

中印对话

CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

Vol.40 | No.5 | 2024

India-China Interactions from a Historical Perspective

Tagore on Civilization



Civilizational Dialogue: A Symphony of Eastern Wisdom

ISSN 2096-2614



国内零售价：10元 / India 100 रुपए

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，

可绕地球赤道一圈。

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

ADVANCING EASTERN CIVILIZATIONS
THROUGH DIALOGUE

04



Going with the Flow: Promoting Exchange Between Chinese and Indian Civilizations / p.07

COMMENT

India-China Interactions from a Historical Perspective / p.10

From Antiquity to Modernity / p.13

A New Chapter for China-India Cooperation / p.16

STRATEGY

Clash of Civilizations or Mutual Learning / p.18

Rethinking India's Path to Modernization / p.22

Political Wisdom Facilitates Cultural Exchange / p.24

TREND

Mental Health Reimagined: Traditional Approaches and Modern Practices / p.26

Transforming Agriculture with Smart Tech / p.30

CASE STUDY

Tagore on Civilization / p.34

Connecting to China through Books / p.38

My Spiritual Guru: The Venerable Xuanzang / p.41

DISCUSSION

Pathways to Partnership / p.44

Circular Sino-Indian Cultural Exchange / p.47

DATA

Cinematic Powerhouses: China and India in the Global Film Landscape / p.50

YOUNG VOICES

Decoding China's Unique Charm / p.54

COLUMN

Her Cup of Tea / p.60

BOOK

Fog and Enlightenment / p.62

CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY: China International Communications Group
PUBLISHER: China Pictorial Publications
ADDRESS: 33 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Haidian, Beijing 100048, China

主管: 中国外文出版发行事业局 (中国国际传播集团)
主办、出版: 人民画报社
地址: 北京市海淀区车公庄西路33号

PRESIDENT: Jiang Yonggang
社长: 姜永钢

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jiang Yonggang, Bao Linfu, Yu Jia, Huang Shouye, Wang Shuo, Yun Xia
EXECUTIVE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Yu Jia
BUSINESS DIRECTOR: YOU SHANSHAN
DIRECTOR OF NEW MEDIA OPERATIONS: QIAO ZHENQI
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: Qiao Zhenqi
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR: Zhao Yue
OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR: Hu Zhoumeng
ENGLISH EDITORS: Liu Haile, Zhao Yue, Yin Xing, Hu Zhoumeng
EDITORIAL CONSULTANT: Scott Huntsman
EDITORS AND TRANSLATORS: Bian Xiuhong, Hu Zhoumeng, Gao Mo, Liu Haile, Li Zhuoxi, Lewis Taylor, Liu Chang, Wang Shuya, Yuan Meng, Zhao Yue, Zhou Xin, Maitri Sharma, Devinder Kumar
EDITOR-VISUALS & PHOTOGRAPHS: Li Zhuoxi
DIRECTOR OF NEWS INTERVIEW DEPARTMENT: Duan Wei
CHIEF DESIGNER: Chi Miao
DESIGNED BY: Liu Peiyao, Zhang Ye
REMITTANCE TO: China Pictorial Publishing and Distribution Department
TELEPHONE: +86-10-68412166
POSTAL CODE: 100048

编委会: 姜永钢、鲍林富、于佳、黄守业、王烁、云霞
执行主编: 于佳
社务总监: 游珊珊
新媒体运营总监: 乔振祺
编辑部主任: 乔振祺
业务总监: 赵月
业务主管: 胡周萌
英文定稿: 刘海东、赵月、殷星、胡周萌
语言顾问: 苏格
编辑、翻译: 卜秀红、胡周萌、高默、刘海乐、李卓希、刘易斯、刘畅、王舒雅、袁梦、赵月、周昕、梅特里·夏尔玛、德伟
视觉编辑: 李卓希
新闻采访部主任: 段巍
设计部负责人: 迟淼
设计制作: 刘佩瑶、张也
邮购收款人: 人民画报社
出版发行部: 电话: +86-10-68412660
邮编: 100048

ACADEMIC PARTNERS: Chinese Association for South Asian Studies
Observer Research Foundation (Mumbai)
LEGAL ADVISER: Yue Cheng
PRINTING: Toppan Leafung Changcheng Printing (Beijing) Co., Ltd.

学术合作单位: 中国南亚学会
印度观察家基金会 (孟买)
法律顾问: 岳成
印刷: 北京利丰雅高长城印刷有限公司

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 (Mumbai)

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* news magazine

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



Seminar on “Deepening Reform to Advance Modernization: How China and India Can Contribute to Each Other’s Success”

On September 19, 2024, the Chinese Embassy in India held a seminar on the theme “Deepening Reform to Advance Modernization: How China and India Can Contribute to Each Other’s Success.” Ambassador Xu Feihong delivered a keynote speech. Sudheendra Kulkarni, founder of the Forum for a New South Asia, G. Devarajan, general secretary of All India Forward Bloc, Vijay K. Mishra, executive vice-chairman of India China Trade Center, Himadri Shuwan, chairperson of Confederation of Young Leaders of India and Charu Das, director of CD Foundation, and representatives from India’s political parties, think tanks, media and youth communities attended.

Delegation of Indian Primary and Secondary School Principals Visits China

To promote educational and people-to-people exchange and cooperation between China and India, a delegation of Indian primary and secondary school principals visited China from September 19 to 27, 2024, with assistance from the China Center for International People-to-People Exchange.

The delegation toured Beijing, Chongqing, and Shanghai, visiting primary and secondary schools such as Xishan School affiliated to Renmin University of China, Beijing Yucai School, Hongfan School affiliated to Chongqing No.8 Secondary School, Chongqing Tiandi Renhejie Primary School, and Shanghai Jinyuan Senior High School and its affiliated primary school. “China-India Principals Symposium” and “Teaching Seminar” were held with focus on the themes “Cultivating Innovative Talents,” “Scientific Education,” and “Digital Education.” Principals also observed and experienced the characteristic courses in each visiting school and signed 11 pairs of sister-school cooperation agreements on sites.

China and India Reach Resolutions on Border-related Issues

At a regular press conference of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 22, 2024, a reporter from Reuters asked, “The Indian Foreign Minister said yesterday that India and China have reached a deal on patrolling along the disputed border in the Himalayas. He said it can lead to disengagement and resolution of a conflict that began in 2020. Could we confirm with the Ministry that such an agreement was achieved? And are there other details?”

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian replied that as of late, China and India have kept close communication through diplomatic and military channels on issues related to the China-India border. According to Lin, the two sides have reached resolutions on relevant matters, which China commends, and going forward, China will work with India for the sound implementation of these resolutions.

Chinese President Xi Jinping Meets with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

On October 23, 2024, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the margins of the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia.


President Xi stated that as time-honored civilizations, large developing countries and important members of the Global South, China and India both stand at a crucial phase of their respective modernization endeavors. He said that it is in the fundamental interest of the two countries and two peoples to keep to the trend of history and the right direction of bilateral relations. He suggested the two sides strengthen communication and cooperation, enhance strategic mutual trust, and facilitate each other's pursuit of development aspirations. The two countries must also shoulder international responsibility, set an example in boosting the strength and unity of developing countries, and contribute to promoting a multipolar world and greater democracy in international relations.

President Xi stressed that China-India relations are essentially a question of how the two large developing countries and neighbors, each with a 1.4-billion-strong population, treat each other. Development is now the biggest shared goal of China and India. The two sides should continue to uphold their important understandings, including that China and India are each other's development opportunity rather than threat, and cooperation partner rather than competitor. They should maintain

a sound strategic perception of each other and work together to find the right and bright path for big, neighboring countries to live in harmony and develop side by side.

Prime Minister Modi noted that maintaining the steady growth of India-China relations is critical to the two countries and peoples. It not only concerns the well-being and future of 2.8 billion people, but also carries great significance for peace and stability of the region and even the world at large. Against a complex international landscape, cooperation between India and China, two ancient civilizations and engines of economic growth, can help drive economic recovery and promote multipolarity in the world. Modi said that India is willing to strengthen strategic communication, enhance strategic mutual trust, and expand mutually beneficial cooperation with China. It will give every support for China's Shanghai Cooperation Organization presidency and strengthen communication and cooperation with China in BRICS and other multilateral frameworks.

The two leaders commended the important progress the two sides had recently made through intensive communication on resolving the relevant issues in the border areas. Prime Minister Modi offered suggestions on improving and developing the relationship, which President Xi agreed to in principle.

The two sides agreed to make good use of the Special Representatives mechanism on the China-India boundary question, ensure peace and tranquility in the border areas, and find a fair and reasonable settlement. 

Advancing Eastern Civilizations Through Dialogue

By Li Wentang



As two of the major Eastern civilizations, China and India have much to contribute to maintaining world peace, promoting common development, improving people's living standards, and achieving shared progress through the dialogue of civilizations.

Both China and India are ancient civilizations, part of what German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) referred to as Axial Age civilizations. The Axial Age refers to the period from 800 B.C. to 200 B.C., marked by remarkable breakthroughs in human civilization. The two countries have been evolving with long-lasting Eastern wisdom including the ideas

of immanent transcendence, interconnectedness of all things, and love and peace. In an increasingly complex and conflict-ridden world, such ideas hold great significance for promoting peaceful development.

REVITALIZING CIVILIZATIONAL EXCHANGE

China and India are neighbors. Despite the vast

rivers and towering mountains that separate them, these barriers have hardly hindered cultural exchange between the two countries. For thousands of years, merchants and scholars have utilized the ancient Silk Road as a conduit for exchange, fostering prosperity along the route. Chinese porcelain and tea found their way to India, while Indian spices and architectural art were introduced to China, serving as historical evidence

of mutual exchange. The missions of Zhang Qian to the Western Regions during the Western Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-9 A.D.) and Zheng He's seven voyages to the West during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), alongside journeys by cultural envoys such as Xuanzang, Faxian, Bodhidharma, and Rabindranath Tagore, have left beautiful stories in history. The Silk Road was not only a trade route, but also a path for mutual learning and cultural exchange. History has shown that through these interactions, China and India have created captivating cultures, making significant contributions to the advancement of human civilizations.

In recent years, cultural exchange between China and India has taken on a new look. In 2018, the two countries launched a high-level cultural exchange mechanism. Bollywood films such as *Dangal* and *Secret Superstar* achieved box office success in China, winning the affection of Chinese audience with their rich cultural connotations and unique artistic expressions. Indian cultural practices like yoga have also gained popularity across China. In 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Civilization Initiative, which advocates respect for the diversity of civilizations, the common values of humanity, the importance of inheritance and innovation of civilizations, and robust international people-to-people exchange and cooperation. China and India are expected to enhance



The Asian culture carnival, a major event of the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations, is held at the National Stadium in Beijing, May 15, 2019. (Photo by Xu Xun/China Pictorial)

dialogue continuously by embracing inclusiveness and seeking common ground while reserving differences. Many hope that the two countries can overcome barriers through exchange and solve conflicts through mutual learning. Together, they can realize the vision of the dragon-elephant tango, ushering in a new chapter of harmonious coexistence among Asian civilizations.

President Xi said that when China and India speak with one voice, the whole world will listen, and if the two countries join hands, the whole world will pay attention. Seventy years ago, leaders of China, India, and Myanmar jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, providing a formula for the era on how to handle state-to-state relations. These principles remain relevant today and have become a widely recognized fundamental norm of international relations and international law, offering

a meaningful response to changes in the world, the times, and history.

Last June, China held the Conference Marking the 70th Anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in Beijing, and issued the *Beijing Declaration of the Conference Marking the 70th Anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*. These principles incorporate the essence of the fine traditional cultures of China and India, showcasing the political wisdom of the Eastern civilizations. The year 2024 also marks the 100th anniversary of Tagore's historic visit to China, whose ideas of love and peace resonated strongly with the Chinese academic community after World War I, testifying to the deep connection between the two countries. In today's world, Eastern civilizations are playing an increasingly important role in modernizing national governance and enhancing global governance. As two of

the major Eastern civilizations, China and India have much to contribute to maintaining world peace, promoting common development, improving people's living standards, and achieving shared progress through the dialogue of civilizations.

The history of exchange between China and India is rooted in equality. Today, both countries exhibit modern vitality and foster continuous peaceful exchange on an equal footing rather than perceiving each other through the lens of civilizational centrism or cultural imperialism. This experience holds significant value for the world today. The driving force behind the peaceful interactions between China and India lies in ongoing pursuits of common ground, aspirations to understand each other through goodwill, and a commitment to learning from each other while respecting differences. This exchange prioritizes virtue and friendship, facilitating harmonious coexistence between the two countries.

SHOWCASING EASTERN WISDOMS IN TRANSITION FROM TRADITION TO MODERNITY

Chinese and Indian civilizations share many commonalities in their transition from tradition to modernity. In both countries, traditional and modern aspects are not separate but interconnected. Their transition is characterized by a dynamic interplay of continuity and transformation.

How can we maintain

cultural patience in the modern world while preserving the strengths of Eastern civilizations alongside the modern technological advancement? This requires focus on spiritual civilization, rather than solely on material civilization, in order to avoid a purely materialistic or capitalistic approach to production. In the face of rapid economic development and fast-paced lifestyles, practices like yoga can offer unique mental solace. Eastern civilizations are rich in spiritual treasures that can be integrated into modern life.

As the great civilizations of China and India progress towards modernization, they may occasionally encounter tensions. While Western civilizations have their merits and shortcomings, we should not blindly emulate them. Instead, we must develop our own theories and practices for modernization. Ensuring the continuation and development of Eastern civilizations is a shared responsibility for both countries, necessitating the concept of building a global community of shared future. Individualistic or nation-state theories are insufficient to address the global challenges of our time. Therefore, we must absorb the essence of Western civilizations while also drawing upon the intellectual wealth of Eastern civilizations. We should delve deeper into Eastern political philosophies and wisdom to provide new ideological and practical impetus for the world today.

More than a century ago, during the May Fourth

Movement in 1919, the magazine *New Youth* advocating for science and democracy was launched in China. There was another publication *Eastern Miscellany* at that time, which promoted Eastern civilizations and featured figures including Liang Shuming and Liang Qichao. Back then, intense debates in Chinese academia centered on Eastern and Western civilizations, with a primary focus on addressing China's domestic issues. Today, China and India need to collaborate and seek insights from the wisdom of Eastern civilizations to tackle global challenges.

Currently, Eastern civilizations have not received adequate representation in the global media landscape. China offers some studies on countries like India, but they remain limited in scope. If scholars from China and India do not strengthen their cooperation, research will become fragmented and marginalized. However, if both sides work together to promote the studies of Eastern civilizations, more individuals from Asia and beyond can engage in this endeavor. China and India are outstanding representatives and key contributors to Eastern civilizations, and scholars from both countries should demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility. 66

The author is the vice president of China's National Academy of Governance. The article is excerpted from his speech at the China-India Dialogue on Civilizations.

Going with the Flow: Promoting Exchange Between Chinese and Indian Civilizations

By Ashok K. Kantha



People from India and China know too little about the cooperative achievements made by the two countries, which hinders the development of friendship and consolidation of ties. Although India-China relations are faced with several challenges at the moment, exchange at all levels and in all fields should continue.

During my tenure as Indian Ambassador to China, Chinese and Indian scholars collaborated on compiling *Encyclopedia of India-China Cultural Contacts*, which was published in Chinese and

English in 2014. The hope was that the encyclopedia would help Chinese and Indian people understand each other's profound history and culture, thus sustaining time-honored friendly exchange between the two civilizations. Thanks to

inter-governmental support for the compilation, many other efforts have been made to promote cultural exchange between China and India.

Despite some current challenges, the bilateral relations are still based on sound cultural and

historical experience, and strengthening them coincides with the practical interests of both. Similarly, enhancing research on exchange between the two civilizations is also important with a positive influence on the development of modern society.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

India and China boast two of the world's most ancient and diverse civilizations that continue to this day. Although the two civilizations maintained different pursuits throughout history, constant exchange and integration were integral to their development. Generally, civilizations integrate different viewpoints and cultural elements while

continuously changing, optimizing, and adapting. India has always been proud of its multiculturalism, and encouraging diversity is essential to its culture.

In recent decades, China has increasingly admired traditional culture such as Confucianism, which is a great source of wisdom. The two civilizations of China and India can inherit their history and culture optimally while remaining open-minded to new perspectives, which will benefit the two nations and their people.

Rising at the same time, China and India are expected to work together to regain their deserved status in the international community. "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" is an Indian concept meaning "the world is one family." Within this big family, India and

China should support each other and respect mutual concerns and demands. They should also treat each other's development as an opportunity rather than a threat. Also, both countries should be aware of the concerns of the international community and adopt a humble attitude to avoid cultural chauvinism. This is how the rise of India and China will be embraced globally.

Since India and China share close exchange and similar experiences, they exert mutual influence on historical processes. In the times of Chinese monks Faxian and Xuanzang, venturing abroad was never a pushover, yet they made pilgrimages to India and introduced Buddhism to China and other countries. From the Tang Dynasty (618-907) to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), official exchange and trade between the two countries continued unabated. Chinese silk and porcelain were introduced to India, and Chinese elements such as dragon and phoenix were integrated into Indian theological culture. Such exchange has greatly benefited both sides. In particular, some Indian archaeologists have greatly gained from Xuanzang's works written after he returned from the pilgrimage to India, since some of India's history was not clearly recorded. Overall, bilateral exchange since ancient times has greatly enriched China and



The jade *cong*, displayed at the "Ancient China" permanent exhibition at the National Museum of China, grabs visitors' attention, May 6, 2023. The exhibit was one of the most important ritual objects of the Liangzhu culture (5300-4200 B.C.) during the Neolithic Age. Made of black jade, the ritual object is the tallest of its kind in China with 19 sections in total and a height of 49.7 centimeters. (Photo by Chen Jian/*China Pictorial*)

India, which explains why great civilizations should not seek conflict, but learn from each other.

The exchanges have been equal and harmonious between the two confident civilizations. Now, the size of the Chinese economy is much larger than India's, and its military strength is much greater. However, India-China relations still feature equality, harmony, and mutual respect.

FACING REALITY AND CHALLENGES

Many global challenges plaguing human society demand a broader perspective to analyze and solve. But the nation-state concept may be too narrow. I completely understand why China proposed



The Buddhist historical painting *Zhang Qian's Mission to the Western Regions* on the north wall in Cave 323 of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, Gansu Province. During the Western Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-8 A.D.), Zhang Qian's expedition to the Western Regions marked the foundation of the ancient Silk Road. (Photo from CFB)

power and hope that India and China can maintain exchange and cooperation on an equal footing. For now, India and China may

publicly expressed support for the concept of a global community of shared future, hope still remains.

Looking ahead, China and India should prioritize literary translation in their bilateral exchange. Throughout history, many masterpieces from the two civilizations were translated, effectively promoting cultural exchange. Even more people should be encouraged to join the ranks. Although India-China relations are faced with several challenges at the moment, exchange at all levels and in all fields should continue. 

India and China should support each other and respect mutual concerns and demands. They should also treat each other's development as an opportunity rather than a threat.

the concept of a global community of shared future. At the G20 Summit 2023, India also proposed the concept of "the world is one family." Solving many global issues requires cooperation and dialogue between India and China.

India prefers a multipolar world. Indian people expect a balance of global

not truly understand the strategic purpose or essence of the concepts each other proposed. To solve the dilemma, more dialogue and exchange are needed. India and China have conducted many candid dialogues and exchange activities as well as organizing cooperation initiatives on connectivity. Although India has not

The author is a former Indian Ambassador to China. This article is an excerpt from a speech he delivered at the China-India Dialogue on Civilizations held in Beijing in July 2024.

India-China Interactions from a Historical Perspective

By Avijit Banerjee

India and China boast a long history of civilization and profound cultural integration. The spread of Buddhism has enhanced the friendship between the two peoples, and bilateral trade has promoted economic exchange. Today, the two sides should strengthen cooperation and deepen mutual understanding.

Looking back at history, the civilizations in China, South Asia, and Southeast Asia all originated from the rivers around the Himalayas and gradually developed in those regions. Interactions between the civilizations didn't harm the existence of each other, but helped promote a continuous sharing of the cultural space and forms, promoting exchange among civilizations and sparking philosophical resonance. Exchange between Indian and Chinese civilizations boasts a long history, and the driving force behind such exchange has been cultural affinity and deep friendship between the two peoples.

SPREAD OF BUDDHISM AND CHANGES IN TRADE

India and China are two societies as well as two unique civilizations. Since ancient times, these two civilizations have continuously shared their cultures and influenced each other. Ample historical evidence suggests that from 1500 B.C. to 1000 B.C., even before Buddhism was introduced to China, exchange of ideas and languages between China's Shang and Zhou dynasties and India's Vedic period was already happening.

Buddhism serves as an important cultural force connecting India and China. Buddhist monks from India gradually established cultural ties between the two peoples through dissemination of

Buddhist teachings. From the 1st century to the early 11th century, this kind of communication facilitated close India-China relations and continuously inspired cultural exchange among various nations in Asia. As Buddhism spread widely in China, Indian literature, art, music, and dance began to profoundly influence Chinese culture. *Bianwen*, a transformative text popular in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), originated from Buddhist culture and later became an important genre of Tang Dynasty literature.

In ancient times, Buddhism acted as the foundation for interactions between India and China, and its influence extended to multiple fields such as philosophy, literature, art, and social life. Eminent Chinese monks such as Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing travelled to India on pilgrimages to seek Buddhist knowledge while renowned Indian monks such as Kasyapa Mateng and Kumarajiva brought Buddhist scriptures to China, dedicating their entire lives to spreading the Buddha's teachings. Over the course of several centuries, India and China developed many similarities in terms of language, culture, and social customs.

Trade has also played a significant role in the bilateral ties. In the 10th and 11th centuries, Buddhist supplies were an important component of trade between India and China. However, as the influence of Buddhism gradually waned as a component of cultural exchange between the two sides, the bilateral trade pattern also changed. Merchants dealing in non-Buddhist supplies began to participate more in Sino-Indian trade, and the trade routes between the two countries were also altered. In the 11th and 12th centuries, Muslim merchants actively integrated the Indian and Chinese markets, facilitating broader commercial activities. By the end of the 13th century, cotton fabrics from regions such as Bengal, Coromandel Coast, and Malabar Coast in India had become one of the country's main exports to China.



Visva-Bharati University is located in Santiniketan, West Bengal. Founded in 1937 by Rabindranath Tagore and Tan Yunshan, the Department of Chinese Language & Culture (Cheena Bhavana) of the university has been dedicated to promoting China-India ties through cultural exchange. (Photo courtesy of the author)

TURNING POINT IN INDIA-CHINA CULTURAL EXCHANGE

However, since then, communication between the two great civilizations decreased due to complex historical reasons. Not until around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries did both sides reignite interest and curiosity in each other's cultures. At that time, the works of the renowned Indian poet and polymath Rabindranath Tagore gained widespread international recognition, and thus young Chinese intellectuals decided to invite him to visit China.

Tagore's visit to China in 1924 sparked widespread interest in academic circles. During his extensive travels across various parts of China, people praised the long-standing friendship between India and China, expressed support for China-India ties, and paid tribute to the great contributions made by predecessors in promoting cultural exchange between the two countries. Tagore delivered speeches in various places and passionately talked about the traditional friendship that spanned thousands of years. He appealed

for restoration and enhancement of friendly relations between the two peoples. He also advocated for further development of Eastern spiritual civilization by the two peoples and opposed Western material civilization. Tagore believed that Indian and Chinese civilizations, with their cultural foundations rooted in the principles of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) and “the Great Harmony of All under Heaven,” both emphasized harmonious development.


Tagore firmly believed in the mutually beneficial relationship between the two countries, and he advocated resuming obstructed communication. Visva-Bharati University, which he founded, played a pioneering role in the field of Chinese studies in India. Tagore established the Department of Chinese Language & Culture (Cheena Bhavana), the first academic center in India to systematically study Chinese culture and society. It laid the foundation for dialogue and exchange between the two ancient civilizations. His visits to China ushered in a new phase of dialogue, injected new vitality into bilateral exchange, and turned a new page in the history of interactions.

CORNERSTONE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

Over their long history of communication, India and China have engaged in extensive exchange across various fields, which have accumulated knowledge and preserved goodwill. Cultural exchange between the two countries is a fascinating research topic. People-to-people exchange has always served as bridges of friendship and ties between the two nations, fostering mutual understanding, mutual learning, and common development.

Cultural exchange still plays a vital role in India-China relations and protects emotions and sentiments between the two sides. While seeking the core of Eastern civilizations, the two countries are also exploring the essence of their own cultures. From a global perspective, the positioning of Indian and Chinese

civilizations is quite clear. Both are based on the cultural diversities of the East, emphasizing cognition, experience, and intuition. They focus on long-term perspectives and inclusiveness, stress morality and ethics, advocate harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature, and promote love and peace. The affinity between Indian and Chinese cultures is also manifested in their homogeneity, high acceptability, and strong inclusiveness. Both advocate the values of harmony in diversity and unity in diversity. In the context of globalization, competition in cultural undertakings among countries becomes intense. Both India and China are facing cultural deficit problems. In fact, the two countries can carry out comprehensive cooperation, showcase the charm of Eastern civilizations to the world, and create a new platform for cultural exchange between the East and the West.

India and China should learn from each other's strengths and strive for enhanced cooperation and common prosperity. The friendship between the two peoples serves as the cornerstone of bilateral relations. Both governments also aspire to foster mutual understanding and deepen friendship. The top priority is to continuously strengthen exchange between the two peoples and especially to promote cooperation in the fields of education and culture. Interactions between India and China will continue to be a key driving force in the bilateral relationship. 

The author is the head of the Department of Chinese Language & Culture (Cheena Bhavana) at Visva-Bharati University.



From Antiquity to Modernity



By Zhang Jun

Looking back, Chinese civilization has demonstrated remarkable identity, adaptability, and creativity.

As one of the oldest civilizations in the world, Chinese civilization has demonstrated a strong cultural identity throughout its historical development. It has undergone significant transformations, each of which profoundly impacted the cultural landscape and social structure of the nation.

The Shang (1600-1046 BC) and Zhou (1046-256 BC) dynasties marked a major turning point in the early development of Chinese civilization, during which Chinese philosophy and political ethics began to take shape. During the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC) and Warring States Period (ca. 476-221 BC), intellectual freedom and cultural prosperity created diverse systems of philosophical thought including Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism,

Legalism, and Yin-Yang theories, and during the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC-25 AD), the policy of “dismissing the hundred schools of thought and revering only the Confucian arts” promoted Confucianism to become the dominant ideology in traditional Chinese society, shaping the basic characteristics of Chinese civilization. During the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties, Chinese civilization underwent another important transformation. Tang culture represented the pinnacle of classical Chinese culture, while Song culture marked the emergence of new ideas and societal changes that would eventually influence modern Chinese culture. Over several centuries from the mid-Tang to the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), exchange between new and old

ideas, academic theories, and customs formed a complex and dynamic process. After 1840, China entered the process of modernization, experiencing intense collisions and blending of Eastern and Western cultures. This marked an era of reconciling the ancient with the modern, and integrating the East with the West.

THE FORMATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CONFUCIANISM

Confucianism is widely regarded as the mainstream ideology of traditional Chinese culture and has shaped many aspects of Chinese civilization. This cannot be separated from its institutionalization. A philosophy or doctrine must undergo strong institutionalization before it becomes a moral standard and value guideline that is universally followed by the nation. Confucianism gradually permeated every aspect of life, from the ceremonial codes and legal systems to the social customs and personal behavioral norms. As Chinese historian Chen Yinke pointed out: “All political and social actions, public and private, are related to legal codes, and these codes are the concrete implementation of Confucian teachings.” This shows the profound influence Confucianism exerted on political life, daily life, and the social order of the Chinese people.

The institutionalization is most evident in the education system and the imperial examination system. The imperial examination system, which lasted for over 1,300 years, selected competent candidates for official positions and shaped a highly fluid social structure. Tang Dynasty poet Meng Jiao’s poem *After Passing the Examination* reflected the joy of social mobility: “The wretchedness of my former years I have no need to brag. Today’s gaiety has freed my mind to wander without bounds. Lighthearted in the spring breeze, my horse’s hoofs run fast. In a single day I have seen all the flowers of Chang’an.”

The imperial examination system was also a profound social system that shaped



The ancient architecture of Beijing’s Forbidden City contrasts beautifully with skyscrapers like the CITIC Tower in the distance, showcasing a stunning blend of tradition and modernity. (Photo by Xiao Jiang)

the mainstream values of traditional Chinese society. Its openness provided upward mobility for all social classes, stimulating great vitality, especially during the Tang and Song dynasties. The fairness of the system allowed individuals to change their fate through personal effort. Historians have determined that during the Northern Song Dynasty, nearly half of the officials came from humble families, and in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), two-thirds of officials were from the lowest social classes. This mobility created the scholar-official class, and many outstanding cultural achievements were produced by political figures and scholars, which became one of the prominent features of Chinese civilization.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY AND HARMONIOUS COEXISTENCE

Another distinctive feature of Chinese civilization is its unity in diversity and harmonious coexistence. Throughout history, many ethnic groups established their own regimes, forming an integral component of Chinese civilization. This cultural fusion among different ethnic groups was deeply influenced by profound historical and institutional factors.

Over the long course of history, through economic exchange, cultural interactions, and migrations, various ethnic groups in China formed a community of shared destiny. This multi-ethnic unity and harmonious coexistence has driven the development and prosperity of the Chinese nation.


Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong's theory of "the pattern of unity in diversity of the Chinese nation" pointed out that although the term "Chinese nation" only emerged in the early 20th century, it encapsulates the nation's 5,000-year history. Chinese archaeologist Su Bingqi emphasized that China is defined by "over a million years of cultural roots, over 10,000 years of civilizational origins, 5,000 years of history, and 2,000 years of a unified entity."

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2012, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, has placed great emphasis on cultural confidence. "It derives from our splendid 5,000-year history and is embedded in decades of a revolutionary struggle that embodies the deep-rooted spiritual pursuits of the Chinese nation, and represents the unique cultural identity of the Chinese people," Xi noted.

The report to the 20th CPC National Congress in 2022 noted that "China's fine traditional culture is extensive and profound; it is the crystallization of the wisdom of Chinese civilization. Our traditional culture espouses many important principles and concepts, including pursuing common good for all; regarding the people as the foundation of the state; governing by virtue; discarding the outdated in favor of the new; selecting officials on the basis of merit; promoting harmony between humanity and nature; ceaselessly pursuing self-improvement; embracing the world with virtue; acting in good faith and being friendly to others; and fostering neighborliness. These maxims, which have taken shape over centuries of work and life, reflect

the Chinese people's way of viewing the universe, the world, society, and morality and are highly consistent with the values and propositions of scientific socialism."

At a meeting on cultural inheritance and development on June 2, 2023, Xi summarized five prominent features regarding Chinese civilization: consistency, originality, uniformity, inclusivity, and peaceful nature. A full understanding of the history of Chinese civilization is essential for more effectively igniting the creative transformation and innovative development of fine traditional Chinese culture, promoting the progress of Chinese socialist culture, and building a modern Chinese civilization.

Looking back, Chinese civilization has demonstrated remarkable identity, adaptability, and creativity. Amid the exchange and mutual learning of civilizations, the Chinese nation has been capable of broadening its mind to embrace the diversity of the world, welcoming all goodness, calmly engaging in discussions on global affairs, focusing on the principles that govern the world, and steadying its resolve to respond to change. This embodies the cultural spirit and vision of the Chinese nation. It is on this foundation that China has proposed to build a global community of shared future. 

—
The author is deputy director-general of the department of culture and history at the National Academy of Governance.

A New Chapter for China-India Cooperation

By Yu Longyu

The idea of harmonious coexistence between China and India would not only guide the two countries toward success but also send a powerful message to the world: humanity must abandon the law of the jungle and embark on the path of shared prosperity.

In 2005, esteemed Indian economist Jairam Ramesh published the book *Making Sense of Chindia: Reflections on China and India*. The term “Chindia” quickly caught the attention of scholars worldwide. In his article *Letter to My Chinese Readers* included in the Chinese edition of the book, Ramesh stated, “Considering the rich, ancient, and intricate nature of the China-India relationship, I ventured to coin the term Chindia to describe it.” The venture left a lasting imprint in history.

Following Ramesh’s introduction of this term, Chinese scholars interpreted it as “中印大同” (China and India in great harmony) and “龙象共舞” (dragon-elephant tango). These concepts arise from a profound understanding of the cultures, histories, and development paths of both nations. Dragon-elephant tango not only encapsulates the historical exchange between China and India but also illuminates a path for future cooperation.

HISTORY AND REALITY

China and India have sufficient reasons to pursue a path of harmonious coexistence.

Historical experience has demonstrated that cooperation has always been best for all parties involved. In the past, China and India frequently joined hands to confront external threats and challenges. For instance, during World War II, China firmly supported India’s independence movement and refused to cooperate with Nazi Germany. This historical bond between Chinese and Indian people remains highly relevant today.

The development of capitalism further underscores the necessity to adhere to the principles of cooperation and mutual benefit. In the current context of globalization, the rise of unilateralism and protectionism poses severe threats to global stability and prosperity. As emerging powers, China and India should assume the responsibility of leading global cooperation.

Moreover, the friendly exchange between China and India in the new era highlights momentum for harmonious coexistence. Historical figures such as prominent Chinese scholar Zhang Taiyan spoke highly of the closeness of China and India, stating that “India and China have stood out among the great Eastern civilizations.” This perspective continues to serve as a reminder of the shared responsibility of China and India in safeguarding peace in Asia.

The world today is witnessing changes unprecedented in a century with profound transformations reshaping the global landscape. As two ancient civilizations, China and India carry significant historical missions. In the face of complex international relations, the two sides should work together to address challenges. The concept of harmonious coexistence will not only lead them to success but also send a powerful signal to the world: humanity must abandon the law of the jungle and embark on the path of shared prosperity. This is the only way for China and India to navigate global political turbulence and economic downturns to secure a brighter future.

By deepening cultural exchange and cooperation, both countries can achieve their own development goals while contributing to global peace and prosperity.

CREATING A NEW CHAPTER


Looking ahead, immense potential awaits for cooperation between China and India across various fields. First, the two countries can learn from each other in terms of education. China has made significant achievements in higher education, while India excels in engineering and technical education. Through collaborative programs and academic exchange, both countries can enhance the quality of education.



A large group of yoga fans practice on the lotus terraces in Sanming City, China's southeastern Fujian Province. (Photo from Xinhua)

Second, the two sides have unique strengths in social development, making mutual learning essential for common progress. China and India can engage in in-depth exchange in areas such as social governance and cultural preservation to draw on each other's successful experiences. Third, in terms of economic cooperation, the Belt and Road Initiative provides a broad platform for collaboration. The two countries can strengthen cooperation in infrastructure development, energy, and other areas to promote regional economic integration.

As two time-honored civilizations, China and India shoulder the responsibility of advancing human progress. By deepening cultural exchange and cooperation, both countries can achieve their own development goals while contributing to global peace and prosperity.

China and India should continue to enhance communication in future collaborations and join hands to address global challenges. Through joint efforts, the two countries can connect the Chinese Dream with the Indian Dream. This is not only a call from history but also an inevitable choice for the times. 

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

Clash of Civilizations or Mutual Learning

By Jiang Shixue

In the face of momentous changes unseen in a century, the need to further promote mutual learning among civilizations has become increasingly prominent.

September 28, 2024, marks the 2575th birthday of Confucius. One of the greatest thinkers in human history, Confucius is well-known for many outstanding ideas, one of which is to promote mutual learning among civilizations. Today, mutual learning has become a bedrock idea in the Global Civilization Initiative proposed by China.

The diversity of human civilization is the basic characteristic of the world and the source of human progress. Differences in ideology, social system, and development model should not become obstacles hindering the exchange of civilizations. And they are surely not reasons for confrontation. In the face of momentous changes unseen in a century, the need to promote mutual learning among civilizations even further has become increasingly prominent.

First, mutual learning among civilizations

promotes the building of a global community of shared future. The ultimate goal of building a global community of shared future is to establish partnerships based on equality and mutual understanding, create a just and equitable security framework built on common development, seek inclusive growth, promote harmonious yet diverse cultural exchange, and establish an ecological system that respects nature and supports green development.

Thus, the concept of building a global community of shared future aims to foster the well-being of all humanity. This concept encompasses both realistic considerations and a future-oriented vision. It paints a beautiful vision and provides practical paths and action plans. Indeed, this goal cannot be achieved overnight, but humanity should have the courage and bravery to pursue it.

Second, mutual learning among civilizations



The 6th Silk Road International Film Festival concludes in Fuzhou City, Fujian Province, October 20, 2019. The film festival serves as an important platform for cultural exchange among partner countries of the Belt and Road Initiative, and is widely enjoyed by global film industry workers and audience. (Photo from CFB)

advances globalization. Globalization is a necessary path for human society, a requirement for the development of social productivity, and an inevitable outcome of technological progress. It also represents a trend towards a more unified world. Horizontal international division of labor is becoming more important, allocation of resources is increasingly extending beyond the scope of nation-states, and interdependence among different countries is growing. Therefore, globalization is transforming the world into a community of shared future in which the prosperity or adversity of one is linked to all.

However, in this process, nation-states have not disappeared, and differences in ideology, social system, and development model among civilizations persist. Moreover, the advancement of globalization often brings a powerful and persistent backlash

of anti-globalization movements that cause trouble. To ensure the continued progress of globalization, adhering to the principles of equality, mutual benefits, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness are essential. By doing this, globalization will keep on moving forward through strengthening mutual learning and bridging differences in national interests.

Third, mutual learning among civilizations helps maintain world peace. As globalization keeps moving forward, the world has become a global village, with interdependence among countries continuously increasing. Although peace and development are the major themes of the day, many factors still hinder peace and development, and the problem of peace deficit persists. Therefore, maintaining world peace and promoting global development remain humanity's enduring aspirations.

Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations"



An expert restores a precious ancient book at the National Library of China in Beijing. The library has prioritized ancient book restoration in recent years to better preserve traditional Chinese culture.

(Photo by Dong Fang/China Pictorial)

theory is flawed, but throughout human history, conflicts between civilizations have indeed led to wars or other kinds of deadly confrontations. Bridging gaps and misunderstandings between different civilizations, approaching other countries and peoples with an attitude of equality and inclusiveness, abandoning notions of civilizational superiority, arrogance and prejudice, deepening mutual understanding and tolerance, and learning from each other while making joint progress, are always essential methods for maintaining world peace and development. The course of history has repeatedly shown that without mutual learning among civilizations, distances and barriers will arise between individuals, nations, and countries, thereby increasing the difficulty of peaceful coexistence and heightening the risk of conflicts and wars.

Fourth, mutual learning among civilizations upholds and promotes the shared values of all humanity. Peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom are the shared values of all humanity. These shared values are not only the foundation of a global community of shared future but also the goals of the United Nations. They are the fundamental

principles governing new international relations. They provide a value foundation for building a global community of shared future and offer intellectual guidance for human advancement. They reflect the progress of human history from national to global dimensions and represent the common ground in the pursuit of progress by different civilizations.

The shared values of all humanity seek commonalities among different individuals, nations, and countries. Moreover, these shared values acknowledge the diversity and plurality of civilizations and strive to narrow the differences in ideology, political or social system, and level of development. However, people living in different civilizations often have different understandings of these shared values. Therefore, to promote these shared values, it is essential to promote exchange and mutual learning among civilizations.

Fifth, mutual learning among civilizations highlights the diversity and distinctive characteristics of human civilization. Diversity is an essential attribute of human civilization. With more than 2,500 ethnic groups in the world, people living in different countries and regions have created a wide variety of civilizations due to differences in geography, climate, history, lifestyle, cultural traditions, and religious beliefs. Thus, throughout history, diversity of civilizations has been a fundamental feature of human civilization and a source of human progress. In other words, diversity of civilizations creates opportunities for mutual learning and progress, and highlights the value of civilization itself.

Undoubtedly, in the foreseeable future, even as the world increasingly becomes a global village, the diversity of human civilization is unlikely to wane. Therefore, in order to preserve this diversity and highlight the distinctive characteristics of different civilizations, upholding the principles of equality, mutual respect, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness is important. Through

communication and mutual learning, they should respect each other, draw on each other's strengths and merits, embrace a variety of perspectives, and coexist in harmony.

Sixth, mutual learning among civilizations promotes economic growth. International relations are built on mutual understanding among peoples. This can be achieved by strengthening international cultural exchange in different ways such as trade in cultural and creative products. Numerous business opportunities and jobs can be directly or indirectly created, thereby fostering economic growth and improving living standards. This demonstrates that mutual learning among civilizations not only promotes the development of spiritual civilization but also drives material progress.


Seventh, mutual learning among civilizations advances global governance. Global issues such as climate change, environmental degradation, cybercrime, infectious disease outbreaks, terrorism, and persistent poverty and hunger have all inflicted significant damage on humanity.

The solution to global problems lies in global governance. Since every country and individual living in different civilizations are victims of various global problems, it is both natural and essential for every country and person to actively participate in global governance.

It should be noted that different countries and individuals have varying understandings of global governance, and their perspectives on global governance can differ significantly. According to psychological principles, beliefs (such as views on global governance) are closely linked to an individual's cognition, which is closely related to factors such as political systems, economic development levels, social relationships, and civilizations. Therefore, when advancing global governance, promoting mutual learning among civilizations is an essential pathway to bridging cognitive differences. Only by minimizing these cognitive differences to the greatest extent possible can countries work together effectively on advancing global governance, pooling

efforts, and enriching the concepts and practices of global governance.

Last but not least, mutual learning among civilizations advances the self-improvement and progress of human civilization. The world is home to a diverse array of civilizations. Each civilization possesses unique charm and profound heritage, and each is a treasure of humanity. Civilizations are not ranked by superiority or inferiority, but rather distinguished by their characteristics and regional differences. All human civilizations are equal in value, and each has strengths and weaknesses. Thus, no civilization is perfect in every way, nor is any civilization entirely lacking in merit.

Human civilization requires equality as the foundation for communication and mutual learning, which enables self-improvement and progress. The course of human history shows that as society advances, the need for enhanced mutual learning among civilizations becomes even more crucial. This is because civilizations become more vibrant through communication and more enriched through mutual learning. Diversity is a fundamental characteristic of the world and the essence of human civilization. Every civilization in the world carries the heritage of different countries and peoples through its own rationale. Therefore, different civilizations can only complement each other and enhance their mutual strengths through communication, which in turn advances the progress of human civilization. 

—

The author is a professor at Shanghai University, Macau University of Science and Technology, and Sichuan International Studies University. The article was first published in China Focus.

Rethinking India's Path to Modernization

By Alka Acharya

Modernization is an evolving process that does not necessarily demand a complete departure from tradition. Adopting an inclusive mindset is essential when considering the modernization of traditional societies.

The term “modernity” does not have a direct equivalent in Chinese, and similarly, Indian society lacks a fully corresponding term. Although it is usually translated as “现代性” in Chinese, this translation does not denote the full meaning of the concept. People often view tradition and modernity through a binary lens, perceiving “the past” and “the present” as oppositional. However, this perspective is evidently problematic for the two great civilizations of India and China.

Modernity is a concept that originates from the Western discourse, referring to the transition from traditional to modern society. Some have suggested that once a society enters a modern phase, it should no longer draw from the past because tradition is no longer relevant. This perspective implies a severance from tradition, which doesn't align with Indian and Chinese scholars' understanding of modernity.

Both India and China face multiple challenges on the path to achieving modernization which is their common goal. As developing countries that have gone through hardships, they are seeking development opportunities from modernization. This modernizing process involves industrialization and urbanization. How can this process be advanced? Modernization does not operate with an on-off switch. Rather, it is a continuous journey. For instance, both countries aspire to advance new industrialization, but this process involves not only economic transformation but also structural changes within society.

When discussing tradition and modernity, especially in the context of India and China, it is important to realize that modernization is an evolving process. We proceed gradually from one stage to another rather than completely severing ties with the past.

Today, both Indian and Chinese societies are growing on heritage from the past such as the influence of traditional culture. People draw on past experiences to adapt to current situations and contemplate future directions. In India, in particular, tradition plays a crucial role in shaping the past, present and future.

Therefore, we should not narrow interpretations of modernity through the Western perspective, but rather adopt a more inclusive and comprehensive view of the modernization process. In fact, traditional social customs are also evolving. Both India and China face complex national conditions and multiple social contradictions. In light of this, Indian scholars have proposed the concept of plural modernity, emphasizing the importance of preserving tradition while pursuing modernization rather than discarding it.

India's modernization began during the colonial period, profoundly impacting its social structure and culture. Initially, the education system and universities introduced by the British promoted industrialization, urbanization, and agricultural modernization,



A giant sculpture of Lord Ganesha on a Mumbai street during a celebration of the birth of the elephant-headed deity. The Hindu festival Ganesh Jayanti in 2024 fell on February 13. (Photo from Pexels)

leading to changes in social structures such as the establishment of bureaucratic systems and the formation of new social classes. However, this development was not inclusive. The majority of ordinary people did not benefit from it, which represents a major drawback of the modernization brought about by British colonialism.

After gaining independence, India discarded many colonial practices, implementing universal suffrage to ensure voting rights for all, establishing a parliamentary system, promoting new development projects, creating new values, and establishing a modern education system. This process marked the transition from the colonization period to the post-colonial era.

India has a diverse historical and cultural background alongside various distinct social customs and behavioral patterns. These traditions have indeed sparked a series of contradictions and conflicts as they adapt to modernization, but modernization remains a goal that India strives to achieve. India aims to change from material scarcity to abundance, ensuring that everyone shares in the benefits of modernization. However, this process comes with challenges. Currently, both India and China seek greater development to benefit their people, and both are experiencing positive momentum, but the major challenge lies in how to address social issues.

Some countries have already succeeded in the process of modernization, while others have not. Japan navigated this process relatively smoothly, yet still faces its own problems. India and China should adapt their traditions to the modern world, making them a part of global culture and history. While forming universal values, the two countries must also preserve their unique characteristics. Internationally, a trend has grown in which all seek common values, but the extent to which this goal can be achieved remains uncertain. ⁶⁶

The author is the honorary director of the Delhi-based Institute of Chinese Studies and a professor with the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Political Wisdom Facilitates Cultural Exchange

By Zhang Chi

In future political communications, if both sides can pay more attention to and understand each other's traditional wisdom, it may help find a path for coexistence and development in the new wave of globalization.

Against the backdrop of globalization, the relationship between tradition and modernity has increasingly become a significant topic in the cultural, political, and social development in various countries. As two major ancient civilizations, China and India possess rich traditional cultures and political philosophies. These traditions have shaped their histories and provided a profound source of wisdom for civilizational dialogues in modern times. By exploring the wisdom embedded in these ancient civilizations, especially the political philosophies of China and India, we may gain new perspectives and insights for addressing the complex issues at present.

TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Discussions of the relationship between tradition and modernity often remind

people of the creative transformation of fine traditional Chinese culture. The term “returning to the roots for renewal” is frequently used to emphasize that returning to the origin is not a simple retro style, but for better innovation.

As Marxist dialectics suggest, the development of things doesn't follow a circular pattern but exhibits a spiral trajectory. On the surface, it may seem like a return to the starting point, but from a vertical perspective, it actually develops and progresses. However, why do people often perceive tradition and modernity as opposing sides? One reason is the fact that modernization originated in the West. For a long time, the confrontation between the East and the West replaced the inheritance and dialogue between the ancient and the modern. In this process, we have overlooked the significant role of traditional elements in modern development.

Integration of tradition and modernity doesn't mean giving up modernization. On the contrary, it requires people to absorb and integrate traditional wisdom in the process of modernization to form a more inclusive and sustainable social structure. For instance, in China, the power of traditional culture is reflected in many aspects, especially in the booming private economy. Many successful private enterprises often draw strength from the pursuit of familial and local honor, fostering a sense of community among villagers. These traditional factors enable the private economy to demonstrate robust vitality and become an important driving force for China's economic development.

Meanwhile, the process of modernization has also posed many challenges. With the deepening of globalization, the influence of Western modernization models continues to grow, and many countries are confronting the dilemma of balancing tradition and modernity in their development. In this context, re-examining traditional cultures, especially the traditional political wisdom of China and India, holds great significance as a reference for the governance and development today.

COMPLEMENTARITY IN POLITICAL WISDOM

Ancient Indian political philosophy is renowned for its unique inclusiveness and diversity. This tradition is not only manifest in the diversity of religious beliefs but also in its tolerance and acceptance of various ideologies. Indian philosophy pursues supreme truth, which enables people to maintain an open mindset and respect different views and beliefs when facing the real world.


In the history of India, Ashoka and Akbar were two highly esteemed monarchs who demonstrated political wisdom by establishing a well-developed ideological system. Ashoka stressed that one should avoid disparaging other religions, while Akbar advocated communication and dialogue among various religions by practicing what he preached. This tradition



Akbar the Great was the third Mughal emperor. During his reign, all religions were treated equally, and religious freedom flourished among the people.

(Photo from Pinterest.com)

of tolerance has empowered India to adopt an open mindset in addressing issues related to diverse cultures, which remains vital in today's society.

The significant differences in the political traditions of India and China in terms of evaluating political figures are noteworthy. In China, political leaders are often viewed from the systems, economic growth, national defense capabilities under their governance. In contrast, in India, evaluation of political figures focuses more on their moral virtues and traditions of tolerance. This difference provides the possibility for complementarity in political wisdom between China and India. In future political communications, if both sides can pay more attention to and understand each other's traditional wisdom, it may help find a path for coexistence and development in the new wave of globalization. 

The author is a professor of the Party building department at the National Academy of Governance.



Mental Health Reimagined: Traditional Approaches and Modern Practices



By Srividya Mehendale

India and China have been placing greater focus on mental health, particularly among the youth, combining traditional approaches with modern practices to foster community support and enhance overall well-being.

In India, China, and around the world, more and more individuals have been discussing and seeking help for mental health issues. This trend is partly driven by the increasing pressures faced by young people, compelling them to confront everyday challenges. On a positive note, this development creates opportunities to establish new room for dialogue, understanding, and support.

defines mental health as “a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.” This definition underscores adaptation, balance, and the ability to contribute to society — concepts deeply rooted in both Indian and Chinese philosophies.

Confucianism believes that harmony in relationships with oneself and society is crucial for mental health. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) also views well-being as a communal goal achievable through societal

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

The World Health Organization (WHO)

balance. This balance is most vigorously expressed in Taoism, which introduces the concept of *yin-yang*. According to the Taoist classic *Tao Te Ching*, “He who knows others is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened.” It highlights the notion that mental health demands self-awareness and harmony between opposing forces within oneself. The *yin-yang* model, focusing on the balance of opposites, aligns closely with the WHO’s definition of mental health, emphasizing the ability to adapt to life’s challenges while maintaining internal equilibrium.

Patanjali, an ancient Indian yogi and

Social media plays a dual role in mental health. On one side of the coin, it exacerbates issues like anxiety and cyberbullying. However, it also fosters community-led solutions.

author of *Yoga Sutras*, emphasized mental health and well-being through the practice of Chitta Vritti Nirodha, which means stilling the fluctuations of the mind. This philosophy posits that when the mind is restrained, one can attain mental peace and clarity. Similarly, Buddhism advocates for sense restraint, viewing such practices as pathways to mental clarity and tranquility. These approaches enable individuals to realize their potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

As of late, the trend has been tipping towards a communal approach to mental health care. Ancient Indian and Chinese philosophies can offer valuable insights to

support this movement.

OFFICIAL ACTION

Both Chinese and Indian governments share a commitment to addressing mental health concerns by integrating traditional healing practices and philosophies.

China’s 2013 mental health law marked a significant step towards improving mental health services by incorporating both ancient and modern practices. It acknowledged the role of TCM in mental healthcare. The law blends traditional wisdom with increased accessibility for those who are in need, adopting a community-based approach that includes training and guidance for primary health care centers and psychiatric facilities.

In India, the *Mental Healthcare Act, 2017* also incorporates traditional healing practices with a strong emphasis on community-based care. The act aims to transform mental health care in India by shifting from institutional settings to more accessible community-based environments. Ayurveda, yoga, and meditation all play significant roles in this approach. The Indian government has recognized the therapeutic benefits of yoga for mental health, especially through its integration into mental health programs supported by the Ministry of Ayush. Initiatives such as Yoga for Mental Health and training programs for mental health professionals on incorporating yoga and mindfulness into therapeutic practices aim to leverage these ancient practices to manage stress, improve emotional well-being, and enhance psychological resilience.

SHARED CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES

Despite notable progress, both countries face barriers such as stigma, limited awareness, and resource constraints. Rural populations often lack sufficient mental health services, widening the treatment gap. In light of these challenges, collaborative research and shared learning can be conducive to addressing these issues and fostering more effective policies.

Young people are playing a critical role

in the mental health movement, reshaping narratives by blending traditional practices, digital tools, and social support systems. This movement has gained momentum due to rising stressors such as academic pressure, societal expectations, and the aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting the youth to care more about their mental health.

Digital tools for mental health have gained prominence, especially in China, where social platforms like WeChat are bridging accessibility gaps for mental health services. Initiatives like Tree Hole Rescue on Weibo, the Chinese equivalent of X (formerly Twitter), use artificial intelligence (AI) to identify individuals expressing distress and provide timely support. Popular mental health service providers such as KnowYourself offer a variety of self-help resources and psychoeducational materials, engaging a large youth audience. Additionally, mobile health solutions like WeDoctor and Ping An Good Doctor integrate mental health consultations into broader healthcare services, making support accessible for individuals with hectic schedules. These platforms provide



Practitioners at Yoga Vidya Mandiram, a yoga school in the Himalayan valley of Rishikesh, India. Yoga is widely practiced to clear the mind and reduce stress. (Photo from Pexels)

scalable and low-cost solutions to address anxiety and depression, blending modern technology with a community-centered approach. India has followed suit with apps like Wysa, which blends AI-powered chatbots with self-help activities based on cognitive behavioral therapy.

However, social media plays a dual role in mental health. On one side of the coin, it exacerbates issues like anxiety and cyberbullying. However, it also fosters community-led solutions. Hashtags like #MentalHealthAwareness have garnered millions of views on platforms like Douyin (Chinese version of TikTok), while positive energy campaigns on WeChat encourage sharing uplifting content. Similarly, initiatives like “It’s Okay to Talk” and Instagram profiles such as The Artidote encourage young Indian people to openly discuss their struggles, dispelling stigma and fostering an empathetic community. The anonymity of these networks makes it easier for individuals to seek help without fear of judgment.

Youth-led peer support initiatives are flourishing as young people recognize the value of communal resilience. In China, university students have formed mental health clubs in which peers can share their challenges and coping strategies. These clubs often collaborate with NGOs to organize workshops on stress management and mindfulness. In India, similar efforts have been seen in programs like YourDOST, which connect students with trained peer counselors.

TRADITIONAL PRACTICES IN MODERN CONTEXTS

The resurgence of traditional techniques in mental health care demonstrates the adaptability of cultural heritage in modern contexts. Both China and India have incorporated traditional methods into contemporary settings, drawing on their philosophical foundations of harmony and balance.

In China, TCM-rooted Tai Chi and *qigong* are being increasingly integrated into corporate wellness and educational initiatives. These practices effectively promote stress

reduction and emotional regulation through calm, deliberate movements and controlled breathing. For instance, Chinese tech company Huawei combines this method with workplace efficiency by offering Tai Chi breaks to combat staff burnout. Such initiatives align with broader recognition of the vital role which mental health plays in resilience and morale. Tai Chi has been shown to enhance focus while reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. Virtual *qigong* lessons on platforms like WeChat are accessible to urban youth with busy schedules.

In India, yoga and meditation — central to spiritual and philosophical traditions — are being repurposed to meet modern mental health needs. The Indian government actively promotes yoga through global initiatives like the International Day of Yoga, highlighting its health benefits. Institutions such as Delhi Public School have implemented weekly meditation classes to help students manage anxiety and improve focus. Yoga is widely recommended in clinical settings as an adjunctive treatment for conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Digital platforms like Sattva combine traditional practices with data-driven wellness strategies, integrating yoga poses and guided meditations with stress-tracking tools.

Substantial scientific evidence supports both practices. Research indicates that yoga and Tai Chi enhance relaxation and lower cortisol levels by activating the parasympathetic nervous system. These physiological benefits are particularly important in urban settings where chronic stress is prevalent. China's community mental health programs and India's AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy) framework both validate the effectiveness of these techniques, bridging the gap between evidence-based care and tradition. Additionally, these practices can serve as instruments for social cohesion. Meditation sessions in India reduce loneliness and enhance emotional well-being, while public



A traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) practitioner collects pharmaceutical materials. TCM relies heavily on herbal remedies, using a vast array of plant, animal, and mineral substances to address imbalances in the body and promote health. (Photo from Pixabay)

Tai Chi classes in China create spaces for social support and interaction. Modernized yet firmly rooted in cultural traditions, these approaches demonstrate their applicability and potential in addressing both individual and collective mental health issues.

Both India and China are addressing mental health by integrating traditional knowledge with contemporary methods, promoting greater inclusivity and accessibility. This combination offers promising strategies to enhance mental health and bridge the gap between traditional values and modern demands. 

The author is a research scientist with Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India.

Transforming Agriculture with Smart Tech

By Shubham Swaroop

China and India, two of the world's largest agricultural economies, have adopted distinct farming strategies. While India has made significant strides, China's rapid modernization of its agricultural sector through technology and policy reforms could offer valuable insights.



Zhang Yueqian (right), a business manager in Shangougou Village, Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province, promotes Luniao honey pears via livestreaming. In 2023, the cultivation area of honey pears in Luniao Township totaled over 533 hectares, achieving an annual output of more than 10,000 tonnes and an annual output value of approximately 240 million yuan (US\$34 million). (Photo from CFB)

China's agricultural reforms began in earnest in the late 1970s with the household contract responsibility system, which decentralized collective farming. By allocating collective land to individual households and allowing farmers to retain profits, China boosted productivity drastically. From 1978 to 1984, agricultural output grew at an average rate of 7.7 percent, improving rural incomes significantly. This reform laid the groundwork for broader economic and technological advancements.

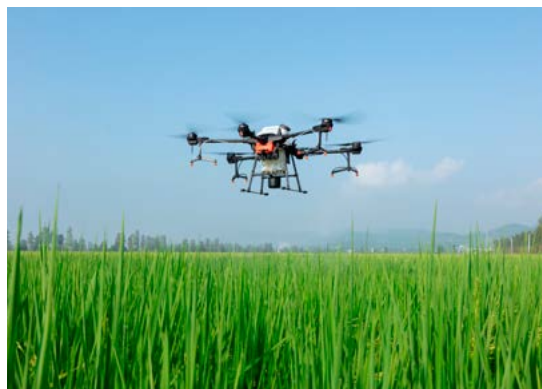
DIGITAL DRIVES

In recent years, integration of technology has been a cornerstone of China's agricultural

progress. Across the country, digital platforms consolidate vast amounts of data to enable smarter decision-making in farming. For example, in eastern China's Zhejiang Province, a complicated intelligent system "Zhejiang Rural Brain" leverages data from over one billion input points to monitor crop health, predict weather patterns, and optimize irrigation. The system has improved efficiency while reducing resource waste and making agriculture more sustainable. Despite experimenting with digital tools like the AgriStack initiative, India has yet to achieve similar levels of scale and integration.

One success story is Maharashtra's Maha Agritech Project, which uses artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to forecast crop yields and predict pest outbreaks. This project has helped farmers plan their sowing schedules more effectively while reducing losses. It can be strengthened by leveraging Zhejiang's expertise in digital agriculture through capacity-building initiatives and fostering knowledge partnerships for technology transfer and innovation. Expanding similar initiatives nationwide with region-specific adaptations can address the diverse challenges of Indian agriculture, from erratic weather patterns to pest infestations.

China's application of AI and Internet of Things (IoT) in farming has yielded transformative results. IoT-enabled devices monitor soil health and water usage in real time, while AI-driven tools predict pest outbreaks and improve crop planning. These innovations have reduced input costs and increased productivity. In China, the widespread use of IoT-enabled smart irrigation systems in regions like Zhejiang has optimized water use while maintaining high yields. In India, where water scarcity affects over 60 percent of agricultural land, similar technologies could mitigate the risks associated with erratic monsoon rains. Some parts of India such as Tamil Nadu have initiated similar projects such as the World Bank-supported Tamil Nadu Irrigated Agriculture Modernization Project (TN-IAMP), but adoption remains localized.



A plant-protection drone at work. Statistics show that China has approximately 250,000 unmanned drones for plant protection, making it the world leader in this field. (Photo from Pixabay)

Scaling these technologies across states with diverse agricultural practices requires both investment and policy alignment.

EMPOWERING THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

Beyond farm inputs, development of the overall ecosystem is crucial. One of China's most impactful innovations has been development of e-commerce platforms like Taobao, Pinduoduo, and more recently offline distribution channels such as Hema Fresh. These platforms connect farmers directly with consumers, eliminating intermediaries and ensuring fairer prices. India's National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) platform, designed to digitalize agricultural markets, represents a similar initiative. The e-NAM is a pan-India electronic trading platform launched by the Government of India to integrate existing physical agricultural markets, aiming to facilitate better price discovery and create a unified national market for agricultural commodities.

In 2023, Zhejiang Province achieved online retail sales of over three trillion yuan (US\$422 billion). In contrast, India's e-commerce market was valued at around US\$120 billion, making Zhejiang's total sales more than three times larger. This stark difference



An aerial view of Jingshan Village in Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province. Leveraging its ecological resources for tourism, the village has created the brand “Go to Jingshan for Tea” and several cultural IPs, diversifying the tea culture experience. It has also built a platform to develop multiple applications to promote digital transformation of rural production and life. (Photo from CFB)

highlights the significant gap between the two countries in e-commerce adoption and penetration. Limited internet access and logistical challenges in India’s rural areas hinder its effectiveness. Addressing these issues through investment in broadband infrastructure and smart logistics could unlock the full potential of digital marketplaces for Indian farmers.

China’s smart zones for agriculture such as those in Pinghu City, Zhejiang Province, integrate digital tools with traditional practices to optimize productivity and income. These zones have attracted investment of over five billion yuan (US\$691 million), demonstrating the economic viability of tech-driven agriculture. India’s Rurban Mission could replicate this model by establishing technology-enabled agricultural clusters in key states. Such hubs could serve as centers for training, innovation, and market access, driving local and regional growth.

The concept of diversified rural incomes has become a cornerstone of China’s rural revitalization efforts. A large group of China’s rural workforce earned supplemental income from non-agricultural activities such as rural manufacturing and

services. India, where a significant portion of its population relies solely on agriculture, could adopt similar strategies. Encouraging agro-processing industries, providing vocational training, and promoting rural micro-enterprises can create alternative income streams. For example, establishing food processing units near agricultural hubs could add value to raw produce and generate job opportunities. Crop insurance is another critical area where India can learn from China. In China, digitalized insurance schemes have reduced delays in claims processing, ensuring timely compensation for farmers affected by natural disasters.

INSPIRATIONS FROM CHINA

In conclusion, the experiences of China’s digital agriculture journey offer a practical roadmap for India. By prioritizing data-driven decision-making, expanding digital infrastructure, and fostering public-private partnerships, India can modernize its agricultural sector and improve farmers’ livelihoods. However, success depends on inclusivity and adaptability. Addressing the specific needs of smallholder farmers, who form the backbone of India’s agriculture, is critical to ensuring equitable growth. The transformation of agriculture in India requires sustained investment, political will, and a commitment to innovation.

India has already made great progress with projects like Bhoomi which digitize land records and initiatives like Digital Green which offer timely advice to smallholder farmers. These innovations showcase the incredible potential as young farmers adopt these tools. By learning from China’s achievements and tailoring them to its unique context, India can create an agricultural ecosystem that is not only technologically advanced, but also socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. This journey will secure the livelihoods of millions while positioning India as a global leader in agriculture. 

The author is a PhD student of Agricultural Economics and Management at Zhejiang University in Zhejiang Province, China.



龙象共舞 相互成就

China and India Work Together
for Common Development



Tagore on Civilization

By Dong Youchen

In the context of globalization, Tagore's perspective on civilization provides significant guidance for building a global community of shared future.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore's visit to China. As an Indian literary giant and thinker, Tagore's views on civilization demonstrate profound insight and unique value. On his 80th birthday, Tagore had someone read his essay "Crisis in Civilization" on his behalf, wherein his reflections on Western civilization were deeply thought-provoking. He remarked that it is difficult to find a suitable Bengali equivalent for the English

word "civilization." That phase of civilization with which Indians were and are familiar has been called "Sadachar," which literally means proper conduct.

In Tagore's view, civilization encompasses relationships among individuals, families, communities, and nations. A civilized person should act decently, be kind and sincere, and willingly help others. In a family, one should respect the elderly, cherish the young, and maintain harmony between spouses. Among

neighbors, people should foster goodwill and mutual assistance. At the level of nations, practicing civilization means coexisting peacefully, respecting one another, addressing each other's core interests, and refraining from aggression. This comprehensive and profound understanding of civilization reflects Tagore's aspirations for harmonious development in human society and offers a valuable perspective for understanding the essence of civilization. His ideas prompt us to consider how

to embody civilization on different levels to achieve harmonious coexistence among individuals, societies, and nations, ultimately promoting the progress and development of human civilization.

TAGORE'S CRITIQUE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Tagore's understanding of Western civilization underwent a significant transformation, evolving from initial admiration to deep skepticism of its essence. In his early views, Tagore embraced Western civilization with respect. However, over time and through deeper observations of reality, his attitude underwent a fundamental shift.

In the essay, Tagore unreservedly exposed the darker sides of Western civilization. "There came a time when perforce I had to snatch myself away from the mere appreciation of literature," he wrote. "As I emerged into the stark light of bare facts, the sight of the dire poverty of the Indian masses rent my heart. Rudely shaken out of my dreams, I began to realize that perhaps in no other modern state was there such hopeless dearth of the most elementary needs of existence. And yet it was this country whose resources had fed for so long the wealth and magnificence of the British people." This reality led him to a profound realization of the immense suffering inflicted upon the



Rabindranath Tagore reads to a crowd of people in 1925. In Tagore's view, civilization encompasses relationships among individuals, families, communities, and nations. (Photo from Wikimedia Commons)

Indian people by British colonial rule. To serve their own national profits, the British first poisoned Chinese people with opium and then occupied a portion of China's territory. "As the world was about to forget the memory of this outrage, we were painfully surprised by another event. While Japan was quietly devouring North China..." These examples vividly illustrate the cruelty of colonialism, exploitation, and war under the so-called Western civilization.

Tagore firmly believed that true civilization is reflected in interpersonal relationships. However, the materialistic tendencies of Western civilization severely contradicted this principle. He pointed out

that Western civilization lacked the patience to address public grievances and instead established, with baton in hand, a policeman's rule. India, smothered under the dead weight of British administration, lay static in her utter helplessness. This materialistic tendency not only resulted in indifference and contempt for the peoples of other nations but also severely hindered India's development.

Tagore's critique of Western civilization extended to his views on Japan. On the evening of April 17, 1924, at a reception hosted by the Japanese community in Shanghai, he condemned Japan for its relentless pursuit of profit and political power,

criticizing it for being rigid, exclusionary, suspicious, and lacking in humanistic values. He regarded Japan's behavior as a manifestation of the negative influence of Western civilization, illustrating how the pursuit of unchecked material interests and power led to the loss of true civilization.

Through his critique of Western civilization, Tagore exposed its hypocrisy and dark side. By citing concrete examples such as British aggression in India and China as well as Japanese aggression, he powerfully demonstrated the shortcomings of Western civilization, calling on people to reassess the true meaning of civilization and

advocating for a concept of civilization that values interpersonal relationships, respects humanity, and pursues spiritual values. His insights remain crucial for critically reflecting on the limitations of Western civilization and exploring more reasonable and sustainable paths for civilizational development.

TAGORE'S VISION OF EASTERN CIVILIZATION

Tagore held a profound understanding and deep admiration for Eastern civilization, recognizing its unique core values, rich manifestations, and significant international influence.

The core values of Eastern civilization include hospitality, inclusivity, humanity, and spiritual faith. Tagore praised the hospitality of Eastern people. At a gathering at the Navy Club on Jinyu Hutong in Beijing, he told his Chinese friends: "Your old civilization has enriched the soil of the heart. Its constant human touch has a vitalizing effect upon everything belonging to it. This civilization could not have lasted so long, if it had not been eminently human, if it had not been full of life of the spirit... But yours, because of its depth of soil, has nourished the great tree of life producing hospitable shade and fruit for travellers who come from a far land."

This statement vividly reflects the tradition of hospitality in Chinese civilization, characterized by its humanity and vitality. Moreover, Tagore emphasized the inclusivity of Eastern civilization, considering it a quality that enabled China to produce outstanding literary and artistic works. He also regarded faith as a critical pillar, highlighting how Chinese people's faith in goodness has created a brilliant civilization, while the spiritual beliefs of ancient Indian people fostered the ancient Indian civilization. Values such as great love, friendliness, sincerity, and tolerance are central to the spirit of Eastern civilization.

The manifestations of



— Celebrated by Rabindranath Tagore as "a teardrop on the cheek of time," the Taj Mahal, a symbol of India's rich cultural heritage, stands as a testament to the enduring beauty of Eastern civilization. (Photo from Pixabay)

Eastern civilization are evident in the hospitality of Chinese culture and the religious philosophy of India. The long-standing hospitality in Chinese civilization, as experienced by Tagore, provided a sense of homecoming for visitors from other lands, demonstrating respect and tolerance for humanity. Similarly, Indian religious philosophy emphasizes inner cultivation and spiritual pursuits, which have been integral to ancient Indian civilization and also reflect

widely accepted by most countries as essential norms for international relations. They have exerted profound global significance, fostering international peace and stability while promoting friendly cooperation among nations. Today, the concept of building a global community of shared future is a continuation, promotion, and elevation of these principles in the new era. Implementation of this vision holds central importance for enhancing the well-being of people on

dismantling the remnants of Western-centrism. Meanwhile, his praise for Eastern civilization reflected recognition of the values of compassion, inclusivity, and concern for humanity, showing his deep understanding and passion for Eastern civilization, which is a fundamental reason he remains beloved by people worldwide.

True civilization should strive to promote harmony among individuals, families, and communities, and peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and shared future among nations. This philosophical inquiry into the essence of civilization inspires us to draw wisdom from the ancient civilizations of China and India as we continue our pursuit of truth. In the context of globalization, Tagore's perspective on civilization provides significant guidance for building a global community of shared future. The global community should transcend racial, national, and cultural boundaries, focus on the profound changes unseen in a century, aim for the collective well-being of humanity, and foster civilizational exchange and mutual learning with an open and inclusive attitude. Together, we can create a better future. 🌍

Tagore's ideas prompt us to consider how to embody civilization on different levels to achieve harmonious coexistence among individuals, societies and nations, ultimately promoting the progress and development of human civilization.

respect and inclusivity toward humanity.

The Eastern civilizational spirit advocated by Tagore has had positive applications and significant international influence. For instance, after China and India freed themselves from imperialist rule, they inherited the civilizational values of their respective nations. In 1954, the leaders of China, India, and Myanmar jointly initiated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Reflecting the Eastern ideals of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect, these five principles have been

both sides of the Himalayas and strongly advancing the world toward a brighter future of peace, security, prosperity, and progress.

Tagore's views on civilization are a testament to his wisdom, offering profound insights for examining the essence of civilization. His critique of Western civilization recognized the erosion of humanity and morality by unchecked materialism, and profoundly exposed and chastised the oppression and exploitation by Western civilization. This critique has been crucial for

—
The author is a professor and former deputy director-general of the department of culture and history at the National Academy of Governance, and president of the International Society of Bengal Studies.

Connecting to China through Books

By Hu Zhoumeng

Books play a crucial role in every society. Through reading, we gain knowledge and learn about each other's history and culture.

It might come as a surprise that even in the age of the internet, books continue to serve as an essential bridge between China and India, revealing striking similarities between the two great civilizations. In an exclusive interview with *China-India Dialogue*, Kaushal Goyal, founder and CEO of Indian publisher GBD Books, shared his insights and experiences in the publishing industry, highlighting the vibrant exchange he has enjoyed with his Chinese partners.



In his office, Kaushal Goyal (second right), founder and CEO of GBD Books, poses for a photo with Arjun Goyal (first right), general manager of GBD Books and two members of a delegation from Wuhan City, central China. (Photo courtesy of Kaushal Goyal)

China-India Dialogue (CID): GBD has been publishing and reprinting children's books and Chinese language, history, politics and culture-related books in India in collaboration with leading Chinese publishers since 2008. What kind of collaborations have you explored over these years?

Kaushal Goyal: Over the years we have published several Chinese language learning books in India including *Elementary Chinese Readers 1 to 4*, a Chinese grammar book, and various self-learning materials which primarily focused on Mandarin. In 2016, we also began publishing books on Chinese history, politics, culture, and children's books. These publications were made possible through agreements with Chinese publishers. By making these Chinese books available in India, we hope to increase awareness of China's rich history and culture among Indian readers. This initiative aims to bridge the gap between our two countries and foster a closer relationship.

CID: In light of current bilateral cultural exchange, how would you rate the progress of publishing Chinese books and distributing them in India? What have been your priorities as of late?

Goyal: Bilateral exchange between India and China



A branch of the Librairie Avant-Garde in Chenjiapu Village of Lishui City, Zhejiang Province offers coffee and reading areas in the bookstore. By hosting various cultural activities, the bookstore attracts constant flows of tourists as well as local children who enjoy reading. (Photo from CFB)

has been thriving in the realm of publishing. Over the past five to six years, we have translated more than 120 Chinese books into English and Hindi, which have been published and distributed in India. In addition to books on Chinese history, politics, and culture, we are now also translating and publishing Chinese children's storybooks that reflect the country's folk culture and traditions. Some of these children's books are available in bilingual (Chinese-English) or trilingual (Chinese-English-Hindi) formats. We aim to focus more on these children's books because they are easier to publish and have broad appeal, not

only for children but also for students learning the Chinese language in India.

CID: What are your most unforgettable memories with Chinese publishers at industry events such as the New Delhi World Book Fair and the Beijing International Book Fair?

Goyal: At the 2016 New Delhi World Book Fair, China was the Guest of Honour Country, and many Chinese publishers participated. GBD organized many events for these publishers and signed contracts with 12 Chinese publishers to publish 50 Chinese language and cultural books in India, available in both English

and Hindi. We regularly travel to China to meet with various publishers and attend the Beijing International Book Fair each year. At the Beijing International Book Fair, we are often on a tight schedule attending back-to-back signing ceremonies and meetings with different publishers. We have established agreements with many Chinese partners to translate and publish their books in India, including New World Press, Foreign Languages Press, Shandong Fine Arts Publishing House, Shandong Pictorial Publishing House, China Intercontinental Press, Southwest Jiaotong University Press, Jiangxi Education Publishing House, China Social Sciences Press, People's Publishing House, Jiangxi People's Publishing House, Beijing Mediatime Books Co. Ltd., Tianjin People's Publishing House, Phoenix Juvenile and Children's Publishing House, Phoenix Education Publishing Ltd., Jiangsu People's Publishing House, Yilin Press, Guangxi Science and Technology Publishing House, among others. Most of these publishers feel like family, and my interactions with my Chinese friends have been truly unforgettable.

CID: What impressed you most during your visits to China?

Goyal: I have visited China many times over the

past 16 years. From 2008 to 2011, I traveled there three times, and from 2015 until June 2024, I made 11 trips to China. What has impressed me the most is the kindness and warmth of every Chinese person I met during my visits. Chinese people are incredibly friendly and hospitable, often inviting me out for lunch and dinner whenever I visit. Another aspect I truly enjoy about China is the food. It is absolutely delightful. I always feel at home in China.

CID: What is the unique role that book-reading plays in today's social life? And what makes books so important for connecting the hearts of Indian and Chinese people?

Goyal: Books play a crucial role in every society. Through reading, we gain knowledge and learn about each other's history and culture. When we present books on Chinese folk culture to Indian students, they discover that Chinese and Indian cultures share many similarities. For instance, China has the Monkey King, while in India, we have Lord Hanuman, who is also depicted as a monkey deity. In India, we celebrate a festival similar to the Qingming Festival in China, during which we honor our ancestors. Just as the Chinese have 24 solar terms, India has 12 Hindu months that correspond to

different seasons. In some parts of southern India, we celebrate a Boat Festival akin to the Dragon Boat Festival in China.

Like China, India is home to many ethnic groups. We also have many ancient saints and sages. Confucius, Laozi, Mencius, and Sun Tzu from China are paralleled by figures like Tulsidas, Kalidas, Valmiki, Ved Vyasa, and Agastya, who remain influential today. In literature, while China boasts works like *Book of Songs*, *Poetry of the South*, *Four Books and Five Classics*, and *The Records of the Grand Historians*, India has its own epics and texts including *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Shakuntala*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Upanishads*, and *Panchatantra*.

Furthermore, just as China has various traditional operas like Beijing Opera and *Kunqu* Opera, India features a rich diversity of dance forms such as Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Kathak, and Manipuri.

At the end of the day, Chinese and Indian cultures are remarkably similar. Both are among the few ancient cultures that continue to not only survive but thrive today, while many other ancient civilizations have long dissolved. 📖

My Spiritual Guru: The Venerable Xuanzang

By Ajay Krishna

Xuanzang was a pioneer of India-China exchange. He acutely represents the Buddhist culture which originated in ancient India and spread across the globe.

Xuanzang (602-664) was not just an ordinary monk, but a rare phenomenon in the Buddhist world. He became an enlightened guru of the Buddhist fraternity in China during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). After some 1,200 years, he became a guiding light for the rediscovery of Buddhist places in India — the motherland of Buddhism.

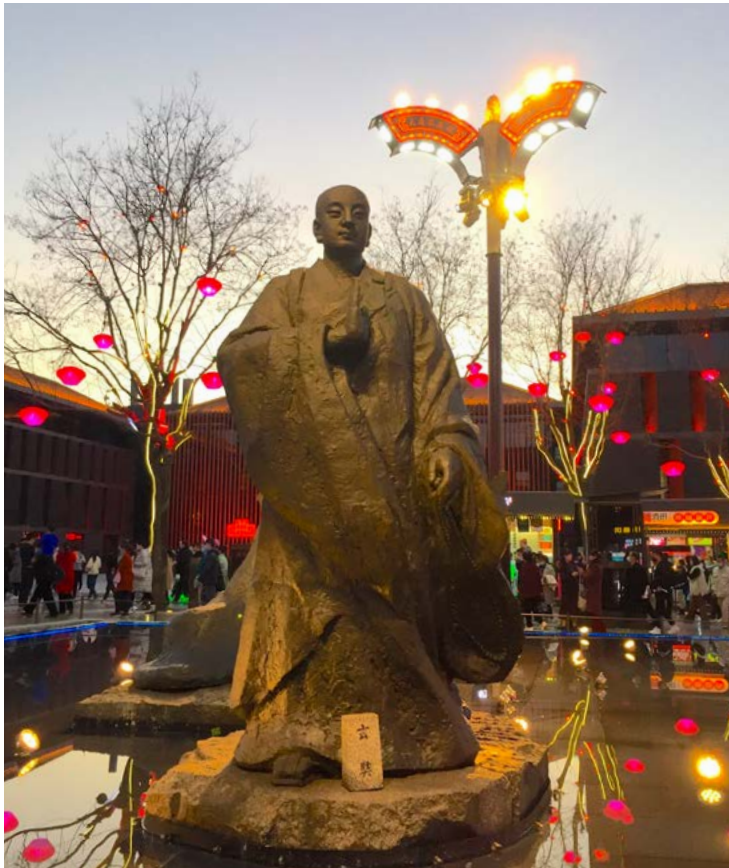
XUANZANG'S SPIRITUAL POWER

The popularity of Xuanzang was more confined to East Asia

and South Asia during and after the Tang Dynasty. But the rediscovery of some sacred Buddhist places in ancient India by British colonial officials, archaeologists and some native Indians kindled global popularity of Xuanzang who eventually became essentially sainted. Now Xuanzang is worshipped by scholars and researchers of history, archaeology, geographical history, Buddhist culture, China-India studies, and other fields.

Xuanzang memorials and temples have emerged across the world but more in China

and India. Xuanzang statues have also popped up in Buddhist holy places. The aura and sacredness of Venerable Xuanzang is such that stories of him are narrated to children. The worship of Xuanzang and his relics is spreading on the same scale as the worship of Bodhisattva including Avalokitesvara, Maitreya, and Samantabhadra. The relics in the Xuanzang Memorial Hall of Nalanda testify to the spiritual connectedness of the two civilizations. Chinese temples in Bodhgaya and Sarnath are living examples of the ever flowing cultural and



A statue of Xuanzang in the Tang Paradise park near the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda in Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province. (Photo courtesy of the author)

spiritual exchanges between India and China.

In the era of globalization, the legacy of eminent Chinese monks such as Faxian and Xuanzang has become a conduit of cultural exchange, Buddhist pedagogy, narrative history, and veneration of tangible and intangible heritage of Buddhism. Imagine if Xuanzang had not given the world his travelogue *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, the rediscovery of the Buddhism of ancient India and the great centres of Buddhist pilgrimage wouldn't have been

possible or would have been delayed. Xuanzang appeared in this mundane world after some 1,000 years of Buddha to spread his teachings further. The spiritual power of Xuanzang was such that after several hundred years of the disappearance from its own motherland, Buddhism reappeared through the medium of Xuanzang's travelogue writings. This wasn't an ordinary phenomenon, but the accumulated dharma and karma of Venerable Xuanzang which had reincarnated in the spiritual sphere of the

Buddhist world.

THE CITY OF ETERNAL PEACE

Xi'an was the city where Xuanzang spread the teachings of the Buddha. Xi'an, known as Chang'an during the Tang Dynasty, literally means eternal peace. Xuanzang brought back some 1,300 fascicles of Buddhist scriptures and translated them with the help of his disciples and royal patronage. The spiritual character of Xuanzang has enhanced the sacred aura of Xi'an and thus lured the followers of Buddhism from across the world.

Such a gigantic endeavour by Venerable Xuanzang culminated in the establishment of Faxiang School of Thought of Chinese Buddhism (Dharmalaksana) and Da Ci'en Temple, Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, Yuhua Palace (initially a summer palace of Emperor Taizong built in 647 and converted into a Buddhist temple in 651 for Xuanzang where he died), and Xingjiao Temple (built in 669 to re-inhume the relics of Venerable Xuanzang in a five-storied Buddhist relic pagoda).

Research on the Xuanzang spirit has seen a constant growth in the field of humanities. More and more researchers and scholars have become devoted to understanding the Xuanzang spirit. Back in 1992, the Xuanzang Research Centre, headed by Professor Huang Xinchuan, was established in China. This initiative brought a large group of Chinese and Indian scholars together,

kindling fresh knowledge about Xuanzang and his works. The centre also organized lots of international academic conferences and published many academic papers.

Continuing the vibrant legacy of the Xuanzang Research Centre, a Xuanzang Research Institute was established at Xi'an-based Northwest University in September 2015 under the headship of professor Li Li'an.

It is generally agreed that these monks brought Buddhist scriptures back to China, but the other side of the story is that while staying in India, they also enriched the wisdom of Indian people by sharing their knowledge on culture, society, people, and governance system of China of the day.

Since 2015, international forums on Xuanzang studies have been organized by the institute, offering a platform for scholars from different countries to research and disseminate the spirit of Xuanzang in modern times. Experts agree that the Xuanzang spirit should be promoted through cultural exchange with the spirit of peace, compassion, love and non-violence. Aligning with such Buddhist spirit, Professor Li said that the Xuanzang Research Institute is committed to promoting dialogues, peace, harmony,

friendship and the well-being of human society with utmost compassion.

I myself have been the beneficiary of the compassion of the institute. Since my college days at the Banaras Hindu University in India and the Northwest University in China, I was taught the Confucian ideas of benevolence, filial piety, respect for gurus and the embrace of diversity. Such

ethos learned from Chinese sages like Confucius and Xuanzang became the guiding light of my life. I was honored to find the opportunity to contribute my limited capacity in organizing international conferences on the Xuanzang spirit and workshops on Xuanzang and Marco Polo at Northwest University and many other cultural and educational exchange activities from 2014 to 2020. I have also collaborated with Professor Li on translating notes by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Daxingshan Temple and Da Ci'en Temple.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE BENEFITS BOTH SIDES

Studies of the cultural exchange between China and India inevitably lead to the names of eminent monks from China who visited India. It is generally agreed that these monks brought Buddhist scriptures back to China, but the other side of the story is that while staying in India, they also enriched the wisdom of Indian people by sharing their knowledge on culture, society, people, and governance system of China of the day. Famous Chinese monks like Faxian, Xuanzang, Yijing, and Taixu all visited India and in some way or another contributed to the knowledge of Indian society while establishing harmonious, peaceful, and friendly connections between the two peoples.

It is mesmerizing to recognize how these spiritual, cultural, and social connections have continued to this day. China has a lot of development experience to share with India. The vast wisdom of China is a treasure trove for Indian people who aspire for development. It is my wish that the wisdom of China can serve as a guiding light for all those who choose the path of development and prosperity. 🇮🇳

—
The author is an Indian freelance writer. He was associated with the Xuanzang Research Institute, Northwest University, in Xi'an, China.

Pathways to Partnership

By Akhil Parashar

Embracing dialogue, cooperation, and a shared vision for peace and prosperity can help navigate the ups and downs of their relationship and steer it towards a more stable and mutually beneficial future.

The relationship between India and China has always been a mix of cooperation, competition, and occasional conflict. Both countries are huge and growing rapidly, which has significantly impacted their interactions regionally and globally. The relationship has experienced ups and downs that continue influencing the dynamics in Asia and beyond. Both nations have been presented ample opportunities to enhance cooperation and understanding that could potentially lead to more

effective collaboration across various domains.

UPS AND DOWNS

India and China, two of the world's oldest civilizations, have shared a multifaceted relationship marked by periods of cooperation and conflict. Over 2,000 years ago, they began engaging in trade and dialogue, with Buddhism from India gaining immense popularity in China. Over time, Buddhism's influence waned in India, and both nations faced hardships in modern history. However, the 20th century

brought renewed friendship, with notable visits by Kang Youwei and Rabindranath Tagore strengthening ties.

In 1950, India became the first non-socialist country to establish official diplomatic relations with China. This historic move propelled Indian cinematic names to stardom in China, enhancing cultural exchange. After so many challenges, the relationship is now flavored by sincerity and maturity, with both nations continuously working hard to maintain good neighborly relations and diplomatic ties.

Indian Prime Minister



Indian primary and secondary school principals visiting China pose for a group photo with faculties and students of Chongqing Tiandi Renhejie Primary School. Their trip to China lasted from September 19 to 27, 2024, in order to promote educational and people-to-people exchange and cooperation between the two countries.

(Photo courtesy of the Chinese Embassy in India)

Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping have held several informal meetings to enhance bilateral relations. In 2015, President Xi welcomed Prime Minister Modi in Xi'an, and in 2019, Prime Minister Modi hosted President Xi in Chennai, in addition to many conversations on the sidelines of international forums. These meetings have symbolized a stabilizing relationship.

Despite tensions that have arisen from territorial issues in the past, both countries have recognized the importance of stable relations and engaged in diplomatic

efforts to address differences and enhance cooperation in trade, regional security, and multilateral forums like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Geopolitical competition and divergent strategic interests continue to shape this dynamic relationship in the modern era.

Historically, India-China relations have been characterized by cultural exchange, trade, and sporadic conflict. Ancient trade routes like the Silk Road facilitated exchange of goods, ideas, and philosophies, fostering

mutual understanding and influence. However, the modern era has shaped a more volatile landscape. President Xi's concept of a global community of shared future and Prime Minister Modi's vision of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family) reflect common objectives striving for the betterment of humanity.

PROSPECTS FOR FRUITFUL RELATIONS

Several factors could shape the trajectory of India-China relations by offering both challenges and



Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong visits Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis Memorial Hall in Solapur, Maharashtra and lays a wreath at the statue of Dr. Kotnis, July 10, 2024. Chinese Consul General in Mumbai Kong Xianhua also attended the event. (Photo courtesy of the Chinese Embassy in India)

opportunities for constructive engagement. Dialogue and diplomacy will be crucial for managing bilateral tensions and resolving outstanding issues. Both nations must explore avenues for enhanced communication and confidence-building measures.

India and China have demonstrated maturity when handling their relationship despite perceptions of discord. Increased bilateral trade underscores the practical cooperation. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, bilateral trade between India and China reached a record US\$118.4 billion and China overtook the U.S. as India's top trading partner.

Beyond trade, collaboration in people-to-people exchange,


health and medicine, and education could significantly improve the lives of people in both nations. Encouraging cultural exchange through art exhibitions, music festivals, and student exchange programs can foster better understanding and friendship.

India and China continue to nurture ancient medical traditions like Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine. Healthcare collaboration can lead to knowledge exchange, joint research, and improved healthcare delivery. Partnerships in pharmaceutical production and distribution can contribute to affordable healthcare solutions.

Both countries can leverage their strengths in education to promote academic

excellence and innovation. Collaborative efforts can enhance the global knowledge economy and prepare the youth to address future challenges. Environmental cooperation is another critical area. As major emerging economies, India and China are responsible for addressing climate change. Collaborative efforts in renewable energy, sustainable development, and environmental conservation can build trust and cooperation.

India and China enjoy countless opportunities for collaboration. Acknowledging similarities, pooling strengths, and overcoming media-driven perceptions can empower them to more deftly tackle global issues like poverty and climate change. Through collaboration, they can redefine their relationship from confrontation to partnership.

As we envision a new world order, India and China are poised to assume leadership. The path to fruitful relations may be challenging, but the potential rewards are significant. Embracing dialogue, cooperation, and a shared vision for peace and prosperity can help navigate the ups and downs of their relationship and steer it towards a more stable and mutually beneficial future in 2024 and beyond. 

The author is a journalist with China Media Group. He has been living and working in Beijing for more than 13 years.



Circular Sino-Indian Cultural Exchange



By B. R. Deepak

The circular exchange between Chinese and Indian civilizations involves mutual flows of ideas, technologies, and commodities, forming a unique cultural ecology.

In the era of rapid globalization, exchange between Chinese and Indian civilizations has become increasingly essential. Cultural communication reflects a legacy of history, and paves the way for future development. The circular exchange between Chinese and Indian civilizations involves mutual flows of ideas, technologies, and commodities, forming a unique cultural ecology. This model enriches the cultures of the two countries and boosts global cultural diversity.

WHAT IS CIRCULAR CULTURAL EXCHANGE?

The circular model of Sino-Indian cultural

exchange was inspired by Professor Ji Xianlin, a renowned Chinese historian. Ji showed how culture flows between different countries, especially emphasizing cultural interactions between and mutual influences on China and India, in line with his research on how Indian folktales spread. Ji's theory works well in historical reviews and offers profound reference for contemporary cultural exchange.

The evolution of Buddhism is a case in point. Beyond direct flows from India to China, its spread involved complex cultural blends and changes. Buddhism was first introduced to Central Asia, where it absorbed the essence of various civilizations, and finally took root in China, developing a



Indian artists perform for the India Day event, held during the Beijing International Horticultural Exhibition in August 2019. (Photo from Xinhua)

unique cultural form. In the process, new classics and characters were created, leading to unprecedented translation activities.

From the Han Dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE) to the Tang Dynasty (618-907), nearly 7,000 Buddhist classics were translated into Chinese after being introduced from India, injecting new vitality into China's knowledge system. Beyond conversion of languages, translation involves the spread of ideas and the blending of cultures. Through translation, Indian knowledge in various fields such as philosophy, astronomy, and medicine was gradually introduced into China, enriching China's cultural wealth. Chinese literature, music, drama and other art forms have also taken root in India, forming a unique cultural landscape. Cultural exchange has also found full expression in Chinese vocabulary, greatly enriching Chinese expressions. Words such as “世界” (world), “方便” (skillful means), “刹那” (moment), and “无常” (impermanence) all originate from Sanskrit. Additionally, many Chinese idioms and sayings, like “对牛弹琴” (casting pearls before swine), “一刀两断” (cutting in two with one stroke of the knife),

and “水中捞月” (catching the moon in the water), have also been influenced by Indian culture. This mutual linguistic blending has further promoted the integration and development of the two cultures.

Generally, the circular cultural exchange between China and India has been two-way interaction. Historically, Chinese papermaking, silk embroidery, and other technologies were introduced to India, facilitating the exchange of ideas and knowledge. This two-way interaction has enabled China and India to learn from each other to seize a shared future.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN THE MODERN ERA

The history of circular Sino-Indian cultural exchange shows that over the past more than two thousand years, the two countries have always maintained exchange momentum with mutual learning and enriched each other's cultures. Even nowadays, benefits from this exchange still exist. The history of cultures was created by mankind, not a specific nation or country. Recognizing universality will be helpful in promoting friendship and mutual understanding among people of all countries.

The 21st century can be dubbed the “Asian century.” In terms of Asian culture, circular Sino-Indian cultural exchange features particular importance in this context. It helps to enhance mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples and provides wisdom and reference to jointly explore a path of sustainable development by solving global issues such as climate change, economic stagnation, and inadequate social governance. 🌐

The author is a professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University in India.



爱护树木 保护树木

关爱地球之肺 净享清新空气

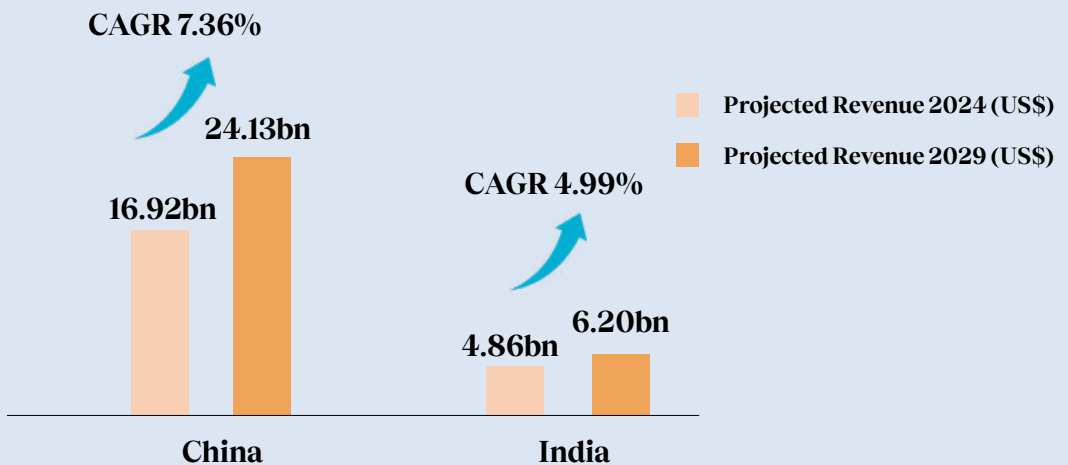
Cinematic Powerhouses: China and India in the Global Film Landscape

Edited by Bian Xiuhong
 Designed by Liu Peiyao

China retained its position as the world's second-largest film market in 2023, showcasing a steady upward trajectory in revenue and audience engagement. Meanwhile, the Indian film industry, renowned for its glitz, vibrancy, and drama, has

earned global repute as one of the largest cinema hubs in the world. The dynamic interplay between these two massive markets not only influences film production and distribution but also fosters cultural exchange and collaboration in the cinematic realm.

Cinema Market Projections for China and India (2024-2029)

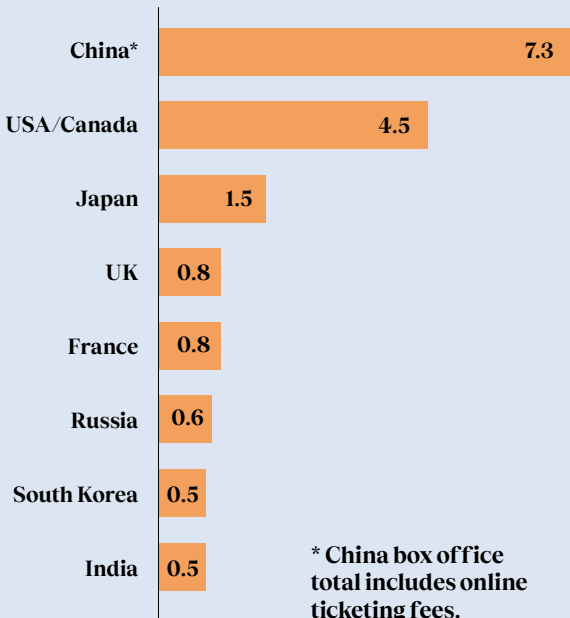


Top Four Highest-Rated Indian Films on Douban (2021-2024)*

2024	<i>Maharaja</i>	8.6	2023	<i>12th Fail</i>	8.2
	<i>Girls Will Be Girls</i>	8.1		<i>Laapataa Ladies</i>	7.7
	<i>All We Imagine as Light</i>	7.7		<i>Vaathi</i>	7.7
	<i>Chandu Champion</i>	7.6		<i>Chor Nikal Ke Bhaaga</i>	7.2
2022	<i>Jana Gana Mana</i>	8.5	2021	<i>Writing With Fire</i>	8.8
	<i>The Elephant Whisperers</i>	8.0		<i>Jai Bhim</i>	8.7
	<i>Badhaai Do</i>	7.9		<i>Maestro</i>	8.0
	<i>Gangubai Kathiawadi</i>	7.8		<i>The Great Indian Kitchen</i>	7.9

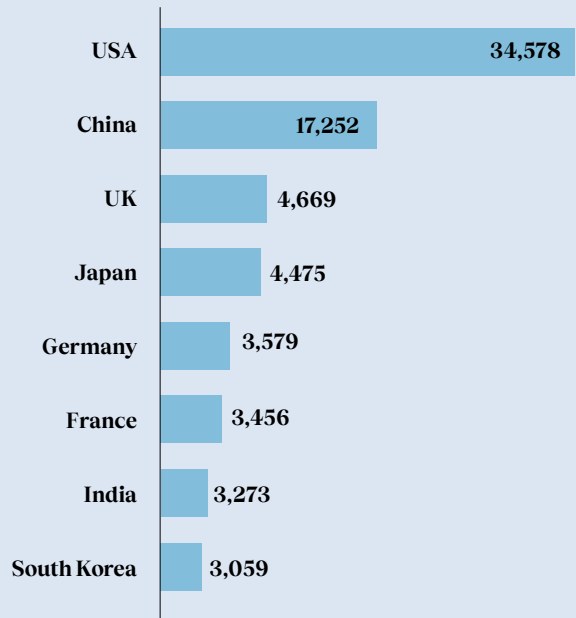
*Rating data as of October 31, 2024.

Leading Box Office Markets Worldwide in 2021, by Revenue (in billion US\$)

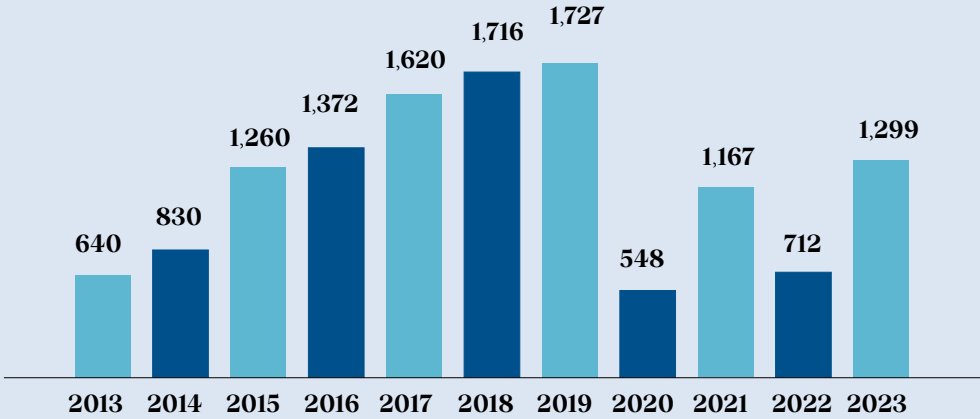


* China box office total includes online ticketing fees.

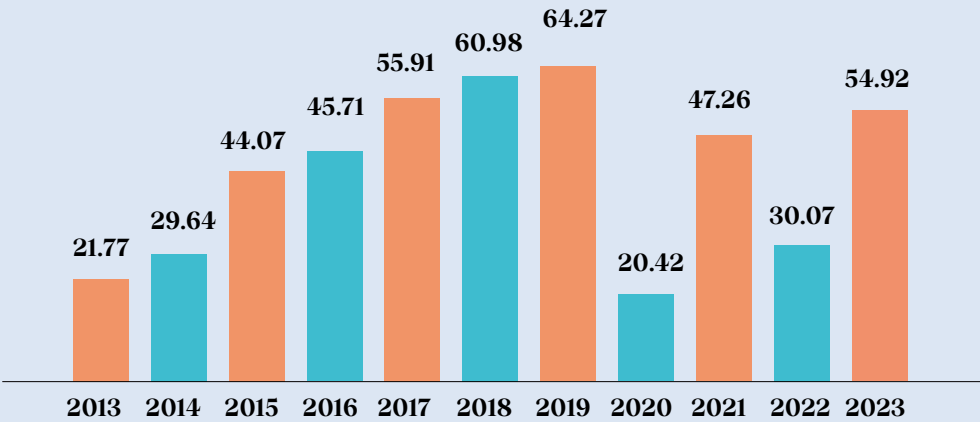
Estimated Filmed Entertainment Revenue in Selected Countries Worldwide in 2026 (in million US\$)



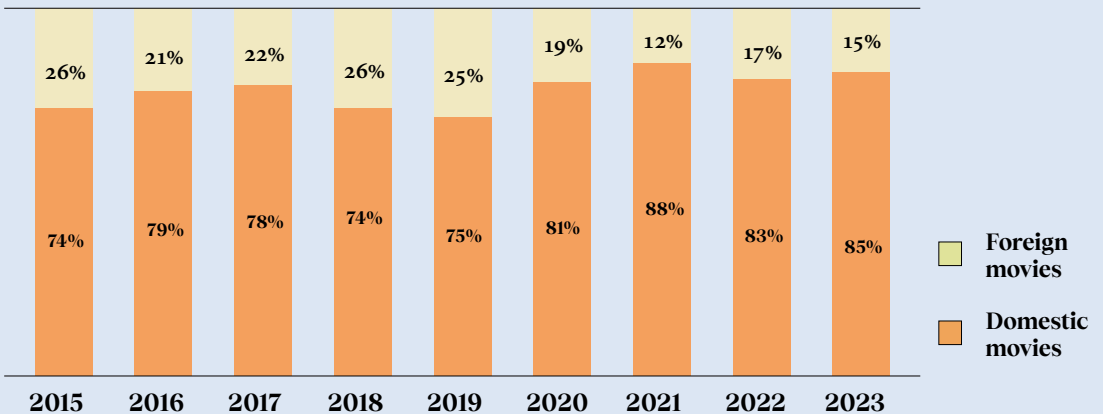
Number of Movie Tickets Sold in China from 2013 to 2023 (in millions)



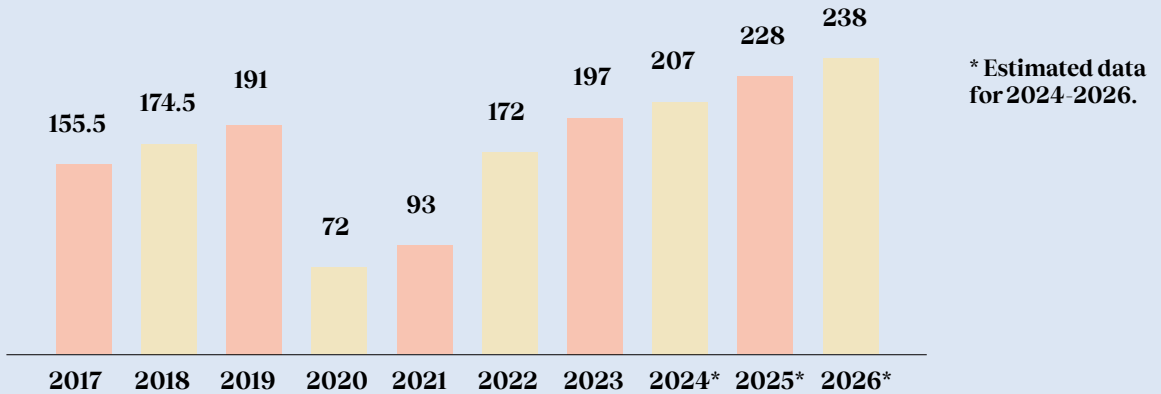
Box Office Revenue in China from 2013 to 2023 (in billion yuan)



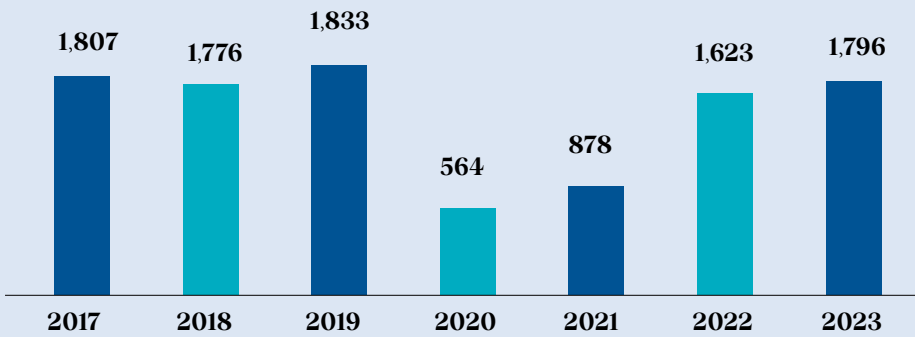
Share of Domestic and Imported Movies in China's Cinema Market from 2015 to 2023 (based on movie number)



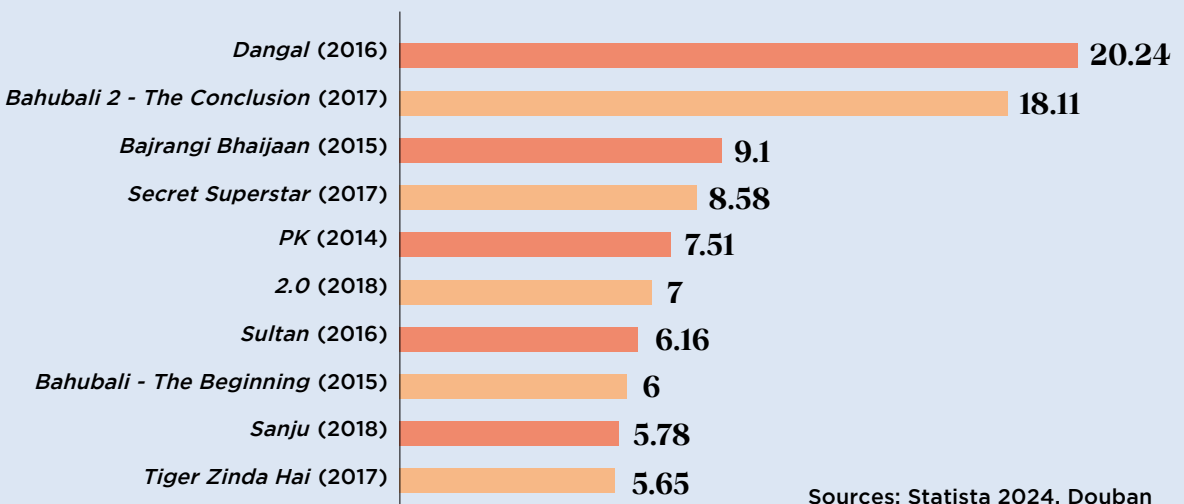
Market Size of the Film Industry across India from Financial Year 2017 to 2026 (in billion Indian rupees)



Number of New Film Releases in India from 2017 to 2023



All Time Box Office Revenue of the Highest Grossing Bollywood Movies Worldwide as of March 2024 (in billion Indian rupees)



Sources: Statista 2024, Douban

Decoding China's Unique Charm

Concept by *China-India Dialogue*

“Bolong,” Hainan!

Darshana Dewashi

Occupation: Scholarship student at
Beijing Language and Culture University

Birth place: West Bengal, India

Current residence: Beijing, China



I recently participated in an 11-day program organized by Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU) in China's southern Hainan Province, where I experienced an unforgettable cultural journey.

The scenery in Hainan captivated me upon my arrival. The warm sunshine there reminded me of my hometown. At Lingshui Li'an International Education Innovation Experimental Zone, the shimmering sea offset lush green mountains on the other side. Looking up, I saw the clear and blue sky, and all around me was vibrant greenery with the fresh scent of nature. From the morning sunrise to the starry night, every moment felt like a

dream.

During the trip, I visited many tourist attractions. At the permanent venue of the Boao Forum for Asia, I experienced the solemn atmosphere of the international conference. In a tropical botanical garden, the variety of plant species amazed me with nature's diversity. While cruising the Yudai Beach area, the sea breeze greeted me, and the magnificent scenery stirred my emotions — this was the South China Sea I had read about and imagined countless times, now vividly in front of my eyes.

Hainan Binglanggu Li and Miao Cultural Heritage Park left a particularly deep impression on me. A young

lady named Xuan from the Li ethnic group recounted their history and explained their culture to us. Her Mandarin was fluent and she was so sincere and warm. She showed us how to say “hello” in the Li language, which is “bolong.” Such interaction brought us closer. In a village boasting intangible cultural heritage, I tasted the fragrant local tea and experienced the Li ethnic group’s traditional culture, especially from an elderly lady who was popular online. She showcased the traditional music of the Li people through her enchanting singing. I also took a photo with another elderly lady in her nineties, who demonstrated her exceptional weaving skills, a craft passed down through generations. I greatly admired her. Every moment spent in Binglanggu



■ A bird’s-eye view of the International Convention Center, the permanent venue of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA), Hainan Province. Over the past two decades-plus, Boao, covering only an area of 86 square kilometers, has grown into a modern tourism destination. (Photo by Xu Xun/China Pictorial)

Central Plains. On Qilou Old Street in Haikou City, I felt as if I had traveled through history, witnessing the architectural art that has withstood the test of time. The Nanshan Cultural Tourism

and Luhuitou Park. The breathtaking views from Luhuitou Park were truly stunning.

For me, this program was not a trip, but rather a journey of personal growth. The rich tropical fruits of Hainan delighted my palate, leaving a deep impression on my taste buds, while the local seafood was incredibly fresh and delicious. I also tried many new foods. Although I wasn’t fond of coconut chicken, I unexpectedly fell in love with white clams.

While traveling in Hainan, I occasionally encountered locals speaking dialects. Our communication wasn’t that smooth at times. However, their hospitality made me feel welcome, such as when they enthusiastically complimented my eyes. Sometimes, their enthusiasm caught me off guard as some people would start taking photos of me

This journey not only deepened my understanding of the diversity of Chinese culture but also sparked my interest in exploring more places across China. Hainan allowed me to experience a completely different charm, and every moment there is already deeply etched in my memory.

allowed me to feel the cultural warmth, making it one of my favorite places in Hainan.

Hainan integrates the cultures of the local Li and Miao ethnic groups, and retains traces of cultures of Southeast Asia and China’s

Zone showcased Hainan’s profound Buddhist heritage, providing a sense of spiritual peace and enlightenment. In Sanya, known as Honolulu of the East, I visited scenic spots such as Tianya Haijiao, Fenjiezhou Island,

without asking for permission, which I felt a bit uncomfortable. It dawned on me that cultural differences necessitate better communication between people.

In Hainan, I met Bie Hongying, a BLCU teacher who is currently working at the Hainan campus. We shared our life experiences, and when she learned that I had completed my master's degree in India, she was pleasantly surprised and offered me valuable advice on further studies. She also explained the employment situation for foreigners in Hainan. I also met an Indian junior, Namrata Mehra, who graduated high school this year and is now studying in the foundation program on the BLCU Hainan campus. She planned to pursue her undergraduate degree in Beijing next year. We happily exchanged our experiences of living in Beijing and Hainan.

In Hainan, I was surprised to find how little some people knew about India. Some even confused it with Indonesia! However, when someone mentioned that India's Prime Minister was Narendra Modi, I felt a sense of relief, realizing that at least some people do know something about India.

This journey not only deepened my understanding of the diversity of Chinese culture but also sparked my interest in exploring more places across China. Hainan allowed me to experience a completely different charm, and every moment there is already deeply etched in my memory. One day in the future, I will surely return to this land to continue writing my own Hainan story.

A Journey of Dreams and Discoveries in Beijing

Arja Dutta

Occupation: Scholarship student at Beijing Language and Culture University

Birth place: West Bengal, India

Current residence: Beijing, China



The plane finally landed in my dream city, Beijing – the capital of China and a city rich in culture, history, and vibrancy. Ever since I embarked on my journey to learn Chinese, the idea of wandering the bustling streets of Beijing had become my cherished dream.

Stepping off the plane and breathing in the air of this magnificent city was an exhilarating experience. I remembered the first sensation that washed over me as I plunged into the vibrant atmosphere: a mix of excitement, curiosity, and a hint of trepidation. As I navigated the airport, I felt an undeniable sense of anticipation for all the adventures that awaited.

Beijing, with its blend of the ancient and the modern, held the promise of countless discoveries.

In my initial days in the city, I began to uncover the true meaning of life. Every time I ventured outside, I encountered so many unknown things that left me in awe. Wandering the streets, I marveled at the blending of cultures – traditional Chinese architecture coexisting with modern skyscrapers, street vendors selling delicious food alongside quaint teahouses, and serene parks nestled amid the urban hustle and bustle. These experiences reminded me how rich and diverse life can be, especially when viewed through a new lens.

One of the most heartwarming aspects of my time in Beijing was the way that local people accepted me. From the moment I arrived, I was greeted with smiles and pleasant words about my home country, India. It filled me with joy to hear compliments and encouragement, bridging the gap between our cultures. I found comfort in the universal warmth of human connection, which transcended borders and languages.

A turning point in this journey arrived when Ms. Wei Liming appeared like an angel in my life. The teacher played a pivotal role in making my dream more tangible. With her guidance, I was given a platform to showcase the vibrant

culture of Santiniketan. This opportunity allowed me to share my heritage and enriched my experience in Beijing. Wei's passion for education and culture was infectious, inspiring me to embrace every moment fully and learn as much as possible during my stay.

One highlight of my explorations was a visit to Peking University, one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in China. I was struck by the beauty and history surrounding me as I strolled across campus. The history I had read in textbooks suddenly felt incredibly realistic and close to my heart. The old buildings, each with its own unique architectural charm, told stories of times long past. A serene lake fenced by weeping willows and tree-lined lanes created a tranquil atmosphere, while a pagoda served as a stunning

From the traditional architecture that lines the *hutongs* to the modernity of new buildings, every corner has a story to tell. These roads may not resemble those in my country, but the warmth among the people is strikingly similar.

centerpiece, adding to the charm of the campus. "How could a university be so soothing and pleasant?" I found myself wondering. It was a space where



A coffee house runner and his student practicing Peking Opera skills outside his Peking Opera-themed café located in Zhuzhong *Hutong* in Beijing. The city's narrow alleys, known as *hutongs*, preserve vibrant traditional Chinese cultural elements. (Photo by Dong Fang/*China Pictorial*)

knowledge flourished and history felt alive, enriching my understanding and appreciation for the cultures

senses. From the moment I arrived, I could feel the creative art, the philosophy and practice of Chinese landscape garden design. It was as though the walls held secrets and stories, whispering tales of the past that resonated with anyone willing to listen. Exploring its vast grounds, I felt an emotional connection to the history contained within each corner.

As I wandered through the Summer Palace, the architecture took my breath away. Crafted during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), this grand complex perched on Longevity Hill commands a spectacular view of Kunming Lake. I often wondered how people could have constructed such an

woven into its fabric.

My love for history propelled me toward the Summer Palace — a UNESCO World Heritage Site that captivated my

enormous palace so long ago with limited resources. The sheer scale of the Summer Palace was astounding. Each pavilion, bridge, and pathway exuded elegance that spoke to the grandeur of a bygone era, intricately linked to the lives of the emperors who once spent time there.

The vibrant *hutongs* (alleyways) in Beijing were a constant source of inspiration and wonder. To me, every day felt like a holiday as I roamed the lively markets and food stalls. I was enchanted by the energy of the streets, where vendors sold an array of tantalizing treats including *tanghulu* — candied fruits on skewers that sparkled like jewels in the sunlight. The delightful aromas of street food wafted through the air, mesmerizing my senses and drawing me in.

The lanes of Beijing serve as a vibrant tapestry of culture and history, interwoven with the daily lives of its people. From the traditional architecture that lines the *hutongs* to the modernity of new buildings, every corner has a story to tell. These roads may not resemble those in my country, but the warmth among the people is strikingly similar.

Each day in Beijing is a learning experience, offering lessons that no one else can impart. I am already living my dream in a fulfilling way and have a strong belief that Beijing holds even more surprises for me.

Shenyang: A City of Heritage and Innovation

Rahul Yadav

Occupation: Undergraduate student at Shenyang Normal University

Birth place: Rajasthan, India

Current residence: Shenyang, Liaoning, China



Shenyang is the capital city of Liaoning Province in northeastern China. With a rich history, it was an important city in many periods of Chinese history. Today, the city is known as a cultural and economic center, offering visitors a glimpse into both its ancient past and modern development. It is not only the largest city in Liaoning, but also a crucial transportation hub connecting northeastern China with other major cities in the country.

One of the main reasons Shenyang is famous is its historical sites. The city

played a significant role in many dynasties. One of the most famous sites is the Shenyang Imperial Palace, also known as the Mukden Palace. Built in the early 17th century, it served as the palace for the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) rulers before the imperial family moved to Beijing. The Shenyang Imperial Palace is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offering a unique glimpse into the life and architecture of ancient China. Visitors can explore the palace's courtyards, rooms, and beautifully decorated halls that showcase the culture and craftsmanship of the time.

Alongside its rich history, Shenyang is known for strong economic growth. The city has a long-standing reputation as an industrial powerhouse, especially known for its machinery and automotive industries. Since the early 20th century, Shenyang has been one of China's most important manufacturing cities, producing everything from heavy machinery to transportation equipment. As the city developed, it attracted high-caliber workforce and businesses from all over China, further boosting its economy.

In recent years, Shenyang has also begun expanding into technology and innovation. New companies and tech parks are springing up, particularly in fields such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology,

and information technology, turning the city into a hub for research and development. The local government's modernization drive has produced impressive results, encouraging businesses to focus on advanced technologies such as smart manufacturing and renewable energy. This shift is making Shenyang more attractive to young professionals and students looking for opportunities in the tech industry, reshaping the city into a vibrant center of innovation.

Shenyang has truly become one of my favorite places. The historical sites like the Shenyang Imperial Palace and Zhaoqing Mausoleum are incredible. They make me feel connected to China's past in an indescribable way. While standing in these places, I can sense the stories and traditions that have been

Alongside its rich history, Shenyang is known for strong economic growth. The city has a long-standing reputation as an industrial powerhouse, especially known for its machinery and automotive industries.

preserved over centuries. Every time I explore them, I find something new to appreciate.

But I might love Shenyang's food the



A night view of the Changqing Bridge in Shenyang City, China's northeastern Liaoning Province. (Photo from Unsplash)

most. From dumplings to hotpots and delicious street snacks, Shenyang offers a flavor experience that's hard to beat. Chinese dumplings, or *jiaozi*, are not

just a meal but a symbol of family gatherings and celebrations. Often filled with pork, cabbage, or shrimp, dumplings represent wealth and prosperity. Hotpot,

on the other hand, is a communal dining experience in which friends and family gather around a bubbling pot of broth to cook various ingredients together. This social aspect of dining fosters connections and creates lasting memories, making food an integral part of local culture.

But what makes Shenyang most special to me is its people. Even though I'm an international student, the locals have been so supportive and welcoming. Despite language barriers, people go out of their way to help, whether giving directions, recommending places to visit, or just sharing a smile. This kindness makes Shenyang a home away from home. 🇨🇳

Her Cup of Tea

By Maitri Sharma

Sharing a pot of tea with friends or family creates a sense of intimacy and a shared experience.

“**W**atching those little curled-up leaves open up in the hot water is like magic,” Hana smiled. “The moment that beautiful aroma hits me, it’s like I’m being whisked away to a peaceful place, right in the heart of the Chinese tea tradition.”

When Czech native Hana Stankova first arrived in Beijing during the 2008 Summer Olympics, her feelings about China were worlds away. The stark contrast between her familiar world and the bustling metropolis initially overwhelmed her. She felt totally lost and alone in the

huge, noisy city. Tea? Ugh, just another drink for her. But she had no idea about the tradition lurking beneath the surface. Beijing was about to teach Hana a whole new way of life, and she had no clue.

FROM TEA BAGS TO TEA CEREMONY

Hana’s life took an unexpected turn when she met Lin Lili, a local with a heart of gold. Their friendship blossomed, and soon Hana found herself being pulled into the magical world of Chinese tea. “I was accustomed to the quick and easy tea bags of Europe,” Hana recalled. “The idea of an elaborate tea ceremony

was completely foreign to me.”

Yet, curiosity propelled her into Lin’s world. In the serene ambiance of Lin’s teahouse, Hana witnessed a transformation. As Lin meticulously prepared the tea, a symphony of aromas and flavors unfolded. “It was like nothing I’d ever experienced,” Hana exclaimed. “The depth of flavor, the delicate balance — it was a revelation.”

Hana and Lin became tea buddies and started meeting every weekend to try new tea varieties and chat. “Chinese tea sessions have become incredibly soothing for me,” said Hana. “Tea time lets me set aside all my worries and

stress, giving me a much-needed escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life. It's like hitting the pause button on life. Brewing tea calms me down and clears my head."

As weeks turned into months, Hana delved deeper into the world of Chinese tea. She learned about the different varieties including green tea, black tea, white tea, oolong, pu'er, and Chinese herbal tea. Each type had unique characteristics and brewing methods. Hana discovered the subtle nuances in the flavor, health benefits, and historical significance of each.

TEA AS A LANGUAGE OF CONNECTION

Hana's knowledge of tea grew, as did her understanding of Chinese culture. Beyond the delicious taste, Hana understood the profound philosophy embedded in this ancient tradition. "Tea is more than just a drink," she explained, her eyes sparkling with insight. "It's a journey, a meditation, a connection to something much larger than oneself."

Chinese philosophy often emphasizes harmony, balance, and the interconnectedness of all things. Hana found these principles mirrored in the tea ceremony. "I never realized how important tea is here," Hana said. "It's like a language Chinese people use to connect and show what



Hana is so fascinated by Chinese tea ceremony that she plans to host it for her friends at home. (Photo courtesy of Hana Stankova)

they care about. Who knew something as simple as tea could be so deep?" Tea, she discovered, is also a powerful tool for connections. Sharing a pot of tea with friends or family creates a sense of intimacy and a shared experience. It is a language without words, a universal bond that transcends cultural differences.

Hana's passion for tea ignited a desire to share the cultural treasure with her friends and family back home. She first envisioned cozy gatherings filled with laughter and the warmth of shared tea experiences. However, she soon realized that it would be a challenge to transplant the rich cultural context of Chinese tea to a different environment. But Hana is optimistic that the calming and communal nature of the tea ceremony will resonate with them.

She believes that, just like in China, tea can bring people together to create cherished memories and foster a sense of peace and well-being. "I can't wait to share amazing tea culture with my family back home," exclaimed Hana. "I'm bringing back a whole tea set-up, complete with those beautiful Chinese teapots and everything for a proper ceremony. They're going to love it."

Tea completely changed Hana's life. "I used to rush through life, but now I know how to slow down and enjoy the little things," Hana laughed. "I'm obsessed with Chinese tea ceremony. Who knew a simple cup could lead to such a crazy adventure?"

Fog and Enlightenment

By Zhang Wenjuan

These carefully-selected experiences are intended to present my seven-year journey in India featuring curiosity, confusion, and how to seek ways out and outline the overall operation and governance in India as completely as possible.



Fog and Enlightenment
(Experience India)

By Zhang Wenjuan
The Contemporary World Press
November 2023

An unexpected job opportunity led my family to an incredible journey to India.

Many people asked me out of curiosity the reason for the journey. “As far as I know, Wenjuan is the first full-time Chinese teacher hired by an Indian university to lecture in a non-Chinese language.” Chockalingam Raj Kumar, the founding vice-chancellor of O.P. Jindal Global University, would always introduce me this way. I also felt a little puzzled over how I had gotten increasingly familiar with India and what had

bonded me so deeply with the country. The book, a process of self-exploration, is intended to inspire more people to understand India and life, and reflect upon multiculturalism.

While studying at Columbia Law School, I received a job offer from the O.P. Jindal Global University in India. I originally planned to spend only two or three years getting familiar with this neighboring country and then return to China after satisfying my curiosity. However, after staying in India for less than half a year, I realized that the plan was simply naive. What is India? How can familiarity

with the country be gauged? And how can India be truly understood? I felt nothing but confused. In the first two years of my stay in India, I felt discouraged by a premonition that I would remain mired in India, much like the blind men touching an elephant in a Chinese parable, who gained only a partial understanding by feeling just one part of the elephant and failed to grasp the whole picture. Fortunately, I didn't give it up thanks to strong curiosity.

Gradually, I discovered that China and India share far more connections than I had imagined. After living in India for some time, I was invited to join several WeChat groups of overseas Chinese in India including investors, students, women who married into local families, or tourists. From time to time, we had online and offline discussions on India-related topics. Although the Chinese community in India is not as large as those in the United States, South Korea, Japan and other countries, Chinese people have diverse reasons for living in India. Due to their small presence and the volatile local environment, overseas Chinese in India share closer attachments to each other.

From my interactions with local overseas Chinese from all walks of life, I realized that the biggest exchange obstacle between China and India was a severe gap in knowledge and information. On Buddhism, people unfamiliar with Indian history might simply assume that Buddhism originates

from India because Chinese Buddhist monk Xuanzang set out to India to retrieve the Buddhist scriptures, as related in *Journey to the West*. This was what I assumed before joining the local university. Anyone who has visited India can develop some in-depth knowledge of the country. We can refer to them as “beginners.” These “beginners” would explain to the aforementioned unfamiliar group: “Actually, in India, most people are Hindus while very few people believe in Buddhism.” After residing in India for a long time, “junior experts on India” can be occasionally met. They have the ability to detail the similarities and differences between Buddhism and Hinduism, providing a basic analysis. In the case of India's caste system, those unfamiliar with Indian history commonly believe that castes in India are divided into four categories. Some of them even assume that castes are related to skin color. A “beginner” may note that more than four castes exist in India, and people's surnames can indicate certain types. For “junior experts on India,” they have the knowledge of how India's caste system came into being, what institutional arrangements the Constituent Assembly of India has made to correct caste discrimination, and how the caste system is reflected in the life of modern Indians. When interacting with relatives and friends, I found most are unfamiliar with India. Even after having lived in India and specialized

in Indian studies for more than seven years, I can at best be described as a “junior expert on India.”

Many reasons cause the Chinese unfamiliarity with India. For example, exchange between the two countries is not close enough. China does not pay enough attention to Indian studies, its limited academic achievements are marginalized, and public impressions of India are left distorted due to self-media. To attract more publicity, some on social media often exaggerate one or two of the most eye-grabbing topics, either positively or negatively, while a real and complex India remains hidden. In India, public awareness of China is roughly at the same level. Chinese and Indian people understand each other, the largest neighbors, while being “fooled” every day by amateur information that doesn't hold water. The trend will exert an adverse impact on strategic interactions between the two countries in the long run.

Realizing that India was complex and full of contradictions, finding a way to efficiently understand this country within a limited time became my central goal. In my third year, I summarized how to study India from the scratch. Considering that India boasts both ancient religious culture and a modern liberal democratic political system, both sides require due attention. More importantly, one has to understand how the two sides interact before acquiring basic

knowledge on how the Indian society works.

This book aims to conduct an engaging and systematic analysis of common life phenomena in India with layman language and from a relatively rigorous academic perspective. Thirty stories, representing thirty types of bumpy life and work experiences, are included to outline my impression of India. I will start with my incredible induction and then share my observations on argumentative Indian students and Indian elites who embrace multiculturalism. I will also elaborate on how stray dogs on campus have become the biggest headache of the university president and share local experiences such as choosing schools for my kids, seeing a doctor, and the impact of India's family planning on me. I will also share my feelings when observing Indian culture such as vegetarianism, meditation, the concept of time being cyclical, "reciprocity," and "non-rejection." I will also analyze issues such as the caste system, judicial independence, and women's protection, drawing insights from major events in India, including the Jat riots, the tussle over Chief Justice appointment, and anti-sexual harassment movements.

These carefully-selected experiences are intended to present my seven-year journey in India featuring curiosity, confusion, and how to seek ways out and outline the overall operation and governance in India

as completely as possible. Beyond boosting knowledge of India, however, this book aims to arouse interest in "difference," inspire imagination about diversity, and encourage reflections on stereotypes largely ignored. Personally, I have been impressed by and benefited considerably from India's complex contradictions and rich diversity.

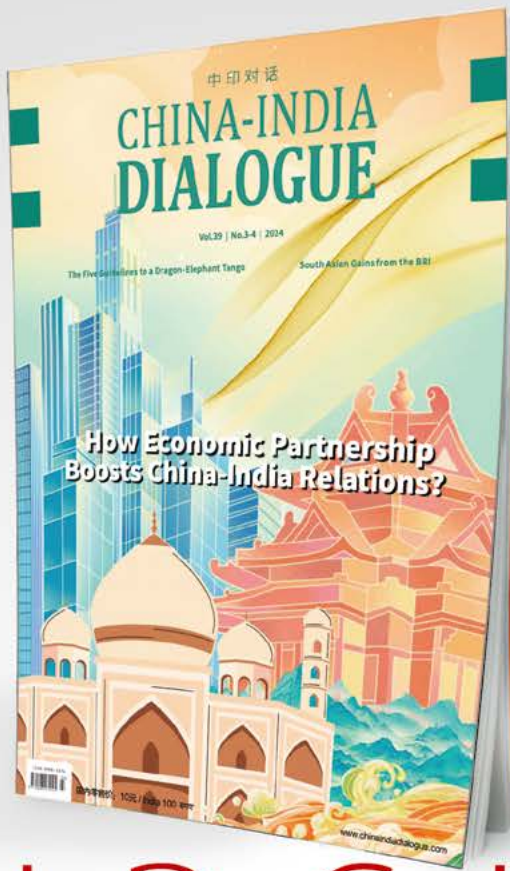
Specifically, I started to reflect on many issues that had been ignored or not taken seriously. For example, since Indian culture is inward-seeking by nature, its modernization features many elements, especially the unremitting pursuit of spirit. Hence I ask myself from time to time "what is the relationship between people's spiritual needs and material pursuits?" In another case, Indians take strikingly different attitudes towards other living beings. For instance, children do not harm animals at will, wild animals can be spotted everywhere, and vegetarianism is prevalent. How should people treat other living beings? I reflect on it occasionally.

There is much comparison between the Chinese government and its Indian counterpart. Traveling between China and India allows me to constantly experience different operating logics in government and reflect upon the criteria for evaluating the operation of state power. Is it based on how the government is restricted from doing harm or how it is

empowered to do good deeds? In another case, after arriving in India, I discovered that diversity is rooted in India's cultural genes. "Difference" is the basis of daily life there while "sameness" is an exception. Therefore I think now and then, "What are the cognitive advantages and disadvantages of Indian citizens when brought up in such a diverse environment? What are the opportunities and challenges it presents for national governance?"

This book hopes to deliver enlightenment. If it inspires you to unconsciously discover a new perspective or think of a topic that never popped into your mind before and find an impulse to explore it, I will be satisfied. If it doesn't bring you total enlightenment, don't be disappointed since my poor methods of expression are to blame. People around you may feel more inspired than you after reading the book, but don't be upset since enlightenment awaits opportunities. Strong preconceptions, curiosity blunted over the time, and negative emotions caused by major life challenges can all slow the process. However, enlightenment occurs in many formats. As long as there is awareness, change has already begun. ☞

The author is a professor and associate dean for international collaborations at the Jindal Global Law School in India. This article is excerpted from the preface of her book *Fog and Enlightenment (Experience India)*.



CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

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