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The cultural relations between India and China can be traced back to very early times. There are numerous references to China in Sanskrit texts, but their chronology is sketchy. The Mahabharata refers to China several times, including a reference to presents brought by the Chinese at the Rajasuya Yajna of the Pandavas; also, the Arthashastra and the Manusmriti mention China. According to French art historian, Rene Grousset, the name China comes from "an ancient" Sanskrit name for the regions to the east, and not, as often supposed, from the name of the state of Ch'in," the first dynasty established by Shih Huang Ti in 221 B.C. The Sanskrit name Cina for China could have been derived from the small state of that name in Chan-si in the northwest of China, which flourished in the fourth century B.C. Scholars have pointed out that the Chinese word for lion, shih, used long before the Chin dynasty, was derived from the Sanskrit word, simha, and that the Greek word for China, Tzinista, used by some later writers, appears to be derivative of the Sanskrit Chinasthana. According to Terence Duke, martial arts went from India to China. Fighting without weapons was a specialty of the ancient Kshatriya warriors of India. Both Arnold Toynbee and Sir L. Wooley speak of a ready made culture coming to China. That was the Vedic culture of India.

Until recently, India and China had coexisted peacefully for over two thousand years. This amicable relationship may have been nurtured by the close historical and religious ties of Buddhism, introduced to China by Indian monks at a very early stage of their respective histories, although there are fragmentary records of contacts anterior to the introduction of Buddhism.

Gerolamo Emilio Gerini (1860 -1913) has said: "During the three or four centuries, preceding the Christian era, we find Indu (Hindu) dynasties established by adventurers, claiming descent from the Kshatriya potentates of northern India, ruling in upper Burma, in Siam and Laos, in Yunnan and Tonkin, and even in most parts of southeastern China." The Chinese literature of the third century is full of geographic and mythological elements derived from India. "I see no reason to doubt," comments Arthur Waley in his book, The Way and its Power, "that the 'holy mountain-men' (*sheng-hsien*) described by Lieh Tzu are Indian rishi; and when we read in *Chuang Tzu* of certain Taoists who practiced movements very similar to the *asanas* of Hindu yoga, it is at least a possibility that some knowledge of the yoga technique which these *rishi* used had also drifted into China."

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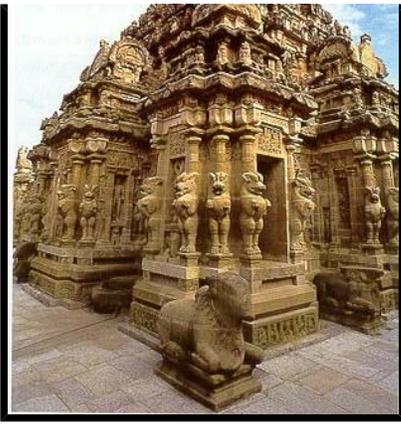


**Bhaarat: Teacher of China**

Hinduism and Buddhism, both have had profound effect on religious and cultural life of China. Chinese early religion was based on nature and had many things in common with Vedic Hinduism, with a pantheon of deities.



**"Never before had China seen a religion so rich in imagery, so beautiful and captivating in ritualism and so bold in cosmological and metaphysical speculations. Like a poor beggar suddenly halting before a magnificent storehouse of**



precious stones of dazzling brilliancy and splendor, China was overwhelmed, baffled and overjoyed. She begged and borrowed freely from this munificent giver. The first borrowings were chiefly from the religious life of India, in which China's indebtedness to India can never be fully told."

(source: [India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal](#) p. 338).

The story of [Sun Hou Tzu, the Monkey King, and Hsuan Tsang](#). It is a vicarious and humorous tale, an adventure story akin to the **Hindu epic of Ramayana**, and like Ramayana, a moral tale of the finer aspects of human endeavor which come to prevail over those of a less worthy nature. **The book ends with a dedication to India:** I dedicate this work to Buddha's pure land. May it repay the kindness of patron and preceptor, may it mitigate the sufferings of the lost and damned...'

(source: [Eastern Wisdom - By Michael Jordan](#) p -134-151).

**Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren** (1760-1842) an Egyptologist and author of [Historical researches into the politics, intercourse, and trade of the Carthaginians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians](#) observes that:

**"the name China is of Hindu origin and came to us from India."**

**"M. de Guignes** says that Magadha was known to the Chinese by the name Mo-kiato, and its capital was recognized by both its Hindu name Kusumpura, for which the Chinese wrote Kia-so-mo-pon-lo and Pataliputra, out of which they made Patoli-tse by translating putra, which means son in Sanskrit, into their own corresponding word, tse. Such translation of names has thrown a Veil of obscurity over many a name of Hindu origin. Hindu geography has suffered a great loss."

(source: [Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society](#) Volume. V).

**Lin Yutang** (1895-1976) author of [The Wisdom of China and India](#):



"The contact with poets, forest saints and the best wits of the land, the glimpse into the first awakening of Ancient India's mind as it searched, at times childishly and naively, at times with a deep intuition, but at all times earnestly and passionately, for the spiritual truths and the meaning of existence - this experience must be highly stimulating to anyone, particularly because the Hindu culture is so different and therefore so much to offer." Not until we see the richness of the Hindu mind and its essential spirituality can we understand India...."

**"India was China's teacher in religion and imaginative literature, and the world's teacher in trigonometry, quadratic equations, grammar, phonetics, Arabian Nights, animal fables, chess, as well as in philosophy, and that she inspired Boccaccio, Goethe, Herder, Schopenhauer, Emerson, and probably also old Aesop."**

(source: [The Wisdom of China and India - By Lin Yutang](#) p. 3-4).

**Sir William Jones** (1746-1794) came to India as a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta. He pioneered Sanskrit studies. His admiration for Indian thought and culture was almost limitless. **He says that the Chinese assert their Hindu origin."**

(source: [Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan; or the Central and Western Rajput States - By James Tod](#) Volume I, p. 35-57).

**Amaury de Reincourt** (1918 - ) was born in Orleans, France. He received his B.A. from the Sorbonne and his M.A. from the University of Algiers. He is author of several books including [The American empire](#) and [The Soul of India](#), he wrote: " The Chinese travelers' description of life in India... reveals great admiration from all concerned for the remarkable civilization displayed under their eyes."

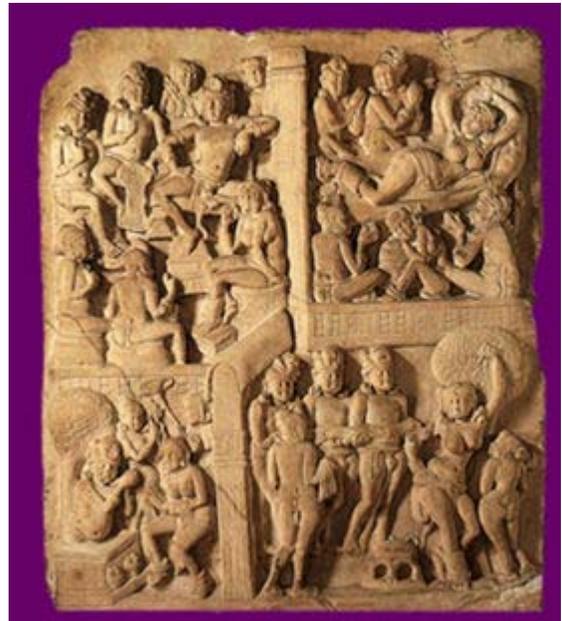
"India sent missionaries, China sending back pilgrims. It is a striking fact that in all relations between the two civilizations, **the Chinese were always the recipient and the Indian the donor.**" **"Indian influence prevailed over the Chinese, and for evident reasons: an undoubted cultural superiority owing to much greater philosophic and religious insight, and also to a far more flexible script."**

(source: [The Soul of India – by Amaury de Riencourt](#) p 141 and 161).



### China (Cinaratha) in the Epic of Mahabharata

It is well known that in the **Mahabharata** the **Cinas** appear with the Kiratas among the armies of king **Bhagadatta of Pragjyotisa or Assam**. In the Sabhaparvan this king is described as surrounded by the Kiratas and the Cinas. In the Bhismaparvan, the corps of Bhagadatta, consisting of the Kiratas and the Cinas of yellow color, appeared like a forest of Karnikaras. It is significant that the Kiratas represented all the people living to the east of India in the estimation of the geographers of the Puranas. Even the dwellers of the islands of the Eastern Archipelago were treated as Kiratas in the Epics. The reference to their wealth of gold, silver, gems, sandal, aloewood, textiles and fabrics clearly demonstrates their association with the regions included in Suvarnavdipa. Thus, the connection of the Kiratas and Cinas is a sure indication of the fact that the Indians came to know of the Chinese through the eastern routes and considered them as an eastern people, having affinities to the Kiras, who were the Indo-Mongoloids, inhabiting the Tibeto-Burman regions and the Himalayan and East Indian territories, the word Kirata being a derivation from kiranti or kirati, the name of a group of people in eastern Nepal.



**In early Indian literature China is invariably shown to be connected with India by a land-route across the country of the Kiratas in the mountainous regions of the north.** In the Vanaparvan of the Mahabharata the Pandava brothers are said to have crossed the country of the Cinas in course of their trek through the Himalayan territory north of Badri and reached the realm of the Kirata king Subahu. The Cinas are brought into intimate relationship with the Himalayan people (Haimavatas) in the Sabhaparvan also. The land of the Haimavatas is undoubtedly the Himavantappadesa of the Pali texts, which has been identified with Tibet or Nepal. In the Sasanavamsa this region is stated to be **Cinarattha**. Thus, it is clear that China was known to the Indians as lying across the Himalayas and was accordingly included in the Himalayan territories. In the **Nagarjunikonda** inscription of Virapurudatta, China (Cina) is said to be lying in the Himalayas beyond Cilata or Kirata. These references to the proximity of China to the Himalayan regions, inhabited by the Kiratas, show that there were regular routes through the Tibeto-Burman territories, along which the Indians could reach China.

**Some such land-route is implied in the remark of the Harsacarita of Banabhatta that Arjuna conquered the Hemakuta region after passing through Cina.** Of course, the route across Central Asia is perhaps alluded to in the itinerary of Carudatta from the Indus Delta to China across the country of the Hunas and the Khasas, described in the Vasudevakindi, and there is probably a reference to the sea-route, passing through Vanga, Takkola and Suvarnavdipa, in the Milindapanho. But there is no doubt that in a large number of ancient Indian texts China is mentioned near the eastern Himalayan regions, through which regular routes, connecting this country with India, passed from fairly early times. It was along these routes that India came into contact with China for the first time and developed commercial relations with her, that are referred to by Chan K'ien in the second century B.C.

In Yunnan there is a large number of old pagodas. Some of them are the oldest and most beautiful in China. Their cornices and corner decoration, showing rows of pitchers (mangala ghata), betray unmistakable Indian influence. Many bricks of these pagodas bear Sanskrit inscriptions, containing Buddhist mantras and formulae in a script, which is identical with that current in Nalanda and Kamarupa in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The beautiful bronze statue of Avalokitesvara from the pagoda of Ch'ung Sheng Ssu near Ta-li is an index to the high standard of culture and craftsmanship attained by the Buddhists of Yunan.

In earlier times, the people of the east, Magadha and Videha, were in contact with Yunan, as the traditions of Purvavideha show. The two names, Purvavideha and Gandhara, seem to represent these two successive eastern and western streams of Indian colonial and cultural expansion in this region.

**Henry Rudolph Davies** (1865 - ) says that Besides Buddhism, Shaivism was also popular in Yunan as is manifest from the prevalence of the cult of Mahakala there. This ancient Indian colony in the south of China was the cradle of Sino-Indian cultural relationship for a long time.



It was an important outpost of Indian cultural expansion along the eastern land-routes, which **Colonel Gerolamo Emilio Gerini** (1860 -1913) author of **Researches on Ptolemy's geography of eastern Asia (further India and Indo-Malay archipelago)** p. 122 -124 has described as follows:

“During the three or four centuries, preceding the Christian era, we find **Indu (Hindu) dynasties established by adventurers, claiming descent from the Kshatriya potentates of northern India, ruling in upper Burma, in Siam and Laos, in Yunnan and Tonkin, and even in most parts of southeastern China.** From the Brahmaputra and Manipur to the Tonkin Gulf we can trace a continuous string of petty states, ruled by those scion of the **Kshatriya race, using the**

**Sanskrit or Pali language in official documents or inscriptions; building temples and other monuments after the Indu (Hindu) style and employing Brahmana priests for the propitiatory ceremonies,** connected with the court and state. Among such Indu (Hindu) monarchies (Theinni) in Burma, of Muang Hang, C'hieng Rung, Muang Khwan and Dasarna (Luang P'hrah Bang) in the Lau country; and of Agranagara (Hanoi) and Campa in Tonkin and Annan.”

“The names of peoples and cities, **recorded by Ptolemy** in that region, however few and imperfectly preserved, are sufficiently significant to prove the presence of the Indu (Hindu) ruling and civilizing element in these countries, undoubtedly not so barbarous as the Chinese would make them appear.”

“It is evident through the medium of those barbarians that **China received part of her civilization through India.**”

Among these colonies Tagong and upper Pagan were called Mayura; Prome was Sriksetra; Sen-wi (Theinni) was Sivirastra; Muang Hang, Chieng Rung and Muang Khwan were the three divisions of Ching Rung kingdom, which the prince of Yong, named Sunandakumara, united under Mahiyagananagara; Luang P'hrah Bang was Dasarna; Hanoi was Agranagara; Tagaung was Brahmadesa (P'o;-o-men), where a Sanskrit inscription, dated in Gupta era 108 – 426 A.D. refers to Hastinapura, situated in that country; and, of course, Yunana was Purvavideha or Gandhara. Thus, from Arakan, where the Mrohaung inscriptions attest the efflorescence of Indian culture, language and literature, to Yunnan, whose history we have traced above, Indian culture made a triumphant advance in ancient times.

(source: [Yün-nan; the link between India and the Yangtze – by Henry Rudolph Davies](#) Cambridge University press 1909 an [India and The World - By Buddha Prakash](#) p. 141-150).



*India was known as T'ien-chu to the Chinese.*

China, like Southeast Asia too, was colonized to some extent by the ancient Hindus. The religion and culture of China are undoubtedly of Hindu origin. According to the Hindu theory of emigration, Kshatriyas from India went and established colonies in China. India was known as T'ien-chu to the Chinese.

**Colonel James Tod** (1782-1835) author of [Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan: or the Central and Western Rajput States of India](#) has written:

"The genealogies of China and Tartary declare themselves to be the descendents of "Awar," son of the Hindu King "Pururawa."

According to the traditions noted in the Schuking, the ancestors of the Chinese, conducted by Fohe, come to the plains of China 2,900 years before Christ, from the high mountains Land which lies to the west of that country. This shows that the settlers into China were originally inhabitants of Kashmir, Ladakh, Little Tibet and the Punjab, which were parts of Ancient India.

**Kakuzo Okakura**, speaking of the missionary activity of Indian Buddhists in China, says that at one time in the single province of Lo-yang there were more than 3,000 Indian monks and 10,000 Indian families to impress their national religion and art on Chinese soil.

(source: [The Ideals of the East With Special Reference to the Art of Japan - By Kakuzo Okakura](#) p. 113).



**Hu Shih**, (1891-1962), Chinese philosopher in Republican China. He was ambassador to the U.S. (1938-42) and chancellor of Peking University (1946-48). He said:

**"India conquered and dominated China culturally for two thousand years without ever having to send a single soldier across her border."**



Court Bjornstjerna (1779-1847) author of [The Theogony of the Hindoos with their systems of Philosophy and Cosmogony](#) says: " what may be said with certainty is that the religion of China came from India."

Chinese authors, too, according to **Mountstuart Elphinstone** (1779-1859) noted, Indian ambassadors to the court of China.

The **Mahabharata** refers to China several times, including a reference to presents brought by the Chinese at the Rajasuya Yajna of the Pandavas; also, the **Arthashastra** and the **Manusmriti** mention China.

According to **Rene Grousset** (1885-1952) French art historian in his book [Rise and Splendour of Chinese Empire](#) ASIN 0520005252 p. 79:

"the name China comes from "an ancient" Sanskrit name for the regions to the east, and not, as often supposed, from the name of the state of Ch'in," the first dynasty established by Shih Huang Ti in 221 B.C.



*Brahma - Chinese version*  
(source: *Our Heritage and Its Significance* - By S. R. Sharma)

The **Sanskrit** name Cina for China could have been derived from the small state of that name in Chan-si in the northwest of China, which flourished in the fourth century B.C. Scholars have pointed out that the Chinese word for lion, shih, used long before the Chin dynasty, was derived from the Sanskrit word, simha, and that the Greek word for China, Tzinista, used by some later writers, appears to be derivative of the Sanskrit Chinasthana. The Chinese literature of the third century is full of geographic and mythological elements derived from India.

" I see no reason to doubt," comments **Arthur Waley** in his book, [The Way and its Power](#), "that the 'holy mountain-men' (*sheng-hsien*) described by Lieh Tzu are Indian rishi; and when we read in *Chuang Tzu* of certain Taoists who practiced movements very similar to the *asanas* of Hindu yoga, it is at least a possibility that some knowledge of the yoga technique which these *rishi* used had also drifted into China."

Both **Sir L. Wooley** and British historian **Arnold Toynbee** speak of an earlier ready-made culture coming to China. They were right. That was the Vedic Hindu culture from India with its Sanskrit language and sacred scripts. The contemporary astronomical expertise of the Chinese, as evidenced by their records of eclipses; the philosophy of the Chinese their statecraft, all point to a Vedic origin. That is why from the earliest times we find Chinese travelers visiting India very often to renew their educational and spiritual links.

Author **Kenneth Ch'en** has said:



"Neo-Confucianism was stimulated in its development by a number of Buddhist ideas. Certain features of Taoism, such as its canon and pantheon, was taken over from Buddhism. Works and phrases in the Chinese language owe their origin to terms introduced by Buddhism. Chinese language owe their origin to terms introduced by Buddhism, while in astronomical, calendrical, and medical studies the Chinese benefited from information introduced by Indian Buddhist monks. Finally, and most important of all, the religious life of the Chinese was affected profoundly by the doctrines and practices, pantheon and ceremonies brought in by the Indian religion."

(source: [Buddhism in China](#) - By **Kenneth Ch'en** ISBN 0691000158 p. 3).

How China was part of the Indian Vedic empire is explained by **Professor G. Phillips** on page 585 in the 1965 edition of the [Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society](#). He remarks,

"The maritime intercourse of India and China dates from a much earlier period, from about 680 B.C. when the sea traders of the Indian Ocean whose chiefs were Hindus founded a colony called Lang-ga, after the Indian named Lanka of Ceylon, about the present gulf of Kias-Tehoa, where they arrived in vessels having prows shaped like the heads of birds or animals after the pattern specified in the **Yukti Kalpataru** (an ancient Sanskrit technological text) and exemplified in the ships and boats of old Indian arts."

Chinese historian Dr. Li-Chi also discovered an astonishing resemblance between the Chinese clay pottery and the pottery discovered at Mohenja daro on the Indian continent. **Yuag Xianji**, member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, speaking at the C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar Foundation, Madras, March 27 1984 said,

" Recent discoveries of ruins of Hindu temples in Southeast China provided further evidence of Hinduism in China. Both Buddhism and Hinduism were patronized by the rulers. In the 6th century A.D. the royal family was Hindu for two generations. The following Tang dynasty (7th to the 9th century A.D.) also patronized both Hinduism and Buddhism because the latter was but a branch of Hinduism. Religious

wars were unknown in ancient China. There was extensive maritime trade and religious exchanges between India and China at this period (Ad 1-600) and the massive expansion of Indian influence into southern China through Jih-nan and Chiao-chih, in what is now northern Vietnam.

**Albert Etienne Terrien de Lacouperie**, author of **Western Origins of Chinese Civilization** states that the maritime intercourse of India with China dates from about 680 B.C. when the sea traders of the Indian ocean" whose "Chiefs were Hindus" founded a colony, called Lang-ga, after the Indian name Lanka, about the present gulf of Kiaotchoa....And throughout this period the monopoly of the sea borne trade of China was in their hands."

In the second century A.D., Indians from the Sindhu during the time of Rudradaman, the Khshatrapa Satrap of Kattiwad, took presents by sea to China.

(source: **Milinda Panha - Vide** p. 127-327).



The sea route from India and China through the port of Tamraliptis was under the special protection of the Indian kings. When the Chinese pilgrim, **Hiuen-Tsiang**, wanted to return to China in A.D. 645, Bhashkarvarman the king of Kamrup (Assam) and a vassal of King Harsha, told him: "But I know not, if you prefer to go, by what route you propose to return; if you select the southern sea route, then I will send official attendants to accompany you." **Itsing** sailed from China for India in A.D. 671 and returned to China twenty-four years later by the sea route from Tamralipiti.

Through its compassionate Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and its promise of salvation to all alike, its emphasis on piety, meditation, its attractive rituals and festivals, its universality and its tolerance, "the religious life of the Chinese has been enriched, deepened, broadened, and made more meaningful in terms of human sympathy, love, and compassion for all living creatures." **The doctrine of karma brought spiritual consolation to innumerable people. The concept of karma is to be found in all types of Chinese literature from poetry to popular**

**tales.**

India never imposed her ideas or culture on any nation by military force, not even on the small countries in her neighborhood, and in the case of China, it would have been virtually impossible to do so since China has been the more powerful of the two. So the expansion of Indian culture into China is a monument to human understanding and cultural co-operation - the outcome of a voluntary quest for learning. While China almost completely suppressed other foreign religions, such as Zoranstrianism, Nestorian Christianity, and to some extent Manichaeism, she could not uproot Buddhism. At times, Buddhism was persecuted, but for two thousand years it continued to Indianize Chinese life even after it had ceased to be a vital force in the homeland and long after it had lost its place as the dominant religion of China. In fact, Indianization became more powerful and effective after it was thought that Buddhism had been killed in China.

The introduction of Buddhism is one of the most important events in Chinese history, and since its inception it has been a major factor in Chinese civilization. **The Chinese have freely acknowledged their debt to India, often referring to her as the "Teacher of China," and Chinese Buddhists have pictured India as a Western Paradise, Sukhavati.** That Chinese philosophy blossomed afresh after the impact of Buddhism indicates both a response to and a borrowing of Indian ideas. The advent of Buddhism meant for many Chinese a new way of life, and for all Chinese, a means of reassessing their traditional beliefs. A new conception of the universe developed, and the entire Chinese way of life was slowly but surely altered. The change was so gradual and so universal that few people realized it was happening.



**The Chinese Quietists practiced a form of self-hypnosis which has an indisputably close resemblance to Indian Yoga.** The Chinese Taoist philosopher **Liu-An (Huai-nan-tzu)** who died in 122 B. C, makes use "of a cosmology in his book which



is clearly of Buddhist inspiration."

The first mention of India to be found in Chinese records is in connection with the mission to Ta-hsia (Bactriana) of a talented and courageous Chinese envoy, **Chang Chien** (Kien), about 138 B.C. Fourteen years later, having escaped after ten years as a captive of the Huns, he returned home and in his report to the Chinese Emperor he

referred to the country of *Shen-tu* (India) to the southeast of the Yueh-chih (Jou-Chih) country. There are other traditional stories suggestive of earlier links, but Chang Chien's reference to Indian trade with the southwestern districts of China along the overland route corresponding to the modern Yunnan road indicates the existence of some sort of commercial relations well before the second century B.C. **The find of Chinese coins at Mysore, dated 138 B.C. suggests maritime relations between India and China existed in the second century B.C.** Passages in a Chinese text vaguely refer to Chinese trade relations with countries in the China Sea and Indian Ocean, such as **Huang-che** (Kanchi or a place in the Ganges delta), as well as to the exchange of diplomatic missions.

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## Trade & Commerce

**The chronicle 'Sung-chu' states that all the precious things of land and water came from India.** Gems made of rhinoceros' horns and king-fishers' stones, serpent pearls and asbestos cloth, they are being innumerable varieties of these curiosities, were imported into China from India. According to the **Chin-hsi-yu-chiu-t'** a rare stone came to China from the countries of Chi-pin (Gandhara or Kashmir). Moreover, po-tie ( a fine textile, probably muslin) was produced in India; and as early as A.D. 430 Indian po-tie was sent to China from Ho-lo-tan or Java. In A.D. 519, King Jayavarman of Fu-nan (Kamboja/Cambodia) offered saffron with storax and other aromatics to the Chinese court. Laufer also suggests that in the sixth century saffron was traded from India to Cambodia. In the **T'ang Annals**, India in her trade with Cambodia and the interior orient, "export to those countries diamonds, sandalwood and saffron." India was a good market for Chinese silk. **Kalidasa** mentions this silk fabric (Chinamsuka) as one of the most fashionable textiles among the richer sections of society. Silk and silk-products were also much demanded luxury articles even in the reign of Harshavardhana. The countries lying on the route from Kashgar (India) to China, were collectively called by historians and geographers as '**Ser-India**', first imbibed Indian culture and then developed into important trade centers.

(source: [Cultural Heritage of Ancient India - By Sachindra Kumar Maity](#) p.119-124). For more information refer to chapter on [Suvarnabhumi](#) and [Seafaring in Ancient India](#)).

There can be little dispute that trade was the main motivation for these early contacts. This is supported by finds of beads and pottery, in addition to specific references in historical texts. By the early centuries of the Christian era, Sino-Indian trade appears to have assumed considerable proportions. Chinese silk, **Chinamsuka**, and later porcelain were highly prized in India, and Indian textiles were sold in southwest China. **The similarity between the Chinese and Indian words for vermilion and bamboo, ch'in-tung and ki-chok, and sindura and kichaka, also indicates commercial links.** At least by the fifth century, India was exporting to China wootz steel (wootz from the Indian Kanarese word ukku), which was produced by fusing magnetic iron by carbonaceous matter.



With goods came ideas. It has often been contended that merchants were not likely to have been interested in philosophy or capable of the exchange of ideas. This is an erroneous belief which disregards historical evidence and, as **Arthur Waley** points out, is "**derived from a**



false analogy between East and West. It is quite true that Marco polo 'songeait surtout a son negoce'. But the same can hardly be said of Indian or Chinese merchants. Buddhist legend, for example, teems with merchants reputedly capable of discussing metaphysical questions; and in China Lu Puwei, compiler of philosophical

encyclopedia **Lu Shih Ch'un** Chiu, was himself a merchant. Legend even makes a merchant of Kuan Chung; which at any rate shows that philosophy and trade were not currently supposed to be incompatible."

India had contact with China from the early period through three routes. One was through the Central Asian region, the second was through Yunan and Burma. The third was by sea to the South Indian ports. The Arthasastra, the Mahabharata, and the Manu-Smriti show knowledge of China. Through all these routes trade and Hindu culture passed to China. Indian arts and sciences were carried to China along with Buddhism. Images, rock-cut caves and the fresco paintings show distinctly Indian influence on the Chinese art. Indian astronomy, mathematics and medicine were spread in China by the scholars who visited it. Several Sanskrit works on these sciences were translated into Chinese.

Chushu-King, a Chinese monk started for India in 260 A.D. But he returned from Khotan. Fa-hien, the first Chinese pilgrim to India stayed here during the Gupta period for some years. Che-mong another monk accompanied by a few others spent 20 years (404-424) in the pilgrimage of India. Hieun Tsang and I-Tsing during the 7th century are well-known. On his return to China, Hiuen Tsang was given a great national welcome by his emperor and the people as well.

(source: [Ancient Indian History and Culture - By Chidambara Kulkarni](#) p.233 -234).

### Land and Sea Routes



The art of shipbuilding and navigation in India and China at the time was sufficiently advanced for oceanic crossings. Indian ships operating between Indian and South-east Asian ports were large and well equipped to sail cross the Bay of Bengal. When the **Chinese Buddhist scholar, Fa-hsien**, returned from India, his ship carried a crew of more than two hundred persons and did not sail along the coasts but directly across the ocean. Such ships were larger than those Columbus used to negotiate the Atlantic a thousand years later. **Uttaraptha** was the Sanskrit name of the ancient highway which connected India with China, Russia and Persia (Iran).

The trade routes between China and India, by both land and sea, were long and perilous, often requiring considerably more than two years to negotiate. The overland routes were much older and more often used, but the sea routes gained popularity with progress in shipbuilding and seamanship. Formidable and frightening as the physiography of the land routes was, the traffic through the passes and along the circuitous routes around the mountains was fairly vigorous.

According to the work of mediaeval times, **Yukti Kalpataru**, which gives a fund of information about shipbuilding, **India built large vessels from 200 B.C. to the close of the sixteenth century**. A Chinese chronicler mentions ships of Southern Asia that could carry as many as one thousand persons, and were manned mainly by Malayan crews.

Long before the northwestern routes were opened about the second century B.C. and long before the development of these Indianized states, there were two other routes from India to China. One of these began at **Pataliputra** (modern Patna), passed through Assam (Kamarupa of old) and Upper Burma near Bhamo, and proceeded over the mountains and across the river valleys to Yunnanfu (Kunming), the main city of the southern province of China. The other route lay through Nepal and Tibet, was developed much later in the middle of the seventh century when Tibet had accepted Buddhism.



In addition to land routes, there was an important sea link between India and China through Southeast Asia. During the course of the first few centuries of the Christian era, a number of Indianized states had been founded all over Southeast Asia. Both cultures met in this region, and the Indianized states served as an intermediary stage for the further



transmission of Indian culture and Buddhism to China.

Ancient Greek geographers knew of Southeast Asia and China (Thinae) were accessible by sea. Ptolemy mentions an important but unidentified Chinese port on the Tonkinese coast. Ports on the western coast of India were Bharukaccha (Broach); Surparka (Sopara); Kalyana; on the Bay of Bengal at the mouth of the Kaveripattam (Puhar); and at the mouth of the Ganges, Tamaralipti (Tamluk). At least two of these ports on the Bay of Bengal - Kaveripattam and Tamaralipti - were known to the Greek sailors as Khaberos and Tamalitis. At first Indian ships sailed to Tonkin (Kiao-Che) which was the principal port of China, Tonkin being a Chinese protectorate. Later all foreign ships were required to sail to Canton in China proper. Canton became a prosperous port and from the

seventh century onward the most important landing place for Buddhist monks arriving from India. Generally Chinese monks set out for the famous centers of learning in India, like the University of Taxila, and Nalanda.

**India had census enumeration earlier than China, since such enumeration is mentioned in Kautilya's Arthashastra. China had its first census in 2 A.D.**

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## Contributions

### Mathematics:

**The Chinese were familiar with Indian mathematics, and, in fact, continued to study it long after the period of intellectual intercourse between India and China had ceased."**

(source: Cited in [Sarkar, Hindu Achievements in Exact Science](#), p. 14).



**Literature:** The great literary activity of the Buddhist scholars naturally had a permanent influence on Chinese literature, one of the oldest in the world. In a recent study a Chinese scholar **Lai Ming**, says that a significant feature in the development of Chinese literature has been the "the immense influence of Buddhist literature on the development of every sphere of Chinese literature since the Eastern Chin period (317 A.D.)." The Buddhist sutras were written in combined prose and rhymed verse, a literary form unknown in China at the time. The Chinese language when pronounced in the Sanskrit polyphonic manner was likely to sound hurried and abrupt, and to chant the Sanskrit verses in monophthongal Chinese prolonged the verse so much the rhymes were lost. Hence, to make the Chinese sutras pleasant to listen to, the Chinese language had to be modified to accommodate Sanskrit sounds. Consequently, in 489, Yung Ming, **Prince of Ching Ling**, convened a conference of Buddhist monks at his capital to differentiate between, and define the tones of, the Chinese language for reading Buddhist sutras and for changing the verses. A new theory emerged called the Theory of Four Tones. The introduction into China of highly imaginative literature such as the Mahayana sutras and the Indian epics, like **Ramayana and Mahabharata**, infused into Chinese literature the quality of imagination which had been hitherto lacking. Taoist literature, such as the book Chuang-tzu, did perhaps show some quality of imaginative power, but on the whole Chinese literature, especially



Confucianist, was narrow, formal, restricted, and unimaginative.

**Mythology:** The Chinese sense of realism was so intense that there was hardly any mythology in ancient China, and they have produced few fairy tales of their own. Most of their finest fairy tales were originally brought to China by Indian monks in the first millennium. The Buddhists used them to make their sermons more agreeable and lucid. The tales eventually spread throughout the country, assuming a Chinese appearance conformable to their new environment. For example, the stories of Chinese plays such as *A Play of Thunder-Peak*, *A Dream of Butterfly*, and *A Record of Southern Trees* were of Buddhist origin.



**Drama:** Chinese drama assimilated Indian features in three stages. First, the story, characters, and technique were all borrowed from India; later, Indian technique gave way to Chinese; and finally, the story was modified and the characters became Chinese also. There are many dimensions to Chinese drama, and it is not easy to place them accurately in history. However, the twelfth century provides the first-known record of the performance of a play, a Buddhist miracle-play called *Mu-lien Rescues his Mother* based on an episode in the **Indian epic, the Mahabharata**. The subject matter of the Buddhist adaptation of the story, in which Maudgalyayana (Mu-lien in Chinese) rescues the mother from hell, occurs in a *Tun-huang pien wen*. Significantly, the play was first performed at the Northern Sung capital by professionals before a religious festival.

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**Amartya Sen** Nobel Prize winner writes in the Times of India:

"It is not often realized "that even such a central term in Chinese culture as Mandarin is derived from a **Sanskrit word, namely Mantri** which went from India to China via Malaya."

Chinese translation - the first printed book in the world was the Chinese translation by Kumarajiva (a half Indian half Turkish scholar) of a Buddhist Sanskrit text, *Vajrachchedikaprajnyaparamita*

(source: [India, according to Amartya Sen - by M.V. Kamath Publication: Afternoon Despatch & Courier](#))..

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**Grammar:** Phrases and words coined by Buddhist scholars enriched the Chinese vocabulary by more than thirty-five thousand words. As the assimilation was spread over a long period of time, the Chinese accepted these words as a matter of course without even suspecting their foreign origin. Even today words of Buddhist origin are widely used in China from the folklore of peasants to the formal language of the intelligentsia. For example, *poli* for glass in the name of many precious and semi-precious stones is of **Sanskrit** origin. *Cha-na*, an instant, from *kshana*; *t'a*, pagoda, from *stupa*; *mo-li*, jasmine, from *mallika*, and terms for many trees and plants are amongst the many thousands of Chinese words of Indian origin. Indian grammar also undoubtedly stimulated Chinese philological study. Chinese script consists of numerous symbols, which in their earliest stage were chiefly pictographic and ideographic.

The word used in the old **Sanskrit** for the Chinese Emperor is **deva-putra**, which is an exact translation of ' **Son of Heaven.**'

**I-tsing**, a famous pilgrim, himself a fine scholar of Sanskrit, praises the language and says it is respected in far countries in the north and south. ..'**How much more then should people of the divine land (China), as well as the celestial store house (India), teach the real rules of the language.**'

**Jawaharlal Nehru** has commented:

"**Sanskrit scholarship must have been fairly widespread in China. It is interesting to find that some Chinese scholars tried to introduce Sanskrit phonetics into the Chinese language. A well-known example of this is that of the monk Shon Wen, who lived at the time of the Tang**

dynasty. He tried to develop an alphabetical system along these lines in Chinese."

(source: [The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru](#) p. 197-198).



**Art:** Indian art also reached China, mainly through Central Asia, although some works of Buddhist art came by sea. Monks and their retinues, and traders brought Buddha statues, models of Hindu temples, and other objects of art to China. **Fa-hsien** made drawings of images whilst at Tamralipiti. **Hsuan-tsang** returned with several golden and sandalwood figures of the Buddha; and **Hui-lun** with a model of the Nalanda Mahavihara. **Wang Huan-ts'e**, who went to India several times, collected many drawings of Buddhist images, including a copy of the Buddha image at Bodhgaya; this was deposited at the Imperial palace and served as a model of the image in Ko-ngai-see temple. The most famous icon of East Asian Buddhism known as the "Udayana" image was reported to have been brought by the first Indian missionaries in 67, although there are various legends associated with this image and many scholars believe it was brought by **Kumarajiva**. However, this influx of Indian art was incidental and intermittent, and was destined to be absorbed by Chinese art. This combination resulted in a Buddhist art of exceptional beauty.

One of the most famous caves - **Ch'ien-fo-tung**, "**Caves of the Thousand Buddhas**," because there are supposed to be more than a thousand cave. So far, about five hundred caves have been discovered. These caves were painted throughout with murals, and were frequently furnished with numerous Buddha statues and sculptured scenes from the **Jatakas**.

Many other caves were initiated in the reign of **Toba Wei Emperor, T'ai Wu**. Some also contain images of Hindu deities, such as **Shiva on Nandi** and **Vishnu on Garuda**.

Images coming from India were considered holy, as suggested by **Omura**, in his **History of Chinese Sculpture**. This significantly underlines the depth of Chinese acceptance of Indian thought.



**Music:** The Chinese did not regard music as an art to be cultivated outside the temples and theatres. Buddhist monks who reached China brought the practice of chanting sacred texts during religious rites. Hence, Indian melody was introduced into Chinese music which had hitherto been rather static and restrained. **Indian music was so popular in China, that Emperor Kao-tsu (581-595) tried unsuccessfully to proscribe it by an Imperial decree. His successor Yang-ti was also very fond of Indian music.** In Chinese annals, references are found to visiting Indian musicians, who reached China from India, Kucha, Kashgar, Bokhara and

Cambodia. Even **Joseph Needham**, the well-known advocate of Chinese cultural and scientific priority admits, "Indian music came through Kucha to China just before the Sui period and had a great vogue there in the hands of exponents such as Ts'ao Miao-ta of Brahminical origin." **By the end of the sixth century, Indian music had been given state recognition. During the T'ang period, Indian music was quite popular, especially the famous Rainbow Garment Dance melody.**

A contemporary Chinese poet, **Po Chu-yi**, wrote a poem in praise of Indian music. "**It is little wonder,**" an official publication of the Chinese Republic says, "**that when a Chinese audience today hears Indian music, they feel that while possessing a piquant Indian flavor it has a remarkable affinity with Chinese music.**"



**Science:** A major Buddhist influence on Chinese science was in scientific thought itself. Buddhist concepts, such as the infinity of space and time, and the plurality of worlds and of time-cycles or **Hindu Kalpas (chieh)** had a stimulating effect on Chinese inquiry, broadening the Chinese outlook and better equipping it to investigate scientific problems. For example, the **Hindu doctrine of pralayas**, or recurrent world catastrophes in which sea and



land were turned upside down before another world was recreated to go through the four cycles- differentiation (ch'eng), stagnation (chu), destruction (juai), and emptiness (kung) - which was later adopted by Neoconfucianists, was responsible for the Chinese recognition of the true nature of fossils long before they were understood in Europe. Again,

the Indian doctrine of Karma (tso-yeh), or metempsychosis, influenced Chinese scientific thought on the process of biological change involving both phylogeny and ontogeny. Buddhist iconography contained a biological element. Buddhism introduced a highly developed theory of logic, both formal and dialectical, and of epistemology.

Tantric Buddhism reached China in the eighth century and the greatest Chinese astronomer and mathematician of his time, **I-hsing** (682-727), was a Tantric Buddhist monk. While the work of Indian mathematicians was carried westward by the Arabs and transmitted to Europe, it was taken eastward by Indian Buddhist monks and professional mathematicians.



**Astronomy:** There is also some evidence that works on Indian astronomy were in circulation in China well before the T'ang period. In the annuals of the Sui dynasty, numerous Chinese translations of Indian mathematical and astronomical works are mentioned, such as Po-lo-men Suan fa (The Hindu Arithmetical rules) and Po-lo-men Suan King. These works have vanished, and it is impossible to assess the degree of their influence on Chinese sciences. However, there is definite evidence of Indian influence on Chinese astronomy and calendar studies during the T'ang dynasty. During this period,

Indian astronomers were working at the Imperial Bureau of Astronomy which was charged with preparing accurate calendars. Yang Ching-fang, a pupil of Amoghavajra (Pu-k'ung), wrote in 764 that those who wished to know the positions of the five planets and predict what Hsiu (heavenly mansion) a planet would be traversing, should adopt the Indian calendrical methods. Five years earlier, Amoghavajra had translated an Indian astrological work, the Hsiu Yao Ching (Hsiu and Planet Sutra), into Chinese.



At the time there were three astronomical schools at Chang-an: Gautama (Chhuthan), Kasyapa (Chiayeh), and Kumara (Chumolo). In 684 one of the members of the Gautama school, Lo presented a calendar, Kuang-tse-li, which has been in use for three years, to the Empress Wu. Later, in 718, another member of the school, Hsi-ta (Siddhartha), presented to the Emperor a calendar, Chiu-che-li, which was almost a direct translation of an Indian calendar, **Navagraha Siddhanta of Varahamihira**, and which is still preserved in the T'ang period collection. It was in use for four years. In 729 Siddhartha compiled a treatise based on this calendar which is the greatest known collection of ancient Chinese astronomical writings. This was the first time that a zero symbol appeared in a Chinese text, but, even more important, this work also contained a table of sines, which were typically Indian. I-hsing (682-727) was associated with the Kumara school and was much influenced by Indian astronomy. Indian influence can also be seen in the nine planets he introduced into his calendar, Ta-yen-li. The nine planets included the sun, moon, five known planets, and two new planets, **Rahu and Ketu**, by which the Indian astronomers represented the ascending and descending nodes of the moon.

### Chinese New Year

Dates from 2600 BC - A complete cycle takes 60 years, divided into 12 year elements. Each of these 12 years is named after an animal favored by the Buddha.

(source: [China welcomes the New Year](#) - BBC). Chinese 60 year cycle has strong resemblance to Tamil Calendar and Indian Hindu Calendars. For more refer to [The Tamil Calendar](#).

### Medicine

**Chinese medicine, was influenced by Ayurveda, and similarities include the extensive use of natural herbs.**

(source: [Balm from the East - By Jenny Hontz](#) - LA Times).

According to **Terence Duke** " Many Buddhists were familiar with the extensive knowledge of surgery

common to Indian medicine and this aided them both in spreading the teachings and in their practice of diagnosis and therapy. Surgical technique was almost unknown within China prior to the arrival of Buddhism.." The renowned Buddhist teacher **Najarjuna** is said to have translated at least two traditional works dealing with healing and medicines in the first centuries of our era. A section of his Maha-Prajnaparamita Sutra is quoted by the Chinese monk I Tsing in his commentary upon the five winds (Chinese: Wu Fung; Japanese: Gofu). This description enables us to see that the breath **Hatha Yoga termed prana** is in fact forming only part of a wider system known in Buddhism."

(source: [The Bodhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China](#) p.139-145).



Evidence of Indian influence on Chinese medicine is even more definite. A number of Indian medical treatises are found in Chinese Buddhist collections: for example, the Ravanakumarantra and Kasyapasamhita. From its very inception, Buddhism stressed the importance of health and the prevention and cure of mental and physical ailments. **Indian medical texts were widely known in Central Asia, where parts of the original texts on Ayur Veda have been found as well as numerous translations.**

**The T'ang emperors patronized Indian thaumaturges (Tantric Yogis) who were believed to possess secret methods of rejuvenation. Wang Hsuan-chao, who returned to India after the death of King Harsha had been charged by the Chinese Emperor in 664 to bring back Indian medicines and physicians.**

Considering that Indian medicine, especially operative surgery, was highly developed for the time, it is not surprising that the Chinese, like the Arabs, were captivated by Indian medical skills and drugs. Castration was performed by Chinese methods but other surgical techniques, such as laparotomy, trepanation, and removal of cataracts, as well as inoculation for smallpox, were influenced by Indian practices.

### **Acupuncture**

**In modern day acupuncture lore, there is recounted a legend that the discovery of the vital bodily points began within India as a result of combative research studies undertaken by the Indian ksatreya warriors in order to discover the vital (and deadly) points of the body which could be struck during hand-to-hand encounters.** It is said that they experimented upon prisoners by piercing their bodies with the iron and stone "needles" daggers called Suci daggers. common to their infantry and foot soldiers, in order to determine these points.

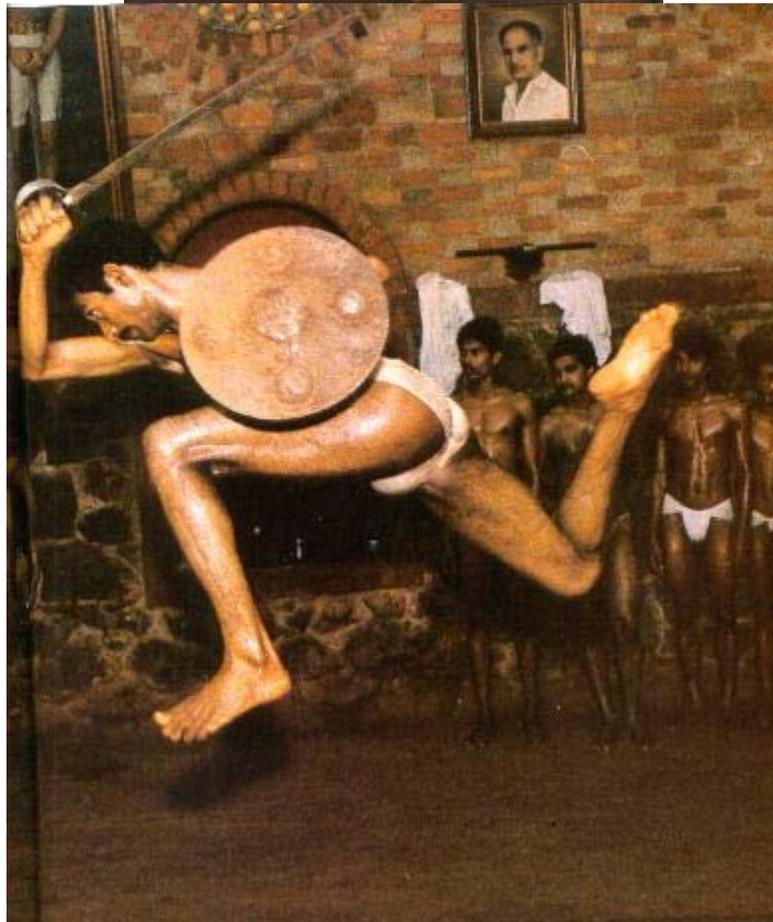
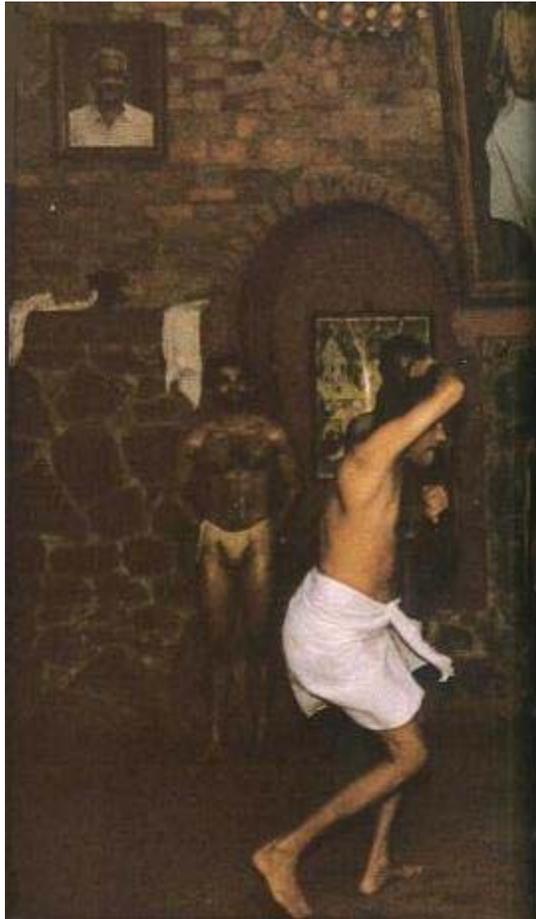
This Chinese legend reflects and complements the traditional Indian account of its origins, where it is said that in the aftermath of battles it was noticed that sometimes therapeutic effects arose from superficial arrow or dagger wounds incurred by the Khastriya in battle.

(source: [The Bodhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China](#) p.139-145).

The alternative form of medicine known as acupuncture is believed to have originated in China. **In Korean academics, students are correctly told that acupuncture originated in India.** An ancient Sanskrit text on acupuncture preserved in the Ceylonese National Museum at Columbo in Sri Lanka.

The custom of ancestor worship was an adoption of Indian custom. There is presence of Indian motifs in various Buddhist caves in China.

### **Martial Arts/Games**



*Fighting without weapons was a specialty of the Ksatreyas (caste of Ancient India) and foot soldiers alike.*

*Danger and Divinity: Originating at least 1,300 years ago, India's Kalaripayit is the oldest martial art taught today. It is also one of the most potentially violent. Weaponless but nimble, a karapayit master displays for his students how to meet the attack of an armed opponent.*

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According to author **Terence Dukes**:



"Fighting without weapons was a specialty of the Ksatreya (caste of Ancient India) and foot soldier alike. For the Ksatreya it was simply part and parcel of their all around training, but for the lowly peasant it was essential. We read in the Vedas of men unable to afford armor who bound their heads with turbans called Usnisa to protect themselves from sword and axe blows.

Fighting on foot for a Ksatreya was necessary in case he was unseated from his chariot or horse and found himself without weapons.

Although the high ethical code of the Ksatreya forbid anyone but another Ksatreya from attacking him, doubtless such morals were not always observed, and when faced

with an unscrupulous opponent, the Ksatreya needed to be able to defend himself, and developed, therefore, a very effective form of hand-to-hand combat that combined techniques of wrestling, throws, and hand strikes.

Tactics and evasion were formulated that were later passed on to successive generations. This skill was called Vajramukhti, a name meaning "thunderbolt closed - or clasped - hands."

The tile Vajramukti referred to the usage of the hands in a manner as powerful as the **Vajra** maces of traditional warfare. Vajramukti was practiced in peacetime by means of regular physical training sessions and these utilized sequences of attack and defense technically termed in Sanskrit nata."



"Prior to and during the life of the Buddha various principles were embodied within the warrior caste known as the **Ksatreya** (Japanese: Setsuri). **This title - stemming from Sanskrit root Ksetr meaning "power," described an elite force of usually royal or noble-born warriors who were trained from infancy in a wide variety of military and martial arts, both armed and unarmed.**

In China, the Ksatreya were considered to have descended from the deity Ping Wang (Japanese: Byo O), the "Lord of those who keep things calm." Ksatreyas were like the Peace force - to keep kings and people in order. Military commanders were called Senani - a name reminiscent of the Japanese term Sensei which describes a similar status. The Japanese **samurai** also had similar traits to the Ksatreya. Their battle practices and techniques are often so close to that of the Ksatreya that we must assume the former came from India perhaps via China. The traditions of sacred Swords, of honorable self-sacrifice, and service to one's Lord are all found first in India.

"In ancient Hinduism, **nata** was acknowledged as a spiritual study and conferred as a ruling deity, **Nataraja, representing the awakening of wisdom through physical and mental concentration.** However, after the Muslim invasion of India and its brutal destruction of Buddhist and Hindu culture and religion, the Ksatreya art of nata was dispersed and many of its teachers slain. This indigenous martial arts, under the name of **Kalari or Kalaripayit** exists only in South India today. Originating at least 1,300 years ago, India's Kalaripayit is the oldest martial art taught today. It is also the most potentially violent, because students advance from unarmed combat to the use of swords, sharpened flexible metal lashes, and peculiar three-bladed daggers.

When Buddhism came to influence India (circa 500 B.c), the Deity **Nataraja** was converted to become one of the four protectors of Buddhism, and was renamed Nar (y)ayana Deva (Chinese: Na Lo Yen Tien). He is said to be a protector of the Eastern Hemisphere of the mandala."



(source: [The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China](#) p.3 - 158-174 and 242).



**Kalaripayattu, literally “the way of the battlefield,”** still survives in Kerala, where it is often dedicated to Mahakali. The Kalari grounds are usually situated near a temple, and the pupils, after having touched the feet of the master, salute the ancestors and bow down to the Goddess, begin the lesson. Kalari trainings have been codified for over 3000 years and nothing much has changed. The warming up is essential and demands great suppleness. Each movement is repeated several times, facing north, east, south and west, till perfect loosening is achieved. The young pupils pass on to the handling of weapons, starting with the “Silambam”, a short stick made of extremely hard wood, which in the

olden times could effectively deal with swords. The blows are hard and the parade must be fast and precise, to avoid being hit on the fingers! They continue with the swords, heavy, and dangerous, even though they are not sharpened any more, as they are used. Without guard or any kind of body protection; they whirl, jump and parry, in an impressive ballet. Young, fearless girls fight with enormous knives, bigger than their arms and the clash of irons is echoed in the ground. The session ends with the big canes, favorite weapons of the Buddhist traveler monks, which they used during their long journey towards China to scare away attackers.

The “Urimi” is the most extraordinary weapon of Kalari, unique in the world. This double-edged flexible sword which the old-time masters used to wrap around the waist to keep coiled in one hand, to suddenly whip at the opponent and inflict mortal blows, is hardly used today in trainings, for it is much too dangerous.

This indigenous martial arts, under the name of **Kalari or Kalaripayit** exists only in South India today. **Kalarippayat is said to be the world's original martial art.** Originating at least 1,300 years ago, India's Kalaripayit is the oldest martial art taught today. It is also the most potentially violent, because students advance from unarmed combat to the use of swords, sharpened flexible metal lashes, and peculiar three-bladed daggers. More than 2,000 years old, it was developed by warriors of the Cheras kingdom in Kerala. Training followed strict rituals and guidelines. The entrance to the 14 m-by-7 m arena, or kalari, faced east and had a bare earth floor. Fighters took Shiva and Shakti, the god and goddess of power, as their deities. From unarmed kicks and punches, kalarippayat warriors would graduate to sticks, swords, spears and daggers and study the marmas—the 107 vital spots on the human body where a blow can kill. Training was conducted in secret, the lethal warriors unleashed as a surprise weapon against the enemies of Cheras.



Father and founder of Zen Buddhism (called C'han in China), **Boddhidharma**, a Brahmin born in Kacheepuram in Tamil Nadu, in 522 A.D. arrived at the courts of the Chinese Emperor Liang Nuti, of the 6th dynasty. He taught the Chinese monks Kalaripayattu, a very ancient Indian martial art, so that they could defend themselves against the frequent attacks of bandits. In time, the monks became famous all over China as experts in bare-handed fighting, later known as the Shaolin boxing art. The [Shaolin temple](#) which has been handed back a few years ago by the communist Government to the C'han Buddhist monks, inheritors of Boddhidharma's spiritual and

martial teachings, by the present Chinese Government, is now open to visitors. On one of the walls, a fresco can be seen, showing Indian dark-skinned monks, teaching their lighter-skinned Chinese brothers the art of bare-handed fighting. On this painting are inscribed: “Tenjiku Naranokaku” which means: “**the fighting techniques to train the body (which come) from India...**”

**Kalari payatt was banned by the British in 1793.** (Refer to chapter on [European Imperialism](#)).

(source: [A Western Journalist on India: a ferengi's columns - By Francois Gautier](#) Har-Anand Publications ISBN 8124107955 p. 155-158).

**Yoga** has had an enormous influence on all forms of Indian spirituality, including Hinduism, Buddhist, and Jain and later on the Sufi and Christian. The teaching of Buddhism which arose in India are similar to those of yoga: striving toward nirvana and renouncing the world. Indeed, some kind of meeting between yoga and early Buddhism certainly took place, and one of the Buddhist schools is actually called Yogachara (practice of Yoga). **Indian Buddhism spread throughout Asia, some ideas from Yoga were carried into Tibet, Mongolia, China, and from there on into Japan. Indeed, Zen is a specific form of Yoga's dhyana or 'transcendental meditation' and the word Zen (like the Chinese tchan) is a simple phonetic development from Sanskrit dhyana.**

(For information on Yoga, refer to chapter on [Yoga and Hindu Philosophy](#)). For more refer to [Kalarippayattu](#) and [Kalari Payatte - The martial art of kerala](#)



The famous **Shao-lin** style of boxing is also attributed to Indian influence. **Boddhidharma**, (8th century AD) who believed in a sound mind in a sound body, taught the monks in the Shao-lin temple this style of boxing for self-defense for rejuvenating the body after exacting meditation and mental concentration.

According to the History channel martial arts were introduced in China by an Indian named **Boddhidharma**, who taught it to the monks so that they could defend their monasteries. He was also said to have introduced the concept of **vital energy or chi ("prana" probably corresponds to this). This concept is the basis acupuncture.**

**Chuan Fa, the Buddhist martial arts, preserved many Ksatreya techniques in their original forms.** The monks to practiced Chuan Fa were often the sole preservers of the Ksatreya art of **Avasavidya**, called in Chinese Huo Ming or Hua Fa.

During the first millennium, Indian racing games reached China. The well-known expert on the history of Chinese games, **Karl Himly**, on the authority of a passage from the **Jun Tsun Su**, a work of the Sung period (960-1279), suggests that the Chinese game t'shu-p'u was invented in western India and spread to China in the time of the Wei dynasty (220-265). **T'shu'p'u** is, in fact, the Chinese adaptation of the **Indian chatus-pada** (modern chupur).

**Chess was introduced from India, ca. 700. through the ancient trade route from Kashmir.** The oldest and best of the native Chinese games, wei-ch'i, did not appear until 1000. Cubical dice (chu-p or yu-p'i), although found in ancient India and Egypt, are generally believed to have reached China from India, possibly quite early. **Arthur Waley** is of the opinion that the prominence of the number six in the Book of Changes was derived from the six sides of cubical dice. In China the first indisputable sources appeared only around 800 AD. **"The King of Kanauj had sent the game of chess to the court of Sasanian King Kusrau I Anshirvan (531-579).**

### Education



The University of Nalanda built in the 4th century BCE was one of the greatest achievements of ancient India in the field of education. The Chinese scholar and traveler **Hiuen Tsang** (600-654 AD) stayed at the Nalanda University in the 7th century, and has left an elaborate description of the excellence, and purity of monastic life practiced here. **He found Indians "high-minded, upright and honorable.**

China received Mahayanic Buddhism and Sanskrit texts from the Central-Asian provinces of India in 67 A.D. After that China became Hinduized not only in theology and metaphysics, but in every department of thought and activity. Thousands of Hindus lived in Chinese cities, eg. at Changan in the N.W. and at Canton on the sea, as priests, teachers, merchants, physicians, sculptors and "interpreters." The name of Chinese tourists, students, philosophers, and translators, also, in India is legion. The Chinese founded their drama on Hindu precedents, imported musical instruments (stringed) from India, and introduced even some of the acrobatic feats, dances and sports prevalent among the Hindus.

During his Indian tour the great Itsing (634-712) mastered Hindu medicine at the University of Nalanda. Hindu mathematics and logic were cultivated among the intellectuals of China; Sanskrit treatises on painting and art criticism, eg. Sadamga (six limbs of painting) in Vatsayana's Kamasutra (erotics), Chitralaksana (marks of painting), etc. furnished the canons of the Chinese art during its greatest epoch (Tang and Sung Dynasties 600-1250); and the traditional Confucianism had to be reinterpreted, eg. by Chu-Hsi (1130-1200) in the light of the imported Hindu philosophy. **China became a part of "Greater India" in poetry, aesthetics, folk-festivals, morals, manners, and sentiments.** The "Augustan Age" of Chinese culture, the age of the mighty Tangs and brilliant Sung, was the direct outcome of the "holy alliance" for centuries between India and China.

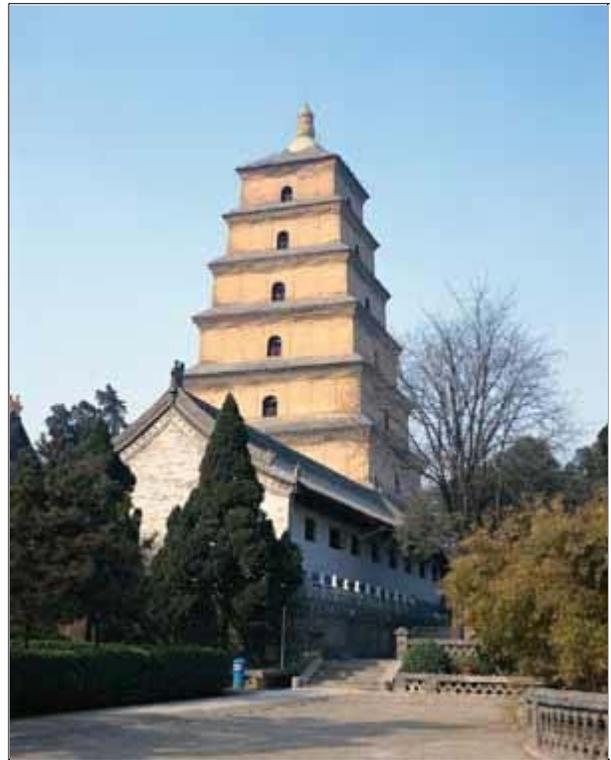
(source: **Creative India - By Benoy Kumar Sarkar** p. 78-79). For more on education, refer to chapter on **Education in Ancient India**).

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## Ling Yin Temple and India

Lin Yin Temple is home to the 19-metre-high Golden Buddha statue. Inscriptions found in the temple say the statue came flying from India.

Fei Lai Feng - Peak Flown From Afar (also named Ling Jiu Feng), stands next to Lin Yin Temple and is a must-see in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. There are many legends about the peak's name. **A well-known legend states that an Indian monk named Huili arrived in the valley 1,600 years ago and was surprised to see a peak so dissimilar from any other one in the valley. He believed that the peak had flown over from India because the shape, although unique in China, was common in India.** However, he did not know why the peak would have flown to this spot so far from his country.



*Inscriptions found in the temple say the statue came flying from India. Big Wild Goose Pagoda - Dayanta - Sanskrit scriptures he had brought back from India.*

**Big Wild Goose Pagoda** (Da Yan Ta - Dayanta) which was built in 652 AD in the Tang Dynasty. Xuanzang, a prominent Buddhist scholar of the time, planned to have a huge stone pagoda built to house the **Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures he had brought back from India**. It contains a large volume of Buddhist scriptures which were obtained from India by the eminent monk Xuanzang. **The pagoda was modeled after the one in India.** It was given the same name in memory of Xuan Zang in praise of Buddhism.

(source: [Ling Yin Temple](#) and [travelchinaguide.com](#) and [visitchina](#))

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## Bhaarat's influence on Japan

Hinduism and Buddhism went from India to China and Korea to Japan. Images of Ganesha and Vishnu have been found throughout Japan. Numerous Buddhist deities were introduced into Japan and many of

these are still very popular.

According to **D. P. Singhal**, "some Hindu gods, who had been incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon, were amongst them. For example, **Indra**, originally, the god of thunder but now also the king of gods, is popular in Japan as **Taishaku** (literally the great King Sakra); **Ganesh** is worshipped as **Sho-ten or Shoden** (literally, holy god) in many Buddhist temples, and is believed to confer happiness upon his devotees. A sea-serpent worshipped by sailors is called Ryujin, a Chinese equivalent of the Indian naga. **Hariti and Dakini** are also worshipped, the former as **Kishimo-jin**, and the latter by her original name. Bishamon is a Japanese equivalent of the Indian Vaisravana (**Kubera**), the god of wealth.



*Brahma - Japan*

**Even Shinto adopted Indian gods**, despite its desperate efforts after the Meiji Revolution to disengage itself from Buddhism. The Indian sea god **Varuna**, is worshipped in Tokyo as Sui-ten (water-god); the Indian goddess of learning, **Saraswati**, has become Benten (literally, goddess of speech), with many shrines dedicated to her along sea coasts and beside lakes and ponds. **Shiva** is well known to the Japanese as Daikoku (literally, god of darkness), which is a Chinese and Japanese equivalent of the Indian Mahakala, another name of Shiva. Daikoku is a popular god in Japan. At the Kotohira shrine on the island of Shikoku, sailors worship a god called **Kompera**, which is a corruption of the Sanskrit word for crocodile, Kumbhira. The divine architect mentioned in the Rig Veda, **Vishvakarma**, who designed and constructed the world, was regarded in ancient Japan as the god of carpenters, Bishukatsuma. The Indian **Yama**, the god of death, is the most dreaded god of Japan, under the name of **Emma-o**, the king of hell.

According to author **Donald A. Mackenzie**: "The Indian form of myth of the **Churning of the Milky Ocean** reached Japan. In a Japanese illustration of it the mountain rests on a tortoise, and the supreme god sits on the summit, grasping in one of his hands a water vase. The Japanese Shinto myth of creation, as related in the **Ko-ji-ki** and **Nihon-gi**, is likewise a churning myth. Twin deities, Izanagi, the god, and Izanami, the goddess, stand on "the floating bridge of heaven" and thrust into the ocean beneath the "Jewel Spear of Heaven". With this pestle they churn the primeval waters until they curdle and form land."

(source: [Myths of Pre-Columbian America - By Donald A. Mackenzie](#) ASIN 185958490X p.190-191).

The climbers wearing traditional white dress, who scale the sacred Mount Ontake as a religious observance, sometimes have inscribed on their robe Sanskrit **Siddham** characters of an ancient type. Sometimes they put on white Japanese scarfs (tenugui) which carry the Sanskrit character OM, the sacred syllable of the Hindus.

According to **Terence Dukes**, "The Gagaku dances of Japan contain many movements derived from the **Indian Nata** and the Chinese Chuan Fa."

(source: [The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China](#) p.206).

The cultivation of cotton in Japan is traced to an Indian who had drifted to the shore of Aichi Prefecture in 799. To commemorate the event, the Japanese named the village where the shipwrecked Indian had landed Tenjiku; Tenjiku was the Japanese name for India, and means Heaven.



The popular Japanese game of sunoroku or sugoroku (backgammon played at the royal of the Nara rulers and still popular in Japan is of Indian origin. In Japan the game is played as nard. Nard is generally regarded as an Iranian game, but the ninth century Arab scholar, **Al Yaqubi**, considered nard an Indian invention used to illustrate man's dependence on chance and destiny. According to Wei-Shu, sugoroku was brought to China in ancient times from Hu country, which at that time meant a country somewhere in the vicinity of India. Again, as Karl Himly has pointed out, the Hun Tsun, Sii, written during the Sung period (960-1279), states that t'shu-pu, another Chinese name for sugoroku, was invented in western India, that it was known in its original form as **chatushpada**, and that it reached China during the Wei period (220-265).

There is some Indian influence on Japanese art. A similarity between Shinto rituals and Hindu rituals (for example ringing the bell as one enters the temple). Narushima (Narasimha) Bishamondo is a famous temple in Japan.

(source: [India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal](#)). For more on Japan refer to chapter on [Suvarnabhumi](#)).

The influence of Indian thought and culture on Japan was very great. **Maurice Winternitz**, while reviewing [Geschichte der Japanischen Literature](#), says:

**"In view of so much Indian influence in Japanese literature, it is possible to assume that the 'Keuyogen' or double meaning of Japanese poetry may in any way be connected with that form of Alankara of the Indian Kavya, which is exactly in the same method."**

The distinguished Japanese scholar, **Mr. J. Taka Kusu**, says: " But I should like to emphasize the fact that the influence of India, material and intellectual, must have been much greater in an earlier period than we at present consider to have been the case. There were, for instance, several Indians, whom the Kuroshiwo current, washing almost the whole southern coast, brought to the Japanese shore." He further says, " It cannot be denied that several Indians came to Japan, especially in view of so many Indians finding their way to China by sea."

He then relates how a Brahmin Bodhisen Bharadvaja, known generally as the "Brahmin Bishop" came with another priest from India via Champa (Cochin China) to Osaka, then to Nara, where they met another Indian ascetic and taught Sanskrit to the Japanese. "His monastery and tombstone, with a written eulogy, still exist in Nara. Just at the time a Japanese alphabet or syllables is said to have been invented. The fifty syllables, Gojuin, are arranged by a hand, evidently with a practical knowledge of Sanskrit method."

(source: [Journal of Royal Asiatic Society](#) for 1905, p. 872-873). The official record of Japan, Nihon-ki and Ruijukokushi describe how **cotton** was introduced in Japan by two Indians who reached Japan in July 799 and April 800 A.D.

(For more refer to Vide Dr. Taka Kusu's "What Japan owes to India" in the Journal of the Indo-Japanese Association for January, 1910). It is noteworthy that some of the scriptures of the Japanese priests preserved in the Horyuji Temple of Japan are written in Bengali characters of the eleventh century.

(source: Daito Shimaji's " India an Japan in Ancient Times," in the Journal of Indo-Japanese Association for January 1910).

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### Common Terms: Sanskrit/Chinese/Japanese

Archarya - Master	Achali	Ajari
Dharma - Law	FA	Ho
Pratima - movement warrior techniques of the Hindu ksatreyas	Hsing	Kata
Sunyatapani -	Tang-Shou	Karate/To De
Dharmahasta	Chuan Fe	Kempo
Marga - The Way	Tao	Do
Guhya-Sutra	Mi-Ching	Mikkyo
Nagarjuna	Lung Shu	Ryuju/Ryusho/Ryumyo
Mudra - ritual gesture	Yin	In
Mandala a special zone or area	Mantolo	Mandara
Vajramukti	Ching Kang, Chieh T'o	Kongogedastu
Sangha - congregation or group followers	Seng	So
Narya - strong or manly	Na-Li	Nara, Naha
Nata	Na-Pa, Na-Ra	Nara, Napa, Nafa
Yoga - to yoke	Yui Cha	Yu Ga

(source: [The Bodhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China](#) p.485-491).

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### Conclusion

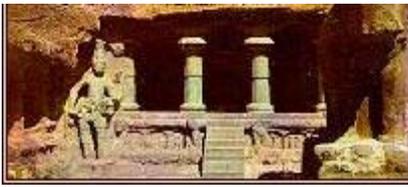
In conclusion, it can be said that China was more influenced by India than India by China. Whilst Chinese monks came to acquire knowledge and take it back, the Indian monks went to China on specific religious missions to impart knowledge. There is hardly any evidence that the Chinese monks brought with them any work which was translated into an Indian language. **It seems that during this period of Sino-Indian contact, the psychological atmosphere was one in which India was naturally accepted as the giver and China as the taker.** Whilst the best in Indian thought was carefully studied and carried back to China, Chinese ideas filtered through India whether they represented the best of their culture or not.

According to **Jawaharlal Nehru** in his book "[The Discovery of India](#)"

"The most famous of the Chinese travelers to India was **Hsuang Tsang** who came in the seventh century when the great T'sang dynasty flourished in China and King Harshavardhana ruled over in North India. Hsuang-Tsang took a degree of Master of the Law at **Nalanda University** and finally became vice-principal of the university.



His book the **Si-Yu-Ki** or the Record of the Western Kingdom (meaning India), makes fascinating reading. He tells us of the system of the university where the five branches of knowledge were taught. 1. Grammar 2. Science of Arts and Crafts 3. Medicine 4.



Logic and 5. Philosophy. **Hsuan-Tsang was particularly struck by the love of learning of the Indian people.** Many Indian classics have been preserved in Chinese translation relating not only to Buddhism but also to Hinduism, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, etc. There are supposed to be 8,00 such works in the Sung-pao collection in China. Tibet is also full of them. There used to be frequent co-operation between Indian, Chinese and Tibetan

scholars. A notable instance of this co-operation, still extant, is a Sanskrit-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary of Buddhist technical terms. This dates from the ninth century and is named the '**Mahavyutpatti.**'

Soon after Hsuan-Tsang's death in China, yet another famous pilgrim made the journey to India - **I-tsing** (or Yi-tsing). He also studied at Nalanda University for a long time and carried back several hundred Sanskrit texts. He refers to India as the West (Si-fang), but he tells us that it was known as **Aryadesha** - Arya means noble, and desha region - the noble region. It is so called because men of noble character appear there successively, and people all praise the land by that name. It is also called the **Madhyadesha** - the middle land, for it is in the center of a hundred myriads of countries.

(source: [The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru](#) p. 193-194).



Yet Chinese culture had some influence on India. The gabled roofs of houses on the western coast of India show a Chinese influence, as do the temples and houses in the Himalayan regions. Some Chinese influence is noted on Gupta coins. The use of a certain kind of silk (china-msuka) in India, different kinds of fruits including pears (cinaraja-putra), peaches (cinani), and lichis, the technique of fishing in the backwaters, and the porcelain industry all owe something to Chinese influence. Indians also learned the art of papermaking from China.

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## Articles

### India and China

By V. B. Metta

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/5185/2-2china.html>

It is a curious fact that Chinese culture, though so distinctive, all-pervasive and compulsive, could not come to India, or if it did come, it could not leave any lasting marks behind it.



Archaeologists and scholars tell us that Chinese ideas and ideals came to India with the Kushan Kings of the North, who were Tartars, but the influence that that dynasty has left on India is almost negligible. We are also told that there is influence of Chinese art on the Ajanta paintings. But that is only a theory, since there is nothing characteristically Chinese about these frescoes. **The influence of India on China however is undeniable. It is not merely in religion that India influenced China, but in most subjects that go to make up national culture.**

The Chinese, always proud of their civilization, looked upon the outside world with contempt. They called the tribes living to their North "Hun slaves," and the tribes living to the North-West "barbarians," while the Japanese were denominated by them "Dwarf Pirates." **But their attitude towards India was different. India was known to them by a number of names, not one of which was contemptuous. She was called Hsin Tu, the Kingdom of the Hindus, or Ti Yu, the Western Land; to Buddhists she was Fu Kuo, the Land of the Buddhas.**

## Pre-Buddhistic Influence



It is probable that there was contact between India and China even before the birth of Buddha; certain similarities of thought and belief between pre-Buddhist Indians and pre-Confucian Chinese go to strengthen that theory. **According to Hindus, the world sprang from the union of Purusha and Prakriti, the Male and Female Principles; the ancient Chinese writers thought the same—the Purusha and Prakriti of Indians being called Yang and Yin in China. There is also the worship of mountains in both countries; what the Himalayas have been to Hindus that Mount Tai has been to the Celestials.** I do not think that these are mere coincidences due to the similarity of all early beliefs. There was a good deal of action and reaction of early Asiatic civilizations upon each other of which a proper history has yet to be written.

With the rise of Buddhism we are, historically speaking, on firmer ground. It is said that Asoka's missionaries had gone to China. There are however no records left of it. But we do know as a matter of historical fact that in 67 A.D., the Emperor Ming Ti received Kashyapamadanya from India, who bore with him presents of images and sculptures for the Chinese emperor. Since then the intercourse between the two countries continued uninterrupted till at least the eighth century. During that time it is estimated that between thirty to forty Indian scholars went to China, and some two hundred Chinese scholars came to India, who took back with them to their country Indian books, paintings, and statues.

**The influence of India on China can be traced on Music, Architecture, Painting, Sculpture, Literature, Mythology, Philosophy and Science.**

### **Influence of Hindu Music**



We learn from Chinese writers that Indian music had displaced Chinese music in the seventh century in northern China; records of this music are said to be preserved in Japan. Although Chinese architecture is mainly wooden, still Indian architecture has succeeded in influencing it. There were certain temples built during the Tang Period in China which were the offspring of Indian and Chinese styles of architecture. Those temples are however in ruins now, and so they cannot be studied properly. But the Chinese pagoda fortunately still exists. It is called Chinese, though the country of its origin was Nepal. The Newars, a people living in the Valley of Nepal, evolved it by making certain alterations in the Hindu temple. Those alterations were: (1) They built the pagoda on a platform and not on the ground direct like the Hindu temple; (2) They tilted up the roof of their building, mainly because the rainfall in the country is very heavy. **Mr. Ernest Havell is of opinion that the pagoda was a modification of the stupa, while Mr. Sylvain Levi thinks that it represents an Indian style of architecture which has now disappeared.** When the pagoda went from Nepal to Tibet and from thence to China is not definitely known yet. The oldest pagoda in China is, I think, of the sixth century.

In **painting**, India influenced China considerably. From the East Chin dynasty to the Tang dynasty there was continuous intercourse between the two countries, and Indian paintings went to China in great numbers and influenced, if not actually displaced for a time Chinese painting in the North. This Indian School of Painting flourished in China till the rise to power of the Southern Sung who favored the purely Chinese style of painting. I shall never forget the exquisite, ethereally delicate pictures painted on silk of this period which I saw at an exhibition at Messrs. Yamanaka's art galleries in New York in 1923. The manager of the galleries on seeing that I was an Indian, approached me, and pointing at the pictures in front of us, remarked with his inimitable Japanese smile, "They are all Indian really!" Then there are the wall paintings of the **Tun Huang Caves (the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas) which Sir Aurel Stein and others have recently excavated in Chinese Turkestan.**



A Chinese writer tells us that before the introduction of Buddhism there was no sculpture in three dimensions in China. But most of the early Chinese Buddhist sculpture was destroyed by an Emperor who was anti-Buddhist. There are, however, the rock sculptures and reliefs at Lo Yang and Lung Men of that period still left intact which show the influence of Indian sculpture on them. There are also sculptures to be found at Yung Kwang which closely resemble the Indo-Greek sculptures of Gandhara.



The **Sanskrit language** and literature have influenced China to a certain extent, since the Buddhist Scriptures had to be translated into Chinese. On account of the study of Sanskrit—which, by the way, is the language of the Mahayana Buddhism and not Pali as some people imagine—the Chinese were inspired to invent an alphabetical system. This alphabetical system which has now disappeared, was called *Ba-lamen Shu* or *Brahminical writing*. **Sakuntala**, the masterpiece of the great Indian dramatist **Kalidasa**, was translated into Chinese, and is said to have influenced the Chinese drama. In mythology, many Buddhist deities of India were adopted by the Chinese; for example, Kwan Yin, the Chinese Goddess of Mercy, was the Indian Tara. **It has been suggested that Lao Tze got his idea of Tao—the Way—from the Hindu Brahman, Universal Soul.** It is likely that the Indian sciences of Astronomy and Medicine influenced the astronomical and medical sciences of the Chinese. There is very good scope for a competent scholar to make a full study of Indian influence on China and other Far-Eastern countries, and write a book on the subject.

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### **British Imperialism and Christian Missionaries in China**

(excerpts from [Glimpses of World History - By Jawaharlal Nehru \(1934\) p. 445-449](#))

**India had sent in the past many a good thing to China.** Bt the Opium war with Britain was a beginning of a unsavory chapter in Chinese history.



This was the beginning of China's troubles with the imperialistic Powers of the West. Her isolation was at an end. She had to accept foreign trade; and she had to accept, in addition, Christian missionaries. **These missionaries played an important part in China as the vanguard of imperialism.** Many of China's subsequent troubles had something to do with missionaries. Their behavior was often insolent and exasperating, but they could not be tried by Chinese courts. Under the new treaty foreigners from the West were not subject to Chinese law or Chinese justice. They were tried by their own courts. This was called "extra-territoriality", and it still exists, and is much resented. The converts of the also claimed this special protection of 'extra-territoriality.'" They were in no way entitled to it; but that made no difference, as the great missionary, the representative of a powerful imperialist nation, was behind them. Thus village was sometimes set against village, and when, exasperated beyond measure, the villagers or others rose and attacked the missionary, and sometimes killed him, then the imperialist Power behind swooped down and took signal reparation.

**Few occurrences have been so profitable to European Powers as the murders of their missionaries in China!** For they made each such murder the occasion for demanding and extorting further privileges.

It was also a convert to Christianity who started one of the most terrible and cruel rebellions in China. This is the **Taiping Rebellion**, started about 1850 by Hung Hsin-Chuan. This religious maniac had extraordinary success and went about with the war-cry "**Kill the idolaters**", and vast numbers of people were killed. The rebellion devastated more than half China, and during a dozen years or so it is estimated that at least 20,000,000 people died on account of it. At first the missionaries blessed it and later repudiated Huang. To the Chinese government, the missionary did not come as a messenger of religion and good will. He was an agent of imperialism.

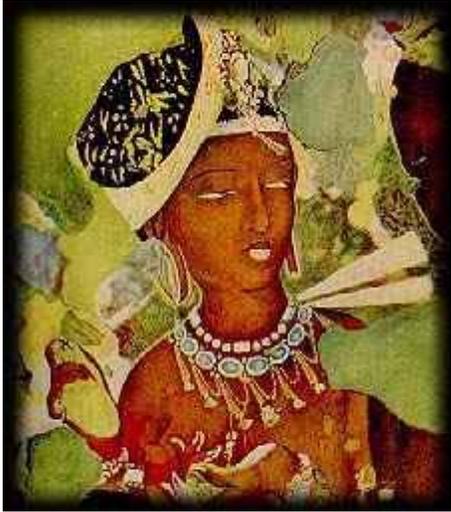
**"First the missionary, then the gunboat, then the land-grabbing - this is the procession of events in the Chinese mind."**

**The foreign barbarians cared little what the Chinese thought of them. They felt secure in their gunboats and with their modern weapons of war.**

**"Whatever happens,  
We have got  
The Maxim gun,  
And they have not!"**

\*\*\*

England waited in the wings as they vied for the key to absolute control of China. Western culture and beliefs moved slowly into the foreground in China, especially the Christian doctrine spread by missionaries which found itself at the center of the Taiping ideology.



The English, when told "Take away your opium, and your missionaries, and you will be welcome" chose to come with both and throw welcome to the wind. The fact that the English had the power in the first place to disregard the Emperor and his ambassadors was a blow to Chinese esteem. Suddenly these little European nations from far away were threatening the traditions and tenements kept by China for thousands of years. For the next ten years, Hung joined Leang-afa as a street preacher. With several close friends, he founded the Society of God Worshippers and remained the head of that organization until the March of 1847, when **he returned to Canton to study with Isaachar T. Roberts. Roberts was an American Southern Baptist missionary, who adopted Hung as a special student and encouraged his ideas of rebellion.** Later, the missionary was to change his mind, calling Hung and his fellow revolutionists "coolie kings" who were "crazy and unfit to rule".

"In search of further guidance, Hong spent two months with an American Baptist missionary, the Reverend Issachar Jacox Roberts, receiving scriptural instruction. Leaving before he was ready for baptism – on which score the Reverend Mr. Roberts was quite right – Hong returned to his native place near Canton. There he and his followers, now calling themselves God Worshipers, made themselves socially unacceptable by **smashing idols** and Hong lost his position as schoolmaster."

(source: [Dragon by the Tail: American, British, Japanese, and Russian Encounters With China and One Another](#) By John Paton Davies Jr.

[Christian influence upon the ideology of the Taiping Rebellion, 1851-1864](#)  
by Eugene Powers Boardman )

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**Hindu-Chini bhai bhai**

**Jyoyti Malhotra**

<http://www.indian-express.com/ie20010521/nat19.html>

New Delhi, May 20: China and India are expected to take a great leap forward in their relationship, with Beijing inviting the Shankaracharya of Kanchi, Sri Jayendra Saraswati, on a tour of China later in October this year.

The Shankaracharya is among a handful of major religious leaders worldwide who have ever been invited by officially atheist China, on a red carpet journey that will take him and his 15-member team across the old cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Hangzhou.



The Shankaracharya's trip is being described as a "civilisational journey", in the manner of the ancient travelers who travelled from India to the Middle Kingdom and back. But it is bound to add an interesting new dimension to modern-day contacts between Asia's giants, who at the best of times seem to regard each other as competitors.

Clearly, the Shankaracharya's trip from October 10 to 17 is also an attempt to break the gathering distrust between the two countries. The fact that the invitation comes from the China Association of International Friendly Contact (CAIFC) in Beijing — all "autonomous" and "independent" bodies in China are linked to the government — whose president is the

former Chinese foreign minister Huang Hua, makes it even more significant.

Beijing, in fact, seems to be rolling out the red carpet with deliberate intent. Jayendra Saraswati will meet Li Peng, the second-most important leader in all China as well as Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji in Beijing, besides Buddhist and Taoist leaders (both groups are native to China) in Shanghai.

Significantly, during the week the Shankaracharya will visit, Beijing will also throw open the gates of the formerly forbidden city to Hindu devotees from the rest of the world, Kanchi sources said. The political importance of the journey has not escaped New Delhi, although diplomats wished not to make comments.

For example, the Beijing-Shanghai-Hangzhou trip is the same route that was given to former US president Richard Nixon when he made his pathbreaking visit to China in 1972.

Analysts pointed out that Beijing has been “under siege” for some years now, with the banned Falun Gong sect gathering worshipers across the country and the West pressurizing China to allow more religious freedom.

By letting in Shankaracharya, the analysts added, the Chinese seem to be sending many messages at the same time. First, that the people of India must be engaged at many levels, not only political. Second, Hinduism is certainly no threat to sects like the Falun Gong. And third, as China opens up slowly, **“Western nations, along with their cultural motifs, must back off.”**

The Kanchi group, comprising of the pontiff’s close aides Venkateshwaran, Rajaram, M.D. Nalapat, Sundar and R. Sarathy, who visited Beijing in end-April to finalise details, said they were “very pleasantly surprised” at the extremely warm reception they received.

They said they were able to wrap up both major details as well as the finer points of the trip in a matter of weeks. **The Catholic Pope, they pointed out, has been trying to go to China or even Hong Kong for the last 17-odd years, but Beijing has steadfastly refused to give him a visa.**

On the other hand, the letter formally delivered by CAIFC emissaries to Kanchipuram a few days ago, is extremely warm in tone, inviting “Your Holiness” to visit China as “distinguished guests of the Chinese people as well as the goodwill ambassadors of **our great neighbor India with which China has a history of thousands (of) years of friendly exchanges**”.

Interestingly, it is the small details that seemed to have warmed the cockles of the Shankaracharya camp. Such as the fact that the pontiff will be able to carry his personal cook with him along with the special rice that he eats. And though the vegetables will be provided by the Chinese side, water will come straight from a borewell in the earth and not from an impersonal tap in the wall.

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Did You Know



**Tea - (Chai), the national drink of the Anglo-Saxons, is an indirect Indian legacy to the Western civilization.**



It is also a favored drink of the Chinese, Japanese, Russians and others. The original home of this shrub was in Assam, (Kamarupa of old) India, and from there in the third century A.D. it traveled to China and by the middle of the seventeenth century, it appeared in England. In the eighteenth century "tea gardens" began to appear in London and attracted especially women who preferred them to the stuffy tea houses in the congested city.



Scholars too were attracted - Dr Samuel Johnson and Boswell lent distinction to these gardens.

(Source: [India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal](#) p- 396)

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