

**INDIA AND BULGARIA
CULTURAL CONNECT THROUGH SOFT POWER
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

**PROF. DR. SHASHIBALA
DEAN, NANDLAL NUWAL CENTRE OF INDOLOGY,
BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN**

- The term soft power is a western concept. It was introduced by Joseph Nye in 1990 which means magnetism towards a country's culture, political ideas and foreign stratagem.
- Soft power/ uirja of knowledge as India does not look forward to dominate or demean anyone but to give what the rishis gave us. It does not involve military power or political pressure or no hard diplomacy.
- We look forward friendly relations but it is often referred to as Smart Diplomacy. But I would say there was no sense of diplomacy in cultural linkages between India and the world. There is no hidden agenda. It was a spontaneous flow of culture.
- Soft power comes from various components of culture : places which are attractive to others, social and political values: when it lived up them at home and abroad and the most important in drafting a foreign policy.

- Soft power- the power of knowledge is not an organised power, it should not be taken as diplomacy
- It happened automatically when Swami Vivekananda visited Chicago to attend the Parliament of Religions and spoke about Hinduism and India, which attracted many foreigners who visited India and learnt about the Indian culture and Sanskrit,
- His book on Raja Yoga influenced Western countries to practice Yoga who came to India and visited asharams,
- I don't know if there is any research on the impact of the visit.
- India's main powers includes spiritualism, yoga, Ayurveda, tapa, tyaga and knowledge. the world is shifting towards organic method of treatment which has its trace in India.
- Science and technology - relations

- **Cultural history of the world over more than two millennia is a silent witness to testify that India had cordial relations with the world, contributed towards its cultural and civilizational advancement establishing harmony, brotherhood, peace and sustainable development.**
- **Indian culture nourished and nurtured by rishis and acharyas established principles of world peace through the philosophy of earth being mother and sky- the father, one world, one family, everyone should be happy and healthy, and so on.**
- **They sacrificed their lives to travel abroad, to reach the unknown people in far off lands.**
- **They gave whatever they had without any sense of gaining in return. It resulted in cordial international relations. Today the resurgent India seeks to trace the history of its contribution to the world and re-strengthen bilateral relations.**

Peace is the internal quest of man

Aeschylus, the great Greek writer of the 5th century BC laments: what returns it a little dust, an urn. War is organised destruction of the harvest of civilization.

- **Historic ties help to strengthen our relations to promote peace and progress to attain a better and more equitable order.**
- **Multi-dimensional cooperation between the two countries**
- **New vision is required for cultural interflow in a quest for peace and friendship**

- **India and Bulgaria are all-time-friends**
- **Culture helps to communicate peacefully and helps to think collectively.**
- **The first encounter of cultural relations of India and Bulgaria is linguistic affinity followed by work and activities at universities, museums, meditation centres, research and publications. We have shared commonalities in ideas, idiom, language, customs, history, archaeology, literature, philosophy etc. Studying historic ties helps to strengthen relations resulting in joint efforts to progress to attain a better and more equitable order at international level.**

Knowledge about India

Toynbee says - this marvellous characteristic of the ancient Thracian people, who were said to be as numerous as the Indian people, belongs to the great historian Herodotus, called the father of Greek history. It is a proof that the Indian and the Thresian people in his days were well known around the ancient world.

- **Thracian civilization played a great role in shaping Slavic culture.** There could be seen a mound of gold treasure in a village in the very heart of Europe, the only one of its kind.
- **Homer speaks about thrace, the fertile and the home of war God true to the name.**
- **Thrace comes from the word dhrish. Dhrish means to overpower to conquer.**
- **Orphism believes that man is a creature of mixed origin containing a divine principle and an evil one. = Indian concept. Six levels of existence – philosophical texts – can bring down crime – eg – gangster turned a yoga teacher**
- **Swastika in Proto-Slavic period.**

- **Bulgarian Embassy in India – Indian Embassy in Bulgaria**
- **Friends of India society, Devam Foundation**
- **East West Indological Foundation, Museums, universities**
- **International Academy of Indian Culture**
- **The Sanskritists in Bulgaria and Tagore’s visits to Bulgaria**
- **Bulgarians have been and should be invited to India - Cultural scientists, students and professors of Indology**
- **Painter Boris Georgiev was invited to Shantiniketan in 1922-1923 – Indian spirituality. painted a ‘cycle of India’.**
- **Historians and archaeologists, Artists and craftsmen**

- **The multi-dimensional cultural cooperation between the two countries- Thracian civilization played a great role in shaping Slavic culture.**
- **The Indian and the Thresian people were well known around the ancient world.**
- **There are two different perspectives to work on this area – one is Indian and the other is Bulgarian.**
- **In India there is not much awareness about the translations of Indian texts into Bulgarian like Bhagavadgita, Upanishads and Gitanjali etc.**
- **Gora and Post office by Tagore, Mme Anna Kamenova wrote two books on India,**
- **Meetings with Tagore.**

- Officially bilateral relations focus on trade, scientific, economic and technical co-operation along with intellectual and cultural

- New vision required for cultural interflow in a quest for peace and friendship
- Buddhologists of Bulgaria Slavi Dontscev – Studied Buddhism in Mongolia, was an architect, Noticed Ashokan elements in Čayan gol in Mongolia.
- Discovered Buddhist elements in Bulgarian architecture like capital with a column with four lokapalas.
- Motifs, Dance around fire. Use of gold,
- History of bilateral relations – exchanges, guests, academicians, artists, media people, MOUs,
- Travels,
- Publications
- Science and technology – relations

LINGUISTIC AFFINITY

- Den – dina
- Sunu – sunu
- Zhiv – jiv
- Thrace – dhrsh
- Add from pg 356-7
- Borovan – the name of a village in Bulgaria, = a village in Ganga valley –
Borovan = Barjevan
- Bogdan – Bhaga daan
- Davame – I give, davate – you give
- Davat – he gives
- Nov pat – nav path

Translations

- Bhagavadgita
- Upanishads
- Gitanjali, Gora and Post office by Tagore
- Later

Hindu – Buddhist images

- Buddhologists of Bulgaria Slavi Dontscev – Studied Buddhism in Mongolia, was an architect,
- Noticed Ashokan elements in Čayan gol in Mongolia.
- Discovered Buddhist elements in Bulgarian architecture like capital with a column with four lokapalas.
- Motifs
- Dance around fire
- Use of gold

Publications

- Mme Anna Kamenova wrote two books on India
- Meetings with Tagore
- -----
- -----
- -----

REMINISENCES

- **Orphism was non political and followed by a few/ So it was not persecuted.**
- **The length of its existence depends on the Orphic documents written in the 4th century. They show unmistakable traces of syncretism and of orphism. We have little or nothing outside the literature.**
- **Legendry lyre of Orpheus could charm even trees and rocks – flute of Krishna**
- **Two deities are Dionysos-Zagreus, the son of Zeus and Persephone. This God while an infant was beguiled by the Titans who gave him a mirror and the other toys and then tore him in pieces and devoured him, all but his heart which was saved by Athene. The God was re-created by his father who swallowed the heart and reborn the child.**

- **Indian films, music and dance**
- **epics - Ramayana and Mahabharat and**
- **studies on the arthashastra by Kautilya – politics, economics, philosophy and statecraft.**
- **Indian literature may inspire to write beautifully about several subjects. Nature may be the best explained. It can be joy to read aloud.**
- **Crafts need creativity – artists of both countries may work in collaboration**
- **They can receive international recognition,**
- **Some countries have included Sanskrit as part of their educational curriculum because of being scientific, logical, beautiful....**
- **Export and import of herbs and herbal medicine**

- **Zeus means sky god and Persephone is Zemelo that means earth mother.**
- **Orphism – After life spent in moral and ceremonial purity the soul of the Orphic deliver was rewarded in Hades, apparently for 1000 years or 10 times the supposed maximum length of a human life while those who had sinned but not beyond remedy were punished for the same.**
- **After this came incarnation, not necessarily in human form.**
- **Next came another period in Hades, and so on. The process being known apparently as close or cycle of reincarnations.**
- **Release from this could be obtained by a series of good lives on both the sides of the grave for apparently each world was the heaven or purgatory of the other. After a triple good life on either side on the earth and the soul had purged itself from the stain of original sin and was free to enter the permanent paradise with no more prospect of reincarnation and in enjoyment of divine and heroic rank.**

Guests in India and Bulgaria – a study

- **History of bilateral relations – exchanges, guests, academicians, artists, media people, MOUs,**
- **Travels,**
- **Publications**
- **International Academy of Indian Culture – contributions**
- **Sanskritists**
- **Tagore's visits**
- **Painter Boris Georgiev was invited to Shantiniketan in 1922-1923 – Indian spirituality. painted a 'cycle of India'.**

Yoga and Ayurveda,

- Experts to be engaged
- Medical system experts
- Ashramas and meditation centres
- Indian films, music and dance

Bulgarians to be invited to India as

- **Cultural scientists**
- **Exchange of Students and professors of Indology**
- **Friends of India**
- **Historians and archaeologists**
- **Artists and craftsmen**
- **Organise food and cultural festivals**
- **Display exhibitions**
- **Arrange workshops**
- **Be an event manager**
- **Comparative studies**
- **Painters and musicians**

Affinity with Gurjaras in Chamba in Himachal Pradesh

PROFESSIONAL AVENUES

- Policy makers for bilateral relations, Diplomats
- Philosophy for life enhancing knowledge
- Linguists and grammarians, Art and literature critics,
- Textile and dress designers, embroiders, fashion designers, printing on fabrics, Dieticians and nutritionists
- Herbal practitioners, Therapists, Chefs, Astrologers
- Experts in palmistry - may help people to chose their paths for future
- Tour operators, travel agencies and guides, Yoga experts, Jewellery designers, exporters and importers
- Bollywood actors, Cultural ambassadors

Professional avenues

- Musicians, dancers, craftsmen, all-round personality developers,
- Spiritual guides – positive energy, aura enhancing, happiness curricula, Stress managers,
- Study of great poets and dramatists – can create playwrights,
- Musicians and Music healers, dress designers for classical Indian dances,
- Kautilya's Arthashastra may teach a syncretic approach towards trade, economics, philosophy and politics
- Fine arts and crafts, puppetry, Gymnastics and martial arts for various sports like cricket,
- Organise arts festivals, Vedic mathematicians, Peace ambassadors
- Wedding managers for destination weddings, Medical and trade tourism

Thank you !!
NAMASKAR !!