Interview
with
Prof. Liu Jian**

By Pankaj Adhikari

Q: Tagore visited China in 1924. Most significant program on May 8 that year (Tagore's 63th birthday) was Liang Qichao's speech, translated into English by Hu Shi (1891-1962), conferring the Chinese name 'Zhu Zhendan/Chu Chen-dan)' on Tagore. This was a great episode in the annals of Sino-Indian cultural intercourse. Xu Beihong went to Santiniketan in February 1940 and met Mahatma Gandhi. Tagore introduced him to Gandhi and the latter requested him to organize an exhibition of Xu's paintings to promote Sino-Indian cultural relations. Both countries should remover mutual distrust and work together to strengthen cultural ties. What do you think?

Liu: There is no doubt that both China and India should remove mutual distrust and work together to strengthen our cultural ties in addition to political and economic ties. Both countries have a history of cultural exchanges for about two thousand years. China is indebted to India, for her culture has enriched Chinese culture in many aspects. The two countries have had many similarities in history. Today since we are both developing or rising rapidly, we need to know each other better and be more friendly to each other than ever. In the past 30 years, all kinds of cultural exchange programs have been carried on smoothly between the two countries. The number of Chinese tourists to India is on the quick increase. Articles and reports about India have also increased tremendously, with positive views overwhelming the negative ones. Intellectuals, including both journalists and scholars, need to do more work to promote mutual understanding between the two countries. Personally I have collaborated with co-authors and written two books entitled *Indian Civilization* (672 pages) and *India* (541 pages), trying to help Chinese readers know Indian culture and various aspects comprehensively. Both of them have been printed twice.

Q: Since 2008, global economic scenario has been bleak. Many European nations are in serious trouble. US economy is in the doldrums. India and China are relatively better off, even though both countries are feeling the heat of financial turmoil.

At this juncture, if China and India sincerely work together, we can bring about global economic stability. Your opinion…

Liu: If China and India sincerely work together, we can make greater contributions to global economic stability. However, both countries are also faced various domestic problems. China's growth rate has shown signs of decrease recently, and India suffers from huge deficit in her trade with China. If the two countries can keep a reasonable and sustainable growth rate, it is already a contribution to world economy. European nations and US can solve their problems, no matter how serious.

Q: China has recently said that South China is their property and asked all the countries to stay away from it…what is your view on that?

Liu: The South China Sea has been part of China for many centuries. Now there have appeared some bilateral disputes between China and some other Southeast Asian nations, the Philippines and Vietnam in particular. The best way to solve the dispute is through bilateral negotiations between China and other individual countries.

Q: Sincere and genuine efforts are needed to ensure peace and development in Asia Pacific region. Also, both India and China can play a significant role for global peace and progress, if we forget border disputes and think positively and work together.

Liu: Both India and China can definitely play a significant role for global peace and progress, due to their sizes, populations, and social-economic progress. If the two countries cannot solve their border disputes at present on in near future, they can still develop relations and cooperate in other areas. Both countries have genuine intentions to keep the borders in peace and tranquility, and both leaderships are more reasonable than their predecessors decades ago.

Q: Last week I read a report that China has responded positively to India's proposal for an India-China-US trilateral talks on regional issues, particularly Afghanistan and Central Asia. What's your opinion?

Liu: Afghanistan and Central Asia are China and India's close neighbors, and historically they have been closely linked with one another. US has been deeply involved with Afghanistan and Central Asia affairs. I think the trilateral talks on regional issues can benefit parties concerned.

Q: We must improve living standard of common man, provide food for them, and ensure primary education. .. Isn't it

Liu: That is absolutely right. If the gap between the rich and the poor is wide enough, if common people feel strongly they are deprived of their basic rights and cannot have sufficient food and clothing, the society is in danger. History has proved this again and again. Common people are the builders of a country. If they are not ensured primary education or further education, how can a society find qualified man power for its healthy and healthy development. Both China and India need to fight against corruption and increase welfare to common people so that they can become truly civilized and modern countries.

Q: We must cut our defense spending and focus more on sustainable development. Your opinion…

Liu: I completely agree with you. Sustainable development is of more significance for both China and India since we have very limited resources and huge populations. Both countries are powerful enough militarily and need to invest more in areas of social development and people's life.

Q: How important is BRICS summit which was held in Delhi earlier this month

Liu: I do not know much about BRICS. I only feel that the nations involved are geographically separated more or less, and they cannot be as close as countries in a regional organization. However, they share some common interests in terms of phase of economic development and size.