Ancient Chinese Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the practice of conducting negotiations between representaives of state and groups. It entails influencing the decisions and conduct of foreign government and officials through dialogues, negotiation, and other nonviolent means. It usually refers to international relations carried out through the intercession of professional diplomats with regard to a full range of topical issues. Diplomacy Is the main instrument of foreign policy, which represent the broader goals and strategies that guide a state interaction with the rest of the world. International treaties, agreements, alliances, and other manifestations of foreign policy are usually the result of diplomatic negotiations and process. Diplomats may also help shape a state foreign policy in an advisory capacity. Since the early 20th century, diplomacy has become increasingly professionalized; the 1961 vienna convection on Diplomatic Relations, ratified by most of the world sovereign state, provides a framework for diplomatic procedures, methods, and conduct. Most diplomacy is now carried out by accredited career diplomats through a dedicated political institution (such as a ministry or department of foreign affairs), usually with the support of staff and diplomatic infrastructure, such as consulates and embassies. Diplomacy is also conducted through other offices, such as envoys and ambassadors. The term diplomat is thus sometimes applied broadly to diplomatic and consular personnel and foreign ministry officials more generally.

Imperial china had a long tradition of foreign relations. From the Qin dynasty, Chinese culture had influenced neighboring and distant countries, while gradually being transformed by outside influences as well. In premodern times, the theory of foreign relations of china held that the Chinese empire was the celestial dynasty, the center of world civilization, with the emperor being the leader of the civilized world. This view saw china as equivalent to ‘’all under heaven’’. All other states were considered to be tributaries, under the suzerain of china, some were direct vassals. Theoretically, the lands around the imperial capital were regarded as ‘’five zones of submission’’,- the circular areas differentiated according to the strength of the benevolent influence from the son of heaven. There were several periods when Chinese foreign policy took on isolationist tones, because of the view that the rest of the world was poor and backward with little to offer. Nevertheless, china was a center of trade from early on its history. Many of china’s interactions with the outside world via the silk road. This included, during the 2nd century AD, contact with representatives of the roman empire, and during the 13th century, the visits of venetian traveler Macro Polo. 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 defense (as exemplified by the great wall of china). The Chinese also arranged marriage alliances known as heqin, or ‘’peace marriages’’.

Chinese officers distinguished between ‘’matured/familiar barbarians’’(foreigners influenced by Chinese culture) and ‘’raw barbarians’’. In many periods, Chinese policy was especially assertive. One of such case was exemplified by treasure voyages of admiral Zheng during the period of dynasty. Cultural diplomacy is widely used by modern state for enhancing soft power. Soft power popularized in the contemporary discourse on international relations by Joseph Nye, focuses on diplomatic engagement for strategic dividends. Several prominent political thinkers, e.g. Foucault, Bourdieu, Gramsci, Habermas and E.H. Carr, also have variously expouned on the concept prior to Nye. The specific period in Chinese history that can be identified for its distinct emphasis on spread of harmony and amity is the spring and autumn era (771BC -476BC), also known as the hundred schools of thought. China communication with the world was largely intermitted until the late 1980s. Prolonged isolation by the international communication, a vocal discourse in the west labeling china as a destabilizing force, and the increasing spread of the “china collapse” theory after the Tiananmen square crackdown in 1989 led china to seriously contemplate positive image building. Chinese culture retains ancient characteristics while accommodating changes. Culture has been influenced by politics and has acquired diverse undertones under different leaders. While Zedong relegated Confucian teachings to the background during the cultural revolution (1965-75), the subsequent generation of leaders adopted confucianism almost passionately.