

Cultural and Civilization Impacts from India and China on the Southeast Asia Region

Dr. Kunal Krishna

Assistant Professor

Department of Political Science

Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi, Delhi, India

Abstract: There is a large diaspora of Chinese and Indian people in Southeast Asian countries, numbering over 20 million. Throughout history, Southeast Asia has been profoundly impacted by the artistic, cultural, architectural, religious, and etiquette practices of neighbouring China and India. Historical sites in Southeast Asian nations like Indonesia and Thailand display tales and people from Indian mythology. Indian folklore and art use elements from the Ramayana and other epic tales. The Southeast Asian people's daily lives are rich with influences from Indic culture. The people of India still hold the title of “Vishwa guru” in their hearts. These Southeast Asian nations pay little attention to Chinese culture, despite the fact that it has a written history spanning five thousand years and has been home to numerous philosophers and thinkers, including Confucius, Laozi, and Taoism, among others. The Chinese, who see themselves as the “Center of the world,” sent a naval fleet under Zheng He's command to extend the Ming dynasty's control over Southeast Asia. Zheng He paid royal visits to several island nations during his voyage and presented priceless presents to the rulers, but his visits had little effect on the people's daily lives. After that, trade began to flow between China and Southeast Asian countries, although Chinese culture was considerably overshadowed by Indian culture. This cultural civilization examination of the Chinese and Indians primarily emphasizes Confucianism and Hindutva as determinants. This study employs qualitative analysis and the interdisciplinary framework of civil Culturology. It relies on the inductive technique. It contends that China prioritizes economic development, asserting that such development may foster peace. China prioritizes economic development in its foreign policies. Cultural confidence and autonomous pursuit are fundamental characteristics shown in India's national behavior. These disparities have been recognized to induce misperceptions and impede the economic interactions between the two nations. It is puzzling that China, with the world's second-largest economy, and India, with the world's fourth-largest economy, have not been able to establish cultural domination in these regions.

Keywords:- Soft Diplomacy, Hindutva, Confucianism, Indic Civilization, Chinese Civilisation, Culturalization, Contemporary

INTRODUCTION

It is thought that India has a history that dates back more than five thousand years, making it one of the oldest living civilizations in the world. South Asia is the location of this region, which is characterized by its proximity to mountains, sea, and ocean, as well as its abundance of magnificent rivers and rich fields. As a result of its geographical location, India has been blessed with a plethora of natural resources, which have enabled the country to meet its fundamental needs for food, housing, and clothing. Because of the fertile lands, our peasants, who were the drivers of the agro economy in the past, had enough time to work and maintain their social life in the form of entertainment, organizing any cultural activities, and religious activities. This is the reason why we mention these three fundamental needs: food, clothing, and shelter. The purpose of this is to argue that the people of India have never been forced to live in a state of scarcity of resources. The existence of a wide variety of folktales and folk melodies, as well as religion and a wide variety of philosophical perspectives, is evidence of the magnificent and happy life that our ancestors have had and handed on to their descendants, ensuring that every Indian has a “Smile on their Faces” to this day to the present day. Indians are considered to be intelligent and caring by nature, and

they are consistently at the forefront of providing assistance to those who are in need, even while interacting with individuals from diverse cultures. The large and affluent culture of India cannot be compared to the cultures of the Western world. Despite the fact that India instills collective ideals and always believes in the growth and development of the community, often known as a feeling of “collectivism,” the Western world is more inclined toward “individualism” in both its way of life and its attitude. Therefore, it is possible to see a great deal of destruction and imperialistic misadventure that was carried out by Western nations. India is one of the countries that has been affected by their aggressive and imperial endeavors. Throughout its history, India has never been a colonialist nation and has never been an aggressive nation. Through the acts of kindness it has performed and the efforts it has made to alleviate people's sufferings (both mental and physical), it has garnered the attention of the entire world and mankind in particular. The existence of respect for multiculturalism in “Hindutva,” “Buddhism,” and other religions has resulted in the establishment of an atmosphere that is peaceful and calm within the social fabric of India. Individuals are content because they have someone on whom they can trust when they are experiencing discomfort and going through any kind of circumstance that is beyond the control of humans. The supernatural powers that they believe in are referred to as “God,” and they have complete faith in the deity, believing that “God will never let them in pain and God will definitely come to his or her rescue.” Since this is the case, individuals are guaranteed protection from any and all occurrences that they might experience throughout their lives. “Vegetarianism” has always been encouraged in Indian epics and mythological stories, and those civilizations and societies that promote and practice non-vegetarianism in their eating habits have been condemned. India is home to some of the most renowned practitioners and practitioners of traditional medicine, including Ayurveda and Unani, which have contributed to the calm regeneration of the body and mind. It is also possible that Indian Ayurvedic professors and monks traveled to China during the early period in order to treat the ailments that were prevalent in ancient China.

Inventions developed by Indian scientists in the past have never had hegemonic goals; rather, they have always been people-centric.

Its guiding principle, “Vashudeva kutumbhikam,” has always been to spread the message of kindness and compassion to people all over the globe.

It is thought that China's history is more than 5,000 years old, with written/documented history spanning 3000 years. China is also one of the world's oldest and most vibrant civilizations. It has a small amount of arable land despite its varied natural resources, which include rivers, seas, and mountains, and its location in East Asia. The components of Chinese cuisine are a testament to the fact that food scarcity occurred in China due to the paucity of fertile land. Most Chinese recipes call for meat or other animal products. What the Chinese eat and how they eat it, how quickly or slowly, are all shaped by their history. They are completely unlike the people of Indic civilization in both speech and behavior. Indians are known for their serene demeanor when they eat and drink. There are many languages spoken in China, and that number continues to grow. However, the state-mandated “Mandarin” language curriculum is a major headache for ordinary Chinese people. China was an early developer of gunpowder, although this innovation may have been driven by a desire to stay alive or by a sense of fear that led them to investigate violent means of self-defence.

Objective of this Paper

In this paper, we shall make an effort to answer the following questions:

- ❖ **What makes Southeast Asian countries so receptive to the Indic Civilization?**
- ❖ **What are the causes that acted as obstacles to the spread of Chinese culture and civilization in Southeast Asian countries?**
- ❖ **The third question is why Indian culture is more pervasive than Chinese culture.**

Comparative Study of Two of the World's Most Prominent Civilizations

Comparing the two ancient civilizations, there are a great deal of similarities and differences between them. It is possible to say that both of these civilizations have coexisted. As a result of the fact that everything is subject to the will of nature, both civilizations, which are essentially based on the agrarian economy, have the same problems and challenges that they must overcome. The map of Eastern Asia is dominated by two major centers of civilization, which are ranked second and first in terms of population size among the nations that make up the world. Over the course of more than two millennia, India and China have supplied Southeast Asia with a significant amount of cultural impact. Indian and Chinese traders have been engaged in commerce along the beaches of what are now Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam for a thousand years. It would appear that the very process of population growth on the peninsula was the consequence of movements of people that were pushed outside by the expanding nations of India and China. In the majority of the cities that are located in Southeast Asia today, there are communities of Chinese and Indian people that compete with one another for jobs and trade.

Folklore and folktales from India and China also contain references to these connections, which can also be explored. The story of Young Hanuman devouring nine Suns, which is found in Indian mythology, is identical to the story that is told in Chinese folktales. Another myth that is similar to this one describes a great archer who shot down nine suns from the sky at the same time that suns appeared at the same time, causing a great deal of difficulty for the common people.

The Silk Road, which began in Luoyang, China, traversed the Indian subcontinent on its way to Central Asia, and then went on to connect a number of different regions of the world before reaching its final destination. It is possible to observe the cultural impact of China in the folktales of the countries that were located along the course of the Silk Road. Not only did the Chinese merchants who traveled along this route bring Chinese goods to the rest of the world, but they also contributed to the dissemination of Chinese culture to many parts of the world. In the realm of cultural influence, the tale of Afanti of China and Mulla Nasiruddin can be considered one of many examples.

The political structures of India and China are currently distinct from one another, and they are also engaging in diverse models of governance. On the other hand, the civilization and cultural connection that these two countries have shared in the past cannot be erased by the fact that they have different models of political and administrative control. When compared to the Chinese civilization, the Indic civilization has been noted to have a greater degree of acceptance in a variety of regions across the globe, particularly in the Southeast Asian region. There are nine countries out of eleven in Southeast Asia that practice the culture of the Indic people. This method is a modest one, but it is an attempt to understand why the Indic civilization has a stronger influence in these Southeast Asian countries than the Chinese civilization does.

What is the reason that China, which has the second-largest economy in the world, is unable to exert cultural influence over these countries?

The relationship between India and China, and Southeast Asian nations, was fraught with difficulties and obstacles; geographical advantages included:

In the past, the harsh mountains that separated Laos, Thailand, Burma, and Cambodia formed one of the causes that became a natural barrier in the way of cultural exchange between China and the countries of Southeast Asia.

There is a direct connection between India and these island states through the marine route. As a result, these countries were frequently visited by Indian merchants who came to these countries in order to do international commerce. Over the course of their journey, Indian Hindu merchants introduced Buddhism and Hindutva to the places they visited. Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Cambodia, southern Vietnam, southern Borneo, Sumatra, Java, Bali, and Lombok were all places where Hindu kingdoms came into existence from time to time. With the passage of time, a significant number of Indian merchants began to establish themselves in these countries. On the side of Southeast Asia that was confronted by India, the influence of India continued to grow to the point that it surpassed the influence of China. become more firmly established and were carried out by a greater number of people. In the course of the communities' expansion, their beliefs regarding religion became more ingrained and were spread to a greater number of people. The Hindu culture was the origin of the Khmer civilization, which originated in

Bangkok. Between the years 350 and 880 A.D., with the arrival of Indian culture in Southeast Asia, the Pallava empire ruled over a significant portion of southern India. Along with the introduction of religion, the style of dancing, its narrative, architecture, and extravagant color schemes were also included. The Pali language, which is a derivation of Sanskrit, was the first written language for a significant portion of Southeast Asia. The majority of the written languages spoken in Southeast Asia were derived from it.

-Political Factors: Migration driven by distress stemming from the political climate of the past. The Chinese populace experienced a tumultuous period marked by significant bloodshed during the Warring States Period, characterized by emperors engaged in fierce conflicts to secure dominion, ultimately culminating in the unification of China under Qin Shi Huang in 221 BC. The existence of the Great Wall of China serves as a poignant reminder of the political upheaval and suffering experienced by the Chinese people throughout history.

During the modern era, Chinese society found itself shrouded in the shadows of superstition and the exploitation inherent in class structures. The civil war, along with various movements and policies, constituted a significant impetus for the emigration of Chinese individuals from their homeland in the past. The aforementioned movements compelled individuals to depart from China during the early 17th and 19th centuries. In modern China, the Great Leap Forward and the anti-rightist movement compelled individuals to leave the country in a bid to escape the state's brutalities. India has not experienced a phenomenon of distress migration characterized by individuals being compelled to abandon their homeland in search of refuge in foreign nations. India has consistently embraced individuals from various nations, despite enduring external aggression from entities such as the Mughals, Portuguese, Dutch, and ultimately the British, who colonized the subcontinent for over three decades. The Indic civilization has consistently embodied the principle of universal brotherhood. Consequently, those who encountered Indian civilization found themselves irresistibly drawn to become a part of it.

Southeast Asia and the Current Confucian Boundaries

Compared to East Asia, Southeast Asia's Confucian culture is less well-known and respected. Regardless, it set a lasting precedent that competed with other civilizational currents like the Muslim and Indian ones due to the strength of its social, economic, and political postulates.

In China, Confucianism developed into a philosophical humanist current that has shaped the country's society, politics, and economics, setting an example for other countries in terms of a civilizational idea that has an impact on their own identity and trajectory.

The traditional texts and ideas of Confucianism have served as a source of doctrinal inspiration for adherents of the religion, which has at times spread beyond China. Outside of China, Christian ethical principles have also functioned as a kind of Confucianism, similar to the moral commitment that Confucius urges as the foundation of a global cosmogony in which people might live in harmony with their social and political realities. Below par and others in the know have identified three stages in this regard: first, the reading and transmission of the Confucian classics from China; second, the reform of the initiation ceremony; and third, the theoretical development of doctrine.

The Confucian influences that began with the Chinese colonization of Southeast Asia, according to Yong Cheng, have persisted through the centuries in the form of philosophy and religion in a number of Southeast Asian countries, influencing a wide range of social groups.

To illustrate the point, he gave the example of the morally elevating currents in society, such as Yiguan Dao and De Jiao. Originating in Guangdong province in the midst of the Sino-Japanese War in 1939, the De Jiao current swiftly expanded to the Chinese populations of Southeast Asia, eventually making its way to Singapore and Malaysia in the early 50s of the twentieth century.

These new manifestations have been emerging since the 20th century as part of a Confucianism rejuvenation. They draw on the teachings of several faiths, including Buddhism, Daoism, Christianity, and Islam, but they nonetheless hold fast to the traditional Chinese values of virtue and moral development.

By adopting Confucianism's six precepts, eight rules, and ten virtues, these contemporary ethical-religious expressions show that they are Confucian. Patience toward one's parents, affection for one's brothers and sisters, honesty, reliability, integrity, fairness, propriety, kindness, wisdom, and a healthy dose of shame are the ten virtues. Meanwhile, the eight rules include not being dishonest, lying, greedy, careless, arrogant, lazy, angry, or hateful. The six tenets would serve as a detailed review of the preceding ones.

According to Cheng, the political climate in Southeast Asia—which, as previously said, is also present in Japan and Korea today—has forced Confucianism to embrace new strategies to survive inside its home countries. Due to the Murayama Clause, it is permissible to discuss Confucian philosophy at that place without directly referencing Confucius.

Accordingly, Confucianism in Malaysia vows to stay out of politics and religion, while in Thailand, it became an outwardly visible religious group for Chinese people, fostering ties to Buddhism and social assistance. However, in Indonesia, the Agama Khonghucu school of thought is formally acknowledged as a Confucian private school. It is the sole organization in the world that uses the term Confucianism and practices religion to this day. Furthermore, it is legally recognized and establishes the four works and five masterpieces as the group's basic canon of ideas.

These Confucian practices, which have recently been making a comeback in Southeast Asia, are just a small part of the larger cultural legacy of the Chinese empire, which flourished as an Asian civilization for millennia. Confucianism was a cultural tributary system that, depending on the circumstances, had varying degrees of success and influence in different countries.

The 10 nations that make up this significant region have faced the same difficulty of coexisting and religious value blending two millennia ago, but they do it within the context of their heritage and multiculturalism.

According to Sole-Farras, China's new position as the world's second-largest economy in the twenty-first century makes it inconceivable that the country would forsake the social cohesion and strategic asset that a revitalized Confucianism provides it internationally in its public diplomacy and soft power initiatives.

The cultural difficulties in the Southeast Asia Region

It is not easy to comprehend or decipher Southeast Asia since, according to Mahbubani, it is the most culturally varied and complicated region on Earth. No other region can compare to it. In this regard, the author asserts that the accomplishments made by this intricate area of the globe thus far merit the Nobel Peace Prize. The recent successes have given rise to hopeful discourse, leading some to believe that Islam and the West can coexist peacefully; thus, ASEAN is a model of peaceful coexistence; for example, in the last 30 years, Vietnam has reduced extreme poverty from 50% to 3%; in 2015, Indonesia had the world's second-highest confidence index; etc.

The significance of the integration among the five pioneering ASEAN nations, which has been in effect since 1967, is particularly noteworthy in this context of results. Their decision to embark on this association was prompted by a significant collective of regional leaders, including Thanat Khoman, a Buddhist from Thailand; Narciso Ramos, a Christian from the Philippines; Adam Malik, a Muslim from Sumatra; Abdul Razak, a Muslim from Malaysia; and S. Rajaratnam, a Hindu from Singapore. These individuals, representing a rich tapestry of cultural and religious backgrounds, catalyzed a movement centered on collaboration, development, and mutual defense, engaging all ten nations that constitute the association.

The present vitality of Southeast Asia, as concurred by other scholars like Yates, stems from the pivotal choice to embark on the integration of ASEAN in the 1960s. This initiative has facilitated the management of their goals and the resolution of various differences, thereby circumventing conflicts, disputes, or conflagrations, while simultaneously fostering collective economic growth and regional resilience.

The trajectory of integration undertaken by ASEAN commenced with its initial five signatory nations—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. This foundation gradually broadened with the inclusion of Brunei in 1984, followed by Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999. As a result, ASEAN has evolved into the seventh-largest economy globally, experiencing noteworthy economic growth exceeding 5% annually on average from 2000 to 2013.

The transition in 1992 to a free trade area significantly enhanced its robustness. The execution of treaties with significant regional partners, including China, Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and India, has fostered enhanced unity, facilitating the establishment of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2020, which initially included ASEAN + 5 prior to India's withdrawal. This agreement signifies a pivotal economic and geopolitical shift, the ramifications of which are expected to expand from 2022 onward, coinciding with its implementation. It further enhances its geopolitical influence in the region via the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) established in 1994, which currently comprises 27 members. Among them is the nation of North Korea, which has garnered considerable debate and discussion. The East Asia Summit serves as a strategic regional forum for cooperation within the East Asia region.

In accordance with this significant regional and global achievement, the economic and political rivalry between China and the United States inevitably emerges. The initial scenario of conflict revolves around the dominance of Asian leadership, a position that was unequivocally maintained by the United States until the close of the 20th century, and which is currently a subject of contention, particularly as we enter the third decade of the 21st century.

Within this analytical framework, certain scholars, including Fox and Mahbubani, argue that the period of Western hegemony in Asia is nearing its conclusion. They observe a noticeable withdrawal of the United States from the Southeast Asian mainland, suggesting that a return is unlikely in the near future. This presents an opportunity for China to reestablish the historic dominance it held in the region for many centuries. In this context, Auslin asserts that, “As the world engages with China’s new regulations, the equilibrium of global power in the forthcoming decades will be of paramount importance.” They note a significant U.S. withdrawal from Southeast Asia, making an early return unlikely.

The accomplishments of ASEAN thus far will largely hinge on the coherence and solidarity it sustains as it approaches the third decade of the 21st century, particularly in its negotiations not only with China but also with all pertinent global entities. In a comparable manner, it will likewise hinge on the “new tributary policy” that China seeks to implement in the region.

Currently, as the influence of the United States and the European Union diminishes, China has emerged as the primary trading partner for a majority of ASEAN nations, particularly Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Simultaneously, it stands as the foremost foreign investor in Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar, ranks second in Vietnam, and is the largest when considering the entire region collectively.

Since 2013, China has significantly enhanced its investment initiatives through the New Silk Road and associated schemes, including the Asian Infrastructure Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road Fund. This expansion encompasses two of its six key international economic corridors, traversing the ten ASEAN nations by land and nine coastal nations via the Maritime Silk Road. The focus has been on various investment avenues, including industrial corridors, transportation networks, digital routes, energy projects, and notably, strategic ports in Cambodia (Koh Kong), Myanmar (Kyaukpyu), and Malaysia (Port Klang), among others.

In 2010, during a meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam, involving China and the ten ASEAN nations, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi articulated a notable assertion: “China is a big country and you are small countries, and that is a fact.” This statement served as a poignant reminder of the resurgence of a previously overlooked geopolitical tributary system, situated within the broader context of a millennial cultural tributary framework, signaling the reemergence of a Chinese world order on the regional agenda.

Southeast Asia often experiences heightened pressure from China's emerging regulations; however, it is evident that the ten ASEAN nations will achieve more favorable outcomes through enhanced unity and collaboration among themselves.

Examining history serves as a crucial avenue for deepening our comprehension of Southeast Asia's evolution, characterized by its diverse distinctions as well as significant commonalities. This region's enduring connection with a millennia-old hegemon, namely the People's Republic of China, is essential for fostering a more nuanced narrative that elucidates the emergence of a new global order, with Southeast Asia positioned as one of its pivotal centers.

The Impact of Hindutva Culture

Hindutva is a cohesive framework of beliefs that has directed the typical Indian household for millennia (Radhakrishnan, 1927, p. 3). Hindutva is regarded as the principal religion of India, influencing the nation's social and legal frameworks post-independence and impacting other faiths (Harriss-White, 2003, p. 133). The impact of Hindutva on the evolution of the Indian civilization warrants thorough analysis.

The Indian ethos of seeking truth and engaging in debate enhances the intellect across all societal strata; the belief in polytheism fosters creativity, abstract reasoning, innovation, and inclusivity; national pride drives a reluctance to fall behind and encourages development alongside a frugal mindset (Sun, 2000, pp. 204–205). In addition to Western industrial culture, Hindutva has been selectively appropriated by industrial leaders as the cultural foundation of Indian capitalist modernity, characterized by a simplified and relaxed kind of religiosity in which the religious principles underpinning ethical behavior were actively utilized by industrialists. (Harriss-White, 2003, p. 134).

India's cultural history has remained continuous and deeply rooted, and with the enhancement of national power, cultural confidence and national pride have been fortified. The rise of cultural disputes revealed the opposition of staunch proponents of Indian culture to foreign influences (Xue, 2003, p. 8). The cultural confidence derived from Hindutva significantly influences India's national strategy. The policies implemented by India and its stance on China's efforts can be attributed to the impact of Hindutva.

An Indian academic posits that it is 'more precise to characterize India as a cultural unit rather than a political entity' and that 'the cultural unit, in terms of geographical expanse, has historically included a territory larger than contemporary India.' (Chhokar, 2017, pp. 971–972) The cultural bond, significantly influenced by Hindutva, facilitated India's unity with other South Asian nations. India exerts a significant and extensive impact on the culture of South and Southeast Asia. India's cultural confidence in relation to South Asia influences its economic and trade collaboration initiatives. Historical cultural linkages were deemed foundational for the Look East Policy and subsequently the Act East Policy (Hussain, 2017, pp. 147–155). Cultural influence has significantly enhanced India's standing in South Asia, beyond the effects of political or military deterrence. Given this context, India's cultural leadership in South Asia is significant, facilitating an understanding of India's perspective amid shifts in the external economic landscape involving other South Asian nations.

The Cultural Benefits of India in Comparison to China

The profundity of Indian and Chinese culture is indisputable. Nevertheless, the cultural landscape of India enjoys broader recognition within the global community compared to that of China. The primary reasons are as follows:

India was regarded as the epicentre of knowledge and wisdom.

India has contributed profoundly to global thought through the philosophies of Hindutva and Buddhism, both of which have significantly influenced the cultural landscapes of numerous countries, including China. India stands as a pivotal hub of religious thought and practice. It is a sacred land that has been the birthplace of significant faiths, including Hindutva, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, and currently hosts adherents of nearly every religion found across the globe.

The Realm of Yoga and Ayurveda: India stands as the birthplace of Ayurveda and Yogic Practices, which have long been instrumental in addressing both mental and physical ailments. Yoga has garnered broad acceptance

across various religious traditions. The ancient practice of Indian Ayurveda, particularly Yoga, has transcended geographical boundaries and garnered significant global recognition. The essence of Indian culture has consistently emphasized the principles of modest living coupled with profound intellectual pursuits.

China has endured significant challenges due to the pandemic for an extended period, influenced by a multitude of factors. Numerous accounts exist of Indian Acharyas journeying to the court of the Chinese emperor, where they provided remedies for epidemics afflicting the populace. Chinese traditional medicine employs acupuncture, a method that alleviates pain through the strategic application of needles.

Despite the presence of Confucianism and other philosophies in China since the Warring States period, the arrival of Buddhism in China serves as a testament to the pre-eminence of Indic civilization over its Chinese counterpart. The Chinese populace sought refuge in Buddhism, as this philosophy emerged as a remedy for the myriad miseries endured by the common people in China. The Indic civilization has consistently articulated and disseminated remedies for all forms of evil and suffering through peaceful means, a philosophy that has been wholeheartedly embraced by the Chinese people, reflecting a deep appreciation for these civilizational teachings and values.

The Zhou people originated as a nomadic tribe, and it is believed that their worship of Tian, which personified a deity, was introduced to China by the Zhou.

From the early Ming dynasty, China's renowned voyages led by Zheng He (1371-1435) to Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent exemplified an expansionist strategy aimed at extending the influence of the Chinese emperor over other nations, which in turn fostered a sense of apprehension among the peoples of the Southeast Asian region. One can observe the diverse strategies employed by the current Chinese government to extend its influence across various regions of the globe. The Confucius Institutes and the Belt and Road Initiative serve as contemporary illustrations that evoke a sense of apprehension and skepticism regarding the underlying motives of China.

Limited mythic evolution: Generally, Confucianism is regarded as the primary factor contributing to the limited development of Chinese literary mythology. In the context of Confucian rationality, which draws from the humanistic tradition, myths are often regarded as mere frivolous narratives.

The initial Hindu presence was established through trade, whereas the first Chinese arrived as merchants and colonizers. Robust and autonomous empires emerged in Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia. Vietnam, on the other hand, was under control, engaged in conflict, or in the process of recuperating from a war with China.

The modern era, marked by significant domestic turmoil in China and notably the conflict against Japanese aggression, saw an Indian medical goodwill team travel to China to assist and heal the war's victims. Dr. Dwarka Nath Kotnis continues to be held in high regard in China and occupies a significant place in the collective memory of the Chinese people.

Indic Civilization upholds a governance based on principles, whereas Chinese Civilization advocates for the rule of law. The fundamental distinction lies in the absence of empathy in the subsequent teachings. Individuals tend to embrace and value compassion over rigid regulations that foster fear and anxiety within the general populace.

Conclusion

The Indic and Chinese civilizations exhibit a range of both similarities and differences. Nonetheless, the principles of Ahimsa (Non-Violence) and the philosophy advocating for universal health stand in stark contrast to the notions of a world centered around the concept of the Mandate of Heaven, which often justifies the imposition of order through conflict and violence. Such teachings cannot be replaced by ideals of brotherhood, harmony, and peace. Consequently, Indic civilization has garnered greater influence and appreciation within the Southeast Asian region when contrasted with Chinese culture. India embodies the essence of a global leader, and its enduring prominence from ancient times to the present serves as a testament to its cultural pre-eminence in comparison to other civilizations. It is superfluous to state that currently, amidst the ongoing geopolitical crisis, global challenges

arising from the Russia-Ukraine conflict have led many to turn their gaze towards India, often referred to as “the great living Indic civilization.” There is a growing expectation for India to illuminate a new path towards resolving the crisis, drawing upon its historical ability to alleviate both physical and mental suffering. India has consistently excelled in its spiritual endeavours, fostering a sense of unity among its populace through a shared foundation of love and compassion. India, as a profound spiritual civilization, is aptly illustrated through its guiding principles: “Incredible India,” “Unity in Diversity,” and the G-20 motto of ‘One Earth, One Family, One Future.’ Consequently, based on the arguments presented in this paper, it can be posited that China, as a significant economic power in contemporary times, has the potential to capture the spiritual and cultural essence of the Southeast Asian populace. India is destined to uphold its status as the “Vishwa guru” indefinitely, supported by a robust foundation of Indic Civilization.

References

- [1] Denmark, Abraham, *China-ASEAN Relations: U.S. Strategy in the Asian Century*, Empowering Allies and Partners. Columbia University Press, 2020.
- [2] Auslin, Michael, *Asia’s New Geopolitics: Essays on Reshaping the Indo-Pacific*. Hoover Institution Press, 2020.
- [3] Mahbubani, Kishore, *The ASEAN Miracle*. National University of Singapore Press, 2017.
- [4] Miksic, John Norman & Yian, Goh Geok, *Ancient Southeast Asia*. Routledge, 2017.
- [5] Miller, Tom, *China’s Asian Dream: Empire Building along the New Silk Road*. Zed Books, 2017.
- [6] Murray, Helbert, *Under Beijing’s Shadow: Southeast Asia’s China Challenge*. Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2020.
- [7] Carden, David, *Mapping ASEAN Achieving Peace, Prosperity, and Sustainability in Southeast Asia*. Indiana University Press, 2019.
- [8] Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), *The Story of Nine Asian Alphabets*. Hollym International Corporation, 2015
- [9] Khanna, Parag, *The Future Is Asian: Commerce, Conflict, and Culture in the 21st Century*. Simon & Schuster, 2019.
- [10] Kissinger, Henry, *China*. Debate, 2012.
- [11] Lai Hongyi & Lim Tin Seng, *Harmony and Development: ASEAN-China Relations*. World Scientific, 2007.
- [12] Kawanami, H., Partridge, C., & Woodhead, L. *Religions in the Modern World*. New York: Routledge 2016
- [13] Lee, Peter, *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization*. Columbia University Press, 1992.
- [14] Paramore, Kiri, *Japanese Confucianism. A Cultural History*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- [15] Prestowitz, Clyde, *The World Turned Upside Down: America, China, and the Struggle for Global Leadership*. Yale University Press, 2021.
- [16] Qixiang, Tan, *The Historical Atlas of China*. Beijing China Map Press, 1982.
- [17] Rachman, Gideon, *Easternization: Asia’s Rise and America’s Decline from Obama to Trump and Beyond*. Other Press, 2017.
- [18] Rasgotra, M., *China and South Asia: developments and trends*. Academic Foundation in association with the Observer Research Foundation, 2012.
- [19] Reid, Anthony, *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads*. Wiley- Blackwell, 2015.
- [20] Stuart-Fox, Martin, *A Short History of China and Southeast Asia: Tribute, Trade and Influence*. A Short History of Asia series. Allen & Unwin, 2003.
- [21] Tu, Wei-Ming, “The Rise of Industrial East Asia: The Role of Confucian Values”, *Copenhagen Papers in East and Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol 4, 1989: 81-97. doi: <https://doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v4i1.1767>.
- [22] Weatherbee, Donald, *ASEAN’s Half Century: A Political History of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019.
- [23] Yao Xinzong, *El confucianismo*. Cambridge, 2001.
- [24] Yates, Robert, *Understanding ASEAN’s Role in the Asia-Pacific Order*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
- [25] *A View on Buddhism*. Brief History of Buddhism in India 2015. <http://www.viewonbuddhism.org/india.html>