‘Made in India’: Heritage Diplomacy and the Infrastructure of Buddhist Memory

DAVID GEARY

Abstract

In recent decades, Buddhist sacred sites in India have become entangled in various soft power initiatives that have important religious and geopolitical implications in the early twenty-first century. Drawing on the concept of heritage diplomacy, this paper examines the geopolitics of Buddhism in contemporary India and how the infrastructure of Buddhist memory is central to development processes and civilisational discourses around Asia as an interlinked historical and geographic formation. In particular, it will examine different spheres of heritage influence in the Indian subcontinent and how they figure into state ideological interests and existing regional diplomatic ties, which includes building trade networks, financial aid and other strategic alliances designed to strengthen India’s image and standing in the region.

Keywords: *Buddhism; heritage diplomacy; infrastructure; soft power; India*

Introduction

On 20 October 2021, a high-level Buddhist delegation was flown in on a special charter flight from Sri Lanka to the new Kushinagar International Airport in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh (UP). Kushinagar is one of the four major Buddhist pilgrim sites in North India (and Nepal) and is believed to be the site of Buddha’s *mahaparinirvana* or final resting place. The airport was built at an estimated cost of Rs 260 crore (est. USD 37.14 million) and is the third international airport in UP, despite having a town population of only 22,214 (2011 Indian Census).

As part of the inaugural flight, the delegation comprised a large contingent of Buddhist monks and Sri Lankan Ministers, including Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa, the eldest son of the recently ousted Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. After reaching the tarmac, the Sri Lankan delegation was greeted by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra

This article can be accessed at https://doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v42i1.7332

Modi and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, as well as diplomats from over 12 countries where Buddhism has a strong cultural foothold, such as Mongolia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Bhutan, South Korea, Nepal and Japan. To mark the occasion, the Sri Lankan delegation also brought Buddhist relics from a renowned Rajaguru Sri Subhuthi Maha temple with plans to organise an exposition in several cities accompanied by monastics representing all four Buddhist orders (*nikaya*) in Sri Lanka. In the words of the Prime Minister Modi:

> There is a special focus on the development of places associated with Lord Buddha through better connectivity, and creation of facilities for devotees. Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha, is not far from here. Sarnath, where Lord Buddha gave the first sermon, is also within a radius of 100-250 km. Bodh Gaya, where Buddha attained enlightenment, is also a few hours away. With the launch of this airport, I, as a representative of Poorvanchal, have also fulfilled one of my commitments to this region.[1]

In line with India's Neighborhood First policy, the new Kushinagar airport has been established as the Indian government extends financial support and technical assistance for the renovation of Buddhist monasteries in Sri Lanka and other parts of Asia.[2] Looking beyond the COVID-19 pandemic that had significantly curtailed foreign exchange earnings and cross-border mobility in recent years, these initiatives are in line with Narendra Modi's recent '3-T strategy'—trade, tourism, technology—to boost economic development through soft power while reinforcing the rich cultural heritage of the subcontinent and its ties with other Asian countries.

As this opening anecdote illustrates, in recent decades, Buddhist pilgrimage and archaeological sites in North India have become the loci for major infrastructural transformations involving new airports, rail lines and significant development of city-tourism, especially through their designation as UNESCO World Heritage (Geary 2017). In this paper, I refer to these emergent developments as the *infrastructure of Buddhist memory*. In using the term memory and its association with infrastructure, I extend some of the theorising in critical heritage studies (Harrison 2012; Winter 2013) to show how religious pasts are mobilised by powerful governments in strategic and instrumental ways that are not only about preserving cultural and religious symbols but also leveraging them for future-oriented developments and soft power projection. More specifically, I argue that Buddhist heritage serves a

dual purpose for the Indian government. On the one hand, it promotes a socioeconomic agenda aligned with neoliberal policies, helping generate revenue through tourism and infrastructure investment. On the other hand, it aligns with domestic political interests by integrating Buddhism into a Hindu cultural fold and highlighting its significance, which some may view as diminishing the historical contributions of other religious minorities.

To illustrate these strategic appropriations of Buddhism by the state government, I approach this topic with special attention to infrastructure projects and political rhetoric. I base my argument on an analysis of publicly available governmental sources, Indian news media, as well as secondary academic literature. I acknowledge that a more nuanced ethnographic approach would examine how Buddhist communities engage with infrastructure and reshape them through a different ontological relationship with materiality and space, but this is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I focus here on the political-symbolic currency of Buddhism for the Indian state government showing how the production of heritage is central to regional geopolitics and material investments that bring religion, state and market forces together.

Building Bridges of Mind and Spirit: Buddhism and Heritage Diplomacy

In recent years, there has been a growing theoretical interest in the social lives of Asian infrastructure and how life-worlds become imbricated in large-scale material assemblages that flow into and shape wider political-economic systems (Appel et al. 2018). In this article, I approach infrastructure as an assemblage of people, places and materials (Simone 2004) to emphasise the importance of infrastructures as dynamic and emergent systems of material and social interaction. Although there is a growing literature on the promise of infrastructure in ways that are designed to signal technological progress (see Anand et al. 2018; Harvey and Knox 2015; Hetherington 2016), these studies often neglect how religion and heritage can provide important catalysts for development and future-oriented projects.

Drawing attention to the affordative and relational arrangements of religious infrastructure, Hoelzchen and Kirby (2020: 4) highlight the 'material-semiotic' ways in which people actively shape religious infrastructure, and are, in turn, shaped by them. In the context

of pilgrimage, for example, religious infrastructures involving transportation, places of worship, and temporary housing, can generate ways of believing, feeling and imagining that help reinforce certain religious ideals and soteriological goals. While the focus for Hoelzchen and Kirby (2020) is on the expansion of mosques and other Islamic institutions in Central Asia, in this article, I am interested in how state-led infrastructure projects can also play a role in facilitating pilgrimage and devotion to a Buddhist sacred geography.

So how does Buddhist heritage and the infrastructure of memory figure into these wider arenas? As noted above, the materiality of the past can play an important role in spurring infrastructure projects, especially when sacred sites become integrated into heritage assemblages and state regimes that bring various material-social relations together (Bendix et al. 2017; Harrison 2012, 2018; Meskell 2018). Following Lynn Meskell (2015: 2), I approach heritage as a 'set of politically inflected material practices' that require all sorts of interventions involving management, governance, translation and capitalisation, 'such that new political economies … [develop] around heritage'. As these religious heritage sites become inserted into wider tourist economies and leveraged within national and global imaginings, they become important objects of desire that feed into various technocratic interventions and new forms of governmentality that extend beyond the 'historic' fabric of a heritage site itself.[3]

It is here where notions of soft power and heritage diplomacy intersect and need further conceptual clarification. When thinking through the notion of soft power, most scholars turn to the seminal book by Joseph Nye (2004), where he refers to the strategic ways in which soft power is utilised for its representational force and ability to attract and influence public opinion through image-related mechanisms. This involves drawing on the attractive power of culture and heritage as instruments of diplomacy to shape bilateral relations, gain (and project) influence and secure loyalty that support geopolitical interests.

Although there is considerable overlap between notions of cultural and heritage diplomacy, I follow Tim Winter (2015), a critical geographer, who argues it is important to keep these empirically and conceptually separate. Whereas cultural diplomacy typically deploys or projects certain cultural forms (such as film, cuisine, sport or fashion) beyond their national boundaries as a mechanism of soft power, heritage diplomacy is a more expansive term that 'not only incorporates the export or projection of a particular cultural form,

but also brings into focus bi- and multi-directional cultural flows and exchanges' (Winter 2015: 1007). In this regard, heritage diplomacy can broadly be defined as 'a set of processes whereby cultural and natural pasts shared between and across nations become subject to exchanges, collaborations and forms of cooperative governance' (ibid.).

Following Winter's definitions, I build this article on the premise that heritage provides an important arena of governance and international relations that brings together various political and material entanglements. In utilising heritage as a form of soft power, Buddhism provides an important mechanism for India (and other countries) to articulate how its culture has diplomatic value, in the present as well as in the past, to rebuild its image and standing in the region, secure trade, as well as advance mutual interests with other countries. As noted earlier, studies on infrastructure have rarely focused on cultural forms such as heritage (see De Cesari and Demova 2019). However, each year, billions of dollars are spent in India and elsewhere in the world towards the protection and maintenance of various cultural sites as well as on how they articulate with the development and interregional promotion of tourism, where the materiality of infrastructure is more visible. It is for these reasons that heritage can be a significant site of infrastructural investment and memory work within an international arena, whereby state governments can draw on deep histories of cultural connection and exchange to enunciate contemporary trade and political relations. Before moving to an analysis of three spheres of heritage-related infrastructure, it is important to situate India's relationship with Buddhism in a broader historical framework, especially within the last few decades.

Decolonisation, Pan-Asianism and Modi's Soft Power

Much has been written about the first Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and how his administration adopted Buddhist iconography as key national symbols (Brown 2009; Ober 2019, 2023; Ray 2014). For example, some of the actions taken by Nehru entailed the adoption of the famous Lion Capital of Ashoka and the *dhammachakra* (wheel of dharma) as the state emblems of India. Nehru also frequently referenced the Buddha, emperor Ashoka and various pilgrims as ambassadors of peace and goodwill that contributed to the cultural spread of a pan-Asian identity that was being revived once again.[4]

Although Buddhism had contributed to earlier expressions of pan-Asian idealism (see Bhalla 2020; Jaffe 2019; Ober 2023), it gained

renewed attention in an era of decolonisation as a bridge between regions and countries, helping to transcend former imperial geographic boundaries. Despite the negative view of the Buddha as an anti-caste and anti-Hindu figure, prominent Hindu organisations established in the early twentieth century such as the MahaSabha, an orthodox nationalist party or the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a right-wing paramilitary group, as well as more recent political parties such as the nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), began to see the Buddha as a national hero worthy of recognition within the imagined Hindu nation (Scott 2016). By reclaiming Buddhism as part of India's ancient Hindu civilization rather than a separate or competing religion, this helped to construct a unified vision of a 'Bharatiya' (Indian) identity based on continuous cultural history rooted in Hinduism. Furthermore, as Shi (2019) writes, recognising Buddhism as compatible with a Hindu majoritarian state also helped the administration tap 'into a pre-existing network of sociocultural, intellectual and political ties' giving Buddhism 'viability as a foreign policy tool' and a vehicle for wider Indian influence abroad.

In the decades following India's independence in 1947, Buddhism continued to be used as a diplomatic tool (to varying degrees) by different national leaders but it gained considerable traction in the 1990s with the launching of India's 'Look East Policy' and its more recent iteration, the 'Act East Policy,' under the Narendra Modi administration (Hall 2019). These policies convey a clear agenda of the Indian government to scale up its engagements and strategic partnerships with the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states to counter the growing Chinese influence in the region. It is in this competitive geopolitical context that India's historical role in the spread of Buddhism provides important soft power advantages (Kishwar 2018).

Since becoming the prime minister of India in 2014, Narendra Modi has frequently championed a cultural and political discourse that leverages India's central role in the birth of Buddhism and frequently lauds his administration's role in reviving India as a contemporary global centre of Buddhist activities. Although Modi's investments in Buddhism pale in comparison to his advancement of a Hindu-centric vision of India at home, Buddhism does provide him with a valuable currency in terms of building foreign partnerships and enmeshing heritage sites in expanding circuits of capital. On various social media platforms such as Twitter/X, Instagram and through formal diplomatic

missions, Modi likes to claim that Buddhism was one of India's 'greatest cultural exports' and reaffirm to his Asian neighbours that Buddhism was 'made in India'.[5] Although similar nationalist invocations are made across the border in Nepal's Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha (Dennis 2017), India likes to put forth an essentialised and exclusive claim over the spiritual manufacturing of Buddhism, highlighting the work Modi's government has done to restore Buddhist heritage sites, build surrounding infrastructure, promote Buddhist events and facilitate pilgrims to visit the holy land.

Although I will examine some of these project - and monument-related politics in more detail shortly, what is central to highlight here is how the intersections of conservatism and neoliberalism align with the political uses of Buddhist heritage in contemporary India. The rhetoric around India's rise as a global superpower projects a sense of optimism about development and progress, matched with enormous investments in considerable region-wide social and physical integration. In India, some of these trends can be traced to the 1990s' liberalisation of the economy that propelled further urbanisation, rural-urban migration, the growth of mega-cities and surges in infrastructure investment. This growing confidence on the world stage also includes a parallel investment in Buddhist heritage as a soft power instrument that feeds into bilateral and multilateral cooperation with neighbouring Asian countries. Importantly, I argue that the enmeshing of Buddhism within Modi's Hindu nationalist vision and new forms of neoliberal accumulation is quite distinct from the earlier uses of Buddhist heritage as cultural currency in the formation of the Indian secular state under Nehru. While these forms of heritage diplomacy may seem innocent, as I discuss in the conclusion, these activities are part and parcel of Narendra Modi's tenor of cultural politics that helps temper criticism of India as a right-wing Hindu nationalist regime and provide a buffer to China's rapidly expanding socio-political and economic influence in other parts of Asia.

Three Spheres of Buddhist Infrastructure

The Heritagisation of Buddhist Sites

How are Buddhist sites managed and configured as heritage in India, and how does that open them up to certain infrastructural projects and investments? Before I investigate the linkages to infrastructure, it is important to note that Buddhist heritage sites in India disproportionally carry the legacy and weight of a colonial curatorial state. The founding of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1861, in particular, had played a central role in producing knowledge about India's Buddhist past and mapping that onto the territorial space of British India. As art historian Himanshu Ray (2012: 37) points out, the 'foundations for contemporary legislation, policies and practices related to the management of heritage resources—both natural and cultural—were laid down in the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth centuries in India'. During this time, the primary focus was documentation, cataloguing and preserving artifacts and images, many of which were shipped off to the imperial metropole alongside raw materials. As Cohn (1996) notes, the deployment of these 'cultural technologies of rule' allowed the British curatorial state to display India's Buddhist past within a civilisational idiom. These narratives would later influence the approach of India's national leaders and decision-makers to the production of heritage.

After India gained independence in 1947, the management of Buddhist sites largely remained under the control of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). However, the government began investing more in infrastructure, such as building roads and providing accommodations for pilgrims and tourists. Additionally, the state purchased agricultural land to allow foreign Buddhist communities to construct monasteries, temples, and lodging for pilgrims (Geary 2017). Thus, while Buddhist religious infrastructure has continued to expand around the urban periphery of Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India, as archaeological heritage spaces that are overseen and managed by state authorities, there has also been a growing interest in the development and promotion of these sites for economic and diplomatic reasons.

Given the limited role and influence of a Buddhist minority in contemporary India, I argue that these processes make Buddhist heritage more amenable to state-party interests that include applying for UNESCO recognition. As Lynn Meskell (2015: 6) notes in her

observations of the structure of UNESCO's operations, despite its global vision and universal aspirations, 'the creation of UNESCO and the emphasis on the global patrimony has resulted in reinforcing the interests of nation-states. The desire for a universal heritage remains tightly sutured to national identification, prestige, socio-economic benefits and the recognition of a particular modernity'. In other words, mobilising UNESCO's brand of Outstanding Universal Value is not only a marker of national prestige within a symbolic economy of heritage value, but there are also 'honeypots of development' (Winter 2016: 9) that can be enfolded in new capitalist relations.

As I have shown elsewhere in my historical ethnography on Bodh Gaya (Geary 2017), the designation of the Mahabodhi Temple Complex as UNESCO World Heritage site served as an 'index of emergence' (Jain 2021: 5) that opened the city landscape to new political-economic relations that included physical infrastructure upgrades, the master planning of urban landscapes for beautification, as well as the building of connectivity nodes such as airports and roads to ensure improved tourist traffic. In this way, the successful branding of cultural sites as UNESCO World Heritage advances socioeconomic agendas by driving domestic and international tourism, while also helping ruling parties gain popular support by showcasing their benevolence on the global stage.

While UNESCO is frequently lauded for its apolitical stance and ongoing contributions to peace and dialogue (Meskell 2018), it is important not to lose sight of how heritage conservation and its aesthetic politics can give rise to intense socio-economic conflicts, especially at the local level. This is something I have documented first-hand in Bodh Gaya (Geary 2017). What is important to this article, however, is how UNESCO World Heritage contributes to the reformulation of space in line with certain infrastructural projects. Many of these initiatives that open heritage to the logic of global capitalism and tourism consumption involve public-private partnerships (PPPs) and the harnessing of World Bank funding to augment expenditures by state and national agencies. As Meskell (2015: 15) writes, 'increasingly national governments nominate sites for inscription on the World Heritage List with the aim of attracting private investment and boosting tourism revenues'. Thus, the enlisting of properties on the UNESCO World Heritage List provides an important catalyst for reshaping socio-economic and political relations around heritage management that serves both domestic and neoliberal interests. I argue that under

the current BJP government, Buddhist sites are viewed as generative spaces for mobilising infrastructure projects wedded to urban redevelopment and city branding as part of India's broader approach to cultural internationalism (Singh and Winter 2023).

In concluding this section, it is important to note that while UNESCO, through the 1972 World Heritage Convention, remains a key actor in disseminating international standards of conservation practice and protocol around the world, there are other collaborative bilateral and multilateral initiatives taking place in Asia that speak to a shared investment in regional 'heritage cooperation' (Akagawa 2014). In addition to using the soft power of Buddhist heritage to attract pilgrims and tourists from ASEAN and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) countries, the Government of India has also been lending financial support and expertise to develop and strengthen bilateral cultural relations with various Southeast Asian countries. For example, while there is a long history of heritage cooperation and cultural transfer between the Indian and Cambodian governments at the famous Angkor Wat archaeological park going back to the mid-1980s, these efforts have broadened and expanded in recent decades to include Nepal, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.[6] Much of this soft power work is aimed at the conservation and protection of Buddhist cultural heritage sites involving the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and other foreign and international agencies involved in the restoration of ancient temples and development of monuments.[7] Importantly, these initiatives and alignments involving archaeology and heritage have occurred in tandem with a rise in intraregional aid and trade between Asian countries as part of a wider strategy to promote economic and diplomatic relations (Winter 2016: 8).

Fostering Buddhist Education and Cultural Exchange

Another important sphere of heritage diplomacy and infrastructure is building bridges through education and cultural exchange. A central organisation for promoting and disseminating Indian culture and education is the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) founded in 1950. As an autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs, the ICCR has been involved in organising conferences, exchange programs and cultural festivals related to Buddhist heritage, including competitive scholarships for foreign nationals to undertake postgraduate studies at Indian institutions of higher education.

Related to these developments is the Ministry of Culture's commitment to promoting research on Buddhist studies and Buddhist culture in India. In 2020, for example, the government was providing financial support to four Buddhist educational institutions located in different geographic states: 1) Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, based in Nalanda, Bihar; 2) Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS), Sarnath (Varanasi), Uttar Pradesh; 3) Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS), Leh, Ladakh; and 4) Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies (CIHCS), Dahung, Arunachal Pradesh.[8] In addition to these educational institutions, the Ministry of Culture also provides annual grants-in-aid for the ongoing maintenance of the following six Grantee Bodies for promoting Buddhist Culture and Art: 1) Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh; 2) Tibet House, New Delhi; 3) Centre for Buddhist Cultural Studies, Tawang Monastery, Arunachal Pradesh; 4) Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Sikkim; 5) International Buddhist Confederation; New Delhi and 6) GRL Monastic School, Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh. It is worth noting that the regulations of the granting schemes emphasise the importance placed by the Ministry of Culture on preserving cultural heritage in the Himalayan border regions that have important geopolitical implications when it comes to claims of territorial sovereignty by the Indian government (Stobdan 2019).

According to the Press Information Bureau memo on the Ministry of Culture's steps to promote Buddhist Studies and Culture (Government of India 2020), the mandate of these educational institutions is to 'provide education in Buddhist philosophies, culture and art and to promote research in different aspects of Buddhism, preserve ancient Buddhist manuscripts, digitise ancient Buddhist texts preserved in the languages of Pali, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese and other Asian languages through the system of a modern university'. With a view to strengthening bilateral relations surrounding the promotion of Buddhist heritage, under the Modi government, the Ministry of Culture has also continued to create new Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs) with countries that have sizeable Buddhist populations, such as Japan, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Vietnam and Thailand. As part of such programmes, special annual scholarships are provided for Asian students interested in pursuing advanced Buddhist Studies at Indian institutions (Mazumdar 2018).

Related to these efforts to promote cultural exchange opportunities, the ICCR has also instituted several award schemes for foreign

nationals in certain fields, such as the International Award for the Promotion of Buddhism (est. 2021). These awards acknowledge eminent international scholars in the field of Buddhist Studies, providing a cash award of USD $20,000 (around Rs. 14.7 lakh), a plaque and a gold medal. While addressing the media, Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President of the ICCR said in 2021, 'One important decision taken is the institution of the award of Buddhist Studies because as we are aware, India has been one of the important places of Buddhist Studies and we have been attracting for several decades global academic leadership insofar as the discipline of Buddhist Studies is concerned'.[9] Furthermore, as part of the recent International Abhidamma Divas celebrations on 17 October 2024, PM Modi also showed his appreciation for the cultural significance of Pali, the language spoken by the Buddha, and acknowledged his government's commitment to declaring Pali a classical language.

Not surprisingly, the growing commitments by the Indian government, through the Ministry of Culture, ICCR and other partner organisations within the last ten years, have led to a surge of international-level seminars, symposia, exhibitions and conferences, involving participation and sponsorship of scholars from various countries, but especially Asia. Under Prime Minister Modi, in particular, there has been a proliferation of Buddhist conferences and summits that seek to leverage Buddhist linkages with ASEAN and East Asian countries while amplifying a message that India is *the* global centre for Buddhist culture and tourism. All of these events have involved close coordination with the Ministry of Tourism and the Delhi-based International Buddhist Confederation (IBC). With the motto "Collective Wisdom United Voice", the IBC retains close ties with Modi's government and aims to serve as a common platform for representing a united Buddhist voice on important issues of concern.

These events, I argue, provide an important arena for engagements with foreign Buddhist leaders, scholars and monastics, government officials, diplomats, tour operators and media personnel in ways that help project soft power and reinforce India's claim as the spiritual birthplace of Buddhism. Importantly, they are also frequently attended by high-ranking monks, including the 14th Dalai Lama. By incorporating the 14th Dalai Lama in these events, not only does his global presence help garner local and international media attention to the chagrin of Chinese officials, but it also helps position India's political elites as the legitimate guardians of ancient Buddhist wisdom. Going one step further, I suggest that these Buddhist summits are

intended to help amplify global Buddhism's Indian roots, presenting a non-confrontational version of Buddhism while at the same time demarcating certain out-groups, mainly the Indian Buddhists from Dalit and low caste backgrounds that have a limited presence at these events.

As part of this nexus of Buddhist heritage and educational infrastructure, in recent decades there have emerged several new institutions of higher education with clear Buddhist alignments, such as Gautam Buddha University in Noida (Greater Delhi) and the Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies in Madhya Pradesh. One site of prominent Buddhist affinities and historical memory that has fuelled considerable infrastructure investment is Nalanda University in the State of Bihar. In a recent paper by Marston and Geary (2023), we examine how the memory of ancient Nalanda and the contemporary revival efforts build on certain forms of pan-Asian idealism but remain fraught with politics at home and abroad.

Throughout much of the Buddhist world, Nalanda represents a symbol of higher education and intellectual exchange that flourished in India between the fifth and twelfth centuries and was widely regarded as the most vital Indian source of Buddhist teachings of the time. In the words of former Vice-Chancellor of Nalanda University, Gopa Sabharwal (2018), 'Nalanda's greatest gift was to liberate knowledge from the narrow confines of geography or religion and seek to share knowledge with the world at large'. However, Nalanda's revival and 'newly imagined vision of "Asian" education' (Pinkney 2015: 111) on the world stage has also come under fire as a result of its emphasis on privileging certain 'secular' subjects rather than Buddhist philosophy and practice. The criticism also points to increasing political interference in Nalanda's curriculum, which some view as part of a broader trend toward 'saffronisation' (the promotion of a Hindu nationalist agenda) in school textbooks and higher education in recent years (Anand and Lall 2022).

These government interventions have led to the resignation of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen and university chancellor and Singaporean George Yeo from the governing board (among others) who were tasked with realising the vision of Nalanda as an autonomous and self-regulating institution.[10] Together, these ideological battles over the governance and revival of Nalanda University illustrate the varying ways Buddhist heritage, cultural exchange and education are not separate from the broader political interests of the Indian government.

Connectivity, Corridors and Circuits

The final sphere of Buddhist infrastructure I focus on is the rise of travel circuits designed to commemorate the peregrinations of the Buddha and situate his life story within a streamlined itinerary for tourism consumption. Although the promotion of selective travel circuits designed to maximise the benefits of tourism has been around at least since the early 1980s with the first comprehensive Indian tourism policy (Hannam and Diekmann 2010), in recent years, religious circuits have become a cornerstone of the Indian governments' tourism agenda in ways that attract investment and promote infrastructure development. Launched by the Ministry of Tourism in 2014-15 under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, the government provides financial assistance to State governments and aligned agencies for the development of themed circuits and the promotion of national cohesion across India's major living religions.

Although there is no canonical history of Buddhist pilgrimage that suggests religious adherents should follow a predefined route, it could be argued that the building of circuits and corridors, like the designation of UNESCO World Heritage, provides an important mechanism for packaging the tourist and pilgrim experience in ways that open up these spaces for greater state influence and capital accumulation (Geary 2018). Not surprisingly, the main Buddhist Circuit focuses on the popularised 'eight places of the Buddha', which include the four primary sites (Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar), as well as secondary sites of Buddha's discourse and religious importance, such as Sravasti, Rajgir-Nalanda, Sankassa and Vaishali. Although this sacred geography and the importance of pilgrimage predates the Indian government, the emphasis and reinforcement of a Buddhist Circuit has increasingly become the primary model for representing and understanding India as a place of pilgrimage and central to Buddhist ritual activities (Huber 2008). What is different under the Modi government is that these sites have been increasingly packaged for elite consumers, promoting a themed spiritual experience of Buddhism that is enfolded in new circuits of hotels and transportation networks.

To develop tourism infrastructure and identify transformative investments along the Buddhist Circuit, the Ministry of Tourism and state governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have partnered with the International Finance Corporation (a member of the World Bank Group) and private sector stakeholders. As part of India's 12th

Five-Year Plan (2012-2017), for example, the Ministry of Tourism provided Rs 9,450 crore (about USD 1.5 billion) for the Buddhist Circuit and was looking to attract some Rs 28,000 crore (about USD 4.5 billion) in additional private investments for the ongoing infrastructure projects (SIGA Team 2012). In conjunction with the state governments, these projects are coordinated by the Ministry of Tourism through the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) and assistance by other Central Agencies (Government of India 2020).

If we look more closely at the collaborative document produced by the Government of India's Ministry of Tourism and the International Finance Corporation (n.d.) entitled *Investing in the Buddhist Circuit*, 2014-2018, the document presents a guided framework for developing and promoting a 'mainstream tourism product' aligned with job creation opportunities. This mainstream tourism product entails an upgrade in terms of quality of services along the Buddhist Circuit as well as increasing desire through the marketing of three experience pillars: 'pilgrimage,' 'ancient heritage' and 'mind, body, spirit' (International Finance Corporation n.d.: 19). In order to provide a recognisable sign to endorse products and services for all visitors along the Buddhist Circuit, a formal brand identity and logos consisting of a lotus flower symbol is used on all electronic and promotional materials.

Thus, by expanding the tourism market and packaging the story of the Buddha's life into a recognisable product and brand, it is hoped that interest accelerates across a wider spectrum of visitors, creating a 'world-class' spiritual experience (International Finance Corporation n.d.: 15). Importantly, emphasising and foregrounding spirituality rather than religion in many of these promotional materials, I argue, helps reposition the Buddhist Circuit alongside the deployment of a broader neoliberal and post-secular image that appeals to individualised self-care regimes and spiritual-travellers more broadly. By emphasising meditation and concepts like 'mind, body, spirit', the commercialization of Buddhism for a broader audience can diminish its moral and ritual significance for Buddhist practitioners, while reinforcing orientalist stereotypes that promote India as a 'land of spirituality'.

Related to the development and promotion of the Buddhist Circuit are two other key investment strategies that are worth highlighting. Firstly, these are investments in media and digital infrastructure to promote Buddhist heritage sites through popularised international

tourism campaigns launched by the government, such as Incredible India and through dedicated websites like 'indiathelandofbuddha.in'. Secondly, this media presence is linked to expanding transportation options and connectivity infrastructure, such as new international airports, enhanced road systems and rail links serving major Buddhist pilgrimage sites and destinations. For example, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation has launched the Budhpurnima Express train operating between Varanasi and Rajgir, and the Mahaparinirvana Express, which is a special elite-tourist train catering to passengers on a spiritual tour through the Buddhist heartland. Although the name of this super luxury train is based on the famous Mahaparinirvana sutra, where the Buddha advises his followers they can attain merit and noble rebirth by going on pilgrimage, this luxury train is largely unaffordable to most middle-income domestic and overseas visitors.

Although primary investments by the World Bank have taken place along the major Buddhist sites that reflect the historical life and spiritual hagiography of the religion's founder, the emphasis on Buddhist Circuits has also expanded to other regions beyond Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. These include a new Himalayan circuit of Buddhist monasteries in Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir), the Andhra Pradesh Buddhist circuit, the Orissa (Odisha) Buddhist circuit and a Maharashtra Buddhist circuit where the popular Ajanta-Ellora caves are located (Geary 2018). In Gujarat, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also shown a keen interest in developing a Buddhist Circuit that includes connections to his hometown of Vadnagar, which has the remains of an ancient centre of Buddhist monastic learning and is also on the tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage status.

As I discuss elsewhere (Geary 2018), by promoting packaged itineraries and connectivity along a closed loop of economic activity, themed religious circuits provide opportunities for the state government and aligned tourism departments to mobilise public and private capital for planning functions and vast physical infrastructure upgrades through a mainstream tourism product. Married to projects of cultural heritage, such as UNESCO World Heritage, this also opens up new investment opportunities for urban redevelopment and the coordination of tourism functions between places by appealing to the conservation of the past.

Conclusion

What I hope is evident in this overview of the infrastructure of Buddhist memory in India is that religious heritage can play an important role in fomenting bilateral and multilateral programmes of cooperation and development. While India has particular symbolic leverage with respect to its claim over sacred sites associated with the Buddha's life, it is not the only Asian country to resource Buddhism and utilise culture and religion to advance foreign policy and soft power influence. For example, Japan in particular has a long history of providing loans and committing millions of dollars towards cultural programmes involving various heritage-related projects in several countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam (see Akagawa 2014; Bhalla 2020; Kersel and Luke 2015). In terms of major centres of heritage diplomacy today, according to Winter (2016: 8), China and South Korea are also among those countries spending considerable funds in order to secure influence in the region.

While much of the soft power nomenclature surrounding heritage is framed within a national and global context that emphasises 'international cooperation, partnerships and collaboration' (Winter 2015: 999) built on narratives of peace and reconciliation, it is also important to note how these soft power strategies mask the undercurrents of realpolitik, ongoing competition between states and ideological struggles over sensitive geopolitical territory and competing claims to the past. Nowhere is this more evident than between the rising Asian powers of India and China, where mutual suspicion and competition are reflected in their claims over Buddhist heritage in the early twenty-first century (Scott 2016). While India has made considerable inroads through their soft power investments in Southeast Asia as part of the Act East Policy as well as building networks of infrastructure to facilitate intra-regional mobility, this pales in comparison to the ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by Xi Jinping in September 2013. Under the BRI program, it is no surprise that several Silk Road UNESCO World Heritage listings have been accepted since 2014 in ways that promote 'cultural corridors' as well as wider narratives of trade, connection and exchange across borders (Singh and Winter 2023).

How does Buddhism figure within this geopolitical struggle over cultural power in Asia? As noted in a recent article by political scientist

David Scott (2016), Buddhism is being utilised by both countries as a form of image management and diplomatic leverage. On the one hand, Scott (2016: 140) argues that Buddhism can serve as a generally 'positive link in current China–India bilateral relations', but it is also a 'tool for competition' as both rising Asian powers look to court influence among neighbouring countries and to position themselves strategically among prominent international Buddhist organisations. Not only are there deep divisions over the role of the Dalai Lama, the politics of reincarnation and Tibetan refugees in exile, but there are also significant geopolitical tensions surrounding the disputed frontier territory and border regions of Aksai Chin (the easternmost part of the union territory of Ladakh) and especially Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh (the northeast of India) (Stobdan 2019). As Scott (2016) notes, China and India are also competing for influence among neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar where Buddhism is deliberately invoked to support diplomatic relations, regional interests and economic positioning.

In terms of mobilising Buddhism in more nationalistic ways, India has the advantage of claiming that Buddhism was 'made in India', even though it has fewer than 10 million Buddhists according to a 2011 census (0.7 percent of the total population). Although the Buddha may have been born in what is now Nepal giving rise to similar exclusive claims of origins and ownership over the past (see Dennis 2017; Gellner 2017), in India the Buddha is frequently cited as a 'son' (*bharata ka beta*), and it was in the Indo-Gangetic region that he spent his life as the Awakened one (Scott 2016: 149). While expanding Chinese influence is relatively limited at the major sacred sites in North India, this is not the case for Lumbini which has been the focus of intense Chinese investment and competition for several years (see Scott 2016; Shi 2019). These examples could be multiplied and are likely to grow in the future.

What I have added to these conversations is to delineate the varying ways heritage and infrastructure undergird these soft power initiatives and feed into wider structures of regional diplomacy and international relations. Because the most powerful decision-makers are state parties, we see in India how Buddhist heritage becomes enfolded in nationalist agendas, informed both by ideological interests and material benefits, especially with respect to urban revitalisation projects and tourism development. Similar to Andrea Jain's (2020) analysis of yoga as a 'political ritual' and how India's heteropatriarchal elites take an

essentialising and exclusionary nationalist view on yoga as a Hindu practice, Buddhism also serves the intersection of neoliberalism and conservativism in important ways. While yoga is often seen as 'the calling card of global Hinduism' (Foxen 2017: 495), it could be suggested that Buddhism, too, has the potential to be strategically leveraged, enabling the Modi government to enhance its political and economic standing by tapping into Buddhism's global influence and widespread cultural appeal across Asia. Through Modi's emphasis on kinship rhetoric and altruistic framing of Buddhism as 'India's gift to the world', Buddhist heritage is utilised as a tool of soft power. This approach allows the Indian government to showcase its commitment to religious pluralism, diverging from domestic majoritarian politics and serving as an effective strategy for regional diplomacy and shared heritage cooperation. It remains to be seen how this civilisational self-image, which emphasises a unified Hindu-Buddhist identity, will affect the lived experiences of other religious minorities in contemporary India, particularly Christians and Muslims, as well as Ambedkar Buddhists. For Ambedkar Buddhists, their radical reimagining of Buddha's teachings continues to offer a strong critique of Hinduism and the caste system.[11] In short, how Buddhist communities in India and abroad can be used as a weapon against religious 'others' without conscious reflection on the political and violent project to which it is hitched remains one of the pressing issues of the moment.[12]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This manuscript draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) in Canada. The author would also like to gratefully acknowledge the support and opportunity to join the *Engineering Buddhism* Workshop organised by Dr. Yasmin Cho and The Centre for Contemporary Buddhist Studies, at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

DAVID GEARY is Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Community, Culture and Global Studies at the University of British Columbia (Okanagan campus) on the ancestral and unceded land of the Syilx people. His research interests include pilgrimage, tourism development, religion, and transnationalism, with an emphasis on contemporary Buddhist revival in North India. He is the author of The Rebirth of Bodh Gaya: Buddhism and the Making of a World Heritage Site in Bodh Gaya (University of Washington Press, 2017). Email: david.geary@ubc.ca

NOTES

1 Poorvanchal refers to a geographic sub-region in Uttar Pradesh that corresponds to the ancient kingdoms of Kashi and Malla. For related news media coverage of the inaugural event and bilateral connections between India and Sri Lanka see Chandra, Jagriti 2021. 'Kushinagar Airport now hub of Buddhist tourist circuit' *The Hindu*, 20 October. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/pm-inaugurates-uttar-pradeshs-kushinagar-international-airport/article37083743.ece (accessed June 2022). 'PM Modi, Rajapaksa meet: India extends $15mn to promote Buddhist ties, discusses bilateral currency swap and trade' *Hindustan Times*, 20 September 2020. https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/pm-modi-rajapaksa-meet-india-extends-15mn-to-promote-buddhist-ties-discusses-bilateral-currency-swap-and-trade/story-Krgl01ZucKQOSRSqjmqI2H.html (accessed June 2022). Chaudhury, Dipanjan Roy 2020. 'India extends $15 million grant for promotion of Buddhist ties with Sri Lanka', *The Economic Times*, 26 September. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-extends-15-million-grant-for-promotion-of-buddhist-ties-with-sri-lanka/articleshow/78334018.cms?from=mdr (accessed June 2022).

2 The Neighborhood First policy refers to the importance of 'establishing peaceful and mutually beneficial relationships with neighboring countries' (Aryal 2021: 3). Although variations of the Neighborhood First policy have been around since India's independence, it has become a central plank of Modi's foreign policy since 2014.

3 There has been a growing scholarly literature around the politics of heritage in recent decades. This paper is building on debates and ethnographic insights of critical heritage studies, especially those influenced by material-semiotic approaches that include actor-network, assemblage theory and new forms of governmentality within a global context. Some of the seminal works I draw upon are Harrison (2012); Bendix et al. (2013); Brumann and Berliner (2016); and Meskell (2015, 2018).

4 Discovered in Sarnath, the place of Buddha's first sermon in the early twentieth century, the Lion Capital is associated with the reign of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka (c. 268-232 BCE) who is known as being a great patron of Buddhism who helped spread the Dharma across ancient Asia.

5 In using the term 'Made in India', I am drawing on, but purposely distinguishing, these efforts from the broader Narendra Modi slogan 'Make in India' that was designed to incentivise dedicated investments into manufacturing and to open up new sectors for foreign capital. Although modern, efficient infrastructure is an important part of this economic policy that has ramifications for the development of Buddhist heritage discussed in this paper, the emphasis here is on 'product labelling' and branding that speaks to the ways Buddhism articulates with national and cultural claims of ownership in a global arena.

6 For more on these inter-governmental relationships see the following: Kausalya Santhanam, 'Angkor Wat: A bridge to the past', *The Hindu,* 7 June 2018. https://www.thehindu.com/society/history-and-culture/angkor-wat-a-bridge-to-the-past/article24103506.ece (accessed January 2022). Embassy of India, Phnom Penh, Cambodia (n.d.), 'Cultural Relations between India and Cambodia' https://embindpp.gov.in/pages?id=nel5a&subid=mep2b (accessed January 2022) and Va Sonyka, 'India committed to help preserve ancient temples' *Khmer Times*, 24 August 2020. https://www.khmertimeskh.com/756185/india-committed-to-help-preserve-ancient-temples/ (accessed June 2022).

7 Some prominent sites for recent archaeological and conversation engagements includes the Ta Prohm Temple site at Siem Reap in Cambodia, Cham monuments in Vietnam, Thiruketeeswaram temple in Sri Lanka, Wat Phou Temple Complex in Laos, Pasupatinath in Nepal and Bagan Buddhist pagodas in Mandalay, Myanmar. For more information, see: 'How India is projecting soft power across world: Top 5 missions that will make you proud', *Financial Express*, 14 September 2017. https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/how-india-projecting-soft-power-across-world-top-5-missions-that-will-make-you-proud/854412/ (accessed May 2022) and 'India Helps Myanmar Restore Bagan Pagodas', *Outlook Traveller*, 31 March 2020. https://www.outlookindia.com/outlooktraveller/travelnews/story/70170/archaeological-survey-of-india-is-helping-with-the-restoration-of-five-pagodas-in-myanmars-bagan (accessed May 2020).

8 Government of India, Ministry of Culture, Press Information Bureau. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1601911(accessed May 2022).

9 'After Indology, Sanskrit, ICCR to Give Awards for Buddhist Studies too,' *News 18*, 15 September 2021. https://www.news18.com/news/education-career/after-indology-sanskrit-iccr-to-give-awards-for-buddhist-studies-too-4203176.html (accessed June 2022).

10 The Nalanda Mentor Group was created to fulfil these obligations and was composed of Indian and international scholars, such as the first Chairman Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen. George Yeo, Amartya Sen and the first Vice-Chancellor Gopa Sabharwal, among other faculty, have all resigned.

11 Although B.R. Ambedkar had been an important minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's first cabinet helping draft the Constitution of India, in 1956 he renounced Hinduism and helped inspire a Dalit Buddhist movement with his public conversion to Buddhism alongside some 500,000 supporters.

12 Here I take inspiration from Vijay Prashad's (2001) critique of the 'model minority' in the United States and the ways in which the Indian diaspora is consistently deployed in racial politics as a weapon in the war against black America

REFERENCES

Anand, Nikhil, Akhil Gupta and Hannah Appel, eds. 2018. *The Promise of Infrastructure*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Anand, Kusha and Marie Lall 2022. 'The Debate Between Secularism and Hindu Nationalism–How India's Textbooks Have Become the Government's Medium for Political Communication'. *India Review* 21 (1): 77-107.

Appel, Hannah, Nikhil Anand and Akhil Gupta 2018. 'Introduction'. In Nikhil Anand et al. (eds.) *The Promise of Infrastructure*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, pp. 1-38.

Aryal, Saroj Kumar 2022. 'India's 'Neighbourhood First' Policy and the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI)'. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 7 (4): 744-756.

Bendix, Regina F. 2008. 'Heritage Between Economy and Politics'. In L. Smith and N. Akagawa (eds.) *Intangible Heritage*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 253-69.

Bendix, Regina F., Aditya Eggert and Arnika Peselmann. 2013. *Heritage Regimes and the State*. Universitätsverlag Göttingen.

Bhalla, Madhu (ed.) 2020. *Culture as Power: Buddhist Heritage and the Indo-Japanese Dialogue*. London and New York: Taylor & Francis.

Brown, Rebecca M. 2009. 'Reviving the Past: Post-Independence Architecture and Politics yn India's Long 1950s'. *Interventions* 11 (3): 293-315.

Brumann, Christoph and David Berliner (eds.) 2022. *World Heritage on the Ground: Ethnographic Perspectives*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Cohn, Bernard 1996. *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

De Cesari, Chiara and Rozita Dimova 2019. 'Heritage, Gentrification, Participation: Remaking Urban Landscapes in the Name of Culture and Historic Preservation'. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25 (9): 863-869.

Dennis, Dannah 2017. 'Mediating Claims to Buddha's Birthplace and Nepali National Identity'. In S. Udupa and S. McDowell (eds.) *Media as Politics in South Asia*. London: Routledge, pp. 176-189.

Foxen, Anya P., 2017. *Biography of a Yogi: Paramahansa Yogananda and the Origins of Modern Yoga*. Oxford University Press.

Geary, David 2017. *The Rebirth of Bodh Gaya: Buddhism and the making of a World Heritage site*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Geary, David 2018. 'India's Buddhist circuit (s): A Growing Investment Market for a "Rising" Asia'. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 6 (1): 47-57.

Gellner, David 2018. 'The Politics of Buddhism in Nepal'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 53 (3): January 20.

Government of India 2020. 'Several Steps Have Been Taken by the Ministry of Culture to Promote Research on Buddhist Studies and Culture in India Culture Minister'. Press Information Bureau. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1601911 (accessed April 2022).

Hall, Ian 2019. *Modi and the Reinvention of Indian Foreign Policy*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Hannam, Kevin and Anya Diekmann 2010. *Tourism and India: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Harrison, Rodney 2012. *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. London: Routledge.

Harrison, Rodney 2018. 'Conclusion: On Heritage Ontologies: Rethinking the Material Worlds of Heritage'. *Anthropological Quarterly* 91 (4): 1365-1383.

Hoelzchen, Yanti and Benjamin Kirby 2020. 'Introduction: Conceptualising Religious Infrastructures' *Conceptualising Religious Infrastructures*, Frobenius Institute, Goethe University Frankfurt, 24 September.

International Finance Corporation (n.d.). *Investing in the Buddhist Circuit, 2014-2018*, New Delhi, 2013. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/911791487142754943/pdf/112816-WP-IN-Buddhist-Circuit-Tourism-Strategy-PUBLIC.pdf (accessed April 2021).

Jaffe, Richard M. 2019. *Seeking Sakyamuni: South Asia in the Formation of Modern Japanese Buddhism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jain, Andrea R. 2020. *Peace Love Yoga: The Politics of Global Spirituality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jain, Kajri 2021. *Gods in the Time of Democracy*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Kersel, Morag M. and Christina Luke 2015. 'Civil Societies? Diplomacy and Neo-imperialism'. In L. Meskell (ed.) *Global Heritage: A Reader.* Malden: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 70-93.

Kishwar, Shantanu. 2018. 'The Rising Role of Buddhism in India's Soft Power Strategy'. *Observer Research Foundation (Issue Brief)* 228: 1-12.

Marston, John and David Geary 2023. 'Nalanda Rising: Buddhism, Heritage Diplomacy and the Politics of Revival'. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 43 (1): 26-42.

Mazumdar, Arijit 2018. 'India's Soft Power Diplomacy under the Modi Administration: Buddhism, Diaspora and Yoga'. *Asian Affairs* 49 (3): 468-491.

Meskell, Lynn 2015. 'Introduction: Globalizing Heritage'. In L. Meskell (ed.) *Global Heritage: A Reader*. Malden: John Wiley & Sons.

Meskell, Lynn 2018. *A Future in Ruins: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Dream of Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nye Jr., Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.

Ober, Douglas F. 2023. *Dust on the Throne: The Search for Buddhism in Modern India*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Ober, Douglas F. 2019. 'From Buddha Bones to Bo Trees: Nehruvian India, Buddhism and the Poetics of Power, 1947–1956'. *Modern Asian Studies* 53 (4): 1312-1350.

Pinkney, Andrea Marion 2015. 'Looking West to India: Asian Education, Intra-Asian Renaissance and the Nalanda Revival'. *Modern Asian Studies* 49 (1): 111-149.

Ray, Himanshu Prabha 2014. *The Return of the Buddha: Ancient Symbols for a New Nation*. New Delhi: Routledge.

Ray, Himanshu Prabha 2012. 'From Multi-religious Sites to Mono-religious Monuments in South Asia: The Colonial Legacy of Heritage Management'. In P. Daly and T. Winter (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Heritage in Asia.* London: Routledge, pp. 82-97.

Sabharwal, Gopa 2018. 'Negotiating Place and Heritage: Creating Nalanda University'. In A. Sharma (ed.) *Records, Recoveries, Remnants and Inter-Asian Interconnections: Decoding Cultural Heritage*. Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, pp. 32-50.

Scott, David 2016. 'Buddhism in Current China-India Diplomacy'. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 45 (3): 139-174.

Shi, Isabelle 2019. 'A Buddhist Path: Cultural Diplomacy in China and India'. *McGill Journal of Political Studies* 29 April. https://mjps.ssmu.ca/2019/04/29/buddhist-diplomacy/ (accessed March 2022).

Simone, AbdouMaliq 2004. 'People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg'. *Public Culture* 16 (3): 407-429.

Singh, Rani and Tim Winter 2023. 'From Hinduism to Hindutva: Civilizational Internationalism and UNESCO'. *International Affairs* 99 (2): 515-530.

Strategic Initiatives & Government Advisory (SIGA) Team 2012. 'Diverse Beliefs: Tourism of Faith'. New Delhi: FICC and YES BANK Ltd. http://ficci.in/spdocument/20207/diverse-beliefs-tourism-of-faith.pdf (accessed April 2015).

Stobdan, Phunchok 2019. *The Great Game in the Buddhist Himalayas: India and China's Quest for Strategic Dominance*. Gurgaon: Penguin Random House.

Winter, Tim 2013. 'Clarifying the Critical in Critical Heritage Studies.' *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19 (6): 532-545.

Winter, Tim 2015 'Heritage Diplomacy'. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 21 (10): 997-1015.

Winter, Tim 2016. 'Heritage Diplomacy along the One Belt One Road'. *The Newsletter* (IIAS) 74: 8-10.