



IIT Madras China Studies Centre

中国学研究中心

# Foreign Policy Conversations

## Webinar on

**"Soft-power tools and the role of films in India-China relations"**

**19th June 2020; 4:30: - 5:30 pm (India time)**

The idea of endearing oneself to others without coercion and through 'persuasion or attraction of values, culture or policies' (Joseph Nye's framework of 'soft-power') has not been fully explored in the context of India and China. Films as an instrument of soft-power promote the attraction of India's manifold heritages to foreign audiences. This webinar is a reappraisal of how China has been perceived in Indian cinema, and likewise how Indian films are received in China - and overall, whether the use of films could be revived as a vital tool of digital diplomacy to promote better understanding between the two countries.

### Key talking points:

China / Chinese characters as portrayed in Indian cinema (as stereotypes or otherwise)  
India as depicted in Chinese films, and how Indian films are received in China  
Reaching out through the language of films

### Featured Experts

- \* Shaji N Karun, Filmmaker and Cinematographer
- \* Rajiv Menon, Writer, Cinematographer and Filmmaker
- \* Zhou Xin, Head of the Tamil Department at the Beijing Foreign Studies University
- \* Arun Gupta, Principal Faculty, National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad
- \* Yongli Jin, Associate Professor at the Renmin University of China

Please register for online participation by clicking <https://forms.gle/rvTEQP3GKGWcJXxU7>

Viewers can submit questions for panelists by clicking <https://forms.gle/eRVPRw5HsJLLFB58>

Moderator: Joe Thomas Karackattu (IITM China Studies Centre); [csc@iitm.ac.in](mailto:csc@iitm.ac.in)

## About the speakers

Shaji N Karun, filmmaker and cinematographer, has bagged National Awards for his Malayalam films *Piravi*, *Vanaprastham* and *Kutty Srank*. His debut *Piravi* won the prestigious *Caméra d'Or* at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival. He was honoured with the Lifetime achievement award for his overall contributions to world cinema, at the 12th Jaipur International Film Festival in 2019. He is currently Chairman of the Kerala State Film Development Corporation.



Rajiv Menon, writer, cinematographer and filmmaker, is associated with Tamil, Hindi and Telugu films, with notable ones such as *Bombay*, *Kadal*, *Kandukondain Kandukondain*, and *Guru*, among several others. His debut directorial venture *Minsaara Kanavu* (1997) fetched four national awards in various categories. Rajiv has also worked on documentary projects with stalwarts like Shyam Benegal and Girish Karnard.

Zhou Xin is Head of the Tamil Department at the Beijing Foreign Studies University. An alumna of SOAS, University of London, Xin's research interests range from the history and social context of Indian cinema, history of China-Tamil interactions to Tamil literature. Her Tamil poems have been part of the overseas Tamil writers' poetry anthology published by the Sahitya Academy.



Arun Gupta is Principal Faculty and Ex-Discipline Lead of Film & Video Communication at the National Institute of Design (NID). Prof Gupta has served as Jury in several International Film Festivals, and is also a sinophile, having been to China often as part of Beijing Normal University's 'Looking China' youth filmmaking project, to make short documentaries on Chinese art, craft, life and culture. He has also taught young Chinese university students about Bollywood films.

Yongli Jin, is Associate Professor of History at the Renmin University of China. An alumna of Beijing University, Prof Jin has taught courses on Bollywood Films and Indian Culture and History through Indian films, apart from courses on Indian history and Contemporary world history.

