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# China-India Relations:A Study

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## Abstract

**Sino-Indian relations** or **Indian-Chinese relations**, refers to the bilateral relationship between China and India. The tone of the relationship has varied over time; the two nations have sought economic cooperation with each other, while frequent border disputes and economic nationalism in both countries are a major point of contention. The modern relationship began in 1950 when India was among the first countries to end formal ties with the Republic of China (Taiwan) and recognize the People's Republic of China as the legitimate government of Mainland China. China and India are two of the major regional powers in Asia, and are the two most populous countries and among the fastest growing major economies in the world. Growth in diplomatic and economic influence has increased the significance of their bilateral relationship. Cultural and economic relations between China and India date back to ancient times. The Silk Road not only served as a major trade route between India and China, but is also credited for facilitating the spread of Buddhism from India to East Asia. During the 19th century, China was involved in a growing opium trade with the East India Company, which exported opium grown in India. During World War II, both British India and Republic of China played a crucial role in halting the progress of Imperial Japan.

**Keywords:**Sino-Indian relations,China, India, Economics, Politics.

## Introduction

China and India have developed their own complementary skills following a period in which they had cut themselves off from each other. By 2007, while China excelled at cost-effective manufacturing, India was skilled in cost effective designing and development. In 2007 Tarun Khanna wrote in Harvard Business Review that "The simplest, and most powerful, way of combining China and India is to focus on hardware in China and on software in India." In the 2009 book "Getting China and India Right", the authors suggest a China plus India strategy so as to strategically benefit from both India's and China's scale, complementary strengths, and reducing the risk of being unilaterally present. There are cases when Indian companies have gone to China and done well, such as Mahindra and Mahindra, while Chinese companies such as Huawei have done well in India. Huawei set up its Indian unit in 1999 and by 2007 had 1500 engineers. In the oil sector there is competition and engagement — China's Sinopec and China National Petroleum Corporation and India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation fight over oil assets in some regions while winning bids as joint ventures in others such as Syria, Colombia, Angola and Venezuela.

## Early history

The first records of contact between China and India were written during the 2nd century BCE. Buddhism was transmitted from India to China in the 1st century CE. Trade relations via the Silk Road acted as economic contact between the two regions. China and India have also had some contact before the transmission of Buddhism. References to a people called the *Chinas*, are found in ancient Indian literature. The Indian epic *Mahabharata* (c. 5th century BCE) contains references to "China", which may have been referring to the Qin state which later became the Qin dynasty. Chanakya (c. 350–283 BCE), the prime minister of the Maurya Empire refers to Chinese silk as "cinamsuka" (Chinese silk dress) and "cinapatta" (Chinese silk bundle) in his *Arthashastra*. In the *Records of the Grand Historian*, Zhang Qian (d. 113 BCE) and Sima Qian (145–90 BCE) make references to "Shendu", which may have been referring to the Indus Valley (the Sindh province in modern Pakistan), originally known as "Sindhu" in Sanskrit. When Yunnan was annexed by the Han dynasty in the 1st century, Chinese authorities reported an Indian "Shendu" community living there.

## Middle Ages

From the 1st century onwards, many Indian scholars and monks travelled to China, such as Batuo (fl. 464–495 CE)—first abbot of the Shaolin Monastery—and Bodhidharma—founder of Chan/Zen Buddhism—while many Chinese scholars and monks also travelled to India, such as Xuanzang (b. 604) and I Ching (635–713), both of whom were students at Nalanda University in Bihar. Xuanzang wrote the *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions*, an account of his journey to India, which later inspired Wu Cheng'en's Ming dynasty novel *Journey to the West*, one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature.

## Tamil dynasties

The Cholas maintained good relationship with the Chinese. Arrays of ancient Chinese coins have been found in the Cholas homeland (i.e. Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Pudukkottai districts of Tamil Nadu, India). Under Rajaraja Chola and his son Rajendra Chola, the Cholas had strong trading links with Chinese Song dynasty.<sup>[21][22][23]</sup> The Chola navy conquered the Sri Vijaya Empire of Indonesia and Malaysia and secured a sea trading route to China.

## Tang and Harsha dynasties

During the 7th century, Tang dynasty China gained control over large portions of the Silk Road and Central Asia. Wang Xuance had sent a diplomatic mission to northern India, which was embroiled by civil war just following the death of Emperor Harsha (590–647). After the murder of 30 members of this mission by the usurper claimants, Wang fled, and returned with allied Nepali and Tibetan troops to back the opposition. With his forces, Wang captured the capital, while his deputy Jiang Shiren captured the usurper and sent him back to Emperor Taizong (599–649) in Chang'an as a prisoner.

A rich merchant from the Ma'bar Sultanate, Abu Ali), was associated closely with the Ma'bar royal family. After a fallout with the Ma'bar family, he moved to Yuan dynasty China and received a Korean woman as his wife and a job from the Emperor, the woman was formerly Sangha's wife and her father was Ch'aeIn'gyu during the reign of Chungnyeol of Goryeo,

recorded in the DonggukTonggam, Goryeosa and Liu Mengyan'sZhong'anji. Sangha was a Tibetan. Tamil Hindu Indian merchants traded in Quanzhou during the Yuan dynasty. Hindu statues were found in Quanzhou dating to this period.

### **Ming dynasty**

Between 1405 and 1433, Ming dynasty China sponsored a series of seven naval expeditions led by Admiral Zheng He. Zheng He visited numerous Indian kingdoms and ports, including India, Bengal, and Ceylon, Persian Gulf, Arabia, and later expeditions ventured down as far as Malindi in what is now Kenya. Throughout his travels, Zheng He liberally dispensed Chinese gifts of silk, porcelain, and other goods. In return, he received rich and unusual presents, including African zebras and giraffes. Zheng He and his company paid respect to local deities and customs, and in Ceylon they erected a monument (Galle Trilingual Inscription) honouring Buddha, Allah, and Vishnu. Bengal sent twelve diplomatic missions to Nanjing between 1405 and 1439.

### **Sino-Sikh War**

In the 18th to 19th centuries, the Sikh Empire expanded into neighbouring lands. It had annexed Ladakh into the state of Jammu in 1834. In 1841, they invaded Tibet and overran parts of western Tibet. Chinese forces defeated the Sikh army in December 1841, forcing the Sikh army to withdraw, and in turn entered Ladakh and besieged Leh, where they were in turn defeated by the Sikh Army. At this point, neither side wished to continue the conflict. The Sikhs claimed victory. as the Sikhs were embroiled in tensions with the British that would lead up to the First Anglo-Sikh War, while the Chinese were in the midst of the First Opium War. The two parties signed a treaty in September 1842, which stipulated no transgressions or interference in the other country's frontiers.

### **Triangular relations**

The United States and Russia (previously Soviet Union) have been a consistent part of developments in Chinese and Indian relations. As a major power, Japan has also been part of China India relations with initiatives such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. Pakistan and China share relations in an attempt to contain India, as well as drive Chinese infrastructure projects in the disputed territory of northern India. The Middle East, Latin America, Africa are places where both India and China engage and compete. The Middle East is important to both countries in terms of their energy security. In Africa, China and India seem most engaged across a wide variety of issues from development to peacekeeping. In South Asia and South-East Asia, a power balance struggle between China and India is seen in relation to third countries.

### **Water sharing and hydro-politics**

China and India share a number of water resources including the Indus, Sutlej and Brahmaputra (or YarlungTsangpo) and tributaries of the Brahmaputra. India has concern with China's water-diversion, dam-building and inter-river plans. Moreso, in a conflict, India fears that China can use the rivers as leverage. China has already constructed ten dam on the Bhramaputra and its tributaries such as the Zangmu Dam, and there has been talk of China

building a mega-dam at the "great bend" called the Motuo Dam. India's concerns also stem from the fact that China does not cooperate with regard to timely sharing of information related to projects which would impact water sharing; nor does China allow Indian experts to visit dam sites. There are a number of MOUs on hydrological data sharing between the two countries with regard to the Brahmaputra including emergency management.

## **Economics**

China and India have developed their own complementary skills following a period in which they had cut themselves off from each other. By 2007, while China excelled at cost-effective manufacturing, India was skilled in cost effective designing and development. In 2007 Tarun Khanna wrote in Harvard Business Review that "The simplest, and most powerful, way of combining China and India is to focus on hardware in China and on software in India." In the 2009 book "Getting China and India Right", the authors suggest a China plus India strategy so as to strategically benefit from both India's and China's scale, complementary strengths, and reducing the risk of being unilaterally present. There are cases when Indian companies have gone to China and done well, such as Mahindra and Mahindra, while Chinese companies such as Huawei have done well in India. Huawei set up its Indian unit in 1999 and by 2007 had 1500 engineers. Huawei's Bangalore unit, already one of Huawei's most important research and development centres, was Capability Maturity Model Level 5 certified in 2003. In the oil sector there is competition and engagement — China's Sinopec and China National Petroleum Corporation and India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation fight over oil assets in some regions while winning bids as joint ventures in others such as Syria, Colombia, Angola and Venezuela

## **Conclusion**

The factors affecting the relationship between China and India can be divided into three categories: structural factors, hard factors, and soft factors. The structural factors are mainly geopolitical factors determined by national strength, geographical features and international status. Hard factors mainly include border conflicts, Tibetan issues, China-Pakistan relations and water disputes, which are difficult to solve and highly sensitive. Soft factors include a trade imbalance, visa issues, different notions of history, strategic differences, and the relationship between the two countries on the international stage. These three kinds of factors are differentiated. Their importance and influence on China-India relations are also changing. Geopolitical factors have begun to play more important role in the bilateral relationship of the two rising countries in the past few years, leading to their strategic competition. This competition has grown despite the fact that the two countries have not yet achieved a status as leaders of world politics. This premature strategic competition will hinder the development of the two countries and will make the "Asian century" hard to realize. For the security and interests of both nations and Asia as a whole, China and India must establish a more stable geopolitical relationship, promote bilateral cooperation in the field of hard and soft factors, and find opportunities for cooperation in new areas and spaces. Finally, China and India need to build a new type of power relations.

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