

## History of Exchange between Korea and India

- Korea and India have indirectly exchanged in culture and commerce until modern times.
  - Both countries share similar history backgrounds in that they have not attacked other countries and were victims of Imperialism.
  - After independence, they successfully realized democracy and achieved a remarkable economic growth.
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- Two countries had not direct exchanges until modern times but Buddhism from India was spread to Korea indirectly. The religion, which came to the country through various routes, had a serious impact on the Korean culture to an extent where it was part of the Korean culture.
  - Some monks such as Hyecho visited India. He went to Northern India in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and wrote a travelogue called *Memoir of the Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India*, which stated a political situation of India back then and later was discovered in China in 1908.
  - A book on historical accounts called *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* described that three Indian monks including Ado and Maranatha visited three Kingdoms of ancient Korea such as Baekje.
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- Trade between the two goes back to 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries by silk roads and sea routes. Fabrics, spices, glass projects, feathers of peacocks, jewelry from India were very popular to nobles of Shilla Kingdom.
  - *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* stated that queen named Heo Hwang-ok of King Kimsuro of Gaya Kingdom was a princess of Ayuta Kingdom. Also, it went on to say that some Koreans came to Gaya(?) (인도에 온 게 아니고?) in A.D. 48 by ship with the evidence of a symbol of 'twin fish' discovered in Gaya sites and Northern India.
  - From the mid-1980s, politicians had started to mention this fact to emphasize the relationship between the two countries and India, in return, began to believe in this 'myth.'
  - In 2002, 'Royal Descendants of Garak Kingdom' set up a gravestone of Queen Heo in Ayodhya under the auspices of Indian National Congress Party and has paid worship ever since.
  - The story of Queen Heo is controversially from the historical aspects.
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- Some scholars argued that Korean alphabets invented by King Sejong were influenced by Indian Sanskrit. It is possible, but has not been recognized by the academia.
  - Korea under the Japanese colonial period had a keen interest in India who was colonized by

the United Kingdom. Especially the Koreans were interested in independence movements and Gandhi of India. They thought that they could be set free from Japan when India got independence successfully.

- In 1921, Donga Daily reported more than 150 articles about India. From 1930 to 1931, relevant articles such as Salt March (Dandhi March), Gandhi-Erwin pact, India-UK round tables made headlines every day.
- There were many editorials and op-eds. Donga Daily and Joseon Daily published 54 of them (as 7 times as 8 cases published by the two dailies from 1981 to 2000)
- Koreans including KIM, Il-cheon paid a visit to India to meet Gandhi and Nehru, the leaders of the Independence movements. Poet MOH, Yoon-sook also met with Nehru and Sarojini Naidu, a female leader and poet.
- In Mar. 1929, Donga Daily states that Tagore, an Indian poet, wrote a poem titled Lamp of the East for Koreans who suffered from the Japanese colonization.
  - "In the golden age of Asia/Korea was one of its lamp bearers/ And that lamp is waiting to be lit once again/ For the illumination of the East."
  - He was believed to write this poem to encourage Koreans who were under the colonial rule and it has been loved by many others. Actually, Tagore expressed his pity for the Koreans.
  - As a result, current Korean Language textbooks published several poems of his.
  - Association of Korea-India Literature was established in Korea to honor the poet. Representative KIM, Yang-shik was honored by the Indian government in 2002 with the highest Indian Civilian Award of the Golden Padma Shri for her contributions to cultural exchange through the Korea-India Cultural Society.
- India also was interested in Koreans' independence movements. Later, in a letter written in prison to his daughter, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru mentioned that "Koreans fought hard against the strong enemy," describing Mar. 1 Independence Movement in 1919.
  - Mahatma Gandhi also sent a postcard to encourage Koreans under the Japanese colonization. KIM, Goo, the premier of the Provisional Government of ROK sent a cheering note to Gandhi and National Congress party in 1942.
- After the independence, K.P.S. Menon, the chair of United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (**UNTCOK**) stood with the Koreans saying "Koreans long for unification as they did for independence." He contributed to the establishment of the Korean government leading successful general elections in South Korea.
  - When the Korean War broke out in 1950, the Indian government supported Korea by sending its field forces.
- Like I mentioned before, two countries had not directly contacted each other for a long time,

but they are relatives in cultural terms. (expressed by Tagore)

- Geopolitically, two countries were surrounded by three seas and have been invaded by forces in the North West region. They share the same history of colonization.
- Both of them got over the unfortunate modern history to grow fast after independence and realize democracy.
- They established their official diplomatic relationship in 1973 and have been close ever especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in every aspect.