

“friends,” more than as scholars. This again fueled internal debates about what their role was – between understanding and friendship – at this particular juncture in Sino-American relations.

The CCAS ultimately disbanded in 1979, and Lanza explains the disagreements and contradictions that led to this outcome. The *Bulletin*, which had devoted much attention to publishing on the Vietnam War and the Cultural Revolution, no longer had much reason to do so. The Deng era, in particular, represented a sharp departure from Maoist policies that was difficult to explain, let alone accept, in the views of many of the concerned scholars. Like Deng – many opted for a pragmatic turn and decided to publish in more traditional journals and even secure cushy places in academic institutions. Some were reportedly purged by universities that had no love for leftists and Marxists (pp. 170–71).

Fabio Lanza gives us clear insight into the driving forces and tensions behind the development of China studies in the United States during the Cold War, by focusing on a particular intellectual movement and a political perspective that was critical of the role being played by the United States government. That critical perspective lived on after CCAS disbanded, through the *Bulletin* which was renamed *Critical Asian Studies*, albeit it was no longer China-centered.

China itself is today nearly unrecognizable from the revolutionary experiment that had first intrigued and inspired the young scholars of CCAS in the sixties and the seventies. China studies in the United States in the post-Cold War period has become an enormous industry representing a wide range of perspectives. But Sino-American relations continues to stand at the nexus of international politics – perhaps more so than ever before.

To some extent, relations even appear to have moved full circle. There is talk of a new Cold War emerging, with the government under Donald Trump having officially labelled China a peer strategic competitor of the United States. With the resurgence of geopolitical rivalry between the two, and China having risen to great power status on the wings of Mao’s and Deng’s legacies but now spurred by the bold ambitions of Xi Jinping, China experts in the United States could once again be called upon to perform a vital role.

The current generation will likely face challenges similar to those faced by their predecessors – to explain what is happening in China both in its own terms as well as to draw implications for China’s relations with the rest of the world, to take a political stand, to scrutinize their own government’s actions, to translate analysis into activism. The stakes are higher than before, should China scholars in the United States (but as a matter of fact, in many other places in the world) not get it right this time.

Rather than simply recording an episode in American intellectual history, Fabio Lanza’s book – intentionally or otherwise – is relevant.

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India, China, and the World: A Connected History

By Tansen Sen. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Pp. 541. ISBN 10: 1442220910; ISBN 13: 978-1538111727.

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Running just beneath the surface of Tansen Sen’s most recent contribution to the study of Indian–Chinese interactions is a characterization of the history of the relationship that Sen finds deeply unsatisfying. According to this cheerful narrative propagated in both China and India, roughly two thousand years of Chinese–Indian relations are comprised of a dialog of peaceful interaction between two great civilizations divided into three periods: the first, religious exchange sparked by the

emergence of Buddhism in India and the Chinese fascination with it; the second, an abrupt loss of connection, driven by violent European colonialism; and the third, a revitalization of the relationship in the twentieth century nurtured by two sovereign states.

This compelling narrative of inevitable, spontaneous and mutually beneficial cooperation, interrupted by a dark period of foreign, Western intervention, followed by a rediscovery of friendship, brimming with optimism for the future crops up in writings by both Indian and Chinese idealists, and increasingly now in state-sponsored projects and pronouncements in China. In this substantial, 500-page survey of Indian–Chinese interactions, meticulously documented and packed with information, Sen, arguably the leading authority on the history of China–India relations, tells a different story.

Yes, for the first thousand or so years of interaction, Buddhism played a key role in facilitating exchange, but more changed hands than religious icons, relics and sutras. Indians consumed Chinese goods like silk, porcelain and tea, while Chinese developed a taste for pepper, frankincense and cotton. Technologies for producing sugar, paper and gunpowder spread from one side to the other. And knowledge of geography, mills and ship-building techniques moved between India and China over the course of centuries. In a series of case studies, Sen shows just how messy the process was and how often those involved were stubbornly uncooperative. Basic geographic knowledge from one side of Asia to the other was consistently fragmented and confused owing in part to the tendency in China of writers to attempt to reconcile different accounts of distances and topography with one another rather than determining which was correct – geographic knowledge did not improve as it expanded; if anything knowledge of the shape of the great Asian other became more confusing. At the same time, merchants understandably guarded geographic knowledge from their competitors. The same holds true for other types of knowledge. As Sen puts it, “Frequently the knowledge circulating between South Asia and China was jumbled, conflicting, incomplete, or deliberately manipulated” (p. 33). Moreover, Sen shows that in these encounters the metaphor of “dialog” rarely holds up to scrutiny, since exchanges of goods, technology and knowledge between India and China almost always involved third, fourth and fifth parties. Sogdians, Arabs, Persians, Africans, Austronesians and others all played key roles in the dissemination of goods and knowledge between India and China.

This point – the place of third parties in India–China exchange – is emphasized in the title of the book, *India, China, and the World. A Connected History*: Sen insists that the Indian–Chinese relationship can only be understood in the context of a wider world, and that it should be studied not as a one-to-one exchange, but rather as a “connected history” – a concept he draws from the work of Sanjay Subrahmanyam (p. 26). For the early period, Sen is hampered by an imbalance of sources: the overwhelming balance of evidence for these encounters comes from Chinese documents. Nonetheless, Sen does what can be done from the fragments of information from Indian sources and from hints to the Indian perspective in Chinese texts.

For the period from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, Sen turns to ways in which China and India continued to be linked, long after the decline of Buddhism in India through Asian and European imperialism, focusing on the four hegemonic powers of the period: Ming China, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. In his discussion of the seven remarkable maritime missions of Zheng He between 1405 and 1433, Sen emphasizes first, that it was not the case that intra-Asian interactions had fallen dormant between the decline of Indian Buddhism and the rise of European colonialism; Ming imperialism played a key role in restructuring intra-Asian networks before the arrival of the Europeans. Second, he stresses the imperialist elements of Zheng He’s expeditions, intended to assert Ming control over Southeast Asia, often resulting in violent clashes with local leaders.

For the early chapters, Sen can draw on his own previous publications, and for Zheng He on the work of Geoff Wade, but the scholarship on European colonialism and the opium trade is so vast as to defy summary. Instead, Sen goes small, focusing first on the stories of three men who experienced India and China in the context of the imperialist enterprise: the first British traveler to Tibet, George Bogle; the Parsi opium and cotton trader Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy; and the first Qing official to visit British India, Huang Maocai. Next, he turns to communities of Chinese merchants in India, and, on a smaller scale, Indians resident in China. All of this demonstrates the extent to which

Indians and Chinese and other intermediaries remained in close contact throughout the colonial period. The experiences of this time played a key role in shaping perceptions of the era that preceded it. As Sen writes, “The extraction of resources and labor, and the trafficking of addictive products (such as opium, tea, and tobacco) by the colonial powers made this world of imperialism exploitative, destructive, and humiliating for Indians and Chinese as they interacted with each other in different parts of the globe. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some of these episodes triggered nostalgic reminiscences of the historical interactions between ‘India’ and ‘China’ that [...] became part of the anticolonial ideology known as Asianism or pan-Asianism” (p. 197).

The final two chapters, roughly a third of the book, treat this dream of pan-Asianism, dashed by the rise of Japanese imperialism but followed by the rhetoric of “Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai” (“Indians and Chinese are brothers”) and, more recently, by the promotion of “Chindia,” all in an attempt, at times with noble motives and at times with more sinister intent, to foster a sense of common identity, against the backdrop of deep-seated mistrust and long-standing disputes over territory. From the 1920s and through the founding of the Republic of India and the People’s Republic of China, attempts to celebrate the solidarity between Indians and Chinese were driven by prominent politicians and writers like Tagore, Nehru, Zhou Enlai and Bertrand Russell, as well as many lesser known figures that Sen details, and included the creation of academic centers, publication projects, Buddhist missions, and diplomatic exchange, reaching their peak of hyperbole in the 1950s. But the question of the sovereignty of Tibet, a sticking point already in the 1940s, and disputes over the border, nonetheless erupted in the brief war of 1962. Attempts to repair the rift through cultural activities like the ill-fated Delhi-Peking Friendship March of 1963–64 failed. The war had demonstrated to both sides that the brotherhood championed in the 1950s was a “facade” (p. 371). The previous campaigns, Sen argues, were not merely unsuccessful, but destructive. After surveying the various attempts to promote brotherhood founded on a myth of past cooperation mapped onto contemporary political boundaries, Sen concludes that “the psychological scar related to the PRC among Indians was a result not merely of the 1962 war but also of the hype of brotherhood that was created throughout the 1950s” (p. 411). Throughout the period, Chinese in India and Indians in China were treated poorly. Thousands of Chinese were deported from India in the early 1960s, while Sikh families resident in China complained that “they and their families are being so systematically and relentlessly persecuted that the conclusion is inescapable that the Chinese intention is to hound them out of the country” (p. 432).

In the conclusion to the book, Sen attempts to draw lessons for Indian–Chinese relations from the long, complex history the book relates. He laments recent attempts to celebrate “2000 years of peaceful exchange” such as the *Encyclopedia of India-China Cultural Contacts* as doomed to yield the same results as the “Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai” rhetoric that quickly fell to the wayside with the War of 1962. He suggests instead recognition of the role that others have played in facilitating Chinese–Indian relations in the past, and calls for both sides to agree to international mediation to address the border disputes that continue to shape public perception and to thwart friendly relations.

The focus on a set of central arguments and commitment to a single volume forces Sen to set aside parts of the story of the encounter between India and China. The War of 1962 is taken as given: readers will need to look elsewhere for descriptions of troop movements or the specific arguments over where the border should be drawn. For all of his discussion about exchanges of knowledge and goods, facilitated by Buddhism, Sen devotes little space to the spread of Buddhist thought, including belief in rebirth and karma, or to the practices associated with monasticism, all of which came to China with Buddhism. He doesn’t speculate on the puzzling absences – why do we find so few references to China and things Chinese in Indian sources? Why didn’t paper catch on earlier in India? Why did Indian drama and epic poetry leave so few traces in China? But his choices on what to leave out are defensible, and the focus on a few key dynamics in the past and their relevance for modern relations bring to the book cogency and, by the conclusion, a sense of urgency.