

中印对话

CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

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A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR
CHINESE AND INDIAN YOUTH

THE YOUTH OF CHINA AND INDIA:
MUCH IN COMMON

Youth in Dialogue



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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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Chinese Embassy in India Holds Online Seminar on BRICS Cooperation

On June 30, the Chinese Embassy in India held an online seminar themed “Strengthen BRICS Cooperation, Promote Global Development Together.” Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong chaired the seminar and delivered a keynote speech. He reviewed the 14th BRICS Summit and its main outcomes and highlighted the significance and bright future of BRICS cooperation. Suresh Prabhu, former Union Minister and Ex-PM’s Sherpa for G20 of India, was the chief guest of the event. Representatives from various areas like the parliament, think tanks, business, friendship organizations,

and youth organizations attended the event.

Sun remarked that the combined forces of global changes coupled with a pandemic both unseen in a century have brought the world into a phase of fluidity and transformation. The successful 14th BRICS Summit has contributed “BRICS of Stability” to ease the turbulent situation, “BRICS of Protection” to fight COVID-19, and “BRICS of Progress” to pave a way for global development and provide the world with the much-needed direction, confidence, and strength.

Participants offered suggestions and views on

BRICS cooperation in the fields of trade and investment, green development, energy transition, cultural interactions, youth exchange, people-to-people friendship, and “BRICS Plus” cooperation. They also expressed hope that BRICS countries would strengthen solidarity and cooperation to play an even bigger role in addressing global challenges, contribute to global development, and jointly create a better world.



Wang Yi Meets with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar

On July 7, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on the sidelines of the Group of Twenty (G20) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Bali, Indonesia.

According to Wang Yi, China and India have maintained communication and exchange since last March, effectively managed differences, and fostered recovery momentum in bilateral relations. The two

countries share common interests and similar legitimate demands. Against the backdrop of once-in-a-century changes in the world, major countries like China and India will by no means just go with the flow. Instead, the two countries are intensely maintaining strategic focus, achieving development and revitalization in accordance with established goals, and contributing more to the future of mankind.

Jaishankar noted that since

the meeting of the two foreign ministers in March, the two sides have made positive progress in aspects such as safeguarding stability along the borders, promoting practical cooperation, and facilitating personnel exchange. India looks forward to a positive, cooperative, and constructive India-China relationship, and stands ready to work with China to shout a clear call for improvement of bilateral ties and turn the consensus and vision of the two leaders into reality.

Droupadi Murmu Takes Oath as President of India

On July 18, India's presidential election began. Elected representatives from Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) across all the states voted on two presidential candidates. The results of the presidential election were released on July 21. The candidate from India's ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Droupadi Murmu was declared winner.

On July 25, Droupadi Murmu took the oath as President of India. She is India's first president from tribal community and second female president. In her speech after taking office, Murmu called on all Indians to unite and move forward on the path of duty with a dedicated spirit to build a glorious and self-reliant India. She also expressed hope that women would continue increasing their contributions in every field of national development.

Murmu was born in June 1958 in a tribal area of Odisha State. She joined the Bharatiya Janata Party in 1997 and served as a councilor and Minister of State for many years. She was the Governor of Jharkhand State from 2015 to 2021.

China-India Youth Dialogue Held in Beijing

The China-India Youth Dialogue, an international forum themed "Together for a Better Future," was held in Beijing on July 25. Under the guidance of China International Communications Group (CICG), the event was jointly organized by the CICG Center for Europe and Asia (China Pictorial Publications), China International Youth Exchange Center, and Cheena-Bhavana of Visva-Bharati University.

Gao Anming, vice president and editor-in-chief of CICG, Zha Liyou, Chinese Consul General to Kolkata, Avijit Banerjee, professor and head of Cheena Bhavana of Visva-Bharati University, and Zhang Hua, director of China International Youth Exchange Center, addressed the event. A dozen Chinese and Indian youth representatives from various fields conducted in-depth exchange and discussions.

In his speech, Gao Anming noted that Chinese and Indian youth are a major force pushing their respective nation forward and enhancing understanding and friendship between the two countries. The youth of both countries need to actively contribute advice and suggestions on national development, ponder global trends, and explore solutions to strengthening cooperation between China and India. He expressed hope that young people from the two countries would embrace a global vision, pursue their dreams on the global stage, and jointly create a bright future for the world.

Zha Liyou said that the current level of youth exchange between China and India is not commensurate with the status of the two major countries. He pledged that the Chinese Consulate General in Kolkata would continue to actively promote exchange between Chinese and Indian youth in culture, sports, film, television, and entrepreneurship and assist more schools in the two countries to enhance cooperation and strengthen mutual understanding. Avijit Banerjee emphasized that the two ancient civilizations have carried out friendly exchanges in fields like culture and education since ancient times. Guided by the important consensus reached by Chinese and Indian leaders, the two countries should take solid steps to further promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges. 📍

Young Energy Powering Exchange and Mutual Learning

By Gao Anming



Growing up in the internet era, young people from China and India have embraced global vision and pursue their dreams on the global stage.

Both China and India are ancient nations with long, enduring histories. More importantly, they are also youthful nations that continuously pursue self-improvement and remain vibrant. The youth have always been a mighty force driving the two nations forward despite all challenges. Liang Qichao (1873-1929),

one of the greatest thinkers and educators in modern Chinese history, once said that a nation will be strong only when its young people are strong, and a nation will make progress only when its younger generations make progress. Indian writer, poet, and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) once said that the youth are like morning stars, shining

a light of hope for the nation's future. Both China and India suffered enormous hardships in modern times. They endured intense humiliation, their people were subjected to great pain, and their once-leading civilizations plunged into darkness. The youth from both countries fought for national independence and people's liberation. Through these efforts, a stirring

chapter of young heroes emerged in both lands. After the People's Republic of China was established in 1949 and India gained independence in 1947, young people of the two countries took the initiative to shoulder great responsibilities and brave the most challenging and demanding missions. They dedicated their youth to building the young republics and made outstanding contributions.

By the turn of the 21st century, both countries were forging ahead on a new journey toward national rejuvenation. Young people from the two countries began pursuing a great cause and a great dream. Today, Chinese youth are devoted to national development and striving to achieve the goal of building a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful by 2049. Indian youth are striving for realization of the 15-year



A still from the Chinese classical dance drama *Silk Road, Flower Rain*. Dramatizing the magnificent Dunhuang frescos with unique artistic style, the dance drama has been performed for more than four decades since its debut in 1979. (Photo by Ma Gengping/China Pictorial)

that of their nations.

Young people from both countries have played a key role as a fresh driving force and spearheaded promotion of mutual understanding and friendship. China and India have the largest youth populations in the world, and

Prabhākaramitra, a Tripitaka master from India, in Chang'an, capital of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). From the Indian master, Xuanzang learned about Nalanda Mahavihara, the center of Buddhism knowledge and learning in Bihar, which attracted scholars worldwide. After a 17-year terrestrial journey through the wilderness, Xuanzang finally arrived in India in 631. He brought back more than 650 Buddhist scriptures to his motherland after completing his studies in India, a vivid illustration of China-India youth exchange in ancient times.

China-India relations have recently encountered some setbacks and faced challenges. To steer the bilateral relationship back to the normal track, people can find solutions from the history of

The youth of the two countries should learn from each other's strongpoints to offset shortcomings, look to each other with respect, appreciation, and openness, and find new ways to contribute to world peace and development.

development agenda launched in 2017. Although the times keep changing, young people in China and India have stayed committed to the same mission. Across different times, the destiny of the youth has always been closely tied to

the combined number of young people in the two countries is more than the population of any other country. The future of China-India relations rests with the youth.

Some 1,400 years ago, young Chinese monk Xuanzang met



Participants of the 4th Asian-African Youth Festival make Chinese dumplings during a Chinese culture experiencing activity at the China-Japan Youth Exchange Center, October 18, 2019. (Photo from CFP)

exchange and mutual learning between the two civilizations, especially friendship between young people of the two countries. Young people from both countries need to more actively offer advice and suggestions on national development, ponder over global trends, and explore solutions to strengthen cooperation between China and India. Such efforts facilitate exploration of new avenues for the two neighboring emerging powers to work together. The youth of both countries need to enhance understanding and mutual trust, promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and work together towards a better bilateral relationship. They also need to drive cooperation in specific fields to a deeper level, complement each other's

advantages and achieve win-win development to better serve their respective countries.

The youth of China and India should act as the driving force promoting world peace and development. Many unprecedented uncertainties for the world economy and international situation still prevail today. Furthermore, frequent extreme weather events, natural disasters, and global issues such as health crisis and food crisis continue to threaten world development. China and India are two neighboring emerging powers, each with a population of more than one billion. Facing global uncertainties and challenges, they should strengthen communication and exchange. The healthy development of China-India ties will benefit

the two countries and their peoples, and inject stability and positive energy into the peace and prosperity of the region and the world at large. Growing up in the internet era, young people of China and India have embraced a global vision and pursue their dreams on the global stage. They should jointly create a bright future for the world. The youth of the two countries should learn from each other's strongpoints to offset shortcomings, look to each other with respect, appreciation, and openness, and find new ways to contribute to world peace and development.

Just as Chinese President Xi Jinping said, young people are like the young trees thriving on earth that will eventually grow into towering trees to provide shelter for those in need. They are like the rising sun whose energy keeps on increasing as it climbs up the sky until the moment when it lights and warms up the earth. The youth of the two countries should actively carry out exchange and mutual learning, enhance mutual understanding, and play a major role in promoting cultural and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries to foster more healthy bilateral ties. 🇨🇳

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The author is vice president and editor-in-chief of China International Communications Group. This is an excerpt from his speech at the China-India Youth Dialogue.

A Bright Future for Chinese and Indian Youth

By Zha Liyou



In today's complex and fluid world, China-India relations are like a startup ready to go, and the heavy responsibility of the "seed money" falls on the youth. We must succeed, and failure is not an option.

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory letter to the World Youth Development Forum on July 21 this year. In the letter, Xi wrote that the youth represent hope and are the architects of the future. Xi expressed hope that young people around the world would advocate peace, development, equity, justice, democracy, and freedom, which are the common values of humanity. He also called

on the youth to promote the Global Development Initiative with concrete action and help facilitate implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development towards a new chapter of solidarity and cooperation among young people around the world. The president's message was highly significant for the youth from both China and India, and I would like to share my understanding of it.

First, improving China-India relations should be a

consensus. Both China and India are major developing countries and should join hands to make their voice better heard. Both are ancient civilizations and share many similarities which have already set a foundation for friendship. The two countries are neighbors that cannot move away from each other. A Chinese saying goes, "Distant relatives are not as helpful as close neighbors." Cooperation is beneficial for both China and India while confrontation



Local women wear traditional costumes to celebrate a festival in Chennai, India, April 1, 2022. (Photo from CFP)

will hurt both. Bilateral trade data in recent years shows that interdependence between China and India is a reality which won't be changed by the selfish wishes of a few people. Therefore, China and India, especially the hundreds of millions of young people in the two countries, should ride the trend and continue to promote bilateral ties. These efforts will benefit not only this generation, but many more to come.

Second, China and India should meet each other halfway to steer bilateral relations towards stable and sound development. During his visit to India this March, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi offered a constructive three-point approach to advance China-India relations: First, both sides should view bilateral relations from a

long-term perspective. Second, China and India should view each other's development with a win-win mentality. Third, both countries should participate in multilateral processes with a cooperative posture.

On July 7 this year, when meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Wang said that against the backdrop of once-in-a-century global changes, major countries like China and India cannot simply drift with the tide. Instead, the two countries are hardwired to maintain strategic focus. The two sides should take concrete action to follow through on the important consensus reached by leaders of the two countries that China and India are not threats to each other but partners creating opportunities for each other's

development.

Recently, working with India and other BRICS countries, China successfully hosted the 14th BRICS Summit, a vivid example of joint efforts to improve China-India ties. China and India, especially the hundreds of millions of young people in the two countries, should adopt a long-term vision and work towards win-win cooperation. They should look at the big picture, roll up their sleeves, work hard, and do the right thing. Courage is needed to transform ideas into action and consensus into reality.

Third, to improve China-India relations, young people need a clearer understanding of their positions in society. Many young Chinese people like Bollywood movies, yoga, and Darjeeling tea, and some 30,000 Indian students are studying in China. But in general, youth exchange between the two countries doesn't match the status of China and India as two major countries. Part of the reason is unclear positioning of the youth in China-India relations.

Chinese President Xi Jinping once said that young people should become a new force promoting friendship between the two peoples. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed wishes that the youth of India and China build a "Great Wall of trust and cooperation." I believe that first of all, the youth should be the pioneers advancing China-India ties. I have heard lots of stories about young people promoting mutual understanding and friendship

of the two countries. I met an office worker who quit a good job and comfortable life in Shanghai to come to India alone to learn Odissi Dance, and an Indian youth leader who has actively participated in various activities to promote bilateral relations and voice strong support for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. Second, the youth from both sides should find the courage to speak their minds and establish a correct view of right and wrong. One of my Twitter friends in Mumbai always adopts a just and objective position on China-India relations and posts unbiased views and constructive suggestions. After seeing so much biased coverage of Chinese medical equipment by the Indian media during the pandemic, a young Kolkata businessman sat down with the Chinese media to speak the truth and praise Chinese medical devices. Third, young people from both sides should work to innovate and explore new realms. With strong support from Avijit Banerjee, head of Cheena-Bhavana of Visva-Bharati University, the Consulate General of China in Kolkata joined the university to successfully organize the first China-India Seminar on National Governance. Cutting-edge and advanced governance experience was exchanged there. Succinctly, the China-India relationship is both time-honored and new. It needs to be respected with devotion and developed with confidence.

The Consulate General



A performance of *Shiv-Yin*, a contemporary China-India dance drama, in Fuzhou, December 3, 2017. The drama explores concepts of gender as well as *yin* and *yang* throughout the distinct cultures of China and India. In a larger context, it searches for commonalities shared by the two great civilizations. (Photo from CFP)

of China in Kolkata always considers our responsibility and focus to be improving Sino-Indian cooperation and strengthening exchange between Chinese and Indian youth. We are building bridges between youth leaders of China and India for more exchange activities. We will continue to actively promote exchange between young people of the two countries in culture, sports, film and television, and entrepreneurship. We are promoting exchange and interaction between schools in the two countries and enhancing mutual understanding. We are helping more Indian students secure the opportunity to further their studies in China. Every February and March, we recommend Indian students for Chinese scholarships. I ask my young Indian friends

to pass on this information to your friends. We take every application seriously and are happy to welcome more diligent Indian students to come to China to study.

In today's complex and fluid world, China-India relations are like a startup ready to go, and the heavy responsibility of the "seed money" falls on the youth. We must succeed, and failure is not an option. The road ahead is long and bumpy, and the journey has just started. We should never stop but keep striding towards a better future. Young friends, let's join hands and work together for a bright future for both of our countries! 🇨🇳

The author is the Chinese Consul General to Kolkata. This is an excerpt from his speech at the China-India Youth Dialogue.

Friendship through Exchange

By Avijit Banerjee



The stronger the interaction between young people of the two countries, the greater the opportunity to overcome misperceptions in today's society.

India and China, two ancient civilizations, have jointly written a brilliant chapter of world civilizations. As close neighbors, the two countries have influenced each other deeply throughout a long history of exchange. The progenitors of the two countries created a magnificent history through exchange, and friendly exchange continues to this day. Indian Buddhism, astronomy, medicine, literature, music, and dance entered China, while Chinese silk, porcelain, tea, and printing entered India. In 1988,

then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi made a landmark visit to China, which gave a historic boost to people-to-people and cultural exchange between the two countries.

People-to-people exchange is always a key component of international relations, and it may play a more important role in India-China relations than in most other bilateral relations. India and China have created rich material and spiritual heritage through people-to-people and cultural exchange, which is well recorded in the global annals of civilizational

exchange. Dunhuang in China and Nalanda in India both bear witness to the cultural exchange and integration of the two civilizations. Even when bilateral relations suffered setbacks, people-to-people and cultural exchange remained uninterrupted.

Entering the 21st century, India and China had established a strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity. High-level exchange between the two countries has become more frequent alongside accelerated economic and

trade cooperation as well as cooperation in culture, education, and many other fields. The two countries have properly handled differences, sought common development, and strengthened friendly exchange. During his visit to India in 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping launched a China-India cultural exchange program with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi covering tourism, youth exchange, museum, language teaching, film, translation of classics and contemporary works, and other fields.

According to statistics, China and India have established 14 pairs of sister provinces and cities. At present, about 20,000 Indian students study in China. Mutual visits by 100-member youth delegations have been conducted smoothly on a reciprocal basis. Some Chinese art troupes have given commercial performances in India and were welcomed and enjoyed by Indian people. In China, practicing yoga and watching Indian movies have become the new fashion for young people. More and more people regard each other's country as a tourist destination. Such exchange has undoubtedly brought the two peoples closer and also enhanced their friendship, mutual understanding, and mutual trust.

After informal meetings between President Xi and Prime Minister Modi in 2018 and 2019, India-China relations again received huge public attention. Bilateral relations rapidly developed, laying a solid foundation for people-to-people



A carpet and tapestry merchant from India shows his products to a Chinese customer at the 21st China International Fair for Investment and Trade in Xiamen, southeastern China's Fujian Province, September 9, 2021. (Photo from VCG)

exchange. Despite these achievements, the frequency and scale of people-to-people and cultural exchange between India and China, the two largest developing countries in the world, still lags far behind their economic and trade cooperation.

The key group that influences the dynamics of India-China relations is young people. They will shape the future of bilateral relations. People-to-people exchange is conducive to eliminating prejudice, fear, and hatred while strengthening mutual trust. The youth should become the major force in promoting people-to-people and cultural exchange between India and China. The more importance we attach to strengthening interaction among young people from the two countries, the greater the opportunity will be to overcome deeply rooted misperceptions in today's society.

Interaction at the local level is another vital approach to stabilizing India-China relations. People-to-people and cultural exchange projects should be enhanced in depth and breadth not only as a supplement to economic and trade cooperation, but also to the greatest extent. Major room remains for local-level exchange to play a role in promoting mutual understanding and cooperation, which is often overlooked. Strengthening people-to-people and cultural exchange, especially among young people, will not only help ease tension between India and China, but also lay a solid foundation for the future development of bilateral relations. 

The author is head of the Department of Chinese Language and Culture (Cheena Bhavana) at Visva-Bharati University. This article is an excerpt from his speech at the China-India Youth Dialogue.

The Chinese “Debt Trap” Is a Myth

By Rama Chandran

“Debt trap” accusation against China is a deliberate attempt to undermine the BRI. Loans from China are used to build infrastructure projects that boost productivity and increase repayment capacity, whereas loans from the West are normally used to cover trade and fiscal deficits at high-interest rates.

In October 2018, former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence used the phrase “debt-trap diplomacy” in comments opposing China’s global strategy. “Loading poor countries up with debt, refusing to renegotiate terms, and then taking control of the infrastructure itself,” said former U.S. Attorney General William Barr in 2020.

In fact, the term “debt-trap diplomacy” first emerged in May 2018 when the U.S. State Department distributed a paper called “Debtbook Diplomacy” unveiled by the

Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School to the media. The two writers of the paper, Sam Parker and Gabrielle Chefitz, commissioned by the U.S. State Department, were from the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense, instead of an academic background in economics.

Soon, this study became the source for the State Department to gain more funds from the Congress for creating derisive reports on

China’s global investments, according to the FY 2018 Department of State Agency Financial Report: Collection of Sidebars.

As the number of countries joining China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) rises, the negative reporting on it by the West grows accordingly. The West uses the term “debt trap” to describe Chinese investments in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

This false narrative wrongfully portrays Chinese investments in other



Night view of the Vietnam Ca Mau project undertaken by China National Chemical Engineering Group, February 4, 2012. The Belt and Road Initiative has created new opportunities for Chinese engineering companies to go global. (Photo from CFB)

developing countries. The deliberate fiction is that a country “weighed down by Chinese loans becomes Beijing’s puppet.”

THE MYTH OF HAMBANTOTA

A prime example of this despicable strategy is how the description of the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota was manipulated. A study by Deborah Brautigam, a professor of international political economy at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, and Meg Rithmire, an associate professor at Harvard Business School, carefully exposed the Western lie about China’s “debt-trap policy” around Hambantota.

Not China but the Canadian International Development Agency hired the Canadian firm SNC-Lavalin to carry out a feasibility study for the port. The 2003 study supported construction of the Hambantota port, and the greatest fear for Canada was losing the construction

contract to European competitors. SNC-Lavalin recommended a joint-venture agreement between the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) and a “private consortium” on a build-own-operate-transfer (BOOT) basis.

The Canada-dominated project ultimately failed, but the plan to build the port gained momentum during the rule of the Rajapaksas. A second feasibility report produced in 2006 by the Danish engineering firm Ramboll made similar recommendations. Armed with the Ramboll report, Sri Lanka approached the U.S. and India, both of which declined. That is when a Chinese construction firm, China Harbor Engineering Company, stepped in. The Export-Import Bank of China (China EximBank) agreed to fund it, and China Harbor won the contract in 2007, six years before Chinese President Xi Jinping introduced the BRI. China EximBank offered Sri Lanka a 15-year commercial loan of US\$307 million with a

four-year grace period, at a 6.3 percent fixed interest rate.

Phase I of the port project was completed on schedule within three years. Instead of waiting for Phase I to generate revenues, Mahinda Rajapaksa pushed ahead with Phase II. In 2012, Sri Lanka borrowed another US\$757 million from China EximBank at a reduced post-crisis interest rate of two percent.

By 2014, Hambantota was losing money. The SLPA signed an agreement with China Harbor and China Merchants Port Holdings to have them jointly develop and operate the new port for 35 years. China Merchants was operating a new terminal in the Colombo port, and China Harbor had invested US\$1.4 billion in Colombo Port City.

In the 2015 elections, Rajapaksa was defeated by his health minister, Maithripala Sirisena. When Sirisena took office, Sri Lanka owed more to Japan, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) than to China. Of the US\$4.5 billion in debt



The groundbreaking ceremony for the Huye highway project in Rwanda, March 29, 2019. The project is located in southern Rwanda and has a total length of 66.3 kilometers. (Photo from CFB)

payments Sri Lanka made in 2017, only five percent were because of Hambantota. Sri Lanka's debt to China is only 10 percent of the country's total foreign debt, while international capital markets borrowing makes up 47 percent and the ADB 13 percent.

With facts in hand, Chinese finance is clearly not the source of Sri Lanka's distress. Colombo arranged a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and decided to raise money by leasing out the underperforming port to China Merchants, making it the majority shareholder with a 99-year lease, and used the US\$1.12 billion to bolster its foreign reserves without paying China EximBank.

U.S. think tanks sensed

emerging fodder for its rumor mill, and suddenly Sri Lanka featured prominently in foreign-policy tirades in Washington. Pence suggested Hambantota could become a "forward military base" for China, ignoring that Hambantota's location is strategic only from an economic perspective.

Although India was alarmed by Hambantota, the 100-year-old India-based international banking advisor Meghraj Group joined the U.K.-based engineering firm Atkins Limited to write a long-term plan for Hambantota Port and a new business zone. French firms Bolloré and CMA-CGM have partnered with China Merchants and China Harbor on port development in Nigeria, Cameroon, and elsewhere.

CHINA'S HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS IN AFRICA

The other slices of the "debt trap" myth involve debtor countries such as Kenya, Zambia, and Malaysia. Over the past nine years, China successively signed more than 200 cooperation documents on joint construction of the BRI, Digital Silk Road, and Health Silk Road programs with 149 countries and 32 international organizations.

In Indonesia, the Jakarta-Bandung High-speed Railway emerged as a landmark project of the BRI. Bangladesh is receiving nearly US\$42.5 billion from China, more than 10 times any other country's investment there. Japan is at US\$3.21 billion and India at US\$3.95 billion. The rate of interest on Chinese loans is a mere 12 percent, which is lower than India (18.5 percent) and Japan (14.5 percent). The starting period of repayment can be as late as 18 months and delays of up to 18 months can be permitted due to financial stress, and China has given such breathers to nine African countries.

In contrast to their Western counterparts, Chinese banks are willing to restructure the terms of existing loans and have never seized assets from any country. In another study, Sweden-based researcher Hussein Askary, the West Asia coordinator for the Schiller Institute, found that the "debt trap" accusation against China is a deliberate attempt to undermine the BRI. Askary argued that loans

from China are used to build infrastructure like roads, ports, railways, hospitals, and schools that boost productivity and increase repayment capacity, whereas loans from Western financial institutions are normally used to cover trade and fiscal deficits at high-interest rates. Sri Lanka has huge investment from the U.S., but it's not in infrastructure, but in political groups to move them towards the so-called Indo-Pacific Strategy.

A recent study from the British charity Debt Justice placed the blame for the African debt crisis squarely at the feet of the West instead of China. The study showed that African governments owe three times more debt to Western banks, asset managers, and oil traders than they do to China and that these lenders charged double the interest. Debt Justice's analysis of World Bank data of 49 African governments showed that at the end of 2020, nearly 75 percent of their total US\$696 billion external debt was owed to non-Chinese private creditors and multilateral institutions.

Yet a study report, published by the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University and the University of Oxford in June 2022, debunked the so-called "Chinese debt trap." This report attributed the debt in Africa to private Western holders. The "Chinese debt trap" narrative in Africa is a construct of U.S.-China strategic rivalry more than a



A freight train from Kazakhstan nears Alashankou Port in northwestern China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, July 28, 2016. Alashankou has become an emerging hub integrating trade, logistics, warehousing, and other functions. (Photo from CFB)

reflection of ground realities.

Capital, in the form of debt repayments, thus continues to flow from Africa to Europe and North America. The report cited confidential estimates of international financial institutions that showed sub-Saharan Africa's government debts to Chinese entities totaled around US\$78 billion at the end of 2019. This was just eight percent of the region's total debt of US\$954 billion and 18 percent of Africa's external debt.

Roughly half of Africa's public debt was domestically issued, and the other half was owed to external actors. Of the latter, one-third was owed to bilateral official partners, one-third to international financial institutions, and one-third in the form of Eurobonds denominated in

a currency other than that of the issuing state. Of the bilateral debt, about half was owed to China.

The Global Development Policy Center at Boston University and the China Africa Research Initiative at Johns Hopkins University estimated that Beijing has lent about US\$150 billion to African countries since 2000, mostly through China EximBank (60 percent) and China Development Bank (25 percent), suggesting that about US\$75 billion has been paid off already.

The data showed that Chinese lending was not driving a continent-wide expansion of debt and was concentrated in five countries: Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia. China is helping many underdeveloped

countries by jointly investing with local companies to build infrastructure in the best interest of the citizens of the host countries by sharing both risk and profits. For instance, to develop the Doraleh Container Terminal, Djibouti borrowed US\$268 million from seven banks at an interest rate of nine percent over nine years. By comparison, its first Chinese loan was US\$620 million over 20 years at an interest rate of 2.85 percent, with a seven-year grace period.

Money owed to China by various countries in Africa is negligible compared to what they owe to others. Most African countries owe far more to other countries and the IMF than they do to China. Southeast Asian countries owe Japan just under US\$300 billion for infrastructure projects while they owe China about half of that, less than US\$150 billion. Pakistan owes China about US\$20 billion while it owes other countries and the IMF US\$100 billion.

According to Zimbabwe-based *The Herald's* reporting, private media journalists are being trained by an outfit called Information for Development Trust (IDT), which poses as an independent investigative journalism center, with funding from the U.S. Embassy in Harare. Through the embassy, local journalists are sponsored to smear China's investment as engaging in malpractices and violations of human rights. The U.S. Congress passed the Strategic Competition Act of 2021, which

authorized the "Countering Chinese Influence Fund." A total of US\$300 million for each fiscal year from 2022 to 2026 was appropriated to counter the "malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party," according to the Act. The Act states the need to support and train local media and journalists to investigate the BRI.

THE WALL STREET TRAP

An expected projection, U.S. deployment of debt-trap diplomacy to crush developing countries has been thoroughly outlined in three books: *The New Confessions of an Economic Hitman: How America Took Over the World* by John Perkins, *A Game as Old as Empire: The Secret World of Economic Hit Men and the Web of Global Corruption* by Steven Hiatt, and *Winner Take All: China's Race for Resources and What It Means for the World* by Dambisa Moyo.

Moyo, an expert in global commodities markets, wrote that the breadth of China's operation is awesome and seemingly unstoppable. John Perkins was a U.S. economic hitman and claimed many people like him cheated countries out of trillions of dollars. They channeled money from the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), and "AID" organizations into the treasury of huge conglomerates and a few wealthy families that control natural resources.

Confirming the confession by Perkins, analysis by a trio

of complex systems theorists at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich exposed the nexus of a small group of Western companies, mainly banks, controlling the global economy. As early as 2011, the Zurich team pulled details for 43,060 transnational companies and the share ownerships linking them from Orbis 2007, a database listing 37 million companies and investors. The work revealed a core of 1,318 companies with interlocking ownerships. Each had ties to two or more other companies, and on average, they were connected to 20. Although they represented 20 percent of global operating revenues, all appeared to collectively own through their shares in the majority of the large blue chip and manufacturing firms, representing a further 60 percent of global revenues.

The team further traced a "super-entity" of 147 tightly knit companies. All of their ownership was held by other members of the super-entity controlling 40 percent of the total wealth in the network. In effect, less than one percent of companies were able to control 40 percent of the entire network. Most were financial conglomerates, and the top 20 included Barclays Bank, JPMorgan Chase & Co., and Goldman Sachs. The trap was never in China, but another deflection by the usual suspects. 📌

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The author is a reputed Indian writer, editor, columnist, and scholar.

BRICS for Inclusive Global Governance and India-China Solidarity

By Josukutty C. A.

The BRICS mechanism has provided a much needed channel for India and China to foster cooperation and facilitate cordiality.

China and India are two major emerging economies and the two most populous countries, representing about a third of the world's population. A healthy relationship between the two countries is vital for world peace and stability. Despite a spirit of peaceful coexistence envisioned by a number of measures, the bilateral relationship has been marked by both cooperation and a mix of distrust and

security concerns including efforts to maintain peace in their border areas. One key reason for the scarred bilateral relationship has been a lack of effective forums to facilitate cordiality.

Although the primary focus of BRICS is to improve global governance, especially global financial governance, it also represents willingness and spirit of the member countries, especially India and China, to work together to improve bilateral relations.

BRICS strives to promote a balanced, peaceful, and stable world which would not be possible without China and India settling into a good bilateral relationship. It is imperative that their differences are resolved amicably and as quickly as possible, which can only be achieved through better communication at various levels fostered through confidence-building measures, especially mechanisms like BRICS.



The Geely assembly line at the BelGee plant in Belarus, May 2, 2017. In response to China's Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese carmaker Geely cooperated with Belarusian companies to form BelGee, the first car manufacturing joint venture between China and Belarus. (Photo from CFB)

MULTIPLE TRACKS OF COOPERATION

BRICS provides multiple platforms to facilitate cooperation among its member countries including the BRICS Summit, a BRICS leaders' meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit, and more than 100 official events with 20 taking place at the ministerial level. A broad network of industry-specific contacts and cooperation within the BRICS countries involving business communities, academics, and other civil society representatives has emerged. Cooperative mechanisms running through Track I involve formal diplomatic engagement. Track II is government-affiliated institutions engagement, and Track III seeks civil

society and people-to-people engagement to foster development of comprehensive relationships in myriad fields. This immensely benefits sustaining channels of

BRICS strives to promote a balanced, peaceful, and stable world which would not be possible without China and India settling into a good bilateral relationship.

communication even in complex contexts and building bonhomie among interlocutors. Over time, the mechanisms will also consolidate the mutual trust that underpins BRICS initiatives.

The BRICS New Development Bank (NDB)

and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) have been particularly useful. To assist member countries address the COVID-19 pandemic, the NDB approved an emergency fund of up to US\$10 billion. People-to-people exchange in areas including culture, media, sports, education, film and youth has proven immensely valuable in terms of improving bilateral relationships. BRICS has consistently advocated an inclusive and win-win approach for India-China relations. It has succeeded in ensuring cooperation in many areas such as economy, finance, and trade, and has promoted coordination on major international affairs.

As the world's two largest developing countries as well as founding members of BRICS, China and India are firm supporters and active participants of BRICS cooperation. They always

make cooperation with other BRICS countries a priority in foreign policy. Currently, both countries are facing a historic mission of growing their economies and improving their people's livelihood. China-India cooperation under the BRICS framework is always

complementary. Major projects of bilateral interest include the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor, and the two countries are working to foster a “Trans-Himalayas Economic Growth Region.” Mutual recognition of pharmaceutical products including COVID-19 vaccines and medicines within BRICS countries is also moving in the right direction for cooperation.

MUTUAL SUPPORT AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

Reciprocal mutual support between China and India when hosting the 13th and 14th BRICS summits is indicative of their shared desire to build stronger China-India relations. The summits pushed BRICS countries to forge greater cooperation and build stronger bonds. *The New Delhi Declaration* adopted at the 13th BRICS Summit reiterated commitment to enhancing intra-BRICS cooperation under the three pillars of politics and security, economy and finance, and cultural and people-to-people exchange. It also emphasized the need to work together to fight COVID-19 and the benefit of keeping outer space free from an arms race, strongly condemned terrorism in all forms and manifestations, and reaffirmed cooperation in a variety of fields. *The Beijing Declaration* of the 14th BRICS Summit stressed “making instruments of



Local workers at the assembly plant of China FAW Group in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality of Eastern Cape Province, South Africa, January 2017. The group became the first Chinese manufacturer to localize its supply chains of production and delivery in Africa as the plant began operation in the Coega Industrial Development Zone. (Photo from CFB)

global governance more inclusive, representative, and participatory.” *The Beijing Declaration* reaffirmed the need for comprehensive reform of the UN including its Security Council, with an eye on making it more representative, effective, and efficient so it can better respond to global challenges. It also reaffirmed the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms under the principles of equality and mutual respect and extended support for an open, transparent, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and rules-based multilateral trading system, as embodied in the World Trade Organization.

BRICS as a mechanism has brought India and China closer despite a few divergent

views. The conceptual framework and objectives of BRICS are based on mutual understanding and accommodation towards inclusive global governance, and the BRICS forum facilitates interactions across a variety of areas of common concern. It provides a much needed channel for India and China to communicate and negotiate, leaving a pacifying effect on the tension-ridden bilateral relations. 

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BRICS Kindling Global Development and Security Architecture for the New Era

By Karori Singh

India-China collaboration can make the BRICS mechanism more effective and shape a judicious world order that serves the interests of all countries.

Meetings of three trans-regional forums—the BRICS foreign ministers’ meeting, the Quad Summit, and the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting—were held in May this year against a backdrop of a devastated global economy and threatened global security. In tandem with the

COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine crisis led to higher inflation, soaring prices, and supply chain disruption. Unlike the BRICS meeting, the other two gatherings underperformed in terms of generating conformity on global development despite high hopes for devising a framework for a common approach to addressing pressing global challenges.

HEGEMONY-UNILATERALISM OVERREACH

Concerns raised during the three meetings pointed towards unilateralism with hegemonic attitude as the root cause of present woes plaguing the global community. Failure to practice solidarity in combating the pandemic caused a lack of willingness

to engage in post-pandemic economic recovery that snowballed into the Ukraine crisis, due to failed diplomacy and dialogue.

BRICS is neither an intergovernmental organization nor a geopolitical bloc. Its vision is to promote sustainable and inclusive global development and security for all nations.

Recognizing the overreach of unilateralism and growing global preference for development over war, U.S. President Joe Biden proposed the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) to foster prosperity among members including Asia-Pacific countries at the Quad Summit in Japan. It was certainly an attempt to reaffirm U.S. engagement in the region, but the proposal is not likely to flourish unless the U.S. grants member states access to its market. Hence, it has been perceived more as a containment measure to offset China's influence in the region rather than a model for development. It will, therefore, generate more polarity rather than inclusiveness in global development.

BRICS HERALDS A NEW ERA

In view of the fragility of unilateralism and hegemonic mindset, the BRICS foreign ministers' meeting was held in May ahead of the 14th BRICS Summit. In

his opening remarks at the meeting, Chinese President Xi Jinping called on member countries to work together to build a global community

of security for all. He called BRICS "a positive inspiring and constructive force," and added that "both history and reality tell us that seeking one's own security at the expense of others' will only create new tensions and risks." He emphasized that BRICS countries need to strengthen political

mutual trust and security cooperation and maintain close communication and coordination on major international and regional issues.

The 14th BRICS Summit adopted a broad theme of "Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development." Addressing the BRICS Business Forum on June 22, BRICS leaders highlighted the achievements and potential of BRICS countries in technological competency and increased investment attractiveness that has been promoting business and development. They hailed the role of the BRICS business community in advancing cooperation in different sectors. In his speech, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi underscored India's



Representatives at the BRICS High-level Forum on Sustainable Development, themed on "Shaping the Future of BRICS Value Chains," in Fuzhou City, Fujian Province, June 29, 2022. The forum, held both online and offline, provided a vital platform for BRICS enterprises to communicate and cooperate with each other. (Photo from VCG)

COMMENT

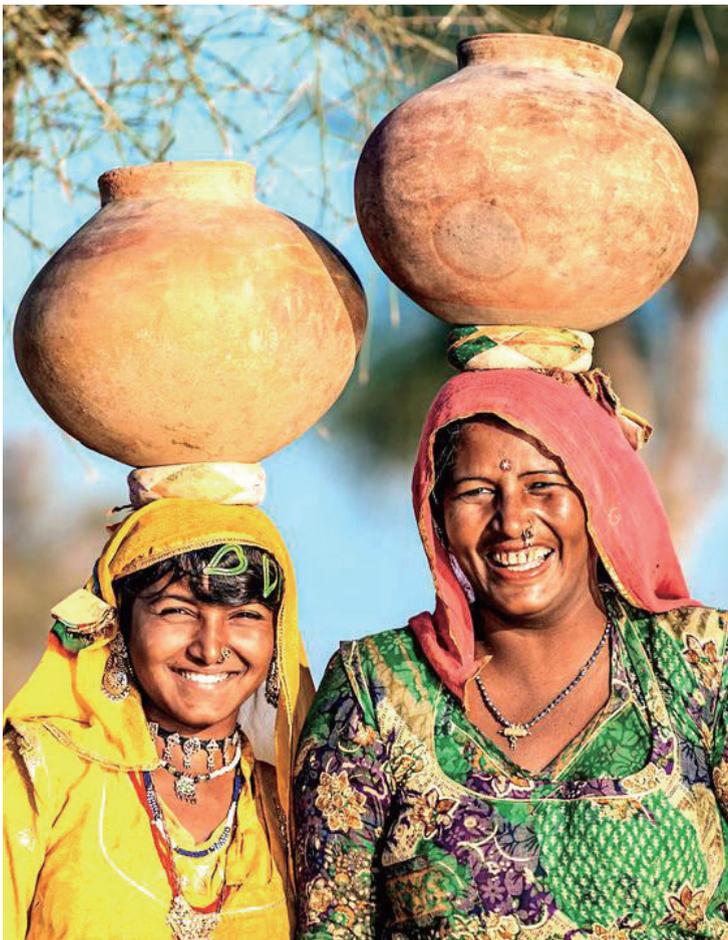
favorable business ecosystem and claimed that the country's digital economy will reach US\$1 trillion by 2025, which further strengthened the widespread BRICS belief in emerging economies as an engine of global growth.

Stressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals, President Xi identified four main focuses for BRICS cooperation: Embracing solidarity and coordination to jointly maintain world peace and stability; Reaching

out to each other to jointly promote global sustainable development; Overcoming difficulties together to jointly pursue win-win cooperation; and Practicing inclusivity to jointly expand openness and integration. Xi also called for efforts to build a BRICS partnership on the New Industrial Revolution, strengthen cooperation on the digital economy, smart manufacturing, clean energy and low-carbon technology, and support industrial

restructuring and upgrading in BRICS countries. In his speech, he cited the need to advance cooperation on energy, food, infrastructure, and skills training.

BRICS is neither an intergovernmental organization nor a geopolitical bloc. Its vision is to promote sustainable and inclusive global development and security for all nations. The 14th BRICS Summit undertook a realistic assessment of regional and global situations. "BRICS Plus" cooperation has resulted in clear evidence of its vanguard role for emerging markets and developing countries that have been underrepresented in global development and security architecture. The work has effectively offset the negative effects of unilateralism and hegemonic order which has accumulated and exacerbated due to deteriorating economic conditions and increasing military build-up. The "BRICS Plus" is a welcome step, and interactions with other regional organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organizations (SCO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and multilateral groups in Africa and Latin America have been of utmost importance. Moreover, alongside promoting development partnerships, BRICS needs more focus on financial cooperation to cope with the U.S. dollar-dominated international financial system.



Two Indian women in traditional clothes carry pots over their heads to fetch water. (Photo from CFB)

PIVOTAL ROLE OF INDIA AND CHINA

India and China have common civilizational values, convergence of world views and shared interests in promoting global development and common security. Recognizing difficulties in India-China relations, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar categorically said that "we are perfectly capable of managing it." China is appreciative of India's position of strategic autonomy on global issues. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has made it clear that both sides should jointly address various global challenges and safeguard the common interests of the two countries as well as the vast number of developing countries. This solidarity signifies that both India and China are capable of exploring avenues of cooperation while dealing with their differences.

China is geographically and economically destined to build a bridge between Asia-Pacific and Eurasian regions, and India has trained human resources to advance the development of many regions of the world. The Asia-Pacific and Eurasia together have immense potential in shaping the post-pandemic and post-Ukraine-crisis world order. Both India and China have reaffirmed the constructive role and potential of BRICS. Prime Minister Modi said that BRICS countries have a "very similar view of the governance of the global



The domestic finals of the Application Skills Competition of Data Analysis and Visualization Technology, part of the 2021 Belt and Road and BRICS Skills Development and Technology Innovation Competition, held in Chongqing, China, October 29, 2021. (Photo from VCG)

economy," and expressed satisfaction with "practical cooperation" in a number of areas among BRICS countries. Also, he has regularly called for reform of the world's multilateral governance system to make it more representative and inclusive.

India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar rightly pointed out that "Europe has to grow out of the mindset that Europe's problems are the world's problems but the world's problems are not Europe's problems." In fact, no country can thrive

in isolation in the world of interdependence, and the concerns of each country must be addressed while making collective decisions. Hence, collaboration between India and China can make the BRICS mechanism more effective and shape a judicious world order that serves the interests of all countries. 📌

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Youth Connections Enhancing Bilateral Ties

By Zhang Hua

Throughout history, young people from China and India have learned from each other and seized progress together.

More frequent visits make friends closer, and neighbors get pushed together the more they see each other. China and India share a natural border defined by mountains and rivers. The two share a recorded history of exchange of more than 2,000 years. China and India have been learning from each other, and the histories and cultures of the two countries have been blended. Both being ancient Eastern civilizations, they enjoy a lasting traditional friendship. With unique and splendid cultures, we share many historical similarities. Moreover, both China and India have a large population and diverse ethnic groups and languages. The two countries are also both

major Third World countries and emerging economies. Both countries shoulder the historic mission of improving people's livelihood and accelerating economic development, and both safeguard the common interests of developing countries and hold the same expectations for a multi-polar world. China and India have extensive common interests that are highly complementary.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India, joint efforts from both sides have driven exchange and cooperation in various fields such as economics, trade, tourism, and science and technology. The extraordinary history of bilateral relations has generally stayed on a healthy

trajectory. Especially in 2021, bilateral trade volume reached US\$125.6 billion, surpassing the US\$100 billion mark for the first time by quite a wide margin. The development testifies to a solid and practical foundation of economic and trade cooperation and a huge potential for future collaboration between the two countries.

A sober assessment of history can pierce through the fog of time and soak up the original goodwill that established their diplomatic ties 72 years ago. The spirits of good-neighborliness, friendship, solidarity, and cooperation have been crucial to the sound development of bilateral relations. As major emerging economies, China and India are both at a critical period of national development

and national rejuvenation. Both countries face similar problems in economic and social development and there is a huge space for cooperation. Analysis has shown that a sound China-India relationship will not only help each other's development, but also play a significant role in fostering peace, stability, and prosperity in Asia and the world.

If China and India speak with one voice, the whole world will listen. In fact, China-India relations have long transcended the bilateral scope to exert important and far-reaching influence on the whole world. In this year and the next, global governance will witness an "Asian moment." China and India will host the summits of BRICS, G20, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, respectively. The two countries will continue to participate in and promote international multi-lateral agendas. Their joint rise along the path to national rejuvenation, characterized as "dragon and elephant dancing together," is not only an inevitable choice for the peaceful development of China and India, but also a realistic need for the peaceful development of the world.

At present, unprecedented global changes and the once-in-a-century pandemic have emerged at the same time. Economic recovery has been a struggle, security challenges have worsened, and global development is facing headwinds and adverse currents. The world has reached a new period of turbulence



Students and teachers from Yunnan Minzu University perform fitness yoga at the 2022 International Yoga Day & China-India Cultural Exchange Event held in Kunming, capital of southwestern China's Yunnan Province, June 21, 2022. (Photo courtesy of Yunnan Minzu University)

and transformation. In this context, calls for fairness and justice in the international community have become louder, the need for development and cooperation has become more urgent, and the desire of emerging economies and developing countries to unite to improve their standing has become stronger. China and India are facing new opportunities for development and unprecedented challenges as well. The two urgently need to enhance mutual trust, deepen cooperation, and conduct in-depth discussions on topics such as accelerating world economic recovery, deepening pragmatic cooperation, implementing global development initiatives, and building a new era of global partnership to promote a new wave of

international cooperation and development. The two countries should continue to work towards common development and prosperity.

Youth represent the future of the world and a vital force for the development of relations among countries. From Xuanzang who ventured to India to study Buddhist scriptures at age 31 more than 1,400 years ago to 23,000 Indian youngsters now studying in China, the young people of the two countries have learned from each other and seized progress together, creating countless touching stories. We have been delighted to see extensive exchanges and mutual visits between youth representatives of the two countries, practical cooperation in many fields, experience sharing



Foreign employees of Alibaba International Station participate in a team-building activity. Established in 1999, Alibaba International Station has already grown into a leading cross-border B2B e-commerce platform. (Photo from CFB)

in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, and discussions on innovation and entrepreneurship, all of which demonstrate mutual support and solidarity between China and India. Mutual understanding enhances mutual trust and friendship. As an organization under the All-China Youth Federation specializing in youth exchange and cooperation, the China International Youth Exchange Center has always been committed to enhancing mutual understanding between Chinese and foreign youth, promoting pragmatic cooperation in this field, and striving to provide fresh strength for building a community with a shared future for mankind. The organization will continue its unremitting efforts to promote exchange between the youth of China and India.

On July 21, the 2022 World

Youth Development Forum was held in Beijing. More than 100 guests from around the world including UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres joined about 2,000 youth representatives from more than 100 countries at the hybrid online-offline meeting. In his congratulatory letter, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized that young people around the world should advocate peace, development, equity, justice, democracy, and freedom, which he deemed the common values of humanity. They should promote the Global Development Initiative with concrete action and facilitate the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to jointly write a new chapter of solidarity and cooperation among the youth of the world. As director of the

China International Youth Exchange Center, one organizer of the forum, I sincerely hope that Indian people from all walks of life start to notice and support youth exchange between China and India and that cooperation between our youth only increases.

At a new historic crossroads, the China International Youth Exchange Center stands ready to work with Indian partners to facilitate friendly exchange between the youth of China and India, address issues of common concern to the youth from both sides, adopt a strategic perspective on youth exchange, and promote practical cooperation. The center will help guide young people of the two countries to listen and observe carefully, exchange and think deeply, view bilateral relations with a long-term perspective, and treat reciprocal development with a win-win mindset. The center will also participate in multilateral agendas with a cooperative attitude, and work to enhance mutual understanding between the youth of the two countries and constantly bring new vitality to the healthy and stable development of China-India relations. All of these efforts are practical actions that will empower us to secure a bright future for bilateral relations. 📌

The author is director of the China International Youth Exchange Center. This article is an excerpt from his speech at the China-India Youth Dialogue.



Better China-India Relations Through Cultural Exchanges



By Ma Jiali

People-to-people and cultural exchanges are the glue solidifying and stabilizing the relationship between the two countries.

China and India are neighboring countries connected by mountains and rivers. Their cultural exchange can be traced back more than two thousand years. The cultural exchange between the two countries represents a major piece of the history of bilateral relations, through which the cultures of both countries have become richer and more splendid. Historically, many eminent monks were committed to exchanges between the two major civilizations. They

braved life-threatening challenges and dangers to traverse thousands of miles to visit each other's country. Their experiences were recorded in countless touching stories and historical records. In modern times, many continue to pursue China-India friendship. Their understanding of the traditional friendship fuels the unswerving determination to overcome every difficulty and contribute to the sound development of bilateral ties. These efforts create effective momentum and valuable

resources for the development of China-India relations.

Both China and India are undergoing rapid development. Both governments have set strategic goals eyeing a stronger nation. Both peoples have strong wishes for a better life. Both societies are dedicated to improving themselves. As two neighboring countries, China and India are in need of communication and interaction, including people-to-people exchanges and cooperation, to achieve established goals of

STRATEGY

prosperity in both material and cultural dimensions. Needless to say, current China-India relations do face some temporary difficulties, and the process of people-to-people exchanges faces mental and emotional obstacles. To break through these barriers, remove emotional restraints, and ease the rigidity of global geopolitics, I have several proposals:

First, I hope that relevant departments of the two countries, based on consensus reached by state leaders and with the overall strategic situation and the fundamental interests of the people in mind, reach further consensus on maintaining security and stability in the border areas as soon as possible, properly resolve disputes of mutual concern, and create a sound atmosphere for people-to-people and cultural

exchanges.

Both China and India are ancient civilizations with a long history and rich political wisdom. I hope that the two countries will

The people-to-people and cultural exchange plans should proceed gradually, and discussion and exploration of additional exchange programs should continue.

strengthen communication at the political level, release political goodwill to each other, eliminate security hostility, practice sincere exchanges, steadily accumulate goodwill from the two peoples, and strive to improve bilateral relations as quickly as possible to create a better environment for people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

Second, I hope that universities and non-governmental organizations of both countries can leverage their unique advantages to

organize various cultural exchange activities through existing and yet-to-be-explored channels. These institutions can also foster goodwill, warm hearts, and get past stagnation to create virtuous circles of people-to-people exchanges to enhance China-India relations. All kinds of exchange and communication activities can boost bilateral relations with a burst of positive energy.

Third, the people-to-people and cultural exchange plans should proceed gradually, and discussion and exploration of additional exchange programs should continue. Over the past few years, China and India have planned many people-to-people and cultural exchange programs, many of which are still significant and feasible. Both sides should evaluate their performance with an optimistic eye to find the best way to further implement plans when conditions are ideal. The two sides can also conduct extensive and in-depth discussions on



Dancers perform classical Indian dance at the Seventh China-India Forum in Langfang, northern China's Hebei Province, May 17, 2018. (Photo from VCG)



The Asian Culture Carnival is held during the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations at the National Stadium in Beijing, capital of China, May 15, 2019. (Photo by Xu Xun/China Pictorial)

cooperation in fields like yoga, film, music and dance, education and training, traditional medicine, heritage protection, and local-level exchanges.

Both China and India are ancient civilizations with rich historical heritage, and each has a splendid culture. People-to-people and cultural exchanges should serve as the glue for the relationship and solidify bilateral ties. In certain circumstances, people-to-people and cultural exchanges can also be an ice-melting agent and help create a warm and humanistic power instead of cold international relations. The two peoples

should contribute to the development of their respective civilizations and to the prosperity of the Oriental civilization by exchanging and learning from each other in the spirit of appreciating the beauty of each other while celebrating their own beauty.

“No matter how high the mountain is, people can always find a way to reach its peak,” goes a famous Chinese saying. “No matter how wide the sea is, people will still touch each other’s hearts.” Both China and India are developing countries facing the historical mission of developing their economy rapidly and greatly improving their people’s

livelihood, and both hope to take advantage of precious strategic opportunities to realize their respective visions. We hope that China and India can sincerely communicate and cooperate, leverage culture as a bridge and the heart as a boat, and jointly promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges to realize their respective glory and dreams and make big contributions to the progress and prosperity of Asian and world civilizations. 📌

The author is director of the Center for International Strategic Studies of the China Reform Forum.

The Bridge of Language Learning

By Nishith Shah

Only by interacting and sharing opinions, outlooks, and aspirations can the youth of China and India become positive agents of a long-awaited change.

As the only two major developing countries in the world with a population over one billion, India and China have huge potential for cooperation, especially in the fields of cultural exchange and language learning. It is important to understand that what India and China do is influencing the entire world.

KEY TO MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

The 72 years of development in India-China relations have left great potential for cooperation. Both nations have been subject to colonial exploitation and currently face many issues of shared concern at the international level. With

so much in common, why are there any “downs” in the relationship when it should only be “ups”? I suspect that the very root cause of this void between India and China is a lack of communication. All other challenges including the boundary question are simply manifestations of this lacuna.

The present need is to encourage more dialogue, language education, and cultural exchange between the two nations. Language is the best way to understand a country’s history and culture, and learning each other’s language is increasingly essential for bilateral exchange and cooperation. As a Chinese language teacher working in India, I have seen how studying a foreign language helps

students develop a deeper understanding of the specific culture and become more open to developing bonds with foreigners.

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, it goes to his head,” Nelson Mandela once said. “If you talk to him in his own language, it goes straight to his heart.” I firmly believe that language learning and culture exchange should be encouraged among the youth. It is important to include the youth in dialogue-building exercises. Young minds can easily acquire a new language. They are open to new ideas and, most importantly, they are the future. Ignorance about an ancient and important neighbor could lead to miscommunication.



A group of teachers and students of the Chinese language class at the India China Academy pose at the graduation ceremony, August 7, 2022. After four months of study, the students are given Chinese names according to their personalities to couple with the surname "Tang," a tradition followed by the academy since its founding. (Photo courtesy of the author)

Language can make people acknowledge cultural differences, and more aware of why those differences exist and how important it is to respect cultures different from their own. Language learning can inspire mutual tolerance and understanding.

PROGRESS LEADS TO SUCCESS

But if learning the Chinese language is very important for the Indian youth, what steps have been taken to facilitate quality language education? Only a few, but it is a long and gradual process. First, the Chinese language is excluded from the list of foreign languages in India's 2020 National Education Policy. As a language that is still gaining popularity in India,

it requires active government support for promotion. Second, the number of scholarships to study in China has dropped. Since 2017, the Indian government has gradually cut annual scholarship programs with China. Scholarships provide a chance for people-to-people connections and first-hand experiences with the culture, language, and people.

Other issues include a limited number of Indian universities offering full-time graduate and postgraduate courses in Chinese, let alone a diploma program in the language. About 20 Indian universities have opened Chinese departments and offer Chinese courses. Almost all countries that consider relations with China crucial

have supported Mandarin language courses at all levels. For example, schools in the United States, Australia, Thailand, and South Korea all offer Chinese language programs at various types of schools. Currently, India has no functional centers for the HSK test, the official Chinese proficiency exam for non-native Chinese speakers. The HSK certificate may serve as a motivating factor for young learners. Another major issue is a lack of adequate support for local educational institutions, which play a fundamental role in the promotion of Chinese language learning. Local teacher training and skill development programs are close to negligible in India. The Latin maxim "*Nemo dat*

quod not habet” means “no one can give what they do not have.” It is impossible for teachers to transfer knowledge if they have not received sufficient training. These issues are just the tip of the iceberg. With this kind of situation, it is no surprise that the Chinese language among the Indian youth is far from its potential.

As far as Chinese language education in India is concerned, there is a real dearth of availability of Chinese textbooks and audio-visual materials. Study materials are still quite difficult to access in India at a reasonable cost. Hence, many schools prefer using tested and widely available older texts. More textbooks that are suited to Indian learning styles could be an area worth exploring for India’s educational circles. Scarcity of native language teachers is also a hurdle for many teaching institutions. There is a rise in demand for Chinese language learning and a growing shortage in availability of Chinese language teachers, and this skewed ratio must move in the other direction if any improvements are to happen. Various education institutions should come together to promote Chinese language and culture. Developing good rapport between language teaching institutions and local Chinese communities will facilitate mutual appreciation of the two cultures and also enhance the scope for developing communication skills among young learners.

FUTURE IN YOUNG HANDS

Through my interactions with people in Chinese academia, I can attest that the grass is not greener on the other side. Chinese educational institutions are getting help from their Indian counterparts to carry out study of Hindi, Tamil, and Bengali. But they also face more or less similar issues, especially with regards to a shortage in the supply of relevant educational resources. Despite the fact that Bollywood has a huge audience in China, Hindi hasn’t been able to penetrate as an upcoming sought-after foreign language. A few years ago at India China Academy, we started a program to introduce Chinese and Indian students so that they could practice the language with each other. We organized activities in which students of the two countries could organically bond with each other. After a few years, they are referring to each other as brother and sister and some have worked together on translation assignments of ancient texts. Many are waiting for the pandemic to end for a chance to meet their long-distance friends. If language learning can produce such results at the micro level, it could simply create wonders at the macro level.

The coming decades are going to bring India and China working together closely in many areas. Considerable efforts should be

invested in paving the way for the two countries to get closer to each other. Language shouldn’t be a barrier in achieving the objective of mutual understanding and cooperation. Rather, it should be a constructive tool.

The future of India-China ties is in the hands of the youth. The youth need wisdom and courage drawn from the rich history and cultural heritage of the two nations to find new ways to make bilateral relations healthier. India-China ties can improve through people-to-people exchange and dialogue. The two peoples should learn each other’s language. Language is a bridge for communication between the two countries and key to opening minds, so it cannot be ignored. The youth of the two countries will only become positive agents of the long-awaited change if they can find ways to interact and share their opinions, outlooks, and aspirations. “Children are like buds in a garden and should be carefully and lovingly nurtured as the future of the nation and the citizens of tomorrow,” said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. “Only through correct education can we build a better societal order.” This is the kind of future we envisage. 📖

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The author is the founder and principal of India China Academy based in Mumbai. This is an excerpt from his speech at the China-India Youth Dialogue.

Youth Leadership Defines the Future of Asia

By Bikash Kali Das

The 21st century will really belong to Asia only if the youth can develop unified, collective leadership.

“The youth should be regarded with respect,” said ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius. “How do we know that their future will not be equal to our present?”

When we talk about the youth in India and China, millennials and Generation Z have become the standard terms. India is home to about 440 million millennials and 375 million Gen Z members whereas China has 400 million millennials and 270 million Gen Zers. According to the latest figures from the United Nations, India and China are home to the world’s largest youth population.

The youth of India and China share similar traditional values originating from

ancient cultures. Chinese and Indian societies are very similar in family-oriented ideas compared to Western societies. Even in business, education, and networking, the youth in the two countries are more pragmatic in building strong friendships. Language is not a barrier for young people in India and China because most of them can speak at least two languages. The young generation is also more aware of environmental protection. They were born into technology, raised with information at their fingertips, and open to correcting mistakes. Young people today are more attracted to and willing to work on social causes such as biodiversity

protection, climate change, heritage conservation, sustainable development, poverty reduction, bullying prevention, civil rights advocacy, traditional healthcare, cross-culture exchange, and better tourism and living.

However, a pressing issue has emerged, that is, some youngsters of both India and China move to and settle in Western nations. If our own talented youth don’t stay in their motherland, how can we achieve a better and prosperous Asian Century? The 21st century will really belong to Asia only if the youth can develop unified, collective leadership.

To realize healthy youth cooperation between India and China, educational



Aerospace scientists cheer when the Long March-5 rocket, launched from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in southern China's Hainan Province, successfully lifted the Chang'e-5 lunar probe into the designated orbit, November 24, 2020. (Photo by Duan Wei/China Pictorial)

exchange should resume and be promoted. Both countries should nudge students back to their institutions. Chinese institutions have started collecting details about returning of Indian youth who were studying in China. Similarly, many Chinese students who enrolled in language courses and various short-term courses in India should also regain access to Indian institutions. The imbalance caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is understandable, but we need to figure out how to gradually pave a way for youngsters to live and study in each other's country.

A common platform should also be built to facilitate convenient communication between the youth of India and China. They are armed with heaps of information

and connected to the rest of the world by a device in their pockets. Historical facts were once exotic

Both India and China have always focused on the world's development needs and joined hands with other countries to respond to global challenges. This reflects the responsibility of the two major Asian countries to promote the common development and progress of mankind.

imaginations of historians and not substantiated by ground realities. But the youth today gain knowledge through an uncomplicated system of connectivity and build diversified opinions on happenings of the past,

present, and expected future. This has led young people to understand the importance of freedom of expression unfettered by geographical, political, cultural, and religious boundaries and irrespective of caste, creed, or race. Young people love to express themselves and feel free in their access to information. Common feelings towards freedom of connectivity and expression have enhanced the relationship between the youth of India and China and strengthened their bond more than ever before.

A few organizations or programs seek to provide opportunities for Indian and Chinese youth to work together. We need to build more India-China cultural study centers, through which young people of the two countries can learn each

other's language and culture, better understand each other, and work together for a better future by tackling pressing collective issues regarding the environment, climate, biodiversity, food, health, and poverty. The Xu Fancheng

Culture Study Center is the first India-China youth cross-cultural exchange center. It opened on October 26, 2020 in Puducherry, India to mark the 70th anniversary of India-China diplomatic ties and the 111th birthday of late Chinese scholar Xu Fancheng. The center has been committed to promoting Chinese culture in India and transmitting Indian culture to China to enhance bilateral relations. It plans to launch internships and short-term cross-cultural programs at Puducherry for Chinese students in 2023. The center also seeks to build ties and collaborate with like-minded individuals, institutions, and bodies and is planning to open a branch in China's Dali or Zhoushan to better help the youth of both countries to work together on academic and cultural projects. It also seeks cooperation with Chinese institutions, think tanks, and tech companies that might consider offering internships or short-term programs for Indian youth.

Both India and China have always focused on the world's development needs and joined hands with other countries to respond to global challenges. This reflects the responsibility of the two major Asian countries to promote the common development and progress of mankind. Could the 21st century be an Asian Century? For that to happen, India and China would need to play a decisive role and create a world based on good-neighborliness and

common prosperity rather than power games and animosity. Both sides should take up the responsibility to lift our bilateral relations to new heights. The role of governments is important, but the contributions of young people in different disciplines and realms of ideas, perspectives, and policy options are equally relevant.

We can build a better world together through the concepts of harmonious development in the spirit of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," a patronizing Vedantic thought from *Upanishads*, which is typically translated as "the world is one family,"

and of "Datong Shijie" from the Confucian classic *The Book of Rites*, which means "a world of grand unity." If the two countries can align their complementary aspects in development and economic growth as well as their great strengths in cultural and civilizational values, India and China can emerge as hubs of creativity and innovation and create a fitting new paradigm for bilateral relations. ☐

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The author is the founder and director of the Xu Fancheng Culture Study Center and secretary general of the Pondicherry India-China Friendship Association. The article is excerpted from his speech at the China-India Youth Dialogue.



— Students from Shaolin Tagou Martial Arts School in Dengfeng, central China's Henan Province, perform to the music at the opening ceremony of the 2nd Summer Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, capital of eastern China's Jiangsu Province, August 16, 2014. (Photo from VCG)

China-India Cultural Exchange Volunteer

By He An

I recalled the rich nourishment of Indian culture to me and the selfless help offered by my Indian friends, and decided to launch public salons themed Indian culture and China-India cultural exchange to bridge the gap between the two peoples.

Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore's visit to China 98 years ago is considered an indelible chapter in the history of cultural exchange between the two countries. In his welcome speech to Tagore, Liang Qichao, a renowned Chinese thinker and political activist, summed up India's influence on China: First, India showed us absolute freedom. Second, India showed us absolute love. Third, India presented us twelve most important gifts: music, architecture, painting, sculpture, drama, poetry and fiction, the astronomical calendar, medicine, alphabet,

genre of writing, method of education, and group organization. Liang added that the twelve gifts were byproducts of Buddhism when it was introduced to China, and commented that Chinese people fully absorbed and internalized them while developing the heritage with their own characteristics.

The depth and beauty of Indian culture unfolded to me when I worked in the Chinese Embassy in India years ago. It was like living in poems of Tagore's *Stray Birds*: "Let life be beautiful like summer flowers and death like autumn leaves." Anyone who lives in India will notice

that the country does not have four distinct seasons. After the end of winter and before the rainy season, when the grass grows fast in China, leaves fall in India. Endless leaves, buds, and summer flowers overlap with each other in Delhi in March. The tomb of dead leaves is the cradle of summer flowers and the fallen branches nourish new leaves. This scene conveys that life and death exist together, inseparably, in the same breath.

When I was in India, I often pondered which particular scene would prove most unforgettable when I left the country one day. The answer

turned out to be a scene of hundreds of birds returning to their nests in the forest at dusk. As Tagore wrote in *Fireflies*, “I leave no trace of wings in the air, but I am glad I have had my flight.” Some of my favorite moments in India were when the night fell and birds returned to their nests in lawns or bushes as I got off work at the embassy building and walked along the boulevard, which my colleagues had dubbed the “Boulevard of Bird Droppings.” The singing birds healed my exhaustion after a busy day, and their joy passed to every blowing grass and branch. Inspired by the scene of returning birds, I wrote a few lines when welcoming my wife and children to reunite with me in Delhi: “The birds sing happily when they return at dusk, but become silent when night falls. Will they dream of the joyous song of the day during the night with twinkling stars and a bright moon?” Each word was filled with anticipation and joy. A family reunion, like birds returning to their nests, is the simplest yet most beautiful moment in ordinary life.

Those who work in the embassy come and go all the time. Not long after I worked in India, a colleague at the commercial counselor’s office prepared to leave. “Everyone has his time to leave, but I really don’t want to say goodbye to people in the country,” she said sadly at her farewell party. I hadn’t yet realized that the Indian people would be the most unforgettable part.



Young priests in ritual costumes perform the Ganga Aarti, a sacred Hindu ritual to worship the holy Ganges River, in northern India’s Varanasi city, September 2018. (Photo courtesy of the author)

Eventually, time showed me the truth.

Sumit is an Indian driver for the cultural affairs office of the embassy. The bracelet on his wrist indicated that he was a Sikh, but he didn’t wear the typical headscarf and usually talked little. On a full moon night, Sumit knocked on my door and invited me to witness a traditional Indian festival called “Karva Chauth,” commonly known as “Women’s Day” celebrated in western and northern India. On Karva Chauth, married women observe a day’s fast for the longevity and wellbeing of their husbands, and they don’t eat or drink until the moon rises.

Sumit was on duty that day, so his wife came to observe the festival with him at the

embassy. She dressed up in a pink saree with golden embroidery, wore jewelry, and sported painted henna. The couple observed the ceremony under the bright moon. Sumit told me that he knew I loved Indian culture so he arranged the session especially for me. After the ceremony, I walked back to my dormitory full of gratitude, my heart welling up with blessings for India.

Time flies, and I have been away from India for several years. Exotic cultural customs, blooming summer flowers, and architectural buildings with splendid history were all impressive, but the most unforgettable part for me is Indian faces like Sumit. After returning to China, I recalled the rich nourishment of Indian

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He An and his friends organize the “Let Life Be Beautiful like Summer Flowers” cultural salon to commemorate the 81st anniversary of the death of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, August 7, 2022. (Photo courtesy of the author)

culture to me and the selfless help offered by my Indian friends, and decided to launch public salons themed Indian culture and China-India cultural exchange to bridge the gap between the two peoples. The salons are aimed at promoting free exchange and innovation of diverse cultures based on the principles of mutual respect and inclusiveness. Over the past six years, I have invited diplomats, artists, think tank scholars, and journalists to share their stories and thoughts on cultural exchange at dozens of free salons held across China. The well-received salons have attracted hundreds of in-person participants and thousands of online viewers while becoming an influential

cultural brand.

Deng Xiaoping, chief architect of China’s reform and opening up, once predicted that the Asian Century would arrive when China, India, and other neighboring countries develop. “The 21st century will become the Century of Asia if China and India can build a stable and lasting relationship,” said former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Realizing the vision requires joint efforts from the two countries. In his book *Making Sense of Chindia: Reflections on China and India*, Indian economist Jairam Ramesh coined the phrase “Chindia” to project the joint rise of China and India. Chinese-Indian scholar Tan Chung

carried the idea further by translating it into “Great Harmony between China and India,” symbolizing great unity, cooperation, exchange, reciprocity, development, care, sincerity, wisdom, compassion, wellbeing, and bright future of the two countries. The vision will bring care, happiness, freedom, and glory not only to the two peoples but also people all over the world.

From ancient times to the present, prominent figures like Liang Qichao and Tagore as well as ordinary people like Sumit and I have experienced the people-to-people exchange between China and India. We should take Chinese social anthropologist Fei Xiaotong’s advice: “Appreciate the culture of others as one’s own, and the world will become a harmonious whole. Every nation cherishes its own culture, and if we respect and treasure each other’s culture, the world will be a harmonious one.” I have volunteered to work on cultural exchange between China and India, and I am doing my best to contribute to the realization of the “Chindia” vision alongside like-minded people committed to enhancing friendship between the two countries. 📖

The author is former first secretary of the Chinese Embassy in India and an off-campus supervisor at the Ocean University of China. This article is an excerpt from his speech at the China-India Youth Dialogue.

A Decade in China

By Maitri Sharma

China's changes have been endless, and they affect everyone.

I have witnessed China's phenomenal growth and development unfold in front of me for the past 10 years. When I first arrived in China in 2012, it was a whole new world to me. Everything I seemed to encounter was completely unknown, things I had never even contemplated. I have been fortunate to meet many good friends and colleagues who refused to allow me to feel alienated.

A decade is a long time when you live it day by day, and it is hard to put China's evolution into words. I have been one of the most intimate witnesses of intensive skyscraper construction right next to my apartment in Beijing. When I first arrived, construction was just starting across the street from

my apartment, and I could monitor the progress from my window. I gazed out my window to watch workers place every brick and finish every floor. I have watched the country develop. But today with hindsight, I understand how the decade was spent reinventing and reshaping the entire nation astoundingly fast.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: A GENERATIONAL CHANGE

When I recall the limits when I arrived, I easily see the big changes. Back in 2012, new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) played a very limited role in everyday life. But today, I find myself astonished at how the new technologies are fundamentally changing the lives of

Chinese citizens. China has undergone such huge changes in the last decade that it is already way ahead of the rest of the world in many ways.

From 2013 to 2014, Apple Pay, WeChat Pay, and Alipay were introduced to pay for online games, apps, and music. With WeChat Pay and Alipay, China became a cashless society for everyday purchases, and QR codes began being used for payment and health tracking. In less than a decade, a generational change occurred.

The use of AI has become increasingly widespread in China in recent years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The most surprising thing for me was being served food by a robot at a restaurant. Robots are also being used to deliver goods to

CASE STUDY

hotel rooms. All the socially distant and unique ways of remaining touchless during the crisis have been especially commendable.

AI is increasingly being used in China's hospitals, city planning, public transport, and many other public services. For any medical report, you don't have to wait in line or go to the counter. All you need to do is to scan your number on a machine. Everything runs on this code whether it's the bus, train, subway, restaurants, or even quarantine centers. It's a smart way to avoid queuing up for hours. Although I live in the most populous country, I have generally been able to keep my distance from others during the pandemic. I have also noticed that a lot of companies or offices use face recognition to unlock

computers and doors.

I believe that AI is key to the future of mankind. Each country is seeking the greatest advances in this technology, and some including China have already started implementing the technology on a large scale. China is emerging as one of the world's leaders in AI development, and the Chinese government is working really hard to develop this field. This area is providing people the opportunity to build a foundation for a golden future.

DIGITAL PAYMENTS: CONVENIENCE FOR ALL

Cashless and digital payments are becoming more and more common in China. Across the country, you can use your smartphone to pay

for anything from restaurants, shops, movie theaters and tourist attractions to taxis. Many of my friends also gift money to their relatives during festivals through WeChat Pay.

Carrying a wallet is no longer necessary, so I never travel with paper money. I find it far more convenient to pay with my mobile phone. A smartphone can be used to make purchases anywhere from street stalls to a luxury mall. China has made tremendous progress in building the infrastructure for mobile payments due to its increasing popularity. The proliferation of micropayments proves that mobile paying is becoming a significant tool of convenience that promotes long-term consumption.

In China, it is widely acknowledged that the mobile payment system has been a big success. The most common method of making payments is by scanning QR codes. There has been a considerable reduction in the number of people who withdraw cash from an ATM. Mobile payments have become so popular that many have stopped using ATMs at all. Mobile transactions have already become a force of habit for many people.

The mobile payment market in China is growing rapidly. It is contributing to an increase in daily consumption. A lot of conveniences are associated with mobile payments. Small and medium businesses in particular benefit from this technology.

Furthermore, the rapid



An actor from the Fuzhou Fujian Opera Theatre takes a selfie at a performance site. Tradition and modernity fuse through technology. (Photo from CFB)

development of internet shopping and e-commerce in China has shaped the favorable environment for digital payments. People purchase all kinds of household items, food items, and everyday necessities that are delivered to their doorstep. Shopping from home and eliminating the hassle of visiting the market or the headache of procuring goods has been a real stress buster for many. Due to the unparalleled popularity of online payment systems in the country, China will almost certainly be the first country in the world to abandon paper money.

Mobile payments are becoming increasingly popular among Chinese people all over the country. Today, even farmers in remote areas buy everyday items through their smartphones. They have been empowered by internet coverage of rural areas in China. I have seen many videos on Chinese social media platforms of drones delivering goods to remote areas. Such usage of drones has been highly appreciated by Chinese residents and people around the world.

TECHNOLOGY-EMPOWERED CONNECTION

China is leading global technology in ways like enabling facial recognition to see through masks. Even though such technology has only been deployed in limited ways so far, experts believe that it will soon become ubiquitous across all sectors.

In terms of enhancing



China's spacecraft tracking ship Yuanwang-3 sails the Pacific Ocean, October 2019. The Yuanwang-3, China's second-generation space tracking ship, has completed many monitoring missions including maritime tracking of the Shenzhou spacecraft, the Chang'e lunar probe, and BeiDou satellites. (Photo by Qin Bin/China Pictorial)

public safety, many devices in Chinese markets are proving useful and effective in fighting diseases like COVID-19. Many Chinese shopping websites offer a device to open doors without touching a handle. It is small enough to fit in a pocket and has the ability to be sanitized easily.

UV sterilizer wireless chargers are also found in markets to kill harmful germs from the surface of mobile phones, watches, headphones, and other gadgets. Moreover, other technologies can help remove dangerous pesticides or viruses from vegetables and fruits.

Such technologies are increasingly being used in schools and universities to enhance safety. Devices go on after the class is over

to remove any airborne particles left behind. Some Chinese companies are starting to mass produce such equipment.

Life is becoming easier and easier in China. Clearly, the unprecedented penetration of technology has changed the life of every Chinese citizen in some way. The list of life-changing developments is endless, and it affects everyone. After a decade in China, for me it has developed from a home away from home to a top living destination. 🇨🇳

The author is a journalist with *China-India Dialogue* who has lived in Beijing for 10 years. This is an excerpt from her speech delivered at the China-India Youth Dialogue.

The Youth of China and India: Much in Common

By Guo Fei

No matter what temporary challenges may arise in China-India relations, the youth of the two countries will maintain support and care for each other with wisdom and courage beyond their predecessors.

Societal progress and improved living standards have extended everyone's potential "youth." From my experience, anyone under 40 can be considered young, and I am right at the crossroads. My 40-year life journey took two particularly meaningful things: First, I went to India to teach Chinese at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN) in Gujarat from 2014 to 2016. Second, I served as first secretary in Eluo Village, Ebian Yi Autonomous County, Leshan City in southwestern China's Sichuan Province and

helped lift the impoverished village out of poverty from 2017 to 2020. The journey to India showed me the vastness of the world, and the experience in poverty eradication impressed me with the depth of China.

The two Asian neighbors have also formed their own specific national conditions in terms of politics, economics, culture, and social life. For China, the problem of imbalanced and inadequate development is still prominent. China has metropolises such as Beijing and Shanghai, but many in some less-developed regions just solved the

problem of food and clothes. That is why the Chinese government launched the world's largest poverty reduction campaign in 2013, leading the whole nation to develop the determination and confidence to devote eight years to eliminating extreme poverty, a campaign which won acclaim from the United Nations.

As a participant in the nationwide mission, I worked in Eluo Village for more than three years to improve the incomes and living conditions of local villagers. When I first arrived, I was very surprised to see that many officials working in

the village were millennials or younger. The promising youth could have sought a better life in big cities, but they chose to stay in the mountainous village to reinvent their hometown with wisdom and passion. Many colleagues of mine who volunteered to become poverty relief workers in remote rural areas were between 30 and 35. They resigned from a decent job and left their families temporarily to strive to improve the wellbeing of impoverished villagers they didn't even know before. Each generation of youth should shoulder the responsibilities of the times. Chinese youth in the new era are ready to live up to the mission of the times by devoting themselves to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

I was equally amazed by the younger generation in India. I still remember a boy I taught at IITGN, who came from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. He turned down a high-paying engineer job offer in the United States and chose to stay in India after graduating in 2015. "There are so many problems that need to be solved in my motherland," he sighed. "Who will build the country if educated youth like me all leave?" After working in Chandigarh for some time, he pursued his master's degree at the Xavier School of Management and finally settled in Mumbai. Earlier this year, the 28-year-old got married. He sent me

the wedding photos of the newlyweds gracefully dressed in traditional Indian costumes. It's admirable to see highly educated youth in India cherish traditional cultural values. I often discussed ideals and values with students at IITGN. Higher education was not only about getting themselves better jobs and lifestyles, but more than that, they wanted to learn to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others who were not as lucky as them. Many Indians chose to learn Chinese because they wanted to learn more about this neighbor and get along well with China and other countries to jointly create a new pattern of mutual benefits and win-win outcomes in the new era. I am very proud to be their teacher and believe that the continuous progress of the fearless, vibrant youth of India will herald a bright future for the country.

The youth of the two countries have grown up in different social environments and cultural beliefs. Estrangement stems from distance, and misunderstanding is a result of ignorance. My experience has shown me that the youth of China and India share so much in common. They love their own country and endeavor to benefit the public when they are able. "Once we dreamt that we were strangers," wrote Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. "We wake up to find that we were dear to each other."

No matter what temporary challenges may arise in China-India relations, the youth of the two countries will maintain support and care for each other with wisdom and courage beyond their predecessors.

As a Chinese saying goes, "there is no mountain too high to overcome, and there is no road too long to travel." About 1,400 years ago, 27-year-old Chinese monk Xuanzang departed Chang'an (the present Xi'an) and traveled thousands of miles to study Buddhism at Nalanda in Bihar, India. The 17-year-long epic journey introduced ancient Indian wisdom to China and marked one of the most iconic youth exchanges in the history of the two civilizations. Today, we could also overcome the inconvenience arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and support each other in these trying times. In the future, I believe that the young people of China and India will build on the achievements of their predecessors, bring the two countries closer innovatively, communicate and listen to each other, build mutual trust, and work together to contribute wisdom and strength to building a community with a shared future for humanity. 📌

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The author is deputy director of the Publicity Department of the Party Committee of Leshan Vocational and Technical College and a writer. This article is an excerpt from his speech at the China-India Youth Dialogue.

China-India History Class

By Zhu Xuan

I hope that our curriculum will empower modern young people to maintain this cultural heritage, seek wisdom and draw new insights from the past, build development momentum through cultural exchange, and pursue deeper cultural communication between our two peoples.

Cultural exchange and heritage inheritance are interdependent. A deep understanding of the millennia-old history of China-India exchange will ensure baseless rumors don't obscure or divert a mission of cultural exchange. To carry on our ancestors' aspirations, Shenzhen University's Center for Indian Studies offers six to seven elective courses on Indian culture accessible to all students all year long. Among them, the course "India and China" is designed to explore the history of friendly exchange between the two countries across the past 2,200 years within seven sectors: trade, science and technology,

people-to-people exchange, Buddhism, literature, philosophy, and art. The course combines macro and micro perspectives and covers high-level exchange and non-governmental contact via land and sea routes. It involves not only a display of physical objects that bear witness to bilateral exchange across centuries, but also a communication of ideas and knowledge, in hopes of shining light on the enduring, multi-level, multi-channel, and rich history of China-India cultural exchange and producing an accurate picture of the diverse, complex, and interactive development of human civilizations.

Based on the *Encyclopedia of China-India Cultural*

Contacts and other works on Indian studies, the course was designed as an ambitious and informative program. However, the first class had to be shifted online when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. To adapt to the change, I adjusted my teaching ideas and redesigned the syllabus to make it more connected and relevant, exploring how to inspire new modern interest in the history of China-India cultural exchange.

I encourage my class to study people and objects that represent cultural exchange between the two civilizations. I suggested to one of my students from Altai in northwestern China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region that she visit the

Pazyryk Cemetery at the northern foot of the Altai Mountains to appreciate the similarities between Pazyryk embroidery and silk unearthed from the Chu Tomb dating back to the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), in Jiangling, central China's Hubei Province. I instructed students from places near Guangzhou to visit the Hualin Temple, which was the first stop of Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism, when he arrived in China via sea from southern India in the 5th century, or to visit the Museum of the Western Han Dynasty Mausoleum of the Nanyue King, which houses five precious African ivory pieces brought to southern China via India in the 2nd century B.C.

Another cultural relic site in Guangzhou that testifies to past cultural exchange is the Nanhai God Temple, commonly known as the Boluo Temple, with a history of more than a thousand years. It was where the emperors offered sacrifices to the God of the Sea, and today it hosts one of southern China's biggest annual traditional folk temple fairs. According to locals, the name was derived from the Pala Empire of ancient India because Pala's Chinese translation sounds like "Boluo." Legend holds that an Indian sailor from the Pala Empire fell unconscious while sightseeing after the ship docked at Guangzhou and was saved by an older local lady. The sailor gifted the woman a rooster to express gratitude,



The floor of Paradesi Synagogue covered with exquisite hand-painted blue and white porcelain tiles, in Kochi, southern India's Kerala State. (Photo by Zhu Xuan)

but the fowl was stolen soon thereafter. The woman mourned the loss by crafting a rooster out of colored paper, which became an unexpected hit with the locals. Gradually, producing the Boluo Rooster, a signature local handicraft symbolizing good luck, became a source of income.

The fall of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) caused a steep decline in Buddhism exchange between the two countries, but bilateral maritime trade continued to rise in scale. This development was confirmed by recent studies of historical sea transportation in Quanzhou, Guangzhou, Yangzhou, and other Chinese cities, so determining how much evidence was still present in

India started seeming like the next step. From January to February 2018, our center organized a 10-member team to visit the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences in Kochi in the southern Indian state of Kerala. Thanks to well-planned and thoughtful arrangements made by the college for the 12-day field trip, we returned home with unforgettable memories after visiting local historical sites, museums, an elephant park, tea plantations, modern senior communities, primary and secondary schools, technology companies, and industrial parks. During the trip, we also learned more about the "Chinese fishing nets" in India, a legacy believed to have been introduced by

DISCUSSION



Palm-leaf Sanskrit sutras tied with bronze Chinese coins collected in the Scripture Library of Calicut University, Kerala, India. (Photo by Liu Yinghua)

Chinese navigator Zheng He during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

We were also impressed by the renowned Paradesi Synagogue in Kochi. Constructed in 1568, the building testifies to the history of Kerala royals aiding Jewish settlers with assimilation and granting them 72 privileges from the 5th to the 15th century. This synagogue witnessed the coexistence of Hinduism and Judaism for more than 1,000 years. The building is not very big, and its floor is decorated with about 1,100 blue-and-white porcelain tiles, each 900 to 1,600 square centimeters. I was most stunned that the floor tiles feature Chinese-style patterns like pavilions, towers, green mountains, rushing waters,

flowers, birds, and weeping willows. My colleague Dr. Wu Weilin and I conducted some quick research to learn that the tiles were imported from Guangdong around 1762. Kerala is a place blending diverse religions and cultures.

Liu Yinghua, a distinguished research fellow at the Center for Indian Studies and associate researcher at the Beijing Hospital of Tibetan Medicine, studied in the Department of Sanskrit at the University of Calicut, Kerala, from 2007 to 2009. While there, he stumbled on a Chinese bronze coin tied with the hemp rope fastened to the wooden spine of a palm-leaf scripture in Sanskrit collected in the university's Scripture Library. Most ancient Chinese coins are characterized by their round outer shape

and a square center hole, so the hole was convenient as a washer securing the knotting to bind sutra leaves. Liu continued searching and found another 15 palm-leaf scriptures tied with a Chinese bronze coin in the library. *The Hindu* interviewed Liu and reported the news on May 6, 2007. My students were amazed when I showed them pictures of palm-leaf Sanskrit scriptures tied with Chinese bronze coins, which offered a vivid proof of historical and cultural exchange between China and India.

At the end of the day, cultural exchange always seems like a grand topic, but historically, the greatest practitioners were humble monks, sailors, and unknown individuals. The history of cultural exchange between China and India is a precious treasure for the people of the two countries and of the world, and a miracle of human civilizations. I hope that our curriculum will empower modern young people to maintain this cultural heritage, seek wisdom and draw new insights from the past, build development momentum through cultural exchange, and pursue deeper cultural communication between our two peoples. 📖

The author is an associate research fellow at the Center for Indian Studies at Shenzhen University and a Ph.D. graduate of Peking University. This article is an excerpt from her speech at the China-India Youth Dialogue.

Cultural Envoys for Friendship

By Darshana Dewashi

We should respect the diversity of civilizations, appreciate each other, and be open and inclusive. This is the key to building mutual trust and fostering harmonious coexistence.

Mankind created four major cultural systems, and China and India each manage one of them. Chinese and Indian civilizations have promoted each other's development through mutual learning. "The best example of cultural exchange benefitting both sides in world history is the cultural exchange between China and India," said Chinese scholar Ji Xianlin. Prominent Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore dubbed China as India's

oldest and dearest brother.

Material and spiritual exchanges have emanated from both countries.

Business and trade enriched China and India's material wealth. Silk, steel, tea, sugar, peanuts, porcelain, peaches, pears, pomegranates, and many other commodities came to India from China. Jewelry, linden tree, pepper, jasmine, aloe, rhinoceros horn, and other items were introduced to China from India. Simultaneously, Indian philosophy, literature, and art greatly

enriched Chinese culture.

Buddhism is the most important cultural bridge between China and India, and it continues casting a profound impact on Chinese life. During the Han (202 B.C.- 220 A.D.) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, scholars from India and China conducted particularly frequent exchange. Chinese monk Xuanzang brought Buddhist scriptures back to China and preserved them completely, which later boosted the spread of Buddhism in East Asia. As

DISCUSSION

the monks disseminated Buddhism in China, Indians also learned about Confucianism from China, which has become a crucial facet of China studies in India.

The friendly relations between China and India have continued from ancient times to the present day and become even closer since the 20th century. Tagore exerted a great influence on literary reforms and cultural enlightenment in China early in the 20th century. Indian people provided tremendous support to China throughout the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese

Aggression. Tagore and Tan Yunshan, a Chinese scholar, founded the Department

Bengal and nurtured many outstanding scholars who have promoted Chinese language

We should keep friendly cooperation front and center, properly navigate our differences, and find ways to build confidence in the development of China-India relations. Seeing the “dragon” and the “elephant” dance together in pursuit of peaceful coexistence and common development is within reach.

of Chinese Language and Culture (Cheena Bhavana) at Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan of West

and culture across India.

Irresistible mutual attraction overpowers the differences between Chinese and Indian cultures. Bollywood films are world-famous. Movies such as *Hindi Medium*, *Secret Superstar*, and *Dangal* are particularly popular in China. Yoga is quite trendy as well. More than 10 million people in China practice yoga for health reasons. Meanwhile, many Indians practice Chinese martial arts, and Chinese acupuncture has been integrated into the Indian healthcare system. Such cases serve as shining examples of mutual learning between Chinese and Indian civilizations, leading to harmony in diversity. We should respect the diversity of civilizations, appreciate each other, and be open and inclusive. This is the key to building mutual trust and fostering harmonious coexistence.

China and India have



Darshana Dewashi is a graduate from the Department of Chinese Language and Culture (Cheena Bhavana) at Visva-Bharati University and lives in Birbhum, West Bengal. Dewashi likes to celebrate traditional Chinese festivals, and make paper-cuts and other traditional Chinese handicrafts. (Photo courtesy of Darshana Dewashi)

reaped an abundant harvest through cultural exchange although some obstacles in bilateral relations remain. Developing a long-term vision has wide consensus in China. We should keep friendly cooperation front and center, properly navigate our differences, and find ways to build confidence in the development of China-India relations. Seeing the “dragon” and the “elephant” dance together in pursuit of peaceful coexistence and common development is within reach.

Today, many teachers and scholars in China and India are devoted to spreading the languages and cultures of the two countries. Young people should utilize platforms for language learning to build stronger communication and cooperation, and bridge the hearts of Chinese and Indian people. The two countries have launched many programs for overseas students. China has set up Confucius Institutes in India, and Indian language courses are gaining popularity in Chinese universities and colleges.

I made many Chinese friends on the internet through social media. I learned from them that in the eyes of most Chinese people, India is still mysterious. In fact, most Indians know little about China either. I hope to improve Indians’ understanding of China with my knowledge of Chinese culture while dispelling misperceptions



An artwork by Darshana Dewashi that exemplifies traditional Chinese paper-cutting. In addition to sharing her works on social media, Dewashi also published videos about paper-cutting on her YouTube channel. (Photo courtesy of Darshana Dewashi)

Chinese people may have about India. I joined several classmates to create our own channel on YouTube. We shot videos after school mainly to introduce Indian festivals, songs and dance, and received great support from Chinese teachers and classmates. I also launched another channel to post videos about celebrating Chinese festivals, making paper-cuts, writing Chinese

calligraphy, and reciting Chinese texts. Hopefully these videos will show the charm of Chinese culture to more Indians. 🇮🇳

The author won the 21st “Chinese Bridge” Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students (India) and graduated from the Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Visva-Bharati University. This article is an excerpt from her speech at the China-India Youth Dialogue.

Youth Nation: Cultural Insights and Business

Edited by Bian Xiuhong

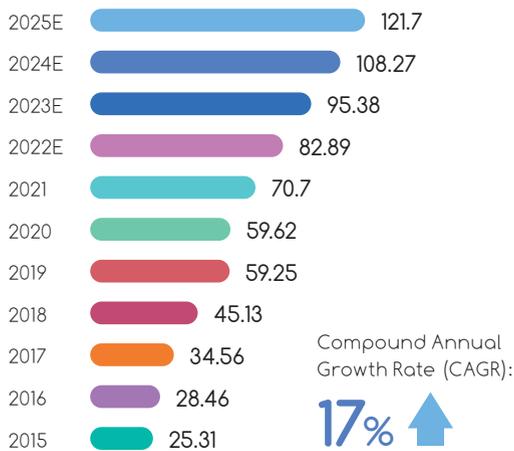
Over the past few years, Chinese youth have kindled broad changes in realms including consumption, technology, and culture. In the consumer sector, the rise

of interest-oriented content has elevated domestic e-commerce transactions to the next level. In science and technology, the gap between imagination and reality continues to narrow

thanks to young enthusiasm and unstoppable drive. Culture-wise, young creativity on cultural concepts is inspiring new business types with unique charm.

Power of Personalized Expression: Consumption for Youth to Express Values

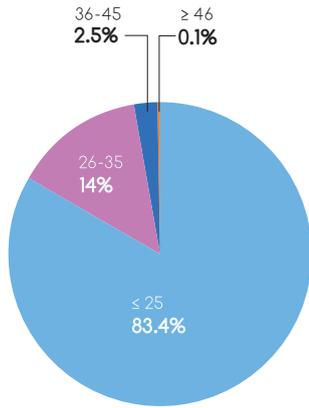
Market Size of Chinese Cosmetics 2015-2025 (billion RMB)



China's Designer Shoes Market Size Forecast 2022-2026 (billion RMB)



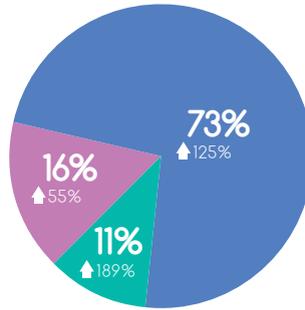
Distribution of Trendy E-Commerce App Users in China by Age Group (years old)



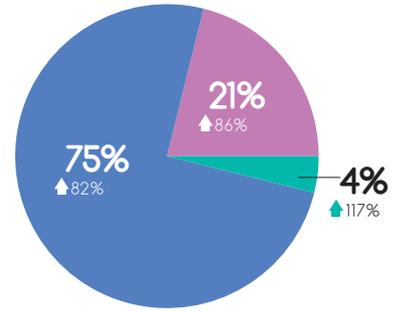
Distribution of Consumers and GMV of Luxury Fashion and Lifestyle Brands on Tmall by Age Group

● Gen Z ● Millennials ● Middle-aged

Number of Consumers

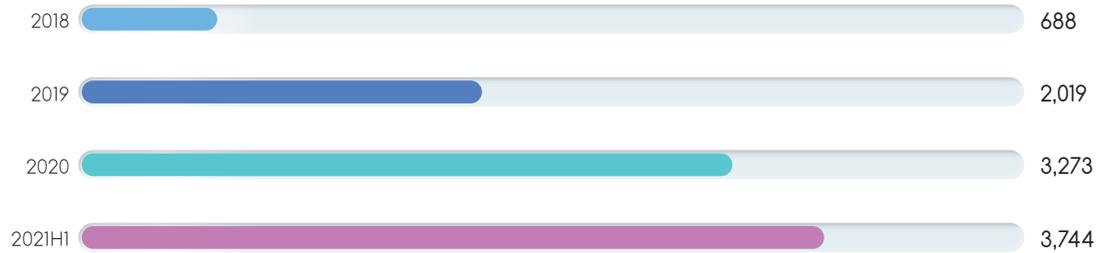


Gross Merchandise Volume (GMV)

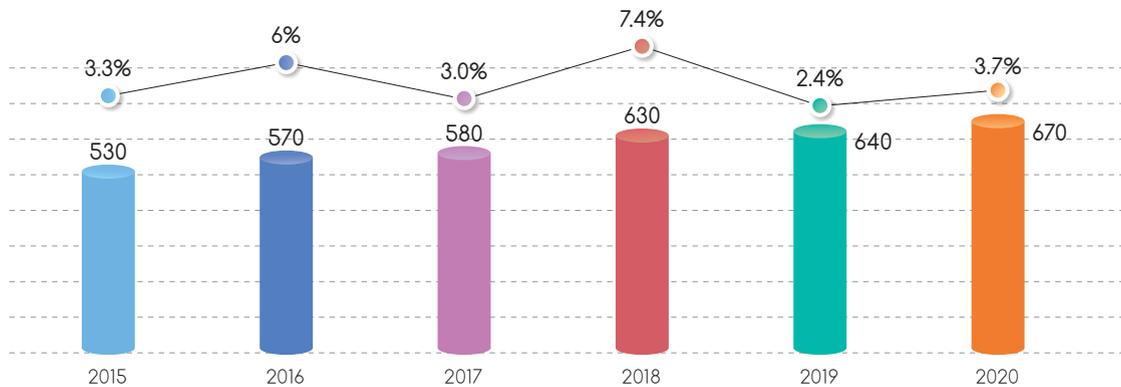


Power of Technological Imagination: Changing Minds through Digitalization

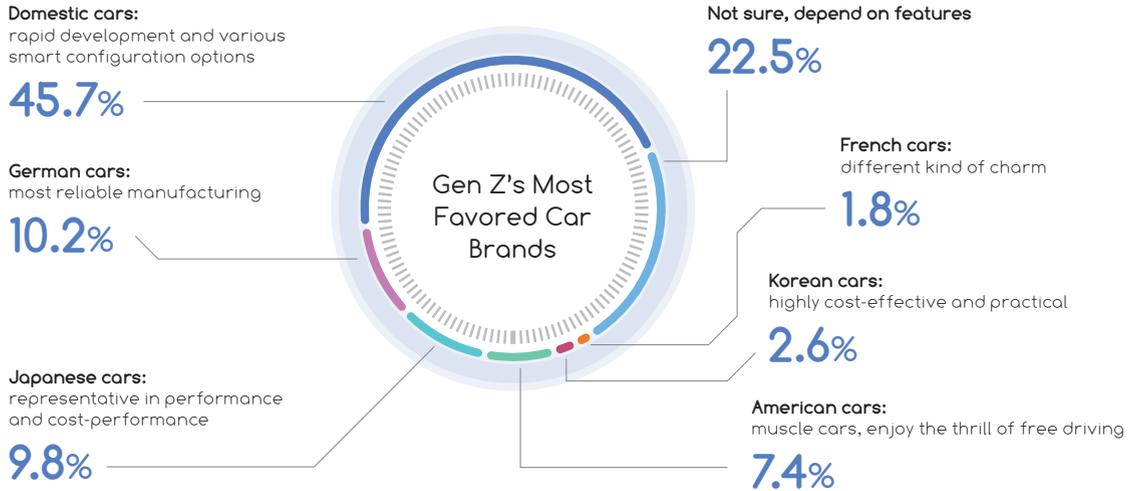
Number of Board Game and Live-Action Role Playing Companies Established in China in Recent Years



Number and Growth Rate of Mobile Game Users in China 2015-2020 (million)

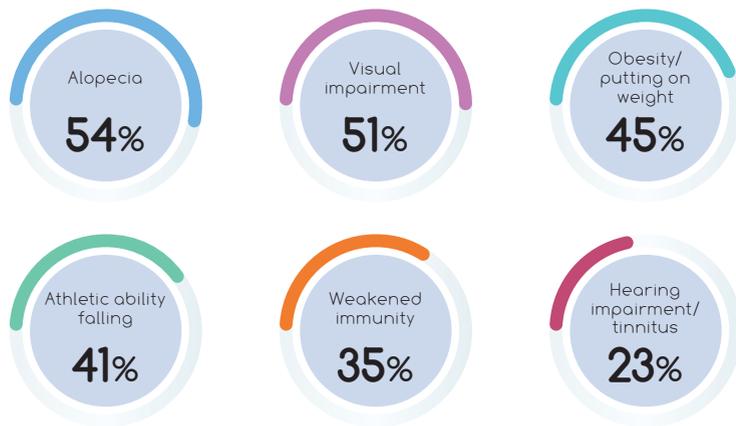


DATA



Power of Physical and Mental Health: Never Too Young to Be Afraid of Getting Old

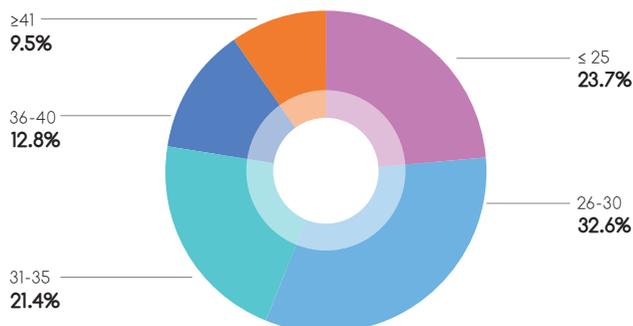
Signs of Declining Health of the Post-90s Population



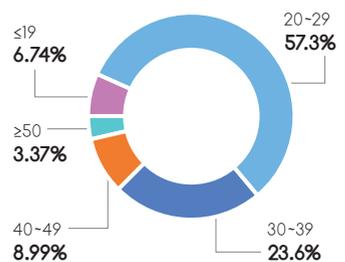
Most Popular Indoor and Outdoor Sports Keywords on Chinese Social Media Platform Xiaohongshu:



Age Distribution of Gym Consumers in 2020 (years old)

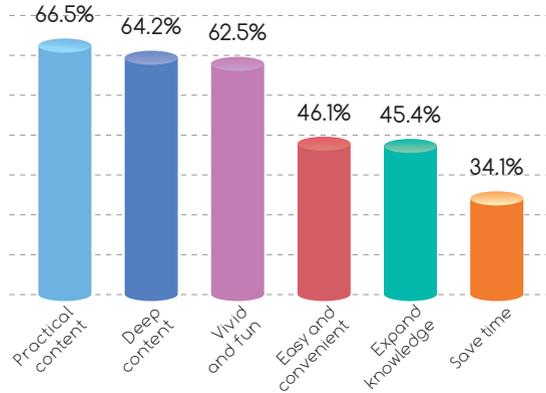


Distribution of "Now Meditation" App Users by Age Group (years old)

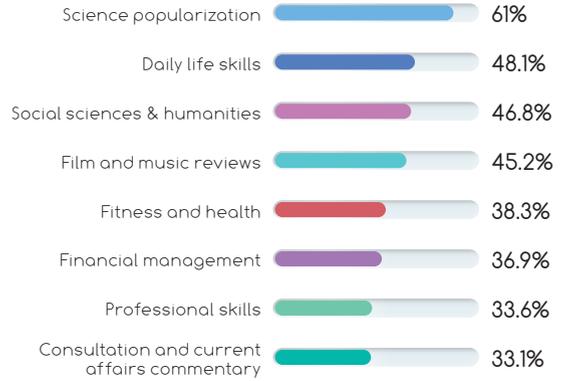


Power of Diversified Growth: Internet Content Explosion

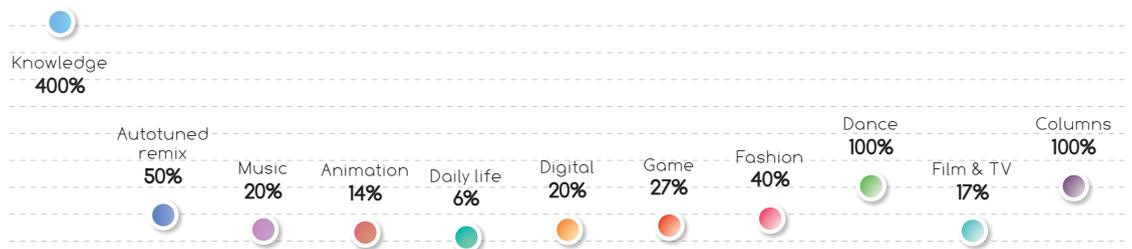
Main Attraction of Pan-Knowledge Short Videos



Content Preference for Pan-Knowledge Short Videos

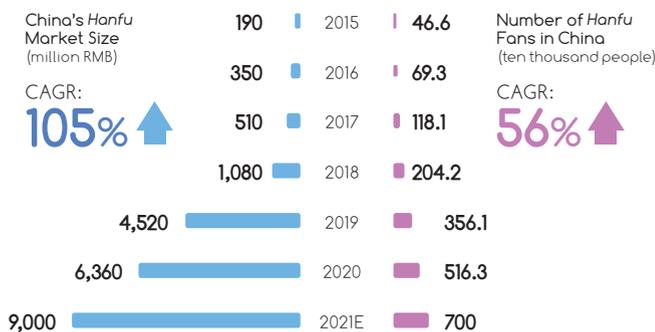


Growth Rate of Top 100 Uploaders by Channel on Bilibili

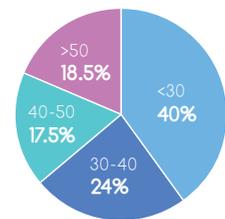


Power of Cultural Confidence

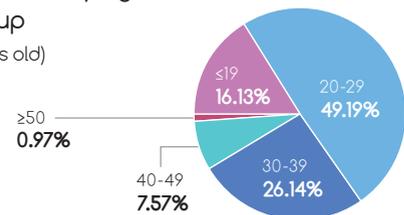
China's Hanfu Market Size and Number of Hanfu Fans 2015-2021



Distribution of Visitors to the Palace Museum by Age Group (years old)



Distribution of Chinese Fad Followers by Age Group (years old)



Chinese Hanfu Consumers Purchase Driving Scenarios:



Source: The Nation of Youth 2021: Cultural Insight and Business Implication Report released by PwC and SuperELLE

Seeing Is Believing: Close Connections and First-hand Experience

Concept by *China-India Dialogue*

Dancing to Connect People

Du Juan

Occupation: Kathak dancer

Birth place: Beijing, China

Current residence: Beijing, China



As a classical Indian Kathak dancer, I see the world through dance and music. The experience of studying social anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London taught me to approach different cultures humbly and trained me to be a keen observer of South Asia. I have been fortunate to encounter Indian culture in artistic realms as well as the Indian artists who create this amazing art and to be accepted into the Indian dance community, even the classical dance community. This deep connection, across borders and time, has made a great difference in my life.

In my eyes, India is one of the most artistic countries harboring a wealth of inspiration for art lovers. Twelve years have

passed since I first experienced Indian dance. In 2010, I visited Gujarat, a western state in India, for an international volunteer project. In a country that wakes you up with music every morning, I was fortunate to participate in the “United Way of Baroda,” a folk dance event listed as a “Guinness World Record,” and danced all night with 40,000 costumed people in a Gujarati folk dance called “Garba.” I also had my first unforgettable memory with a live Indian classical dance at the India Habitat Center in New Delhi, during which an Indian guru and her foreign disciple spent 90 minutes giving a breathtaking presentation on a simple stage with strong energy that deeply touched the audience. Although I came from a different culture and

was grappling with language barriers, years of training in contemporary Chinese dance empowered me to immediately sense the chemistry of the Indian art. I have remained deeply attached to Indian dance ever since. And it aroused my strong curiosity: What kind of spiritual energy inspires the art?

After years of exploration, I finally arrived at profound understanding. The energy is called “Bhakti,” which means “connection, participation, dedication and love.” Bhakti is the shared passion, affection, and belief in art transcending language and cultural barriers for dancers from different countries. I can feel it from every Indian artist. As they say in the Indian classical art community, artists will immediately establish a special connection the moment they meet, no matter where they are from. The more committed they are, the stronger this connection will be.

Gradually, as I became more involved with the Indian classical art community, I was able to better empathize with the stories of each artist, for example, my dancing teacher Guru Pradipto Kumar Chakraborty. In India, working as a full-time classical dancer is not easy. As the eldest son in the family, Chakraborty was responsible for the whole family and left the stage for several years to work as an accountant. But he never abandoned his passion for classical dance and kept practicing as much as he could. He eventually returned to the art world and established himself in the competitive dancing market in Delhi. The Indian dance community has



Du Juan (left) and her dancing partner dressed in Indian classical dance costume pose in a street in London, capital of the United Kingdom, 2019. (Photo courtesy of the author)

many similar stories, and each artist’s devotion and dedication eventually transforms into inspiration and energy that ultimately bursts out on the stage. I was encouraged by every artist I met on this journey, from dance partners to world-class gurus. “Always dance, no matter what happens” is how they enlightened me with their stories.

In recent years, cultural and artistic exchanges between China and India have been more frequent. Many young Chinese people have developed a strong interest in Indian dance, with some willing to devote great time and energy to exploring the art. A growing number of Chinese dancers have performed on stages in India and other countries, attracting international spectators with the passion

and effort necessary to connect China with the rest of the world. Dance has truly become an emotional connection between the youth of the world. After so many years of hard work, I am happy to become one of those artistic envoys to pass the love and connection to others. Over the past decade, I have remained dedicated to popularizing the beauty of Indian dance and enhancing understanding between peoples by participating in more than 100 events including performances, speeches, video productions, and workshops in China, India, the United Kingdom, and the United States. All these efforts have earned me a reputation as a “pioneer of Kathak in China” from Farooq Chaudhary, the producing director of the world-renowned

Akram Khan Dance Company.

Sufism is one of the most expressed themes in Kathak. "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right-doing, there is a field," wrote Sufi poet Rumi. "I'll meet you there." The dance floor is my field to meet the like-minded.

Connect to Debunk Stereotypes

Kamal Panchal

Occupation: Executive Director of the Asia-Pacific Model United Nations HK and former Vice President of the India-Pakistan Scout Youth Forum

Birth place: New Delhi, India

Current residence: Guangdong, China



"If I am walking with two others, they are both my teachers," Confucius said. "I can see the good traits in one to emulate, and recognize the undesirable aspects of the other to avoid." As two neighboring great ancient civilizations, India and China woefully know little

about each other. There seems to be a lack of mutual understanding and trust. However, I believe that many barriers will be lifted in the future. China and India have much to share with each other in many areas like information technology, textiles, agriculture, irrigation, export-oriented manufacturing, and, of course, politics and culture. One thing clearly shared by the history of India and China is an understanding of eternity without denying the undertow of time.

Several stereotypes about each other still persist, but when you live in the other country for an amount of time, you start to see the bigger picture. When I first visited China in 2017, I was impressed by Shanghai's incredible infrastructure. Five years later, I have formed a tight

believe in ethos and character development. Both countries are known for their splendid cultures and quality human resources. The power of both nations is the youth. We have a large population of talented, hard-working young people. However, both countries grapple with the challenge of brain drain. Of the many talented people who attend universities in foreign countries, some don't come back due to the attractiveness of job opportunities, medical facilities, and compensation.

"We are converting brain drain to brain gain," announced Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January 2022 at a celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, a holiday to honor the contribution of India's diaspora. Chinese President Xi Jinping also said that

India and China have historically maintained close relations for thousands of years, and their cultural and economic relations date back to ancient times. The Silk Road not only served as a major trade route between India and China but is also credited with facilitating the spread of Buddhism from India to East Asia.

bond with China and consider it my second home. I think both countries can learn a lot from each other and grow stronger together. And the role of youth is important in this journey.

Regarding the similarities and common interests of China and India, both countries have an epic history of standing stronger after multiple invasions and wars. Both Chinese and Indian societies are family-oriented, and

as long as all Chinese both at home and abroad unite as one and contribute whatever they can, be it strength or intelligence, they can marshal great power for realizing the Chinese Dream. We need to find ways to provide appropriate facilities for talented people to return and contribute to the development of their motherland. A few agreements between our countries on educational exchange programs



Du Juan and Kamal Panchal attend the China-India Youth Dialogue, an international forum themed on “Together for a Better Future,” with other Chinese and Indian participants, July 25, 2022.

through the BRICS mechanism have emerged, but we need more of them. It would be great if the two governments work jointly in the education sector to develop higher learning institutions with better quality.

According to my observations, the most important quality I find in the Chinese people is integrity. Chinese people are proud of their history and love their culture. They speak multiple dialects but are united by the same written language. They have a strong trust in the government, which is really important. Some other important Chinese qualities to absorb are related to the professional administrative and judiciary systems. They have made corruption rare, which builds confidence with the public. China also has the

world’s best road and railway networks. However, there are some areas where collaboration could help further improvement, like artificial intelligence development, which both India and China are excelling at independently. Another area of mutual collaboration should be specialized programs on alternative energy development.

India and China have historically maintained close relations for thousands of years, and their cultural and economic relations date back to ancient times. The Silk Road not only served as a major trade route between India and China but is also credited with facilitating the spread of Buddhism from India to East Asia. The two countries are now strong trade partners, and I am sure the future belongs to China and India.

However, communication remains a big problem. Not enough direct communication channels connect our two peoples. This allows stereotypes to fester and wrong information to go unchecked. Relying on Western media or cinema for information could make things worse. People should travel more to each other’s country and observe reality. The number of flights and tours should be increased and visa access eased. India and China should work on organizing student exchange and cultural exchange programs. Both countries are playing an important role in global economic development, regional peace, and response to climate change. Why should it ever be “China vs India?” Let’s make it “China with India.” Let’s work together and create a better world. 🌐

Yoga in China: Origins, Evolution, and Localization

By Mao Shichang

Yoga has been localized in China by incorporating many Chinese elements.

Yoga originated in India more than 5,000 years ago. It is one of the six major philosophical schools of ancient India. The birth of yoga is related to the local natural environment. In hot climates, people meditated and cultivated their minds through yoga in forests to resist the sweltering heat and humidity. As a Chinese saying goes, “you will cool off as you calm down.” The same method was widely favored among ancient Indians. Inspired by the resilience of flora and fauna, they started imitating their postures. Over time, each position was increasingly refined, and yoga began to spread among all

classes of Indian society.

Yoga, an ancient method of cultivating energy and knowledge, can help achieve self-perfection by tapping into an individual’s potential. It was inspired by ancient Indian philosophy: Indian culture has integrated mental, physical, and spiritual disciplines for thousands of years. It is characterized by religious pursuit, diversity, and inclusiveness. Alongside a science, it’s also an art of living that enables people to cultivate themselves physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. Its emphasis on developing brotherhood, harmony, fraternity and equality embraces not only people of every skin color,

ethnicity, race, age, gender, religion, caste, and creed, but all living things. Hence yoga philosophy is quite clear and practical, freeing people from spiritual grievances and the resulting spiritual, psychological, and physical diseases to improve vitality and quality of life.

More than 99 percent of Indian people hold religious faith. Philosophy and religion have penetrated every aspect of Indian life, evidenced by ubiquitous pursuit of spirituality in its culture. To achieve liberation in life is the ultimate goal of many Indians. Yoga has developed into the most important and popular physical fitness and mind cultivation practice in

India due to its time-honored history and tight integration with religion.

Expert opinions on the phases of yoga in India vary widely. I lean towards the “Four Periods” theory. They are Vedic Yoga, Pre-classical Yoga, Classical Yoga, and Post-classical Yoga, marked by the emergence of *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Yoga Sutras*, and rich production of various modern yoga schools and practices.

Yoga was introduced to China alongside Buddhism around the 4th century. Despite its Indian origins, the kernel of yoga always shared striking similarities with time-honored Chinese civilization. For instance, the earliest records of Chinese meditation can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.). Vivid examples of similar philosophy include Lao Tzu’s idea that “an enlightened man is free from desire and full of calm,” which calls for achieving extreme tranquility through meditation, and Chuang Tzu’s notion of “Xinzhai,” which calls on people to escape distractions and empty their minds to quietly seek enlightenment.

The idea of “unity of man and nature,” emphasized in yoga, had long before been mentioned in China’s *Huangdi Neijing (Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor)*, a fundamental doctrinal source for Chinese medicine. Passed down since ancient times, the concept was written out in the Zhou (1046-256 B.C.) and Qin (221-207 B.C.)



An Indian coach leads yoga lovers to demonstrate various elegant and beautiful techniques in water in southwestern China’s Chongqing Municipality, August 10, 2022. (Photo from CFP)

dynasties, around the same time as the era of the *Upanishads* featuring the “Atman-Brahman” theory of Indian yoga, meaning the “absolute reality of eternal existence.” The Zen concept in Chinese Buddhism, the “Six Wonderful Dharma Doors” created by the Tiantai sect of Buddhism, and the “tranquility of the mind” from the Vijnanavada sect are all variations on meditation in yoga. More than a thousand years ago, Xuanzang, a famous Buddhist master of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), ventured to India to study the Buddhist system centered around the yoga school and brought back important classics such as *Yogācārabhūmi-Śāstra*. *Yi Jin Jing (The Classics of Changing Tendons)* was introduced to China during the Southern and Northern Dynasties

(420-589), *Tianzhu Massage* during the Tang Dynasty, and *Introduction of Brahmin* during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). They all involve yoga techniques introduced from India. Tibetan tantric practice is popular globally and also features yoga meditation. Zen Buddhism promoted by Master Bodhidharma in the Shaolin Temple formed the culture of Zen learning, Zen painting, and Zen poetry.

Yoga has exerted a huge impact on Chinese culture over centuries. Beyond physical exercise, yoga strengthens the mind, nurtures lifestyles with natural health and balance, and advocates making all aspects of the body and mind peaceful. However, China’s earliest access to yoga in contemporary time did not

originate from India, but from the West. As of today, yoga has had its presence in China for only thirty or forty years, which can be roughly divided into four phases.

The first phase spanned from the 1980s to the 1990s. In the initial stage of China's reform and opening up, people didn't have much awareness of health preservation. Yoga gained early popularity from gyms where women, the main consumer group, were attracted to advertisements

Beyond physical exercise, yoga strengthens the mind, nurtures lifestyles with natural health and balance, and advocates making all aspects of the body and mind peaceful.

about weight loss and body shaping. During this period, yoga teachers and learners explored the exercise without much background knowledge.

The second phase lasted from 2000 to 2007 when yoga teaching and training was still not yet varied enough despite obvious commercialization. Since 2000, professional yoga clubs have appeared in China, categorized into the high-end industry. Later, as people's urgent needs for the health industry gradually increased alongside awareness of health preservation and exercise, yoga workshops devoted to full training emerged in China, and yoga clubs also began to cooperate with yoga teachers from the West. By 2007, yoga training programs as long as a month appeared

in first-tier cities in China. However, most yoga training institutions still focused on offering short-term courses.

The third phase brought a deeper understanding and wider spread of yoga from 2008 and 2014. From 2008 to 2010, yoga developed in second- and third-tier cities with the emergence of relevant chain stores. Various yoga clubs mushroomed, resulting in fierce competition. Chinese people developed a deeper

understanding of yoga and started perceiving its purpose as more than weight loss and body shaping. From 2012 to 2013, yoga physiotherapy and related training sprang up to help improve people's physical health. Since then, yoga has been exponentially popularized in China.

The fourth phase marked the maturation of the yoga sector from 2015 to present. In May 2015, the Yoga-Tai Chi Joint Event & China-India Cultural Exchange Event was held in China. That year also witnessed the establishment of the International Yoga Day and a partnership between Yunnan Minzu University and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations to offer more yoga courses. The development of yoga peaked

in China with the emergence of a highly specialized yoga market. From 2015 to 2016, competition in China's yoga industry became fierce enough to quietly herald the arrival of a mature period. Since then, yoga teaching and training has been formalized in relevant clubs with higher requirements for teachers. Consequently, more yoga teachers have been heading to India to study, in hopes of further sharpening the edge of their skills.

Asceticism is largely gone, and yoga science and its techniques have been adjusted to adapt to modern lifestyles and social preferences. Yoga doesn't compete with traditional physical fitness practices because it involves disciplines such as philosophy, beliefs, psychology, and medicine and is integrated with the cultural development of China and India. The development of yoga in China has long showed Chinese features. It not only captures the essence of Indian classical yoga but also draws on the post-modern yoga system in the West and finally integrates Chinese Zen, the philosophies of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, Confucianism, and Chinese Tibetan Buddhism. This is how yoga has been localized in China. 📖

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The author is former director and a professor at the Centre for Indian Studies at the School of Politics and International Relations, Lanzhou University. This article is an excerpt from his speech at the 2022 International Yoga Day & China-India Cultural Exchange Event.



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An Encyclopedia of Oriental and Indian Studies in China

By Wang Xiangyuan



***Indian Literature in China:
Translation and Dissemination
Across a Century***
By Zeng Qiong
The Commercial Press
December 2021

China and India are neighbors, but they are separated by the Himalayas, the world's highest mountain range. This geographical condition determined the uniqueness of cultural exchange between the two countries.

From the perspective of China, a keyword for its exchange with India is “Fan” (meaning “cross” or “translate” in Chinese): From the Jin Dynasty (266-420) to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), many Chinese monks “crossed” the Himalayas seeking Buddhist sutras in India, which were then “translated” into Chinese before they were spread across China. Considering the huge gap

between Sanskrit and Chinese, ancient Chinese translators had to add considerable explanations when translating sutras from India.

Both “crossing” the mountains and “translating” the sutras were very difficult and could be only accomplished by a few who were indifferent to fame and fortune but dedicated to Buddhist studies. Among them were ancient monks such as Faxian, Yijing, and Xuanzang as well as modern and contemporary scholars Ji Xianlin, Jin Kemu, Xu Fancheng, Huang Baosheng, and Liu Anwu. Despite very few such people, each was knowledgeable and yielded remarkable achievements that enriched the treasure

trove of Chinese culture. This is another feature of Chinese translation and studies of Indian literature—high-end studies by elites.

For this reason, however, researching the history of translation and spread of Indian sutras and literature in China and compiling relevant academic monographs is extremely difficult. No ancient Chinese scholars ever tried to specifically study the history of translation, but some biographies of famous Buddhist masters included preliminary reviews and summaries in this regard such as *Biographies of Eminent Monks* by Huijiao of the Liang Dynasty (502-557) and *Biographies of Eminent Song Dynasty Monks* by Zanning. Works such as *Compilation of Notes on the Translation of the Tripitaka* by Sengyou of the Liang Dynasty and *Collection of Prefaces, Epilogues, and Postscripts of Chinese Buddhist Sutras* by contemporary scholar Xu Ming are also considered compilations of the translation history of ancient China. Of course, various works on the history of Chinese Buddhism published in modern and contemporary times also mention translation of Buddhist sutras in China. However, outside a few booklets, no influential monograph has ever expounded on the history of Buddhist

sutra translation in China. Moreover, there is also a void in academic works on the history of translation and studies of Indian literature in modern and contemporary China.

Since the turn of the 21st century, Chinese academia has made considerable efforts in this regard. In 2001, I gave a brief overview of the history of translation and studies of Indian literature in China in *Eastern Literature in China: From the Perspective of the History of Their Translation and Research*. Then, *Buddhist Sutras in Sanskrit: Chinese Writers and Indian Culture*, co-authored by my students and me, was published in 2007, seeking to explore the relationship between Chinese and Indian literature from the perspective of how Chinese writers interpreted Indian literary works.

In 2011, Dr. Zeng Qiong began her postdoctoral studies at the postdoctoral research station of the School of Chinese Language and Literature at Beijing Normal University. She had formerly studied Indian literature from Professor Liu Shuxiong at Peking University. Considering her expertise in Indian literature studies, I believed that Dr. Zeng had advantages in studying the relationship between Chinese and Indian literature. Therefore, as one of her postdoctoral

supervisors, I suggested she focus postdoctoral research on the topic of “Indian literature in China.” The research topic was later approved by the expert team. In 2013, after she joined the Institute of Comparative Literature at Tianjin Foreign Studies University, where Dr. Zeng successfully applied for the research project “History of the Spread of Indian Literature in China During the 20th Century” under the National Social Science Fund of China. Subsequently, she published a series of papers to share the early results. The research project was completed in 2018. I was happy to see that *Indian Literature in China: Translation and Dissemination Across a Century*, a book Dr. Zeng compiled from the results of the research project, was set to be published by The Commercial Press.

The “century” in the title refers to the 20th century. China-India cultural exchange started in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) and continued for the next 1,000 years but went dormant for centuries after the Song Dynasty (960-1279) until translation of Indian literature enjoyed a renaissance in China in the 20th century. Dr. Zeng’s book reviews the history of translation and studies of Indian literature in China throughout the 20th century and explores

the varying characteristics of different periods in hopes of standardizing studies in the field. In particular, her studies on Chinese translation of Indian literature and China-India cultural exchange during the Republic of China period (1912-1949) revealed some phenomena and links previously ignored by researchers which demand further exploration

Furthermore, the book covers not only translation and studies of Indian literary classics but also Indian movies and travel notes popular among the public. This is how it provides a panoramic view of translation and spread of Indian literature in China during the 20th century.

More importantly, this book is not only a country-based case

above, conducting research in this field is never easy due to language and cultural barriers. In terms of translatology, shifting the focus of research from studying translation through a cultural perspective to conducting micro analysis and aesthetic evaluation of translated texts still requires persistent efforts.

My words in the Preface of *Indian Literature in China: Translation and Dissemination Across a Century* were based on my feelings about the book as a reader and friend who had long tracked the academic growth of Dr. Zeng. In my view, this book is more than just a monograph on Oriental and Indian studies in China; It will become a key reference for China's Oriental and Indian studies. Alongside several other recently published works such as *History of Sino-Foreign Literature Exchange: China-India* (2015) by Yu Longyu and Liu Zhaohua and *An Academic Journey of Indian Literature Studies* (2016) by Yu Longyu, this book helps establish a relatively complete knowledge structure in the field. Those who have a chance to read the book are fortunate, and it will provide a major boost for Oriental and Indian studies in China. 

In terms of translatology, shifting the focus of research from studying translation through a cultural perspective to conducting micro analysis and aesthetic evaluation of translated texts still requires persistent efforts.

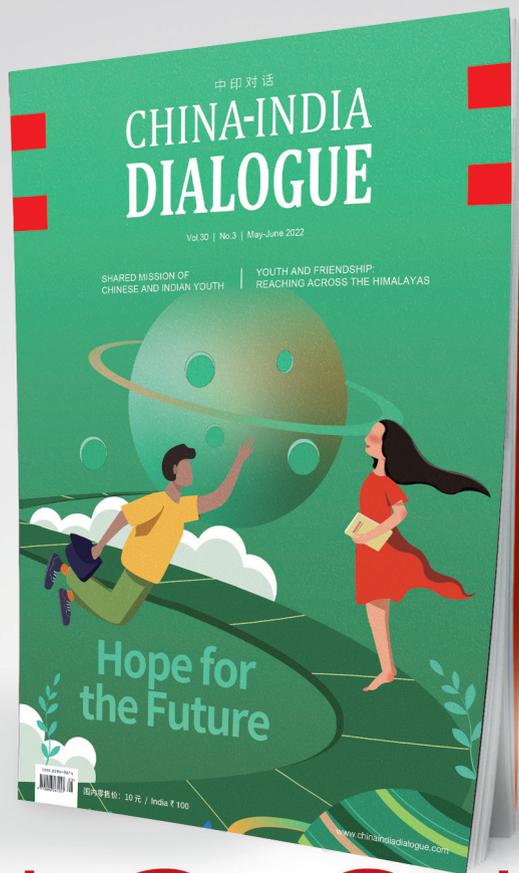
of relevant realms. For instance, in recent years, Professor Wang Chunjing has conducted research on literary exchange between China and India, especially Indian travel notes, during the Republic of China period. Her research complements Dr. Zeng's snugly.

In terms of research scope, *Indian Literature in China: Translation and Dissemination Across a Century* focuses on studying not only Indian literary works in Hindi and Urdu, two major languages in India, but also those in Bengali, Tamil, Punjabi, English, and other languages. Chinese academia had never before conducted research on China's translation and introduction of Indian literature from Bengali, Punjabi, or Tamil.

study of the relationship between Chinese and Indian literature, but also demonstrates the academic consciousness on Oriental studies. In recent years, Dr. Zeng organized several academic conferences on Oriental studies and Eastern literature at Peking University, Tianjin Foreign Studies University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, and other institutions and compiled and published conference proceedings such as *Understanding Oriental Studies* and *Exploring Oriental Studies*. She has made considerable contributions to the development of the discipline of Oriental studies in China by writing books and organizing academic events.

Of course, as mentioned

The author is a professor at the School of Chinese Language and Literature at Beijing Normal University. This article is an excerpt from the Preface of *Indian Literature in China: Translation and Dissemination Across a Century*.



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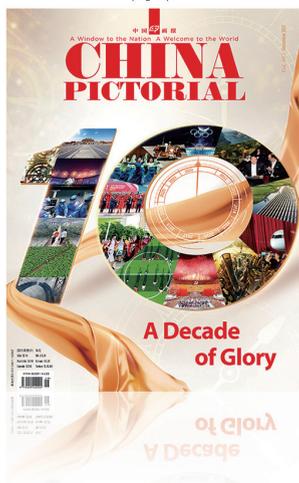
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