

CHINA CROSSROADS

Wednesday, October 21st, 2026, 19:30 – 21:00

China's Relations with South Asia

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China's relations with South Asia are complex and often fraught. Borders with Nepal, India and Bhutan are contested and fighting regularly occurs at these lines of control. At the same time, China has been quite instrumental in terms of fostering development in the region, both directly through the BRI, and indirectly, by spurring development-related competition. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have all benefited. This is also true with respect to climate change. China remains a significant source of carbon, but also underpins Pakistan's and Nepal's green transitions, while also helping tremendously in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. With a focus on the August 2026 China-Nepal floods, I will tease out some of these issues and try to imagine a path forward toward more productive inter-Asian relations.

[Susan Ostermann](#) is an Associate Professor of Global Affairs and Politics at the University of Notre Dame and an expert in comparative politics in South Asia, regulatory compliance, and environmental regulation. Her work seeks to understand why actors comply with regulations in unlikely circumstances, such as when states are weak or actors have strong incentives to break the law. She holds a PhD in Political Science from University of California, Berkeley. She also holds a law degree from Stanford University and worked several years as a practicing litigator, focusing on class actions and intellectual property disputes.

[Joshua Eisenman](#) is a Professor of Politics at the University of Notre Dame and Senior Fellow for China Studies at the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington, DC. Author of five books and numerous articles, his 2025 research included scores of interviews in Czechia, Morocco, Singapore, Malaysia, and Colombia, examining how small powers navigate relations with China. Eisenman has been a visiting professor at Peking University (2016), Fudan University (2017), and Shanghai International Studies University (2023). Between 2003-2005 he served as a policy analyst for the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Eisenman holds a PhD from UCLA and an MA from Johns Hopkins SAIS including a year at the Hopkins-Nanjing Center. He first came to China in 1998 to study Chinese at Capital Normal University.

[China Crossroads](#) hosts talks on all topics related to China, including business, foreign policy, and other areas as they relate to China, the idea being that China is both already a “crossroads” of the world and itself at a “crossroads” in terms of its future global influence. For more information, contact Frank Tsai at editor@shanghai-review.org.