

# Sino Indian Historical Linkages: An Assessment

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**Abstract:** *India and China are referred as the Two Giants of the Asian region. The Two Asian Giants China and India have had relations Sustained for more than 2,000 Years .But, in the year 1950, the era of modern relationship started. The First interactions between the India and China were written during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. In the 1st century C E , The two Nations had some contacts before the transmission Of Buddhism from India and China .The Indian Epic Mahabharata (5<sup>th</sup> Century) contains some references to “China”, Which may have been referring to Qin State Which later became the Qin Dynasty. The Prime Minister Of the Mauryan empire – Chanakya (C.350-283 BCE) and A professor at Takshahila university ,referred to Chinese Silk as “Cinamsuka” (Chinese Silk Dress ) and “Cinapatta” (Chinese Silk Bundle) in his Arthashastra.*

**Keywords:** Buddhism, Gaints, Mahabharata, Arthashastra

## 1. Introduction

China and India are the very two old nations. Both are big; their civilizations ancient and their cultures Vulnerable .There was a close contact of friendship between the two nations for many centuries. [1]

The both nations Got the Independence in the same century: India On 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947 and China on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1949 .But the manner in which Freedom was won speaks Volumes about their policies. India won freedom after a prolonged nonviolent struggle; on the other hand Chinese Independence was a result of a never seen before military backed aggression. [2]

The Two giants of Asia India and China are the two oldest and living civilizations of the world. Sindu and Ganges gave birth to the Indian Civilization, Which influenced south and Southeast Asia. Similarly ,The Yellow River and The Yangtze gave birth to the Chinese civilization ,which on its part influenced Southeast Asia and Northeast .India and china had established cultural and trade relations since times immemorial .If One Talks of thousand years old then there must have been a starting point .It could be established from the available historical records that china India interaction had been a two way traffic and the two elements of this exchange could be categorized as material exchanges and spiritual cultural Exchanges .This exchange was so carried through the central Asia Route or The so called Silk route ;Assam Burma and Yunnan Route or the Famous southern silk Route; Tibet Nepal Route ,and The Sea Route Or The so called Maritime Silk Route.

## 2. Ancient and Medieval period

The reliable literary records of the India China interface could be traced to Han Dynasty (Bc 206-AD 220).The First information is provided by Si Maqian (BC 145-BC90),The great Chinese historian in his masterpiece Shiji , Xinanayizhuan (Records of the Historian: Foreigners in the south west ).The record narrates that Zhang Qian,A Han Envoy in thw western regions when returned to the court in 122BC,reported to Hann Emperor Wu Di (Bc 140-Bc 87) that while in Bectria.

He also saw walking Bamboo sticks and silken clothes made in the Sichuan. When he enquired about the source of these things, he was told by the locals that “these were brought from the Shu (Sichuan) markets in the shendu (Sindu for India) several thousand Li (1/2 Km) away from here in the southeast. [3]

During the Tang, Song and The Yuan dynasties, The Interactions between the two nations also flourished. By this time maritime activities were Intense and it is reported in various sources that in Guangzhou (Canton) there were ships of Persians, Indians and Srilankan Merchants. [4]

The Two nations have been friendly neighbours for many thousand years .The Cultural Exchanges between the two nations have enriched both the civilizations materially and spiritually. Even, Today the billion million people are enjoying the benefit of this interface .It is very difficult to find a similar example in the history of Human kind, and our two nations should be proud of it.

The Word ‘Sugar’ appeared in the china very late. It is not found in shuowen Jiezi (The First Dictionary in china compiled by Xu Shen in the year 100AD. [5]

India and China are the only nations having such a close proximity or striking similar experiences. Both the nations are ancient civilizations with long history and uninterrupted cultural development .Both are Asian as well as world giants with vast territory and large populations. The Combined population of the two accounts one fourth of the world population .There are many Commonalities between us; we have had a long history of friendly contacts for over 2000 years.

‘Zhongguo’ is translated as china in English .If One traces the origin of this word ,then infact it originates from the ‘Sanskrit’ word Cina (Cheena ).The name ‘China’ in western languages mostly comes from here.

‘Yindhu’ in English is translated as India. The Origin of this name also lays in Sanskrit word ‘Sindhu’ Meaning River or the ‘Indus River’. Initially, The Persian people used this

word for the India, Later, It spread to Greece, and the distortion in pronunciation finally made it 'India'.

Today, although the Chinese call china as 'Zhongguo' and the Indian people call their nation as 'Bharata'. But, for most of the people or most of the nations in the world, our two nations are known as China and India.

### 3. Origin of Buddhism

Buddhism originated in India, but spread to china and was accepted by the Chinese people around two thousand years back. According to this view Point It can be said the India is the root of Buddhism .China's Buddhism is the trunk and leaves that sprouted from the Indian root. A story in the history of Chinese Buddhism is just an example .During the mid Tang Dynasty, A monk called Bu Kong (Amoghavajra), came to China from India. Amoghavajra propagated the Esoteric Buddhism in china and was highly revered by the Chinese people. Among the Buddhist monks who came to china from India during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) ,There Were three monks who were revered as the "First Three Great Buddhist Masters of Kai Yuan Era" and Bu Kong is one of them. Bu Kong had a Chinese disciple named Han Guang . After reaching china, Bu Kong returned to India with Hna Guang.

This is to say Generally speaking, It was the Chinese people who always learnt Buddhism from India. [6]

China and India, The Two sister nations, possess the richest and the greatest culture and have the longest and oldest history in the world. Since the introduction of Buddhism from India into china at very interactions between our two nations have been incomparably great and intimate. The Similarities between the China and India are also very great and numerous. The elementary spirit of the Chinese national character is 'benevolent Love' and 'Polite deference', which may be represented by the word 'Ahimsa'. These four terms, Benevolent Love' and Polite Deference, Mercy, and Peace, though different in form, are yet fundamentally the same in sense.

The life of the Indians laid stress on Continenence, so, their attitude towards nature is a process of harmonization. The Life of the Indians laid stress upon Continenence so their attitude towards nature is a process of assimilation .In Social Intercourse; The Chinese people emphasize Justice and Uprightness ;despite Advantage and Disadvantage .and So do the Indian People.

In relationship between Man and Women, The Indians Observe 'Chastity' and prize Modesty And do so the Chinese people .Examples of similar nature are too copious to be enumerated in detail. Numerous Chinese Buddhist came to India in past times for learning and Indian missionaries went to china for preaching .They met each other with Love and respect. They exchanged their greetings and gifts just as noble friends. [7]

After the Introduction of Buddhism into China, numerous Chinese Monks and Scholars came to India for studying and Indian Sages and Missionaries went to china for preaching.

The most famous among the Chinese who came to India were Fa-Shien, Hsuan Tsang and Yi Tsang. Among the Indians who went to china were Kasyapa Matanga ,Kumarajiva and Gunarta were the most famous .Kasyapa Matanga was the first Indian Missionary to have preached in China and to have formally introduced the great religion of Buddha .Kumarajiva and Gunarata were the two of the greatest Indian translators of Buddhist scriptures from Sanskrit into Chinese. The Former translated 94 Books, consisting of the 425 fasciles; The latter 64 Books, consisting of 278 fascicles .Fah-Shien was the first Chinese, Who came to India for learning and returned to china after achieving great success .Hsuan and -Tsang and Yi -Tsing were the two greatest of the Chinese translators of the Buddhist Tripatika .Hsuan T sang Brought from India to China 520 bundles of 657 books and translated 73 of them, consisting of about 1330 fascicles.Yi -Tsing brought to china from India nearly 40 books and translated 56 of them, consisting of about 230 Fasciles. [8]

Sir S Radhakrishnans Bhandarkar Research Institute Silver Jubilee address delivered at Poona on January 04,1943,has the following : "Sir Aurel Stein has traced Indian settlements and Carvan routes through the desert of central Asia right upto the great Wall Of China .Buddhism found its way across the Indian Borders into the Mongolian nations About the second Century B.c. The Cultural interaction between the two nations India and China started perceptibly with the introduction of that world religion known as Buddhism. Professor Tan Yan Shun wrote in Hindustan Times Review for July 1942 says: "According to the record of Chinese History ,It is the Yung Ping tenth year of the Minti of the Han dynasty ,namely 67 A.D ,when Buddhism formally reached china for the first time."He goes further to write that: "But according to other books it seems that even before the China dynasty, Buddhism had arrived in China. [9]

Chou Tun Yi was the founder master of Chinese rationalism as Nanak of Indian Sikhism. Wang Yang Min was the last master of Chinese rationalism Like Guru Govind of Sikhism in India.Chou Tan Yi has left us two very important works which contain all his philosophy and Ideas: One is called 'Tai Chi Tu Hsuo' or the Diagram of the Great absolute and its explanation, Other is called 'Tung Hsu' or the General Book .The Former was his interpretation to the metaphysical truth of the Universe; The latter was his explanation of the Philosophy of Human Life. [10]

#### Early settlement of the Chinese: An Assessment:-

Mystery shrouds the early settlement of the Chinese in Calcutta. In an interview with a French Journalist, The Owner of the Nanking Restaurant ,The Oldest Chinese Restaurant in Calcutta ,Narrated :

"It was started in the 1780s when Lord Hastings was the Governor General; When A Chinese ship caught by a storm in the Bay of Bengal came to take shelter in the harbour of Calcutta. To help her crew and those of other ships, Hastings gave permission to the sailors of china to establish here a settlement where they could fend for themselves.

There is another version, which runs as follows:

One Chinese sailor, named Atchew or Acchi in English and Yang Da Zhao in China, travelled on a ship with a British Captain. Seeing two stowaways in the ship, The Captain accused Achi of Smuggling them. But the store ways in the ship, the captain accused Acchi of smuggling them. But the storeways magically transformed themselves into pieces of Wood. Acchi then knew they were Gods. He planted them on Land around which A temple was eventually built. Subsequently Warren Hastings supposedly agreed to grant him as much land in this area as could be covered on Horseback in a day. Acchi later recruited workers from china to grow sugar cane for him.

There are striking similarities between these two versions of the story of early Chinese Settlement:

That the arrival of the Chinese in Calcutta is dated back to the 1770s or 1780s.

That the first settler was Sailor.

That Land was granted by Warren Hastings for settlement.

The second version of the story however is able to mention the specific name of the original settler, and that makes it closer to archival records. Archival records inform us that one Chinese named Acchi brought some Chinese to work for him as an Indentured labourers. They are alleged to have escaped upstream from Calcutta. Achhi then sought assistance from Warren Hastings. In response to Achhi, s request A Government advertisement published just a few days later regarding the indentured Labourers.

The Presence of Chinese in Calcutta is evidenced by an advertisement in the Calcutta Gazette in April 1784 in which a man referred to as Tom Fatt offers his services as a cleaner of water tanks. This same man is said to have owned a rum distillery and a cabinet making workshop, and to have been a maker of sugar and sugar candy. Police records of 1788 also state that a number of Chinese had settled in Calcutta. Even in two maps of Calcutta prepared as early as 1792 and 1793, Chinese settlement is well marked. The Chinese settlement in Calcutta is further corroborated by an altogether many source. One Li Van Phue, A Civil servant of Chinese origin, in his travel note in 1830 stated that he found in Calcutta A few Chinese who had been residing there for a long time. Li further informs us that they amounted to several hundred. Most of them were extremely poor. During his stay in Calcutta, Li had many occasions to visit Calcutta, Which was a meeting place for every Chinese Businessmen. [11]

#### Evidences of Indian Traders in Western China

The migration of traders and Money Lenders from Punjab, Sind, and Kashmir into the region south of the Taklaman Desert in western China was of Ancient Origin. When the First British traveller, Robert Shaw, visited Xinjiang in 1869, He estimated that there were 'hundreds' of Indians there. The Principal goods exported from India were Opium, cotton, Piece, Indian Tea, Sugar, Indigo, While the main exports from the Chinese were Charas, Tea, Silk, Wool, Felt, Gold, Silver, Horses etc. The Most Important Item among them was Charas.

While one section of the Indian Business Community consisted of seasonal traders, who regularly returned Home

with their consignments of goods bought in the Bazaars of Xinjiang, A number of merchants of Indian Origin, predominantly from Kashmir stayed on for so long that they lost their ties with their Homes in India and considered themselves as belonging to Xinjiang for all practical Purposes. Several of them also acquired Land in Xinjiang and married to Turki Wives. [12]

#### Some Parallelisms among the Indian and Chinese Art

China as the spiritual brother of the India has also Produced a voluminous and brilliant body of Buddhist Art, with obvious affiliations and affinity with the Indian Buddhist Art, in theme, Iconography and technique. But beyond the limits of Buddhist Art, There are various points of contact between the Chinese and The Indian Art –Which have not been sufficiently noticed by the scholars, and which offer very fascinating field for comparative study. [13]

#### 4. Conclusion

There are many evidences regarding the interaction of the two nations. Buddhism religion spread to china from India. The Chinese people willingly accepted the religion. Amoghavajra propagated the Esoteric Buddhism in china and was highly revered by the Chinese people. Among the Buddhist monks who came to china from India during the Tang Dynasty. It is very difficult to trace exactly when India and China two of the great ancient nations came in contact with each other. However as we know from the Chinese records that Kasyapa Matanga, The celebrated Buddhist Monk Of India, went to china in 67 A.D and since then for more than a thousand years, hundreds of Indians went to china and Chinese came to India, with a mission to bring these two peoples into the intimate spiritual and cultural interaction with each other.

Among the oldest texts, It is in the Mahabharata that we find frequent references to china, to Chinese people and to things Chinese In the Manusmriti there is mention of the Chinese people only in one place. In the Ramayana too there is a single reference to Chinese, but that is not to be found in all edition.

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