

## **Book Launch on Beyond Pan-Asianism: Connecting China and India, 1840s-1960s**

**Chair:** Dr. Alka Acharya

**Keynote address:** Amb. TCA Raghavan

**Speakers:** Dr. Tansen Sen, Dr. Brian Tsui, Dr. Cao Yin, Dr. Anne Reinhardt, Dr. Zhang Ke, Adhira Mangalagiri.

**Date:** 3 December 2020

**Venue:** Zoom Webinar, ICS Delhi

Event started by Professor Alka Acharya the chair, with the introductory note on need of such work given the current circumstances of India-China relations that is marked by extreme belligerence and provocation with all possible variants of strategic and tactical confrontation, denunciation stemming from emotive nationalism. Further point that this critical therapeutic intervention add on to the important intellectual interests of the Institute of Chinese Studies and aired some thoughts on the business of Asia by questioning that what is this Asia, what connects Asians?

Keynote address by Ambassador T.C.A Raghavan with congratulation remarks to editors and the contributors and highlighted that this volume juxtaposes number of themes on India, China and wider canvas of Pan-Asianism. Ambassador elucidated on the complexity of Asianism, emergences of discourse in India by tracing the work by Keshub Chandra Sen . Quoted Professor Battacharya on historical paradox with Nationalism and Asianism and stated that the idea of nationalism as a principal factor of this Indian- China face off. Discourses on India and China by intellectuals from both sides respectively, illustrations of historians, and writers and many others in the chapters lead by Rabindranath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehu and others despite the critiques on this relation. Added that the tangential view of the China in its proximate regions is something that interests many and this volume evokes that interest again.

Follow up, professor Brian Tsui gave overview of the book by elucidating about its initial plan and how this volume came about. Than explained major themes of the book as following; Archives and libraries, Pan-Asianism and its complicated legacies, supernational and transregional trends connections, being politics and borders and China and India as method. This volume attempts to answer the question on China–India connectedness in the modern period. Instead of providing one definite answer, it engages with prevailing and past frameworks notably ‘Pan-Asianism’ and ‘China/India as Method’—with an aim to provoke further discussions on how histories of China–India and, by extension the non-Western world, can be conceptualized.

Add on note gave by the alternative editor of the book professor Tansen Sen on this collaborative research and its future prospects. Emphasized upon the subtitle of the volume that the timeframe

it has taken was from 1840s to 1960s which oriented to question how India China relations are periodized. Further elucidated on each sections starting from the first being intervention based on three contributions which go beyond the archives by looking at literatures.

A contributor of the book Adhira Mangalagiri summarized the first section of the book which contains of three chapters which mainly talks about theoretical background and contribution it makes to India China relations in the contemporary era. Interdisciplinary manner in which volume being formulated with first chapter entitled Slave of the Colonizer: The Indian Policeman in Chinese literature which reads a large collection of Chinese short stories, novels, poetries that explicitly portray this figure of Indian policeman. Republican era literary sphere in China with regards to the concept of language, national autonomy and vision of revolution are shown through literary engagement within this chapter. Second chapter closely reads 1923 short story by Xu Dishan and focuses on religious thought and literary realism of modern China during late Qing and Republican period. And third chapter is on rethinking Pan-Asianism through Zhang Taiyan: India as method focusing on the writings of the Chinese revolutionary Zhang Taiyan. Together these three chapter in the section addresses how the China India pairing actually disrupts dominant narratives of intellectual thought in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China. In contrast to the narrative such as engagement with the west or Japan tend to be the main ways to understand the development of modern intellectual literary thought, this work intend to ask how did thinking about India and China together enable writers to critique colonial and imperial paradigms and how this imagination of India play a central and transformative role in shaping China's intellectual and literary part during the republican period? This section addresses above questions.

Zhang Ke brief the second section, encounters and images starting from the chapter four which examines some of the late Qing writing in order to demonstrate two modes of observations and critical reflections. Professor Kamal Sheel investigates the Hindi sources from 19<sup>th</sup> century to first World War and distinguishes these materials into four types ranging from introduction of China through travel logs and pieces of information in Chinese life and society, stories and illustrations, second being essays, editorials, reviews and detail comments on contemporary events on China, third is Indian intellectuals discussions of convergence and differences between Indian and China in the context of Asianism and final are news items on domestic politics. Chapter six is closely connected with previous chapter as professor focused upon the question about how people in colonial India consider China. To sum up this section which aims at reviewing the development of the feeling of empathy and sympathy from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century and review the mutual understanding and images of India and China from both sides.

Section three titled as Cultures and mediators and it's looking at people and institutions that connected China and India. This section was dealt by Cao Yin who stated all four chapters under this section are reflected upon just as professor Prasenjit Duara said about how to rescue history of this cultures and mediators that some cannot be accommodate into national history of both hence, need to explore alternative methodologies and primary sources to write down the history. Chapters under this section centers around the exploring the conversation between Tagore and

Chinese intellectual counterparts in 1920 to examine the interconnection between the two in hope of obtaining new perspectives. Pitfalls during Second World War and examines the complicated relations between the Chinese nationalist government, British Colonial authorities and Indian nationalist intellectuals. Third chapter encompasses about Sikh temple in Hong Kong and Mecca between China and India as the final chapter of the section.

Building and Challenging imperial networks, the final section of the book was summarized by Anne Reinhardt which is based on historical methods driven interactions and comparison between India and China and its newly open or under covered aspects are looked into. Indian Political Activism in Republican China as the chapter eleven of the volume examines China and particularly Hong Kong and eastern treaty ports as important sides of recruitment and political mobilization by Indian anti imperial organization and exile Indian nationalist. She details the political activities of both activists and others who contributed to sustain political activism from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the 1930s. Between Alliance and rivalry: Nationalist in china and India during the Second World War utilizes newly available military, diplomatic and intelligent sources in the Gongmingtanf Party archive and among others academic historica in Taiwan to explicate a range of examples on how nationalist Chinese changing understanding of India and Indian Politics informed diplomacy and national policies during early stages of the pacific war. Chapter thirteen tilted Shipping nationalism in China and India compares respective engagements of company leaders from both sides in early 20<sup>th</sup> century and shipping nationalism as term used to encompass political and entrepreneurial efforts to challenge British and Japanese domination of shinning trades and markets. Final Chapter written by Tansen Sen called the Chinese intrigue in Kalimpong Intelligence gathering and the 'spies' in a Contact Zone in which he used the record of intelligence branch West Bengal and State archives of Calcutta to examine hilltown of Kalimpong as a side of covert espionage activities involving Chinese, Indian and Tibetan interests. His essay traces mass knowledge on Chinese agents and how this knowledge put to used as the geopolitical relation transform. End note by Professor Brian highlighted upon continuing collaborative study of China and India.

The Q&A session revolved mainly around few specific questions like how much Indian is relevant to China? How much of Amitav Ghosh is fiction and how much is true? Relevance of Pan-Asianism in the context of rising Hindutva politics and increase in Chinese Nationalism? Wrapped this session with complements to the work put up by the team.

Conclusion remarks from Ambassador Raghavan, to answer the question proposed by the chair about how important is India to China, from the Indian perspective, China is Important and would aspects the same from counterparts both being large country. Despite the current circumstances, scholarship from both sides existed and act as a push for a better one. Need of promoting the study of China in India and go beyond as title states beyond Pan Asianism as the study of present helps shape the future asserted by the chair.