



FRIENDS AND GOOD NEIGHBORS IN A HARMONIOUS WORLD

# FRIENDS AND GOOD NEIGHBORS IN A HARMONIOUS WORLD

DIPLOMATIC THINKING IN  
THE CHINESE SYSTEM

Li Hongshan



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THE CHINESE  
PUBLISHERS



FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRESS

## Publisher's Notes

China is the only large nation to have risen through peaceful means, accomplishing in just decades what it took developed nations centuries to do in the aspect of industrialization. The people of China have made the historic leaps from liberation to prosperity, and thence to a strong nation, creating what is known as the "Chinese Miracle." While there was widespread poverty when the PRC was founded in 1949, diligence over just a few decades has pushed the nation's economy to become the second largest in the world, causing people around the globe to marvel.

In his book *When China Rules the World*, the British academic Martin Jacques keenly pointed out, "It is banal, therefore, to believe that China's influence on the world will be mainly and overwhelmingly economic: on the contrary, its political and cultural effects are likely to be at least as far-reaching." Today, as China is continually making its way to the center of the global stage, its governance, spirit, wisdom, and solutions are gaining more attention from the international community. In the end, China's success is attributed to the success of the Chinese System and governance model, which is why more and

more scholars around the world are starting to study the features and merits of the model. During the formation of this system, numerous factors have played roles, the most foundational and most important being China's millennia-old cultural legacy. Thus, in order to comprehend the Chinese system, one must understand the nation's fine traditional culture.

The governance and other state systems of any nation do not simply form out of thin air; they have their historical and cultural backgrounds. During the 4th Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, President Xi Jinping stated in an important address:

*China's socialist system and state governance system have a profound historical background. Over several thousand years of history, the Chinese nation has created a splendid civilization, and developed a wealth of ideas on state systems and governance, including:*

*·the ideal of great harmony believing that When the Great Way rules, the land under Heaven belongs to the people";*

*·the same tradition across the country so that all areas follow similar customs and all people are of the same family;*

*·the idea of prioritizing morality over sanctions in governance and guiding people with virtue;*

*·the people-centered philosophy holding that the people*

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*have primacy over the ruler and the aim of governance is to ensure and improve the people's wellbeing;*

*·the idea of equality among all people in terms of social status and wealth, and taking the wealth of the rich to help the poor;*

*·the idea of justice and impartiality of the law;*

*·moral standards advocating filial piety, fraternity, loyalty to the country, good faith, propriety, justice, integrity, and conscience;*

*·standards for the appointment of officials based on virtue and competence;*

*·the reformist spirit as exemplified by such adages as: "Although Zhou is an ancient state, its destiny binges on reform;"*

*·the principle of good neighborliness and harmony in relations with all other countries; and*

*·the belief in the primacy of peace and opposition to bellicosity.*

China's adoption of the Chinese socialist system is a result of its 5,000 years of history and culture.

*Understanding the Chinese System* is divided into volumes with titles based on the 11 ideas President Xi spoke of. On the basis of stories on governance from ancient Chinese historical writings, the books also describe governance in the present day as it relates to these ancient

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principles. By tracing the governance experiences and wisdom of ancient Chinese people, the books show how the Chinese socialist system inherited and carried forward in an innovative way the fine traditional culture, allowing readers to understand not only the historical legacy inherited by the system but also its unique Chinese features.

The strength of China's traditional culture lies in its pursuit of the *dao* (the way), which is the order of life and the entire universe. According to the great philosopher Laozi, pursuing the *dao* differs from the pursuit of knowledge: "In the pursuit of learning one knows more every day; in the pursuit of the way one does less every day. One does less and less until one does nothing at all, and when one does nothing at all, there is nothing that is undone." The sages of old empowered themselves through non-action and ignorance to the point that nothing was impossible and nothing was unknown to them, which is quite different from the method through which Westerners pursue knowledge. In the pursuit of knowledge, no matter how much knowledge one obtains, as long as he possesses knowledge in one area, he is destined to lack it in others, which means he will be unable to reach the realm of

omniscience. But the ignorance of the sages is like a mirror which, though having no image of its own, allows all images to be seen through reflection. That is why Buddhists often say, "Be silent and thus illuminate

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others, and illuminate others while remaining silent." The ancients of China believed that everyone could transcend to the realm of the sage emperors Yao and Shun, that is, become sages and worthy (omniscient) by pursuing the *dao*. But in Western culture, only God can be omniscient. Thus, trying to understand the wisdom of ancient China's sages and its worthy people through the Western methodology of pursuing knowledge is quite problematic.

Differences in methodology have led to a divergence in worldviews and theories of knowledge.

The major feature of the Western worldview and theory of knowledge is dichotomy, as seen between the subjective and the objective, the subject and the object, the self and the other, and humankind and nature. This mode of thought pervades every aspect of Western thought, which is why there is a dichotomy between father and son, husband and wife, employer and employee, brothers, friends, companies, and nations. Such concepts and theories as competition, game theory, and the Thucydides Trap are products of this mindset. Misunderstanding and misjudgment are inevitable when looking from the angle of the Western mindset at the traditional Chinese values of loving fathers and dutiful sons, upstanding husbands and virtuous wives, benevolent rulers and loyal subjects, the love and respect among brothers, integrity in collaboration, mutual benefits in cooperation, rapport

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among nations, and harmony between humankind and nature.

In contrast, the Chinese of long ago formed a worldview of everything in the world being united as one and believed that the benevolent are united with all in the world. Therefore, it was believed that relationships of harmonious unity should exist between father and son, husband and wife, brothers, friends, the ruler and his subjects, and nations, which would result in glory for one leading to glory for all and loss for one implying loss for all. Such a mindset allowed harmony in China to be maintained among the people, between the people and nature, between people and society, and with other nations in the country's long history, making the Chinese civilization the world's only civilization to endure unbroken for so long. This is because Chinese people have almost always held to the direction given by the sages and the worthy: the pursuit of the *dao*. They have maintained the worldview of harmony with nature and the overall mindset that the benevolent are united with all in the world, and they have held fast to the moral concept that all living things are kin. This worldview, mode of thought, and moral concept permeate every aspect of governance and the social system in China. From different perspectives, *Understanding the Chinese System* provides an interpretation of how China's unique cultural traditions are made manifest

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in China's systems of politics, economics, culture, education, law, and diplomacy. It is thus a bridge for readers around the world to better understand China.

Of course, whether the reader is from a Western background or from China, understanding the Chinese system is by no means a simple task, though it is a necessary one because it is highly significant in promoting harmony within Chinese society and peace between nations.

This series is an effort at telling the story of China through Chinese discourse. I believe its publication will produce a positive and far-reaching influence, allowing readers to better understand the historical context of the Chinese socialist system and state governance system. It will also help reinforce confidence in China's path, its theories, its system, and its culture, promote exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and Western cultures, and boost the influence of the Chinese culture on the global stage.

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## **Foreword**

Since the beginning of the 21st century, humanity has undergone major changes while the international landscape has seen subtle transformation. Western countries have begun to express much greater interest in China's direction and methods of development. Though some suspicion is embedded in such interest, the CPC-led endeavors in building Chinese socialism are so successful that the Western countries have to seriously search to answer the question of just what lies behind China's tremendous achievements.

Despite the confusion expressed by the Western countries, the answer to this question is self-evident to the Chinese: The Chinese socialist system, under the leadership of the CPC, is a fundamental system that befits the nation and ensures it will reach the Two Centenary Goals, initiate a new journey in building a modern socialist country in all respects, and on this basis realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. A basic prerequisite to understanding China is understanding its system and the cultural traditions and ethos underlying that system. As President Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed,

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the Chinese socialist system, which is guided by Marxism, is deeply rooted in the Chinese soil and in the Chinese culture and enjoys the full support of the people. It combines Marxism and the best of our millennia-old cultural traditions and values that our people inherently hold to in everyday life. To understand the Chinese system and the underlying ethos, one must not only proceed from the reality, but also look at our fine cultural traditions and the ancient wisdom that thrives and transforms with the times.

In his essay "Uphold and Improve the Chinese Socialist System and Modernize State Governance," President Xi summarizes the historical background of the Chinese system, and brings together ancient ideas on state systems and governance in 11 aspects, including the advocacy of virtuous governance, the people-centered philosophy, the concept of equality, the standards for appointment to office, the reformist spirit, and the principle behind diplomacy. The essay shows people the cultural traits and ethos underlying the Chinese system, its major advantages and unique appeal, delivering a message of confidence in the culture and system.

Inspired by President Xi's essay, this series of books seeks to explore the Chinese system

from the perspective of China's traditional culture. Relating the stories about

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the state system and governance from China's historical writings, these books demonstrate the ancient wisdom and experiences in the hope of helping people apply the wisdom and learn from the past. This will serve to support the current governance endeavors. The compilation of this book series indicates a clear awareness of the problems that are of practical relevance today. Even though the people and events described here are from history, they are analyzed from a modern perspective to give readers a unique inspiration. The series explains the longstanding cultural tradition behind the Chinese system, helping readers understand the fine legacy of traditional culture and innovative elements within the Chinese socialist system.

Whether the Chinese system is good or bad is no longer a topic of debate, because history has given us the best answer with evidence. But where does its strength lie? How does one extrapolate on the clear merits of the Chinese system in an appropriate, convincing and easy-to-understand way? These are no easy questions to answer. A unique perspective is especially needed in interpreting and explaining China's traditional culture. President Xi once said that China's fine traditional culture is the lifeline of the Chinese nation, and is highly significant for the efforts of building Chinese socialism. It is

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also an important resource for thought, good practices and wisdom on governance. The cultural traits and ethos endowed by the best of the traditional culture makes the Chinese nation what it is. This holds true for the Chinese system too, as the key to understanding it is understanding the fine cultural tradition behind the Chinese system.

China's traditional culture advocates a holistic approach to the *dao*. Everything in the world must comply with the *dao*. It is the highest principle and standard which cannot be defied; if anyone defies it, corresponding retribution will follow. As is said in the *Doctrine of the Means*, "The *dao* cannot be separated from us for even one moment; that which can be separated from us is not the *dao*." Therefore, the ancients followed the model of the *dao* whether in handling their relationships with the nation or with nature. By following the *dao*, people can come to understand the laws of the universe and make the best use of their inherent goodness so as to serve the country and its people. From this, the ancients formed an extensive system of thought on governance, which involved the way a ruler and ministers should govern (the human aspect) and the way administration should be conducted (the institutional aspect).

Specifically, the human aspect is embodied in such ideas as people-centeredness, the people having primacy

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over the ruler, good neighborliness and harmony. The institutional aspect is manifested in such ideas as prioritizing morality over sanctions, selecting the worthy for office, and the belief in the primacy of peace. In short, the nation must be governed through virtue. These ideas, constitute an essential part of ancient wisdom on governance, are embodied in the

Chinese socialist system. President Xi has said, "The essential attribute of our state and governance systems is that they always represent the fundamental interests of the people, safeguard the people's status as masters of the country, reflect the people's common will, and protect the people's legitimate rights and interests. This is precisely why the operation of the systems in our country is so effective and dynamic." His remarks point to the optimal way to carry on and develop China's fine traditional culture and neatly encapsulate the cultural traits and ethos underlying the Chinese system.

It was said in ancient times, "While looking at a matter, the benevolent see benevolence and the wise see wisdom." The Chinese system and the cultural traits and ethos underlying it can and should be expounded from different perspectives. In seeking the answer to the question posed earlier, we should not restrict ourselves to just one answer. Building and improving the Chinese socialist system is a dynamic process and thus must be viewed in

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the context of changes in the times. I believe the publication of the series will provide readers with a unique angle from which to holistically examine the Chinese system, a broad topic which is worthy of careful consideration.

Liu Yuli  
June 2021

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### **Introduction**

Many people with insight believe we can turn to the traditional Chinese culture for solutions to the common challenges facing mankind today. Such principles as "*qin ren shan lin* 亲仁善邻"(amity and good-neighborliness) and "*xie he wan bang* 协和万邦"(harmonious world order) in Chinese civilization are of great value in resolving conflicts between countries and in promoting world peace and development.

The phrase "*qin ren shan lin* 亲仁善邻" is a quotation from "Yingong liunian"(The Sixth Year of Duke Yin's Reign) *Zuo Zhuan (Zuo Qiuming's commentary on Spring and Autumn Annals)*, which reads, "Amity and good-neighborliness are key to a state's success." A loving and friendly spirit is essential to the harmonious coexistence of different countries. On the concept of *ren* (仁), Confucius has the following remarks:

The man of perfect virtue, whom I may call *ren*, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he

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seeks also enlarge others.

and

Don't impose on others what you yourself do not desire.

On the concept of *lin* (邻), the ancient Chinese had a two-fold understanding. In the first place, the concept concerns the neighbors and the neighborhood in a geographical sense, which also involves the idea of amity, intimacy, and friendliness. One old saying illustrates the ancient Chinese people's deep understanding of neighborhood:

A close neighbor is dearer than a distant relative.

The relationship between neighbors and between neighboring countries should not be one of rivalry and opposition but one of solidarity and inter-dependence. Such a philosophy still prevails in China today. The concept of *lin* may also refer to countries that share similar or compatible principles, values, and visions of justice. Confucius says,

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Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors.

In other words, a virtuous nation will never be alone, but will appeal to, and be befriended by, like-minded nations.

The phrase "*xie he wan bang* 协和万邦" is quoted from "Yaodian" in *Shangshu* (The Book of Documents):

(Emperor Yao) was able to cultivate his own moral character and promote moral values, so that amity prevailed in his clan. He then clarified the hierarchical order of tribal officials. Only when this was done could all vassal states, big and small, prosper in harmony, and the people become friendly with each other.

China has been one of the most densely populated areas of the world. In the late prehistoric period, numerous states co-existed in the area of what is present-day China. Such a reality inspired Emperor Yao, a legendary Chinese ruler, to put forward the moral ideal of "harmonious international order." According to Emperor Yao, the harmony between different countries is in effect har-

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monious kinship being extended in the wider society and in the context of "international" relations. Therefore, he advocated the principle of benevolence in diplomacy, calling for respect for diversity, mutual support, and common development

What, then, have enabled the Chinese to put forward these great ideas of "amity and good-neighborliness" and "harmonious world order" as early as thousands of years ago? The "unity between humanity and Heaven" (*tian ren he yi* 天人合一) is a fundamental law of the universe that the Chinese people got to know in ancient times. Tian 天, (Heaven) in this context does not only mean nature, but has a moral dimension; and yi (一) means oneness and unity. When it comes to state governance, this concept of humanity-Heaven unity is manifested by the solidarity and oneness between the sovereign and his ministers, between



the ruler and his subjects, between the family and the state, and between different countries. The world is an intertwined whole. If we liken it to the vast sea, each country is like a wave that is only tiny part of the sea and can never detach itself from the sea. That is why Mencius says,

Respect the elderly in your own family and

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extend the same respect to the elderly of other families. Care about your own children, and extend the same care to others' children.

To help other countries is to help our own country; and benevolence extended to the people of other countries is likewise benevolence to our own people.

A basic prerequisite for achieving amity and good-neighborliness and a harmonious world order is mutual respect and seeking harmony without uniformity. The Chinese believe each civilization is rooted in its unique cultural environment and each embodies the wisdom and vision of a nation, and therefore, it is necessary to respect each other's sovereignty, culture, history, and current conditions. Human beings are different only in terms of skin color and the language used, and no civilization is superior over the others. Each nation has the right to handle its own internal affairs and international relations, which is the most basic dignity of a sovereign state. According to *Zhongyong* (*The Doctrine of the Mean*), "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire." The same principle applies to international relations. It is the wish of every country to see itself, in particular its sovereignty, being respected by others. Therefore,

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there's no justification for any act of interference in the internal affairs of other countries. As the countries are bound to embark on different paths of development due to differences in their national conditions, history and culture, the Chinese have always emphasized the principle of "seeking harmony without uniformity."

Take Chinese cuisine for example. While it gains popularity across the world, it is worthwhile to know about the secrets behind it. As Chinese gastronomy has a long-standing emphasis on color, aroma, and taste, various condiments are widely used in the culinary process. It is a blend of various tastes that makes the dishes delicious. Moreover, foreigners living in China may marvel at the vast difference in food culture between different regions in China. Each locality has its own specialities, unique customs, and ways of living. "Delicious soup is made by combining different ingredients." It is this philosophy that has made Chinese gastronomy diverse and inclusive. "Seeking harmony without uniformity" entails respecting diversity and equality in the pursuit of harmony. Equality, as a moral concept, entails treating all countries as equals, be they big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor. Seeking convergence of interest, tolerating disparity, and expanding common ground while shelving

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differences - these are the prerequisites for achieving amity and good-neighborliness and a harmonious world order.

To achieve amity and good-neighborliness and a harmonious world order, it is highly relevant to keep good faith - the concept of *xin* (信) in Chinese culture. *Xin* (信) entails *cheng* (诚, sincerity and honesty) in the first place. There have been ancient sayings such as

The quality of *xin* (信) should be emphasized in our personal cultivation. But *xin* (信) entails *cheng* (诚) in the first place. These two concepts are interdependent.

and

Without *xin* (信), nothing can establish itself. Without *cheng* (诚), nothing can function properly.

The Chinese have traditionally attached paramount importance to good faith, holding it as a basic moral standard for a decent person. To break faith is to lose righteousness. Some may wonder why the Chinese have valued *xin* (信) and *yi* (义) so much. compared with

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the pragmatism as was embodied in the well-known saying in the 19th century - "In international relations, there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests," these Chinese notions might sound much too pedantic. But that is not the truth. The ancient Chinese argued, "The pursuit of interests must be compatible with justice." A country that pursues its own interests in total disregard of international morality is bound to suffer the consequences of its own doing. Therefore, the Chinese advocate the principle of mutual respect and trust and seeking common ground while shelving differences, and call on all countries to reduce mutual misgivings by engaging in sincere and in-depth dialog and communication and to adhere to the correct concept of justice and interests that puts righteousness first and upholds justice while pursuing shared interests. As early as thousands of years ago, the ancient Chinese realized that a country would not last long if it ignored moral standards in its international relations and that real solidarity entailed offering assistance to other countries in need. International relations are not a zero-sum game or a life-and-death struggle, but a mutually- beneficial partnership. Mankind should pull together to contribute to the prosperity and stability of the world, build a community

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with a shared future for mankind, and make the fruits of development available to all people.

The ultimate goal of pursuing amity and good-neighborliness and a harmonious world order is achieving prosperity and stability of the world and fostering a community with a shared future for mankind. The concept of "a community with a shared future for mankind" envisages an ideal human society in multiple dimensions and at multiple levels: a community of life for both man and nature, a global community of health for all, etc. As the countries differ from each other greatly in historical experience and national conditions, it is only natural for them to encounter problems and disputes in their relations. Resorting to violence

and war as a solution will lead to dire consequences, as the two world wars have made manifest. Peace and development hold the only key to a practical solution. The Chinese have always “valued harmony above all else” and pursued “good governance and social harmony.” As Mencius pointed out,

Geographical advantage is more important than favorable weather, but still more important than geographical advantage is group morale.

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Social harmony is conducive to development; and in return, development ensures social harmony. “Harmony” is the universal law of the world. Exchanges and mutual learning, common development, peace and prosperity - all these will not be possible without “harmony.” The basic goal of pursuing “harmony” in diplomacy is the well-being of the people. Development achieved on the basis of “harmony” will not only belong to any individual country, but belong to the whole world and the entire human race. This notion also finds expression in the Chinese belief that “a just cause should be pursued for the common good.” Building on this idea, in an effort to pass on the torch of peace from generation to generation, sustain development, and make civilization flourish, contemporary China calls for a new type of international relations that is characterized by mutual respect, equity and fairness and win-win cooperation, and promotes the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

The guiding philosophy of pursuing amity and good-neighborliness and a harmonious world order represents a classical expression of contemporary China’s diplomatic thinking and the historical source of the thought on foreign affairs of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Like a shiny pearl in the treasure house of

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human civilization, it carries the wisdom of ancient Chinese sages and illuminates the way ahead for contemporary Chinese diplomacy. The change of times can never eclipse its sparkling ideological value. We look forward to more efforts to tap the wisdom of traditional Chinese culture and energize those cultural elements that possess current value. To contribute Chinese wisdom to world peace and development, to foster a community with a shared future for mankind, and to pursue common development and prosperity with the rest - all this is the sincere aspiration and best wishes of the Chinese people.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Equality, Respect, Inclusiveness and Mutual Learning**

All things differ from each other in one way or another. A country’s attitude toward differences determines its diplomatic philosophy. China has a vast territory and dozens of ethnic groups. In the face of the cultural diversity and differences between different ethnic groups, the Chinese civilization and culture values equality and mutual trust, inclusiveness and mutual learning, and advocates for the contemporary world a new type of international

relations characterised by mutual respect, justice and fairness, and win-win cooperation.

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### **Duke Huan of Qi's Respect for the State of Yan**

Before Duke Huan of Qi became the first "Hegemon" of the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC), he helped Qi's neighboring state Yan to repulse the invasion by Shan-Rong nomads.

The Spring and Autumn Period was an age of enormous social changes and constant interstate conflicts. According to *Shiji (Records of the Grand Historian)*, there were more than 100 regional states of varied sizes, which had turned into de facto independent sovereign states as the Zhou monarch declined. The initiative and final decision in matters of religion, education, and declaration of war proceeded from the regional lords rather than from the monarch. War became more frequent between the states, and annexations became rampant as they vied for hegemony. Diplomacy had a more prominent role to play and multilateral diplomacy prevailed. The ancient Chinese set great store by the concept of *li* 禮 (literally meaning propriety, rituals, ceremony, etc.), an ethical concept that institutionalises and standardizes the dealings between individuals

### **The Hegemons**

The original meaning of *ba* 霸 (literally a hegemonic overlord) in ancient China differs from that of the hegemonism in contemporary international power politics. As "LiLou" in *The Mencius points out*, "Ba means seniority, and refers to a senior leader of the lords." In other words, the "Hegemons" were leading feudal aristocrats. The "Five Hegemons of the Spring and Autumn Period" were leaders of the regional state alliances, to whom the King of Zhou assigned the authority to govern the relations between the regional states in the king's name.

dividuals and between groups. Confucius says, "If you do not learn the rules of propriety, your character cannot be established." The Confucian code of ethics advocates respect, restraint, and dignity as the fundamental elements of an established character. Without a proper sense of propriety, a man will find himself in danger. The dealings between states, likewise, have to be handled in accordance with international rituals and rules. In the Spring and Autumn Period, the ritual system of Zhou remained the backbone of the "international laws" as the Zhou monarch was still the supreme ruler - albeit in name only. Different occasions were governed by their corresponding

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rites. For instance, there was the rite of paying homage the monarch, and there was also a set of rites to conduct a battle. Such rites formed the international rules at time. Besides these, there were still some other unwritten rules that were in place. For example, when two states engaged in war, either party had to furnish the other with an announcement to sever their diplomatic ties formally to start with, and then send an envoy to liaise and fix a date for the battle, before they got down to fighting on the appointed date. Sneak attacks without a

prior declaration of war were considered inappropriate, and, after the war started, the belligerent parties had to observe another set of principles, for example:

- Charge forward only at the beating of drums.
- Don't attack before the opponents stand ready in battle formation.
- Don't attack when the opponent state is in mourning for its deceased sovereign.
- The envoys shall be exempt from execution (when two states are at war).
- Never kill prisoners of war.

Meetings of sovereigns or their deputies to form alliances or sign treaties were a common form of diplomatic activities. On such occasions, rites were all the

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more necessary.

Aspiring to advantage in the competition for hegemony, the regional states were keen to appoint talented and wise people to office and carry out both political and economic reforms. The first one to emerge successful was the State of Qi, which grew strong and prosperous under the reign of Duke Huan of Qi. Duke Huan of Qi (?-643 BC), named Xiaobai (clan name: Lǚ, and ancestral surname: Jiang), was the fifteenth-generation sovereign of the State of Qi. His elder brother Duke Xiang of Qi

### **"Honor the King and Drive Off the Barbarians"**

The earliest reference to the phrase "*zun wang rang yi* 尊王攘夷" was made in *Gongyang Zhuan* (*Gongyang's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*). It means honoring the king, rendering him service, and driving of the invading barbarians. This was necessitated by the specific historical conditions during the Spring and Autumn Period, a time characterized by the waning prestige of the Zhou monarch, incessant wars between the regional states, and frequent invasions by foreign tribes like Di and Rong. To facilitate the resistance against foreign invasion, it was imperative for the regional states in Central China to unite in a justifiable manner under the banner of "honoring the King."

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was killed in civil strife, and Xiaobai vied against Prince Jiu for the throne before emerging victorious. Duke Huan was an ambitious sovereign and knew his subordinates, well enough to assign them to suitable posts. He appointed Bao Shuya, Xi Peng and Guan Zhong to office and reformed the administration. Owing a debt of gratitude to the duke for having recognized his talents, Guan Zhong, during his tenure as prime minister of Qi, assisted Duke Huan whole-heartedly. He initiated reforms domestically and implemented civil-military integration. He promoted trade and commerce, leveraging the State of Qi's geographical advantage as a coastal region, and developed its economy. He heeded the wishes of the people in drawing up policies, winning strong public support. Under Guan Zhong's administration, the State of Qi prospered. On the international front, he upheld the ritual system and the patriarchal status of the Zhou monarch, led allied troops to resist aggressions against Central China by nomadic tribes, and pursued a proactive multilateral foreign policy,

developing diplomatic ties with all states, big or small, strong or weak, under the principle of upholding the Zhou system.

In 681 BC, Duke Huan of Qi convened a summit at Zhen (in present-day Zhencheng County, Shandong Province), a conference attended by the sovereigns of four other states, at which he became the first alliance

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leader in this period. In 663 BC, Shan-Rong, a tribe from the north, invaded the State of Yan, indulging in looting across its territory. Too weak in strength, Yan was besieged despite its desperate resistance. The Marquis of Yan dispatched an envoy to seek military assistance from the State of Qi. Adhering to the policy of honoring the King and driving off the barbarians, Duke Huan of Qi led an army in person to rescue Yan. The Shan-Rong invaders suffered defeat and fled. Upon Guan Zhong's advice of "eradicating future troubles," Duke Huan seized the day and gave hot pursuit, joined by the Yan army, until they reached Guzhu (in present-day Lulong county, Hebei Province). On their way back, the Marquis of Yan was so thankful for Duke Huan's kindness that he insisted on seeing Duke Huan off in person until they were already 50 *li* (approximately 25 kilometers) across the Yan border into the Qi territory. Being always mindful of propriety, Duke Huan said, "As a rule, a lord never crosses the border when he sees off someone else except the King." To save the Marquis of Yan the embarrassment of breaching proper etiquette, Duke Huan re-demarcated the Yan-Qi border on the spot, relinquishing to Yan that part of the Qi territory which the Marquis of Yan had traveled when seeing him off.

After driving off the Rong invaders, Duke Huan assisted the States of Xing and Wei in resisting aggressions

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by the Di tribe, an act that greatly boosted Qi's international prestige. The Zhou monarch, as well as all the other regional states, recognized Duke Huan's meritorious service and the State of Qi's international status. In 656 BC, Duke Huan allied with a few other states to attack the States of Cai and Chu, and concluded a treaty with Chu at Zhaoling, checking the latter's ambitions in the north. Later, he led actions to put down the internal strife in the royal house, called together the princes to congresses, and restored the international order. The King of Zhou appreciated his efforts and made him the first "Hegemon."

Two factors have contributed to Duke Huan's success: the increased comprehensive strength of the State of Qi during his reign and his commitment to ethical standards in international relations. Duke Huan was keenly aware of the impossibility to enhance a state's international status through threat of force or schemes and intrigues. Though Qi was then the biggest power, Duke Huan treated the weaker State of Yan with due etiquette, which expressed his respect for the latter's national sovereignty and dignity. Confucius speaks highly of Qi's commitment to morality in diplomacy thus:

It was due to the great services of Guan Zhong, rather than by threat of force, that Duke

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Huan, his master, was able to call together the regional states of the kingdom to a congress. What has one to say against the moral character of a man like that?

According to Mencius,

One who uses force under the guise of benevolence will become the leader of the lords (the "Hegemon"), but he must first be the ruler of a large state before he can do so. One who practices benevolence through the virtuous rule will become the unifier of the world, and to do so, his state need not be a large one. King Tang began to be such a ruler with a territory of only seventy *li* square, and King Wen with one hundred. People submit to force not because they do so willingly, but because they are not strong enough. People who submit to the virtuous rule do so sincerely just like the seventy disciples in their submission to Confucius.

In short, people subject themselves sincerely to benevolent, virtuous rule rather than to force. Respect cannot be earned through use of force, because war is bound to cause casualties to the people of both countries involved. People hate war, and a bellicose regime is certain

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to lose public support.

Equality and mutual respect are basic values of an ideal society. They represent a state of existence characterized by dignity, justice and fairness. In a world full of disparity and difference, mankind has tried to treat all things without discrimination, as is manifested by various political thoughts in both China and the West: the equality between the privileged in ancient Greece; the equality of all lives before God in the Mediaeval Age; the modern notion that all men are born equal; the Confucian idea that "Don't impose upon others what you yourself do not desire"; the Taoist argument that "Heaven and Earth would conspire to send sweet dew. Without law or compulsion, men would dwell in harmony"; the Legalist doctrine that "When a prince breaks the law, he shall get the same punishment as that for a commoner."; the Mohist theory of "universal love"; and the Buddhist notion that "All living beings and the Buddhas are equal."

Having gone through the test of ancient Chinese political practice, equality and mutual respect has become a philosophy for international relations. There is a quotation from The Rites of Zhou: "Big countries should deal with smaller countries on an equal footing." Lao Tzu, the founder of the Taoist school, speaks of international relations thus:

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If a big country can place itself below a small country, then it will win the adherence of the small country; and if a small country can place itself below a big country, then it will win the adherence of the big country.

In other words, when countries treat each other with modesty, they will win respect and tolerance from each other. Mo Tzu, the founder the school of Mohism, voices a similar idea:

(What is righteousness like?) The great will not attack the small, the strong will not plunder the weak, the many will not oppress the few, the clever will not deceive the ignorant, the honored will not disdain the humble, the rich will not mock the poor, and the young will not rob the old.

In short, it is inappropriate for those big and strong to bully those small and weak in international relations.

Respect and equality is more than mere diplomatic rhetoric. It calls for equality and justice in international relations. In international exchanges and cooperation, this entails respecting the sovereign equality of nations in the first place. Sovereign equality has been the most important norm governing state-to-state relations over the past

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centuries. Its essence is that the sovereignty and dignity of all countries, whether big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, must be respected, their internal affairs allow no interference, and they have the right to choose their social system and development path independently; and that all countries are entitled to equal participation in international affairs and global governance, enjoying equal rights and opportunities under equal rules, and should respect each other's core interest, major concerns, ethnic culture, and values and faith. According to *Zuo Zhuan*, in 651 BC, a treaty reached at the Kuiqiu Summit prohibited any state from building dykes to drain flood water to its neighboring states or maliciously impeding the free flow of grain cargo in times of famine. And in 579 BC, the

#### **The Kuiqiu Summit**

A meeting hosted by Duke Huan of Qi in Kuiqiu (in present-day Minquan County, Shangqiu City, Henan Province) in 651 BC. Participants to the summit included the sovereigns of Qi, Lu, Song, Wey, Zheng, Xu, and Cao. King Xiang of Zhou sent a representative to the meeting, commending Duke Huan of Qi profusely. The summit is one of the largest of all the meetings hosted by Duke Huan, representing the pinnacle of his influence.

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#### **The Treaty of Boyi**

In 562 BC, the allied troops of Song, Qi, and Jin attacked Zheng. The latter sued for peace. All the parties met in Boyi and reached a treaty, stipulating:

We, the signatory states to this Treaty, shall never hoard grain for speculation, never monopolize interest or resources, and never offer shelter to criminals or the ill-intentioned, and shall work together to relieve famines, ward off disasters, align our values, and render service to the Zhou monarch.

#### **The Yanggu Meeting**

This took place in autumn, 657 BC. Duke Huan of Qi called a conference with the states of Song, Jiang, and Huang in Yanggu (in the north of the present-day Yanggu County,



Liaocheng City, Shandong Province) to discuss the actions against Chu. At the meeting, Duke Huan proposed “never cutting off the water flows of river valleys and never hoarding grain for speculation.”

treaty between the states of Jin and Chu stipulated that both sides must ensure free trade by cancelling the checkpoints at their border. At the Boyi Summit in 562 BC, the

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participating states pledged never to hoard up grain for speculation instead of offering relief to a neighboring country hit by famine, and never to monopolize water resources (since ancient China was an agrarian economy to which irrigation was crucial). A similar clause was included in the agreement signed at the Yanggu Meeting in 657 BC: “Do not cut off water flows of the river valleys.” All these agreements demonstrate the principles of free will, equality, mutual benefit, and sharing in the state-to-state relations in ancient China.

Mankind has sought after fairness and justice in international order. A dialog in *The Golden Years of Zhenguan Reign* between Emperor Taizong of Tang and his minister Fang Xuanling exemplifies the ancient Chinese understanding of fairness and justice. Upon Emperor Taizong's ascension to the throne, Fang Xuanling, then Director of the Imperial Secretariat, reported, “People are complaining - those veterans of the Office of the Prince of Qin, who haven't yet been installed in office. They say, even former subordinates to the former Crown Prince and the Prince of Qi - your political rivals - have received official posts.” To this, Emperor Taizong replied, “A just man is supposed to be selfless. As a ruler, he needs to remain impartial and take the whole world as one shared community.” In international relations, this sense of impartiality translates into fairness and justice. A

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quotation from *The Book of Documents* reads, “By upholding justice without any partiality or bias, the kingly way is inclusive and boundless.” To practice the kingly way of government, a ruler needs to be fair and benevolent and bear public interests in mind. Those seeking hegemony in the international community, having made the selfish interests of their own countries the sole goal of diplomacy, are bound to veer off the right path of benevolence, righteousness, and justice, and such values as equality, mutual respect, fairness and justice will only be reduced to a mere disguise for their diplomatic tricks.

Though a series of commonly-recognized principles have been formed for international relations over the past centuries, the present world is still far from fair and just. World peace and development face the threats of hegemonism, power politics, terrorism, unilateralism, trade protectionism, etc. However, history keeps moving on and takes us all forward. The trend towards multi-polarity and economic globalization will be irreversible. To seize the initiative of a bright future, all countries have to follow the trend.

To uphold and promote international fairness and justice, we must honor the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The United Nations was born in the wake of two anti-fascist World Wars, and its founding unfolded a fresh chapter of world peace and development.

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The UN Charter, its purposes and principles, are the fundamental rules for handling international relations, and are important cornerstones for a stable world order. China is firmly committed to putting multilateralism into action, playing an active part in reforming and developing the global governance system, safeguarding the UN-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law, and upholding the role of the UN in international affairs. China calls on all countries to respect the sovereign and territorial integrity of all countries, the diversity of civilizations and development paths, to respect and safeguard the rights of all peoples to independently choose their social system, and to reject hegemonic, domineering and bullying acts. The international prestige of any country should not be expressed through its ability to interfere in other countries' affairs under the guise of "democracy" and "human rights," but through leading its own people and people around the world toward a more peaceful and promising future.

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### **Monk Xuanzang's Pilgrimage to India**

#### **The Silk Road**

In 139 BC, Emperor Wudi of Han ordered Zhang Qian to visit the states in Central Asia - then known as the Western Regions, and to seek to establish trade ties with them. Trade routes were thus opened to Central and West Asia. These routes collectively received a beautiful name - the Silk Road - first put forward by German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877.

Xuanzang (602-604), also known as Monk Sanzang, is an influential Buddhist scholar, translator, and traveler in Chinese history and the founder of the Faxiang (or Yogacara/Consciousness-only) School of Buddhism in China. Secular name Chen Yi, he was a native of present-day Henan Province. He had been exceptionally intelligent and virtuous since childhood, and loved reading the canons and classics. An admirer of the ancient sages, he took care to avoid reading books that were considered

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unorthodox or in poor taste, and followed the examples of the wise and virtuous in personal conduct.

Xuanzang was born during the Sui Dynasty, a time when Buddhism was much in the vogue. He began reading Buddhist scriptures under the tutorship of his father since he was eight or nine years old, and his elder brother left home to learn Buddhism, too. Under family influence, he developed a keen interest in Buddhism and, following his brother's example, became a novice monk at the Jingtu Temple in Luoyang, where he received his religious name Xuanzang. Gifted and diligent, he plunged into the study of Buddhist canon to the extent of neglecting his meals and sleep, and had already made a name for himself by the time he was thirteen. Before long, peasant uprisings broke out across the country, followed by constant upheavals. Li Yuan seized the chance, took the capital city Chang'an and proclaimed himself emperor, founding the Tang Dynasty. The volatile political situation

forced Xuanzang and his brother to take refuge in Chengdu, where they studied under the guidance of eminent monks. With an insatiable thirst for knowledge, Xuanzang left Chengdu three years later, and spent the next five years traveling extensively in Hubei, Henan, Shandong, and Hebei, visiting temples and eminent monks and scholars. He was able to lay hands on still more Buddhist classics and study various schools of Buddhism. When he returned to

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Chang'an after this grand tour, he had grown into a profoundly-learned monk.

To get an authentic idea of Buddhist doctrine and texts, Xuanzang thought of seeking the original versions of scriptures from India - the cradle of Buddhism. Between different schools of Buddhology, at that time, there used to be myriad differences, and even contradictions, in their interpretation of the Buddhist scriptures. Furthermore, mistranslations abounded, making the texts unintelligible. He remembered Faxian, a monk during the Eastern Jin Dynasty who made light of all kinds of hardships

### **Monk Faxian**

An eminent monk in the history of Chinese Buddhism, who lived during the Eastern Jin Dynasty. He was the first Chinese monk to seek and learn Buddhism overseas, and was a great traveler and translator. In 399, Faxian set out for India from Chang'an at the advanced age of 65. For the next 14 years, he toured over 30 states in the Western Regions and collected a large number of Buddhist scriptures written in Sanskrit before returning to China in 413. His efforts proved crucial to the spread of Buddhism in China, with far-reaching influence on Chinese history and culture.

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ships to travel to India for further studies. However, as it was decreed that no one might go abroad without government approval, Xuanzang applied to the authorities for a travel permit.

However, the government was far too slow to rep to his application. Xuanzang could not wait any longer; he decided to go secretly anyway without a travel permit. He embarked on the journey in 627. It was, no doubt, a hard journey, fraught with dangers and hardships. But he marched ahead unswervingly and finally reached his ultimate destination. He toured around India for 17 years, experiencing local customs and visiting holy relics, and studied at the Nalanda Monastery, the highest institute for Buddhist scholarship in ancient India.

When Xuanzang came back to Chang'an in 645, people streamed out and lined the street to welcome him. Emperor Taizong received him in person, expressing the hope that Xuanzang may leave the order, resume a secular life and join his administration - an offer Xuanzang declined with thanks. According to records, Xuanzang brought back from India 657 volumes of Buddhist scriptures, along with a number of sarīra (relics left after the cremation of the Buddha or a saintly monk) and Buddha statues. Thanks to the support from the emperor, Xuanzang began translating these scriptures at the Hongfu Temple in July, the same year.

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As any locality has its own characteristics, since its introduction into China, Buddhism has kept interacting with indigenous Chinese culture such as Confucianism and Taoism to develop into a religion with distinct Chinese characteristics, a relatively independent form of culture free from foreign intervention. China today pursues the policy of freedom of religious belief and upholds the principle of independence in its religious affairs, keeping religious bodies and religious affairs free from any foreign intervention or control. It has been a millennia-old tradition for China and the Chinese civilization to treat foreign religions in this manner, which might prove different from the development experience of religions in the West. However, such a difference is not only a historical reality, but a reasonable existence today, because any given country, region, or race has had its own unique historical and contemporary background. No civilization and no race are superior to the others.

In practice, disputes and conflicts between different countries have arisen more often from ideological and cultural differences than from economic and trade frictions. To minimize such differences, it is necessary to treat the cultures of all ethnic groups with a "harmony without uniformity" mentality and to promote their interplay and mutual learning in the spirit of openness and inclusiveness. "Seeking harmony without uniformity" is

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the Chinese nation's unequivocal attitude toward any other culture.

In a sense, Xuanzang has built a cultural bridge between China and India. During the 19 years from his return until his death, he finished translating 75 volumes of Buddhist scriptures, which totalled more than 13 million characters. Thanks to his mastery of both languages - Chinese and Sanskrit, his translations boast both accuracy of content and elegance of prose, with very high academic value. Translation of Buddhist scripture is difficult, for it takes - in the case of Sanskrit-Chinese translation - both a good command of the foreign language and a profound understanding of Buddhist doctrines, and the translation has to make perfect sense to Chinese readers. According to Indian scholar P. Prodhon, "Xuanzang is, in every sense, the greatest translator the world has ever seen... China is the motherland of this translator, and no other country than the great China can ever produce such a great translator." Besides translating Buddhist texts, Xuanzang also translated some works of Chinese philosophy into Sanskrit, in an effort to introduce Chinese culture to the Indian people.

Xuanzang's pilgrimage also set the stage for the earliest diplomatic ties between China and India. The Chinese had known of the existence of India at the time of Zhang Qian's mission to the West Regions during the

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reign of Emperor Wudi of Han, and monks had traveled between China and India ever since. However, it was Xuanzang's journey that led to the earliest official exchanges between the two countries. Xuanzang talked with the Indian king and gave an account of the prosperous Tang, which caught the fancy of the king. A couple of years later, the Tang emperor dispatched a delegation to visit India, and the Indian king presented rare treasures along with a map of India as national gifts to Tang. In return, the Indian king expressed the wish to

receive a portrait of Lao Tzu and his work *Tao Te Ching* from the Tang emperor.

At Emperor Taizong's encouragement and urging, Xuanzang wrote down his pilgrimage experience in a book, *Da Tang Xi Yu Ji* (*Records of the Western Regions of the Great Tang Dynasty*). This encyclopaedic work about the history of ancient India and the ancient states in the Western Regions has not only had far-reaching influence on the development of East Asian cultures (including Chinese, Korean, and Japanese cultures) but are also of high reference value to the studies of the history and culture of the ancient Western Regions, India, Central Asia, and South Asia. Though Ancient India has been one of the "four cradles of civilization," it has left no written record of its own history, as Karl Marx pointed out in *The Future Results of British Rule in India*: "Indian society has no

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history at all, at least no known story." And Xuanzang's *Da Tang Xi Yu Ji*, like a lamp, re-illuminates the hidden past of Ancient India. Contemporary Indian historian Ali once commented: "Without the works of Xuanzang, Fa Xian and Ma Huan, it would be impossible to reconstruct Indian history." Therefore, Sino-Indian exchanges have

### **Da Tang Xi Yu Ji**

Also entitled *Xi Yu Ji* (Records of the Western Regions) for short, the book was written by Bianji, a disciple of Xuanzang, at the latter's dictation. It is a record of Xuanzang's experience in the Western Regions on his journey to India, involving more than 200 states, city-states, and regions. It gives an account of their climate, geography, territory, population, and transport conditions, along with their customs, languages, culture, architecture and arts. The areas involved span from Iran and the Mediterranean coast in the west to the Indochinese Peninsula and Indonesia in the east, from southern Central Asia and northern Afghanistan in the north to the Indian Peninsula and Sri Lanka in the south. The book offers important literature on the history and geography of India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and other regions, and is highly valued by scholars from various countries.

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### **Ma Huan**

A famous Ming-dynasty translator, well-versed in Persian and Arabic. He joined Zheng He's mission as a translator on three of his voyages into the Indian Ocean, in 1413, 1421, and 1431, respectively. But he was not just a foreign affairs translator, but also an active disseminator of Chinese culture. He authored *Yingya Shenglan* (*An Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores*).

been a two-way, constructive process. China has learned Buddhism - a fine achievement of human civilization - from India and has, in return, helped India reconstruct its history.

Each ethnic group in the world has formed its unique cultural traditions. Diversity of civilizations has been the basic characteristic of human society and the most reliable guarantee for its sustained development. The world today has a population of over 7 billion, over 200 countries and regions, over 2,000 ethnic groups, and over 5,000 languages. The civilizations, each with its own merits, are the shared wealth of mankind as a whole.

According to *The Doctrine of the Mean*,

It is this same system of laws by which all created

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things are produced and developed without injuring one another; that the operations of Nature take their course without conflict or confusion.

We should respect the diversity of civilizations and promote exchanges, dialog, peaceful and harmonious coexistence among different civilizations, and should not seek supremacy or denigrate other civilizations and nations. We should promote mutual learning and draw on all that is good created by different countries, nations and civilizations in a joint effort to create a splendid human civilization.

However, diversity and differences among civilizations may cause misunderstandings in international relations. As a result of negative publicity from the Western media, in the middle of the 20th century, "China" used to be a synonym for "mystery" and "dictatorship" to most foreigners who had not been to China. But a review of China's long history reveals that China has never invaded any other country. Instead, the Chinese people, as well as the people of many other countries, have gone through a difficult modern history of blood and tears in the course of securing the nation's independence. Seeing China's rapid development in recent decades, some people begin to proclaim that China will inevitably seek hegemony as it grows in strength, painting China as a threat. It may be

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true that China is mysterious, but it will not by any means seek hegemony. A look at the history of China sheds some light on its mysteriousness.

First, China's progress and prosperity, in ancient and modern times alike, has never been achieved through invading or exploiting other countries. China adheres to the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, and respects the right of all countries to choose their own development path. The story of China's rise has been a marked contrast to the bloody wealth-accumulating history of some developed countries. The Chinese have always been a diligent and friendly people, and its glory has never been built upon colonizing other countries, not even in its most prestigious periods - the Han and Tang dynasties, but has been the result of the diligence, self-reliance, and concerted efforts of the whole nation. The fundamental character of the Chinese nation finds expression in a quotation from I Ching (*The Book of Changes*), which reads,

Just as heaven keeps operating vigorously, a virtuous man should strive continuously to strengthen himself. Just like the earth, which is generous and peaceful, a virtuous man should have ample virtue and accommodate all things.

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Second, one theoretical basis for China's pursuit of a culture of peace is the traditional Chinese world view of "harmony between mankind and nature." Like Nature that

accommodates everything, the Chinese civilization acknowledges the diversity of civilizations and respects the diversity of development paths and social systems in different countries. It is open-minded and inclusive, embraces equality and harmony, but never loses its own characteristics. China advocates the principle of “harmony without uniformity” and promotes mutual learning between civilizations, calling on different civilizations to set up modes of exchanges characterised by equality, inclusiveness, mutual respect and understanding, seek common ground while putting aside minor differences, and establish mutual trust and consensus. This will contribute to a peaceful, mutually-beneficial international environment, and respond effectively to challenges facing the relations between countries with different civilizations and social systems. This will help clear up misunderstanding, prejudice and enmity, sow the seeds of peace, and break the ideological shackle of such theories as “clash of civilizations” and “cultural superiority,” theories which some countries and scholars have played up and which have posed a challenge to world peace.

Third, China opposes all forms of hegemony and power politics. It has traditionally practiced the notions

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of “benevolent government ” and “extending favor to distant peoples.” In its history, China has never sought to invade any other country and expand its territory, not even in its heyday. Instead, modern China, during the 100-odd years from the First Opium War (1840) until the founding of the People’s Republic of China, has constantly fallen prey to foreign invasion and oppression; and its people, having suffered a good deal from the ravages of war and social unrest, longed for national independence and peace and longed for respect in the international community. Confucius says, “Don’t impose on others what you yourself do not desire.” Over the past decades, China has faced numerous difficulties in its reform and opening-up drive, but the Chinese government readily assumed all responsibilities and never shifted the burden of crises onto other countries. In the darkest of times, the national leadership led the whole nation to tighten the belt and break the bottlenecks in its development. From a poor and weak country to the world’s second largest economy, China has not grown by committing military expansion or colonial plunder; the secret lies in the benevolence and equality in its cultural genes, the diligence and frugality in its national character, and the commitment to respecting other countries’ legitimate interests. No matter how strong its economy grows, China will never seek hegemony,

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expansion or sphere of influence. History has borne this out and will continue to do so. This forcefully refutes the so-called “China threat” theory put forward by Some Western scholars.

“China threat” is essentially a pseudo-proposition. This argument represents a kind of panic or uncertainty over the future of one’s own country or the international community. There are quite a lot of people who are thrown in panic over what China’s rise will mean to the world. Panic easily gives rise to repulsion; and repulsion, in turn, breeds conflict and even war. The logic behind this argument is discouraging enough. In fact, to lull the panic and suspicions, all they need to do is understand what China wants to achieve from development. Churchill said, “The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see.”

Similarly, in order to predict the future of a country, we need to first look at its history and cultural genes, instead of making unfounded accusations or comments from our own standpoint. According to Buddhist scripture, “all dhammas (all things) are what you conceive.” The so-called “China threat” is little more than a picture conceived by those who believe in this theory, not any real facts. Such a mentality, which is neither objective nor truthful, has exposed their ignorance about China’s history and disrespect for the Chinese people’s feelings.

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China today embraces the world with open arms. The Chinese civilization has been enriched by the introduction of Buddhism and the confluence of Islam and Confucianism in ancient times, and by the introduction of Western learning, the launch of the New Culture Movement and the introduction of Marxism and socialism in modern times. Thanks to the peaceful and stable international environment, China has opted for a path of peaceful development in its reform and opening - up since 1978, embraced the trend of globalization more proactively, and readily taken international responsibilities under the rules of the UN. China actively assimilates the achievements of other cultures. Each year, it sends a large number of students to study overseas. People-to-people friendship holds the key to good state-to-state relations. China has offered a number of favorable policies to facilitate international exchanges at government, enterprise, and people-to-people levels. More and more Chinese are going abroad. Public diplomacy is playing an increasingly prominent role, with significant impact on the exchanges between different civilizations and their development.

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### **Monk Jianzhen’s Voyages to Japan**

Monk Jianzhen (688-763), secular surname Chunyu, was a native of Yangzhou, Jiangsu. Influenced by his father, a hermit who practiced Zen Buddhism at home, he imbibed quite a lot of Buddhist doctrine. China was then under the reign of Empress Wu Zetian, who favored and promoted Buddhism vigorously, and, in time, Jianzhen decided to renounce the secular life at the age of 14. Later, he went on study tours to Chang’an and Luoyang, where the Vinaya Sect was the dominant school of Buddhist teaching, and undertook upasampadā (became a monk) in Chang’an. He visited master monks and studied Buddhist canons systematically, with special interest in the study of “the discipline *pitaka*,” the part of rules and regulations that Buddha stipulated for the religious life of his disciples. He delved deeply into it with high scholarly attainments. In 713, Jianzhen returned to his hometown Yangzhou, where he disseminated Buddhist teachings and conducted ordinations (conferred holy orders). He enjoyed such high prestige that people hailed him “the master converter in the Yangtze-Huaihe River region.”

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### **Upasampadā (The complete Precepts)**

The precepts and rules that Buddhist monks and nuns (bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs) are



required to observe. Compared with the “ten precepts” to be followed by novices, the “complete precepts” are a higher level of moral precepts and more complete.

Historically, China and Japan have been closely linked to each other. Traces of classical Chinese influence are visible in Japan in many aspects: religion, language, clothing, customs, architecture, political system, etc. Buddhism spread and developed in China rapidly during the period from the late 3rd century to the early 8th century. The same period was also one of reformation in Japan when Buddhism was gaining popularity. Many Japanese monks came to study in China, while Chinese monks preached the faith in Japan. Bilateral exchanges boomed. Of these exchange efforts, Monk Jianzhen's visits to Japan were among the largest and the most influential. He preached in Japan upon the latter's invitation and made great contributions to the exchange between the Chinese and Japanese civilizations. Contrary to the Buddhism exchanges between China and India, in which China was at the receiving end (as is exemplified by Monk Xuanzang's

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scripture-fetching pilgrimage to India), in the case of Sino-Japanese exchanges, it was Chinese monks that brought Buddhist culture to Japan. That is why many sects and schools of Japanese Buddhism have actually originated from China.

During the Tang Dynasty, Chinese culture was much in the vogue in Japan, and the Japanese thirsted for the teachings of eminent Buddhist monks from China. Official ties between China and Japan had begun since the Han Dynasty, and bilateral exchanges of both material and culture had never ceased, binding the two nations closer and closer. During the Sui Dynasty, Japan sent diplomatic missions to China to learn about its political system, culture, medicines, etc. The two nations witnessed the closest bilateral ties during the Tang Dynasty, when China was at the very peak of its mediaeval history in terms of economic prosperity, political system, military strength, and splendid culture and arts. In a posture of amity, confidence and yet modesty, its capital city Chang ' an, a bustling international metropolis, welcomed envoys from all over the world. The diversity of world culture was recognized here. The city was broad-minded and inclusive, standing ever ready to absorb and learn from the best of other civilizations, and promoted the harmonious, equitable co-existence of different faiths. According to records, many foreigners made their homes

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in Chang'an and even held important positions in the Tang government.

As a close neighbor to China, Japan enjoyed a geographical advantage. Between 630 and 894, Japan sent nineteen missions to China for studying purposes. Their study encompassed everything from political system, rites and ceremonies, laws, literature and arts, craftsmanship, astronomy and calendar, to customs like cuisine and tea, which they learned in China and introduced to Japan. The famous “Taika Reforms,” a massive social and political reform attempt in Japan, have been closely patterned on Chinese models.

The Japanese government wished to engage eminent monks from China because there was a rigorous system of ordination in Chinese Buddhism. For example, a ceremony of ordination (at which a person becomes a monk formally) would be deemed invalid without

the presence of three monks holding a Dhammācariya degree and seven witnesses; and all the precepts were compulsory for an individual monk to join a religious life. In contrast, there was not a unified and rigorous system of precepts and ordination in Japanese Buddhism at that time, and the monks were noted for corrupt conduct and poor discipline. All this, according to Ryuson, a Japanese monk, had resulted from the absence of a strict system of precepts like that in China and a lack of qualified monks to conduct the ordination ceremonies. Therefore, Ryuson

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presented a memorial to the Mikado (Japanese emperor), calling on the government to engage eminent monks from China to introduce the precepts to Japan.

In 741, two Japanese monks, Youei and Fusyou, came to China, at the behest of Emperor Shōmu. Having heard of Jianzhen as a virtuous, eminent monk and a reputable *Vinaya bhāṇaka* (master of Buddhist disciplines), they visited him in person at the Daming Temple in Yangzhou, inviting him in all earnest to preach and standardize Buddhist disciplines in Japan. Upon the request, most monks in the temple were unwilling to go, deterred by the grave risks of traveling by sea, particularly in consideration of the then unadvanced navigation technology compounded by the erratic weather on the stormy sea. However, Jianzhen agreed to the request with resolution. He believed the mission was meaningful, as it would enable more people to imbibe Buddhism, and should by no means be abandoned simply for fear of danger. His dedication touched his disciples, all of whom, 21 in total, agreed to follow him to Japan.

Having agreed to the Japanese envoys' request, Jianzhen set about making preparations for the voyage. Their first four attempts all failed. However, Jianzhen and his team refused to give up, and went on the fifth voyage three years later, only to meet the same harsh weather conditions again. The voyage aborted, and, to

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make matter worse, Jianzhen went blind in both eyes because of illness and one of his favorite disciples died during this time. In 752, another Japanese mission came and made a special visit to Jianzhen in Yangzhou, inviting him to travel together on their return trip to Japan. At long last, Jianzhen made it to Japan the next year. From the Japanese envoys' first invitation until he finally reached Japan, it took Jianzhen eleven years and five failures, and thirty-six people laid down their lives during these voyages.

The world today is much better connected. Modern transport has turned all countries into close neighbors, despite the distances between them. Exchanges between different countries, both official and people-to-people, are increasingly frequent. China organizes cross-cultural exchange activities every year, and has set up mechanism to facilitate the exchanges. It has set up a number of Confucius Institutes, a non-profit educational organization, in cooperation with host countries around the world. These institutes offer a platform for the promotion of Chinese language and culture worldwide and facilitate exchanges and cooperation in other fields, contributing to the world's cultural diversity and harmony.

Jianzhen spent ten years in Japan, where he worked with the government to push for

reforms to Japanese Buddhism. Precepts and disciplines were introduced,

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which not only facilitated the government's overall administration of the religion, but also enhanced the general quality of the monks. Furthermore, to facilitate the exchanges between the monasteries and between the monks, and to encourage more people to learn Buddhism, Jianzhen proposed building a Chinese-style public temple in Japan. Emperor Junnin took his advice and built a temple modeled after a Chinese Buddhist temple, naming it Tōshōdai-ji. He went one step further by decreeing that a monk could not be officially ordained unless he had studied at Tōshōdai-ji. In time, the temple was to become the ancestral temple of the Vinaya Sect

of Buddhism in Japan, and Jianzhen is generally regarded as the founding father of the Japanese Vinaya Sect.

Jianzhen's arrival brought Japan the best of Chinese culture. He and his disciples, both virtuous and talented, were active in spreading the Chinese culture, enabling many Japanese monks to learn it either directly or indirectly. The government decreed that Buddhist canons and precepts had to be preached in Chinese; this undoubtedly made the Chinese language popular among the Japanese people. Ancient Japanese scholars would even take pride in learning Chinese, which boosted the development of Sinology in Japan. Making use of the graphical components of simplified Chinese characters, Japanese scholars invented the Japanese syllabary known as "katakana,"

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which in effect marked the birth of the Japanese written letters. Inspiration for "hiragana," the other basic component of Japanese writing system, came from Chinese cursive style calligraphy. Besides Chinese characters, Jianzhen also introduced Chinese medicine, crafts and arts, sculpture and painting, and architecture to Japan. The Tōshōdai-ji, for instance, crystallized the best of Chinese architectural art in the Tang Dynasty and embodied the popularity of Chinese culture in Japan. The Japanese were also eager to learn and copy elements of state-building, thinking, culture and institutions from China. Empress Genmei went so far as to copy the size of Chang'an, the capital of Tang, in the city planning of Japan's new capital Nara. And the "Nara Period," a golden age in Japanese history, was also a time when "Tang style" became the mainstream in Japan. Ever since Jianzhen, successive generations of cultural envoys voyaged from China to Japan, of whom Monk Daolong, Monk Yishan Yining, and Zhu Shunshui were among those better known for their contributions to Sino-Japanese exchanges.

In his work *A Brief History of Japan*, historian Taro Sakamoto points out that ever since the Stone Age, the Japanese culture has owed much of its growth to the introduction of Chinese culture, which has had epoch-making significance to Japanese culture in both spiritual and material aspects. In the spiritual aspect, the introduction

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### **Tōshōdai-ji**

The central temple for the Risshū Sect (Vinaya Sect) of Japanese Buddhism, located on

Gojocho, Nara. Monk Jianzhen directed its construction, which began in 759 and was completed in 770. The buildings include the Kondō (Golden Hall), the Kōdō (Lecture Hall), and two “azekura” (store-houses) for sutras and treasures. Of these buildings, the Kondō is the biggest and boasts sophistication and elegance in architectural design, with a sitting statue of Monk Jianzhen. The Kondō, the sutra azekura, the belfry, and the statue of Monk Jianzhen are now considered “national treasures” of Japan. The word “shōdai” originates from Sanskrit “caturdeśa,” meaning “public.”

of Chinese characters, Chinese classics, Confucianism, and Buddhism has shaped the fundamental character of Japanese culture. In the material aspect, agricultural technologies (such as water conservancy, irrigation and sericulture) and crafts (such as architecture, sculpture, weaving, metallurgy, and pottery-making) imported from China had a big role to play in raising the living standards of the Japanese people.

The ocean is vast for it admits all rivers. Diversity spurs interaction among civilizations, which in turn promotes

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### **Zhu Shunshui (1600 - 1682)**

A native of present-day Zhejiang Province, Zhu Shunshui was a scholar and educator during the late Ming Dynasty. He went in exile to Japan after the fall of the Ming Dynasty, and Shunshui was the title he adopted in his later years in Japan. He lectured in Nagasaki in 1659, and was invited to Mito in 1665, where he preached Confucian doctrines. Thanks to his efforts, Confucianism flourished in Japan during the Tokugawa period (1603-1867). The doctrine of “honoring the king towards national unification,” which he advocated in the *Dai Nihon Shi (History of Great Japan)* compiled under his guidance, was influential in Japanese intellectual history. It informed the Japanese Meiji Restoration of 1868. After his death, Zhu Shunshui was buried in Japan.

motes mutual learning and their further development. Such exchanges and mutual learning form an important drive for human progress and global peace and development. Every civilization, with its own appeal and root, is a human treasure. In the course of their dissemination, different civilizations learn from each other automatically. Exchanges characterized by equity, respect, and inclusiveness will accelerate their mutual learning and common

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progress, resolve tensions that have resulted from ideological differences and clash of civilizations, and ensure the healthy development of international relations.

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## **Chapter Two**

### **Good Faith, Justice and Mutually Beneficial Cooperation**

Since ancient times, the Chinese have placed a high value on *xin* 信 (good faith, trust,

credibility, etc.) and *yi* 义 (justice, righteousness, etc.), two moral concepts that translate into the advocacy of the virtuous, kingly way of government as opposed to the way of the hegemon in state governance. The contemporary China has inherited these traditional concepts. Taking a holistic approach to the situation both at home and abroad, China upholds good faith as the foundation of international relations and pursues both justice and shared interests in international cooperation.

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### **Duke Wen of Jin's Victory on the Basis of Good Faith**

Duke Wen of Jin (697-628 BC ), given name Chong'er, was a ruler of the State of Jin during the Spring and Autumn Period. He was the second son of Duke Xian of Jin, and ruled for nine years. Since his childhood, he had surrounded himself with virtuous, talented friends such as Zhao Shuai, Hu Yan, Jia Tuo, Xian Zhen, and Wei Jiang. The unrest caused by Li Ji, the concubine of Duke Xian, forced him into exile, and he took refuge abroad for nineteen years in a number of regional states - Di, Wey, Qi, Cao, Song, Zheng, Chu, and Qin - before he was able to return under the protection of an army dispatched by Duke Mu of Qin and mounted the throne of Jin.

The ancient Chinese were extremely cautious about starting a war. They mostly pursued a defensive national defence policy.

A quotation from "Important Governing Principles" in *Qunshu Zhiyao* (*The compilation of Books and Writings on the Important Governing Principles*) reads,

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Warmongers will be annihilated, but he who fails to prepare for war will find himself in danger; and those who, albeit not warlike, are well prepared for war will win the world.

And according to Sun Tzu,

The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.

Therefore, the supreme art of war is "to subdue the enemy without fighting. " To gain victory without bloodshed, it takes nothing short of a formidable national strength and a convincing moral character. Some may argue that military strength alone would suffice. However, victory secured simply through military action is bound to be incomplete, because the conqueror has yet to win over the people ; otherwise, a never-ending cycle of conflict will ensue.

Ambitious as he was, Duke Wen of Jin lived a modest life and was known for refinement and decency in both speech and manners. After he mounted the Jin throne, on the home front, he carried out reforms, straightened out the administration, appointed talented

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## Sun Tzu

Sun Tzu is an honorific title of Sun Wu (courtesy name: Sun Changqing), a native of the State of Qi and a celebrated military strategist and politician in the Spring and Autumn Period. He has been revered as “the forefather of military strategists,” “the founder of Oriental military science,” and “the ultimate master of war.” His masterpiece, *The Art of War*, is China’s earliest-known treatise on war and is respected as “the bible of military science,” ranking first among the Seven Military Classics of ancient China. The book has been immensely influential in the military history of China and the world over.

and capable people to office, cut taxes, offered real benefits to the people, encouraged agriculture and foreign trade, etc., doing whatever was conducive to economic development and people’s livelihood. He also readily followed his minister Zifan’s advice to popularize the teachings on *xin* and *yi*. On the international front, he restored King Xiang of Zhou to the throne by putting down the rebellion of Prince Dai and called for all the regional states to uphold the authority of the Zhou monarch, a move that greatly boosted Jin’s international prestige.

Before setting out on his first expedition to conquer the State of Yuan, Duke Wen promised his soldiers that

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the action would take no more than seven days. After seven days of attack, however, the State of Yuan still held out, and Duke Wen gave the order to retreat as promised. But the generals suggested holding on for a few days longer because it seemed to them Yuan’s defence was collapsing soon. But Duke Wen dismissed the idea and insisted on retreating, saying, “Credibility is a priceless treasure of a state. We cannot by any means afford to lose it for the sake of a mere successful conquest.” The next year, Duke Wen relaunched the expedition against Yuan. This time, he made it a target never to retreat until Yuan was conquered. At the mere news of such an order, Yuan surrendered without a fight. Such was the force of Duke Wen’s credibility that the State of Wey, another rival state, soon followed suit and paid allegiance to Jin. This is known as the story of “(Duke Wen of Jin) subduing Wey on his way to conquer Yuan.” Though he did aspire to the conquest of Yuan, he abandoned the first attempt because the conquest would be undesirable if it had to come at the cost of the credibility of the state. This story sheds light on Duke Wen’s heavy emphasis on credibility, which also accounted for his unrivaled influence and prestige in international relations.

In the context of international relations, the concept of *xin* demands good faith on the part of all countries in their mutual political, economic, and military ties. To

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honor promises with good faith, this is a fundamental moral principle deeply rooted in Chinese culture. During the Spring and Autumn Period, when the states warred with each other, they had a common set of moral principles and unwritten codes of conduct to observe. For instance, it was considered inappropriate to open hostilities without a formal declaration of war, and the belligerent parties had to fix a specific date for the battle. And a war declaration had to follow correct procedures. First, an announcement had to be

delivered to the other party to formally sever the diplomatic relations, and then an envoy was to be sent to liaise and fix a date for the battle, before both sides could start fighting. With regard to the fight itself, there were another series of principles to obey. Below are some examples:

- Charge forward only at the beating of drums.
- Don't attack before the opponents stand ready in battle formation.
- Don't attack when the opponent state is in mourning for its deceased sovereign.
- Never annihilate a state whose sovereign shares the same surname with you.
- The envoys shall be exempt from execution (when two states are at war).
- Never kill prisoners of war.

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These principles had used to be held as the standard code of conduct in war. Towards the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, however, they became less and less binding as the feudal lords became increasingly ambitious and the traditional social order were undermined. As a quotation from *Han Feizi*, a representative work of the Legalist school of philosophy, reads, "there can never be too much deception in war," tactics, deception and intrigues became rampant in war during the Warring States Period, while fewer and fewer stuck to good faith in international relations. However, a wise ruler would attach no less importance to the concept of *xin* even in a time of upheavals.

The story of "retreating three *she* (one *she* is equivalent to 30 *li*, which is a Chinese unit of length equivalent to 0.5 kilometer)" is another example of perfect political honesty. During his exile in Chu, Duke Wen of Jin promised, in appreciation of the King of Chu's warm reception, that he would order the Jin army to retreat a distance equivalent to three *she* (approximately 45 kilometers) if Jin and Chu were to meet each other in war in the future. He kept his promise in the Battle of Chengpu and won the war despite the Jin army's inferiority in number. The victory confirmed the hegemony of Jin and checked Chu ambitions in the north. With the rise of Jin and the official endorsement of King Xiang of Zhou, all the other regional states acknowledged the State of Jin as the

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overlord and paid homage to Jin.

This story is much lauded in Chinese history. We all know opportunities are rare and fleeting in battles. But Duke Wen, for the sake of a mere gentleman's agreement, kept his word on the battlefield. His credibility not only earned him moral support for the war, but also won public feelings both at home and abroad. For the Chinese, victory in war mainly depends upon three factors: weather, geographical conditions, and group morale. And according to Mencius,

Geographical advantage is more important than favorable weather, but still more important than geographical advantage is group morale.

A virtuous ruler with exceptional military talent, astuteness, and wisdom, Duke Wen of

Jin promoted righteousness, credibility, and propriety among the public. The people followed him without bewilderment, and the soldiers were not only brave but well trained in proprieties. It was a high morale, bolstered by the solidarity of the entire group from the duke, ministers and generals all the way down to the commoners, that contributed to Jin's victory over the allied troops of Chu, Chen, and Cai in the Battle of Chengpu.

As an ancient saying goes, "Without good faith, a

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### **A Gentleman's Agreement**

An agreement that is based on mutual trust rather than on a duly-signed document, and may take the form of a verbal promise or informal correspondence.

man will accomplish nothing and a nation will go downhill." In diplomacy, mutual trust is the foundation and prerequisite for international exchanges and cooperation, and is an underlying international covenant. Mutual trust facilitates mutual cooperation, and is, in turn, reinforced through the latter. Major powers in particular should take the lead to honor their promises and practice no exceptionalism, still more so in their cooperation with the developing countries.

Good faith has been, and will always be, the foundation of China's foreign policy. Practices of double standards and distortions of international law will only undermine the effective functioning of the international governance system. China is the world's largest developing country. Maintaining and developing friendly cooperation with the developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America is not only part of its diplomatic tradition, but also an integrated effort pursue both justice and national interest in diplomacy. China will remain a reliable friend and sincere partner to other

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developing countries, which is a cornerstone of China's foreign policy. China pledges always to stand for the interest of the developing world in the United Nations - a position that will remain for ever unchanged despite China's own development and the rise in its international status. For example, for the China-Africa cooperation in the new era, we put forward the principle of "sincerity, real results, amity and good faith" in China's Africa policy, that is, to treat African people with "sincerity," to seek "real results" in Sino-African cooperation, to enhance Sino-African friendship with "amity," and to resolve with "good faith" any problem that may arise in the cooperation. It is in this spirit of pursuing the greater good and shared interest that China and Africa have agreed to upgrade Sino-African relationship to a comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership, a partnership underpinned by five major pillars, namely, political equality and mutual trust; mutually beneficial economic cooperation; cultural exchanges; security cooperation and mutual assistance; and solidarity and coordination in international affairs. Adhering to the traditional Chinese philosophy of "building a nest to attract the phoenix," China will assist African countries in strengthening their capacity for self-development and working towards national rejuvenation.

Good faith is of fundamental importance to the harmony and sustainable development of people-to-people and state-to-state relations. It is a guiding principle of



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mankind, as is manifested in a quotation from *Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*:

If Heaven stopped observing its own laws, there would be no such thing as “year” or “seasons” to speak of. If Earth stopped observing its own laws, the plants would stop growing. Spring is characterised by wind, and if wind failed to come as scheduled, the plants would never bloom, let alone bear fruits. Summer is characterised by heat, and if heat failed to come as scheduled, the soil would lose its fertility and the plants could hardly flourish. Autumn is characterised by rain, and if rain failed to come as scheduled, grains would never grow plump-eared and the crops never ripen. Winter is characterised by cold, and if cold failed to come as scheduled, earth would not freeze stiff enough to crack open. Now that Heaven, Earth, and the four seasons have to “keep their promises” in order for everything to grow and flourish, isn't it the same with mankind?

In other words, in the same way as the proper functioning of nature depends on its compliance with the laws, human behaviors must be governed by good faith. Keeping good faith sets the stage for flourishing and success; breaking it leads to ruin.

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### **Duke Mu of Qin's Choice**

During the Spring and Autumn Period, Duke Mu of Qin magnanimously helped Duke Hui of Jin and his people three times.

The Spring and Autumn Period was still a time of low and backward social productivity, a time when human life was subject to natural conditions. Whenever a natural disaster struck, subsistence would become difficult. According to calculations by some scholars, about 190 natural calamities hit China during the Spring and Autumn Period - floods, droughts, pests, fires, earthquakes, extreme weather, and famine - averaging once every three years. In such situations, most countries would have to seek aid from other states to offer relief at home, and the regional states would normally be read to help, either in consideration of national interests or under a moral obligation.

It all started from the succession dispute in the State of Jin. Upon the death of Duke Xian of Jin (Duke Hui's father), minister Li Ke planned to welcome back Prince Yiwu, who was then in exile abroad, to take the Jin throne.

Prince Yiwu allied with the State of Qin and promised

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Duke Mu of Qin that he would cede the territory of eight cities west of the Yellow River to Qin on condition that he took the Jin throne with Qin's assistance. Duke Mu agreed, and assigned minister Baili Xi to escort Yiwu back to Jin. Yiwu succeeded in ascending the Jin throne, and was to be known, posthumously, as Duke Hui of Jin. However, he broke his oath and refused to hand the promised eight cities over to Qin.

In the winter of 647 BC, the fourth year of Duke Hui's reign, a famine struck Jin, and the

duke sought grain supplies from Qin. Opinions were mixed when Duke Mu of Qin discussed the matter with his ministers. Zisang said,

If the Jin duke knows only to receive but doesn't know well enough to reciprocate, its people will distance themselves from him. If he loses the people's support, any attack will doom him to failure.

Another minister Baili Xi said,

Natural disasters may occur in any country. The right thing for a neighboring state to do is offer aid to the disaster-hit country and show solicitude for its people. A state acting with a good sense of morality

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is bound to be rewarded.

An enlightened lord who ruled with benevolence and righteousness, Duke Mu weighed up the options and decided to help. He believed the people of Jin were innocent though their ruler had behaved despicably. Upon his order, fleets laden with grain soon set out from Qin capital Yongcheng and braved all kinds of hardship until they reached Jiangcheng of Jin, tiding the latter over the famine. It was a hard trip, indeed. Given the transport conditions at that time, the Qin fleet had to sail downstream the Weihe River into the Yellow River, thence travel upstream the Yellow River to get into the Fenhe River, and then go on sailing east upstream the Fenhe River before they could reach the final destination. This grain-transport mission was an exemplary international disaster-relief effort

### **Zuo Zhuan**

A work believed to have been authored by Zuo Qiuming, a historian living in the late Spring and Autumn Period. It narrates China's history from 722 BC to 468 BC in an annalistic style, along with many historical facts and legends before that. It is China's earliest complete chronicle.

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during the Spring and Autumn Period.

Despite Qin's generosity, however, Duke Hui was to let Duke Mu down again. According to *Zuo Zhuan*, a famine struck the State of Qin in the winter of 646 BC, and this time, Qin tried to procure grain from Jin. When Duke Hui of Jin held a discussion on the matter, there was a heated debate between his ministers Qing Zheng and Guo She over whether to sell grains to Qin or not.

Qing Zheng stood in favor of approving the sales. He argued that when famine struck Jin last time, Qin was kind enough to disregard past grudges - Duke Hui's breach of faith on the territory issue - and agreed to sell grain to Jin; now that Qin was in trouble, it was time that Jin reciprocate Qin's kindness. His opponent Guo She argued otherwise: Heaven presented Qin with a golden opportunity to eliminate Jin when Jin suffered the famine last

time, but Qin turned a blind eye to the opportunity and sold grain to Jin; now that Heaven had offered Jin the opportunity to eliminate Qin, Jin ought to follow the will of Heaven to attack Qin.

Qing Zheng said, "Forgetting the kindness of other countries will hurt public feelings. Gloating over a famine in a neighboring country goes against benevolence. Taking by force what belongs to others is ill-omened. Infuriating your neighbors is immoral. By refusing to sell grain to Qin, we would be acting in defiance of four virtues:

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Amity, benevolence, kindness, and righteousness, which will leave us defenseless." Guo She replied, "But if the state itself ceases to exist, what's the use of sticking to these virtues?"

Qing Zheng insisted, "If we ignore good faith and abandon our neighbor to itself, whom else could we count on, should calamity befall Jin again? Having lost credibility, a state is doomed to perish when calamity strikes, because no other state will be willing to help it. So we must stick to good faith." Guo She responded, "There has been enmity between Qin and Jin from the start. Assistance to Qin at this moment will not alleviate the enmity but will add to Qin's strength. So we'd better offer Qin nothing."

At last, Duke Hui took Guo She's advice. Far from granting grain supplies to Qin, he prepared to launch an attack on Jin. This threw Duke Mu of Qin and his ministers into a fury. Duke Mu led an army in person to meet the invaders head-on. Morale among the Qin troops was very high in the battle, while the Jin troops were in no mood to fight at all. Duke Hui's chariot got bogged down in mud, but none of his subordinates came to his rescue. Finally, he was captured alive by Duke Mu. After negotiation, Duke Mu promised to set Duke Hui free on condition that Jin cede the territory west of the Yellow River, which the latter accepted promptly. Thus agreed, Duke

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Mu treated Duke Hui to a banquet and saw him back to Jin.

Benevolence is the "kingly way" of government. Those who practice benevolence in international relations will win over other countries and their people. Benevolence endears them to all other countries. Magnanimity adds to their appeal. And dignity inspires awe. Good faith should be a top priority in international relations. Acts of pursuing selfish interests at the cost of international morality and the legitimate rights and interests of other countries will affect the normal functioning of the international order, and may even lead to war, benefiting no one at all. In fact, the difference in their attitude toward good faith had foretold the different outcomes for Qin and Jin. It was not so much military strength that secured Qin's victory despite the famine, as the national solidarity on the Qin side inspired by Duke Mu's benevolence and virtue: after all, its self-defense was justified. Duke Mu's offer of relief assistance to a famine-struck neighboring country was an act of benevolence, and would naturally win public feelings and support which, in turn, would carry him over crises. On the Jin side, quite on the contrary, its act of taking advantage of the plight of the neighboring country to wage a war on it, a totally unjustified act, was held in contempt by its own people, let alone the enemy

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country. That is why Duke Hui of Jin was to find himself isolated and deserted, which eventually led to his capture by the enemy troops.

It is worth mentioning that, when another famine struck Jin again in 645 BC, Duke Mu of Qin did the same - offering food relief to Jin - on the same grounds: "Though I disapprove of the duke of Jin, I feel sorry for its people." Believing that the people were innocent despite their ruler's detestable conduct, Qin ignored past grudges again and offered grain supplies to alleviate the

### **Five Hegemons**

The "Five Hegemons" of the Spring and Autumn Period

*Ba* (霸), the Chinese character for "hegemon," was a phonetic loan character for "伯 (*Bo*)," which originally meant "the leader of the aristocracy." The "Five Hegemons" of the Spring and Autumn Period refer to five leading lords in this period. As the Zhou monarch declined, it lost control of the regional states which warred against each other for hegemony. Five lords won this title successively. Though the Hegemons were supposed to cal together the regional states to pay homage to the king, they had, more often than not, taken advantage of this hegemon status to seek dominance over the other states.

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plight of Jin's people. Such magnanimity raised the State of Qin's profile in the international community, setting the stage for its designation as a "Hegemon" state under Duke Mu's reign. Qin's generosity in disaster-relief diplomacy and its sense of responsibility in international affairs without expecting realistic returns or interests had rallied extensive public support. All this was responsible for Qin's emergence as a major power.

The requirement for the states to offer international aid for disaster relief during the Warring States Period, in accordance with either the "international law" at the time or the inter-state covenants, was essentially an expression of international humanitarianism. It was recognized diplomatic etiquette to offer assistance to those countries suffering calamities, and sometimes, multiple states would meet, like the International committee of the Red Cross does in modern times, to discuss joint actions of humanitarian assistance to one single disaster-stricken state.

In a world of deepening globalization, all countries become interconnected, and development in many aspects becomes increasingly diversified. However, globalization is like a double-edged sword. The impact of any "black swan" or "grey rhino" event will easily spread to multiple countries or even the whole world. In such circumstances, international relations often feature

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two general tendencies. One tendency is the mounting of unilateralism and protectionism and the cutting-off of exchanges with other countries. The other tendency features solidarity and cooperation with other countries to jointly respond to the current crisis. Obviously, the second approach is the correct path to a promising solution. That is why China unswervingly

pursues a win-win, mutually beneficial strategy of opening-up, upholds international equity and justice, and promotes common development in the world.

China will prosper only when the world prospers, and vice versa. Between 1950 and 2016, China provided foreign countries with over 400 billion *yuan* of aid. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China's import of services has totaled 3.4 trillion USD, averaging an annual growth rate of 9.2%, which is higher than the global average of 3.7%; its contribution to the growth of global trade in services ranks first in the world. Each year, China's import of services creates more than 18 million jobs for its trade partners worldwide, and offers vast and stable business opportunities for the global industrial and supply chains. In his keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the First China International Import Expo in September, 2020, President Xi Jinping announced that China's imported services were estimated to exceed 10 trillion USD in the next 15 years. China

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has brought huge development opportunities to other countries.

China and the rest of the world share the same community, and the Chinese people share a bond of common destiny with people around the world. In the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic since 2020, China has consistently upheld the vision of a global community of shared future, shared information and experience with the world in an open, transparent and responsible manner, and responded to the concerns of various parties. It has enhanced cooperation with the international community and provided medical resources to other countries. No politicization or conspiracy theory surrounding COVID-19 can shake China's determination to join hands with the rest of the world in the fight against the pandemic and to jointly win this battle for global public health, because China is well aware that the pandemic threatens the entire human race.

China advocates building a world of common security for all through joint efforts, and calls on all countries to embrace the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. Crisis knows no borders and may take place in any era. No country in the world can enjoy absolute security. "United we stand. Divided we fall." In the face of global issues such as terrorism, refugee crisis, bird flu, Ebola and Zika,

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COVID-19, climate change, and ecological degradation, the only way out is for us to join hands to tide over the difficult time. As its national strength grows, China attaches increasing importance to humanitarian aid and plays an active part in the UN peace-keeping missions. Since its establishment, the Chinese International Search and Rescue (CISAR) Team has participated in a number of international rescue operations, including the 2003 Bam Earthquake (Iran), the 2005 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the 2005 Kashmir Earthquake, the 2011 Christchurch earthquake, the 2011 Tōhoku Earthquake and Tsunami, and the 2015 Nepal earthquake. Whenever a disaster strikes, members of the CISAR team are seen, in their orange uniforms, working busily in the debris. Having experienced all kinds of hardship over its long history, the Chinese people highly values peace and development. That is why China readily extends a helping hand whenever other countries calls for help. From the year 1990, when it dispatched the first team of military observers to the United Nations Truce

Supervision Organization (UNTSO), till February, 2019, China has dispatched more than 40,000 peacekeepers, participated in the construction of over 13,000 km of roads in the peacekeeping mission areas, transported cargo across a total distance of 13 million km, treated 170,000 patients, and fulfilled over 300 armed escorts and long or

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short-distance patrols. The PLA Navy's hospital ship has visited over 40 countries and regions and helped over 230,000 people. All these have been the security benefits China has shared with the world.

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### **The Birth of the “Porcelain Road”**

When he traveled overseas, Wang Dayuan (1311-?), a Yuan-dynasty traveler, kept an account of the local geography and culture of the regions he set foot on. He described the geography, customs, means of transport, and trade of a state named “Pu-Ben.” Porcelain, bowls, cloth, herbs, and wine jugs were among the goods being traded.

From a traveler's perspective, Wang Dayuan gave a historical account of his time. This involved facts about Yuan-dynasty China's foreign trade, in particular porcelain. His book *Dao Yi Zhi Lue (A Brief Account of Island Barbarians)* made over 40 references to porcelain trade. It bears witness to Sino-foreign friendly exchanges, with numerous records of Chinese culture's influence in people's life in the neighboring countries and of how overseas Chinese got along harmoniously with local people. Moreover, it is also a valuable reference to the studies of China's foreign trade during the Yuan Dynasty. According to the book, China was leading the world in ship-building, marine navigation, and foreign trade at that time. A narration from the book's preface sheds light on China's

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bustling foreign trade thus:

China is surrounded by the vast sea. Though there are tens of thousands of barbarian states overseas, all of them, except those in the north due to the precarious weather in the north sea, are accessible either by land or by water despite the long distances, and translators are available to enable their effective communication with China.

And in the book itself, Wang Dayuan gave the following description about the unprecedentedly prosperous maritime trade in the Song-Yuan period, particularly during the Yuan Dynasty:

The overseas barbarian states, perhaps thousands of them in number, all pay tribute to the Chinese emperor to establish official ties, and travel across land and water to open trade with China. Merchants ply their trade to and fro between China and these foreign states conveniently like traveling between two prefectures in China.

In 1260, Kublai Khan succeeded to the Mongol throne, naming his reign period “Zhongtong.” In 1276, the Mongol army seized Lin’an, the capital of Southern

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### **Dao Yi Zhi Lue**

A book authored by Yuan-dynasty Chinese traveler Wang Dayuan recounting his travels overseas. Wang Dayuan, courtesy name Huanzhang, was a native of present-day Nanchang, Jiangxi Province. He is hailed the “Marco Polo of the East.” He made two voyages to dozens of countries and regions in Southeast Asia and East Africa, and kept an account of his experiences - the geography, customs, scenery, products, trade, etc. Hence this book *Dao Yi Zhi Lue*. Its content involving over 220 countries and regions in Asia, Africa, and Oceania, the book is an important work on the history of Sino-foreign communications, and a record of ancient world geography with extremely high reference value.

Song, and the last remnant forces of the latter were completely annihilated in the naval battle of Mount Ya in 1279. During the Yuan Dynasty, China had a vast territory, having not only put an end to the disunion since the end of the Tang Dynasty but also inherited the territory of the Han-Tang Chinese Empire.

On the international front, the Yuan Dynasty opened a new phase of all-round opening-up, a situation never before seen in the China’s ancient history. China interacted with the world via both land and sea; and the

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“Hua-Yi (Chinese and non-Chinese) distinction” was weakened. The Yuan Dynasty was founded by the Mongols, with its capital Dadu in present-day Beijing. It was a period of unprecedentedly grand unification in Chinese history. Its influence on the international system was twofold. On the one hand, it developed China’s international transport network, both maritime and land, to its pinnacle in ancient times. During the Han Dynasty, the line of communication by land via the Western Regions was opened and the seafarers started to explore the sea route to the West via the South China Sea. Since the reign of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty, the land route via the Western Regions went on the decline while the maritime route began to flourish and became, during the Song Dynasty, the dominant path for China to communicate with the West. Building on the existing lines of communication with the world, the Yuan Dynasty further expanded China’s international trade routes, and China was connected to more than 200 countries and regions. The Yuan Dynasty was the first dynasty to promote China’s foreign trade via both sea routes and land routes. It was thanks to the advanced and extensive marine navigation technology and knowledge developed during the Yuan Dynasty that Zheng He was able to complete his remarkable voyages into the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, the international system of the Yuan Dynasty represents

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an early stage of globalization. In his book *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, Jack Weatherford, a celebrated American historian on Yuan Dynasty, emphasizes that

the Mongol Conquests forced open and integrated different civilizations that had used to exist in isolation. The mercantilism of the Mongols turned China into a major supplier to the world market, its products such as porcelain and silk being increasingly diversified subject to world market demand. Economic prosperity and development gave rise to social changes, setting the stage for the modern world in political, cultural, and social aspects.

Porcelain is one of ancient China's greatest inventions. In the Mediaeval Age, porcelain, along with silk, became the symbols of China, and China was referred to as "the country of porcelain" in the West. Porcelain production was active during the Tang Dynasty and developed during the Song Dynasty. As both dynasties embraced openness in their foreign policy, porcelain became a much sought-after choice product on the international market. Chinese porcelain in the Tang Dynasty was represented by the Yue Kiln (in present-day Zhejiang Province), and was widely exported to Japan, the Korean Peninsula, Arabia, Egypt, Iran, India and other countries and regions. Production and export of Chinese porcelain grew substantially during the Song Dynasty, with a richer

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product variety and a wider overseas market. All the five major kilns except the Guan kiln had porcelain products for export, the majority of which were celadon and whiteware. In the Yuan Dynasty, porcelain production saw further development. Jingdezhen overtook Longquan to become the biggest porcelain production center in China, earning itself a nickname "the capital of Chinese porcelain." Its blue-and-white porcelain further boosted China's porcelain export. During the Yuan Dynasty, exports of porcelain to European countries totalled tens of millions.

For a long time in history, the Silk Road had used to be the principal line of communication for the economic and cultural exchanges between East and West. As a result of the changes in the political landscape of Central Asia since the middle of the Tang Dynasty, however, trade between East and West showed a gradual shift from the land routes to the sea routes. By the time the Song Dynasty was founded, the situation had become even worse. The Hexi Corridor, the vital passage from inland China to the Northwest, was cut off by Tubo and Western Xia regimes; and the Liao Dynasty in the north, also known as the Khitan Empire, controlled the land route for trade between inland China and the Korean Peninsula. Such a general political landscape forced the Northern Song government to conduct much of its foreign trade

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via the maritime routes. Though half of the count had fallen into enemy hands by the time the Southern Song Dynasty was founded, major foreign trade ports remained under its control, and the national treasury became even more reliant on revenues from foreign trade. The Yuan Dynasty expanded foreign trade actively, while protecting it from disruptions caused by war. Therefore, China's foreign trade prospered and reached its peak in the Song-Yuan period. Maritime traffic became unprecedentedly busy, as China established trade ties with more and more countries and regions, with increased overall trade volume and greater product variety. More trade ports were opened, of which Quanzhou, Guangzhou, and Mingzhou (present-day Ningbo) were the busiest and best developed, and government



regulations on foreign trade became more and more complete. In fact, the Song-Yuan period witnessed the busiest maritime traffic and the acme of prosperity in international trade over the course of China's history, its trade volumes and influence both being unprecedented. A "Porcelain Road" came into being during this period.

Handicraft products dominated China's exports during this period, of which silk and porcelain were the most important. Blue-and-white porcelain was a favorite with the aristocracy in European and Arab countries; it became a shiny "visiting card" of Chinese porcelain culture.

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In Europe, blue-and-white porcelain was nicknamed "Kraak porcelain"; and in the Arab world, it was cherished as luxuries worth collecting. In Turkey, the Topkapi Palace houses 40 items of blue-and-white porcelain ware, each with a clear record of ownership transfer history; some of them are now the only extant items of their kind. In 2011, a blue-and-white porcelain plum-vase bearing patterns of the classic story "Xiao He Chasing Han Xin under the Moon" fetched 658 million RMB at an auction in Macao. For the ancient Chinese, precious artefacts were also carriers of China's diplomatic culture and thinking, which were characterised by the pursuit of amity and win-win cooperation. Such a cultural quality has been evident in the paintings and carved designs on blue-and-white porcelain ware. One example is the patterns of *kirins*. China has exported large quantities of porcelain plates bearing such patterns, and the moral message is "good-neighborliness."

A review of how the "Porcelain Road" flourished during the Yuan Dynasty reveals that maritime trade in ancient China was subject to three factors. Firstly, convenient international transport, which is a vital condition for trade. The international lines of communication of Yuan China had developed on the basis of those formed in the former dynasties. Secondly, marked advancement in marine technology (including ship-building and navigation),

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### **The Kraak Porcelain**

In 1602, the Dutch East India company captured a Portuguese merchant ship (Portuguese: "car-rack," translating as "kraak" in Dutch) fully loaded with blue-and-white porcelain wares from China. As they were not clear at the time about the place of origin of these porcelain products, the Europeans named this type of porcelain "the Kraak Porcelain."

which was a decisive factor in maritime trade. During the Yuan Dynasty, sea-faring ships grew much heavier and unsinkable, and new technologies emerged, such as all-weather magnetic compass navigation and astronomical positioning based on the use of astronomical distance scale. These represent major breakthroughs in China's ancient marine technology. Thirdly, the mercantilist policy of the Chinese government, which was a crucial guarantee for foreign trade. China used to be an agrarian economy, and the development of handicraft and commerce depended to a very large degree on government support. The Yuan government, in particular, pursued an inclusive, pluralist cultural policy and played down ideological differences in its international relations; these made its diplomacy pluralist, inclusive, and assimilative. Thanks to the mercantilism of the Yuan government,

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China saw unprecedented openness in its foreign trade. That is why people have referred to the Song-Yuan period as the heyday of the "Maritime Silk Road."

On the basis of the ancient "Silk Road" and "Maritime Silk Road," China today has put forward the Belt and Road Initiative - a great exploration of China's reform and opening-up in the new era. In a speech at Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University on September 7, 2013, President Xi Jinping proposed building a "Silk Road Economic Belt." In October, the same year, he proposed jointly building a "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" in his speech to the Indonesian parliament. Over time, these proposals evolved to form the "Belt and Road" cooperation framework, which represents China's solution for building a new type of international relations and meets the practical needs of greater economic globalization and China's opening-up in the new stage. The Belt and Road Initiative will not overlap or compete with other existing cooperation mechanisms; instead, it will add new substance and fresh vitality to these mechanisms.

The Belt and Road Initiative advocates extensive consultation and joint contribution, deeper regional and world economic integration, and optimized global division of labour. It calls on the participating countries to make full use of both domestic and international markets and factors of production, enhance their infrastructure

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development capacity, make innovations in their systems and mechanisms, nurture new areas of growth for economy and employment, improve economic interconnectivity, boost the internal forces driving economic growth, enhance resilience against risks, adjust and coordinate development plans, minimize regional imbalances, and make the benefits of socio-economic development accessible to the people. The Belt and Road Initiative is proposed by China, but its opportunities and fruits will be shared with the whole world. A strong and indestructible community of shared interests and shared future will be forged, as long as the participating countries stick to extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, adhere to the principles of cooperation, inclusiveness and openness, set up long-term and in-depth mechanisms for economic, political and cultural exchanges and cooperation, and work towards mutual benefits and common development.

Nowadays, a European has no longer to make a long and hard journey to China when he wishes to procure some Chinese porcelain or tea leaves. At 10:28, September 28, 2018, a Moscow-bound container train pulled out of the Jingdezhen Railway Station in Jiangxi, loaded with Jingdezhen porcelain products and tea leaves. This was the first China-Europe Railway Express (CER Express) cargo train from Jingdezhen, the capital of China's

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porcelain industry, and it was the first time Jingdezhen porcelain and tea leaves went abroad via this new service. Compared with the traditional modes of transportation, either by sea, by air, or by land, the CER Express service boasts shorter distance, higher speed, greater safety, environmental friendliness, and lower susceptibility to natural conditions, and has become a

major mode of international transport by land. And the railway lines that collectively form the logistics channel for the new Silk Road Economic Belt have greatly enhanced the inter-connectivity between the participating countries and have changed the lives of the people in these countries.

The prosperity of international trade necessitates reform and optimization of the international order. To achieve win-win results in international cooperation and to establish a mutually-inclusive and mutually-beneficial international political and economic order - this is not only the original mission and goal of the Belt and Road Initiative, but also China's strategic choice for building a new form of international relations characterized by cooperation and mutual benefit. The Belt and Road Initiative has built on and carried forward the spirit of the ancient Silk Road, and marks China's first stride forward in fostering a community with shared future for mankind. It is a path to peace, prosperity and openness through innovative programs and friendly engagement, and marks

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an important step towards bringing greater benefits not only to the Chinese people but also to people all over the world.

The proper handling of interests is crucial for achieving win-win results in international cooperation. Interests feature most prominently in international relations and are a litmus test of the effectiveness of diplomatic efforts and foreign policies. As early as the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, the ancient Chinese had already developed systematic thinking on the relationship between justice and interest. The Confucians advocated "putting justice above all else," "thinking of what is right when you see a personal advantage," and "accepting only what is justified." The Mohists honored both righteousness and interests, advocating "procuring benefits for the world." For the Legalists, "real interests should be prioritized above righteousness," but "the pursuit of interests should be governed by law." And in the eyes of the Taoists, "neither justice nor interests count."

The Confucian concept of justice and righteousness prevailed since the Western Han Dynasty. It represents a holistic approach to this moral question, and has had far-reaching influence on contemporary China's diplomatic philosophy. For the Chinese, "what really makes a nation prosperous is not material interests, but righteousness." There is a dialog between Mencius and King Hui

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of Liang in The Mencius in *Qunshu Zhiyao*. When they met, King Hui's primary concern was what benefits Mencius, who had made light of a long journey to meet him, could bring? Mencius replied:

When one prioritizes benefits over everything else, he will be at risk. Now Your Majesty asks what benefits the country may get; the ministers ask what benefits their households may get; and the commoners ask what benefits they themselves may get. However, if everyone in the country is fighting for their own interest, the country will be placed in danger.

China adheres to the correct concept of justice and interests. While it puts righteousness

first, this does not mean it ignores interests. It upholds justice while pursuing shared interests. In its diplomatic practice, China is resolute in safeguarding its national sovereignty, security, and development interests and defending its core national interests. It aligns the pursuit of national interests with the delivery of the people's interests, handles international relations under the guidance of national interests, and pursues a holistic approach to national security. In international cooperation, China opposes seeking selfish development at the expense of other countries. In its efforts to safeguard its own national interests, China is never

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bent solely on profit-making. It gives full consideration to the reasonable concerns of other countries, takes care to avoid damaging their interests as well as the interests of the international community as a whole, and seeks to identify areas of converging interests. China sticks to the path of peaceful development. But this does not mean blindly making compromises to other countries at the cost of its own legitimate rights and interests, still less its core national interests. In its diplomatic practice, China stands firm and takes forceful measures in response to disputes concerning rights and interests and safeguards its territorial sovereignty. In the meantime, China advocates strengthening dialog and exchanges to settle its disputes with other countries and to maintain good relations with its neighbors as well as overall peace and stability in the region.

“Zero-sum mentality” is obsolete. Justice and interests cannot be had simultaneously unless we put righteousness first and pursue both justice and shared interests. And win-win results for justice and interests can only be achieved when a right balance is maintained between them. Practicing a correct concept of justice and interests is of basic importance to mutually beneficial cooperation, harmonious co-existence and sustainable development in international relations. All countries should raise awareness about human beings sharing a community

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of common destiny, accommodate the legitimate concerns of others when pursuing their own interests, and promote common development of all countries when advancing their own development. Only in this way could a new type of global development partnership be forged - one that is more equitable and balanced.

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### **Chapter Three**

#### **Good Neighborliness and Partnership**

Based on the Confucian ideal of benevolent government, the ancient Chinese advocated a foreign policy of good-neighborliness and friendship, and relations with its immediate neighbors were a priority in China's international relations. In the new era, China has inherited the traditional diplomatic philosophy of maintaining a friendly neighborhood. It intensifies its relations with the neighboring countries, strengthens the solidarity and cooperation with the developing countries, develops global partnership on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, participates in the reform and development of the

global governance system, safeguards the international system with the United Nations as the core and the international order based on international law, and calls for joint efforts in response to global challenges.

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### **From Hostility to Friendship: A Dispute over Melons**

One story in the chapter "Odd Stories - IV" in *Xin Xu (New Arrangements)*, compiled by Liu Xiang in Western Han Dynasty, narrates a dispute over "melons" between two neighboring states - Liang and Chu.

Song Jiu was a minister of the State of Liang. He had used to serve as magistrate of a county at the Liang-Chu border. Both sides had set up sentry posts at the border to deter illegal crossing attempts. Melons were grown on both sides of the border by the soldiers in garrison. Being the hard-working sort, the Liang soldiers fertilized the soil and watered the crops conscientiously so that their plants grew in luxuriance and bore plump fruits. In contrast, the Chu soldiers were a bunch of lazy-bones who rarely cared to water the plants or spread manure. As a result, their melon fruits were not only sparse but wizened. The sight of this sharp contrast threw the magistrate on the Chu side in a fury. He sent for the garrison captain and gave him a severe tongue-lashing. Jealous of the luxuriant melon crops on the Liang side, the captain

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sent a detachment to steal across the border at night and destroyed the Liang garrison's melon crops, which, of course, was soon discovered by the Liang soldiers. The later proposed retaliation by destroying the Chu garrison's melon crops and asked Song Jiu for instruction. To their surprise, Song Jiu dismissed the idea, arguing that that would only sow the seeds of enmity and exacerbate the tensions. Instead of an eye for an eye, Song Jiu decided to return good for evil. He sent Liang soldiers to steal across the border at night and water the melon crops grown by the Chu garrison. When the Chu soldiers patrolled the fields in the morning, they found to their astonishment the crops had already been watered and were growing better. After careful observation, they discovered the secret - it was the Liang soldiers who had been doing the job for them. The story was reported by the Chu magistrate to the king of Chu, who felt both worried and ashamed. He asked to make friends with the king of Liang, and offered an apology by presenting gifts. Therefore, it was thanks to Song Jiu that the amity between Liang and Chu began.

Being neighbor to specific country is an unchangeable fait accompli. While a person may choose where to live so as to select neighbors, a country cannot do the same. Conflicts between neighbors are inevitable after long-term co-existence and frequent interactions. What

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really counts is a right approach to resolving the conflicts. In the above story, the State of Chu had failed to do well in its own development, became jealous of the achievements of its neighboring state, and, out of that jealousy, went so far as to destroy the latter's melon crops.

As a matter of fact, Chu's melon crops would not do well even though it uprooted all the melon crops grown by Liang.

Mencius emphasizes, "Whenever you fail to achieve the desired result, seek the cause in yourself." The same principle is applicable in international relations. Whenever it encounters any problem in its development, a country should first look inward for the possible causes, because the development of things depends fundamentally on internal causes. Problems in a country's development can only be solved through development itself rather than any attempts to shift crises to others or divert attention. According to Mencius,

A man of benevolence loves others; a man of decorum respects others. One who loves others is always loved by others ; one who respects others is always respected by other.

The Confucian philosophy of mutual respect and mutual love has become part of the cultural genes of the Chinese nation. It has taken root in the Chinese character,

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exerting a subtle influence on the way the Chinese think and behave. China stays committed to resolving disputes through dialog, consultation and peaceful negotiation, which is the effective way to ensure the sustainable development of international relations.

If, instead of seeking solutions with a positive mentality, the countries keep falling foul of one another and are preoccupied with vengeance, the deepening enmity is bound to lead to armed conflicts. Another classical Chinese story, popularly referred to as "the mulberry leaves dispute," constitutes a sharp contrast to the above-mentioned story between Liang and Chu. The story was recorded in *Records of the Grand Historian*, telling about a dispute between two women, from two neighboring states Chu and Wu respectively, over the ownership of the leaves of a mulberry tree on the Wu-Chu borders. The dispute escalated into a bloody feud between their clans, which eventually led to a war between the two states. Chu took the Wu border town by force, while the latter launched a counter-offensive and seized two cities from Chu. In both stories mentioned above, disputes have arisen from trivial conflicts, but have had different outcomes due to different handlings. The former brought about friendship, and the latter violence.

In "King Hui of Liang ( II )" in *The Mencius*, King Xuan of Qi inquired Mencius if there was a proper way

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of developing good relations with the neighboring states. Mencius replied:

Only a benevolent ruler can render service to a state smaller than his own. This accounts for the service of King Tang to the State of Ge, and that of King Wen to the Kun tribes. Only a wise ruler can render service to a state bigger than his own. This accounts for the service of King Tai (the grandfather of King Wen of Zhou) to the Xunyu tribes and that of King Goujian to the State of Wu. He who renders service to a state smaller than his own is a ruler who delights in Heaven's mandate. He who renders service to a state bigger than his own is a ruler who stands in awe of Heaven's mandate. He who delights in Heaven's mandate will be

able to stabilize the world, while he who stands in awe of Heaven's mandate will be able to stabilize his own state. *The Book of Songs* says: "I stand in awe of Heaven's mandate, and so can stabilize the Empire."

A stable regional environment is a necessary condition for a country's peaceful rise and national rejuvenation. China and its neighboring countries are closely connected and share a natural bond of affinity. They learned from each other in ancient times, went through similar

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historical trials in modern times, and now hold the same dream of national rejuvenation for the future. Neighborhood diplomacy has always been a top priority in China's foreign policy. Advocating trust and amity to build a harmonious neighborhood is the right course of action, which will benefit all parties. Though a country cannot choose its neighbors, it can choose the manner in which it coexists with them. Building friendship and partnership with neighboring countries is the wisest choice.

The ancient Chinese believed that amity and good conduct were the proper way of getting along with one's neighbors. A conversation between Mencius and Bai Gui, recorded in "Gaozi ( II )" in *The Mencius*, unequivocally expresses the Chinese philosophy on neighborhood relations. Bai Gui, a minister of the State of Wei during the Warring States Period, was a water expert. He claimed to do better than Yu the Great in water control. To this, Mencius said,

You are mistaken here. Yu the Great controlled floods by allowing the water to run its natural course. So he made it empty into the seas. Now you empty the water into the neighboring states. When water runs against its natural course, it is called "inundation," that is, a flood. A flood is hated by a benevolent man. You are mistaken, my good sir.

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Here, Mencius pointed out, in harsh terms, that Bai Gui's approach to water control was essentially using the neighbor states as a drain - a selfish act of protecting its own interests by shifting trouble onto others, which went against international moral standards.

China today sticks to the principles of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness in its relations with neighboring countries. Amity involves good - neighbor interactions and mutual support and assistance, and frequent reciprocal visits based on equality and cultural affinity. The more we do to win the hearts and minds of our neighbors, the stronger our ties will become. Sincerity is indispensable if we want to work with and win trust from our neighbors. We need more friends and partners. Mutual benefit is the foundation on which China cooperates with its neighbors. It helps strengthen networks for those who share common interests, and enables China and its neighbors to benefit from each other as they pursue their development strategies. Inclusiveness is key to regional cooperation. Underpinned by the belief that the Asia-Pacific region is large enough to accommodate us all, it encourages open-mindedness as we work more proactively toward our shared goals.

China stays committed to building an amicable, peaceful and prosperous neighborhood. It advocates mutual respect and equity, embraces the concept of

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common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and promotes peaceful coexistence and mutual benefit between Asia-Pacific countries. China has settled its border issues with 12 of its 14 land neighbors, and will endeavour to properly resolve disputes with its neighboring countries over the sovereignty of relevant islands and maritime rights and interests, pursuing peaceful settlement to territorial sovereignty issues. It will carry out in-depth exchanges and cooperation with its neighboring countries through various mechanisms, and seek common development and foster partnerships with Asia-Pacific countries.

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### **The Disastrous Consequence of Helping Those Who Try to Attack Your Neighbors**

There had been a long vendetta between the States of Jin and Guo. In 658 BC, the State of Jin decided to invade Guo. To do that, however, the Jin army had to march past the State of Yu before arriving at Xiayang, a city in the State of Guo situated on the north of the Yellow River. This worried the Duke of Jin, because Yu and Guo had traditionally befriended each other. If Jin attacked Guo, Yu was bound to come to Guo's rescue and form a close military alliance against Jin.

After a comprehensive analysis of the Yu-Guo-Jin trilateral relations, however, Xun Xi, a politician and diplomat of Jin, put forward a bold plan: to attack Guo via Yu. The plan was not altogether impossible, because, after all, Jin had been on friendly terms with Yu, too. Besides, the Duke of Yu had a weakness for money and rare treasures. It seemed to Xun Xi, the success or failure of the plan hinged upon Yu's attitude. He advised the Duke of Jin to bribe the Duke of Yu with fine steeds and

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precious jade - local specialties of Jin - in exchange for permission to cross the Yu territory. As a Chinese saying goes, "while gold may be priced, jade is priceless." Jade was more valuable than gold. As for steeds, they used to be strategic resources for a country. In ancient China, the military strength of a state used to be measured by the number of sheng (乘, a chariot pulled by four steeds) it had. Horse - husbandry requires certain geographical conditions, and war steeds were rare and precious in

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Central China. Therefore, the Duke of Jin grudged the investment and hesitated for a quite long while. Xun Xi consoled him by saying, "There's no need to worry. To have these steeds and treasures in the hands of the Duke of Yu or keep them in our own warehouses, it doesn't make much difference. Yu will only keep them temporarily. Once we get permission from Yu to cross its territory, we may annihilate Yu on our way back. These bribes will be back in our hands." But the Duke of Jin had further misgivings about the idea. He was worried about possible opposition from Gong Zhiqi, a politician who rendered service to the Duke of Yu.



On this, Xun Xi gave his analysis: "First, Gong Zhiqi is weak n character. He won't hold firm on his opposition for all he is worth. Second, the Duke of Yu won't listen even if Gong does remonstrate with him. The two of them have been brought up together in the palace and are on intimate terms with each other. So Gong commands little respect before the Duke."

So the Duke of Jin assigned Xun Xi to negotiate with Yu. Upon his arrival, Xun Xi said to the Duke of Yu, "When the State of Ji invaded Yu, it was Jin who allied with Yu to drive out the invaders. Now, that ambitious State of Guo, defying international morality, makes o bold as to attach Jin's southern border areas. It is time Jin make a punitive expedition, and to facilitate the action,

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it will be great if Your Grace kindly allows us passage to Guo. Gifts of fine steeds and precious jade stones will be delivered to Your Grace as a token of gratitude." Persuaded by Jin's generosity, the Duke of Yu readily accepted the bribes, and volunteered to join Jin's action as the vanguard. Thereupon, the allied troops from Jin and Yu launched an offensive against Guo in the summer of the same year and captured the city of Xiayang, forcing Guo troops to retreat south of the Yellow River where they stood on the defensive at the city of Shangyang. For the State of Guo, however, having lost the city of Xiayang meant the loss of a vital line of defence against Jin, and the state was in grave peril. In this way, the first Battle of Guo ended in favor of the Jin-Yu alliance.

In 655 BC, the State of Jin renewed his designs against Guo. Its ambitious new ruler, Duke Xian of Jin, asked the State of Yu for the convenience of passage again. He was confident of a successful conquest. Ever since the first aggression of Jin and Yu three years before, Guo had lost the most important line of defence against Jin, leaving itself powerless to check Jin ambitions in the south. However, instead of losing no time to rebuild its defences and recovering its economy, the Duke of Guo went on draining the state's limited resources into the military and attacked the Rong-Di tribes. Therefore, Jin ministers predicted that the State of Guo was bound

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to fall in less than five years.

Jin's ambitions were abundantly clear. Therefore when Jin requested Yu for the convenience of passage in order to attack Guo again, Yu minister Gong Zhiqi was strongly opposed to it. He admonished the Duke of Yu: "Jin's ambitions are all too clear. Guo is a neighbor of Yu's, and both states are closely connected. Once Guo is annihilated, Yu will suffer, too. The two countries are as dependent upon each other as lips and teeth, or as the jowls and the jawbone. If the lips go missing, the teeth will suffer coldness and lose their function." The Duke of Yu, however, thought otherwise. He believed Jin had no evil designs on Yu, because he and the Duke of Jin were of the same ancestry. Gong Zhiqi dismissed the argument, saying, "The Duke of Guo's forefathers, Guo Zhong and Guo Shu, were paternal uncles to King Wu of Zhou, and the State of Guo rendered meritorious service to the Zhou monarch. compared with Guo, Yu is more distantly related to Jin. Now that Jin goes so far as to annihilate its blood relation Guo, how can we expect it to treat Yu leniently?" "I have always offered sumptuous and clean sacrifices to the gods. They will bless us," said the Duke

of Yu. Gong Zhiqi retorted: "The gods only bless people of virtue. According to the *Book of Zhou*, 'heaven never takes sides, but assists the virtuous,' and 'it is not so much the cereals on the altar that suffuse

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an exquisite fragrance all around, as the virtue of the worshipper.' What the gods accept is not the sacrifices themselves, but the virtue and piety of the man. The best sacrifice is not livestock like ox and sheep but moral integrity of the worshipper. The lack of virtue in a monarch will lead to discord among the people, and the gods will refuse to accept their sacrifices." To Gong's remarks, the Duke turned a deaf ear. He granted the Jin envoy's request. Extremely disappointed, Gong Zhiqi left Yu. "I'm afraid Yu won't last till the year-end sacrifice this year," said he.

Consequently, in the winter of 655 BC, Jin troops completed its conquest of Guo, and, sure enough, attacked Yu on their way back. Xun Xi unharnessed the fine steeds, which Jin had presented to Yu as bribes a couple of years ago, and returned them to Duke Xian of Jin. "Yes, they are still mine; only they've grown a bit older," said the latter, who could not help clapping his hand complacently and laughing loud. For all his shortsightedness, the Duke of Yu relaxed his moral standards, made the wrong strategic judgment on geopolitics, and failed to recognize the indispensability of neighborhood amiability to a nation's own peaceful development. Instead of building partnership with its neighbors, he assisted Jin with its assault against Yu's own close neighbor. Few rulers in China's history would handle neighborhood relations

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### **Book of Zhou**

A classic book that records the Zhou monarch's decrees on the appointment of officials and the conferral of honors as well as other political activities during the period.

### **La ji**

An old Chinese folk custom of offering sacrifices. People would go hunting for wild beasts in the last month of the year and offer them as sacrifices to their forefathers, praying for good harvests, peace, and good luck in the coming year. As the sacrificial ceremony (called *la* 腊) normally took place in the twelfth lunar month, this month became known as *la-yue* (腊月) since the Qin-Han period.

in the way the Duke of Yu did. Normally, a wise ruler would try his best to maintain an amicable immediate neighborhood. Regarding countries that were more distant, he would advocate winning over them by extending favor and would be generous to give but care little to receive.

In contemporary China's overall diplomatic landscape, relations with major powers are the key links, relations with the neighboring countries are a top priority,

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relations with the developing countries are the fundamentals, and multilateral mechanisms

are important platforms. "Distance cannot separate true friends who remain close even when thousands of miles apart." China stays committed to building friendship and partnership with its neighbors to foster an amicable neighborhood. It works actively to deepen win-win cooperation and connectivity with its neighbors and makes its development bring more benefits to them. In its dealings with other developing countries, China adheres to a correct concept of justice and interest, doing what it could to help them. And in its pursuit of a new model of major-country relations, it sticks to the principle of win-win cooperation. When he met with Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith of Laos on January 6, 2020, President Xi Jinping pointed out that China and Laos are not only good neighbors, good friends, good comrades and good partners with the same

vision, but also a community of shared future, and that both sides should pull together and join hands in times of difficulty, maintain the tradition of close high-level exchanges, strengthen exchanges and experience sharing so as to jointly improve governance capacity, maintain their respective political security, and uphold the common interests of both countries and other developing countries. At the meeting with President Mauricio Macri of the Republic of Argentina on December 2, 2018, President

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Xi Jinping emphasized that China will adhere to the principle of treating each other equally and working towards win-win results, join hands with Latin American nations including Argentina to build a new Sino-Latin American partnership that is characterized by equity, mutual benefit, innovation, and openness and is people-centered, promote the development of China - CELAC Forum, push forward "Belt and Road" cooperation, and jointly build a China-LatAm community with a shared future. And again, at the China-Germany-EU leaders' meeting on September 14, 2020, President Xi Jinping pointed out that it is important that China and the EU remain steadfast in pursuit of sound and steady growth of their comprehensive strategic partnership and adhere to four principles, namely peaceful coexistence, openness and cooperation, multilateralism, and dialog and consultation. In this age of globalization, all countries are interconnected and none can stay immune to impacts from the rest of the world. No country can develop itself by keeping its doors closed. It is a wise choice for all countries to respond to global issues through extensive consultation and joint contribution.

China will stay committed to an independent foreign policy of peace and to the path of peaceful development, and continue to enhance friendship and cooperation with all other countries on the basis of the Five Principles of

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Peaceful Co-existence. To date, China has established partnerships of various forms with more than 90 countries and regional organizations. It will build a circle of friends across the world. China participates actively in global governance, works to make the international order and system more just and equitable, safeguards the common interests of the international community, and actively contributes its wisdom to the innovative development of the concept of global governance. While it advocates a new global governance mechanism, it does not discard the existing mechanism totally. Instead, China is a resolute

defender of international order. However, the international order and system has to keep pace with the times through constant reforms to rectify unfair and unreasonable arrangements in the existing system, making it better reflect the reasonable demands of the developing countries, safeguard their legitimate rights and interests, so that the global governance mechanism may develop in an integrated, coordinated manner.

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#### **Chapter Four Harmony and Shared Prosperity**

The Chinese have traditionally placed a high value on the concepts of *he* 和 (“harmony”) and *he* 合 (“unity”). “Humanity and Heaven are a unified whole” and “All things live in harmony without interfering with one another” - these notions lay at the core of the ancient Chinese conception of the universe and nature. An emphasis on harmony has featured prominently in ancient China’s governance philosophy, as can be discerned from such sayings as “Moderation should be prioritized, and harmony be valued,” “Harmony is to be prized in practicing the rules of propriety,” and “Balance and equilibrium are the true state of perfection; and harmony is the universal law in the world.” Ancient China pursued the ideal of a peaceful world characterized by “Grand Union.” Such diplomatic wisdom has been handed down and is being carried forward in contemporary China. While adhering to the principle of independence and peace in international relations, China has enriched the diplomatic thinking with innovative concepts and mechanisms. It has proposed a community with a shared future for mankind.

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#### **A Ming Emperor’s “Non-Aggression” Approach**

Zhu Yuanzhang, the founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty, summarized his diplomatic strategy in *Huang Ming Zu Xun (Instructions of the Ancestor of the August Ming)*.

Zhu Yuanzhang was the founder of the Ming Dynasty. In 1368, he proclaimed himself emperor in Nanjing, naming his new regime “The Great Ming ” and reign title “ Hongwu.” He was to be honored posthumously as “Ming Taizu” (Emperor Taizu of the Ming Dynasty). “Drive out the barbarians! Restore Han China!” was his rallying cry when he launched expeditions to the north and the west, which drove out the last emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, putting an end to Mongolian rule in Central China. When China went through a dynastic change, the world was changing, too. The Ming Dynasty coincided with dramatic changes in the West - the Renaissance, the Great Geographical Discoveries, the Reformation, etc. Capitalism began to emerge in Western countries, and an age of colonialism unfolded.

Amid the complexities both at home and abroad,

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Zhu Yuanzhang opened another model era of good government in Chinese history. Though China was powerful in the early Ming Dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang, instead of inheriting the Yuan Dynasty’s militarism in international relations, set two key-notes for the new empire’s

foreign policy: commitment to peace on the one hand and maritime exclusion (a ban on maritime trade) on the other. As a consequence, the tribute system - a set of highly regulated, ritualized exchanges that occurred between the imperial

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court in China's capital and leaders of other Asia societies - flourished and reached its zenith under the Ming Dynasty. The ban on maritime trade, in particular, had made the tribute system the only lawful channel for economic, political, and cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world. In this period, the system saw the largest number of tribute states, the largest tribute trade volumes, and the most systematic and best-developed diplomatic institution. However, the emperor was clearly aware of the independence and legitimacy of the tribute states. He adopted a policy of "winning over distant peoples with restraint and kindness," and advocated "giving generously while receiving modestly" in China's economic exchanges with the tribute states. To show good faith, the Ming government used to buy up at a handsome price - sometimes tenfold the normal price - all the goods brought to China by the tributary missions. With regard to the ethnic minorities, the emperor proposed "treating all ethnic groups, the Han people and the minority groups alike, non-discriminatively with equal kindness and favor." He dismissed racism and advocated openness and inclusiveness to rebuild the regional international system in which China was at the center.

Zhu Yuanzhang's opposition to the arbitrary use of force and advocacy of peace and caution against war had its historical background. After its founding, the

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Ming Dynasty faced unprecedented difficulty in its foreign relations. In order to rebuild political order as soon as possible, he combined Confucianism and Legalism in domestic governance and upheld the Confucian concepts of benevolence, righteousness, rituals, wisdom, and good faith as the guiding principles for diplomacy, pursuing a foreign policy of peace. The extensive use of force had led to the fall of the Yuan Dynasty despite its formidable strength, and Zhu Yuanzhang, who had experienced that part of its history in person, was to draw lessons from it. In *Records of Emperor Taizu of the Ming Dynasty*, he exhorted repeatedly:

Ruling a country is not about holding a vast territory, but about exercising virtue. The Mongols used to have a very large territory, but they lost it quickly as the last Yuan emperor indulged in dissipation. Isn't this a painful lesson?

In other words, what really mattered for a country was whether its ruler can practice virtue and bring benefits to the people, rather than its territory size. Therefore, Zhu Yuanzhang banned arbitrarily seizing territories from other countries by force and adopted a national defense policy that was defensive in nature.

During his reign, Zhu Yuanzhang was to emphasize

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this notion constantly. As a preemptive measure, he ordered the compilation of *Huang Ming Zu Xun* in which he warned his descendants against taking advantage of China's national strength to bully other countries at will. He said,

Even if we took their land, its harvest would make little difference to us. Even if we captured their people, they would not be truly obedient. Such a conquest is not worthwhile, as it brings greater harm than benefit, and is bound to make a ridicule of ourselves. ... As long as they do not stir up trouble, we will never attack them.

From the perspective of national strategy, the emperor made a thorough analysis of the domestic and international situation. China had a vast territory and had a number of neighboring countries, being separated from them either by mountains or by the sea. Some smaller countries were situated in remote areas, and it would be meaningless to conquer them militarily, because they could hardly be of any service to China even if they had been conquered and their people would be unwilling to accept Chinese rule even if they were taken prisoner. On the other hand, any attempt by these countries to provoke military conflicts at the borders, if they *did* do so for lack

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of judgement, would be unwise, because they were bound to meet heroic and determined resistance from Chinese forces. Conversely, it would be equally unwise for China to attack other countries unless provoked. Therefore Zhu Yuanzhang listed, in this book, 15 "non-aggression" countries, which his empire would never lay hands on: Korea, Japan, Okinawa, Ryukyu, Vietnam, Kmir, Siam, Champa, Sumatra, Pandya, Java, Pahang, Padjadjaran, Sri Vijaya, and Borneo. This "no-aggression" approach expresses a commitment to a peaceful foreign policy on the basis of recognizing national sovereignty and independence. In the Ming emperors' letters to foreign countries, a willingness to "share the blessings of peace" with all countries was a recurring theme. Such a position was, of course, no simple-minded appeasement, still less an expression of power politics. It represents a diplomatic thinking that values harmony above everything else, conditional upon national independence and backed up by a defensive national defense strategy. All this has had profound influence on contemporary Chinese thinking on international relations.

At the heart of the "non-aggression" approach to international disputes and issues is a commitment to dialog and consultation. It is only natural that the countries may have frictions and conflicts between each other. The important thing is how to deal with them and how to

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### **The "Thucydides Trap"**

The term was coined by the famous ancient Greek historian Thucydides. It describes an apparent tendency towards war when an emerging power threatens to displace an existing great power as a regional or international hegemon.

resolve the disputes, so as to facilitate the healthy functioning of international relations.

Dialog and consultation do not mean compromising or evading the question, but entail facing the question head-on and delving into it. As long as we maintain communication and engage in dialog with sincerity, the “Thucydides Trap” can be avoided.

Peace characterized the Ming Dynasty’s foreign policy. It built on and enriched the diplomatic traditions of successive Chinese dynasties. The “non-aggression” approach, as Emperor Taizu’s admonition for later emperors, bears both historical and current significance. It calls on all countries to resolve issues through peaceful diplomatic efforts. Having inherited his father Emperor Taizu’s “non-aggression” diplomatic thinking, Emperor Chengzu of the Ming Dynasty went a bit further by saying,

The world, including both the Chinese and the

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non-Chinese, is one family. What necessity is there to distinguish between them?”

When Zheng He, the Ming Admiral, made seven grand voyages to the Indian Ocean, his fleet brought treasures, technologies, and products to countries in the region, but did not commit any act of invasion or colonialism. Their visits were given broad welcome by the locals. With the efforts of Emperor Taizu and Emperor Chengzu, the Ming-dynasty China had developed a multi-ethnic state system during Emperor Yongle’s reign. And the notion of “Hua-Yi Unity” became the defining feature of this age of prosperity.

While the foreign policy of the Ming Dynasty was pioneering, it had its limitations all the same. It is considered pioneering, on the one hand, because the Ming Dynasty broke new ground in China’s head-of-state diplomacy since the Qin-Han period. According to records, three kings of foreign countries died of illness in China when they were paying a state visit. On their deathbed, they expressed the wish to be buried in China, and the Ming government eventually held elaborate funerals for them in accordance with the rites and standards befitting an imperial prince. On the other hand, however, Ming-China’s foreign policy had its limitations. When minister Liu Bowen proposed the “maritime exclusion” policy, he had

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done so in consideration of the state’s real situation in early Ming, with an eye to minimizing the threat of local warlord unrest and piracy in the coastal regions. And the “maritime exclusion” in this period mainly referred to a ban on trade, which was a realistic choice for a newly-founded regime. However, as the empire developed over time, which made it necessary to adjust this policy, successive Ming emperors took it as an infallible principle and refused to change. Under the reign of Emperor Yongle (Emperor Chengzu), restrictions became a bit relaxed, but the tribute trade was open at the official level only and the ordinary people were still banned from putting out to sea. The maritime exclusion policy gradually lost its advantages and exposed more and more drawbacks. It proved a hindrance to Sino-foreign exchanges. China’s formerly splendid seafaring culture lost momentum and

### **Liu Bowen**

Liu Ji (1311-1375), courtesy name Bowen, was a native of Qingtian (present-day

Wencheng, Zhejiang Province). He was a statesman and scholar in the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties, and served as a key adviser to Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming Dynasty, in the latter's struggle to overthrow the Yuan Dynasty and unify China under his rule.

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almost ceased completely, giving way to a land-dominated culture.

The world today still faces a number of non-traditional security threats such as local wars, regional conflicts, terrorism, "color revolutions," hegemonism, power politics, neo-interventionism, racial conflicts, religious extremism, and spying. Global issues facing mankind as a whole cannot be resolved by one or a few countries alone. Any individual country cannot be separated from the world in achieving development, and the development of the world requires participation of all countries. All countries should participate in global governance together and jointly make the international order fairer and more equitable.

In the context of a fluid and complex international situation, contemporary China has proactively embraced the world. As it presses ahead with the reform and opening-up since 1978, China has continuously enriched its diplomatic thinking while sticking to a foreign policy of peace. It has put forward the theory of major-country diplomacy with distinctive Chinese characteristics in the new era, and advocates a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, equity, justice and win-win cooperation. In terms of politics, China has unswervingly followed an independent foreign policy of peace and committed itself to developing friendship and cooperation

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with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. It sticks to multilateralism, and forges partnerships of dialog with no confrontation and of friendship rather than alliance. It upholds the international system with the United Nations at its core, the basic norms of international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and the central role of the United Nations in international affairs. In terms of economic development, China advocates mutually-beneficial cooperation and inclusive development. It calls on major countries to respect each other's core interests and major concerns, keep their differences under control, strive for non-conflict and non-confrontation, and treat smaller countries as equals. In terms of security, China advocates cooperation and sharing, and upholds the principles of peace, sovereignty, benefit for all and co-governance. It works to turn the domains of deep sea, polar regions, outer space and cyberspace into new areas of cooperation between all relevant parties. In terms of cultural exchange, China calls for inclusiveness and mutual learning. In terms of eco-environmental progress, China upholds the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in mankind's joint response to challenges presented by global climate change.

The theory of a new type of international relations builds on and further enriches the concept of "he 和"

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(harmony) in China's political traditions, and crystalizes and develops the thoughts of “*qin ren shan lin* 亲仁善邻” and “*xie he nan bang* 协和万邦.” On the one hand, China's foreign policy orientation has, to a very large extent, been determined by its cultural gene of “valuing harmony” and the traditional quest for moderateness and peace. Ancient Chinese diplomatic thinking attached great importance to relations with the neighboring countries. It analogized the geo-political inter-dependence between neighboring countries to that between the jaws and the jawbone and between lips and teeth, and took amity and good-neighborliness as “the key to a state's success.” Building friendship and partnership with its neighbors to foster an amicable neighborhood constituted a vital part of ancient Chinese diplomacy and a national strategy to promote world peace. All this represents a sharp contrast to typical Western geo-political thinking that tends to stress “conflict of interest” and “zero-sum game.” Over the past 2,000 years, the traditional geo-political thinking of “valuing harmony above all else” has consistently held sway in China. Successive dynasties have “taken the whole world as their own family property” and believed China was “the center of the whole world.” Led by such beliefs, mainstream Chinese political thinking has always been informed by a quest for peace and has opted for a defensive national defence strategy, warning that “bellicosity

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will lead to ruin even though the country is strong” and advocating “giving up military pursuits in favor of virtuous rule.” On the other hand, Chinese culture values not only integrity of the individual but also universal care for the world, and combines self-interest and altruism. Adhering to the principle of “harmony without uniformity” in handling domestic and international relations will help resolve conflicts between countries, and will pave the way for peaceful development on the basis of mutual respect and win-win cooperation.

Contemporary China has inherited the tradition of pursuing “harmony without uniformity.” It calls for respect for the will of people of all countries, and calls on all countries to work together towards a harmonious world that enjoys lasting peace and universal prosperity. Recognizing the principles and independence of others is a precondition for achieving “harmony without uniformity.” China remains a staunch force in maintaining world peace. It unswervingly follows an independent foreign policy of peace and actively promotes the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. China has repeatedly sent a message to the world: China opposes hegemonism and power politics in all forms, and will never seek hegemony or expansion. Peace, like air and sunshine, is hardly noticed when people are benefiting from it. But none of us can live without it. Without peace, development is

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out of the question. Peoples that have survived the trials and tribulations of war have a deeper understanding of the value of peace and development. Countries, whether big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, should all contribute their share to maintaining and enhancing peace. Nothing short of peaceful coexistence, a spirit of seeking common ground whilst reserving differences, equity and justice, and win-win cooperation can help build the world into a happy home for mankind.

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### Shi Bo's Prediction Based on a Harmony Uniformity Analysis

Duke Huan of Zheng consulted Shi Bo about administration. The latter made his prediction based on an analysis of the concepts of harmony and uniformity.

Shi Bo was a renowned thinker and politician late in the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BC). Widely-read, knowledgeable, and well-versed in history, he was in general charge of drafting decrees, conferring aristocratic titles, keeping records of historical events, and compiling official history books, with special responsibilities in the management of national documentation, astronomy and calendar. Duke Huan of Zheng was the founder of the State of Zheng. As he was given the rank of Bo (伯, corresponding roughly to being a Count), he was also known as Zheng Bo You (You being his given name). Duke Huan of Zheng was his posthumous title. Duke Huan served as *Situ* (司徒, to be in charge of disciples or followers, literally), a position of great prestige from high antiquity, to King You of Zhou, and oversaw the national land register, residence, land utilization, fiefs, and

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education. He fulfilled his duties diligently in a responsible manner, winning wide public support. Extremely worried about the circumstances of the kingdom, which went from bad to worse under the reign of the self-indulgent King You of Zhou, Duke Huan took counsel with Shi Bo: "Do you think the Zhou Dynasty will decline?"

#### Ranks of Nobility

Ancient sovereigns used to confer titles and ranks of nobility on royal relations or subjects who had rendered meritorious service. During the Zhou Dynasty, there were five ranks of nobility: *gong* 公, *hou* 侯, *bo* 伯, *zi* 子, and *nan* 男, corresponding roughly to duke, marquis, count, viscount, and baron respectively.

#### Shi

This refers to an honorary name granted to royalty, nobles, ministers, or any other celebrities after the person's death and chosen according to how the respective person had performed during his lifetime. Normally, an emperor's posthumous honorific title was chosen by the officials in charge of rites while that of any other person was granted by the imperial government.

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Based on his understanding of the way of Heaven and the laws of socio-historical development, Shi Bo answered in the affirmative.

It seemed to Shi Bo that King You, as a monarch, failed to rule in the principle of harmony but favored uniformity, which was bound to result in the fall of the Zhou Dynasty. Shi Bo argued:

According to *The Book of Documents*, "Whatever the people want, Heaven will satisfy."

Now the king alienates the wise and virtuous, but befriends the treacherous and crafty; estranges the upright and enlightened, but associates with the fatuous and mean; dismisses dissenting views despite their correctness, but adopts only those suggestions that are aligned with his own despite their faults. In a word, he casts aside harmony, but pursues uniformity.

Shi Bo pointed out, “harmony fosters new things; uniformity cannot sustain development.” Harmony means a good balance between different things and nothing short of harmony can make all things develop and unify them in the same universe. Repeat the same things, and they will be exhausted sooner or later. Therefore, the great kings of the past created things out of five basic elements: metal, wood, water, fire and earth; created

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tastes by blending five flavours: sourness, sweetness, bitterness, spiciness and saltiness; guarded the body through strengthening four limbs; made music tuneful via the six pitches; set all seven apertures straight to serve the mind; coordinated the eight parts of the body to make a man complete; established nine disciplines to regulate morals; and set up a hierarchy of ten grades to discipline the officials. Therefore, a wise monarch possesses a vast territory, feeds the people with what wealth is reaped from the land, educates them with the doctrines of loyalty and faith, and enables them to live harmoniously together like one family.

For Shi Bo, harmony was in itself an all-inclusiveness that leads ultimately to the co-existence of all things as well as the stability of the individual. Music with a single pitch would be monotonous. Objects with a single color would be dull and boring. Dishes with a single flavour could never be called delicious. Therefore, harmony entails diversity in the first place. Shi Bo went on to cite the example of the great kings of the past. They would select as their queens women from other clans, sought supplies from across the country, and appoint righteous and loyal ministers to office. In their handling of numerous state affairs, they would seek harmony rather than uniformity. That is how they managed to keep the country in good order and enjoy peace themselves. Now that

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King You of Zhou ignored the principle of upholding harmony and opted for uniformity, Shi Bo predicted that the Zhou Dynasty would collapse in no more than three years. The prediction proved correct. In 771 BC, King You of Zhou was killed, which marked the end of the Western Zhou Dynasty.

Shi Bo had not made the prediction out of nothing. The *Book of Changes* says,

If all things operate with perfect balance and appropriateness, harmony and correctness will be achieved.

The thinking pursues a universal harmony of the world. The notion of treating the world as one big whole emphasizes an inclusiveness and coordination for all things. It has had far-reaching influence on the ancient Chinese understanding of the world and human life, as well as their values and approach to state governance. Another quotation from the *Book of*

*Changes* reads,

The superior man, where there is a general agreement, yet admits diversity.

This tallies with the Confucian idea that

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The true gentleman is conciliatory but not accommodating, while common people are accommodating but not conciliatory.

While it advocates harmonious and amicable relations with other countries, China takes care to remain independent and never blindly echoes the views of others. Inspired by Shi Bo's analysis, later philosophers had more discussions on the concepts of harmony and uniformity. Confucius says,

In practicing the rules of propriety, harmony is prized. It was this quality that the great kings of the past valued.

And "harmony" in this quotation suggests a spirit of respecting diversity and seeking common ground whilst reserving differences; it is a combination of myriad things developing in an orderly fashion.

Being applied in ancient China's international relations, the value of harmony translates into a model of harmonious coexistence and common development. This is why the ancient Chinese pursued the ideals of "attracting people from the distant quarters by endorsing propriety and righteousness," "maintaining trust and amity," and "real prowess is to prevent violence." They would

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rather interact with the other nations in more peaceful manners such as alliances, marriage alliances, exchanges of gifts, and trade in the border regions. Sometimes, a tributary trade system was formed on a voluntary basis. For example, in the Tang Dynasty, a time of prosperity and unrivalled national strength, many smaller countries paid tribute to China of their own accord. They used to benefit greatly from the tributary trade, because normally, upon receipt of the tribute, the Tang Dynasty would reciprocate more generously with better, more expensive and varied products. In some cases, some smaller, remote countries, in their entirety, rendered obedience to Tang in the hope of receiving support for their people. In relations like these, there is no such thing as power politics or bullying. Instead, they represent an equitable trade system that both parties have opted for on a voluntary basis in consideration of their own conditions, a system that is fundamentally different from the power politics in today's world. Power politics essentially encroaches upon the legitimate rights or core interests of the relevant countries.

The traditional value of harmony has informed contemporary China's diplomatic thinking. Domestically, it takes the form of the cultural diversity and inclusiveness of its 56 ethnic groups living harmoniously with each other and safeguarding national security

together. In its external relations, China promotes a new type of international

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relations characterised by mutual respect, equity and justice, and peaceful coexistence, and, while recognizing the need for each country to develop along its own path, advocates resolving the “heterogeneous conflicts” that arise from diversity, maximizing common interests and common grounds, and minimizing the differences and disputes.

It does not seek to turn the existing order on its head, but approaches the reform in the international order in a gradual, step-by-step manner in an effort to make it more democratic, fairer, and justified - these are also the intrinsic values of the international order. In different historical periods, China has constantly updated its diplomatic thinking and system according to new conditions. In ancient times, there were the notions of “the world being one big family” and “unity in diversity.” After the founding of the People's Republic of China, it put forward the three foreign policy principles of “reinvent the wheels” “clean the house before entertaining guests” and “lean to one side” and the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. In the 1980s, China experienced “Two Major Shifts” in its judgment about the international situation and in its foreign policy orientation. And in the new era, it proposes the system of foreign affairs of socialism with Chinese characteristics for the new era, the vision of global governance featuring extensive consultation, joint

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contribution and shared benefits, and the ideal of a community with a shared future for mankind. In every historical period, China has integrated the value of harmony in its diplomatic thoughts. Having inherited and pooled the traditional Chinese wisdom, these thoughts represent extensions and manifestations of traditional Chinese diplomatic philosophy in their respective times, contributing new models to the development of international relations.

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### **Wang Xuance's Missions to India**

Early Tang-dynasty diplomat Wang Xuance's visits to India offer a glimpse of the openness and inclusiveness of the Tang Dynasty's diplomatic philosophy.

Wang Xuance was an official and diplomat in the early Tang Dynasty. He authored *Travels to Middle India*, a ten-volume book that records the experience of his diplomatic missions to India. He lived under the reign of two emperors successively - Emperor Taizong and Emperor Gaozong. Due to his relatively low official rank, he is not biographized independently in the official history books about the Tang Dynasty - neither the *Old Book of Tang* nor the *New Book of Tang*. However, according to some scholars, he was another diplomat after Monk Xuanzang whose extraordinary achievements pushed Sino-Indian relations to a new height.

In the beginning of the 7th Century, India became a key destination for diplomatic missions from the Tang Dynasty. At that time, India was divided into over 70 independent kingdoms. Around the year 640, Tang monk Xuanzang made a pilgrimage to India, where he

met

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Harsha Vardhana, the king of Magadha. Having learned about the Tang Dynasty, Harsha sent envoys to Chang'an, proposing diplomatic ties with Tang. This was the first time Tang established official ties with India. The prosperity of Tang appealed greatly to the neighboring ethnic groups and countries, and they scrambled to send envoys to visit China. These included Indian envoys. In return, the Tang Dynasty sent Wang Xuance on a diplomatic mission to India.

In 643, Wang Xuance visited India for the first time. Emperor Taizong set up a mission of 22 delegates, with Li Yibiao (then Grand Master for Closing Court, Deputy Director of the Court of the Imperial Regalia, and Upper Military Protector) as the ambassador, who was deputed by Wang Xuance (then Magistrate of Huangshui Count, Rongzhou). The mission traveled by way of Tubo, arrived in Nepal and finally in Middle India in December of the same year, where the king gave them a grand reception, and got back to Chang'an circa 646. On their way, ambassador Li Yibiao passed the kingdom of Kamarupa, whose king requested Sanskrit versions of Chinese classics from Tang. Upon the request, Emperor Taizong instructed Monk Xuanzang to lead a team of 30 translators to translate the Taoist classic *Tao Te Ching* into Sanskrit. On his second mission to India, Wang Xuance visited Kamarupa specially to present the translated copy

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to the king. Sino-Indian relations became closer and closer thanks to efforts on both sides.

Wang Xuance's second mission to India took place in 647. This time, Wang was the ambassador, heading a delegation of more than 30. They traveled by way of Tubo and arrived at Magadha. It happened that the king of Magadha had just recently died heirless, and minister Arunasva took advantage of the political chaos to usurp the throne. The usurper changed the kingdom's formerly friendly foreign policy towards Tang, and laid an ambush on the Tang mission. Eventually, only two people - ambassador Wang Xuance and deputy envoy Jiang Shiren - survived the looting and killing. It was only thanks to the assistance of Tang's vassal states that they finally escaped and got back to China.

In 657, Wang Xuance visited India for the third time. This time, the emperor assigned him the task of escorting Buddhist sacred relics to India. The third mission spanned four years - the longest of all his three missions.

Wang Xuance was at once a diplomat and a cultural envoy. He was perfectly aware that exchanges between countries were not all plain sailing, and therefore pro-activeness was necessary. He made three visits to India, brought back to China many Buddhist relics, deepened Sino-Indian cultural exchanges, and maintained close ties with countries in Central Asia. His missions manifested

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the Tang Dynasty's proactive approach to foreign relations.

The proactivity of Tang rulers opened a new era for ancient Chinese diplomacy. To begin with, the opening-up of Tang was all-dimensional and multi-sectoral. Its monetary

policy was relaxed, flexible, and liberal. Foreign currencies were allowed to circulate in China so as to facilitate trade activities by foreigners, and taxation was kept low to invigorate foreign trade. The government was liberal-minded enough to employ foreign talent in its central and local administrations, and the names of many of them have gone down in history. For example, Emperor Taizong appointed Asnadur, a Turkic, to the position of Left Cavalry Guard General, the commander of a military unit responsible for guarding the imperial palace, and married him to the Grand Princess of Hengyang. Japanese envoy Fujiwara no Kiyokawa was made Director of the Palace Library, a 3b-rank official in the Tang government, and never went back to Japan. When Peroz, a Persian prince, sought asylum in Tang after Persia fell to Arab Muslims, Emperor Gaozong made him General of the Right Militant Guard, and later, Emperor Zhongzong promoted him to General of the Left Awesome Guard. He spent the rest of his life in China. The Tang Dynasty embraced foreign cultures with open arms, absorbing their fine elements while discarding the

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dross. It showed respect to the immigrants' customs and beliefs and permitted them to build temples in China. As a result, social customs were pluralist. The government upheld equality between all countries. Foreign nationals, regardless of their ethnicity, color, culture and language,

were given equal treatment in China and enjoyed equal respect on diplomatic occasions. Foreigners were also offered convenience with regard to their life in China. The government avoided interference in transnational marriages. Procedures for inbound travel were simple and

quick. All the traveler had to do was file an application to the authorities, and fill in his personal information and details about his belongings and the purpose of the trip.

Second, the opening-up of Tang was well-regulated, orderly, and solidly based. The pluralist, all-dimensional, and continuous diplomatic activities were based on the nation's economic prosperity, political stability, overall security, liberal administration, and convenient transport network. During the Tang Dynasty, foreign affairs were mainly administered by the Court of State Ceremonial and the Bureau of Receptions, assisted by relevant departments of the Imperial Secretariat and the Chancellery, with clearly defined division of responsibilities and close collaboration between each other. These ensured the standardized administration of foreign affairs.

Third, the opening-up of Tang was peaceful and

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inclusive. Like the vast sea that admits countless rivers, the Tang Dynasty was receptive to foreign civilizations. Emperor Taizong put it forthright :

Despite the ancient belief in the superiority of the Chinese, I make no distinction between the Chinese and all other people.

Tang emphasized equity and inclusiveness, and the traditional distinction between the Chinese and the non-Chinese was weakened during this period. Foreigners might even

receive better treatment than locals. This inclusiveness was, in the first place, a manifestation of confidence, which had been backed up by the dynasty's immense strength in all aspects: political, economic, military, and national defence, etc.

Though by no means afraid of war, the Tang Dynasty exercised great caution when it came to starting a war. A best case in point was Tang's relations with Tubo. In 633, Songtsen Gambo unified Tubo on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and the next year, he sent envoys to pay tribute to Emperor Taizong, requesting marriage with a Tang princess, an idea the emperor dismissed. After being turned down, Songtsen Gambo launched an attack on Tang, threatening to march into Tang capital Chang'an with a force of 200,000 (though the fact was 50,000).

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Emperor Taizong responded by assigning Hou Junji, an ever-victorious general in Tang's campaigns in the Western Regions, to resist the invasion. Leading a cavalry force of 5,000, Hou Junji defeated the Tubo troops, and the war ended in favor of Tang. In 640, Songtsen Gambo sent minister Gar Tongtsen Yulsung to Chang'an to acknowledge his guilt to the Tang emperor and to propose the marriage alliance again. This time, Emperor Taizong had a change of mind. His considerations were recorded in *Zhenguan Zhengyao* (*Essentials of Government in the Zhenguan Reign*):

Having thought twice, I (Emperor Taizong) seem to have two options. One option is to muster a large force of 100,000, launch an offensive, and take them prisoners, thus removing the cause of future trouble. The other option is to grant their request and form a marriage alliance with Tubo. As ruler of the world, if my choice would bring benefit to the people, I wouldn't grudge giving away a princess for marriage.

Marriage alliance would help prevent a war and protect the people. Therefore, Emperor Taizong agreed to the proposal. He selected a princess from the royal clan - Princess Wencheng - and married her to Songtsen Gambo.

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The latter proved worthy of the emperor's trust. She worked actively to maintain Tang-Tubo peace. For ten years after the marriage, the peoples got along amicably with each other. No war broke out, and people enjoyed peace and close trade ties. With Princess Wencheng's arrival, many technologies were introduced to Tubo, which were to change the lives of the local people in many aspects. To carry forward the friendship, another Tang-Tubo marriage alliance was to take place during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian. This was known as Princess Jincheng's marriage to another Tubo king. Throughout the Tang Dynasty, close to twenty Tang princesses married into ten ethnic groups. These marriage alliances promoted peace between ethnic groups, sparing the people the ravages of war. This "marriage-alliance" diplomacy played a role that military actions could never manage. It enhanced the spontaneous exchanges and mutual learning between different nations, with far-reaching historical significance.

The Tang Dynasty represented a pinnacle of prosperity in China's ancient history. It



created another unified, powerful empire after the Qin-Han period, with unprecedented prosperity and comprehensive national strength. It was widely connected in the international community, with close ties with countries in Northeast

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Asia and Central Asia, the Arab world, and the Byzantine Empire. In 651, envoys from the Arab Empire arrived in Chang'an and established friendly ties with Tang. Visits became more frequent after that. From 651 to 798, the Arab Empire sent a total of 39 missions to Tang. Trade and exchanges in culture and technology between Tang and the Arab world developed greatly. Paper-making was introduced from China to Arab countries, and a papermill was built in Samarkand with the assistance of Chinese artisans. Chinese silk-weaving technology was introduced to Mesopotamia, and Chinese porcelain was widely used in Arab countries, too. Since the 8th century, the commercial ties between Arab countries and China were sustained by two lines of communication: the Silk Road that crossed the grassland in Northwest China and the sea route - the Maritime Silk Road. On the Silk Road, trade caravans traveled to and fro in an endless stream. And the Tang capital Chang'an saw the emergence of many businesses selling exotic products - breweries, jewellery shops, clothing stores, utensil shops, etc. - as well as all kinds of food from the Western Regions. Chinese products were exported to the Western Regions, too. The two-way trade enhanced the exchanges of culture and customs, values, and ideas. According to contemporary studies based on records in *The Six Statutes of the Tang Dynasty*, a compendium of state offices and official positions

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of the Tang Empire, China had official ties with over 300 foreign countries and regions during the Tang Dynasty, making it the most splendid chapter in the history of ancient Chinese diplomacy.

The proactive opening-up policy of the Tang Dynasty opened a new era for ancient Chinese diplomacy. China saw its circle of friendly nations expanded. In fact, Tang diplomacy was not just a pinnacle of success in China's history, but led the world at that time. It stood at the very center of a whole network of nations in East Asia, a network that was on a par, in terms of coverage, influence and outreach, with those formed around Francia, the Byzantine Empire, and the Arab Empire at the same time in the west.

The Tang Dynasty was among those more successful dynasties that practiced the concept of "the world as a whole" in handling ethnic and international relations, leaving a rich heritage of diplomatic wisdom and philosophy for China today. "Tang" has become synonymous with China and the Chinese. Even today, many foreigners are still referring to the Chinese as "*Tang Ren*" (Tang people), and there are such terms as "*Tang Ren Jie*" (Chinatown) and "Tang Zhuang" (Tang suit). And "a dream back to the Great Tang" is now a popular theme in TV dramas. All this bespeaks the Tang Dynasty's far-reaching influence on posterity.

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What fascinates people the most about the Tang Dynasty is perhaps its historical

environment, an environment that was characterized by equity and liberty, openness and inclusiveness, harmonious co-existence, security and prosperity and one in which the Chinese and the non-Chinese were treated alike. Faced with changes unseen in a century, the world today finds itself at a historical juncture. Against the backdrop of a complex and fast-changing international environment, China seeks solutions to modern problems by tapping traditional wisdom. Economic globalization, international division of labour and mutually-beneficial cooperation represent the trend of history in the long run. Today's China will keep its door of opening-up open, and will, based on an understanding of the laws that underlie the development of human society, continue to deepen its reforms, open wider, enhance opening-up and cooperation in various fields, and pursue an open world economy.

A deep concern for the country and the people features prominently in Chinese culture, as is demonstrated in the saying "Everyone has a stake in his country's rise or fall." This vision of universal inter-connectivity has had a long history in China, and is still holding sway today.

In his speech at the 70th session of the UN General Assembly on September 28, 2015, President Xi Jinping announced an important initiative to build a new model

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of international relations based on cooperation for the benefit of all, and to create a community with a shared future for mankind. The initiative expounds the meaning of a community with a shared future for mankind: consultation and coordination between countries as equal partners on the basis of mutual understanding ; a fair, just, and participatory security framework; innovative, inclusive and green development prospects; exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations; well-protected ecosystems and natural environment. This is the centerpiece of the theory of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, and an innovation in practice. As

a response to the reality of close inter-connectivity and inter-dependence between countries, it proposes an international system that transcends the historical experience that "a rising power is bound to challenge the established power" and transcends such mentality of binary opposition as "the zero-sum game" and "either balance of power or hegemonic stability." Instead, it represents a mentality of "the world being one big family." To build a community with a shared future for mankind, we must uphold world peace and promote universal security. We must stay committed to mutual benefit and win-win results, pursue common development, build partnership, and uphold multilateralism. We must go for green, low-carbon and sustainable development. This is the

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entire process and a blue print for building a community of shared security, shared interests and shared values, and eventually a community of shared future. Far from being any illusory or abstract concept, the community with a shared future for mankind concerns every country and

every people. Each person is a molecule in it, and each country a cell. Global issues that put human survival and development under threat have highlighted the urgency and necessity of building a community with a shared future for mankind. In today's world, all countries share a common stake in development and have extensive converging interests. It has

become a prevailing trend to follow a path of peaceful development, pursue win-win cooperation, and build an open world economy. All countries should work together to make economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial for all.

Peace and development remain the call of our times. Looking to the future, China will be an active participant in global governance. It will promote the shared human values, and will contribute Chinese wisdom and solutions to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

According to Master Yin Wen in *Qunshu Zhiyao*,

The sagely way of government is not superior in that the sage is able to govern by himself, but in

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his sharing the governance with others. A craftsman is not superb because of his own skills, but because of his good coordination with others in completing a superb item. A mere individual, no matter how strong ability he / she has, is not enough to complete all tasks on his / her own;

The same holds true for a country. Problems confronting the whole world cannot be resolved by any single country, no matter how strong it may be. In a globalized world, where all countries face a complex of opportunities and challenges, global hot-spot issues erupt in succession. Non-conventional security threats such as climate change, cyber security, and refugee crisis, continue to spread. Protectionism and unilateralism are resurging. The global governance system and multilateralism are under threat. We should follow the principle of achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration in engaging in global governance, encourage the joint participation of all countries in global affairs, and actively advance the democratization of global governance rules. We should stay committed to multilateralism represented by the United Nations, and fully leverage the constructive roles of global and regional multi-lateral mechanisms such as the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the G20, and the European

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Union. Together, we can build a community with a shared future for mankind.

A community with a shared future for mankind is at once the goal of peace and development and a way of achieving them. It envisages a world in which all people love and care for each other like one family. This ideal the ultimate spiritual destination for mankind who have through all kinds of hardship and exploration.

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### **Classic Quotes**

1. The inter-dependence between neighboring countries is like that between jowls and jawbone and that between lips and teeth.

—Zuo Qiuming's commentary on Spring and Autumn Annals

2. Heaven is perfectly unbiased. It helps those virtuous only.

—Caizhong Zhiming, *The Book of Documents*

3. While people offer the same sacrifices to gods, only those offered by the virtuous will be accepted by the gods.

—*The Book of Zhou*

4.(Monk Xuanzang) took care to avoid reading books that were considered unorthodox or in poor taste, and followed the examples of the wise and virtuous in personal conduct.

—*Biography of Monk Sanzang of the Da Ci-En Temple*

5. Good faith is key to a state's success.

—*Lisulan, Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*

6. Natural disasters may strike any country at any time. We have a moral obligation to offer relief to a neighboring country hit by disaster.

—Zuo Qiuming's commentary on Spring and Autumn Annals

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7. If a ruler knows only to receive but doesn't know well enough to reciprocate, his people will distance themselves from him. If he loses the people's support, any attack will doom him to failure.

—Zuo Qiuming's Commentary on Spring and Autumn Annals

8. How can we do that? To start a feud with your neighbor is to court disasters. To commit a sinful act because others have done anything wrong - isn't that too small-minded?

—*Odds and Ends (IV), New Arrangements*

9. Turn a failure into a success. Turn a disaster into a blessing.

—*Odds and Ends (IV), New Arrangements*

10. Now that others have committed an evil deed, why do we have to follow their bad example?

—*Odds and Ends (IV), New Arrangements*

11. Whether it is big or small, many or few, requite hatred with virtue.

—*Tao Te Ching*

12. Music with a single pitch would be monotonous. Objects with a single color would be dull and boring. Dishes with a single flavour could never be called delicious. Therefore, harmony entails diversity in the first place.

— *The Discourse of Zheng, The Discourses of the States*

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13. Harmony fosters new things; uniformity cannot sustain development.

— *The Discourse of Zheng, The Discourses of the States*

14. The State of Yu is to the State of Guo what lips are to teeth. With bared lips, the teeth feel cold.

— *Records of the Grand Historian*

15. Whatever the people want, Heaven will satisfy.

— *The Speech of King Wu of Zhou*