

INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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Voice of Research

Volume 7, Issue 3

December 2018

ISSN 2277-7733

Abstract

India and China are naturally a pair of sister countries. Their similarities and their association are great, numerous and intimate with every aspect and from every standard of observation and judgment. Looking over the geography and history of all the nations in the world, it is observed that there are no other two nations that can be compared to these two countries. The two countries, both situated in the bright and glorious continent of Asia; India to the south-west and China to the north-east, spread out lordly in different direction but yet are linked up at the main line, just like the two wheels of the carriage or the wings of a bird, and the two hands and feet or the two ears and eyes of a person. More than 2,000 years ago, the southern silk road from Yunnan became the link of trade, culture exchanges between China and South and Southeast Asian countries. Yunnan has historically shared a border with India for a long time. The state in the western part of Yunnan was connected with the ancient state of India which still adds to the better relationship of the two countries. With this background the article stress on the similarity of the two countries and highlights the avenues yet to be achieved by the counties.

Keywords: *emerging trends, India, China, India and China, developing countries*

The history of the exchanges of Yunnan-India goes back to more than 2,000 years, which makes it a major channel connecting the two thematic cultures and the mainstream economy of China and India. Yunnan has played a significant role in promoting the development of Yunnan's economy, science, technology and culture, thus making Yunnan to become the first important region in China for direct Sino-India exchange. In ancient times, through this channel, the communication between China and India was realized in the aspects of rice planting culture, building technology, smelting technology, tea cultivation, silkworm cultivation, astronomical and calendar measurement. In the modern times, this channel has become active again, forming a trading circle of Yunnan, Burma, India and Tibet, where commodities such as Yunnan's tea, medicine, gold, silver and India's cotton and cloth were circulated. In recent years, under the framework of India-China strategic and cooperative partnership which has been driven by cooperation mechanisms such as BCIM regional economic cooperation forum, the relations between India and Yunnan have witnessed substantial development. The two sides have increasingly frequent interactions, which has strengthened contact and cooperation in the areas of economy & trade, culture, education and tourism. Yunnan and the eastern areas of India, including west Bengal, developed their relations from neighbor to partner, and now are good friends.

What is special and similar between the two countries?

Speaking about similarities between China and India, what first comes to the thought is population. Both China and India are the most populous countries in the world. Their combined population is about 2.3 billion, accounting for two-fifths of humanity. Coincidentally, the development of ancient philosophical thinking in both China and India was thriving in the 6th century B.C. Almost at the same time, Confucius founded Confucianism in China and Siddhartha Gautama established Buddhism in India. It is again a historical coincidence that around the 3rd century B.C., after years of wars, the first united dynasty was established by Qin Shihuang, the First Emperor of China, as was in the sub-continent, by Mauryan Emperors. China and India are great civilizations and historically both were the centers of the related civilization circles in Asia. In Northeast Asia and some Southeast Asian countries, the historical influence of Chinese culture could be easily

detected. Similarly, Indian culture could be traced in many South and Southeast Asian countries, even as far as in Indonesia. Such cultural influences reveal the great contribution made by China and India to the world. In their long history, both China and India were frequently invaded by alien tribes but despite repeated foreign cultural onslaught, the backbone of the two ancient cultures, namely Confucianism in China and Hinduism in India, vigorously sustained. The vitality and continuity of both Chinese and Indian civilizations are exceptional in the world.

In modern times, both countries lagged behind the West in economic and social development and suffered tremendously from the invasion of Western powers. Coincidentally, once again almost at the same time, China and India were reborn. In 1949, after the liberation war, new China was established, while in 1947, India won its independence. Afterwards, although different in political system, China and India took similar paths of planned economy but both found it difficult to achieve their goals. Today, the similarities between China and India have become even more striking. Both countries have been pursuing policies of reform and opening-up, and both are now the fastest growing economies in the world, drawing great universal attention. Indeed, development of China and India over the next decades will have great impact on the whole world.

Buddhism as a common link and bonding between India and China

Like democracy, most people in the world believe that China has no religion and gods and thus no belief in religion, gods, reincarnation etc. But the fact is different. Many Chinese people are pure vegetarian and have strong belief in Buddhism. Buddhism, which originated from India, has greatly enriched Chinese culture. Between China and India there lie the greatest mountain ranges of the world, insurmountable obstructions in ancient times. Inspired by Buddhism, dedicated monks of the two countries overcame all conceivable perils and hardships and succeeded in linking the two civilizations for one thousand years since the time of Christ. After its introduction in China, Buddhism was embraced and localized, becoming an integrated part of Chinese civilization. The great value of Buddhism in Chinese civilization can never be overemphasized. Before Buddhism spread in China, there were indigenous



Confucianism and Taoism in that land. However, Confucianism could not be regarded as a religion in its true sense, and the influence of Taoism was rather limited. The introduction of Buddhism enabled common people in China with a new religious faith and the ideas of Karma and Reincarnation enriched Chinese people's spiritual life and spiritualism in China. Buddhism ushered in a profound and pervasive revolution in Chinese culture. A series of new philosophical concepts for understanding of the universe and individual soul were brought into China by Buddhism. Today few Chinese people are aware of the fact that actually many words in the Chinese vocabulary originated from the translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese more than one thousand years ago.

In ancient times, the Chinese had no knowledge of phonology. It was through the translation of Buddhist scriptures and under the influence of ancient Sanskrit phonology, that the Chinese phonetic notation and Chinese phonology were created. This, in turn, pushed forward the development of *lvshi*, one form of Chinese poetry which has a strict tonal pattern and rhyme scheme. China's early literature was restricted to realism. It is because of Buddhism that the power of imagination of Chinese literature became invigorated. Since Tang Dynasty, from the 7th century A.D., romanticism became more popular in Chinese literature. *Journey to the West*, a novel well-known to every household in China, is a good example. It is about the pilgrimage of Xuanzang, a learned monk in Tang Dynasty, who travelled from China to India to study Buddhism. The most popular figure in the novel, *Monkey King*, is believed to be based on Hanuman, the revered figure of Indian mythology.

In ancient China, the art of stone-carving was underdeveloped. The spring-up religious caves and stone sculptures in China were a direct result of the spread of Buddhist culture. Additionally, Buddhism has exerted a profound influence on Chinese painting, music and dance. Apart from that, the development of ancient printing in China is also closely related to the spread of Buddhism, which was driven by the increasing demand for Buddhist figures and scriptures.

During the mutual exchanges between the two civilizations in the past, although certain Chinese technologies and inventions contributed to Indian civilization, in general, especially in spiritual terms, it was mainly China that learned from India. In one thousand years or so, India was China's teacher. Chinese people will never forget that. Today, the Chinese people's admiration of Indian culture remains undiminished as it was in the past. In the year 2000, to commemorate the 140th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, *The Complete Works of Tagore* was published in 24 volumes in China. As far as I know, Chinese is the language which has done the most for Tagore's publications, second only to Indian languages and English.

An Overview of India-China Relations during 2014-2017

The past year saw generally steady progress in the bilateral relations, frequent high-level interactions, more pragmatic business cooperation and enhanced cultural and people-to-people exchanges. However, the complexity of the relationship was highlighted. Against the backdrop of major changes in international landscape and profound adjustment of the international system, China-India

relations are at a new historical starting point. Thanks to the joint efforts, the two governments worked to comprehensively implement the strategic agreement between their leaders, enrich the strategic partnership, and promote bilateral relations.

1. Close Bilateral Interactions: During the State Visit of Chinese President Mr. Xi Jinping to India from 17 to 19 September 2014, a total of 16 agreements were signed in various sectors including, commerce & trade, railways, space -cooperation, pharmaceuticals, audio-visual co-production, culture, establishment of industrial parks, sister-city arrangements etc. The Chinese side agreed to establish two Chinese Industrial Parks in India and expressed their intention to enhance Chinese investment in India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China from May 14-16, 2015. Besides meeting with the Chinese leadership, Prime Minister Modi and Premier Li also addressed the opening session of the First State/Provincial Leaders' Forum in Beijing. There were 24 agreements signed on the government-to-government side, 26 MoUs on the business-to-business side and two joint statements, including one on climate change. Prime Minister also announced the extension of the e-visa facility to Chinese nationals wishing to travel to India.

The momentum of meetings at the leadership level continued in 2016 too. President Pranab Mukherjee made a state visit to China from May 24 to 27, 2016. He visited Guangdong and Beijing where he met with the Chinese leadership. President also delivered a keynote address at the Peking University and attended a Round Table between Vice Chancellors and Heads of institutions of higher learning of the two countries. Ten MoUs providing for enhanced faculty and student exchanges as well as collaboration in research and innovation were concluded between the higher education institutions of the two countries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China in September 2016 to participate in the G20 Summit in Hangzhou and September 2017 to participate in the BRICS Summit in Xiamen, where he also held bilateral talks with President Xi Jinping. President Xi Jinping visited India in October 2016 to participate in the BRICS Summit in Goa.

2. Renewed Dynamism in Bilateral Business Ties: In 2016, India's top exports to China included diamonds, cotton yarn, iron ore, copper and organic chemicals. Indian exports of diamonds grew 28.48% and amounted to US\$ 2.47 billion. India was the second largest exporter of diamonds (worked/not worked) to China (with a share of 31.81%). India's cotton (including yarn and woven fabric) exports to China showed a decline of 44.1% to reach US\$ 1.27 billion, although India was the second largest exporter of cotton to China with 16.43% market share. In 2016, Indian exports of iron ore registered an increase of over 700% to reach US\$ 844 million.

In 2016, China exports of electrical machinery and equipment saw an increase of 26.83% to US\$ 16.98 billion. India was the largest export destination of Fertilizers exports from China. China exported 23.48% of its total Fertilizers (worth US\$ 1.54 billion) to India. India was the largest export destination for Chinese Antibiotics worth US\$ 711 million in 2016, with a share of 23.55%. India was the second largest export destination for Chinese organic chemicals, worth US\$ 5.68 billion in 2016.

Some of the other institutionalized dialogue mechanisms between the two countries include the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Trade, JWG on Collaboration in Skill Development and Vocational Education, Joint Working Group on Information and Communication Technology & High-Technology, Joint Study Group and Joint Task Force on Regional Trading Agreement (RTA), India-China Joint Working Group on Agriculture, India-China Joint Working Group on Cooperation in Energy and the Joint Study Group on BCIM Economic Corridor.

3. Unprecedented Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges: Indian Bollywood movies were popular in China in the 1960s and 1970s and the popularity is being rekindled in recent times again. India and China have entered into an agreement on co-production of movies, the first of which based on the life of the monk Xuan Zang hit the theaters in 2016.

Yoga is becoming increasingly popular in China. China was one of the co-sponsors to the UN resolution designating June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. During the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to China in May 2015, a Yoga-Taichi performance in the world heritage site of Temple of Heaven was witnessed by Premier Li Keqiang and the Prime Minister. During the same visit, an agreement was signed to establish a Yoga College in Kunming, Yunnan Minzu University, Yunnan Province. Colors of India Festival showcasing a unique blend of Indian performing arts, Bollywood movies and Indian photography was held from 15-26 May, 2017 at Beijing and Nanjing.

India and China signed Education Exchange Programme (EEP) in 2006, which is an umbrella agreement for educational cooperation between the two countries. Under this agreement, government scholarships are awarded to 25 students, by both sides, in recognized institutions of higher learning in each other's country. The 25 scholarships awarded by India are offered by Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). During the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to China, both the countries have signed fresh Education Exchange Programme (EEP) on May 15, 2015. The same provides for enhanced cooperation between institutions in the field of vocational education; collaboration between Institutes of higher learning etc. 25 Chinese students have been selected to join Hindi language course for the academic year 2017-18 under EEP scholarship awarded by ICCR. Apart from this, Chinese students are also annually awarded scholarships to study Hindi at the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra to learn Hindi. For the year 2017-18, 5 Chinese students have been selected to study in Agra under this scheme.

Measures to develop better China-India Relations: Undoubtedly, the development of the China-India relations during these 3 years encountered a host of problems. Some were political, some were economic, some were cultural and some had something to do with the public opinion which demands the two countries to address trade imbalance at top priority; enhance strategic mutual trust between the two countries; as well posits that bilateral relations need stronger popular support.

Future China-India Relations: Future progress in strategic cooperation between China and India in the next decade or beyond will be determined by the will, and more importantly, concerted efforts of the two countries. Chinese and Indian leaders are devoted to developing

healthy and stable China-India relations on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, enriching strategic cooperation and expanding the convergence of interests. This demands the two countries to 1) Vigorously explore new thinking and model for the development of bilateral ties; 2) Pay attention to the effectiveness of strategic communication and constantly build strategic mutual trust; 3) Seek ways to resolve bilateral issues with a pragmatic attitude; 4) Further step up cooperation on global issues and 5) Reinforce economic and cultural basis and popular support for bilateral ties.

Cultural exchanges and cooperation is the basis, core and key of the bilateral relationship. India and China have rich resources of cultural exchanges and strong cooperation potentiality. The think-tanks can extend their strengthened research and find the best overlapping point to further expand the scale of exchange of teachers, exchange of students and art groups, and deepen the cooperation in educational institutions, medical institutions and art institutions so as to work together. Actually, working on this step; Yunnan Minzu University has highly valued the communication and cooperation with Indian Universities, scientific research institutions, and other sectors of society in India. Every year the students from YMU come to India to study Hindi. Through this program for students, it promotes its students to let them to know more about India, its culture, history, politics, education, and economics. The YMU built the India-China cultural exchange center through the K2K forum in November 2014. On 15th May, 2015, in witness of prime minister Narendra Modi Ji and prime minister Li Keqiang, India's government decided to set up the first India-China yoga college at YMU.

Conclusion

Education is the foundation of all communication and cooperation. When communication and cooperation in the educational field is carried out, when the language and culture of associated states is studied, and when people with ability in regional cooperation are cultivated, then further communication and mutual understanding will be achieved. Only through full understanding and trust can deeper communication and cooperation of regional humanity be carried out.

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