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**Level: 100**

**Department:** International Relations and Diplomacy

**Course code:** IRD106

**Course title:** Introduction to International Relations and Diplomacy III

**Question:** In not more than 5 page, discuss Ancient Chinese Diplomacy?

**INTRODUCTION**

The Chinese gave birth to one of the four greatest ancient civilizations of the world and it is seen to have a recorded history of about 4,000 years. The Chinese created a civilization that led the world in feudal times, but it lagged behind the West after the Industrial Revolution. The British launched the Opium War in 1840 and forced open the door of china with its warships and canons. This led to the successful invasion of other Western powers such as Russia, Germany, France and the United States on China; leading to the State to lose almost all its sovereignty.

This had made the form of diplomacy of the State that of humiliation. The Chinese that is characterized by a means to use its weakness and humiliation to promote its strength and overcome the contextual meaning of the word power.

This method is applied in order to revert the notion of Western values as positive, while it projects the Chinese values as negative in order to promote its own interests. This led the Chinese to fight for national independence and liberation and for democracy and freedom, after making numerous sacrifices in 1921 the Communist Party of China was set up. After 28 years of armed struggle the Chinese people overthrew the imperialist rule, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism and founded the People’s Republic of China.

The Chinese form of diplomacy is one that is to be dug into as it may appear vague, whilst it is complex. The ancient Chinese diplomacy is characterized by the presence of dynasties, which occurred at different times as each fell and risen. They ranged from the Shang dynasty to the Qin dynasty. Chinese foreign policy was usually aimed at containing the threat of so-called "Barbarian" invaders (such as the Xiongnu, Mongols, and Jurchen) from the north. This could be done by military means, such as an active offense (campaigns into the north) or a more passive defence (as exemplified by the Great Wall of China). The Chinese also arranged marriage alliances known as *Heqin*, or "peace marriages."

In these times China was considered the centre of the world making it be seen as the equivalent of all under heaven, this notion brought about the method of rule called the “Mandate of Heaven”. This was a sign to show that anyone that ruled was chosen by heaven and it was used as a means to attain the throne. The Shang dynasty was the first dynasty (c. 1600–1046 BC), during the king Wu Ding’s reign, who was the twenty-first Shang king. But, before the Shang dynasty it was recorded in ancient historical texts such as the *“Book of Documents in* its early chapters, 11th century BC, the *Records of the Grand Historian* (c. 100 BC) and the *Bamboo Annals* (296 BC) mention and describe a Xia dynasty (c. 2070–1600 BC), but no writing is known from the period, and Shang writings do not indicate the existence of the Xia.

The Shang ruled in the Yellow River valley, which is commonly held to be the cradle of Chinese civilization. However, Neolithic civilizations originated at various cultural centres along both the Yellow River and Yangtze River. These Yellow River and Yangtze civilizations arose millennia before the Shang. With thousands of years of continuous history, China is one of the world's oldest civilizations and is regarded as one of the cradles of civilization. The Shang capitals are located in present near Zhengzhou and Anyang.

It had been in a state of collapse as it was characterized by instability, famine and other forms of peril. The Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BC) supplanted the Shang because of the situation surrounding it and introduced the concept of the Mandate of Heaven to justify their rule. The central Zhou government began to weaken due to external and internal pressures in the 8th century BC, and the country eventually splintered into smaller states during the Spring and Autumn period. These states became independent and warred with one another in the following Warring States period, much of traditional Chinese culture, literature and philosophy first developed during those troubled times. During this time the Zhou dynasty was divide into two periodic reigns; Western Zhou (ca. 1046-771 BCE) and Eastern Zhou (ca. 771-256 BCE). This period was characterized by hegemony as larger states began to annex smaller states, slowly small states disappeared and this led some southern states to claim independence from the Zhou. This contributed to the promotion of many schools of thoughts such as; Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism and Mohism. Which was due to the presence of great intellectuals such as; Laozi, Confucius and Sun Tzu lived during this chaotic period. After further political consolidation, seven prominent states remained by the end of the 5th century BC, and the years in which these few states battled each other are known as the Warring States period. Though there remained a nominal Zhou king until 256 BC, he was largely a figurehead and held little real power. This warring state though was decentralized promoted the development of Chinese culture and modern mandarin Chinese language.

This was the birth of Imperial China, which began with the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC) during Qin Shi Huangdi’s reign, China was greatly expanded to cover the Ye lands of Hunan and Guangdong. He lasted for only 12 years as he died in 210 BC due to consumption of mercury pills. Its capital was Chang'an, present-day Xi'an. Although short-lived, the period saw a centralized government under the absolute power of the emperor and ambitious public works projects including the unification of state walls into a single Great Wall. It saw the development of a standardised form of currency, a uniform system of writing and a legal code after the tribulations of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. Even something as basic as the length of axles for carts, which need to match ruts in the roads had to be made uniform to ensure a viable trading system throughout the empire. Also as part of its centralization, the Qin connected the northern border walls of the states it defeated, making the first Great Wall of China. It opposed criticism of the reign of a ruler resulting into brutal silencing of political opposition, including the event known as the burning of books and burying of scholars.

The tribes of the north, collectively called the Wu Hu by the Qin, were free from Chinese rule during the majority of the dynasty were prohibited from trading with Qin dynasty peasants. The Xiongnu tribe living in the Ordos region in northwest China often raided them instead, prompting the Qin to retaliate. After a military campaign led by General Meng Tian, the region was conquered in 215 BC and agriculture was established; the peasants, however, were discontented and later revolted.

This fostered the development of the Han dynasty as the constant revolt and the death of the emperor caused destabilization in the empire, this finally led to the sack of the capital and the collapse of the dynasty’s reign in 207 BC.

The Han dynasty was divided into periods known as the Western Han (206 BCE-9 CE) also known as the former Han and Eastern Han (25-220 CE) also known as the later Han. The Western Han was founded by Liu Bang, who emerged victorious in the Chu–Han Contention that followed the fall of the Qin dynasty; It was ruled by Gao Zu, who accorded his former adversaries with respect and promoted peace unifying the empire; its capital was Chang'an This was recorded as a golden age in Chinese history as the Han dynasty had a long period of stability and prosperity consolidated the foundation of China as a unified state under a central imperial bureaucracy.

During this period the territory of China was extended to most of the China proper and to areas far west. Confucianism was officially elevated to orthodox status and was to shape the subsequent Chinese civilization. Art, culture and science all advanced to unprecedented heights. With the profound and lasting impacts of this period of Chinese history, the dynasty name "Han" had been taken as the name of the Chinese people in respect of Liu Bang’s home in Hanzhong province now the dominant ethnic group in modern China, and had been commonly used to refer to Chinese language and written characters.

Though there was increase in wealth led to the rise of large estates and general prosperity but, for the peasants who worked the land, life became increasingly difficult. In 9 CE, the acting regent, Wang Mang (l. 45 BCE-23 CE), usurped control of the government claiming the Mandate of Heaven for himself and declaring an end to the Han Dynasty. Wang Mang founded the Xin/Qin Dynasty (9-23 CE) on a platform of extensive land reform and redistribution of wealth.

He initially had enormous support from the peasant population and was opposed by the landowners. His programs, however, were poorly conceived and executed resulting in widespread unemployment and resentment. Uprisings, and extensive flooding of the Yellow River, further destabilized Wang Mang’s rule and he was assassinated by an angry mob of the peasants on whose behalf he had ostensibly seized the government and initiated his reforms. This ushered in the Eastern Han dynasty.

Emperor Guangwu reinstated the Han dynasty (Eastern Han) with the support of landholding and merchant families at Luoyang, east of the former capital Xi'an. Thus, this new era is termed the Eastern Han dynasty with its capital as Luoyang. With the capable administrations of Emperors Ming and Zhang, former glories of the dynasty were reclaimed, with brilliant military and cultural achievements. The Xiongnu Empire was decisively defeated. The diplomat and general Ban Chao further expanded the conquests across the Pamirs to the shores of the Caspian Sea, thus reopening the Silk Road, and bringing trade, foreign cultures, along with the arrival of Buddhism. With extensive connections with the west, the first of several Roman embassies to China were recorded in Chinese sources, coming from the sea route in AD 166, and a second one in AD 284.

The Eastern Han dynasty was one of the most prolific era of science and technology in ancient China, notably the historic invention of papermaking by Cai Lun, and the numerous scientific and mathematical contributions by the famous polymath Zhang Heng.

By the 2nd century this was the period of the Three kingdoms (AD 220 – 280), the empire declined amidst land acquisitions, invasions, and feuding between consort clans and eunuchs. The Yellow Turban Rebellion broke out in AD 184, ushering in an era of warlords. In the ensuing turmoil, three states tried to gain predominance in the period of the Three Kingdoms. This time period has been greatly romanticized in works such as Romance of the Three Kingdoms.

After Cao Cao reunified the north in 208, his son proclaimed the Wei dynasty in 220. Soon, Wei's rivals Shu and Wu proclaimed their independence, leading China into the Three Kingdoms period. This period was characterized by a gradual decentralization of the state that had existed during the Xin/Qin and Han dynasties, and an increase in the power of great families.

In 266, the Jin dynasty (AD 266 – 420) overthrew the Wei and later unified the country in 280, but this union was short-lived due to the growing decentralization. The Jin dynasty was severely weakened by internecine fighting among imperial princes and lost control of northern China after non-Han Chinese settlers rebelled and captured Luoyang and Chang'an. In 317, a Jin prince in modern-day Nanjing became emperor and continued the dynasty, now known as the Eastern Jin, which held southern China for another century. Prior to this move, historians refer to the Jin dynasty as the Western Jin.

Northern China fragmented into a series of independent kingdoms, most of which were founded by Xiongnu, Xianbei, Jie, Di and Qiang rulers. These non-Han peoples were ancestors of the Turks, Mongols, and Tibetans. Many had, to some extent, been "sinicized" long before their ascent to power. In fact, some of them, notably the Qiang and the Xiongnu, had already been allowed to live in the frontier regions within the Great Wall since late Han times. During the period of the Sixteen Kingdoms, warfare ravaged the north and prompted large-scale Han Chinese migration south to the Yangtze River Basin and Delta. This finally led to the division of the empire into the Northern and Southern dynasties.

Northern and Southern dynasties (AD 420 – 589) In the early 5th century, China entered a period known as the Northern and Southern dynasties, in which parallel regimes ruled the northern and southern halves of the country. In the south, the Eastern Jin gave way to the Liu Song, Southern Qi, Liang and finally Chen. Each of these Southern dynasties were led by Han Chinese ruling families and used Jiankang (modern Nanjing) as the capital. They held off attacks from the north and preserved many aspects of Chinese civilization, while northern barbarian regimes began to sinify.

In the north, the last of the Sixteen Kingdoms was extinguished in 439 by the Northern Wei, a kingdom founded by the Xianbei, a nomadic people who unified northern China. The Northern Wei eventually split into the Eastern and Western Wei, which then became the Northern Qi and Northern Zhou. These regimes were dominated by Xianbei or Han Chinese who had married into Xianbei families. During this period most Xianbei people adopted Han surnames, eventually leading to complete assimilation into the Han.

Despite the division of the country, Buddhism spread throughout the land. In southern China, fierce debates about whether Buddhism should be allowed were held frequently by the royal court and nobles. By the end of the era, Buddhists and Taoists had become much more tolerant of each other.

Yang Jian (Emperor Wen) ruled in northern China from 581, and conquered the Chen dynasty in the south by 589, hence reunifying China under the Sui dynasty (581–618). He and his successor Emperor Yang initiated several military campaigns.

Northern Vietnam was retaken by conquest, while there was a temporary occupation of the Champa kingdom in southern Vietnam. They launched unsuccessful campaigns against the northern Korean kingdom Goguryeo during the Three Kingdoms of Korea, depleting not only troops but ultimately much of the government's revenue.

The Grand Canal was completed during the Sui dynasty, enhancing indigenous trade between northern and southern China by canal and river traffic.

One of the diplomatic highlights of this short-lived dynastic period was Prince Shōtoku's Japanese embassy to China led by Ono no Imoko in AD 607.

Prince Shōtoku made his queen Suiko call herself Empress, and claimed an equal footing with the Chinese Emperor who regarded himself as the only Emperor in the world at that time. Thus Shōtoku broke with Chinese principle that a non-Chinese sovereign was only allowed to call himself king but not emperor.

Emperor Yang thought of this Japanese behaviour as 'insolent', because it opposed his Sinocentric worldview, but finally, he had to accept it and send an embassy to Japan in the next year as he had to avoid conflict with Japan to prepare for the conquest of Goguryeo.

The Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) is considered the 'golden age' of Chinese civilization. Gao-Tzu prudently maintained and improved upon the bureaucracy initiated by the Sui Dynasty while dispensing with extravagant military operations and building projects. With minor modifications, the bureaucratic policies of the Tang Dynasty are still in use in Chinese government in the modern day. Despite his efficient rule, Gao-Tzu was deposed by his son, Li-Shimin, in 626 CE. Having assassinated his father, Li-Shimin then killed his brothers and others of the noble house and assumed the title Emperor Taizong (r. 626-649 BCE). After the bloody coup, however, Taizong decreed that Buddhist temples be built at the sites of the battles and that the fallen should be memorialized.

Taizong followed his father’s precepts in keeping much of what was good from the Sui Dynasty and improving upon it. This can be seen especially in Taizong’s legal code which drew heavily on Sui concepts but expanded them for specificity of crime and punishment. He ignored his father’s model of foreign policy, however, and embarked on a series of successful military campaigns which extended and secured his empire and also served to spread his legal code and Chinese culture.

Taizong was succeeded by his son Gaozong (r. 649-683 CE) whose wife, Wu Zetian, would become China's first - and only - female monarch. Empress Wu Zetian (r. 690-704 CE) initiated a number of policies which improved the living conditions in China and strengthened the position of the emperor. She also made ample use of a secret police force and highly efficient channels of communication to stay always one step ahead of her enemies, both foreign and domestic.

The fall of the Tang dynasty was caused by the arising rebellions, the most prominent was An Shi Rebellion (also known as the An Lushan Rebellion) of 755 CE. General An Lushan, a favorite of the imperial court, recoiled against what he saw as excessive extravagance in government. With a force of over 100,000 troops, he rebelled and declared himself the new emperor by the precepts of the Mandate of Heaven. Although his revolt was put down by 763 CE, the underlying causes of the insurrection and further military actions continued to plague the government through 779 CE. The most apparent consequence of An Lushan’s rebellion was a dramatic reduction in the population of China. It has been estimated that close to 36 million people died as a direct result of the rebellion, either in battle, in reprisals, or through disease and lack of resources.

Due to this many sectors of the empire suffered such as Trade, taxes went uncollected, and the government, which had fled Chang’an when the revolt began, was ineffective in maintaining any kind of significant presence. The Tang Dynasty continued to suffer from domestic revolts and, after the Huang Chao Rebellion (874-884 CE) never recovered. The country broke apart into the period known as The Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960 CE), with each regime claiming for itself legitimacy, until the rise of the Song Dynasty.

With the Song, China became stable once again and institutions, laws, and customs were further codified and integrated into the culture. Neo-Confucianism became the most popular philosophy of the country, influencing these laws and customs, and shaping the culture of China recognizable in the modern day. Still, in spite of advances in every area of civilization and culture, the age-old strife between wealthy landowners and the peasants who worked that land continued throughout the following centuries.

Periodic peasant revolts were crushed as quickly as possible, but no remedies for the people’s grievances were ever offered, and each military action continued to deal with the symptom of the problem instead of the problem itself. In 1949 CE, Mao Tse Tung led the people’s revolution in China, toppling the government and instituting the People’s Republic of China on the premise that, finally, everyone would be equally affluent.

**CONCLUSION**

Though other dynasties such as the Yuan dynasty, the Ming dynasty came after the Song dynasty, they applied similar ideas of the Song dynasty. Which created a foundation for the modern China (The People’s Republic of China). As seen through the timeline the common method of diplomacy was that absolute supremacy, which made China the supreme empire and other surrounding nations subject to China. Another form of diplomacy was the use of the Mandate of Heaven, this was not only used as form of attaining ruler ship over China. It was as a justification for China taking over other territories and expanding its empire.

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