

中印对话

CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

Vol.30 | No.3 | May-June 2022

SHARED MISSION OF
CHINESE AND INDIAN YOUTH

YOUTH AND FRIENDSHIP:
REACHING ACROSS THE HIMALAYAS



Hope for
the Future

ISSN 2096-2614



国内零售价：10 元 / India ₹ 100

www.chinaindiadialogue.com

塞罕坝

牢记使命 艰苦创业 绿色发展

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.

CONTENTS

CHINDIA NEWS / P.02

OPENING ESSAY

UNDERSTAND CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT,
KEEP FAITH IN COOPERATION

04



Shared Mission of Chinese and Indian Youth / p.10

COMMENT

The Youth Design the Future
of China-India Ties / p.14

The Youthful Shape of Asian
Values / p.18

STRATEGY

Youth and Friendship:
Reaching Across the
Himalayas / p.22

Young Game Changers / p.25

TREND

Cooperation Imperative in
Uncertain Times / p.28

Progress Through Bilateral
Appreciation / p.31

CASE STUDY

My Journey to the West / p.34

Keep Our Biggest Friends
Closest / p.37

An Anecdote with
Atul Singh / p.40

DISCUSSION

Putting the Youth
to Work / p.44

Challenging Youth
Employment / p.48

DATA

Chinese Youth in
the New Era / p.52

YOUNG VOICES

A New Generation of
Resilience / p.56

COLUMN

Weddings and Marriages:
Traditions and Trends / p.60

BOOK

Exchange and Cooperation
to Bridge over Mutual
Estrangement and
Misunderstanding / p.63

CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY: 主管:
China International 中国外文出版发行事业局
Communications Group (中国国际传播集团)

PUBLISHER: 主办、出版:
China Pictorial Publications 人民画报社

ADDRESS: 地址:
33 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Haidian, 北京市海淀区
Beijing 100048, China 车公庄西路33号

PRESIDENT: 社长:
Jiang Yonggang 姜永钢

EDITORIAL BOARD: 编委会:
Jiang Yonggang, He Peng, 姜永钢、贺鹏、
Bao Linfu, Yu Jia 鲍林福、于佳
EXECUTIVE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Yu Jia 执行主编: 于佳
BUSINESS DIRECTOR: Wang Shuo 社务总监: 王舒
EDITORIAL DIRECTORS: 编辑部主任:
Qiao Zhenqi, Yin Xing 乔振祺、殷星
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR: Zhao Yue 业务总监: 赵月
OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR: Hu Zhoumeng 业务主管: 胡周萌
ENGLISH EDITOR: 英文定稿:
Liu Haile 刘海乐
EDITORIAL CONSULTANT: 语言顾问:
Scott Huntsman 苏格
EDITORS AND TRANSLATORS: 编辑、翻译:
Bian Xiuhong, Gong Haiying, 卞秀红、龚海莹、
Hu Zhoumeng, Liu Haile, Li Zhuoxi, 胡周萌、刘海乐、李卓希、
Li Yiqi, Liu Chang, Wang Shuya, 李艺琦、刘畅、王舒雅、
Xu Shuyuan, Yin Xing, 许舒园、殷星、
Zhao Yue, Zhou Xin, Maitri Sharma 赵月、周昕、Maitri Sharma
EDITOR-VISUALS & PHOTOGRAPHS: Li Zhuoxi 视觉编辑: 李卓希
DIRECTORS OF NEWS INTERVIEW DEPARTMENT: 新闻采访部主任:
Duan Wei, Dong Fang 段巍、董芳
DESIGNED BY: 设计:
Alinea Productions Alinea Productions

REMITTANCE TO: Publishing and Distribution 邮购收款人:
Department, 人民画报社
China Pictorial 出版发行部
TELEPHONE: +86-10-68412166 电话: +86-10-68412660
POSTAL CODE: 100048 邮编: 100048

ACADEMIC PARTNERS: 学术合作单位:
Chinese Association for 中国南亚学会
South Asian Studies
Observer Research 印度观察家基金会 (孟买)
Foundation (Mumbai)

LEGAL ADVISER: Yue Cheng 岳成
PRINTING: 印刷:
Toppan Leefung Changcheng Printing 北京利丰雅高长城
(Beijing) Co., Ltd. 印刷有限公司

OVERSEAS DISTRIBUTION:
China International Book Trading Corporation (Guoji Shudian),
35 Chegongzhuang Xilu, P.O. Box 399, Beijing 100048, China

In China, subscriptions are available at any post office.
Subscription and distribution agency in Hong Kong, Macao,
and Taiwan:

Hong Kong Peace Book Company, Ltd.
17/F., Paramount Building, 12 Ka Yip Street,
Chai Wan, Hong Kong

CHINA STANDARD PERIODICAL NUMBER:
ISSN 2096-2614
CN10-1433/D

ADVERTISING BUSINESS LICENSE:
J.H.G.S. Advertising Business Registration No.20170199

PRICING:
¥10 / India ₹ 100

VOL.30 | NO.3 | MAY-JUNE 2022

Visit *China-India Dialogue* on the Internet:
www.chinaindiadialogue.com
Follow us on:



CONSULTANTS OF THE CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE ADVISORY BOARD

Alka Acharya Professor and former director of the
Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi

Dhaval D Desai, Senior Fellow & Vice President of
Observer Research Foundation

Hu Shisheng Director of the Institute of South and
Southeast Asian and Oceanian Studies under China
Institutes of Contemporary International Relations

Li Daokui Economics professor and director of the
Center for China in the World Economy at Tsinghua
University

Lin Minwang Professor at the Institute of
International Studies at Fudan University

Ma Jiali Deputy Director of the Center for International
Strategic Studies of China Reform Forum

Ma Weigong Consultant of the National Institute
of Strategic Communication at Peking University
and former deputy editor-in-chief of China Radio
International

Mukul Sanwal Former Policy Adviser to the
Executive Director of United Nations Environment
Programme

Pravin Sawhney Editor of *Force* Newsmagazine

Sun Shihai Former director of the Chinese
Association for South Asian Studies and former
deputy director of the National Institute of
International Strategy under the Chinese Academy
of Social Sciences

Sun Yuxi Former Special Envoy of the Chinese
Foreign Ministry on Afghan Affairs and former

Chinese ambassador to India

Sudheendra Kulkarni, Founder of Forum for New
South Asia

Tarun Vijay Former member of Parliament and
president of Parliamentary Group on India China
Friendship

T. C. A. Rangachari Former Indian Ambassador to
France and Germany, dealt with India's relations
with China for over 15 years in the Ministry of
External Affairs

Yang Yifeng Director of the Hindi Department
of the Center for Programs in Asian and African
Languages, China Media Group

Zhang Wenmu Professor of the Center for Strategic
Studies at Beihang University

14th BRICS Summit

On June 23, Chinese President Xi Jinping chaired the 14th BRICS Summit in Beijing via video link. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the summit.

Xi said that over the past year, despite formidable and complex circumstances, BRICS countries have maintained the BRICS spirit of openness, inclusiveness, and win-win cooperation, enhanced solidarity and coordination, and jointly addressed difficulties. The BRICS mechanism has demonstrated

resilience and vitality. BRICS cooperation has achieved sound progress and results. The summit was held at a critical juncture in the shaping of the future course of humanity. BRICS countries, as important emerging markets and major developing countries, need to act with a sense of responsibility, speak out for equity and justice, remain firm in the conviction that the pandemic will be defeated, pool strength for economic recovery, advocate sustainable development, jointly contribute wisdom and ideas to the high-quality development of BRICS cooperation, and bring positive, stabilizing and constructive strength to the world, according to Xi.

Under the theme “Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development,” leaders of the five countries conducted an in-depth exchange of views on BRICS cooperation in various sectors and major issues of common concern and reached important consensus. They agreed on the need to pursue “BRICS Plus” cooperation at more levels, in broader areas, and within a greater scope, actively advance the BRICS membership expansion process, keep BRICS abreast of the times, increase its appeal and relevance, and constantly strive for substantive, solid, and sustained progress.

Seminar on Xu Fancheng and Mahakavi Bharathiyar Held in India

On June 5, a seminar named “The Great Poets of India & China: Mahakavi Bharathiyar & Xu Fancheng” was held in Puducherry in southern India.

Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong delivered a keynote speech at the event. He said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India over 70 years ago, non-governmental organizations from the two countries have always firmly promoted exchange between the two peoples, making important

contributions to consolidating friendship between the two nations and promoting their bilateral relations. He suggested that the foundation of the tree of friendship between China and India is the people and that profound friendship between the people is the source of nourishing state-to-state relations. Hope for China-India friendship rests with the youth, and the close exchange between young people of the two countries will create perpetual impetus for China-India relations.

24th Meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on China-India Border Affairs

On May 31, Hong Liang, director-general of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of China's Foreign Ministry, and Naveen Srivastava, additional secretary of the East Asia Division of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, co-chaired the 24th

2022 International Yoga Day & China-India Cultural Exchange Event Held in Kunming

The 2022 International Yoga Day & China-India Cultural Exchange Event was held on June 21 in Kunming, southwestern China's Yunnan Province. Themed "Enhance Mutual Learning between Civilizations through Yoga, Work Together to Strengthen People-to-People Bonds," the event was attended by more than 100 Chinese and overseas guests both online and in-person.

At the main forum and three parallel forums of this event, over 50 scholars and experts joined discussion on topics including "Yoga and Tai Chi: Dialogue beyond Body," "Cultural Exchange and Mutual Learning between Chinese Civilization and Indian Civilization," and "Yoga and Health Promotion in China."

Under the guidance of China International Communications Group(CICG), as well as the Foreign Affairs Office and the Publicity Office of Yunnan Provincial People's Government, the event was hosted by Yunnan Minzu University(YMU), the Publicity Department of the Kunming Municipal Party Committee, and the CICG Center for Europe and Asia (China Pictorial Publications) and organized by the India-China Yoga College of YMU, *China India Dialogue*, and the Yunnan International Communication Center for South & Southeast Asia.

meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on China-India Border Affairs via video link. Representatives from departments related to diplomacy, national defense, and immigration in both countries attended the meeting.

The two sides held a candid and in-depth exchange of views on the current situation in the China-India border areas and agreed to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the

leaders and foreign ministers of the two countries, further ease and cool tension, and jointly maintain peace and stability in the border areas. They agreed to continue to maintain dialogue and communication through diplomatic and military channels and hold the 16th round of Corps Commanders-Level Meeting as soon as possible to handle outstanding issues related to the western section of the boundary under the principle of mutual and equal security.

Chinese Foreign Minister Meets New Indian Ambassador

On June 22, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Pradeep Kumar Rawat, India's new ambassador to China, in Beijing.

The Chinese foreign minister said the two sides should meet halfway to shift bilateral relations back to a track of stable and healthy development as quickly as possible, jointly address various global challenges, and safeguard the common interests of China and India alongside other developing countries worldwide.

Highlighting the fruitful history of exchange between India and China, Rawat said that India will firmly pursue an independent foreign policy and stands willing to work with China to adhere to the strategic consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, strengthen communication, properly handle differences, enhance mutual trust, and continue advancing bilateral cooperation. 🌐

Understand China's Development, Keep Faith in Cooperation

By Sun Weidong



I hope young friends search for and discover a true, multi-dimensional and comprehensive picture of China, and contribute more wisdom and energy to the friendly and cooperative bonds between China and India.

To understand China's development, it is essential to have a good understanding of China's history and the Communist Party of China(CPC). In the past century, China has witnessed tremendous changes and transformations from an old descending country ravaged by war to

a vigorous, prosperous new China. In the past, China was extremely backward. We could only make tables, chairs, teapots and tea cups, but not even a single car or tractor. Today, China becomes the world's second-largest economy and the largest trader of goods. In the past, we couldn't meet people's basic living needs such as

food and clothing. Today, we are a moderately prosperous society. We feed nearly 20 percent of the world's population with only 9 percent of the world's arable land. We have lifted more than 850 million people out of poverty. We now have a middle-income population of over 400 million. China's modern science and technology started from

scratch and have made great progress including taking samples from the moon, building a space station, and landing on Mars. China's comprehensive national strength has reached a new level. Many opinion polls over the years have shown the approval and satisfaction ratings of the Chinese government reach more than 90 percent among the Chinese people. This is at the top of world rankings.

How has China made such changes and achievements within one century since the CPC was founded in 1921? We can interpret from two perspectives.

THE CHOICE OF HISTORY

Looking back at its 100 years of history, the CPC has been the leader of China's continuous victories in revolution, construction and reform. It is the backbone of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

China has a long history and created a splendid civilization. But it has been through trials and tribulations in modern times. After the Opium War of 1840, China was plunged into a dark period. Foreign invasion and internal exploitation led to the disintegration of our land and unspeakable misery of our people. The Chinese nation was almost at the brink of extinction. To save the nation, countless patriots struggled to explore the path forward and even sacrificed their lives. They tried political systems including



A Red Army veteran tells a group of children stories about the glorious history of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and its people-first philosophy. (Photo from CFB)

constitutional monarchy, parliamentarism, multi-party system and presidential system. But all these endeavors ended in failure.

At this critical moment of life-or-death, the CPC adapted Marxism to the realities of the Chinese society. It rallied and led the Chinese people to achieve national independence and liberation through hard work and sacrifice. The Chinese people stood up from then on. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the CPC led the Chinese people in painstaking exploration and embarked on a right path of development toward prosperity. This is the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. After the start of its reform and opening up in 1978, in just a few decades, China has completed the industrialization process that took those developed countries hundreds of years. We

established a comprehensive modern industrial system in this period. The Chinese people achieved a transformation from meeting basic living needs to building a well-off society. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, under the leadership of the Party Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core, China has made a series of new historic achievements. China has won a decisive victory in the battle against poverty. Socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. China's GDP has exceeded 100 trillion yuan. The country's per capita GDP has exceeded US\$10,000. China has become a major engine of global growth.

Nearly every Chinese knows a song—"No Communist Party, No New China." It is the CPC that history has chosen to lead the Chinese people from standing up, getting rich to becoming



Workers pose for a group photo in a workshop in Suzhou in eastern China's Jiangsu Province. China's manufacturing value-added output expanded from 16.98 trillion yuan (about US\$2.5 trillion) in 2012 to 31.4 trillion yuan (US\$4.7 trillion) in 2021, showing growing resilience and competitiveness in industrial and supply chains. (Photo from CFB)

strong. We stand with renewed confidence again in the family of nations.

I also would like to stress that China is still a developing country. We are sober and clear about this. There is a long road ahead of us and huge amount of work to do to bring a better life for the people. It will take tireless struggle and lots of efforts.

THE CHOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Why could the CPC secure victory of the revolution and further establish socialism with Chinese characteristics? One of the primary reasons is that the CPC is the vanguard of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation, and has won the wholehearted endorsement and support of the people. Since its founding, the CPC always represents the fundamental interests of the

greatest possible majority of the Chinese people. It always gives top priority to the interests of the people. There are countless examples and here I would like to share some true stories:

The first story is about a halved quilt. In November 1934, the CPC-led Red Army was on the extremely tough Long March. When the Red Army passed by a village in Hunan Province, the soldiers slept under the roof and in the courtyard, not to disturb the villagers. A woman named Xu Jiexiu in the village shared the bed of herself and her one-year-old son with three female Red Army soldiers. These female soldiers noticed Xu was extremely poor, and there were just one grass raincoat and a piece of clothing made of rotten cotton on the bed. Before their departure, they cut their only quilt into

two halves and gave one half to Xu. They told her, the Red Army was the people's army, who was fighting the enemy for the people to live a good life. They said that they would come back to see her after their victory with a brand new quilt. Xu held the halved quilt with tears and walked a long way to see the Red Army soldiers off. She missed the three female soldiers, and often sat on a small bench by the riverside waiting for them to come back. Until October 1984, the 50th anniversary of the Long March, a journalist encountered the 80-year-old Xu waiting for half her life in her village. That was how the halved quilt story was uncovered.

People don't know the names of the three soldiers, where they went, and whether they survived or not. But the story made the Chinese people remember what the CPC was. Even if the CPC had only one quilt, it would give half of it to the people.

The second story is about an ordinary grassroots official during the construction period of China. Jiao Yulu, a county Party chief, sacrificed his life on duty of poverty alleviation. In the early 1960s, Jiao became the Party chief of Lankao County in Henan Province. At that time, Lankao faced the "three disasters" of sandstorms, saline-alkali land and floods. The people there suffered from hunger and poverty. In more than a year after Jiao took office, he led the investigation team to travel

more than 2,500 kilometers to visit more than 120 rural villages. After he came to know how to distinguish saline-alkali land by tongue tasting, he himself tasted nearly 67 square kilometers of saline-alkali land across the county. He finally drew a detailed map of the saline-alkali land to fight the “three disasters.” Due to long-term overwork, Jiao’s liver pain became increasingly severe and he couldn’t even stand straight. In order to continue his work, he poked at his belly with a rod. And even a big hole appeared on the right side of his old cane chair in the office. In May 1964, liver cancer took Jiao’s life at an age of 42. The only request he made before passing away was to be buried in Lankao’s sand. He said he never got the chance to see the victory over the management of saline-alkali land, so he wanted to see it after death. When his bone ash was delivered back to Lankao, tens of thousands of people attended his funeral with tears. Lankao was lifted out of poverty in March 2017. At present, the former saline-alkali land has become oasis, the paulownia trees widely planted by people under the leadership of Jiao have become the “green bank” of the local people. Soundboard of Chinese national musical instruments made of paulownia trees has become one of the pillar industries in Lankao.

Jiao Yulu’s story made the Chinese people keep in mind that the CPC always puts people in the hearts. The

CPC members are pioneers who maintain a heroic spirit despite any difficulties. They work hard, live a simple life and never seek personal privileges.

The third story is about a medical worker who has been diagnosed with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). Zhang Dingyu is the president of Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital. He is a doctor, and also an ALS patient. ALS patients will gradually lose their mobility due to muscle atrophy, and there is no cure. He could not stop his illness, but tried his best to save lives. Sometimes he went to bed at 2:00 a.m. and was woken up by phone calls at 4:00 a.m. Facing the raging COVID-19 pandemic, he stuck to the front line, and led hospital staff to save more than 2,800 COVID-19 patients. He raced against the virus and demonstrated the amazing “China speed.” As his legs shriveled, he made some touching remarks: “My time may be running out, and I have to run faster and outrun time in order to save more patients.” In August 2020, Zhang was rewarded a national honorary title called “People’s Hero.”

The story of Zhang Dingyu has reminded the Chinese that the CPC members are self-sacrificing people who demonstrate the philosophy of “people first and life first” with concrete actions in the epicenter of a storm.

Everything is for the people, serve the people wholeheartedly, have heart-to-heart bonds with people.

Such a spirit will never become outdated.

President Xi Jinping stresses that the state is the people, and the people are the state. Putting people first is the secret behind all achievements made by China under the leadership of the CPC. It is also the consistent values and spiritual concept in the Chinese civilization for thousands of years. Over 2,000 years ago, an ancient Chinese sage Mencius said that to a state, people come first, state comes second, the ruler is the least important. China’s Tang Dynasty (618-907) followed the wise governing philosophy and created a flourishing age. They understood that people are like water and the ruler a boat, and water can support the boat or overturn it. However, since ancient times, only the CPC has been remaining true to its original aspiration and keeping its mission firmly in mind. The past 100 years witness the history that the CPC practiced its original aspiration and mission, and shared weal and woe with the people, winning the heartfelt support of the people. The CPC and the people are as inseparable as fish and water. The CPC has gone through countless difficulties and tests all the way from small to large and from weak to strong. It relies on the firm will of ideals rising above the persistence on its original aspiration and mission. And it relies on the lofty vision of keeping the wellbeing of the people, the country and the world in the mind. If China’s peaceful

development can be described as building an edifice in the world, then the 95 million CPC members are its iron and steel supporting framework.

To seek happiness for the Chinese people, rejuvenation for the Chinese nation, and the common good for the world is the goal and source of strength of the CPC.

THE CPC'S OUTLOOK ON INTERNATIONAL ORDER AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

The CPC is a political party that seeks happiness for the Chinese people and strives for the cause of human progress. Since its founding, the CPC has closely linked the happiness of the Chinese people with the happiness of people of the whole world. President Xi Jinping clearly points out that the overall goal of China's diplomacy is to foster a new type of international relations and build a community with a shared future for mankind. Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy provides fundamental guidance for China's foreign policy in the new era, and clarifies to the world the general direction in which we hope to work with other countries. I would like to highlight this vision with three keywords, namely "peace, development and cooperation."

Peace is the foundation. Without peace, there will be no development and cooperation. Amity with neighbors and harmony without uniformity are values cherished in the Chinese culture. Having been torn

by wars and conflicts in the past, we Chinese know too well the scourge of turmoil and the value of peace. Peace and stability are the only way to development and prosperity. China grows not by expansion or colonial plunder, but through the hard work of its people. China is committed to an independent foreign policy of peace, and is the only country that has codified peaceful development in its Constitution. China is committed to peaceful co-existence with all countries, true multilateralism and to non-hegemony, non-expansion, non-alignment and non-coercion. We never copy foreign models, nor export ideologies or ask other countries to copy China's practices. Instead, we advocate that all countries follow development paths that suit their own national conditions. All countries should respect each other and learn from each other without interfering in others' internal affairs. Throughout the years, China takes concrete actions to fulfill its responsibility in maintaining world peace. The Chinese military and police have participated in more than 30 UN peacekeeping operations. China is also the largest contributor of peacekeepers among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The Chinese people know that, for the national interests and future of mankind, we must cherish peace, and stick to the path of peaceful development. We must uphold peace, and address differences through

dialogue. And when peace is undermined, we must strive to defend peace.

Development is the goal. Development is the eternal theme of human society and the master key to solving almost all the problems. Through focusing on development, China has completed eradication of extreme poverty. We have met the poverty eradication target set out in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 10 years ahead of schedule. According to the International Monetary Fund, in 2019, 69 countries and regions had a per capita GDP exceeding US\$10,000. That includes approximately 2.8 billion people, including more than 1.4 billion people from China. China's building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects has doubled the world population with a per capita GDP exceeding US\$10,000. This is an important contribution to the cause of global poverty alleviation. This year is crucial for the full implementation of China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025). We will increase domestic demand and expand opening up. China's development has not only provided more cooperation opportunities for other countries, but also offered Chinese wisdom to solving the problems facing humanity.

Cooperation is the path. As the inheritor of the ancient civilization, the Chinese people do not believe in the philosophy of using one's strength to bully the weak or winner-takes-all. China's

development has never been at the expense of other countries' interests. We will never pursue a "China first" approach, nor do we seek to dominate the world. Instead, we advocate making the pie bigger and conducting win-win cooperation. For over 10 years, China has contributed to more than 30 percent of global growth and more than 70 percent of global poverty reduction. As I see it, if development is the goal, cooperation is the bridge to get there. We need to build more bridges instead of destroying or demolishing them. History has proven time and again that to pursue beggar-thy-neighbor practice, conduct isolation and exclusion, and build small circles seeking zero-sum confrontation always failed. Only openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation are the right way forward for the mankind.

President Xi Jinping said, "There is only one Earth in the universe and we mankind have only one homeland." No country alone can address the many challenges facing the mankind. No matter how the international situation evolves, China will firmly hold high the banner of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit. We will be committed to the mankind's common values of peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom. We will work together unswervingly with the people of all countries to build a community with a shared future for mankind, and we will



July 25, 2020: A group of students practice interpreting school history at the Qamdo Experimental Primary School in Qamdo, southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region. (Photo by Xu Xun/China Pictorial)

endeavor to build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity.

When the First National Congress of the CPC was held, the average age of the participants was only 28. That was a political party built by young people full of vigor and vitality, with optimism and a vision for the future. Today, China has entered a new era with a new look, attracting the attention of the world. People wonder how the CPC can maintain the vitality arising from the early days of its founding. In fact, President Xi has already given an answer: "For a party which fights for the eternal wellbeing of the Chinese nation, the centenary only ushers in the prime of life."

The young people are the most vigorous and creative

forces. I hope the young friends present today could be open-minded. You could use your ears to listen, use your eyes to watch, use your hearts to communicate, and use your minds to think. I welcome you to search for and discover a true, multi-dimensional and comprehensive picture of China, to increase your understanding of China, and to contribute more wisdom and energy to the friendly and cooperative bonds between China and India. 📢

The author is Chinese Ambassador to India. This article is an excerpt from the speech by Ambassador Sun Weidong at an online dialogue with the Confederation of Young Leaders and students and faculty from Indian universities.

Shared Mission of Chinese and Indian Youth

By Himadrish Suwan



In the 21st century, the youth of China and India are destined to shape the vision of a shared future between the two neighbors.

This year marks the 72nd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and India. Guided by the important consensus reached by top leaders, China-India relations have achieved stable and sound development and tapped deeper into the potential for bilateral cooperation over decades despite strange

up-and-down trends in bilateral relations. No single person could ever possibly understand every nuance of how things evolved, but I think people have a general sense of the difficulties as well as the development of this relationship.

China is the country with the largest population in the world. India is the country with the largest youth

population. Historically, youth were the driving force enhancing cultural exchange between China and India along the ancient Silk Road. At the age of 27, eminent Chinese monk Xuanzang ventured to India to study Buddhist sutras. Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis, a young Indian doctor, went to China to fight together with the Chinese people during the

Second World War.

Many ancient Chinese visitors to India talked and wrote about the country so much that cultural fragments were adopted in art, technology, and philosophy. Xuanzang's visit to ancient India was especially important for China-India relations. He was an ancient ambassador of peace between China and India. His praise of Harshavardhana and the Indian people in his travel accounts deeply influenced subsequent Chinese pilgrims. India owes much to this Chinese traveler for his valuable accounts including many details of political, religious, economic, and social conditions of those days. History unfolds in cycles, and in the 21st century, again the youth are the people destined to shape the vision for a shared future between the two neighbors.

In recent years, the two sides have set up many interaction platforms to engage youth from both countries. Every year, the two countries organize two-way exchanges of socio-cultural-educational delegations. Members of delegations are young people drawn from diverse institutions and include doctors, engineers, businesspeople, entrepreneurs, journalists, musicians, and students. The central role of youth in fostering development partnership between China and India becomes particularly clear when the two nations ideate: Fresh perspectives alter the outlook and aspirations at large. However, this alone is



September 28, 2019: The “China-India Youth Talks 2019” brings together representatives from the two countries in Beijing to exchange ideas on what the two peoples can learn from each other.
(Photo by Hu Zhoumeng/China Pictorial)

not enough. We need more concrete measures to enhance youth cooperation between China and India in addition to expanding the scope of exchange among youth with focus on specific groups such as interaction among press, movies, education, and sports.

Both China and India have been devoting a lot of attention to boosting the start-up ecosystem, inspired by a whole new generation of entrepreneurs emerging in the region. This start-up revolution is being led by young people breaking from traditional notions of jobs, careers, and employment in general. A dedicated youth entrepreneurship platform between the two nations could enhance communication, increase mutual understanding, and deepen economic cooperation among young entrepreneurs. Young

entrepreneurs face diverse challenges in their journeys to sculpting high-impact and high-growth enterprises. Yet when they succeed, entrepreneurs are empowered as meaningful agents of change—they enhance efficiency, create jobs, and boost economic development, so the two nations should give them all the support in the market.

China and India are both home to hundreds of millions of people below the age of 35, and their aspirations, energy, enterprising nature, and skills could serve as the ideal force for mutually beneficial economic interfacing. By working in tandem, both nations can generate cultural, political, and economic benefits that could last for decades.

In 2019, in an airport-bound Beijing taxi, the driver asked where I was from. When I



June 24, 2022: Chinese and Indian dancers perform Indian classical dance at an event in Beijing to pay tribute to Zhang Jun, China's legendary dancer of Indian classical dance. (Photo by Zhang Huiqin)

replied “India,” he reached for his phone and played a familiar song. Most of the older Chinese generation is familiar with this Raj Kapoor’s 1951 Indian song “Awaara hoon.” And then he started singing a more contemporary Indian song, “Aankhen khuli ho ya ho band” from an Indian movie released in 2000. Indian cinema resonates with the Chinese audience because they connect emotionally with the common themes. Indian Actor Aamir Khan is very popular in China. His movies *Dangal* and *Secret Superstar* performed exceptionally well in China. Similarly, Chinese movie stars such as Jackie Chan are household names in India.

Chinese and Indian societies are very similar; they are just on different timelines. Listing out the similarities, Chinese and

Indian cultures are the most ancient living cultures in the world, and both are more family-oriented compared to Western societies. Social functions are also starkly equivalent on education, with both placing an extremely high priority on students seriously investing time in schools. Attitudes toward teachers, education, and child upbringing are similar. Philosophical and religious ideas match each other. Beliefs in traditional medicine are largely shared. Music is based on pentatonic scales in both countries.

The most important indicator of their mingling cultures is methods of entertaining guests. Both nations have a rich tradition of making their visitors feel at home and make them enjoy themselves to the fullest, exposing them to everything their

culture has to offer. This is most visible in the adapted cuisine of India, which shows deep influence from Chinese flavors. On any given day in an Indian metropolis, restaurant patrons are spoiled by the available choices. India now serves Peruvian cuisine, French patisserie, Mexican tacos, and more. But all these choices haven’t taken much share from the scores of Chinese restaurants that dot every city with names like China Bowl, China Pearl, Chung Wah, Wang’s, and Zhang’s.

Although India has tweaked the basics to its modern needs and tastes, subtle clues in nostalgia remain. Both countries have diverse dialects and languages despite stereotypes that Indians speak Hindi and Chinese speak Mandarin. Both countries have a lot of diversity. The older generations in both societies are more traditional and orthodox while young people are more open to new ideas.

China seems to be emerging as a new yoga epicenter. Thousands of yoga schools and trainers across China are working with millions of practitioners. The interactive history long shared by China and India makes it easy for yoga to be understood by China’s vast population. Yunnan Minzu University in China became the first university outside India to award a master’s degree in yoga. I was awestruck by the admiration for yoga during my visit to the university. A strong India is the best thing that could happen to a rising

China and vice versa.

On the other hand, the contribution of linguistic cooperation has been paramount in enhancing communication and improving bilateral relations through increased people-to-people exchange. Language is the spirit of civilization, like the soul of a country. This is why it is particularly significant for China and India to engage in comprehensive correspondence with each other in their languages. Chinese is not just a popular language; it is also a scientific language. Chinese is written with hieroglyphs, non-consistent with speech.

The China-India relationship is truly poised at a crossroads today. How the two countries choose to do now will create profound repercussions in the years to come, not just for the two nations but for the entire world.

For this reason, modern Chinese can more easily understand theories written by Confucius some 2,000 years ago. Chinese students can read poems written by Qu Yuan. In sharp contrast, readers in modern days have difficulty understanding Shakespeare's masterpieces. Just like the undiscovered charm of its language, China has vast undiscovered literature. For Indians, reading Chinese works is monumental, not just to understand Chinese culture but also to dissolve misconceptions.

Unleashing the full potential of youth-led cooperation


in a sensitive bilateral relationship demands breaking down the strange cycle of ups and downs in the relationship. The reason is simple: Every time such an incident happens, our bilateral relations roll back several years. The aftermath of the 2020 Galwan Valley border clash placed new demands on diplomacy between the two neighbors.

Nevertheless, over the last three decades, interaction and exchange grew steadily in many areas. China became one of India's largest trading partners, a very significant source of investment, even of

technology, a participant in projects and infrastructure building, and a very important destination for tourism and education. The advancement of bilateral ties in this period was clearly predicated on ensuring that peace and tranquility were not disturbed and that the border was respected by both sides.

Regardless of the perceptual disagreements on the boundary question, the border areas remained fundamentally tranquil for more than 45 years until an early 2020 incident that caused casualties on both sides and continues to impact public

and political opinion. Such divergences on public opinion and mutual understanding create a roadblock impeding construction of trust and cooperation between the two neighbors, including promotion of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two nations. The China-India relationship is truly poised at a crossroads today. How the two countries choose to do now will create profound repercussions in the years to come, not just for the two nations but for the entire world. The "three mutuals" (mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests) could be the determining factor steering the two nations to make the right decisions, according to Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. Nothing is ever simple, however. The two are constantly focused on the aspirations of 2.7 billion people.

Mahatma Gandhi once said that an ounce of practice is worth a thousand words. We must seize opportunities, take concrete action, and march together in pursuance of Chinese and Indian dreams. All these dimensions will help us understand the importance of moving past our differences and working in collaboration to ensure the 21st century belongs to Asia. 

The author is chairperson of the Confederation of Young Leaders based in New Delhi, India.

The Youth Design the Future of China-India Ties

By Wang Haixia

Young people from China and India should seek ways to communicate, understand, respect, and foster deeper understanding of each other. Doing so will ensure they become the driving force to improve China-India ties.

The COVID-19 pandemic has widened the gap between different economies and exacerbated inequality. With conservatism, populism, and extreme nationalism on the rise, the ongoing Ukraine crisis continues to risk escalation, causing uncertainty for world economic development and the international situation. Affected by the pandemic and the Ukraine crisis, fiscal deficits of many countries have risen, the unemployment situation has worsened, and structural imbalances have intensified. At the same time, extreme weather events and natural disasters occur more frequently and become intertwined with the

pandemic. People are most concerned about the human health crisis, food crisis, and survival crisis. More non-conventional security problems have emerged, and national governance has become more difficult.

For China and India to make choices that benefit the most people in such an international environment, they should join hands to build a community of shared future for humanity and empower youth to play a bigger role. The future of bilateral relations rests on the shoulders of young people.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Both China and India are major developing countries with a population over

one billion, and they are geographically adjacent to each other. The two neighbors face similar challenges in many fields and shoulder the arduous task of leading a huge population to achieve development goals.

At present, both countries are committed to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting economic recovery, and improving people's livelihood. They share common aspirations and visions on promoting economic development and need to address a wide range of issues related to governance. China has achieved a complete victory in its battle against poverty and developed the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social

Development and Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035. India also formulated a 15-year national vision in 2017 that aims to build a US\$10 trillion economy by 2032 with annual growth of 10 percent.

Decades of globalization have enabled the two countries to establish closer economic ties. Rapid economic and trade development has helped China become India's largest source of imports and third-largest export market. The two countries have established close ties in the fields of pharmaceuticals, automobiles, electronics, chemicals, telecommunications, textiles, and apparel. China is a global manufacturing hub, an important consumer market, and a major overseas investor, while India has become the global home office with its developed software service outsourcing industry.

Considering so many complementary comparative advantages, China and India share huge cooperation potential. Analysts see great room for cooperation in industries such as infrastructure, new energy, medicine, electronics, automobiles, telecommunications, the internet, and the digital economy. However, the past few years have seen bilateral economic cooperation seem to be downgraded to a tangential topic, while the boundary question and broader global geopolitics dominate discourse. Some Indians have sought to reduce China-India economic



A young volunteer distributes COVID-19 containment leaflets to passengers at a railway station in Jilin Province. During the fight against the virus in China, volunteers have played important roles in various communities. (Photo from CFB)

and trade cooperation and expel Chinese investment from India in the name of self-reliance.

STRONGER PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR IMPROVED CHINA-INDIA RELATIONS

Stronger public support is key to steering the relationship between the two countries back on track. The youth are the core force for development and growth and also represent the future of China-India relations. Strengthening exchange between the youth of the two countries is conducive to establishing a solid public opinion base. If young people from both sides deepen understanding and learn from each other, it will lay a solid

foundation for friendly ties between the two countries. Doing so will ensure young people seize their potential as an important driving force enhancing China-India relations.

First, the youth of the two countries should deepen their understanding of the bilateral relationship and play a more active role in bringing the relationship back on track. Young people should develop a global vision and enhance their understanding of China-India ties. Despite the increase of unstable and uncertain factors around the world, peace and development remain the underlying themes of our times. As the two largest developing countries and emerging economies, China and India face similar

development tasks and goals, and their common interests far outweigh their differences. Addressing common global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and arms control demands cooperation among countries and governments. In such complex internal and external environments, China and India need to strengthen cooperation, proceed towards the fundamental interests of the two countries and their peoples, and continue delivering on the people's aspirations for a better life.

As Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong said, both China and India should act as the driving force for multi-polarity and economic globalization. The two countries need to jointly safeguard free trade and multilateralism, seize opportunities in the latest scientific and technological revolution, advocate exchange between civilizations, establish a community of shared future for humanity, and build a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity. People should see that in terms of bilateral economic and trade relations, the push to decouple with China by anti-China forces in India would make it difficult for India to develop manufacturing and cause economic suffering among Indian people and enterprises alike.

Stricken by the COVID-19 pandemic, China rose to the challenge and took the opportunity to promote domestic reform. The

pandemic has also presented opportunities for India to advance economic reforms and remove barriers to development. The large youth population in China and India should play a more active role in promoting mutual understanding. Only when the young people of the two countries open their minds and share their vision—listen, observe, communicate, and think with their hearts—can they foster a deeper understanding of each other and contribute more to enhancing friendship and promoting cooperation.

Second, young people from both sides should make more efforts to understand each other's culture, overcome prejudices, and eliminate biases. Both China and India are ancient civilizations with a long history and splendid culture. Both long histories feature many beautiful stories of the two countries learning from and influencing each other. Eminent Chinese monk Xuanzang (602-664) journeyed west to India to bring Buddhist scriptures to China. Six of his seven celebrated voyages brought Chinese maritime explorer Zheng He (1371-1433) to India. Today, many Indian movies such as *Dangal*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, *3 Idiots*, and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* have been widely acclaimed in China, and many Indian actors such as Aamir Khan are adored by Chinese youth. In 2017, *Dangal* earned about 1.3 billion yuan (US\$194 million) in the Chinese market and became one of the

highest-rated foreign films on Douban, a revered Chinese film review website. Despite all these developments, many Chinese still know little about India, and some Indians don't trust China.

According to an August 2021 survey sampling over 2,000 Indians aged 18-35 in 14 Indian cities conducted by the New Delhi-based think tank Observer Research Foundation, 77 percent of interviewees ranked China as the least trusted country among the major powers. Both countries need more people who are familiar with each other and more youth excited about making friends with people from far away. These people will be an important force for maintaining friendly ties. Chinese and Indian youth face similar living and growing environments as well as similarly fierce competition. They should develop empathy for their counterparts and work together. More Chinese and Indian youth should visit each other's country and learn more about each other's culture and customs by studying, researching, and traveling, not just from news, movies, and TV shows.

ENHANCING EXCHANGE AND COOPERATION IN DIFFERENT FIELDS

In this era of rapid development, great changes, and major adjustments, the multi-polar world is developing quickly. New technologies such as 5G,

artificial intelligence, big data, and blockchain are growing vigorously, exerting a profound impact on human society. In future competition, the key to victory will be talent. And competition among talent ultimately rests with competition among youth. The new era is raising the requirements for youth. While enhancing mutual understanding remains the foundation for making friends, promoting mutual learning and cooperation in specific fields has become even more important in terms of furthering friendship between the youth of the two countries.

In April 2022, China's State Council Information Office released a white paper titled "Youth of China in the New Era." The document records achievements in the country's youth development in the new era, and reflects the spirit of its youth. The youth of China and India can strengthen exchanges and cooperation in fields such as medical care, information technology, financial technology, and climate change. By doing so, they will improve themselves, so as to better serve their own countries.


In terms of state governance, China and India are facing similar problems in economic and social development. Young officials from the two countries can share experience and ideas. In medicine, China provides alternative options for Indian students who experience difficulties getting admitted to medical schools in their own country. Of the 23,000

Indian students in China each year, 90 percent are medical students. China and India can also set up platforms for young doctors from both countries to establish better communication to learn from each other and improve their expertise. India has already welcomed the digital economy era, and China's digital economy ranks second in the world. According to a report from the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, the financial technology adoption rate of both China and India sat at 87 percent in 2019, leading the way in the world.

In the field of climate change, both China and India have announced targets of net zero emissions. Many outstanding young professionals are finding rewarding work in clean energy technology. They can conduct more exchange and cooperation. In the field of information technology, China and India have complementary strengths. Known as the global office, India has strong advantages in the software service outsourcing industry. China is home to a number of tech giants including Alibaba, Tencent, Huawei, and DJ-Innovations. The country has advantages in the fields of 5G, big data, and artificial intelligence. In terms of social progress, youth from both China and India have adopted a broader vision and attached greater importance to issues such as gender equality, rights of vulnerable groups, and social justice than past

generations.

Numerous activities have already been organized to promote youth exchange between the two countries. Themed "Seize Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Realize Joint Development," the China-India Youth Entrepreneurship Forum focuses on serving start-ups in the fields of big data, artificial intelligence, and new consumption. The forum has provided a platform for youth exchange between the two countries. The China-India Youth Dialogue, co-hosted by the Chinese Embassy in India and the Confederation of Young Leaders, has also achieved remarkable results.

The responsibility of building good China-India relations will inevitably fall on the shoulders of the youth. Young people from the two countries should communicate, understand, respect, and foster a deeper understanding of each other. They should learn more about each other's history, culture, and current national conditions. Doing so will empower them to serve as a strong driving force for improving China-India ties and make better decisions that benefit both sides against the backdrop of anti-globalization sentiment. 

—
The author is an associate researcher with the Institute of South Asian Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

The Youthful Shape of Asian Values

By Hu Juan

Chinese and Indian youth need to raise the banner of bilateral cultural exchange to become a central driving force for promoting their respective national culture and reshaping Asian values.

The world is now undergoing profound changes unseen in a century, of which the most fundamental is the change in strengths of major countries. The change involves not only “hard power” such as economic and military strengths but also “soft power” such as culture and ideas. Contrasting the general decline of Western countries, developing countries and emerging economies represented by China and India see their overall strengths increasing. This trend urges us to rethink Asian values. As Asia is on the rise, the continent’s two biggest developing

countries, China and India, should work together to reshape Asian values. The foundation of this effort is the people of the two nations, especially the young generation. Chinese and Indian youth are the main force determining the future of the two countries as well as the key driver for reshaping Asian values and building an Asian Century.

WITH TRADITIONAL CULTURE AS THE CORNERSTONE

A huge change is underway in the global economic landscape featuring the overall rise of emerging economies and the relative decline

of Western countries. In particular, the rise of major developing economies represented by BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) heralds the onset of an Asian Century. In this context, rethinking and redefining Asian values has become a crucial task for our times. With the expansion of globalization, clashes between civilizations are increasing. Currently, anti-globalization, xenophobia, religious conflict, and non-conventional security issues become common challenges faced by countries worldwide. Asian nations cannot solve those problems or lay the groundwork for

an Asian Century by merely leveraging their “hard power.” To sustain Asia’s rise, they must renew Asian values.

Culture is the soul of a country and an innate, fundamental factor that distinguishes each nation from the others. As the world’s two oldest living civilizations, China and India need to inject new elements into the Asian values with their traditional cultures and values. As the world faces enormous changes, the two ancient civilizations should not only realize economic revival, but also rebuild confidence in their traditional cultures and contribute Asian wisdom to addressing global challenges and an Asian model for the world’s political, economic, and cultural progress.

Throughout the history of human civilization, Chinese and Indian cultures have played a significant role by providing endless inspiration for civilizational development. China and India are ancient civilizations with splendid cultures. In early modern times, both countries suffered Western colonization and invasion, and their peoples underwent similar national humiliation and civilizational destruction. With the rise of China and India and the advent of the Asian Century, their traditional cultures should return to the center stage of the world and contribute to reshaping the Asian values.

“As a big country based on its own civilization, it is hard for China to ‘decorate’



A Chinese artist introduces traditional Chinese culture to foreign kids through traditional Chinese musical instruments. Strengthening people-to-people and cultural exchanges is a significant pillar of building friendship with other countries, promoting solidarity and cooperation, and addressing common challenges. (Photo from CFB)

itself with Western discourse like some non-Western small nations did,” eminent scholar Zheng Yongnian once said. Historically, the spread of Chinese civilization exerted substantial influence on the development of world civilization, as did Indian civilization. India created brilliant culture and made irreplaceable contributions to the advancement of human civilization. Particularly, its traditional culture cast far-reaching influence on its neighbors in South Asia and Southeast Asia. The fine traditional cultures of China and India laid the foundation for shaping Asian values.

Chinese and Indian cultures share many similarities. Despite Western influence on India’s politics, economics, and lifestyles in modern times, Indian culture

retains considerable diversity. Chinese and Indian societies both place high priority on collectivism, family, and traditions. The popularity of Indian movies *Dangal*, *Secret Superstar*, and *Hindi Medium* in China indicates resonance of attitudes toward family and education as well as ethical values. Unlike Westerners who uphold individualism, Easterners emphasize education and kinship and consider frugality and diligence virtues. This is the foundation of the similarities in culture and values between China and India. Traditional Chinese culture and philosophy advocate harmony between human and nature, and the Indian philosophical idea of “Brahmatmaikyam” also calls for the unity of man and nature. Both traditional Chinese and Indian

cultures suggest harmonious coexistence between human and nature and advocate that a balanced natural environment is necessary for a harmonious, sustainable human society. Such ideas may provide inspiration for tackling the challenges of globalization we face today.

In the face of unprecedented changes, we need to rediscover the essence and eternal value of traditional cultures of all Asian countries, rebuild cultural confidence among Asian nations, and empower Eastern culture to radiate again in the new era. As the leaders and guides of building the 21st century as Asia's, China and India should join hands to create a new, distinctive Asian model and inject new connotations into Asian values.

YOUTH FORCES

China and India have the largest youth populations in the world. To reshape Asian values, the two countries need to strengthen youth cooperation. Chinese and Indian youth should play a central role in promoting their respective traditional cultures, promoting bilateral cultural exchange, and renewing the Asian values.

China and India should look to their young people to consolidate cultural confidence and advance mutual learning between civilizations. Despite different forms and expressions, Chinese and Indian cultures share many similarities in spirit and

nature. Both advocate coexistence with nature, social harmony, and inclusiveness. The youth of the two countries should maintain the confidence on Asian culture, increase mutual learning between Chinese and Indian cultures, and seek to truly understand the strategic importance of China-India relations. Only through mutual learning can they firmly uphold beliefs in peace and cooperation and become supporters and advocates of Asian values.

China and India should look to their young people to discard outdated biases and bridge gaps in people-to-people exchange. Due to historical and practical reasons, China and India remain distant from each other despite geographical proximity. Misconceptions and prejudices among the two peoples abound, resulting in insufficient cultural and people-to-people exchanges. In recent years, border clashes and media hype have made negative mutual cognition even worse. Boycotts against Chinese products occur occasionally in India, negatively impacting bilateral ties. The youth of the two countries should take the lead in overcoming prejudices, breaking through misperceptions, and returning to rationality. The future of China-India relations relies on the young generation. Advancing mutual understanding, trust, and cultural recognition among the youth of the two countries, which will lay the foundation for

closer people-to-people communication, is imperative. Through seeking individual growth and national development, the young generation of China and India will determine the future of bilateral relations.

China and India are depending on their young people to reshape Asian values in the new era. Alongside the rise of Asian economies, renewed Asian values are indispensable components of an Asian Century. The development experiences and paths of China and India, the world's two most populous countries, provide great inspiration for the international community. The values, lifestyles, and worldviews rooted in the two nations' traditional cultures should become mainstream discourse to interpret the Asian Century. Their successful experience provides important practical support for the rationality of the Asian values. The youth represent the development trends of both countries and our times. Chinese and Indian youth should undertake the historic mission to strengthen national cultural confidence, look to Asian values to guide economic and social development, and embrace a harmonious, prosperous Asian Century. 

The author is a research fellow and Ph.D. at the Institute of South Asian Studies under the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences.



Plant Trees Love Trees

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

Youth and Friendship: Reaching Across the Himalayas

By Yuan Jirong

If Chinese and Indian youth can deepen understanding of each other, they will surely contribute greatly to the development of bilateral relations.

The youth is the most sensitive barometer of the times. China and India have the largest youth population in the world. The China-India relationship has reached a crossroads. Working alone or working together has emerged as the decision for youth from the two countries.

LANGUAGE LEARNING OPENS WINDOWS

Language is the starting point to understand a culture and even a country. For many young Chinese and Indians, the journey of getting to know the other side began with learning the other's language.

Usha Sahoo first became familiar with the Chinese language in 2007. Later, she chose to major in Chinese at the University of Delhi because of her strong interest in the language. In 2010, she relocated to Mumbai from New Delhi and founded her own Chinese language school, Yeh China Education. With only six students at first, the school expanded quickly. By 2019, it had opened 18 branches in four cities including New Delhi, Mumbai, Gurgaon, and Pune, employing more than 30 teachers to serve 1,000 students, most of whom are business people, teachers, and middle school students. "From my experience, I can say that

the Chinese language has gained increasing popularity among Indians, especially Generation Z," said Sahoo.

In recent years, more and more Indian youth like Sahoo have been learning and teaching Chinese. According to India's media reports, by the end of 2021, 42 universities in India offered Chinese language courses, and the figure didn't include private schools. Chinese steel producer Baosteel, headquartered in Shanghai, established its first wholly-owned overseas factory in Gujarat, India. Many of its Indian employees spoke fluent Chinese after gaining some working experience and doing business in China.

Meanwhile, the enthusiasm of Chinese youth to learn Hindi is also rising. Ashish Ahuja started to learn Chinese in 2005 and is now a visiting professor at the University of Delhi. He organized a Hindi course for Chinese students at the university, and his classes for both the starters and advanced learners filled up fast. Hindi learning is spreading in China. According to Professor Jiang Jingkui from the Institute for International and Area Studies at Beijing-based Tsinghua University, at the turn of the 21st century, Peking University was the only institution of higher education in China to offer Hindi studies. By the end of 2019, at least 18 universities in China offered a Hindi major, with undergraduate students totaling 400 to 500. The curve has been steep.

YOUTH EXCHANGE: BRIGHT PROSPECTS, BUMPY ROAD

The bulk of foreign language learners are young. Learning another language is a microcosm of the deepened understanding between the Chinese and Indian young people and is certainly not an accidental phenomenon. On the whole, the youth exchange between China and India has made huge progress in recent years with the following characteristics:

Many people-to-people exchange activities are spontaneous. Mechanisms to promote youth exchange are still nascent, and exchange content is relatively shallow.



The Bangalore boy Kishan Shrikanth (middle, front) grabbed headlines in early 2006 for his talent in filming and acting. By the time he was nine, Kishan had already cast in several movies and TV series, and he was beginning to direct his first movie. (Photo from CFB)

The reciprocal enthusiasm for language evidences desire to communicate in the young generation. In recent years, more mechanisms for youth exchange have emerged such as the China-India Youth Dialogue, exchange trips, China-India Youth Entrepreneurship Forum, and China-India High-Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges. However, COVID-19 brought most mechanisms to a grinding halt over the past two years. But even before the pandemic, these mechanisms for youth exchange were still in their early stages, with most under construction and needing improvement.

Youth are enthusiastic about exchange activities, but both the scale and quantity are limited. Indian young people, especially Generation Z, are quite enthusiastic

for learning about China. This enthusiasm can be felt in many ways such as the Chinese language fever in India, seminars on China held in India, and increased Indian media coverage on China in recent years.

My personal experience in India also illustrates this point. Because of my work as a journalist, I've visited many Indian enterprises and schools, where I witnessed how eager Indian youth are to know more about China. Once during a trip to Kochi, Kerala, I got plenty of questions from people from all walks of life, from middle school students, bus drivers, to roadside vendors. They were all curious about China. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indian youth have also been concerned about China. However, this enthusiasm among the youth hasn't been fully harnessed to produce

a positive impact because the scale of bilateral youth exchange remains insufficient considering the massive youth populations of the two countries.

Youth exchange between the two countries attracts massive attention, but is still plagued by bias and prejudice. With the rapid economic development in both countries in recent years, China and India are paying increasing attention to each other. Many Indian films such as *Dangal* have been well received in China. China's cellphones and electronic gadgets are now favorites among young Indian consumers. However, due to limited communication channels, most ordinary young people only form a limited impression of each other either from Indian movies or Chinese smartphones. Clearly, such communication is far from enough, and this kind of understanding is one-sided. Against this backdrop, biased media reports and contrasting mindsets cause seemingly unavoidable prejudice and suspicion among the youth.

STRENGTHENING HEART-TO-HEART TIES

Given the huge populations and economic volumes of China and India, efforts to warm up youth exchange between the two countries and build platforms for youth exchange are more urgently needed than ever.

First, we can strengthen the exchange of international students, which is also the


easiest to achieve quickly. The two countries can increase the quota of students from each other and organize more activities among international students. Now, altogether, more than 30,000 Chinese and Indian students are studying in each other's country, which is highly disproportionate to the huge populations of the two countries. Special scholarships can be set up to promote a new wave of exchange activities between students from higher learning institutions in China and India.

Second, the role of bilateral institutions, including the cultural offices of both embassies and chambers of commerce, should be optimally leveraged. More activities focusing on youth exchange should be held in both countries, which will play a positive role and have a driving effect. Doing so will positively impact the political climate and promote youth exchange between the two countries.

Third, efforts should be made to enhance communication among language learners as well as young employees in Chinese or Indian enterprises in the other country. Some parts of China such as the provinces of Zhejiang and Yunnan abound with Indian business people. Many Chinese are working in Chinese enterprises or Chinese language schools in India. These groups of people have a strong desire to communicate with the target country as well as a solid understanding of the target

country. Their role should be optimized to further promote bilateral youth exchange.

Fourth, we can strengthen online communication between the youth of the two countries, especially communication on social media. Both China and India have hundreds of millions of netizens. Considering that offline exchange between the two countries is so meager at the moment, the youth of the two countries should endeavor to strengthen online communication.

“Young people should become the new force promoting friendship between our two peoples,” Chinese President Xi Jinping once said. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed hope that the youth of India and China would build a “Great Wall of trust and cooperation.” Both China and India are ancient civilizations with splendid histories and cultures, and both face new development opportunities in today's fast-changing world. It is the responsibility of the youth from both countries to strengthen communication, enhance mutual understanding and trust, reduce misconceptions, and resolve differences. 

The author is a senior journalist with the International Department of People's Daily who has been posted in India for years.

Young Game Changers

By Samridhi Sukhani

A lot of knowledge needs to be disseminated from both sides to explain the real India and China without alterations.

I first arrived in China at the age of 22 thanks to a Confucius Institute scholarship. The opportunity unlocked a whole new world for me. Before coming to China, I believed many stereotypes regarding Chinese food and culture just like everyone else in India. However, after spending so much time in China, my outlook towards the country turned completely upside down as it tends to do for almost every Indian who stays in China for long enough to find the chance to explore.

MYTHS DEBUNKED

I engaged in very little discussion of Chinese culture in India while learning Mandarin, which I believe is an essential part of my

language learning. My year spent living with a family in China, studying the Chinese language, and learning Chinese culture helped me gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture and helped me break down many myths I had believed.

One of the biggest myths is that vegetarians can't survive in China. That one was far off, and I had some of the best vegetarian food ever in China. I was blown away by the variety of mushrooms I ate over there. Once you can read and speak Mandarin, it becomes really easy to navigate vegetarian food in China. Another myth about Chinese people was that they eat everything. However, they don't. I have talked to many Chinese about this, and most of them only eat the standard meats and

refrain from exotic animals.

But the trend goes both ways. A lot of my Chinese friends were not very familiar with India and its culture and believed dusty videos and old news as "truth." Over in India, many young people are crazy about Chinese TV dramas. And Chinese youth love Bollywood movies. I talked to people of every age, and every Chinese person could name a favorite Indian movie: It was usually *Caravan* among the older generation and *Dangal* among young people. Some could even sing Hindi songs, the most popular of which were "Awara hoon" and "Ankhein khuli ho ya band." Outside Bollywood, popular movies from southern India also have a solid fan base in China.

But Chinese people also

have certain misconceptions about India which need to change. Some are not aware of the development in India. They are hardly aware of the growing GDP, improving infrastructure, and that places are getting cleaned up. It's like thinking that every Indian can dance and that every Chinese can do kung fu. It should be natural for the two most populous countries to have more empathy for each other because of such similar belief systems and values. I saw little difference between the celebrations of Diwali and Chinese New Year. We have the same rituals. It was mind-blowing to witness. A lot of knowledge needs to be disseminated from both sides to explain the real India and China without alterations. The familiar diversity makes me think of different fingers

with contrasting appearances that operate together doing the same thing on the same hand.

RELiance ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is defined by its interactivity, connectedness, and user-generated content. In today's society, social media usage has become a necessary daily activity. Everywhere in the world, social media is typically used for social interaction and access to news and information and decision-making. It is not only a valuable communication tool to stay in touch with others locally and worldwide, but also to share, create, and spread information. Social media influences consumers' purchasing decisions through reviews, marketing tactics, and advertising. Essentially,

social media vastly impacts our ability to communicate, form relationships, and access and spread information before making decisions.

Social media has played a key role in sweetening India-China relations. Our generation creates content and documents everything that happens, which empowers people to learn more about each other. Various media portals offer information platforms to help Chinese and Indian people know more about each other.

Recently, many individual accounts from both nations have been sharing authentic information regarding cultural exchange on social media platforms. Many accounts are operated by Indians residing in China and documenting their daily life. Surprisingly, followers of such accounts are largely Chinese netizens curious about the life of an Indian in China. The same goes for Indian netizens: They follow Chinese influencers in India to learn about China. Youngsters from both sides prefer to learn about their neighbors directly from locals to receive unfiltered, authentic information.

Such content provides millions a peek into India and China and the ability to witness how the two countries are so alike in terms of culture and values. These days, both Chinese and Indian youth are connected via various social media platforms including Instagram, Douyin, and YouTube. A lot of video-creating apps are used by netizens to express



September 7, 2018: Two Indian social media influencers who have gained much popularity by making short videos pose with a photographer (middle) who interviewed them, in New Delhi, capital of India. (Photo from VCG)

experiences in their respective countries. Being from one of the two most populous countries should give content creators an edge over those from anywhere else. If given the right direction and support, these young people can bridge the age-old gap between India and China and foster greater awareness around understanding each other's culture and language through social media content.

Social media facilitates the amazing ability to connect with people on the internet and turn them into friends. Many strong bonds have been forged through shared hobbies and interests. Social media enables people to search for and join various groups and communities where they can chat, post questions, and communicate with other people. And active social media users have a higher likelihood of being influenced by offline cultural exchange and youth programs. Social media is now beginning to impact users' decision-making processes. Reviews and blogs are posted constantly describing colleges, restaurants, products, and companies. Some people have learned to rely on these reviews to make decisions. We are seeing the impact of social media dominance on Indian and Chinese youngsters alike. This is how Xiaomi phones became the best-selling mobile phones in India and herbal Indian products became so beloved in China.

Cross-cultural awareness and language programs are



June 30, 2020: TikTok influencers record a video on a bridge in Allahabad, northern India's Uttar Pradesh State. TikTok was very popular among youngsters in India. (Photo from VCG)

also needed in work and business sectors to shorten the bridge and foster more empathy and trust. A lot of young Indians and Chinese are taking part. Digital and internet marketing is on the rise, and online expos, entrepreneurs, and small business owners are starting to look to social media to spread the word about their companies across borders. Its advantages have been a significant contribution not only to businesses but also to bringing Chinese and Indian youth closer and increasing mutual understanding.

In today's world, India and China are young and not afraid to speak their minds, which makes people see India and China for what they are.

China has shown me a great deal of love, and Chinese friends in India have received the same. Despite differences between our two countries, we value and respect each other. With Indians and Chinese sharing so many similar roots, it is more important now than ever to soak up each other's culture, language, and bonds and show the world how strong we are together. 🇨🇳

The author is the founder of *The Mandarin Story*, an online language school based in Bangalore, India. She attended Zhengzhou Normal University and Nanjing Normal University in China.

Cooperation Imperative in Uncertain Times

By Josukutty C. A.

Resetting India-China relations in tandem with strengthening cooperation would serve as a model for choosing diplomacy for global peace.

The importance of India-China relations cannot be overstated, especially in the context of the current fluidity of world politics caused by the Ukraine crisis. The two major developing countries believe in multilateralism, multipolarity, peaceful negotiations, and diplomacy when addressing global issues, and their positions are important in determining the dynamics of world politics as well as the bilateral relationship.

TOGETHER FOR PEACE

On the Ukraine crisis, India and China have generally taken a somewhat similar position. They have both abstained from votes at the United Nations Security

Council and General Assembly on Ukraine and emphasized the need for diplomacy and dialogue to address the issue. In a discussion between the foreign ministers of India and China on March 25, 2022 in New Delhi, they agreed on the need for an immediate ceasefire and a return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue to defuse the crisis. This common position on peaceful settlement of disputes is quite useful for addressing many complex issues between and among the big powers of the world. It also acknowledges the futility of militarization and armed engagement in terms of resolving territorial and political disputes.

India's position on the Ukraine crisis is indicative

of how the South Asian country might position itself in big power relations. India has traditionally been opposed to bloc politics and militarization by big powers. India never believed in interfering in the affairs of other countries and has always advocated for the sovereign equality of nations. During the Cold War, India's foreign policy was guided by non-alignment. It refused to align with either power bloc led by the U.S. or the Soviet Union and insisted on being friendly to all. The U.S. criticized this position as a policy of fence sitting and no policy at all. But for India, it was a creative and constructive policy of standing up for democracy, freedom, and development of all countries of the world.

India's policy became one of avoiding alliance politics, especially security alliances. India continued this policy even after the end of bipolarity and the Cold War.

The key features of India's foreign policy today, such as strategic autonomy, multi-alignment, and inclusiveness, essentially integrate these policies in the context of contemporary world politics. India's stand on the Ukraine crisis demonstrates that its relationship with big powers will be guided by enlightened national interest and concerns for world peace. Opposition to the use of force and respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of nations are fundamental to India's conduct. The hallmark of India's foreign policy has been independence in decision making. India's position is very clear that it is not going to side with any big powers in this conflict. This is because India doesn't believe in aligning with one or the other against others especially for security purposes.

In this context, the right course of action for India and China would be to work together for world peace. Both India and China believe in a multipolar world order based on the sovereign equality of nations. In the Ukraine crisis, India and China have taken special care not to get sucked into power politics. As two major countries, it is imperative that India and China resolve their issues, especially border conflicts, in a peaceful manner as a model for the world.



April 15, 2020: About 180 members of the medical team from Peking Union Medical College Hospital wave goodbye to local residents when they leave Wuhan City for Beijing after finishing their task of aiding Hubei Province in the fight against COVID-19. The medical team arrived in Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province, on January 26 of that year, and was the last national medical aid team to leave the province. (Photo from CFB)

COOPERATION THROUGH BRICS

BRICS provides a platform for India and China to work with emerging countries on global financial institutions. BRICS seeks to shape the norms of global governance, which have been fashioned by the Atlantic system in the past. As emerging economies, the formation of BRICS reflects the urge of these countries to work together to improve the world. The major objectives of the grouping include broadening, deepening, and intensifying cooperation among member countries for mutually beneficial, sustainable, and equitable development and to emerge as an innovative entity capable of resolving global financial issues and reforming

financial institutions.

These objectives provide an effective conceptual frame for India and China to work together amid differences on addressing current bilateral relations.

The 13th BRICS Summit was held virtually in New Delhi in September 2021. At the meeting, both Chinese and Indian leaders emphasized the need for greater cooperation and understanding between the two countries and testified to the positive role of BRICS in facilitating relations. "We recognize and appreciate India's contributions during its chairmanship over the past year, including its hosting of this summit," said Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian during the summit. Such warm words of appreciation



March 19, 2020: Quanzhou Qufeng Trade Co., Ltd. holds a meeting to discuss cross-border orders. The company primarily sells shoes and clothes to countries and regions including Europe, the U.S., Japan, South Korea, and India. (Photo from CFB)

could freshen up bilateral relations at a time when better communication is greatly needed. Attending the summit online, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that China looks forward to working with BRICS partners to deepen cooperation in all areas and build a closer and more results-oriented partnership to meet common challenges and create a better future. His remarks set the stage for the 14th BRICS Summit held in China with an emphasis on fostering high-quality partnerships with a vision of ushering in a new era of global development.

ECONOMIC SILVER LINING

Economic cooperation between India and China, home to more than a third of the global population, matters

not only for the people of the two countries but for the entire world. Despite high geographical proximity, economic cooperation and trade between India and China have been moderate and fallen far short of their potential.

In April 2020, India introduced restrictions on foreign direct investment (FDI), making it mandatory for investment from any country that shares a land border with India to go through a government approval process which practically restricts share-based investments from China. India also banned popular Chinese apps including TikTok, Weibo, CamScanner, SHAREit, and UC Browser on grounds of safeguarding data.

Despite all these discouraging

trends, India-China bilateral trade reached a record high of over US\$125 billion in 2021, up 43.3 percent from 2020 according to official data. China's exports to India rose 46.2 percent to US\$97.5 billion, while India's exports to China grew by 34.2 percent to US\$28.1 billion.

This economic silver lining in the context of political divergence points to the huge potential for cooperation and the nature of interdependence in bilateral relations. India has become one of the largest overseas markets for Chinese mobile phones. Reports show that Chinese brands commanded 75 percent of India's smartphone market in 2020, and most were manufactured in India. This supports the "Make in India" project and provides employment for many Indians. Chinese tech investors held an estimated US\$4 billion in Indian start-ups according to 2020 data.

Ultimately, resetting India-China relations alongside strengthening cooperation would serve as a model for choosing diplomacy for global peace and building mutually beneficial relations, especially in the context of the Ukraine crisis and its economic fallout. 📌

The author is a professor in the Department of Political Science and director of the School of Social Sciences at the University of Kerala in India.

Progress Through Bilateral Appreciation

By Zhong Ai

Chinese and Indian youth should seek out commonalities. They also need to pay attention to the differences between the two sides and find out the underlying reasons to avoid suspicion and reduce misunderstandings.

China and India are both ancient civilizations and enjoy a long history of exchange with each other. “Exchange between China and India is like an age-old, heavy book worth reading for a lifetime,” said Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong. “There is no parallel example in human history comparable to the exchange of our two great civilizations, which started more than 2,000 years ago.” Historically, China’s papermaking, porcelain, and tea were introduced to India, while Indian singing and dancing, astronomy, and spices were introduced to China. Exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and

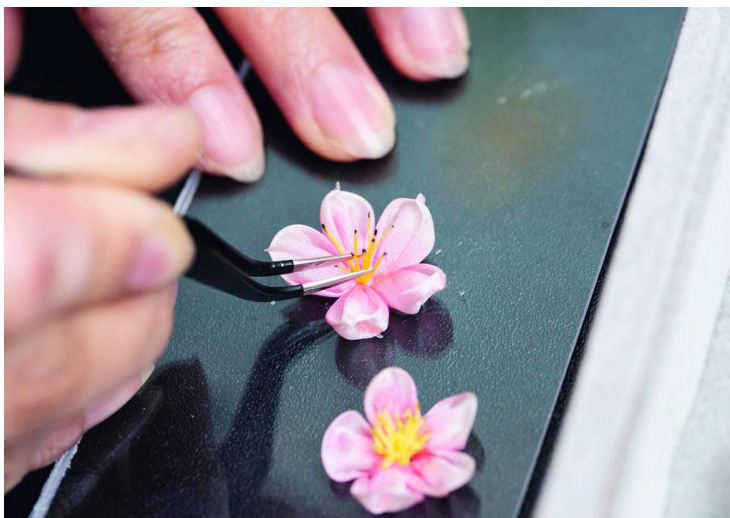
Indian civilizations have made important contributions to the development of both countries.

Since the turn of the 21st century, people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two countries have continued to expand. In 2005, the two countries announced regular youth exchange activities, providing an opportunity for young people of the two countries to deepen mutual understanding. Since 2006, the two countries have exchanged 100-member youth delegations on a reciprocal basis 14 times. In April 2018 during their first informal summit in Wuhan, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi agreed to

establish a China-India high-level mechanism on cultural and people-to-people exchanges. This important initiative has further provided opportunities and platforms to facilitate visits and exchange between Chinese and Indian youth.

MUTUAL RESPECT TO MUTUAL LEARNING

Although China-India people-to-people and cultural exchanges have a long history and a sound policy foundation, they still face a number of challenges and problems. For example, in the fields of culture and art, the two countries strengthen exchanges through regular



Traditional Chinese handmade cherry blossoms, a technique dating back to the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.). The decorative pieces must be made of thin silk fabric that weighs only a few grams per square meter to better imitate the elegant beauty of the light and soft petals.

(Photo by Qin Bin/China Pictorial)

cultural forums and film festivals, co-producing films, and holding book fairs and art exhibitions. However, compared with similar cultural exchange events between China and the United States or between China and some European countries, these events are relatively small in scale and participation. In the field of academic exchange, abundant exchanges between universities, think tanks and scholars from the two countries have been happening, but the topics are mostly focused on politics, economics, and security. Not many people are paying attention to exchanges on literature, language, and arts. Considering the huge youth populations of China and India, the number of

students and visiting scholars to each other remains small. We have also seen problems like limited cooperation in education, exchange activities focused only on a few areas, and shallow communication. This situation leads to a scarcity of professionals who are proficient in Chinese, English, and Hindi and familiar with each other's national conditions.

As Chinese President Xi Jinping said at the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations in 2019, a civilization can flourish only through exchange and mutual learning with other civilizations. Such exchange and mutual learning should be reciprocal, equal-footed, diversified, and multi-dimensional. It should not be coercive,

imposed, one-dimensional, or one-way. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed opposition to cultural estrangement and civilizational superiority. However, in both China and India, some still refuse to accept other civilizations with a humble and tolerant attitude. Some even consider their own race and civilization superior. I would like to share my experience studying in India to demonstrate that no civilization is superior to others.

Before I went to India, my supervisor had a long talk with me. "Most of our Indian friends are good talkers, while many Chinese people are shy and reluctant to speak their minds in public," he said with a smile. "How can a shy person like you survive in India?" After arriving in India, I witnessed and experienced the liveliness and volubility of my Indian classmates and the country's unique debate culture. In class, every time my Indian classmates spoke, they made a presentation or speech. Teachers and students often argued fiercely with each other to defend various ideas. Sometimes, they couldn't find consensus even after the class bell rang. Since I wasn't an outspoken person, I felt worried about my inability to adapt to the new environment at first.

But soon, something happened that changed me. For a group presentation, all my Indian teammates wore colorful sarees to honor the occasion. They encouraged me to do the

same and wear a traditional Chinese costume. “It is not just an academic presentation,” one Indian classmate said to me. “Seize the opportunity to show yourself to the entire class and enjoy your moment on the platform.” During the presentation, standing among Indian classmates all dressed up for the occasion, I felt relaxed and at ease. I felt that I could be as good of a talker as they were. After that, I gradually adapted to the environment, thanks to positive influences around me. With hindsight, this Indian studying atmosphere seems similar to the principle of “being united, alert, earnest, and lively” which is advocated by many Chinese schools.

I often think that if Chinese young people can become more verbally intelligent and willing to speak in public like their Indian counterparts, teachers would feel better about their class participation. And if some of our dear Indian friends were slightly less casual, efficiency in many industries might improve. There are no two identical leaves in the world. In terms of either lifestyle or development model, if China and India can learn from each other on the basis of mutual respect, it will be a blessing for humanity and for the world.

YOUTH AS THE BACKBONE

Today, the healthy development of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China

and India is facing challenges. Since both countries are rising powers, competition in some fields is natural. When the relationship encounters difficulties, we should focus on our common interests and overcome differences through people-to-people and cultural exchanges. With diverse opinions on myriad issues, today’s young people think actively and have great curiosity about the future. They are the essential force behind people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two countries. The raging COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years has greatly hindered in-person exchange activities involving China and India.

Available solutions always outnumber the problems, and the youth from the two countries have continued to conduct virtual research and exchange activities. For example, in May 2020, the All-China Youth Federation and the Confederation of Young Leaders held a virtual seminar to share experiences related to China-India cooperation on fighting COVID-19. But young people from both countries must also remain on alert in the internet era because so many media outlets prioritize sensationalism over truth and facts. Believing fake stories leads to misunderstanding and stereotypes and hinders communication.

“Mountains do not meet, but people do.” In today’s fluid world of uncertainty, the youth from both China and India, important forces in

promoting bilateral relations, should look at the relationship rationally and take up the responsibility to promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Many young teachers, scholars, business people, and even ordinary tourists are contributing to the people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Although young people from the two countries are raised in different cultures, they all develop broad vision and open minds. They learn from each other and join hands to march forward, thus contributing to the development of friendship between the two peoples.

Chinese and Indian youth should seek out commonalities. They also need to pay attention to the differences between the two sides and find out the underlying reasons to avoid suspicion and reduce misunderstandings. The youth of the two countries should broaden their horizons, shoulder international responsibilities, explore different cultures and civilizations, influence the world with their thoughts and actions, and serve as the backbone for the development of China-India ties. 📌

—
The author is an assistant research fellow and Ph.D. at the Research Institute for Indian Ocean Economies of Yunnan University of Finance and Economics.

My Journey to the West

By Zhang Yang

My experience studying in India broadened my vision and enhanced my individual goals.

From 2013 to 2019, I pursued a Master of Philosophy and then a Ph.D. at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, India. I hold this experience dear to my heart. During my stay in India, I recorded my research and daily life in detail. I finished research logs of 150,000 words and wrote diaries, letters, and poems totaling more than 50,000 words. Even today, the memories of my seven-year stay in India remain fresh.

ARDUOUS STUDY AND RESEARCH

As an international student, my major task in India was to study. When I was admitted to Jawaharlal

Nehru University to pursue a Master of Philosophy, I planned to conduct research on Sino-Indian trade relations. For this purpose, I even enrolled in an optional course on world economic history at the university's Centre for Economic Studies and Planning. However, I gradually discovered a wide gap between the topics I wanted to research and those I had the ability to study. Around the same time, I was getting together several young Indian friends to make music, and we even participated in a few cultural exchange events hosted by universities, research institutes, and theaters to perform our music. Along the way, I met an Indian professor who had been

honored as an Inspirational Teachers Award Winner by the University of Oxford. He pioneered a new research paradigm of conducting experiential studies as a participant. Because of these experiences, I began to think about doing research on cultural exchange between China and India. I talked with my supervisor and asked his opinion. He was enthusiastic.

While writing my dissertation, I visited a number of universities, museums, and other cultural institutions in places such as Kolkata, Santiniketan, Patna, Nalanda, Bodh Gaya, and Varanasi to conduct research. I was also honored to be invited to teach the Chinese language and Chinese culture at the Department of Far East

Languages at the Central University of Jharkhand. That teaching experience gave me far more than just face-to-face interaction with Indian teachers and students.

When I handed over my dissertation to my supervisor, he had a long conversation with me. “I know that over the past few months of writing the dissertation, you have not been able to eat or sleep well,” he said. “But I still hope you can continue this effort over the next few months to revise your dissertation and make it long enough to be published as a monograph.” I was greatly encouraged and inspired by his words. While working on my master’s degree, I had previously abandoned the idea of continuing to pursue a doctoral degree because of the academic difficulties I encountered.

However, during the same period, I visited many universities for study tours. I talked with seniors and peers from different fields, which broadened my vision. Inspired and encouraged by my teachers and friends, I gradually had some fun and realized the value of conducting academic research on China-India studies. I became determined to apply myself more to the research. In my spare time, I applied for jobs as a tutor in the Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University and also worked part-time for a few media outlets and research institutions based in China.

At the beginning of my



When studying at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Zhang Yang, the author of this article, was invited to teach Chinese language and culture at the Department of Far East Languages at the Central University of Jharkhand. Above is a group photo of him with teachers and students of Chinese major at the department. (Photo courtesy of Zhang Yang)

Ph.D. studies, I thought of continuing the subject of my master’s research. But my supervisor suggested I start with a new field. He mentioned Sino-Indian trade research, which I had wanted to do when I first joined his research center two years earlier, and recommended my doctoral dissertation focus on Sino-Indian economic relations. I took his advice and started preparing.

I collected a lot of data from various sources and sought out opinions from my seniors and co-workers from both China and India before finally deciding to combine economic and cultural studies in my doctoral dissertation. After three rounds of oral defense and revision, the title of my doctoral

dissertation was decided as “Cultural Dimensions of China-India Economic Relations.” To write a good thesis, I attended a number of academic conferences held both in China and India during my holidays, went to other universities to sit in on lessons from renowned professors and experts, and interviewed people engaged in economic and trade interactions between China and India. I soon realized that it was almost impossible to fully understand the different dimensions of China-India relations in just a few years. The longer I stayed in India, the deeper I understood the problems caused by cultural differences in people-to-people exchange between the two neighbors. While writing

my Ph.D. thesis, I analyzed and elaborated my arguments on this issue.

HINDI MAGIC

Language can serve as a window to know the outside world. I found this statement especially true during my stay in India. Although English was enough to deal with problems in my studies and daily life when I first arrived in India, I soon realized the great importance of Hindi as my days in the South Asian country increased. At an exchange event held by the Chinese Embassy in India, a Chinese scholar encouraged Chinese students studying in India to learn at least 100 Hindi sentences to get closer to Indian people. And it would make life in India more convenient. If a foreigner can communicate with locals in their own language, he or she would develop intimacy with them. It's a way to naturally foster closeness. After the event, I set a goal of learning 100 Hindi sentences. To this end, I participated in a Hindi course offered by Jawaharlal Nehru University. In everyday life, I often wrote down the Hindi expressions I learned in a small notebook I always carried with me and practiced them whenever I had time. This later became great fun alongside my research.

Every language has its charm. For me, the beautiful rhythm of Hindi was a huge attraction. Previously, when I heard the sounds of “hai,” “ji,” and “dou” in a Hindi conversation, I was often

amazed by the delightful and interesting rhythm and always wanted to know their meanings. Hindi has influenced some of Indians' English pronunciation. For example, the /t/ in English is usually pronounced to /d/.

Before learning Hindi, I always felt like it was impossible to escape the legendary rickshaw pullers waiting outside every subway station. These hardworking gentlemen often swarm foreigners and pressure them to take a ride until the deal is made. I explained each and every time that my destination was nearby and that I was happy to walk. But they didn't understand my English and always thought I was negotiating the price, which kept dropping. I started planning my escapes from them. But I no longer had any problems after learning Hindi. Before a trip to India's northern state of Bihar, my friends majoring in Hindi taught me the magical phrase “nahin chahiye” which means “I don't need it” in English. This phrase caused rickshaw pullers to disperse instantaneously. This is the charm of Hindi. I even taught this sentence to other international students so they could communicate with the pullers more efficiently.

At some important events and activities in India, speakers often use Hindi at all times or a mix of Hindi and English. People who don't know Hindi can be easily confused. The longer a person lives in India, the more attractive learning Hindi

becomes. Hindi is indeed an important tool to understand India and its people.

My studying experience in India has broadened my vision and enhanced my individual goals. After returning to China in 2019, I continued researching Sino-Indian relations. In January 2021, I was quite honored to become a joint postdoctoral researcher by the National Museum of China and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and focused my research on China-India exchange history as well as the two countries' perceptions of each other.

Nowadays, the world situation is changing, and the relationship between China and India has witnessed ups and downs. China needs to foster a deeper understanding and conduct more in-depth research on India, a neighbor connected by mountains and rivers. I believe that as more Chinese young people study in India, learn its languages, and research Sino-Indian relations, alongside more activities being held featuring mutual learning between their young people, the two nations' understanding of each other will deepen. Greater closeness will foster more powerful energy for development and progress benefiting the people from both countries, especially the youth. 📍

The author is a joint postdoctoral research fellow at the National Museum of China and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Keep Our Biggest Friends Closest

By Cherry Hitkari

India and China could promote economic growth through shifting to an ecological path and advocating for responsible ecotourism not just at home, but across Asia.

Asia has a long history of harmonious relations between humans and elephants. Elephants are revered in societies across Asia, especially in India and China. As our largest terrestrial friends become more vulnerable with each passing day, how can the two vast Asian countries with great civilizations come together to conserve them?

THE TIMELESS ELEPHANT

Elephants were revered by the oldest cultures of the Indian subcontinent as evidenced by findings of skeletal remains and images on over 4,000 seals and copper tablets from the Indus Valley Civilization period.

White elephants are key players in Hindu and Jain traditions. According to Hindu mythology, a white

elephant with four tusks and seven trunks called Airavat accompanies Indra, the God of Heaven. Airavat crafted his own niche by supplementing his cloud-making with becoming the “King of all Elephants.” In Jain legends, Indra and his wife Shachi descended from heaven on the back of Airavat for the occasion of the birth of the first Tirthankar.

The mammals are so



July 15, 2021: A herd of migrating Asian elephants is filmed by a drone of the Yunnan Provincial Forest Fire Brigade. (Photo courtesy of the Yunnan Provincial Forest Fire Brigade)

intricately linked to Indian culture that they have become representatives of even modern symbols of the state. The Indian Constitution is known by the sobriquet “Elephant Constitution” for its magnificent size and depth of issues addressed. Independent India under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru earned friends from nations like Canada, Japan, and the Soviet Union for gifting elephant calves. In 2010, elephant was recognized as the National Heritage Animal of India.

Historical evidence also points to the presence of elephants in China since ancient times. The traditional Chinese character for “elephant” found on Oracle Bones, the earliest evidence of writing and hence of civilization in China, is a

pictorial representation of the mammal.

Elephants also appear in various ancient Chinese stories. In the story of the mythical King Shun in *The Twenty-four Filial Exemplars* compiled by Guo Jujing, Shun was so filial that elephants plowed his fields. Elephants’ association with power appears in *Master Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals* where the Duke of Zhou composed the song “Three Elephants” to commemorate his victory against the Yi people. Other stories such as *Cao Chong Weighs an Elephant* and *Blind Men* and *an Elephant* also mention the large mammals.

WAYS OUT

The major challenges most affecting our big friends include climate change,

habitat loss, poaching, and illegal wildlife trade, with climate change being the most adverse. Both India and China have made concerted efforts in the past decades to conserve elephants.

As home to 50-60 percent wild elephants and about 20 percent domesticated ones, India has already devised some of the strictest laws to protect elephants. Legally, elephants have been granted the highest protection with their inclusion under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. For nearly half a century, India has enforced a strict ban on poaching, trading, and trafficking of elephants with a hefty fine and incarceration of up to seven years. The Forest Department in every state acts as the first responder for any reports of violation of

their safety.

In 1992, the Indian government launched Project Elephant to address the issue of habitat loss and preserve elephant corridors to protect the traditional migratory path of herds and minimize human-elephant conflict. It created 25 elephant nature reserves across 58,000 square kilometers. Project Elephant has also incorporated the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants as part of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Concerted efforts over a long period have brought positive growth to the population of wild elephants in India. In 2016, India formally adopted August 12 as the World Elephant Day with the aim to conserve the mammals as well as to spread awareness about their protection.

In China, conservation efforts to preserve the country's small elephant population began in earnest in the 1980s. Local authorities in areas with elephant populations such as Xishuangbanna have not only made efforts to relocate human population from traditional habitat of elephants but have also collaborated with private insurance companies to compensate farmers whose crops are destroyed by wandering elephants.

The 2016 amendment to the Wildlife Protection Law of 1988 explicitly called for providing elephants necessary conditions

for living, breeding, and enjoying good health as well as fines for mistreatment or encroaching on their habitats. According to a report from Xinhua News Agency, China's population of elephants in 2021 nearly doubled compared to the number during the 1980s.

In 2020, the world watched a rare migration trek of 14 elephants of varying sizes and ages when they left home in southwestern China's Yunnan Province, baffling scientists and conservationists. Images of certain adorable moments such as playing in mud and napping together melted hearts around the world.

POTENTIAL FOR CONSERVATION COOPERATION

While both India and China have made concerted efforts to protect elephants and some success has been achieved, danger still looms because conservation laws can often be a lot of words without robust implementation. Strengthening domestic legislation is not enough considering the threat climate change could bring to our big friends. The urgency of the matter calls for decisive action from the world's two most populous countries.

New Delhi and Beijing could collaborate on myriad avenues to providing more support to elephants such as reaching an understanding with Myanmar and Bangladesh on joint

monitoring and conservation efforts in elephant-populated parts of those nations; forming a collaborative institute to research elephant conservation; joint reforestation to ensure expansion of buffer zones between animal and human settlements; training and incentives for human settlements near elephant habitats to ensure harmonious coexistence with elephants; creation of a joint resource fund to achieve targets on world elephant population through careful breeding and care facilities; and development of a broader Asian multilateral organization networking governments, research institutes, non-governmental organizations, local populations, and environmental experts. China and India could carve out various ecozones across Asia wherein elephants can flourish in their natural habitats under the watchful eyes of conservation experts.

India and China could promote economic growth through shifting to an ecological path and advocating for responsible ecotourism not just at home, but across Asia. Such joint efforts would also serve as a bridge to better relations between New Delhi and Beijing. 📌

The author is a postgraduate student of East Asian Studies at the University of Delhi, India.

An Anecdote with Atul Singh

By Guo Fei

After soaking up another splendid culture, I long to probe its beauty in an inclusive way and explore and interpret it fairly and positively.

I taught Chinese at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IITGN) from 2014 to 2016. I frequently and fondly recall episodes that occurred in that cross-cultural context, and they always give me food for thought.

One of the most prestigious institutions in India, IITGN often invites experts and scholars from around the world to lecture and conduct academic exchange. The Guest House where such guests eat most of their meals and dwell is a natural hotspot to maximize the exchange.

I was dining alone quietly at the Guest House on an ordinary evening in 2015 when someone walked in and sat down across the table

from me. I didn't manage to break the ice by saying hello to the stranger at that moment because it was embarrassingly difficult to greet everyone with a smile, as so many different guests came and went.

However, his opening line grabbed my attention instantly: "Black cat or white cat, it's a good cat if it catches the mouse." This is a famous quote from Deng Xiaoping, chief architect of China's reform and opening up, and well-known to almost every Chinese person. Surprised, I was keen on knowing more about him. The South Asian man had tanned skin and a kind face and wore a white Chinese-style jacket featuring a dragon pattern on the left chest. He probably noticed

me and sensed my Chinese identity when entering the room, so he quoted Deng's words to make an instant connection. This was my first conversation with Atul Singh.

Singh is the founder, CEO, and editor-in-chief of a web portal. Born in India, he graduated from the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom and taught political economics at the University of California, Berkeley in the United States. He talked to me happily, and I could sense his unabashed love and affinity for China. During the conversation, he described his passion for Chinese culture, demonstrated his familiarity with China's history and present developments, and expressed his admiration for everything modern China

has achieved. He even dated a Chinese girl for a while. I could tell his words were from the heart rather than polite pandering. He couldn't have known he would meet a Chinese person or planned the Chinese jacket and Chinese quote.

Singh visited IITGN for academic exchange on his specialty of political economics. We engaged in a lengthy, pleasant conversation and became quick friends. Later, we even attended each other's classes at times. Once, he invited me to his lecture on the modern world economy, one important part of which was the economic reform devised by Zhang Juzheng, an eminent prime minister in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), so he asked me to discuss it with his class from the perspective of a Chinese person. Zhang Juzheng is described as a great Ming reformer in Chinese history textbooks, but the connection between



September 10, 2014: Guo Fei teaches his first Chinese language and culture class at IITGN. (Photo courtesy of Guo Fei)

into politics and economics. I assumed he would say just a few nice things about China given his fondness for the country, but where he went was beyond my expectations. I could tell he enjoyed his lengthy introduction to Ming

lecture. "Policymakers in the Ming Dynasty launched many big projects outside Zhang Juzheng's reform, and each of them is unbelievable to me." Singh then shifted focus to how the dynasty maintained and strengthened the Great Wall and commissioned mariner Zhang He's seven great voyages. He didn't prepare PowerPoint presentations for these two cases, so he improvised by searching for related pictures on the fly, sharing relevant information on the big screen with the class.

His insights and interpretation engaged all the students and inspired robust interaction. I listened attentively, but a voice in my head felt the need to speak out. I kept thinking about another cultural feat from the Ming Dynasty, which, though not as visually impressive as

Seeing is believing, and I wonder how much the chemistry between their understanding of Chinese culture and their inherent Indian genes helped them gain new perspectives and look at life with positive energy.

Zhang and the modern world economy seemed new to me, so I excitedly agreed.

Singh's knowledge is an eclectic mix of East and West, antiquity and modernity, and he offers unique insights

history, and he essentially transformed the one-hour economics class into a Chinese culture class.

"The Ming was a great dynasty in Chinese history," he proclaimed during the



September 12, 2021: Examinees walk towards an exam site of the National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) in New Delhi, capital of India. (Photo from VCG)

the Great Wall or as epic as Zheng He's expeditionary voyages, should also be recognized in Chinese and even world cultural history.

Singh didn't address it and finished his lecture and then invited me to the front for commentary. "Thanks for your interest and interpretation of Chinese history," I said. "Alongside the Great Wall and Zheng He's voyages, the great dynasty also produced the world's largest encyclopedia." Everyone was surprised. I looked up "Yongle Encyclopedia" and went over the English description with the class. Singh was amazed to learn that the Ming Dynasty produced an encyclopedia 370 million characters long. "Wow," he

grinned to his students. "To be frank, I didn't know about that book until today. It's awesome. That is the Ming Dynasty. That is China."

After class, some students with lingering questions swarmed around Singh and me, seeking more information on China. "India has always regarded China as an evenly matched rival," Singh said to the students in his expansive style. "Let me tell you the truth: Chinese people don't take India seriously. We should learn more from China instead of living in our own bubble." He then turned to me: "Am I right?" His rhetoric was clearly intended to be provocative to Indian students' ears, but as an Indian, his true motive was to inspire them. I understood his

intentions, but I was obliged to share what I saw and knew: "That might have been true in the past, but things have changed in the recent years with more Chinese people recognizing India's rapid economic growth," I rebutted. "The Chinese government values friendship with India. I have personally gained a wealth of Indian wisdom since I came to the country, which I believe will benefit me throughout my lifetime, so the learning is mutual."

Chinese language teachers working in foreign lands tend to inherently cherish their homeland culture, as did I. Like Singh, after experiencing so much of another splendid culture, I want to probe its beauty in an inclusive way and explore and interpret it fairly and positively. Years later, I was happy to see that some of my Indian students have carved a niche for themselves after we kept in touch via email and updated each other on work and life. Seeing is believing, and I wonder how much the chemistry between their understanding of Chinese culture and their inherent Indian genes helped them gain new perspectives and look at life with positive energy. 📖

The author works for the Leshan Vocational and Technical College in southwestern China's Sichuan Province. He taught Chinese at IITGN between 2014 and 2016 as the institute's first Chinese teacher. Those years in India inspired his book 701 Days in India.



PROMOTING THE SPIRIT OF READING

CHARITY PROGRAM

SENDING NEW EXTRACURRICULAR BOOKS TO CHILDREN IN THE REMOTE MOUNTAINOUS AREAS, ALLOWING THEM TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE, BROADEN THEIR HORIZONS, AND ESTABLISH IDEALS.

DONATION

DONATE 15,000 YUAN FOR 1,000 VOLUMES OF NEW EXTRACURRICULAR BOOKS TO THE PRIMARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE REMOTE MOUNTAINOUS AREAS.



中国下一代教育基金会

China Next Generation Education Foundation

ADD: NO.26, CAOQIAO EAST ROAD, FENGTAI DISTRICT, BEIJING

TEL: 010-65275519

Putting the Youth to Work

By Chu Zhaohui

Promoting youth employment at source involves fostering a more open job market and freer labor flow.

In 2022, Chinese universities and colleges produced more than 10 million graduates for the first time. The negative impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic have created new challenges for graduates seeking jobs. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, China's surveyed urban unemployment rate stood at 6.1 percent in April 2022. The rate for people aged 25 to 59 was 5.3 percent while that of people aged 16 to 24 was 18.2 percent, a new high since the index began regular publication in January 2018.

At the same time, however, China has been experiencing an acute labor shortage. China currently has the world's widest range of

categories of manufacturing industries with enterprises spreading across the country, but the supply of labor no longer seems unlimited. Manufacturing in China has advanced far beyond primary processing of supplied materials, and the competency of Chinese production is no longer based on quantity. The labor shortage in the manufacturing sector is a consequence of the imbalance between the upgraded demand with an increasingly segmented structure and the relatively lagging supply. The present predicament in China's manufacturing sector should be attributed to a "skilled labor shortage," which implies that knowledge-based

and skilled labor will become the major driving force for future development.

In general, youth employment in China presents clear distinctions, largely influenced by traditional values and realistic concerns. Nowadays, university and college graduates tend to seek jobs in civil service and public service. With existing barriers preventing labor from shifting between industries, many experts have been mulling a fully open job market with highly free flow of labor.

As the number of university and college graduates in China reached 10.76 million this year, the number of qualified applicants for the national civil servant exam

hit 2.12 million for the first time, an average competition ratio of 68:1. Many graduates with master's and doctoral degrees have been competing for county-level, township-level, and even community-level positions. Yet research data shows that China is short about 30 million highly skilled workers. The gap in employment opportunities is caused by a mismatch in the education system and market needs.

Private enterprises provide more than 90 percent of new jobs in China but have difficulties in recruiting employees. Many jobs are perceived to include a high workload, uncompetitive salary, and lack of social recognition. Many young employees in private enterprises only work for a short time, which limits the development of these enterprises and thus impedes the continuous creation of job opportunities. The growing digital economy has been a bright spot, generating new employment models and employment forms based on internet platforms, which has provided more options for graduates at all levels. Surveys show that in 2021, about 30 percent of Chinese university and college graduates involved in flexible employment found jobs related to the internet. Fresh graduates have been somewhat reluctant to start their own businesses considering uncertain market prospects, insufficient market regulation, and inadequate social security.



March 27, 2020: A shop owner sells commodities via livestreaming at the China Yiwu International Trade City in eastern China's Zhejiang Province. Shopkeepers at the small commodities market have moved their business online over the recent years as livestreaming becomes an increasingly important channel to reach customers. (Photo from CFB)

POLICY EFFECTS

The Chinese government has always attached great importance to employment issues, which are primarily overseen by the Ministry of the Human Resources and Social Security. The employment rate has become an assessment indicator for the performance of governments at multiple levels as well as universities and colleges. The employment rate of university and college graduates influences enrollment quotas in various majors, funding allocation, and administrative evaluation. It is a deciding factor in resource allocation.

To respond to the current situation, the Chinese

government has taken multiple measures to stabilize employment and increase support for university and college graduates in business creation. The 2022 government work report proposed to “strengthen the employment-first policy” and “make all-out efforts to stabilize and expand employment,” which requires more guidance on employment and business creation, policy support, and continuous service. China launched a program aiming to provide one million positions through traineeships to ensure smooth employment of university and college graduates as well as other young people.

Despite all these efforts,



March 31, 2020: Workers on the production line of Zhejiang Kangkang Medical Devices Co., Ltd. After resuming production, the company required the workers to test body temperature, put on new masks, and disinfect their hands before entering the production area. The workers were demanded to wear protective masks before they begin operation, in addition to the previous cleaning standards. (Photo from CFB)

the underlying problems that hinder employment still need treatment. Many manufacturing enterprises can hardly hire employees capable to take advantage of new technologies. The demand can hardly be met by graduates from regular universities and colleges or even higher vocational colleges. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security plans to facilitate development of advanced manufacturing, modern services, and strategic emerging industries across the country to meet national needs. Measures have already been taken to improve training quality, foster more skilled and innovative workers, and adjust

allowances for various training programs, but the effects won't be noticeable for quite some time.

China has never weakened its efforts to encourage

The present predicament in China's manufacturing sector should be attributed to a "skilled labor shortage," which implies that knowledge-based and skilled labor will become the major driving force for future development.

and support university and college students to create businesses through innovation. Policies

introduced this year offer university and college graduates a one-time subsidy to start a business, guaranteed start-up loans with interest compensation, tax relief, and other perks. And to encourage university and college graduates to take more chances with their expertise, social insurance subsidies are now granted to graduates involved in flexible employment within two years of graduation. However, only a very limited amount of graduates seek to start businesses, and graduates of higher vocational colleges have been the most likely to do so. Statistics from previous years suggest that they have been primarily employed in internet-based sectors with relatively higher uncertainty such as e-commerce, livestreaming, new media marketing, and other realms.

In response to the employment problem, the government should enact stronger measures to optimize and expand the job

market. Creating a more flexible and favorable environment for market entities would increase job

opportunities. Data also indicates that any government work to establish a healthier law-abiding and rule-based market will improve the youth employment situation.

OPENING THE JOB MARKET

China's current education system has not yet fully docked with the labor market. Even vocational college curriculum demands more diversity and practicality. A substantial gap remains between job requirements and skills of fresh graduates. China's scale of vocational education has grown fast, but in general, positive interaction between vocational education and the job market has not yet been cultivated. Fluidly updating major curricula in vocational education to meet market demand remains difficult, and graduates usually find their skills hardly matching employers' requirements, which have become increasingly diversified and specific. Enterprises and educational institutions, two major forces in industry-education integration, operate in different ways with distinct features. To fully integrate with the market, vocational schools should transform their operational systems and mechanisms to free students from single-standard examinations and help young people seize better development opportunities.

Promoting youth employment at source requires a more open job market.



— Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, formerly known as Victoria Terminus, is one of the busiest railway stations in India, where numerous young people commute every day. Many young Indians come to Mumbai to start their own businesses. (Photo by Qiao Zhenqi/China Pictorial)

Analyzing employment issues from the perspective of the dynamics and sustainability of all of society is crucial. In addition to tax reductions for enterprises, it is also important to optimize and simplify regulations, reduce excessive administrative requirements for enterprises, and find other ways to inject more vigor into the enterprises to stimulate the whole market. Narrowing gaps in social security levels between different types of employees is important for society as a whole because different industries and regions need to be integrated into the open market, so as to achieve more balanced and effective employment.

Globalization is fostering a global market for international flow of talent. The talent, however excellent, will fail to achieve its potential and realize intellectual value without the global market. Enterprises, however strong, will fail to develop sustainably without global intelligence and skilled talent. No one should underestimate the power of an opening and thriving global market. 📌

—
The author is a senior researcher at the National Institute of Education Sciences in Beijing, China.

Challenging Youth Employment

By Rajiv Ranjan

Chinese and Indian youth are struggling to live the life of their dreams and seek a secure future amid all the challenges at home and abroad. They also have extra responsibility to redefine the civilizational journey of their nations.

China and India are two major emerging economies in the world. Boasting glorious histories, they are also on ambitious paths to achieve national goals of growing into global powers. Each entered into the new era of governance and self-reliance with the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the Republic of India in 1950. Both countries introduced reforms and started opening their economy and market before the late 20th century.

The 21st century is expected to go down as the century of Asia. With the world's biggest markets, India and China are among the most significant

Asian countries acting as baton holders as the concept materializes. The aspirations of the two nations are flowing through their leaders and visionaries and landing on the shoulders of the youth who are accepting the responsibility of carrying forward such ambitions and visions.

At the turn of the 21st century, the ambitions of both China and India were still heavily focused on development. The youth of India and China have inherited a better society, more prosperous economy, and greater opportunities compared to previous generations. At the same time, however, this year's university graduates have been experiencing some

extraordinary employment challenges amidst the pandemic, sluggish economy, and global conflict combining in a worldwide storm rarely seen in the history of mankind.

EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES FACING INDIAN YOUTH

The major challenges Indian graduates face after leaving school include acquiring minimal skills, resulting in an unskilled labor force. Having a third of the population in the 15 to 29 age range gives India an acute demographic advantage, but around 30 percent of this young group is unemployed. In 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

was elected and took power. One reason for his victory was criticism and failures of the previous government in economics and job creation. The current government has made serious efforts and set up the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) with the vision of job creation and entrepreneurship. The Modi government also launched ambitious programs such as “Make in India” to attract foreign investment, “Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana” to provide skill training for the youth, and “Digital India” and “Shramev Jayate Yojana” to improve employability and skill development, and support labor in other ways.

The government recognizes that job creation is a task it cannot perform alone. Therefore, they have invested in the programs like “Stand up India,” a bank loan program to assist scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and women entrepreneurs to set up a greenfield enterprise, and “Startup India” and “Atal Innovation Mission” with the vision to attract youth to lead in the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector. However, these programs and schemes have not been as successful as expected, and the job market remains uneven for various reasons. As a result, India, despite great governmental efforts to build a manufacturing hub, is still removed from widespread entrepreneurship.

One of the main reasons



August 24, 2020: Wang Kaifeng resumes his talk show performance after half a year of suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Beijing young man born in 1999 co-founded a talk show club with his friends in 2018. (Photo from CFB)

behind this shortcoming is the prevailing Indian youth attitude towards jobs and economy. Traditionally, Indian students don't want to take career risks and prefer a secure life, so they seek government jobs. They also face pressure from parents and society to find a government job because of the guaranteed lifetime security. Government jobs matter for marriage and social status. After all the efforts made by the government and individuals, the transformation is still slow. According to the Global Youth Development Index 2020 prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat, India still ranked 122nd out of 181 countries, but it showed some important improvements since the 2018 index.

The other reason for this situation is a crisis of identity and gaps between different groups of youth. High unemployment and irregularity in government job exams caused a serious problem among college-educated youth, leading to a law and order issue in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states earlier this year before assembly elections in five states, but it still did not appear as a core issue of the elections in these states. The youth of India want reforms, technical advancement, security, health, good economics and jobs, and as voters they vote for caste, religion, regionalism, freebies, and money. Some are also disinterested in the electoral process and don't vote. Therefore jobs are not only an economic issue but also a social issue



May 23, 2022: A worker works at a plastic manufacturing plant in New Delhi, capital of India. (Photo from VCG)

for Indian youth. Somewhere they are stuck between identity, culture, and ambition. They want to embrace a rich Western life of freedom but they also want to maintain Indian values. They are constantly searching for their own identity and recognition in the global landscape of the modern world.

EMPLOYMENT CONCERNS FOR CHINESE YOUTH

Chinese youth are also entering the third decade of the 21st century facing similar challenges as Indian youth, sharing troubles caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, international conflict, and economic slow-down. The generations born in the 1980s and 1990s have grown up in the background of economic reform and

socio-economic development. They have witnessed constant social changes and continuous economic growth. For the last few decades, they have been enjoying more opportunities and better material life.

Chinese youth have received better professional and vocational education. Many take vocational courses in secondary education and junior high school education. They are growing up as hardworking students and citizens of their nation aiming for higher growth personally and professionally. They have inherited professional attitudes needed to compete globally. Most of their life, they perceived China as the fastest-growing economy of the world. However, these young minds are also facing fiercer market

competition and greater risks in their careers than previous generations.

The labor force of Chinese youth is primarily skilled in the urban areas, but the case in rural areas is different. The rural crowd is a mixture of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workforce. Finding a job is not a big problem for Chinese youth, but high-paying jobs are concentrated in a few industries such as IT, computer services, software industries, and financial industries. These are the preferred sectors. Less preferred sectors include manufacturing, lower-level service industries, and small-scale emerging industries. The demand for labor in these industries is high. The other industries are competitive only for high-quality, skilled labor.

Finding a job is not the biggest problem for Chinese youth, but they still face challenges like inaccessibility to suitable and ideal jobs. They are also not able to switch jobs easily. If they quit, it is difficult to find a job in other sectors. They are likely to maintain the status quo and lack the ability and courage to move to other industries. They also face challenges regarding low pay, long work hours, and unfavorable work conditions. Youth in organized sectors enjoy much better benefits and welfare schemes. In China, a huge number of new labor forces pour into the market every year and it puts enormous pressure on employment. In many cases, young members

of low-income families are becoming more competitive. They generally accept lower salaries corresponding with job skill.

The Chinese government has made job creation for its citizens a priority for decades, and played a proactive role in job creation by making it a key part of the country's overall socio-economic development. The policies regarding continuous maintenance of the domestic demand, expanding infrastructure, and continuous expansion of manufacturing and exports, as well as stable fiscal and monetary policies, have been driving economic growth. Policies of tax cuts, low-interest loans, incentives to the businesses that hire recent graduates, career counseling facilities, and vocational training have been priorities.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the trend of slow employment has been a global phenomenon, and China has not remained unscathed. The demand for new employment is high, and competition for stable jobs is fierce. Risk of unemployment has become relatively high. The top priority during the pandemic is economic stability. The Chinese government reiterated its commitment to strengthen the employment-first policy in the 2022 Government Work Report. This year, the Chinese government has also highlighted job creation and established a secure employment framework.

JOURNEY AHEAD

The world has navigated many different challenges in the past few years. COVID-19 has dealt the global economy a heavy blow. The world has not yet completely recovered from the pandemic. Domestic markets are yet to recover. MSMEs and private sectors have been affected badly, and the pandemic has seriously impacted the job market.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has caused a serious energy crisis. Oil and gas prices are higher in international and domestic markets, and it has been affecting consumer behavior. It has primarily affected the neighbors of Ukraine but also distant economies including the U.S., Asia, Africa, and Australia. Geopolitical crisis affects socio-economic development globally.

Consequently, various young people are having distinctly different experiences. They are completing school online with less laboratory and practical experience, and they have to compete with everyone who got laid off over the past two years. Survival, sustainable growth, and uncertainty are big challenges. Chinese and Indian youth are struggling to live the life of their dreams and seek a secure future amid all the challenges at home and abroad. They also have extra responsibility to redefine the civilizational journey of their nations.

China and India, with their large populations, are facing a labor surplus and partially

disorganized employment structure. They face pressure from urban employment and migration of rural laborers to cities. The demand for jobs among new graduates and re-employment of laid-off workers are serious challenges for both countries recovering from the pandemic. The governments have to plan and implement technology-driven skill development programs catered to modern markets, especially in rural areas. They also have considerable space in the production area catering to new consumer products. They have to take advantage of their big domestic markets and consumers. Enterprises and companies need to adopt new ideas in job creation that resonate with the modern youth and take into account social values and emotions while embracing new technologies and maintaining culture. China and India have extensive experience to cope with the challenges before us and a promising future powered by their young populations. They have the biggest young populations, who are the most important group as both labor forces and consumers in the two countries. Cooperation can help both countries embrace mutual peaceful co-existence and growth. 📌

—
The author is an assistant professor in the Department of Chinese, School of Humanities at K.R. Mangalam University in Gurugram, Haryana, India.

Chinese Youth in the New Era

Edited by **Bian Xiuhong**
Designed by **Liu Peiyao**

The year 2022 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC). The glorious century of history has shown that the lofty ideals of communism have always inspired the young people to forge ahead. Increasing numbers of Chinese youth have applied to join the

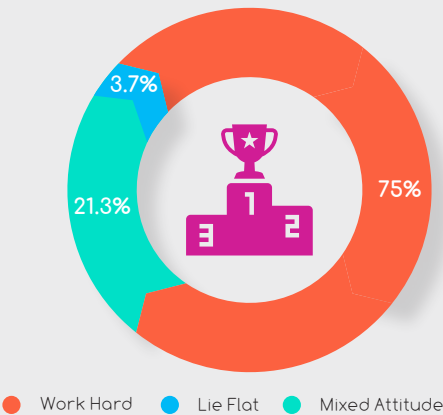
Communist Party of China (CPC) and the CYLC. By June 2021, the CPC had nearly 24 million members under the age of 35, accounting for 25 percent of its total membership. CYLC members aged 14-28 reached nearly 74 million by the end of 2021. Although the times keep changing, young people in China remain

committed to the same mission. With eyes looking ahead, China's young people are embracing precious opportunities to realize their ambitions and display their talents as they take on the important responsibility of building a great modern socialist country and realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

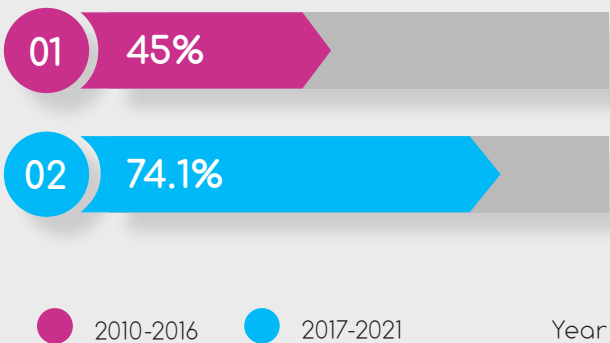
Fighting Spirit

Do Young People Prefer to Work Hard or "Lie Flat"*

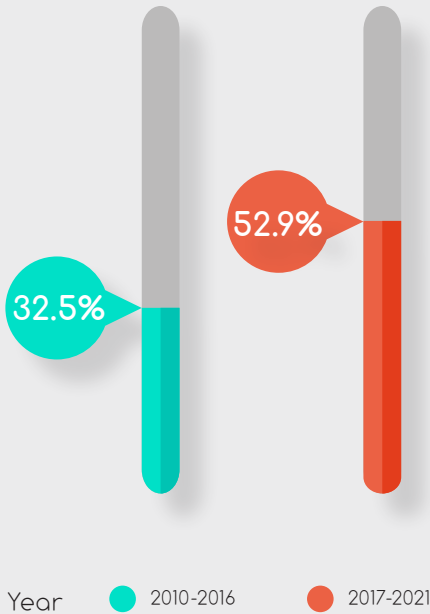
*"Lie Flat" reflects a mentality that young people surrender under pressure and give up fighting.



The Share of Young People against the "Lying Flat" Attitude



Share of Young Adults Seeking to Reduce Financial Dependence on Parents

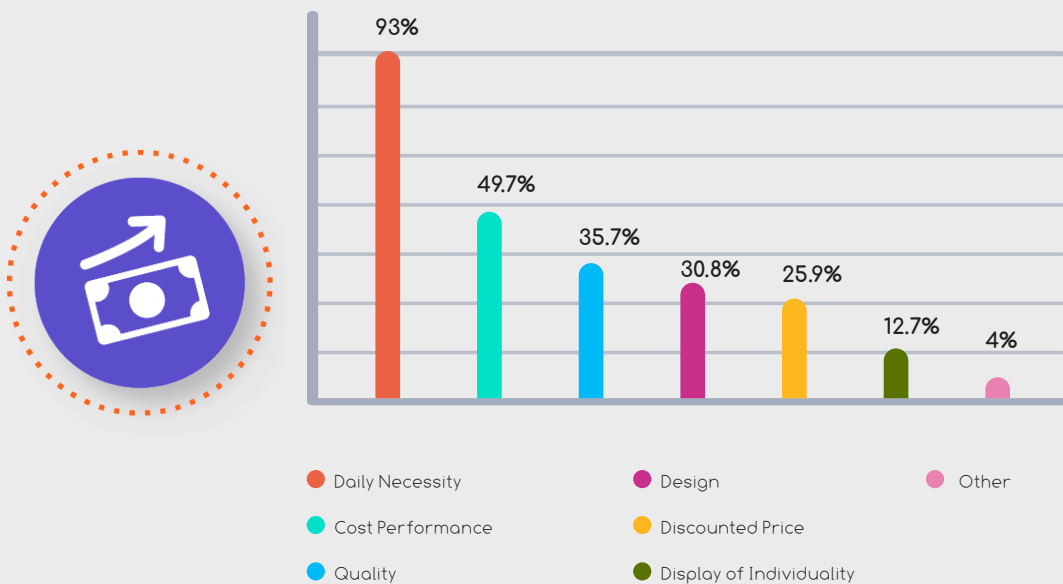


Over **90 Million** Volunteers
Aged 14-35 (as of the end of 2021)

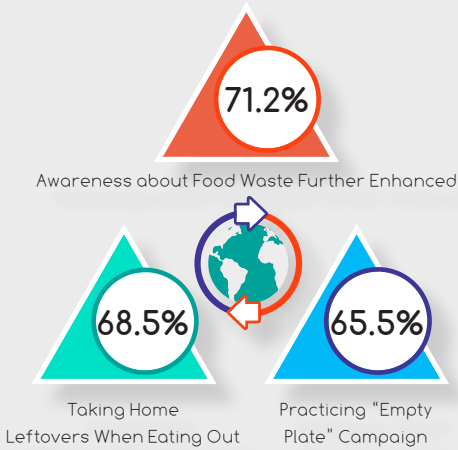


Mature Consumption Behavior

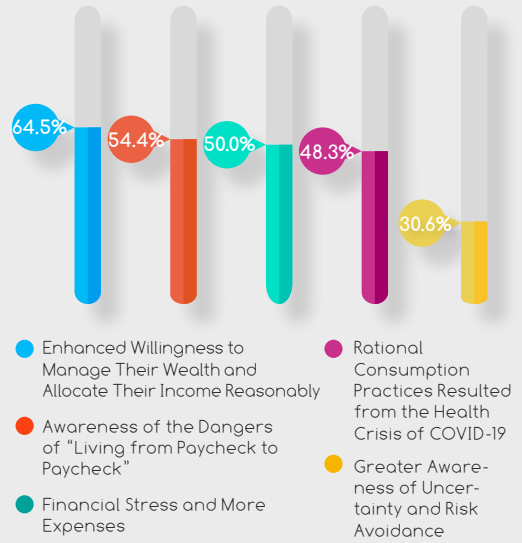
Considerations in Consumption Behavior of Young People in 2021



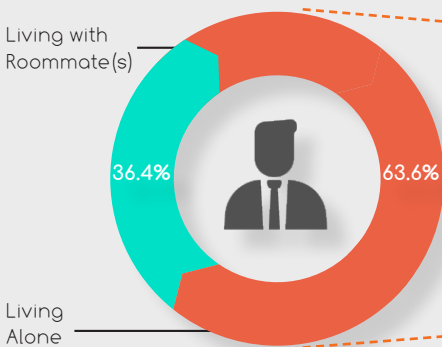
Attitudes of Young People Towards Food Waste in 2021



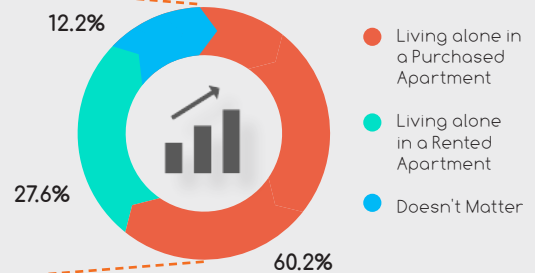
Reasons for Changed Consumption Behavior of Young People in 2021



Do Young Adults Live Alone or Live with Roommate(s) in 2021

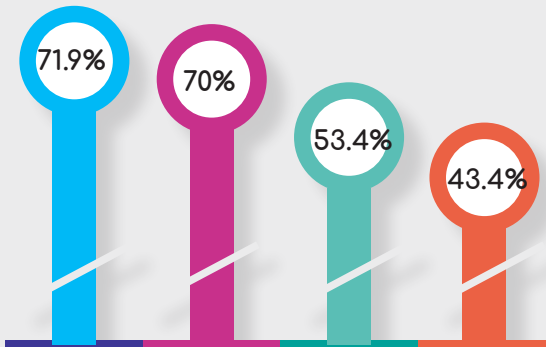


What Way of Living Do Solitary Young People Expect in the Future



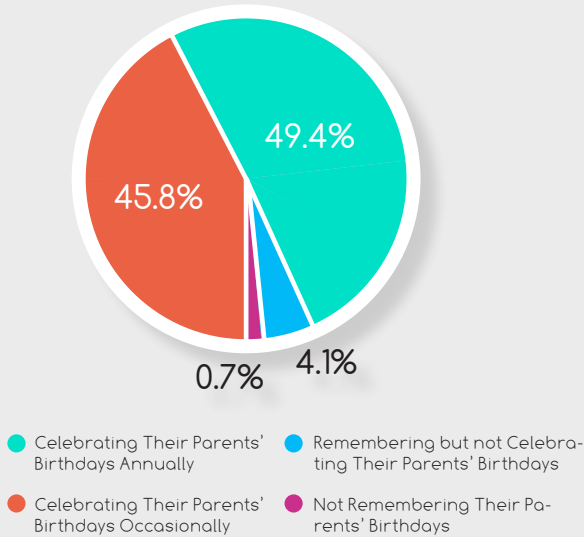
Close Family Ties

Benefits for Young People to Learn about Their Parents' Short-video Preferences in 2021

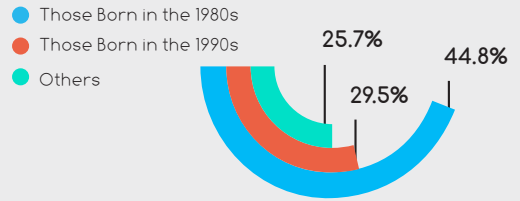


- Improving Communication and Interactions with Parents to Bridge the Generation Gap
- Responding to Parents' Emotional Needs and Their Perspectives
- Reminding Parents to Avoid Short-video Addiction
- Preventing Parents from Being Misinformed or Misled by Short-video Content

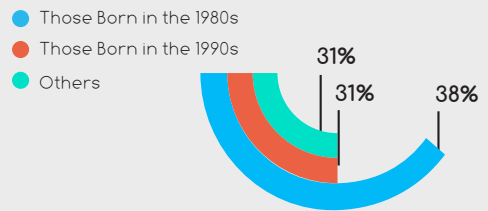
Do Young People Celebrate Their Parents' Birthdays



The Distribution of Young Parents Taking Children on Trips

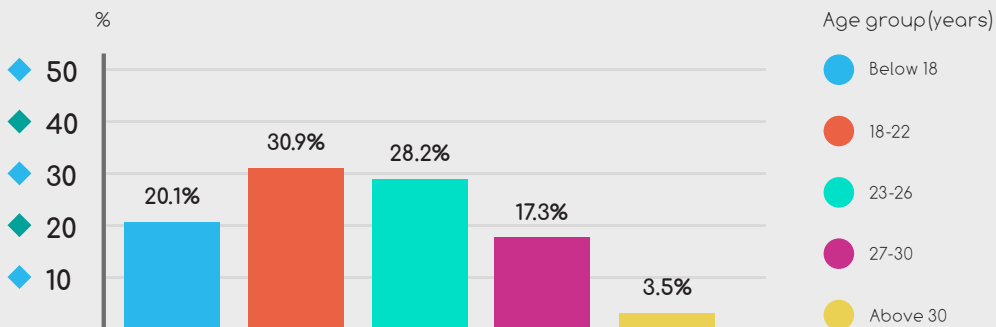


The Distribution of Age Groups of Visitors to Revolutionary Sites with Historical Significance in the First Half of 2021

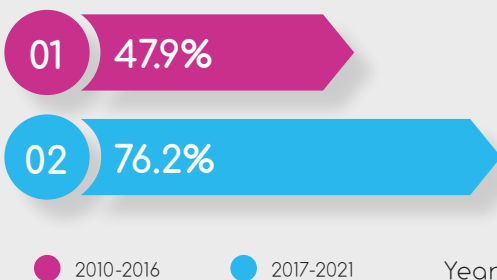


Diverse Hobbies and Interests

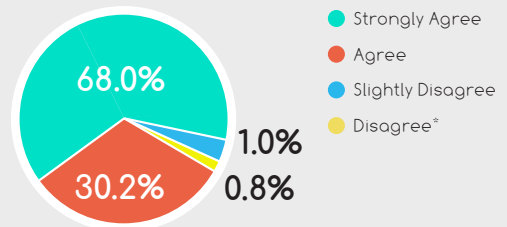
The Distribution of Age Groups of Fans of Hanfu (Traditional Chinese Clothing) in 2021



The Share of Young People Who Support Environmental Protection



The Attitudes of Young People Towards Animal Protection



*Young people who disagree with animal protection mainly worry that animals may "endanger individual safety and life."

Sources: Youth of China in the New Era, People Data Research Center, and Fudan Development Institute

A New Generation of Resilience

Concept by *China-India Dialogue*

Life Back on Track

Zhang Yifan

Occupation: Ph.D. student at the School of Philosophy of Renmin University of China

Birth place: Panzhihua, Sichuan Province

Current residence: Lijiang, Yunnan Province



The COVID-19 pandemic has cast shadows on our formerly colorful and vibrant human society. Although the world is recovering, the impact will undoubtedly linger for a long time. The global health crisis, which caught us all by surprise, dealt a heavy blow to people's livelihood. Many young people all over the world who should be benefiting from globalization have instead been bearing the brunt of the fallout veering off course. Along this journey, however, their tenacious and resilient rhythm of life, like wild grass fighting towards the sky from the dirt, is helping them bounce back. Their work has inspired me to understand and explore how they navigate their daily life in the crisis.

Raju Yadav is an old friend of mine. He lives in Narayanpur, a small town in Varanasi in India's Uttar Pradesh State. We met at a meditation center in

Sarnath, a holy Buddhist city in India, during the monsoon season in 2012 when we were both in our twenties. I took a muddy path to the meditation center and arrived just before it closed by the evening. I silently followed the well-organized routine while also curiously observing the people and things around me. In the meditation session, I found that Raju, who practiced in a wheelchair, had the maximum stamina. Every day before dawn, I could hear him propel his wheelchair to the meditation room when I was still in my bedroom. When the entire session was over, Raju told me he would roll more than 20 kilometers to get home, just like he had done to get to the center. I was worried for him, but he left without a hitch. It rained heavily that afternoon, and I called him after the rain. He told me that

he was soaking wet with a chuckle.

Raju received phone repair training that autumn, and the hardworking and diligent man opened a small booth in Narayanpur the following summer. Mobile phone technology has seen significant evolution in the past decade and the young man has never fallen behind. He temporarily closed his stall and went to Allahabad to learn smartphone repair with the help from his friends in 2013 just as touch-screen smartphones became

their rhythm of life.

I met Amit Basudeb in the old town of Bhubaneswar, capital of India's northeastern state of Odisha, in 2019. My friendship with him is just as profound and interesting as Raju despite being much more recent. In the early spring that year, on the way from Visakhapatnam to Kolkata, I detoured to Bhubaneswar and was enchanted by its mix of ethereality and worldliness. As the sun went down, I was strolling along the bank of Bindusaga Lake when I saw

Bhubaneswar with a large bag of equipment. He elaborated on historical anecdotes and legends of the old town with obvious passion for the local culture. The well-dressed man even had the word "creativity" tattooed on his arm, but under his ostentatious look hid a keen observation of local culture and art. He explained that to film a promotional tourism video commissioned by the Odisha state government, he and his girlfriend drove a motorcycle to every corner of the state to find the best visuals possible. After accumulating so much experience, he could engage in commercial photography and government projects alone.

On my train to Kolkata, Amit texted me and reminded me not to forget to attend his photography exhibition in Delhi months later. That October, I went to the art institution near Lodi Gardens to admire the world of art woven by the young man.

In 2020, Odisha declared a lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving Amit and his girlfriend home busy editing pictures and videos. At that time, he jokingly complained about gaining weight and becoming moody due to the long isolation. Now, the couple is again on a motorcycle. In the pictures he shared with me, long hair, tattoos, and heavy metal outfits set off Odisha's sea-to-sky coast and lush mountains. During our discussion about photography, Amit invited me to visit and travel in India with him again.

Along this journey, however, their tenacious and resilient rhythm of life, like wild grass fighting towards the sky from the dirt, is helping them bounce back. Their work has inspired me to understand and explore how they navigate their daily life in the crisis.

ubiquitous in Narayanpur. Raju returned and expanded his booth into a small shop which has supported his daily life.

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in India, the frequent lockdowns disrupted Raju's small business. He felt hopeless in the anxious and unstable atmosphere but luckily he had some savings. Now, Raju's business has basically recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Many unyielding young people like Raju, unlike floating weeds bowing their heads in turbulent times, have resumed

a well-built young man with many tattoos on his arms and a camera in his hand taking pictures of the beautiful lake scenery. I walked up to him to get a closer look. He eventually took a break and sat on the stone steps by the lake to show me his pictures. I learned that he was a freelance photographer and documentary director with an ambition to share the beauty of Odisha with the rest of the world.

Against the night breeze over Bindusaga Lake, Amit took me into the depths of

On the prosperous and fertile lands of China and India, every youngster is striving to seize continuous improvement and growth in their life through learning from their communities.

Future Workforce: Gen Z Making It Work

Siddhi Kabra

Occupation: Research & investment analyst

Birth place: Hyderabad, India

Current residence: Bangalore, India



More than a third of the world's population qualifies as Generation Z, or Gen Z, born between 1995 and 2009. This generation is different from the millennials, and defines success in life differently. According to *The Huffington Post*, 92 percent of Generation Z has a digital footprint, meaning they have some sort of online presence.

Generation Z has been nicknamed "digital natives" because they are the first social generation to have grown up with access to the internet and portable digital devices from an early age.

According to figures from the United Nations, India is home to the world's largest youth population. Almost 600 million are below the age of 25, nearly half of the country's population. India's Gen Z population currently stands at 472 million according to a 2019 Bloomberg report. Some of the generation are already in the workforce, while others may enter in the next few years. This is still a rising group, with individuals who may not have had standard life experiences (career, housing, etc.). Half of them are expected to earn a university degree. In their lifetime, they will work an average of 18 jobs spanning six careers and live in 15 residences.

According to INTO Global, a leading international education partnering organization, India's Gen Z is the most optimistic about the future, unfazed by the COVID-19 pandemic and determined to achieve their dreams. Globally, common patterns exist in choices and preferences of Gen Z. This generation prefers jobs at the intersection of their interests and skills. Gen Z loves a narrative to their occupation choices and views work as an active choice that defines them. They have an affinity to stay loyal to this narrative. For example, if an 18-year-old Gen Zer studies

digital marketing in college, he or she usually chooses extra-curricular activities such as graphic designing and content writing as add-ons versus literature and philosophy. Gen Z uses this narrative to build a personal brand image consistent across all their social media handles.

More than half of Gen Z workers around the world are optimistic about the future. However, this optimism is tempered by increasing concern about job expectations and attaining achievement. From a macroeconomic perspective, Gen Z faces a job market with a global structural imbalance. For example, there are more jobs in particular sectors such as manufacturing, and a demand-supply gap persists. Because of a mismatch between their chosen narrative and market reality, Gen Z is forced to take matters into their own hands. Many choose entrepreneurship and business. The majority also choose supplementing their full-time job with gig jobs, which allows for the best of both worlds. This is a natural fit for a typical Gen Z who craves stability in a world with uncertainty, but also craves quick success and working on one's own terms. On the company's side, Gen Z prefers diversified workplaces with a strong social media presence. This is a mark of transparency and "quality assurance" to Gen Z.

Aspiration wise, Gen Z desires to ditch the rat race. A survey by Goldman Sachs Asset Management highlighted that a

quarter of Gen Z, despite barely joining the workforce, plans to retire before the age of 55. This phenomenon, popularly known as the F.I.R.E movement (Financial Independence, Retire Early), is characterized by extreme savings and investment. A typical Gen Zer is not hesitant to learn more about investing and its basics and is more than willing to live off their investments. Thus, working in an occupation is a means to an end, but the occupation has to be on their own terms and at the intersection of their personal story.

Gen Z is quick to define what is important to them professionally and prioritize activities accordingly. This allows them to cut their losses short. For example, if work isn't fulfilling, a side-gig related to a passion will fill the void. And if passion is still not fulfilling, creativity will do. Since Gen Z has been consuming online content their whole lives, a natural progression is to create something of their own—blogs, videos, and pictures are an essential part of Gen Z's professional and personal story. Gen Z is encouraged to grow a side hustle. At any given point, Gen Z can be expected to do multiple things different from their full-time jobs. Popular ideas for side hustles include creating a niche on social media platforms and monetizing it, creating in-demand content (such as podcasts), creating simple websites, creating digital products (such as digital textbooks and online courses),

selling pictures online, or even selling T-shirts. Close to 50 percent of Gen Z engages in some forms of side hustles according to a survey by LendingTree. For Gen Z, simply having one job does not cut it.

Just as Gen Z refuses to put celebrities on a pedestal


In their lifetime, they will work an average of 18 jobs spanning six careers and live in 15 residences.

as an act of rebellion, they refuse to accept ready-made jobs. There must be a level of individualism that resonates with the narrative Gen Z tells themselves. Gen Z also enjoys dabbling in multiple fields and synergizing to create niche jobs specific to their education and skill set. For example, a student studying mass communication couples it with digital marketing and coding to become a UI/UX designer. This allows them to couple old-school communication skills with technology to improve employability with companies and start-ups today. Increasingly, Gen Z is using this technique to combine passion with employable skills. Gen Z students are interested in alternatives to the standard four-year degree, but the majority believe that higher education is important, and they choose schools that provide the most value. Opportunities abound for a Gen Z student who has a multitude of combinations

available. Coupled with a practically worldwide ability to network through professional social media platforms and work from anywhere, Gen Z is the creator of their own destiny.

The generation is eager to work and learn differently. In a work environment, Gen Z

prefers flexibility and expects to make meaningful contributions. Gen Z places a premium on having realistic expectations on how to attain professional success and growth. If millennials were idealistic, Gen Z is pragmatic. Work-life balance and meaningfulness take precedence over mere survival at the workplace. A sense of purpose in the workplace drives the choices Gen Z makes.

Since many Gen Zers have not yet had a chance to physically enter the workspace due to the pandemic, a warm, thoughtful, and personal welcome (such as a welcome kit or swag bags) and a sense of belonging is necessary before starting a new job to keep Gen Z engaged and motivated. Stable paychecks are simply the starting point for Gen Z. This generation expects diversity and inclusive communication, customized job descriptions and roles, higher compensation, mental health and wellness programs, and feedback consideration. 

Weddings and Marriages: Traditions and Trends

By Srividya Mehendale

Although traditional values and customs have maintained prominence in modern societies, changes in weddings and marriages have been happening fast.

Historically, Indian weddings in early societies needed both a secure means to perpetuate the lineages and an institution to handle passing property rights for social and political reasons. Marriage was an institution to fulfill both needs.

TYING THE KNOT

Arranged marriages have a long history in Indian culture, dating back to at least the 4th century. The influence of arranged marriages survived industrialization

and modernization. In ancient times, marriages took place when the couple was very young. The groom's parents started looking for a suitable match when he was still a child and approached the bride's family with a proposal. Matchmakers would help facilitate the process. Proposal and acceptance across different communities was often time-consuming and tense. Both Indian and Chinese cultures placed utmost importance on birth charts, horoscopes, and cosmic timing. A compatible horoscope was long believed to ensure a prosperous life while

faults in the stars could be a reason to call a wedding off.

Proceeding nuptials, the families would send invitation cards to every acquaintance. Both Indian and Chinese people favored grand weddings which were seen as an opportunity to express gratitude to relatives, colleagues, and trusted clients. In the past, the host family in India would visit relatives to deliver wedding invitations, but they are now often sent by email or SMS. Chinese wedding invitations were typically sent in a long red envelope with the character meaning "double

happiness” on it.

A recent addition to pre-wedding conventions in both cultures is wedding photography: The couple finds scenic places to pose in their wedding attire. Many prefer Western dress, but some mix and match traditional and modern styles freely with a variety of outfits and settings.

Indian and Chinese weddings traditionally contrast Western weddings in many ways including the most important colors. Red is an important color in Chinese weddings because it represents success, prosperity, love, and joy, among other things. The color is used for the bride’s wedding gown and most decorations as well as gifts. On the wedding day, even the bride and groom’s homes are decorated in red. In India, red is also a color for the bride. Red signifies joy,



A bride and her groom in traditional wedding costume in New Delhi, capital of India. At traditional Indian weddings, the bride and groom exchange floral garlands, usually made of roses, marigolds, jasmines, gerberas, carnations or orchids, an expression that the two join their life together. (Photo from VCG)

with a Hindu priest chanting prayers. As a symbol of unity, the priest ties a concentrated linen to the bride’s clothing, carried by the groom. The

two families and ensure descendants. Reverence for parents and ancestors, omens to encourage fertility and wealth, financial and social obligations contracted by both families, extensive gift-giving etiquette, and the bride’s incorporation into her husband’s family are all recurring elements.

NEW TRENDS

In ancient China, bride prices dominated wedding negotiations but dowries were also common. Accounts from the Song Dynasty (960-1279) literature show that the dowry was required to be at least half of the bride price. In the 20th century, dowries were prevalent in northern India while a bride price was common in southern India. This could be attributed to

The younger generations have been striving to change stereotypes associated with marriages. Across communities in India and China, more and more young people are seizing control of their lives.

purity, happiness, and prosperity and is known to attract good luck. Brides also tend to choose unconventional color schemes for their dress and wedding decorations. A combination of red, gold, and other bright colors sets a celebratory tone.

Nowadays, the Hindu marriage rite usually begins

couple then takes a stroll around a sacred fire, and the contract is sealed after the seventh circle. In the end, the priest blesses the couple by breaking a whole coconut. Chinese weddings, on the other hand, have few religious elements.

The main goals of weddings remain to unite and enhance



The bride often wears a lot of gold jewels at Indian weddings, which symbolizes not only social status but also great wealth. (Photo from VCG)

differences in social classes. Marriages were hypergamous in northern India, with women marrying into the same or a higher clan. As a result, bride-givers compensated bride-takers with a dowry in exchange for an improved social rank. Marriages in southern India were usually between brides and grooms of equal status. Therefore, bride prices were paid to make up for the loss of labor in the bride's family.

A major similarity between India and China is financial preparations for the big day for eons. "I was surprised to discover how much my parents planned for the wedding in terms of finance," said Shipra Parswani, a 22-year-old Indian in Mumbai.

Meimei, a 27-year-old in the eastern Chinese city of

Nanjing felt the same. "My father has been planning my wedding since I was young," she said. "In my family, spending money and inviting guests is a symbol of status one can boast about, but I really wish it weren't this way because the times are changing."

The younger generations have been striving to change stereotypes associated with marriages. Across communities in India and China, more and more young people are seizing control of their lives. From marriage to singlehood, more choices are becoming popular. Methods of finding a life partner are diversifying too. Online dating apps are used widely by the youth to connect with like-minded folks. Meanwhile, a few still agree to arranged marriages through a matchmaker, but the practice, especially in

cosmopolitan areas, has been fading.

Chinese-Indian weddings in India are often tough to navigate. They usually result in a massive cultural shock for both families. Clarissa, a Chinese-Indian from Nellore in southeastern India, married Hari a few years ago. "Hari had to prove he could take good care of me to get my father's approval," she smiled. "My husband had to work harder to woo my parents."

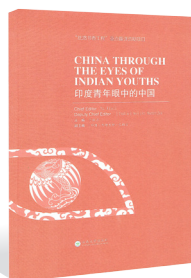
Unlike typical Chinese and Indian weddings, theirs was smaller, with only limited relatives invited. Since the rituals were quite different, they decided to skip them altogether to avoid clashes. The cultural differences were stark in terms of wedding planning, organization, and more sensitive issues. These concerns had to be navigated for the wedding and marriage to proceed amicably. "Both the husband and wife must work hard to maintain peace between the families," Clarissa said.

"The meaning of weddings and marriages has definitely changed, especially as expenses are skyrocketing," said Aditi Gupta, a 27-year-old who tied the knot last year. "I think the choice of a marriage is now more about companionship than social pressure." 📌

The author is the founder and lead language trainer at the Mandarin Lab and a researcher and psychologist in Mumbai, India.

Exchange and Cooperation to Bridge over Mutual Estrangement and Misunderstanding

By Yu Xinli



China through the Eyes of Indian Youths

Chief Editor Yu Xinli

Deputy Chief Editor [India] Avijit Banerjee

Yunnan University Press

October 2017

On the evening of May 5, 2015, Wu Qi, deputy chief editor of Yunnan University Press, and I went to Kunming Changshui International Airport to meet with Dr. Avijit Banerjee, dean of Cheena Bhavana

(Department of Chinese Language and Culture), Visva-Bharati University who passed by Kunming. In a small airport restaurant, we talked about deepening the cooperation between our two universities. An important part of the talk was about student exchanges between the two universities with more mutual visits, so as to promote mutual learning, gradually change mutual recognition and bridge over the gap between the youngsters of the two countries. With the talk we settled that a book series shall be co-published in both China and India—*India Through the Eyes of Chinese Youths* and *China Through the Eyes of Indian Youths*. They are finished by youngsters from both countries, including

theses, travelogues and poems on learning experiences in India by Chinese, and those by Indians in China. From November 3 to 4, 2017, activities celebrating the 80th anniversary of Cheena Bhavana and the 90th anniversary of Tan Yun-shan's entry into India were held at Visva-Bharati University. Then, I joined with the first issues of *Enter the Realm of Chindia*, *India Through the Eyes of Chinese Youths* and *China Through the Eyes of Indian Youths*. *China Through the Eyes of Indian Youths* can fill the vacancy of Indian youngsters' recognition of China. Indian students' writing style may not be mature enough, but it is a mirror of what they have seen and learned in China,

which boosts the development of the relationship between India and China. There are many interesting details in the book. For instance, they had learned from movies the quadrangle courtyards and Chinese kungfu, which, however, they hardly found when they were in China. And many Indians are vegetarian, so they were not used to Chinese food when first arriving in China, but later they found delicious Chinese vegetarian dishes like fried peppers and potatoes (辣椒炒土豆), stir-fried green beans (干煸四季豆), mushrooms and green vegetables (香菇青菜), Mapo tofu (麻婆豆腐), peanuts and spinach (花生菠菜), fried bean sprouts (炒豆芽), mushroom mixed with cucumber (金针菇拌黄瓜) and fried cabbage (炒白菜). And Xinjiang pie (新疆大饼) is also one of their favorites because it tastes like Indian scone. Besides, a variety of porridges are available everywhere. And it is also very delightful to have Chinese vegetarian dishes with steamed rice or various steamed buns. Indian youngsters are shocked at abundant Chinese dishes that mainly include the “Eight Famous Cuisines” and feature “south sweet, north salty, east spicy and west sour” in terms of flavor.

Preservation of traditional Chinese culture was another concern of Indian youth. They thought Chinese youngsters might have forgotten their own traditional sports and instruments, such as shuttlecock, diabolo, *pipa*

(a four-stringed plucked musical instrument), *erhu* (a two-stringed bowed musical instrument) or *guzheng* (Chinese zither). And Indian youth love Confucius Institute, hoping more will be built in India. And their biggest anxiety was health-care in China. Their medical system and treatment philosophy are different from that in China, and they prefer Chinese traditional treatment than the Western way. All this above illustrates their changing cognition of China, their passion for Chinese culture, their great adjustment in China, their willingness to exchange with Chinese youth and also their suggestions for our improvement.

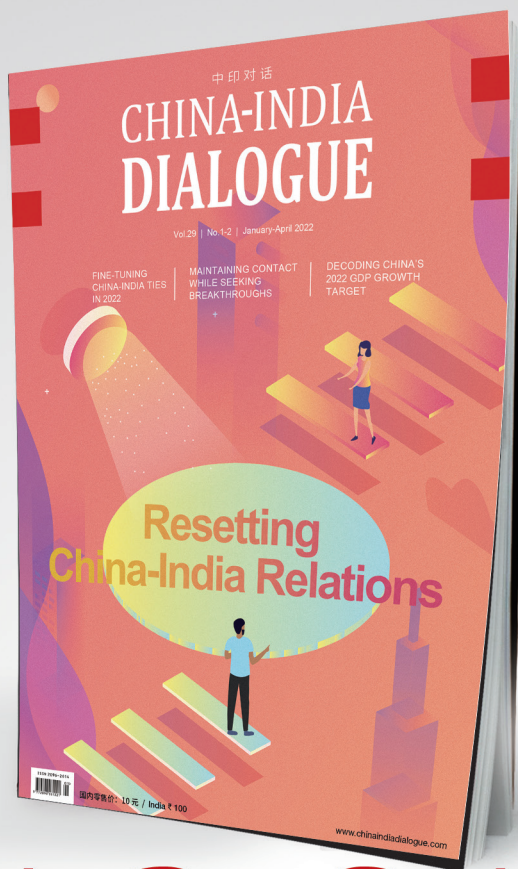
Mr. Tan Chung wrote the preface of the book. He said, “Since the independence of India, Indian elites had learned of China from the one-side stories told by the American media so that they are misled by the U.S.” The aim of this book is to note down what is sensed by young Indian intellectuals themselves, which is the start of bridging over the gap between India and China.

In Abitaki of Indian Buddhism, there is a story named “Two Birds Sharing a Body.” There were two birds that share a body, but they had separate brains and thoughts. One day when one was taking a nap, the other found a fragrant flower falling down by its head. The waking bird devoured the flower alone, thinking “although I eat the flower alone, it will add to the power and good to both

of us.” However, the napping one woke up with distress. And days later, it is filled with hatred and killed itself with eating a poisonous flower. And the situation between India and China is like that in the story which is in need of the efforts from both nations, especially those from the youngsters. They need to learn from each other with effective communication, so as to grow up together and contribute to their respective countries.

More than half of the writers of the book are students from Visva-Bharati University which was founded by Tagore. Tagore was a bridge connecting Indian and Chinese cultures, and he set an example for the friendship between the two countries. Cultures in both countries need to be handed down, which is the main concern of the book. But the book is only a start of the cultural exchange of youngsters between the two countries. I hope student exchange shall be continued and developed so that further connection and communication between Chinese and Indian students can be built, so as to prepare for “the prosperity of both countries.”

The author is director of the Sino-Indian People-to-People Exchange Center, Yunnan Minzu University.



BRIDGING CHINA AND INDIA



**FIND US
ON VARIOUS MEDIA**



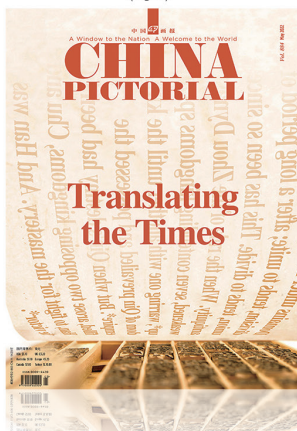
Any question or comment about *CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE*
Please email us at contact@chinaindiadialogue.com

WWW.CHINAINDIADIALOGUE.COM

人民畫報

China Pictorial Publications

China Pictorial
(English)



China-India Dialogue
(English, Chinese, and Hindi)



China Pictorial
(Chinese)



China
(Russian)



New Silk Road Review
(Russian, Chinese, and Kazakh)



A Window to the Nation A Welcome to the World
Chinese Passion Global Vision

Advertisement hotline: 86-10-8841 7354 / 7355 / 7419