanks to the latest intelligent translation software and 5G technology, translation of literary works will soon become industrialized. Translators can devote more time to error correction, polishing and improving the quality of translations. Alongside more available work in widely-read languages such as Chinese, English and Hindi, other

tongues such as Bangladeshi and Tamil will get more attention. The context around media convergence, multimedia integration and cooperation will also encourage development of cultural undertakings and literary exchange.

Literary exchange between China and India has reached a new stage well worthy of investment.

### **BUILDING A SHARED PLATFORM FOR LITERARY EXCHANGE**

Professor Tan Yunshan, who has traveled frequently to India for half a century, is a prominent friendship figure

for the two Asian giants. With Tagore's support, Tan Yunshan founded the Chinese Academy in Santiniketan in 1937. The institution remains a key research center of Sinology in India to this day. Over the past 80 years, the Chinese academic building has been regarded as one of the most spectacular architectural designs on campus. Increasing demand for Chinese language education has teachers and students of the Chinese academy seeking financial support from China to build a matching building for the original academic building as a special place for Sino-Indian literary exchange. Such a structure might include a small lecture hall, reading rooms and dormitories for Chinese teachers and language students. If a literature museum could also be built, it will be incredibly

beneficial for teaching and studying.

### **NEW METHODS FOR CLASSICAL TRANSLATION**

Translation of Chinese and Indian classics has always been an important form of cultural exchange and long-lasting. After an agreement on translation of literary works was reached between China and India in 2013, the *Encyclopedia of China-India Cultural Contacts Between China and India* was published in two volumes. During the same period, reciprocal translations of several classical works from the two countries accelerated. Among them were Hindi translations of *Chinese Poetry*, *The Analects of Confucius* and *Four Books* by B. R. Deepak of Jawaharlal Nehru University. Deepak

also translated more than 500,000 words of *Ji Xianlin: India-China Civilizational Dialogue and Intercultural Studies* into English and Hindi. Few experts are as proficient in Chinese and Hindi as he is. Although direct translations from Chinese into Hindi are the most accurate, there are not enough translators to meet the actual demand. How could we change the phenomenon of "a roomful of Chinese translation of Indian classics and a handful of Indian translation of Chinese classics?" We could consider translating Chinese classics into Indian national languages such as Hindi from English versions. China and many other countries have used this "second-hand" option effectively. Today, Chinese, Hindi and English can be translated in parallel. Early Chinese translations of Tagore's works relied on existing English and Russian translations and were only much later translated directly from the original Bengali.

### **COOPERATE TO PROTECT CLASSICS**

As a result of natural and man-made disasters, many volumes of literary classics have been destroyed in both China and India. Despite extensive efforts spent to rescue and protect literature today, arduous tasks in the field remain ahead. The Indian government now prioritizes a mission to save manuscripts. This project is significant for the preservation and documentation of



October 13, 2016: Guests unveiled the nameplate at the launching ceremony of the China Books Editorial Department and the co-publishing projects in New Delhi, India. by Bi Xiaoyang/Xinhua





November 25, 2017: Bookaroo, India's first children's literature festival, was held in the Children's Park near the Indian Gate in New Delhi, India. VCG

ancient India, which held the tradition of “voicing religions.” China has rich experience and deep skills in rescuing manuscripts (including rare documents), which can be used for reference by Indian counterparts.

### LITERARY EXCHANGE TO FILM COOPERATION

Literary exchange could also be extended to film and television. A Sino-Indian co-production of Tan Yunshan would be a timely exchange project. If the film proves successful, three other works of a “Golden Bridge of Friendship” series between China and India could be co-produced: *Tagore and China*, *Dwarkanath Kotnis* and *Ji Xianlin's Passion for India*. Historic works such as *Xuanzang*, *White Horse Temple*, *Kumarajiva* and *Bodhidharma* are some other subjects suitable for

film and television.

### YOUTH EXCHANGE AND THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES

Younger generations from China and India heartily appreciate each other's literature. In addition to reading literary works and watching movies and TV, their enthusiasm has also been reflected in theater. Translations of classics have been the most valued, but touring performances also deserve attention. Tagore's plays are popular among college students in Beijing, Tianjin, Jinan, Lanzhou and Shenzhen. The Ninth Beijing Nanluoguxiang Performing Arts Festival organized a season to pay tribute to Tagore with six plays: *Chitra*, *The Post Office*, *Sanyasi*, *Red Oleander*, *Tan Yunshan* and *Atonement*. Organizing Chinese and Indian university

students to perform in each other's countries might sow seeds for theatrical exchange.

### EXPORTING TOURISM LITERATURE

Tourism is an important form of human communication, and tourism literature is a unique sector. China exports the world's greatest number of tourists, and India attracts Chinese tourists with its Buddhist culture, splendid ancient civilization and Bollywood movies. China's history and development also drew considerable tourism visits from India. The two countries need to deepen understanding of each other, and tourism should be a top action item. 📖

The author is director of the Center for Indian Studies at Shenzhen University.

# By the Book

By Rajiv Ranjan

India and China endured similar historical situations that shaped their literature, which has impacted their societies and radiated around the world.

India and China are two ancient civilizations that share a long history of cooperation and exchange in trade, knowledge and culture. They have contributed significantly to human civilization through their cultural offerings. As the global situation is becoming more competitive, the two countries are reinforcing their millennia-old model of peaceful co-existence and prosperity, following the peaceful path paved by ancient masters such as Confucius and Buddha.

Culture is the soul of any society and nation, and human civilizations always sprout from cultural practice. With rich history and philosophy, India and China share abundant cultural tradition, of which literature is a prominent part.

Generally, literature includes subject, structure and ideas. Richard G.

Moulton called world literature the 'autobiography of civilizations.' Literature helps civilizations understand themselves. Literature is also a mirror reflecting impressions of the society. In India, literature has played a key role in preserving history, enhancing its geography and

even promoting diversity.

Both India or China have profound literary histories with long lists of great scholars and writers. Historically, the diaries of Xuanzang remain a key Chinese historical account of India. Similarly, early Buddhist texts brought to China represent a major



June 3, 2017: The 12th International Cultural Festival of Jilin University kicked off. A Chinese girl is taking pictures with Indian students. by Zhang Yao/Xinhua

source of Buddhist knowledge not available from original texts in India. In the modern period, Rabindranath Tagore impacted many Chinese writers while Lu Xun was a very popular progressive writer influential in India.

Indian and Chinese literature are vast and diverse collections consisting of multiple languages and cultures and are integral building blocks of world literature. Not only do they continue to impact their own societies but their pulse beats around the world as they influence foreign literary trends. Classical philosophical works of Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism are now part of the global consciousness. The four major classics of China, *The Three Kingdoms*, *Outlaws of the Marsh*, *Journey to the West*, and *The Dream of the Red Mansions*, all remain popular. Similarly, classical texts of India such as Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Bhagavad Gita and Ramayana Mahabharata are widely read and studied around the world.

India and China have much in common in terms of literary development. The two countries endured similar historical situations that shaped their literature. Both countries' literary development can be divided into four periods: classical, ancient, modern and contemporary literature.

In the classical period, the language medium in India was Sanskrit and classical Chinese in China. During this period, knowledge was passed from one generation to



May 20, 2017: Indian overseas students from Nanjing University of the Arts introduced Indian customs to Chinese students. VCG

another mainly through oral tradition. Nature, ethics and spiritual knowledge were the main content.

In the ancient period, literature was written to praise of emperors, explore the imagination and pay homage to nature.

In the modern period, literature challenged orthodox practices. Modern progressive writings depicted rural people, villages, the plight of women and other issues. Indian society was colonized while China was also plagued by semi-colonialization, and literature was used as a tool against feudal and colonial practices.

The contemporary period has accompanied reform and opening up. Digital alternatives to print have challenged traditional books as the internet revolutionizes education with computers and mobile phones in every possible way. New means

of reading and writing are on the rise. And Indian and Chinese societies are in closer contact with global trends as the two countries become leading developing countries. Thus, authors are engaging in literary experimentation.

The 21st century has been dubbed the century of the East. China and India both emerged as important global players as the world navigates many challenges alongside the reshuffling of the global balance of power and redefining of international relations. Indian and Chinese governments have engaged with each other on different platforms, sharing important bilateral strategic, economic and cultural relationships. Still, exchange of literature between India and China has been very limited. Both governments are making continuous efforts to deal with the issue.





On May 19, 2007: The exhibition “Xuanzang’s Pilgrimage - Ding He’s Rediscovery Photographic Works” opened at the Capital Museum of China. In just four years, photographer Ding He visited Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region thirteen times, crossed the Lop Nur twice, and retraced Xuanzang’s entire journey from Xi’an to Nalanda, India.  
by Tao Xiyi/Xinhua

Despite challenges facing India-China relations, new doors are opening. Business cooperation, tourist trips, student and research exchange, and movie exchange have all helped Chinese and Indians to better understand each other. People-to-people bonds between both sides have increased significantly, but language remains a barrier to understanding. To read each other’s literature, English is often the conduit for translation. But communicating through a third-party colonialist language isn’t the ideal way to understand each other properly.

It is critical to teach

Chinese and Hindi and boost direct translation from Chinese to Hindi and Hindi to Chinese. In the recent past China has done significant work in this area, but India needs to do much more. Governments need to divorce politics from cultural exchange and implement favorable policies for educational exchange. The media, which heavily influences public opinion, has played a large role which now needs to change. Also, more publishing houses and authors should participate in book fairs, literature festivals, educational conferences and seminars.

Conditions have improved over the past decade. In

2016 an India-China translation program was launched by the two governments. Hindi institutions in China increased from three to twelve, and more than thirty universities have started teaching Chinese in India. An increasing number of Indian and Chinese students are pursuing Masters and Doctorate degrees in each other’s countries. The new generation is clearly playing a significant role in literature and cultural exchange. 📖

*The Author is Guest Faculty teaching Chinese at the Delhi School of Journalism, University of Delhi.*



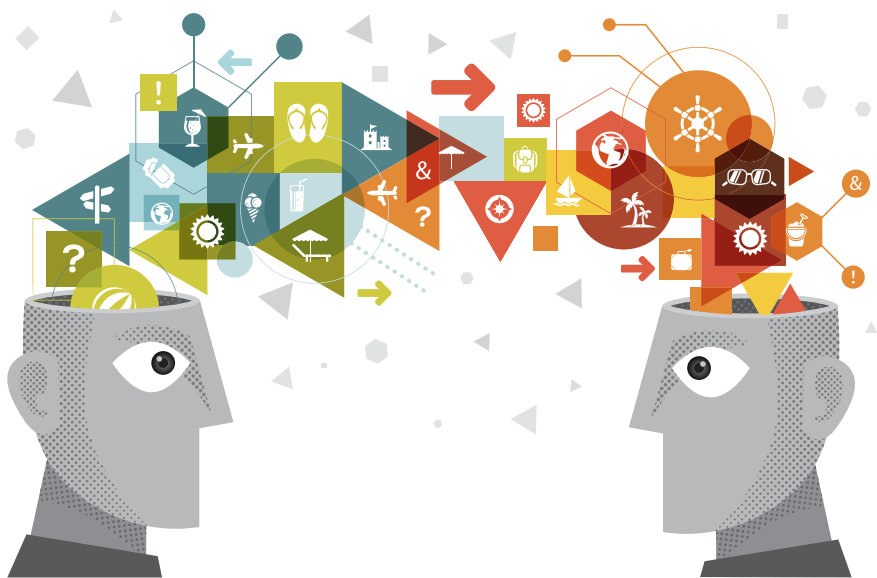


**Plant Trees    Love Trees**

**Protect the "lungs of the earth"  
to enjoy clean air.**

# Friendly Exchange: Bridging China and India

Edited By Hu Zhoumeng



**F**riendliness between peoples is the key to sound relations between states. Guided by their national leaders, China and India have boosted cooperation in various fields such as investment, commerce, education, tourism, arts and culture. Bilateral investment and trade are on the rise. A rising number of tourists from China and India are visiting each other's countries. More and more Indian

students head to China for education. Indian films such as *Dangal* have become popular with Chinese audiences, and yoga has been popular in China for decades.

China and India established a high-level people-to-people exchange mechanism at the end of 2018. In the future, the two countries will hold multiple activities related to cultural exchange, preservation of cultural relics, education

cooperation, language teaching, tourism cooperation, and youth, sports, media and academic exchange, coproduction of films, and more. The 2.7 billion people in China and India hold enormous potential for cooperation. The increasingly enhanced people-to-people exchange will strengthen mutual understanding, mutual trust and friendship, driving China-India relations forward. 



## Commerce and Trade

**2016**
**us\$ 11.76 billion**

China's imports from India


**us\$ 58.42 billion**

China's exports to India


**2017**
**us\$ 16.35 billion**

China's imports from India


**us\$ 68.04 billion**

China's exports to India


**China's exports to India (Jan. to Sep., 2018)**

Category	Volume (million USD)	Year- on-year (%)	Proportion (%)
In total	56,251	5.7	100.0
Mechanical and electrical products	28,665	-4.1	51.0
Chemical products	10,089	32.9	17.9
Base metal and relevant products	3,970	9.2	7.1
Plastics and rubber	2,277	22.3	4.1
Textile and raw materials	2,145	10.5	3.8
Transportation equipment	2,040	33.3	3.6
Furniture, toy and Miscellaneous Products	1,406	0.7	2.5
Watches and clocks, optical and medical equipment	1,296	-0.4	2.3
Pottery and porcelain, glass	1,105	22.2	2.0
Minerals	1,042	46.0	1.9
Cellulose pulp and paper	406	-7.1	0.7
Shoes, umbrellas and other light industrial products	387	13.7	0.7
Precious metals and relevant products	366	-18.8	0.7
Leatherware, bags and suitcases	312	24.5	0.6
Plant products	130	-47.7	0.2
Others	617	-11.3	1.1

**India's exports to China (Jan. to Sep., 2018)**

Category	Volume (million USD)	Year- on-year (%)	Proportion (%)
In total	11,745	34.9	100.0
Minerals	3,577	57.6	30.5
Chemical products	2,558	63.3	21.8
Textile and raw materials	1,378	39.0	11.7
Mechanical and electrical products	1,004	23.4	8.6
Base metal and relevant products	913	-39.1	7.8
Plastics and rubber	735	160.7	6.3
Animal and vegetable fats and oils	321	-2.3	2.7
Live animals and animal products	258	179.6	2.2
Precious metals and relevant products	255	85.2	2.2
Plant products	132	10.0	1.1
Shoes, umbrellas and other light industrial products	127	-10.8	1.1
Watches and clocks, optical and medical equipment	113	-5.1	1.0
Transportation equipment	93	-10.0	0.8
Leatherware, bags and suitcases	90	-8.9	0.8
Cellulose pulp and paper	86	2,030.7	0.7
Others	105	-25.5	0.9

Source: stats.gov.cn, countryreport.mofcom.gov.cn



## Investment

In 2016 **us\$ 51.81 million**

actual use of Indian direct investment  
in China



In 2017 **us\$ 157.72 million**

actual use of Indian direct investment  
in China



### Cumulative total of China's direct investment in India to date (2009-2017, million USD)

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
221.27	479.8	657.38	1169.1	2446.98	3407.21	3770.47	3107.51	4747.33

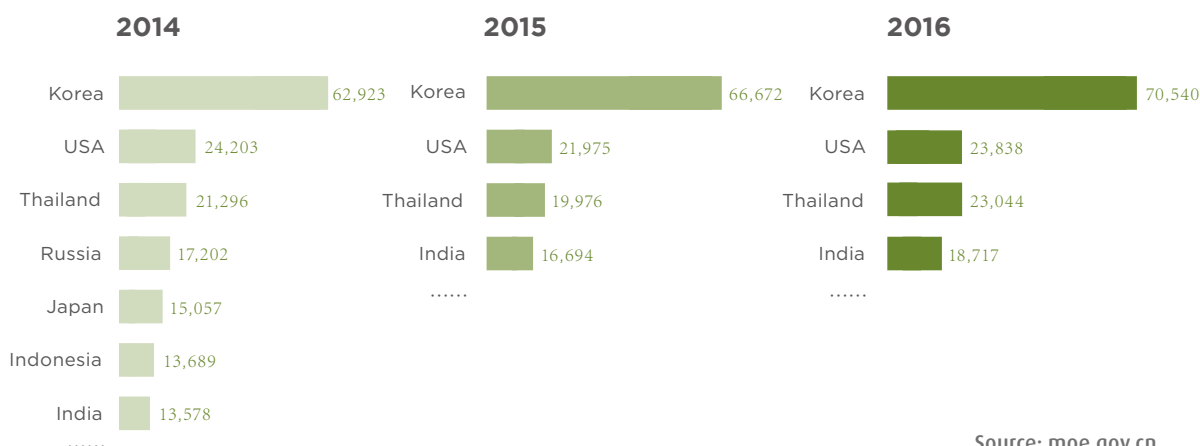
Source: stats.gov.cn and 2017 Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment



## Tourism



## Overseas Students in China



Source: moe.gov.cn





## Aviation

Source: carnoc.com

Number of air passengers travelling between China and India in 2017

**650,000**

year-on-year growth

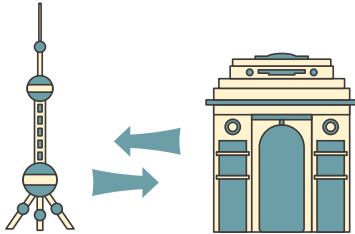
**3.68%**

Number of air passengers travelling between China and India in the first half of 2018

**377,000**

year-on-year growth

**10.5%**



Shanghai and Delhi is the pair of cities with the largest amount of mutual flights between China and India

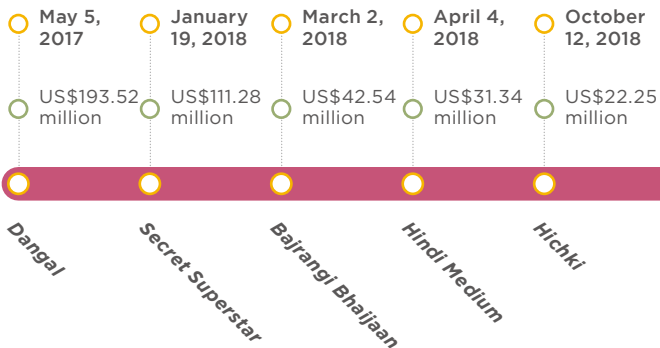
From 2016 to the first half of 2018, in terms of air passengers travelling between China and India



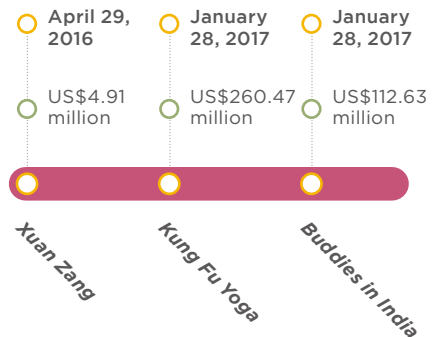
## Film

○ Release date ○ Box office Source: piaofang.maoyan.com

### Top five Indian films in China, in terms of box office revenue



### Box office of coproduced movies by China and India in China



## Sister Cities and Sister Provinces (States)

● Date established

October, 2013	Beijing-Delhi	May, 2015	Sichuan Province-Karnataka State
October, 2013	Chengdu-Bangalore	May, 2015	Chongqing-Chennai
October, 2013	Kunming-Calcutta	May, 2015	Qingdao-Hyderabad
September, 2014	Guangdong Province-Gujarat State	May, 2015	Dunhuang-Aurangabad
September, 2014	Guangzhou-Ahmedabad	December, 2017	Jinan-Nagpur
September, 2014	Shanghai-Mumbai		

Source: cifca.org.cn

# Beyond borders: China and India's enduring cultural bonds

Concept by **China-India Dialogue**

## Language of Love

**Tanvi Dutta Gupta**

**Age:** 18

**Occupation:** Gap-year student and incoming freshman (class of 2023) at Stanford University

**Birth place:** Singapore

**Current city of residence:** Singapore



I mix up Mandarin and Hindi a lot. I don't always realize it at first—only after my grandmother or teacher falls silent do I think to backtrack, review the

sentence, and figure out which words were from another language. Oops.

It keeps happening over and over, which is perplexing given how structurally and syntactically dissimilar the two languages are. I learned Mandarin formally by shaping phrases over and over in a classroom. My Hindi was absorbed from kitchen conversations at home, semi-fluency constructed from grocery lists and gossip. But now I slip a Mandarin verb into the middle of a Hindi sentence without even thinking. As if I expect them—two radically separate approaches to words and grammar and script—to somehow seamlessly dance.

For me, India and China exist in parallel. Living in Asia, they

mold daily politics and culture. The shapes of the countries exert a physical presence on my life. I hold the passport of one and I grew up in countries dominated by the other. Often, the two feel in opposition. The two superpowers seem to glare at each other across the mountains.

I see only one immediately obvious, inarguable, quantifiable similarity between China and India as they look today, which is their scale. Yet, in the afternoons in rural Shandong, our teacher called a small group of us to sit cross-legged in the sunlight. He had bought us each a copy of Confucius's *Analects*, and we sat and read line by line, tearing the words apart as the sun turned a pollution-stained red. "A young man must remain devoted to his

parents at home and respectful of his elders outside it.” The sentence reminded me of my curved back when we visited my grandparents’ friends in India. I would sit folding my hands, bowing my head, and they would place their wrinkled hands on my shoulder. They whispered, “God bless you, child.” I never knew that was from *Analects*.

We traced Confucius’s footsteps a few days later up Taishan (Mount Tai), one of the holiest mountains in China. A total of 72 emperors over time, up till and including Mao Zedong, have summited the peak. Each left an inscription—a poem, a pithy quote or a grand declaration—behind, engraved by the stairs in careful calligraphy. Every step took us back a millennium, and the next step forward again. This past was new to me. But the depth was as familiar as a drive through Delhi’s Chandni Chowk neighborhood—the Red Fort and the tangled electricity lines beside it.

The scale of India and China extends through both the past and the present. Each place forces confrontation with largely unbroken roots branching back to the beginning. I’ve learned to recognize it in small things—a dilapidated temple or a rice field with a single farmer—that spark a sudden, destabilizing déjà vu. These things have been happening last generation and two generations before that and ten more before that. Maybe the farmer turns and takes out a smartphone. There have been so many people before me here, and there will be so many after. Whether reading the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* or the *Mahabharata*, how can anyone determine that their stories—their morals, their loves, their losses—are new? Every tale has been told before, and these countries are vast enough to foster them all.

But this means that every old tale must be told again. From my mother and my Chinese teacher, I learned to hold my heritage in high regard. Dutta

Gupta Tanvi. Du Tian Wei. I am young, and I am new, and that means that to determine who I am, I must examine my family closely. In Mandarin class, I gave presentations on the importance of sweeping your ancestors’ graves. Later, I went home to where my grandparents’ pictures are displayed in effigy.

Even as both countries undergo unprecedented migrations from rural areas to cities, everyone remembers the village they came from. You take along dust on your feet and a family name. Because in a place of over a billion individuals, you are not one: You are also everyone who came before you—their sacrifice and courage. India and China both host a vastness of the past and of the present, but it is important to build links between the two. These links are in people and families and a responsibility to each other that often translates as duty but should more accurately be seen as love.

Love isn’t always expressed the same, but it’s a vocabulary that is shared everywhere.

## New Connections

### Saksham Khetan

**Age:** 20

**Occupation:** Student

**Birth place:** Akola

**Current city of residence:** Mumbai



I recently had the pleasure of hosting a Chinese student via the international exchange program AIESEC. The month that my guest Alysa stayed at my home in Mumbai was among the finest learning experiences for me in terms of

understanding Chinese culture and lifestyle.

We referred to our guest as Alysa, her English name, because her birth name seemed too difficult for us to pronounce. Despite language barriers, Alysa got along very well with my family and within a couple of days, felt like one of us.

As we got to know Alysa better and vice versa, we realized that although we speak different languages, Indians and the Chinese have a similar approach to a lot of things such as attitudes towards family and cultural values, preferences in food and even sharply honed bargaining skills. I learned that just like how Indians give envelopes filled with money to the younger members of the family on special occasions, the Chinese have a similar tradition of gifting “red envelopes.”

It shouldn't be surprising that people from India and China share a number of similarities. While they have definitely had differences over the years, the two neighbors have also maintained decades and decades of economic, political and cultural exchange. A popular slogan during the 1950s was “Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai” (literally “the Indians and the Chinese are brothers”). It aptly described the bond shared by the two great civilizations and emphasized that their

people were part of one big family. Today, thanks to cultural exchange programs like AIESEC, the younger generations from India and China are discovering new ways to connect with each other.

Food is a popular area for bonding. India and China have a staggering variety of culinary delights across the length and breadth of these countries, much more so than anywhere else in the world. Rice, vegetables, meat and potatoes are used in abundance in their dishes. And while both have their own specific spices, the amount of detail that goes into producing incredibly well-rounded flavors is a common link between their kitchens.

And how can I not mention tea here? Called chai in Hindi and cha in Mandarin, the beverage is virtually the elixir of life for people in both countries.

Cultural exchange between India and China has been taking place since ancient times. Several Chinese philosophers such as Xuanzang visited India and documented the rich experiences of their travels. Almost all of the works of Rabindranath Tagore, among the most influential figures in Indian history, have been translated into Chinese. India may be known as “the land of festivals,” but the Chinese celebrate just as many, if not more, with

comparable pomp. India has Diwali, Holi, Eid and more, while China observes festivals like Lunar New Year, Dragon Boat Festival and the Lantern Festival.

The moral values and ethics that India and China share are similar in nature and practice. Both cultures are heavily family-driven and place considerable value on the concept of multicultural upbringing. Education is of the utmost importance in both societies, with kids pushed to great lengths to excel in final exams (respectively, grade 10 Board Exams in India and the Gaokao in China). Along with this pressure to succeed, another unfortunate common trait is the belief that sons are more important than daughters.

India and China are home to various sects living in harmony, speaking many languages and dialects, making both countries vibrant melting-pots. Meeting Alysa was a window into a world that is so like my own, despite superficial differences. By the end of her stay, Alysa started referring to us as her second family and still keeps in constant touch through video calls. She learned some Hindi words from us during her brief stay, but I can safely say that she gave us a lot more than we could teach or give her.



## Experiencing Sino-Indian Culture Through Dance

### Du Juan

Age: 29

Occupation: Overseas Student

Birth place: Beijing, China

Current city of residence: London, UK



I am a learner and performer of *Kathak* and *Odissi*, both major forms of Indian classical dances, as well as a Chinese classical and modern dancer. As I see it, although Chinese dances seem to be restrained and Indian dances vivacious, both belong to Asian culture and share an agrarian cultural background, so they have many things in common.

There is a section in Indian classical dances called *Abhinaya*, featuring highly intricate movements. During

this particular act, dancers play multiple roles, telling mythical folk stories with their body movements, gestures and expressions. The love story of *Krishna and Radha*, for example, is the most famous of Indian classical dances. Drawing from the creativity of numerous Indian artists, it expresses the full range of thought and feeling common to lovers, such as joy, grief, naughtiness, expectation, disappointment and nostalgia, so carefully elaborated that several emotional changes are expressed in a single glance.

According to ethnographic studies, Indian dance, along with other traditional arts such as Indian literature and painting, exquisitely describe love, including love between couples, *Prem* (physical intimacy) and *Bhakti* (spiritual devotion).

As a non-Indian, it seems to me that the most difficult part of becoming an excellent Indian classical dancer is grasping the essence of the performance and drawing in the audiences of different countries with acting that transcends cultural and ethnic differences. Talent alone is not enough to achieve this objective; what is more important is a profound understanding of Indian culture. As a Chinese dancer

I can clearly feel the delicate emotions of Chinese and Indian cultures and how alike they are, in the process of learning their respective dances, so that I can better grasp the emotional dimension of Indian classical stories, such as the shyness, vexation, and tender affection of eastern women, and depict them in a natural way perceivable to the audience.

During *Abhinaya*, scenes from a traditional agrarian lifestyle are also depicted, such as fetching water, sieving millet, milking cows and playing in rivers. It easily strikes a chord among Chinese audiences who share a similar traditional way of life.

I have been studying Indian classical dance for six years. My learning and performing experience in China, India and the U.K. shaped my particular understanding about the connections between Indian classical dance and Chinese and Indian dance culture. Compared with the emphasis of Chinese classical dance on bodily expression, Indian classical dance is more emotional and narrative. I think this is why dances and pantomimes are both called *Natyam* (dance) in the perspective of Indian classical performing arts. 🎭

# Possibilities for a Non-Alienated Life

By Ling Min

It would be wrong and even ludicrous to judge a city's social development level based on its appearance.

At the end of 2018, I flew to India to attend the annual conference of the International Biennale Association in Kochi. At the time, the southeastern Indian coastal city was also hosting the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. During my stay in Kochi, I visited most museums and galleries involved in the Biennale as well as the city's lanes, streets and harbor. While feeling astonished and shocked by what I saw in the city, I began to ponder the theme of the 2018 Kochi-Muziris Biennale: Possibilities for a Non-Alienated Life.

So, what does “non-alienated” mean? To pinpoint an answer, we must first understand the meaning of “alienation.” As a philosophical term, “alienation” refers to separation and estrangement between the subject and the

object, and from the specific perspective of mankind, it refers to the situation of human production working against humans themselves. It means that humans are supposed to be the masters of labor, tools and products, but often they lose their freedom and become slaves to labor and the tools of production. This is the process and consequence of alienation. Human alienation is obvious, particularly, in an industrialized, capital-dominated society.

Anita Dube, curator of the Biennale, believes that a non-alienated world is one in which people embrace each other, share wisdom and beauty, and feel connections with others, instead of engaging in hostility. In her eyes, the real world is now full of hostility. If we want a better life on this planet, we must embrace modesty and refuse

to serve capital.

Dube divided the Biennale into two parts: First, there was an exhibition presenting an artistic “symphony,” composed of influential and realistic works on diverse thoughts and ideas. Then, the other part aimed to create a carefree but powerful space for dialogue, where everyone could be a curator and express their own ideas.

Perhaps due to my unfamiliarity with local discourse,



A work displayed at the 2018 Kochi-Muziris Biennale. by Ling Min

history and culture, I didn't at first understand Dube's intentions and harbored reservations about the Biennale's theme. Moreover, the city of Kochi confused me. A port city with a history of more than 500 years, Kochi had been an important trading hub between East and West in the past. Portuguese, Spanish, British and Chinese merchant fleets once frequented it. However, the run-down appearance of Kochi does not match its long and rich history, with its narrow dirt roads, dilapidated bungalows and undeveloped beaches.

Yet it would be wrong, and even ridiculous, to judge a city's social development based on its appearance. The works displayed at the 2018 Kochi-Muziris Biennale, as well as interactive activities presented by the organizer, were exceptional and diverse. In fact, I was amazed by the strong indigenous flavor of the Biennale, the close connections of the works on display with everyday life, local people's enthusiastic participation, and their unique insights into contemporary art.

The Kochi-Muziris Biennale is the largest contemporary art event in India. The 2018 Biennale expanded to cover an area including not only Kochi, but also Muziris and nearby islands, hence its full name "Kochi-Muziris Biennale." According to the Kochi Biennale Foundation, Kochi is one of only a few Indian cities to continue to preserve diversified cultural traditions of the precolonial era. The organizers of the Biennale believe it is necessary to review the past to develop a new genre



Artists participating in the Student's Biennale pose for a group photo. by Ling Min

of aesthetics rooted in the Indian experience.

Just as the Kochi Biennale Foundation noted, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale aims to create a new cosmopolitan and modernist language, based on the history and realities of the ancient trading port of Kochi. With this purpose in mind, the Biennale used many existing buildings, public spaces and historical sites, including disused industrial facilities, office buildings, residences, lanes and even abandoned structures as the venues to display art works. More importantly, many works have close relations with the venues in which they were exhibited. It was easy for such works to inspire a tacit sense of identity among local residents, thus connecting to history and traditions while emitting a strong contemporary appeal.

On the flight back to China, I read through the textual materials that I had taken from Kochi, which enabled

me to better understand the intentions of the Kochi Biennale Foundation and Curator Anita Dube. The organizers had wanted to bring world cultural trends to India, while demonstrating India to the outside world to explore possibilities for a non-alienated life in India. Compared to the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, how much do the many Chinese art exhibitions—usually held in fine, imposing venues and attended by VIPs from all over the world—really contribute to demonstrating the country's own culture? Are those exhibitions not slightly removed from the general public? It is certainly worth spending a moment or two pondering on these questions. ■

*The author is vice president of the International Association of Art Critics and member of the International Biennale Association.*



**Fond Memories on the Campus:  
Stories of Chinese and Indian  
Exchange Students**

*Compiling Committee / Editors-in-Chief*

*GBD Books  
First Indian Edition 2019*

China and India are world famous civilizations, both of which have nurtured their respective millennia-old ancient cultures. The two countries

have long been friendly to each other historically. The written history of exchanges between the two countries, though they are separated by mountains and rivers, dates back over two thousand years. The two peoples learn from each other in the long span of history, which has enriched each other's magnificent cultural treasures and created the "twin precious jades" of Eastern civilizations.

People-to-people exchanges are the most colorful and significant chapter in Sino-Indian history. This book includes some jottings and impressions by Chinese and Indian scholars and students during their stays in India and China respectively. From different angles, the book reflects what they saw and heard, how they came to realize, what cultural shocks in various degrees they were confronted with during their study period. It vividly reflects their joys and sorrows of life, shows all sorts of flavours in life

they experienced. It provides a rare opportunity for us to get to know about the life of students studying abroad. Many Chinese students indicate that only when you finally arrived in India and savored the country deep in your heart and used your own footprints to measure this land, can you change your stereotyped thinking and impressions that you used to have about India. In terms of establishing friendly relations between China and India, it is extremely important for the two countries to strengthen ideological and cultural exchanges among their populace in order to understand their respective counterpart in a real comprehensive, rational and objective way. Those Indian students who have been to China, they have also gained much understanding. They have a more direct of Chinese culture and of the great accomplishments made by the Chinese people in recent decades.

# A Visit to Buddhist Shrines of India

*By Jiang Yili*

During the early springs of the year 1992, while studying as a foreign student in Delhi University of India, I was along with some scholars from the department of Buddhist studies of Delhi University had the fortune of embarking upon the

footsteps of the Buddha on a tour to famous Buddhist shrines, mountains and temples of India. It was a really fruitful trip which left a great impression on me. Till date whenever I recalls about those memories, scenes of the past leap before my eyes.

## **PALACE RUINS IN THE TWILIGHT**

On 23rd February afternoon, we the group of 18 people boarded train and left Delhi, we reached Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh at night and stayed at Bharata temple. Next day we started our journey to Lumbini on



a rented jeep. Lumbini is currently located in Nepal, distanced 20 kms from the Nepal-India border and it's the birth place of Lord Buddha. According to the legend, queen Maha Maya, wife of King Suddhodana, got pregnant after seeing a white elephant in her dream, after that according to the local traditions she returned to her maternal house before delivery time. While passing through Lumbini garden, the queen decided to take rest in the garden. The garden had a variety of birds and dense trees. Queen Maha Maya suddenly started to feel uneasy, under the trees and without any problem she gave birth to Gautama who was later known as Buddha.

We reached the Nepal-India border in the evening. Nepal and India have mutual visa exemption, hence the Indian scholars could cross the border smoothly and go to Lumbini, but unfortunately we

being foreigners (scholars from China, South Korea, Japan and Sri Lanka) couldn't cross the boundary due to visa problem. We had to turn back and head towards Kapilavastu, as the dusk rolled out we could see the remains of the palace in the far distance.

The palace of Kapilavastu is the place where Gautama spent his childhood and youth days. Here he enjoyed a life of extravagance and pleasure, but his soul was time and again entangled by pain. In the end after being disillusioned with the mortal world, he left his wife and child, renounced his family and the world and embarked upon a journey to seek the true meaning of life.

The once prosperous and magnificent palace is now reduced to ruins under the moon and the breeze. Under the misty moonlight, one can vaguely see the grandeur of the palace that existed during its golden days.

Facing these broken walls and ruins, imagining the scene of Siddharth Gautama renouncing his family on a star lit night, one can't help but feel emotional. In the present world where people are giving more and more importance to material comforts, seeking personal fame and gains, how many can resist the temptations of the worldly customs?

On the early morning of 26th February we reached Kushinagar and stayed in a Sri Lankan temple. Kushinagar is the place where the Buddha attained nirvana and there are many temples built here. Back in the history, eminent monks from China such as Fa Xian and Xuan Zang have visited this place to pay homage. Presently there are numerous temples built by various countries in the city, each having its own unique style. There is also a Chinese Buddhist temple here but its abbot is a Vietnamese nun.



The ruins of Nalanda University in Bihar, India. IC

**THE PLACE OF THE BUDDHA'S  
NIRVANA— KUSHINAGAR**


According to the legend, while the Buddha was travelling from Vaishali to Rajgir in order to preach there, on the way he got infected with a disease, at last he came to a dense forest of sal trees and peacefully attained nirvana. As far as the reason of infection is concerned, some say that he felt uncomfortable after eating the meat of wild boar which was presented by a hunter, some say that he ate rice porridge. I asked an Indian monk present there, he also didn't dare to jump to any conclusion. Although, the Buddha's old age of 80 years, tiredness due to the journey and the fierce climate might all have led to him getting infected. The vast sal tree forest of that time no more exists now, there are only a few tall sal trees standing there in the spring and a few residential houses nearby. A few kilometers away is the place where the funeral rites of the Buddha was carried out during that time, now it is a huge mounded stupa with cluster of weeds on the top. About 1 kilometer from this stupa there is a nirvana temple, inside the hall of the temple there is a big gold plated statue of the sleeping Buddha, one can see different expressions of the Buddha through different angles. Looking from the front, the Buddha seems to be serene and tranquil, representing the quietness after he attained nirvana. Looking from the left side, both the eyebrows of the Buddha are slightly wrinkled, showing the condition of pain, as if he is feeling pity for all the living beings struggling in the sea of sorrow. Looking from the right

side, Buddha is seen having a smiling face, representing the joy after attaining enlightenment.

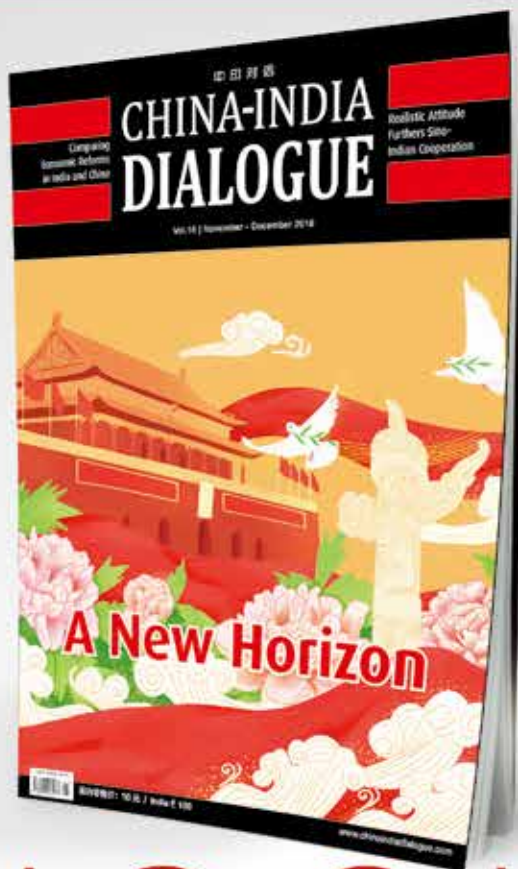
**TOUR TO NALANDA**

On the evening of 27th February, we boarded a train and started our journey, at around 3 am in the early morning we reached a small town of Bihar, after taking a little rest at the station we started off for Vaishali on a medium sized bus that we had rented and reached after almost an hour. The sky was still dark during that time, under the misty moonlight we could see the lion head pillar of King Ashok's reigning time which still stood tall in the ruins. After spending a few minutes, we continued on our journey forward. There was wind entering inside the bus from all sides, a light sweater couldn't stop the spring cold. I could feel my entire body shivering in the cold and I couldn't sleep due to the bone chilling cold. While passing through a small town, we got off the bus and had two cups of hot milk tea which made us feel warm again. After getting back into the bus I soon fell asleep. Suddenly, I was awoken by an uproar, the bus had stopped. There were two little kids who had climbed up to the top of the bus and were trying to steal our luggage but got caught by someone on the bus. Because all of us on the bus were scholars and we were in a hurry to reach our destination, also we wanted to maintain peace hence let go of those two small thieves.

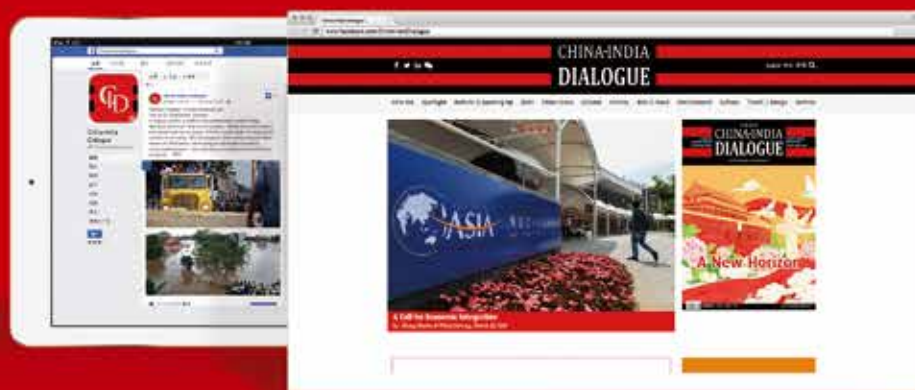
We reached Nalanda in the afternoon. From a distance we could see a grand Chinese style architecture, we were informed by the Indian scholar that it is the Xuan Zang Memorial Hall which was financed and built by the Chinese government. While we

were talking, the bus had already stopped at the gate of Nalanda temple. Nalanda temple is India's most famous Buddhist temple. It is said that King Shakraditya of the Gupta Empire built this temple after the nirvana of Buddha, it was a place where meritocratic people gathered together and also converging point for eminent monks from different parts of the world. Monks such as Nagarjuna, Deva, Asanga, Vasubandhu etc. all had studied and preached here. Chinese monks such as Xuan Zang and Yi Jing had also come to study here. The scale of this temple is grand, Xuan Zang once described it in his book like this: "Precious terraces ranged like stars in the sky and jade storeyed pavilions spired like lofty peaks. The temples stood high in the mist, and the shrines hovered over the rosy clouds. Breeze and fog rose from the doors and windows, and the sun and moon shone alternately at the eaves of the buildings.". This world famous temple was later destroyed by Muslim invaders. What remains today is only vast spread ruins of broken walls and structures of red color and a huge broken stupa which showcases the vicissitudes of life to the people. Within the broken stupa there is a huge stone pillar which had got engraved lifelike figurines of Buddha in different poses and different expressions. In front of the ruins there is a museum which has got exquisite figurines, bronze articles and seals on display which were excavated from this site. 

—  
*Dr. Jiang Yili, 1990-1993, Doctor of Philosophy Department Delhi University. This article is excerpted from the book Fond Memories on the Campus: Stories of Chinese and Indian Exchange Students*



# BRIDGING CHINA AND INDIA



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