



Editorial

The Path from Fragmentation to Wholeness Goes through Trans-Himalayan Civilisations: the Case of Reconstructing Holistic Education

Since seventh century CE till twentieth century CE, the continuous erasure of Indigenous and ancient civilisational worldviews in lure of glitter, pomp and perfidy could not damage the chance of regaining a lovable livable Earth. Attacks after attacks on culture, economy and belief destructed indigenous civilisations of Africa, Middle-east and West Asia, South America, North America and Australasia paving the way for semitic-Western approach to frame rules for dominance. However, the resistance of continuous Asian civilisations like China and Bharat in the mainland Asia was the hope. However, since 1950s, they are lowering of the resistance wall to one or other western binaries in high hope of becoming equal with the West on their standard binarian protocols. This now leaves the international community trapped in a leadership deadlock. Whether China and India can break the deadlock? If so, how?

China, barring using civilisational philosophy in rhetoric has been in accelerating process of surrendering their development, society, economy and international behaviour to Western models. India too, except following the ancient tradition of non-aggression on others and consistent multilaterality. Following Westphalian approach to operationalise concepts like sovereignty, deterrence, extraction, and security, they too are moving farther from their *samaj* (community) and culture -centric unique strength of broader self.

This context calls to revisit World-poet Rabindranath Tagore's call for *Atmashaktir Udbodhan* (awakening of own unique strength). This call in early twentieth century from the Eastern World visualised community as the site realising peace as a cosmic, relational, and ecological continuum. China and Bharat are the only lands which can redefine modern times on the basis of pillars of millennial continuity. How do they systematically stop marginalizing the distinct structural realities and the deeply complex behaviors of the "unbroken" civilisations represented by them till now? Here is a ray of hope in their bid to transform education as a tradi-modern institution bringing ancient wisdom to practical use.

The proposal

Civilisational kins India and China, along with the other kin Bhutan need to act fast to reconstruct holistic education with clear goal, practice in statecraft and purity of mind. This educational reform is must to avoid the curse of binarian, reductionist paradigm by a deeper reconstruction of the educational imagination itself. This will be transformative for the globe - the human and the nature. Gradually others will join from Eastern and South-eastern Asian civilisational countries who withstood and protected their own civilisational nationalistic DNA despite attack from others for thousands of years. This reconstruction phase is for training the mind, an education for all.

India and China will offer their models of reimagination for the high population countries; Bhutan's example would offer inspiration to small population countries. They would discover resources in their own ways of living, not mimicking others.

It would help solve the central problem before us - how solution of any problem in current dispensation creates more problem due to only reductionist mind training. Whether education can once again become an instrument to train mind cultivating wholeness replacing fragmentation, discernment replacing consumption, responsibility rather than only right and entitlement? Would the World be able to prioritise long-term civilisational flourishing sublimating short-term individual or national ego?

This proposal is not about cultural superiority. It is how to bring back modernity-marginalised civilisational wisdom into conversation with contemporary science, technology, economics, governance, and education for a reconstruction. It would offer the strength to slow down, to use discrimination for prioritizing transgenerational nature-human progress by accepting our common threads of kinship.

Why Trans-Himalayan Trio

The strength lies in this civilisational territory's great capacity to think holistically, use discrimination to decide how knowledge should flow from all sides and convert these into practice for trans-generationality. This trio have the capacity to consider any human action from nature-centredness human progress context. Only for the last eight decades this territory is in danger of losing this capacity to discriminate in the altar of the immediate. The thought process of this zone's leaders must be guided by only one mantra "united by civilisational mind, we shall bring back the world on ecologically sustainable transgenerational progress in natural progression". That emancipatory belief would save trans-Himalayan civilisations from the psychological collapse of fear to dominators and subsequent reaction on the same coin. Of late, India and China are slowly trying to recover from this psychological collapse. Their sincere desire to transform education operationalizing millennia-old philosophical frameworks raises hope.

Their ancient texts present a profound worldview. They realized that the internal human consciousness and the external linguistic and physical world are continuity of a single reality. This continuity is not confined to human only, it arises in the Mother Earth and embraces all. Bhutan has been practising the same in low population, trans-generational community level by following an education in the same philosophical frame with tradi-modernising trend, aiming it ingraining Gross Happiness as aim. For small population community prominent countries this offers an educational architecture.

The World needs this civilisational strength

Modern education is the outcome of money and man-centric exclusivity which continues creating binaries, pampering boastfulness and getting satisfied dividing the world into isolated isles. It works through constructing non-real divisions suiting capitalism to score profit. Students study biology of a living organism as separate from the physics and chemistry of the same body. Economics is studied as framework of endless financial growth extracting finite resources to serve economic giants. Students learn history as a long series of violent wars for territory by the powerful. Geography for them is different from nature even when five elements of nature is studied. Even when Integrated Science is introduced or women studies, students sit in classes of specific subjects in the name of multidisciplinary learning. It is left to exceptional students to discover by themselves that all are ways of looking into same phenomenon by seven blind men. Even such exceptional students are shaped by genetics -both of epigenetic and inborn traits from parents.

But individualism driven legal, educational, cultural, economic and governance architectures, by breaking families are driving almost all to psychological surrender to selfish thinking and praxis. This endless separation, despite reality being total, began in post-enlightenment industrialising and modernising Europe; then spread in colonies in propaganda mode. Current education of such structural separation trains the human mind to look at the planet through a lens of deep division. We learn to see ourselves as isolated units as individuals, nuclear family, community, territorial state and non-government NGOs. We learn to see nature as a dead asset to be extracted, utilised, and discarded. Global leaders in industry are trying to find out new planets where only few can escape, accepting apocalypse designed by their cohort as fait accompli. The earth needs to be saved from this height of emotional bankruptcy and selfishness urgently.

The education of last few hundred years sustains a toxic culture of intense, short-term competition and aggression. It encourages students to forget that in an examination hall or interview, the challenge is to do better than the last test by correcting earlier mistakes. The unbridled growth of individualistic, consumerist and market maximising mindset institutionalises psychological blindness convenient for driving local-national-global conflicts. World leaders are trained in this system only. So, they attempt to solve planetary climate breakdown and geopolitical conflicts employing the same logic that caused the same. More resource control and better military leverage is their answer. This loop leads to systemic exhaustion.

The time has come when few countries start to abandon this loop. Let them lead holistic education push to train the world by operationalizing own civilisational wisdom driven praxis. These countries should be able to ward off others' antagonistic madness without inflicting the wound upon others. India and China are fit for the role due to not yet lost civilisational strength; Bhutan also, being the low population country with holistic aim of education in practice.

The role of great powers

Two great powers—specifically the United States and Russia—have critical roles to play. Their duty is to provide the geopolitical guardrails and the strategic patience that offers this educational shift the time to take root. They must step back from their current trajectory of hyper-militarism, economic warfare, and intense resource competition affecting the continuous civilisational stretch. This requires restraint as detected by the ancient great Laozi. He cautioned:

“Do you want to improve the world? I do not think it can be done. The world is sacred. It cannot be improved. If you tamper with it, you will ruin it. If you treat it like an object, you will lose it.”

Laozi reminded the powerful in ancient China and elsewhere that true power is found in alignment and restraint, not in the frantic drive for total control. Today it is equally applicable. It is doubtful, how far two superpowers would perform their duty to save the Earth. Therefore, that onus is on shoulders of China, India and few middle countries who are groaning. What should be the role of small population communitarian countries?

What Bhutan practices

Bhutan is the small population communitarian country on the Himalayas. This is the hermitage where Bharatiya civilisational values of kings continue to make the king equal to everyone in *dhamma* and community with the highest goal of subject's happiness in tradi-modern ways. The king is revered by all not under force. He seldom uses discrimination for the nature and people's sake. This land never forgets to be in harmonious respectful relation with India, not only because India performs the role of the ancient Bharat with Bhutan but knowing by heart the carriage of the same DNA by the two.

What India May

In this complex world, India, by the calmness of decision-making rooted firmly on few civilisational norms fits the role on most of the yardsticks. Her embrace of Western socialism-capitalism and Western style democracy breeds vices. This has had impact upon traditional consensus practising eastern society as the state replaces the community and society. Despite this, her deep root of nature-centric community living is live in rural population which is 70% of the total population. Many election results show the strength of this community living in embrace of nature.

This worldview is captured in the phrase *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* i.e., the entire world is one interconnected family. This tradition offered the philosophy that the real human progress is measured by our capacity for self-limitation and mutual well-being, not by how much we extract from the Earth. This ethos was captured by Rabindranath Tagore, the great protagonist of community living and holistic education. He warned against the dangers of fragmented, industrialised schooling:

“We have come to this world to accept it, not merely to use it. A mind that is starved of its nourishment of world-communion can never achieve true freedom.”

India is uniquely positioned because it is actively trying to implement this philosophy on a massive scale. The National Education Policy (NEP-2020) is a serious attempt to dismantle the colonial, fragmented model of learning. The policy officially mandates a shift toward a highly integrated, multidisciplinary education which would strengthen the holistic thinking. It introduces Holistic Progress Cards to evaluate students on their relational awareness, empathy, and emotional intelligence. It deliberately moves away from the raw grading of competitive individualism.

This macro shift is vital for the entire world. India is currently home to the largest youth population on the planet. If India successfully trains millions of young minds to think through wholeness, it will change the global trajectory. These youth will enter the polity, media and economy with a completely different operational code. How to develop non-oppositional critical frame of thinking and effective action instead of oppositional binary is the challenge of NEP-2020. Time is short.

What China shows

It was destined that China show the world that un-broken civilisations have all capacities to beat others on their reductionist thought and practice to control their madness. It risked its civilisational DNA despite invoking the same as reductionist pride to play the role. Yes, it has shown aggression but that can be transformed. Now it has a larger role, to show the capacity of its great civilisational mind and matter to offer the world the holistic education not as a profit affair but as continuous civilisations' aspiration for ecologically sustainable trans-generational progress (ESTGP).

The core principle of the modern Chinese curriculum is Lide Shuren rooted deeply in Confucian philosophy. This views moral cultivation as the ultimate goal of learning, comprising holistic moral upbringing and character over metrics. Along with this China is embedding its indigenous writing systems and historic scripts directly into modern education. By leveraging concepts such as Tian Ren He Yi (Harmony between Humanity and Nature) within the educational system, China drives indigenous solutions for environmental sustainability, green technology, and social cohesion.

It's time for China to guardrail this together with India and Bhutan as civilisational brothers both of whom never departed from home. Rather, they together protected entire Himalayan geography. Where should lie the value of civilisational greatness of China if realpolitik can't leverage country's civilisational kinship for improving the world on civilisational terms?

Holistic approach to save the world

Those embracing binary thinking of superiority-inferiority would definitely join later this journey of the world towards the great paradigm of civilisation's continuity genetics. India, Bhutan and China shall work towards this goal and wait for solace to those great civilisational people who were killed, dumped and stripped of own way of happiness. They would also wait for the New World to join the journey for thinking and acting holistically.

Fixing this planetary problem needs a fundamental rewrite of our educational DNA avoiding fragmented consciousness. Education must stop training students to be isolated individuals with right and no duty. It must start training them to see the world as a single, living organism where the nature includes human. This transformation is not an idealistic moral choice. It is the strict necessity for long-term human survival. Only then global systemic collapse by hyper-competitive states led by atomised citizens as leader in all activities can be averted.

To rebuild this educational DNA on a global scale, Western industrial models can't be relied. Education built entirely on the logic of individualism, material accumulation and aggression pursued by nation states and theocracies would lead to further destruction. We must turn to unbroken civilisational substrate which has already shown understanding non-dualistic wholeness.

The principle is not the East versus the West. It should be fragmentation yielding space to integration; stewardship replacing domination and putting transgenerational responsibility above short term gains.

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