

## **Moderator's introduction to the workshop**

A documented history of the interaction between the Chinese and Indian civilizations has existed ever since the second century BC, and the interactions between the two before recorded history can be traced back even further. During thousands of years of exchanges, divergence has occurred, but communication and integration have been more common. India's spiritual culture, such as Buddhism and astronomy, has enriched the Chinese civilization, while China's tangible culture, such as silk, sugar and tea, has also boosted the Indian civilization.

However, the communication between the two civilizations tended to decrease or even be interrupted during the Middle Ages due to many external factors. Since the 1950s, China and India have started national exchanges in the modern sense, which includes the "Sino-Indian brotherly stage" and "Sino-Indian conflict stage."

Since the first half of 2020, China-India relations have taken another sharp turn for the worse, and the negative trend has not reversed.

Although China and India have a "structural" border dispute, there is also a "misinterpretation" of the problem. Therefore, we are holding this workshop to discuss the current problems between China and India from the perspective of Chinese people looking at India, and vice versa, trying to find

some kind of “motivation” to interpret the problem of “misinterpretation” between the two countries.

Participants give speeches from the above two perspectives. From the perspective of Indian people looking at China, they considered that:

1. India has an illusion of its international status and tries to incorporate Chinese Tibetan culture into the Indian cultural circle. It has taken actions such as applying to UNESCO for inclusion of Tibetan medicine on its Intangible Cultural Heritage List in the name of traditional Indian medicine, including Ladakh in its union territory to integrate the Tibetan Buddhist regions of southern Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal and Ladakh into one, and compiling textbooks involving Tibet-related issues. The purpose of the above actions is to fabricate the Buddhist cultural plate in the Indian cultural circle and further promote the “reality” of the “separation” of Tibet.

2. India regards China as its rival in development and has changed its original non-alignment policy to a selective alignment policy, or even a multi-direction alignment policy. It follows the Western group led by the US, assists Western forces to contain China, and tries to take advantage of such situation to develop itself.

3. India regards Chinese funding and related entities as obstacles to its economic development, and treats them (such as Huawei and ZTE) unfairly. It has been forcibly decoupling from

the Chinese economy at the expense of the interests of both countries.

From the perspective of Chinese people looking at India, they considered that:

1. China thinks that India is poor and weak and can be “suppressed” at will.

2. China views India from the perspective of non-believers and atheists, believing that the ancient civilization of India has abandoned civilization, leaving only an empty shell of an ancient country. China also regards Indian people’s words and deeds related to religion and gods as superstitious, ignorant and backward.

3. Due to the language barrier, China’s study of India has been divorced from the target country’s social reality. It lacks attention to the emerging elites (such as RSS, BSS) who attach great importance to the masses and traditions, thus failing to correctly analyze the latest “trends” in India.

In response to the above views, the participants put forward suggestions on how to resolve the problem of “misinterpretation” between China and India.

1. To break India’s attempt to include Chinese Tibetan culture in the Indian cultural circle, China should do research and summary on Chinese Tibetan culture, such as the Kangrinboqe culture’s characteristics featured by Chinese Tibetan culture and Chinese Tibetan culture’s influence on the

areas south to the Himalayas.

2. To study and judge relevant policies in India, China should make an in-depth study of the emerging elites in India, especially RSS, BSS and other organizations, and from the perspective of non-believers and atheists, try to understand religious believers and theists.

3. China should explore the possibility and feasibility of China-India trade agreement negotiations to provide guidance for the overseas development of China's economy.

Jiang Jingkui

April 17, 2021

**The 42nd Broadyard Workshop**  
**Chinese Perceptions of India**  
**and Indian Perceptions of China**

**April 10, 2021**

The first half of the workshop was moderated by Wang Xu, associate professor of the South Asia Department, School of Foreign Languages, Peking University. Rong Ying, a research fellow from the China Institute of International Studies, gave the first presentation, titled “Opinions on building an objective view on India.”

Rong Ying illustrated from four aspects how China can build an objective and rational perception on India. First, from his own research experience, he pointed out that China’s India studies need a correct methodology. For Chinese scholars, the framework of historical materialism and materialist dialectics is the basis for the study of such a complex and diversified country as India. Only through correct methods and theories can Chinese researchers view India objectively and rationally.

China needs to observe and understand India in an objective and rational way with a relatively fixed research framework and system. Only on this basis can research remain continuous. However, to some extent, Chinese researchers still need to be aware of some changing elements and problems during in-depth investigation.

Researchers needs to know the elements, signs and trends

from the changing relationships between the two countries, which require them to explore the underlying factors. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India, China's view on India has experienced different stages: the "fellow traveler" during national liberation, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in 1956, the 1962 border conflict, and the 1988 meeting between Deng Xiaoping and Rajiv Gandhi. China's perception on India has been constantly changing and revised by the Galwan Valley conflict in June 2020. In the post-Galwan period, Chinese researchers should pay more attention to the motivations behind such changes.

The perception of China and India is also a process of interaction and mutual shaping, which inevitably brings subjective imagination into objective analysis. Therefore, special attention should be paid to this during policy formulation and implementation, Rong Ying said.

Rong Ying put forward four points of view on an objective and rational view on India. First, India is China's neighbor, which is an unchangeable fact. The boundary issue between China and India has not yet been resolved, and there will be no complete solution to this key problem in the foreseeable future. Second, both India and China are big countries living next to each other. At the current stage of development, India's acceptance and support cannot be taken for granted by China. Competition is inevitable when China recognizes India as a

great power and neighbor. Third, as both India and China are developing countries, there is still great room and potential for cooperation. How to pursue further cooperation is an issue that researchers need to pay special attention to. Fourth, China should not allow itself to suffer from “unrequited love” on India’s major policies. China should have reasonable expectations for India and China-India bilateral relations.

Hu Shisheng, a research fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, delivered a presentation titled “India’s view on China in history, great power, and geography.” He expressed his belief that observing India’s China policy has three dimensions:

The first dimension: India’s perception of China as observed from the main line of contradiction in China-India relations. With the changing main contradiction in China-India relations, India’s perception of China has gone through several stages:

The first stage was from the struggles in the two countries for national independence to the establishment of diplomatic relations, when the two countries appreciated and supported each other. At that time, India’s perception of China was that it wanted to work with China to build a new world in the future and cooperate on the road of anti-colonialism.

The second stage was from the establishment of diplomatic

relations between the two countries to the armed border conflict in 1962, when the two countries were still in the “honeymoon” phase. However, there were also disharmonious factors, which were mainly the sharp contradiction between China’s claim to restore full sovereignty over Tibet and India’s claim to retain colonial privileges in Tibet. In 1954, the two countries signed the “Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet Region of China and India,” and established the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,” resolving the contradiction as much as possible for the time being. In Jawaharlal Nehru’s view, China was a country “lacking rewards,” so he opposed China’s peaceful liberation of Tibet.

The third stage was from the 1962 conflict to the 1988 initiation of the normalization process of bilateral relations. The main contradiction in this period between the two sides was the boundary issue. During the diplomatic “freeze,” Indian elites regarded China as treacherous and even suspected China of exporting revolution to India, secretly supporting leftist militancy and secession in the northeast of the country. In India’s opinion, China was a staunch supporter of Pakistan and India’s biggest real enemy, because China supported Pakistan in the second and third wars between Pakistan and India.

The fourth stage was from the rapid normalization of relations between the two countries from 1989 to 2013, when China put forward the Belt and Road Initiative. In this stage, the



two countries pursued development through cooperation, saw in each other opportunities for development, and worked together to make the international order fairer and more just. During this period, the two countries' identities were highly compatible, and they jointly dealt with the oppression from developed economies on developing countries. China-India relations thus entered the second "golden period."

In the fifth stage, China-India relations entered a new era after China put forward the Belt and Road Initiative and vigorously built the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, in 2013. The two countries have now fallen into the "Thucydides Trap," and the core of their conflicts is order claims. India wants to retain its regional dominance, which is in sharp contradiction with the expansion of China's influence in South Asia. In fact, it is the expansion of third-party factors between China and India that leads to regional problems. As India increasingly sees China as the biggest threat to its rise, New Delhi's perception of Beijing has become more hostile, and it has begun to evaluate China in terms of the Western discourse system.

The second dimension is to observe India's perception of China from the perspective of the game between China and the US. The game between the US and China implies the game of two strategic systems, namely the Indo-Pacific strategy and the Belt and Road Initiative. Hu Shisheng pointed out that the game is mainly focused on the Indian Ocean Rim, so a fierce collision

between China and India is inevitable. For India, joining the Indo-Pacific strategy and conducting strategic cooperation with the US will improve its status as a great power, which can benefit it far more than developing cooperation with China. This is a very important and obvious change in India's identity.

It is certain that India would rather choose an international order controlled by the US than forge a new order of the future with China. The implicit purpose of the Indo-Pacific strategy is to target China. When adopting such a strategy, India is bound to form hostile relations with China. Due to India's opposition to the Belt and Road Initiative, the increasingly negative perception of China seems to be irreversible. However, the outcome still depends on the results of the game between the US and China.

The third dimension is to observe India's perception of China from the perspective of India's views of history, great power and geography. Hu Shisheng pointed out that the three views between China and India are different. In term of the historical view, India sees itself as the inheritor of the colonial legacy of the British Empire, while China is trying to break the old order and start a new one. As a result, the two countries have been carrying the "original sin" — the Tibet border issue — since the establishment of diplomatic relations.

When studying India's views on great power, we find that India believes that developing cooperation with China as a big

country can increase its own strength, but it ends up becoming a “stepping stone” and a foil for China’s development. Therefore, India actively embraces the US and Indo-Pacific strategy and has increased cooperation in many aspects. There are also a few issues on geographical perspective. How can China and India peacefully coexist under the circumstances that they live side by side? How can they support each other? How does China see India’s view on China? These are all important perspectives for future domestic Indian studies.

Prof. An Ping, director of the Musicology Department of the Central Conservatory of Music, gave a presentation titled “Indian music culture from the perspective of world music.” From this perspective, he pointed out that researchers should observe and understand China and India based on the development of world human culture. Only in this way can they abandon their narrow views.

An Ping pointed out that a classic work must have four dimensions: national cultural identity, regional cultural identity, Chinese national cultural identity and world cultural identity. He compared the differences and connections between Chinese and Indian cultures with several simple examples and pointed out how Indian classical music has world appeal.

An Ping believes that only through genuine exchanges can China and India deepen their mutual understanding. From the perspective of the concept of world music, such communication

should be placed above the overall culture. As a matter of fact, Chinese culture has historically been influenced by Indian culture in a subtle way, but now this influence is gradually being forgotten. China needs to have confidence in India and vice versa, and the key to build such confidence depends on the actions of both sides.

Prof. Li Li of the Institute of International Relations at Tsinghua University gave a presentation titled “US Factors in China-India mutual cognition.” Her research focused on the role of the US in Sino-Indian security issues after the normalization of Sino-Indian relations, in 1988. The content of her research involved both the intention and capability of China and India when addressing security issues.

In terms of intention, Li Li said, both China and India have a strong desire to compete for interests or realize their own claims due to border disputes and democratic disputes. Since India has the upper hand in the border issue, it is easier for it to be on the defensive. In this case, China has a stronger impulse to act on the offensive. So, India may view China as a threat for such intention.

Due to the widening gap between the national strength of China and India, India is feeling increasingly threatened. Foreseeing such a widening gap, India has put itself on the defensive. Therefore, India has a strong desire to resolve the border issue in the short term to ensure its gains. After the

involvement of US factors, the Sino-Indian relationship has been changing. US factors have restrained China's offensive trend on the border issue.

On the other hand, the US increasingly has the intent to cooperate with India since it has been more able to contain China through India issues. On this basis, India's ability to counter China has also been enhanced, while the US factors have also inhibited China's ability to counter India. Under such circumstances, India has developed an opportunistic mentality. On the boundary issue, it not only actively promotes the solution of maintaining the status quo, but also adopts a new forward policy in the western section of the border.

Li Li further elaborated the influence of US factors on China-India relations in two periods. The first period was from 1988 to 1996, when the tension between China and India were easing. During that time, China and the US fell afoul of each other, and the US was also exerting great pressure on India due to the nuclear issue, human rights, Kashmir and other issues. Therefore, India and China needed support from each other at that time, and the intention of China and India to threaten each other was reduced accordingly. In 1993 and 1996, China and India signed border agreements to adopt confidence-building measures to manage the border.

The second period was from 1998 to 2001, when US factors still existed. India wanted to use the so-called "China

threat” theory to realize its ambition of being a nuclear power, but the US made public a letter from India, which led to a China-US joint statement on nuclear issues in South Asia.

Li Li believes that India sees itself as weak and seeks to improve the status quo when China and the US are close. When China has a strong desire and ability, India will “give in.” Currently, due to the bad relations between China and the US, India is more likely to adopt offensive policies.

Qian Feng, a research fellow at the National Strategy Institute, Tsinghua University, gave a presentation titled “Is democracy out of shape in India today?” He stressed that India is like a coin, both of whose two sides need to be observed and viewed comprehensively. He describes the development of democracy in India from four aspects.

He presented India’s democracy from the perspective of one country, one political party and one person. “One country” refers to the UK. The British colonial rule in India brought Western political and civilized ideas, exposing India to Western democracy. When the British were eroding or even destroying the ancient Indian civilization, they also unknowingly gave rise to Indian capitalism. The upper class of India accepted the Western education system, and many Indian national capitalists were unintendedly cultivated, which laid a foundation for the country’s economic development after independence.

“Political party” refers to the Indian National Congress. It

is a century-old party and a product of the influence of Indian democracy. After India's independence, no matter what domestic and foreign policies the country adopted, the general direction of democracy remained unchanged. India's election commission is also relatively nonaligned.

The "one person" refers to Jawaharlal Nehru, who played a very important role in the development of democracy in India. He accepted Western elite education, and Western democracy was rooted in his heart. Out of reverence and reflection for Western democracy, Nehru learned about economics from the former Soviet Union but rejected the Soviet Union's political system.

Qian Feng also presented India's democracy from its achievement and the identification of the country's elites. After independence, India's democratic system ensured the stability of the country and played a positive role in national unification. Meanwhile, the internal factors threatening national unity and integrity were weakened with the tradition of "no military interference in politics" established. In a country with multiple religions, ethnic groups, languages, cultures and castes, democracy has been able to keep the country stable with no election scandal or recount ever.

The third aspect is the fierce collision between democracy and reality. The collision refers to the "inadaptability" of the age-old malpractice of Indian society under the democratic

system, which is manifested in stubborn corruption, family politics, farcical democratic politics, assassination and violence, and other aspects.

Qian Feng also presented India's democracy as a reflection of the country's political elites. Many of them believe that India's democracy is only 70 years old compared with the 200-year-old democracy in the US. So, there is plenty of room for improvement. They also see India's need for good governance rather than democracy when comparing the country with China. India is still lagging in terms of such reform's efficiency.

At the end of Qian Feng's presentation, he concluded that Indian-style democracy and growth have supported each other in history, but this situation has changed dramatically in today's India led by Modi.

Jiang Jingkui, professor at the School of Foreign Languages, Peking University, gave a presentation titled "Tibet from the Indian perspective." He pointed out that India has realized the strength and invincibility of China's hard power. So, it has turned to making public opinion by emphasizing the legitimacy of India's occupation of Tibet from historical and cultural aspects. It wants to seek international support on the foundation of national support.

In late March 2017, India applied to list Tibetan medicine as a world Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was opposed by



China. After China listed Tibetan medicine as an intangible cultural heritage in 2018, India named it as Sowa Rigpa in 2019 and reapplied for it to be listed as an intangible cultural heritage. In addition, the India government approved the establishment of a national-level Sowa Rigpa Institute in Leh, Ladakh. To take the first strike in international publicity, Indian government claimed that this is likely to be one of the first important decisions taken by the government for the development of Ladakh after it is officially included in India's union territory.

According to Jiang Jingkui, India wants to integrate south Tibet, Sikkim, Nepal and Ladakh to create a reasonable method to rule the region. It wants to form a Tibetan Buddhist culture belt and blur the boundary between Tibetan Buddhism and Hindu culture. In India, Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan culture are rarely talked about. Instead, it takes South Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal and Ladakh as Tibetan cultural factors in Indian culture and includes them into the Indian cultural circle to legitimize the "cultural domination" of Tibet in soft power. However, Indian classics, such as the two great epics, recorded the geographical isolation of Indian culture from Tibet. Therefore, to prevent India from misleading the public in culture, Chinese researchers should study and describe Chinese Tibetan culture together with Chinese culture.

Jiang Jingkui put up three opinions on the influence of Indian culture on Tibetan culture. First, before the Tubo regime

was established, Tibetan Buddhism was spread to southern Tibet, Nepal, Ladakh, Sikkim and other places after the formation of Tibet. Meanwhile, Tibetan Buddhism is not Indian Buddhism, and it could not have been spread from the bottom to the top in India. It could only be Tibetan culture that has influenced Indian culture. After the Tubo regime was founded, it was not India that influenced China, but China initially absorbed Buddhist culture from India. According to Indian written materials and archaeological records, no Hindu historical remains have been found near the Kangrinboqe. With a consensus among Chinese scholars formed on this issue, China will be able to have the power of discourse on this subject internationally.

The second point is very important. The biggest difference between India and China is that China is not religious, but India is. Chinese are atheists and Indians are theists. Therefore, when dealing with Indians, strategies should be adopted according to their historical and world views.

Third, it is Chinese Tibetan culture that has influenced India, not the other way around. It is most important for domestic researchers to find such evidence from history, communicate with India and prove it by restoring history.

Wang Xu, associate professor at the School of Foreign Languages at Peking University, gave a presentation titled “Narratives about China in Indian history textbooks.” He first explained the origin of the study on the topic. He stated, first,

that it was a very important content to understand China when South Asian countries are building modern nation-states. Most of the negative factors in India's perception against China have come from the collective perception transmitted through textbooks and conceived by the collective memory. Therefore, to study how China and India perceive each other, researchers need to examine how India's history textbooks portray China.

Wang Xu pointed out that the current major conflicts between China and India include issues on boundary, nuclear weapons, terrorism and India's pursuit of permanent UN Security Council membership. These contradictions can be divided into two categories: structural ones such as boundary issues and Tibet-related issues, and Pakistan-related issues. China-Pakistan relations have become a major stumbling block in China-India relations. Since the 18th century, there has been a very strong process of "othering" of Muslims in India, resulting in the contradiction between India and Pakistan.

Considering the development of China-Pakistan relations, India regards China and Pakistan as a community of shared interests. When India implements the "othering" of Muslims in general, or those it says are represented by Pakistan, China, as another "other," is implicated in it as well. Therefore, the construction of the "other" in the process of Hindu nationalism nation-state construction, and the interaction within China-India relations, India-Pakistan relations, and reality-theory

construction, are topics very worthy of attention.

According to Wang Xu, there is a simple conclusion can be drawn by studying the historical narratives related to China in Indian textbooks, which is, India's view on China cannot be changed in the short-term future. Under such circumstances, it would be difficult for the two countries to carry out cultural exchanges and friendly development.

First, the construction of China-related narratives in Indian history textbooks did not start when the Bharatiya Janata Party took office in 2014, and its China-related narratives have been consistent.

Comparing the education policies when the National Congress party ruled and the China-related narratives in history textbooks in that period, it is obvious that India has been adjusting them and making them more and more negative. It is closely related to Sino-Indian relations and the construction of "othering" by Hindu nationalists. This problem also reveals that Indian politics and society as a whole has turned right, leading to negative public opinion of China, not only among a minority of elites in India, but also within the entire society.

The historical narrative about China in India's textbooks includes three major themes: the 1962 border conflict between China and India, Tibet-related issues, and communist ideology. India has described China as an overbearing aggressor, a threat to India and an evil red demon. Also, it invented and emphasized

Tibet's autonomy in the history and the cultural ties between India and Tibet. A series of subtle influences constituted the theoretical basis and public opinion basis of India's strategic choice. Since the founding of India in 1947, a resonance has been formed through top-down national construction efforts and bottom-up changes in the perception on China. And the top-down carnival of the Indian media during the Galwan Valley stand-off was only a symptom and consequence of such a perception.

According to Wang Xu, this cognitive construction against China has produced the following problems: First, it hastened India's shifting of its perception on China to a negative one. At present, the upper-level elites in India are increasingly estranged from China in politics. In the private sector, according to a 2020 poll in India, two-thirds of respondents thought China was a bigger problem than Pakistan, doubling the proportion in 2016. Among the interviewees, those with a bachelor's degree or higher generally worried about the China threat. Supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party were more concerned about China's growing economic and military power, and saw the boundary disputes and China–Pakistan relations as serious obstacles to India's rise.

Second, the Bharatiya Janata Party denies China's sovereignty over Tibet. Hindu nationalism seeks to build a “greater India,” which is based on Indian cultural construction

and imagination. This has resulted in a negative impression of China.

Third, it has spurred India's hardline policy toward China, which have been moves to decouple from China, implementation of aggressive border policies, and stronger hedging measures against the Belt and Road Initiative. India's current policy determines a closer relationship between the US and India, and the benefits it brings far outweigh the negative costs caused by its strained relations with China.

Ding Hao, director of the Research Office of Academy of Military Sciences, gave a presentation titled "Indian perceptions of China and its strategy toward China" from two entry points.

First, polls on India conducted by research agencies over past years. According to the polls of Pew Research Center released in June 2017, India's kindness to China was declining, and the Bharatiya Janata Party and the elites were becoming more anti-China. In 2020, India's polls basically concluded that 70 percent of people believed that India could win if a war was launched between China and India; 84 percent of people did not trust China; 59 percent believed that the Sino-Indian border issue could be resolved through war; and up to 91 percent agreed with India's ban on Chinese apps, and so on. Thus, Indian polls reflect a relatively negative view of China.

Second, India's perception of China drawn from the academic research by Chinese scholars in recent years. Chinese

scholars usually divide China-related Indian parties into three factions. One is those friendly to China and who understand China, represented by the Indian Communist Party, left-wing scholars, pacifists, and anti-Americanists. Another is the moderate or centrist faction, which includes government officials, businessmen, academia, and media. They interact with China economically but are wary of China in terms of security. Still another is the opposition faction or the hawks, which is represented by the Indian military or people in the intelligence, security, and strategic fields.

Ding Hao pointed out that the two views above were limited and impacted by time and standpoints. Our understanding of India's perception of China must penetrate the surface to see the inner essence with a comprehensive, historical and dialectic angle. He put forward several opinions on Indian perceptions of China from the perspective of India's strategic culture. One is that the tradition of Kautilya's realism and the thoughts of "befriending the distant enemy while attacking a nearby enemy" have had a profound influence on India's strategic choices. Another is that the British colonial tradition had a deep influence on India, branding India's security thinking, political system and ideology. Still another is that India's complex of being a big power, its splendid culture and its long history have all had a profound impact on its psychology.

Given this background, Ding Hao, basing his views on Su

Jiesheng's *India's Road: Strategies to Respond an Unknown World* and Shyam Saran's *How India Sees the World: Kautilya and the 21st Century*, summarized the Indian mainstream's perceptions of China. First, India does not sufficiently understand Sino-Indian historical economic and trade ties, and India tends to be self-centered. Therefore, ordinary people do not know enough about the history and culture of China and India. On the contrary, they think that the exchanges between China and India in the 1950s were painted in overly rosy colors, and India has been more helpful to China than vice versa. This has led Indians to know nothing about the close ties between China and India in history and to believe there is huge difference between the political systems and ideologies of the two countries. Second, the deep memories of contemporary history, especially the Sino-Indian conflict, have caused concerns about China's growing political and military power. Third, dissatisfaction with China–Pakistan relations. India believes that the relationship between China and Pakistan is a challenge to India, which relates to China's recognition of India and its status; thus, they believe that China has not been sincere enough to India. Finally, the Sino-Indian border dispute. India regards the border issue as the key to the comprehensive normalization of relations between China and India, and a necessary step for the two sides to strengthen worldwide and region-wise cooperation. At present, India believes that it is China's actions that caused



the dispute between the two countries, whereas, in fact, the opposite is true. At the same time, India believes that taking a tough stance against China can bring better benefits. Therefore, at this stage, India believes that it is necessary to be tough, even if a war is triggered.

Ding Hao opined that the above issues related to China are representative, which, in the view of the Indians, basically mirror the essence of the relations between the two countries. India's strategy toward China under the framework of India's diplomatic strategy can be generally summarized as "looking at the world realistically." It means taking a flexible and pragmatic approach to China without foregoing establishing an alliance with the US or giving up its right to take any means to serve the interest of its national security and development.

Lan Jianxue, a research fellow from the China Institute of International Studies, made a presentation titled "Reflections on Promoting the Model of Sino-Indian Relations in the New Era." He opined that, since 2004, India's foreign policy has been highly distinguishable and relatively stable because the Indian government is not a multi-party coalition. In the recent two decades, both the domestic and foreign policies of India have undergone changes. In this sense, the following two aspects should be engaged in breakthroughs — national restructuring and diplomatic advance. With the gradual increase in China's comprehensive power and walking to the center of the world

stage, both China and India are witnessing great changes, and Sino-Indian relations have entered a new era. Overall, challenges and influence from India on China's sovereignty and security development have become more prominent.

First, over the recent two decades, India's foreign policy and Sino-Indian relations have undergone prominent changes. After thorough consideration, India started to strategically bind with the US, a tendency that will not change in the future. Notably, with India gradually being involved in US diplomatic and security systems, its previous strategic autonomy will inevitably be eroded. Therefore, the evaluation on whether India can maintain its strategic autonomy needs to be continually adjusted based on actual situation.

Second, the speculative and adventurous nature of India's China policy is extremely noticeable. Currently, India is gradually decoupling from China, which was not something decided on a whim, but after careful calculations of changes in the country and the international situation. It is also a new change for Sino-Indian relations.

Third, in recent years, the strategic competitions between China and India in their shared border regions have intensified, and the momentum for cooperation on the international stage and global governance field has been declining. For example, competition is intensifying in their strategic overlapping areas, including Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, the Indian

Ocean and even East Africa. In the past, the multilateral arena saw relatively close ties between China and India in the aspects of the non-aligned movement, responding to climate change, carrying out South-South cooperation and coordinating emerging economies. But in recent years, the two countries have had fierce confrontations on a series of issues, such as regional and global governance, Security Council reform, Kashmir region issues, and tracing the origin of COVID-19. Sino-Indian cooperation on the multilateral stage has become increasingly difficult.

Overall, the connotation and extension, inner momentum and external environment of Sino-Indian relations have been undergoing great changes, which requires new understanding. Given the context that both countries are increasing in national power, how should they explore ways of coexistence? Lan Jianxue proposed a “China-India model”: On the premise of the two countries’ territorial sovereignty dispute and major strategic disagreements being unresolved, both China and India are capable of controlling disputes, continuously creating common or shared interests, trying to avoid conflicts caused by the rise and fall of the big powers, and maintaining a stable relationship.

Lan Jianxue pointed out that four principles must be complied with to promote such a “China-India model.” First, the two countries must “evolve” together and realize strategic “evolution” during peaceful competition. The momentum for

both countries to grow stronger together will not end, each of them is not able to constrain the other completely, and external forces are difficult to stop the rise of the two countries. In this sense, China and India can only keep the long-term situation of “evolving” together. If they could not boost each other’s achievement, they should at least not interfere in each other but compete equally. The second is to be accustomed to grudges. Both countries accurately compare and coordinate their respective core interests and concerns. For example, to establish a sense of control on boundary issues. Control is the beginning of solving problems. The third is to go beyond the Cold War mentality and inject new connotations and perspectives to Sino-Indian relations. Achieving linkage and consistency between top and bottom is a prerequisite for establishing Sino-Indian relations in the new era. The fourth is to conduct pragmatic cooperation to maximize the establishment of a bond of common interests between the two countries.

The presentation by Lou Chunhao, deputy director of the Institute of South Asian Studies of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, was titled “India’s perception of the world and China amid the COVID-19 epidemic.” The presentation had three aspects.

First, impacted by the epidemic, India has found itself in hot water. Recently, the death rate in India caused by COVID-19 has risen, but the vaccination rate has been low. Therefore, the

epidemic will have an impact on India for a long time in the future. But India holds enough confidence toward the situation, and the international community also believes that India can find opportunities amid the crisis and play a larger role in the post-epidemic international order. Thus, as Lou Chunhao pointed out, India believes that the epidemic exposed the loopholes in global governance and that it has a chance to benefit from between China and the US and to promote its reform. Meanwhile, the global industrial chain and value chain faces demands that it be reshaped after the end of the epidemic, during which India believes that it can become an alternative manufacturing center. Moreover, India also hopes to take advantage of the reshaping of the industrial chain to reduce its dependence on the Chinese industrial chain. Second, India hopes to promote vaccine diplomacy via the epidemic to improve its global influence. At the recent summit of the US, India, Australia, and Japan, the four countries jointly issued document expressing the desire of the four countries to work together, along with three areas of cooperation, proposing to establish a vaccine partnership. However, due to the serious domestic epidemic situation in India since March, India has suspended foreign exports, and vaccine diplomacy may also die out early.

Against the backdrop of the epidemic, India's perception of China has undergone some changes, from taking pleasure in China's misfortune to "being envious" of China's performance.

China's investment in India over the years has been increased quickly, but since the reshaping of the industrial chain caused by the epidemic in 2020, along with the border issue and the rising economic nationalism, India has released a series of discriminative policies against China. Lou Chunhao pointed out that the trade volume does not show a complete picture of Sino-Indian economic and trade relations and the tendency of India's decoupling from China still stands up.

Third, China and India have turned from global governance and multilateral mechanism partners to being competitors. At present, the multilateral mechanism is West-oriented, and India is leaning more toward the US due to three reasons. First, the intensifying competition between China and the US has provided India with space and possibility for risk-taking; second, the benefit gained by India from cooperating with the US is larger than the loss from competing with China; third, the US-led order is more beneficial to India than the China-led order.

Lou Chunhao pointed out that India hopes to make its voice heard in global governance and provide an India-made solution, including offering public health services, playing the role as the world's pharmacy, and developing vaccine diplomacy, among others. These are India's post-epidemic plans on the international stage.

Liao Bo, an associate professor from the Information

Engineering University, made a presentation titled “The impact of false information on Indian perceptions of China.” When talking about the origins of his research, he said that, in December 2020, EU DisinfoLab released a report called “Indian Chronicle,” disclosing that an organization in India had produced false information for a long time that discredited Pakistan and China. This organization has a huge network, manipulates a lot of false media, and spreads false information. It has even influenced the UN Human Rights Commission to make unfavorable proposals against China. The report showed that a new war is unfolding between India and Pakistan and between China and India, which has deeply affected the arena of public opinion and has become a non-peaceful act. Regrettably, the international media did not pay more attention to it, and neither did the Chinese government protest it.

Liao Bo said that his team conducted related investigations on these data, and the quantitative analysis showed that a lot of facts prove that India systematically spreads news that is not conducive to China and Pakistan in the international public opinion field, which has objectively confirmed what the “Indian Chronicle” said was true.

Liao Bo summarized the characteristics of the false news used by India to discredit China and Pakistan. First, there is a huge network behind Indian media to systematically produce and spread false news. Second, such false news articles are in

large number and have no bottom line. In the early half of 2020, the online false news read by Indians about the situation of COVID-19 in China had no bottom line at all. Even the earliest reports that discredited China's so-called genocide against Uyghurs were from the Indian media. Third, the false information of the Indian media has had a huge international impact. Due to the large population of India and the high popularity of English, Indians have a strong discourse power. Therefore, false information created by the Indian media, after being amplified by Indian netizens, forms a strong resonance effect, which has had a very negative impact on China in international public opinion. Liao Bo expressed his belief that India wants to achieve two goals by countenancing false information. First, to create anti-Pakistan and anti-China public opinion domestically; second, to create anti-Pakistan and anti-China consensus in the international community. India's domestic organizations and agencies have spared no effort in discrediting China and have engaged in doing this for as long as 15 years. After fermentation of the information, there has been an onrush of anti-Chinese public opinion.

Liao Bo also analyzed the manipulators behind it. He said that as India's consensus attacks, information attacks and hacker attacks toward China and Pakistan have been greatly intensifying, Chinese scholars should pay more attention to these issues.



Prof. Wang Chunjing from Hebei Normal University made a presentation titled “Gender perspective in the study of Chinese perceptions of India—Taking women’s travel notes as an example.” Wang Chunjing pointed out that males and females have different perspectives in writing travel notes. In the travel notes of the well-known Chinese male writers Yu Qiuyu and Yu Jian, they usually either hold a narrow-minded standpoint or compliment India. But both focus on the backward aspects of India and target India’s negative image.

However, women’s travel notes to India have played a special role in constructing a positive image of India. Wang Chunjing opined that women’s social status has determined that women’s travel notes to India come out late. Since the founding of China, the earliest female travel notes to India were by renowned writer Bing Xin, in her *A Trip to India*. However, due to the then China-India friendly environment, the personalized expressions of emotions, psychology, and character relationships were quite few, and the writing was relatively formularized. A lot of Indian travel notes by female writers appeared after 2000. According to statistics, from 2005 to 2015, there were 21 examples of female-written travel notes. It can be seen from the numbers that during this period, Chinese people’s personal exchanges with India were quite active, which was inconsistent with the negative tensions previously mentioned.

Wang Chunjing pointed out that most of the women’s travel

notes to India at this stage did not represent the knowledge of professionals. Their descriptions were basically from their direct knowledge of India, and were mainly emotional and subjective. At the same time, Wang Chunjing drew on theories of surface phenomenology, feminine literature and travel studies to draw the conclusion that the fundamental reason for the differences between the Indian travel notes by men and women is social differences, and therefore different images of foreign countries were presented in their notes. Women often present new themes when they look at foreign countries, which is determined by the cultural context. Women pay more attention to individuals, families and women's status, which is particularly prominent in travel notes to India. However, Chinese men are more exposed to the public world in India, rarely pay attention to the private sphere, and are not as sensitive as women in this field. However, most of the 21 books were focused on personal experience, and have a little introduction to the knowledge of Indian history and religion.

Wang Chunjing expressed her belief that women's travel notes to India present the following characteristics:

First, India is described as a spiritual home, and its spiritual characteristics are highlighted. Many authors hope that through India's religious culture, the depression and psychological distress of their soul can be resolved, and seeking peace of mind in India is a very common motivation for traveling there.

Second, the love stories described in female travel notes to India are often full of passion and affection. They are described as fresh, beautiful and charming emotional experiences, and, as such, they show the progress of Chinese women.

In her conclusion, Wang Chunjing pointed out that women's travel notes to India focus on recording personal relationships with others, as well as emotional and psychological experiences, among which public cultural stereotypes rarely play a role. With their personal writing, they have created a more positive image of India beyond the dirty environment.

Jin Yongli, associate professor at the School of History of Renmin University of China, gave a presentation titled "India's two perceptions of China." She compared the views on Sino-Indian relations in the report *India's Strategic Choices: China and the Balance of Power in Asia*, which had Prof. Rajesh Rajagopalan at Jawaharlal Nehru University as the main author, and the book *Pax Indica: India and the World in the 21st Century*, by Shashi Tharoor.

The central argument of Rajesh Rajagopalan's report *India's Strategic Choices: China and the Balance of Power in Asia* is that an alliance with the US is India's best strategic choice. The geographical proximity of China and India poses a huge threat to India's security, Asia's geopolitics, and even global interests. In this state of instability, India should ensure its own interests.

Prof. Jin Yongli also summarized several points in the report. First, China's rise has brought about many challenges to India, including military threats and border issues. Second, China's role in newly established international organizations is becoming more important, which will possibly hurt India's interests and obstruct India's goals. Third, China's alliance with Pakistan and its deepening ties with other South Asian countries have constituted severe challenges to India in South Asia. After all, India has been in a dominant position in South Asia over the past decades. Fourth, China's economic power allows China to spread its influence worldwide, which may harm the interests of India. The report insisted that India's geographic location makes it impossible to dominate Asia. Since India cannot dominate Asia, it must ensure that other powers cannot dominate it either. Although, theoretically, the US is also overwhelming, it poses a much smaller threat because it is far away from India. There are no major disputes, especially territorial disputes, between India and the US. Building an alliance with the US would therefore be beneficial to India.

In Jin Yongli's opinion, the report collectively mirrored the anti-China thought of India's domestic right-wing forces, who regard China as an obstacle for India to realize its goal to become a hegemon and a strong world power and regard the alliance with the US as its most important channel to become a big power. Meanwhile, Tharoor repeatedly stresses the

importance of India's soft power. He highly admires the diversity within India but has a rather rigid view of China.

Prof. Jin Yongli pointed out that in terms of Sino-Indian relations, Tharoor mentions more of competition. From the aspects of building roads, dams and holding Olympic Games, he shows that China and India have totally different systems, and there is no comparison between them. India's bureaucracy is rigid and China's system is efficient; foreign investors need to follow red tape in India, while China shows an open attitude; India is filled with divided opinions, which is difficult for political parties to control, while China's Communist Party system works well from top to bottom. Therefore, although Tharoor believes that India still needs to solve many problems before competing with China, there is still room for cooperation between China and India. On the sensitive border issue, New Delhi has no intention to cater to Beijing. China's development experience and economic influence are an exception, and it is difficult for other countries to learn from it.

Jin Yongli put forward two points of thinking: First, both Rajesh Rajagopalan and Tharoor are greatly influenced by Western geopolitics. No matter whether they regard China as a strategic adversary or view China from the perspective of American democratic values, they have not jumped out of Western thinking. They do not have Tagore's cosmopolitan vision, Nehru's Asianism vision or the perspective of human

civilization. Second, the two authors look at problems from the perspective of criticizing the other, but seldom from the perspective of the other, so misunderstandings and misjudgments will inevitably occur.

The topic of the presentation by Indian dance performer Jin Shanshan was “A view of the Chinese perception of India and Indian perception of China from the Artistic Perspective.” She first put forward her views on the Chinese perception of India, which was divided into two parts. One was that some people have no understanding of India but base their knowledge of India on hearsay, which leads to deepening misunderstandings; the other was those who are interested in Indian culture and develop affections for the country.

Starting from her experience of learning Indian classic dance, she pointed out that dance can reflect one’s inner power, which is more like a faith but not related to religion. Indian art can make people spiritually enlightened.

Jin Shanshan expressed her belief that India is quite confident about its culture and art, which is frequently embodied in life. At the same time, Indian people respect artists. That is why Indian culture and art can be passed down and spread to other parts of the world. It is also part of India’s soft power.

Jin Shanshan pointed out that, different from India, China neglected its traditional culture while paying attention to its rapidly growing economy. Moreover, Chinese people value

speed while having not enough patience. In terms of education, Indian students start to learn Indian classical music from an early age, while Chinese music education is more Western-style and does not focus on the study of traditional culture.

Regarding Indian perceptions of China, she opined that in the eye of India, China is economically powerful, but Indian people have little knowledge about Chinese art. She said that Chinese art is decoupling with public life. But in India, religion is the source of art and a part of life, and art is closely related to life.

She summarized her presentation by saying that culture is the best bridge to connect emotions. In the 1950s, Premier Zhou Enlai established the China Oriental Song and Dance Ensemble, pioneering a path for cultural diplomacy. Today, China can continue down that path, do more cultural popularization, showcase China's excellent traditional culture, and promote China's Tai Chi culture, classical music and classical dance on a large scale. Only by deepening the mutual understanding and respect between the people of the two countries can the friendship between the two countries be promoted.

Liu Xiaoxue, an associate research fellow of the Institute of Asia-Pacific and Global Strategies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, gave a presentation titled "Read the *Economic Survey* of India to Observe India's Perception of China's Experience." Liu Xiaoxue pointed out that the *Economic Survey*

is very reliable and authoritative. It serves policy makers, economists, political analysts and businesspeople.

Analyzing the content of the *Economic Survey* in detail, she opined that the content of the *Survey* reports is very comprehensive, and has been increasing year by year, and will be changing to a World Bank research report. Since 2014, the reports have been divided into two volumes. Volume I is about the prospects and Volume II analyzes economic situation. The reports have been paying more and more attention to China, mainly from three aspects: First, as an important component of the international economic environment, China's role has been becoming more and more prominent. Second, as a statistics reference for India's economic development. For example, India's agriculture, employment, and labor quality are compared with China statistically. Third, China is a reference object for India's development policy. India has not deviated from the East Asian model.

Using 2016 and 2017 as examples, Liu Xiaoxue made a detailed explanation of the comparison of the data and expressed her belief that the rating agencies had unfairly evaluated the sovereign credits of China and India. In terms of manufacturing, the report pointed out that China's labor costs were rising, but this part only accounted for a small part of the price of produced goods. The real impact came from logistics costs, which were much lower in China.



She also introduced the statistical data of the second volume. She pointed out that each chapter of the report involved comparison with China and an analysis of China, thus seeking the possibility of India's learning from China and suggesting opportunities for India to catch up with China. At the same time, the report also mentioned China's poverty alleviation work, taking China's path as a reference.

Liu Xiaoxue summarized the most important aspects of Indian perceptions of China. She pointed out that India's perception of China involves a multidimensional cognition. Instead of researching public opinion in India, researchers should better understand Indian elites' understanding of China and the importance of their views.

The participants had a discussion after the presentations. Liu Xiaoxue pointed out that in the East Asian model, the government plays a direct role, and the manufacturing industry is very active. In this regard, India must increase investment, improve domestic investment efficiency, improve infrastructure, and enhance labor policies. At present, India has moved closer to the East Asian model in terms of investment and manufacturing industry.

Wang Xu pointed out that the traditional structural contradictions in Sino-Indian relations cannot be resolved. At the same time, India is learning the East Asian model. In this way, the same economic development model used by China and

India has resulted in competition; therefore, it is inevitable for India to promote de-Sinicization. On this basis, the structural contradictions between China and India have increased. This is a major hidden danger in the future development of Sino-Indian relations.

Lan Jianxue pointed out that the mutual appreciation of art and culture between China and India not only failed to create an understanding of political relations, but instead deteriorated the relations. Jiang Jingkui opined that the reason for this problem was that China's friendly attitude toward Indian culture and art was mainly based on the understanding of Buddhism, while India's recognition of Chinese culture is based on China's acceptance of Buddhism, rather than reality and the status quo. Moreover, many people in China and India are unwilling to understand each other in depth, so they cannot move toward mutual recognition politically, resulting in a disconnect between history and reality. The differences in faiths between China and India have led to misunderstandings between the two peoples. In this regard, Rong Ying pointed out that China and India should have more dialogue and exchanges and not rely merely on seeing and imagining each other from their own perspectives. They still need to learn more on the spiritual or cultural level.

Prof. Jiang Jingkui said at the end of the workshop that thinking about India's perception of China from a Chinese perspective not only involves the fields of area studies, politics,

and diplomatic relations, but is also deeply related to history, religion, and culture. China-India relations should not stop at the political and cultural level. While Indian elites' diligence in analyzing and studying China deserves attention, misunderstanding of China by ordinary people is more important and will affect the future development of China-India relations. Therefore, "Chinese perceptions of India and Indian perceptions of China" is a subject worthy of long-term consideration and research by scholars of both countries.