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**COURSE TITTLE: INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY II.**

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**ASSIGNMENT TOPIC: DISCUSS ANCIENT CHINESE DIPLOMACY.**

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**INTRODUCTION.**

As a conceptual identity, soft power and the role of culture in its use are hardly limited to the western political discourse. Indeed, the prevalent impression of China’s modern soft power strategy for connecting with the rest of the world being essentially an emulation of similar strategies pursued by major western powers overlooks the fact that soft power was strongly embedded in ancient Chinese history and philosophy. 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 (771 BC – 476 BC), also known as the Hundred Schools of Thought. Marked by significant cultural and intellectual developments, the historical thoughts of the period remain relevant in the modern era and are reflected in the contemporary Chinese articulation of soft power and its emphasis on Chinese Diplomacy. Thus, recognizing culture as an effective instrument of soft power and modern statecraft is an example of the pragmatism characterizing contemporary Chinese foreign policies. However, all information in this study is gotten from notable scholars of history, information materials; article, journal and textbook, online resource and individual knowledge, idea and effort.

**DIPLOMACY.**

Before looking at the practice and principle of ancient diplomacy, thorough explanation about the term “Diplomacy” and its general idea. Therefore, Diplomacy as a tool of international relations can be defined as the practice and process of conducting negotiations, holding discussions and meetings between or among accredited representatives of countries and intergovernmental organizations (Bossman E. Asare, 2018). It could also mean the processes in which government on behalf of its citizens interrelate and cooperate with other governments overseas to come up with policies which seems to be of interest of the mass or constituent states. In international relations, representatives are sent from countries to another to hold meetings on behalf of their countries since the full populations of several countries cannot be engaged in discussions held among countries internationally. These representatives are known as Diplomats, they are mobile personnel who carry information from their country to other countries and from other countries to their country.

**ANCIENT DIPLOMACY**.

The term diplomacy is as old as the existence of mankind. Since diplomacy involves or deals with influencing decisions and behaviour for ones benefit or dissolving dispute. So, the term diplomacy has began for long, the only difference is how it has evolved overtime as diplomacy is now evolving at a much faster rate than in the second half of the twentieth century. Ancient diplomacy applied to all solemn documents issued by chancelleries’ especially those containing agreement between sovereigns and it later became identified with International Relations.

Modern diplomacy can however be traced to diplomatic arrangement in Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China e.t.c. this can be seen as diplomacy from antiquity to New diplomacy, more or less like evolution of diplomacy. The evolution of diplomacy can however be broken down into significant and specific eras and its mode of diplomatic application/system, but our main concern here is understanding diplomacy in ancient china.

**ANCIENT CHINESE DIPLOMACY**.

The first records of Chinese and Indian diplomacy date from the 1st millennium BCE. By the 8th century BCE, the Chinese had leagues, missions, and an organized system of polite discourse between their many warring states including resident envoys who served as hostages to the good behaviour of those who sent them. The sophistication of this tradition, which emphasized the practical virtues of [ethical](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethical) behaviour in relations between states (no doubt in reaction to actual amorality), is well documented in the Chinese classics. Four major institutions shaped their relationship with states outside and within their domain and they include;

***THE TRIBUTARY SYSTEM***: the tributary system was the traditional Chinese system for managing foreign relations. By establishing the rule and controlling means and symbolic forms by which foreign countries entered into and conducted their relations with china, the Chinese found in the tributary system an effective mechanism for exacting compliance from neighbouring states on people on important matters of political, defensive, economic and diplomatic concern to china.

According to the usual practice, foreign people would be granted permission to establish trade and contact with china on the condition that their ruler or the ruler’s emissaries demonstrate their subservience to the Chinese emperor by personally bearing him tribute. On presenting the tribute, usually a large token offering of native products or rare and precious commodities, they were also to perform an act of ritual obeisance (anglicized as “kowtow”). Which consisted of three knelling and nine prostrations or bows of the head to the floor in the presence of the emperor.

***MINISTRY OF RITES***: The Ministry or Board of Rites was one of the Six Ministries of government in late imperial China. It existed from the Tang (7th century) until the 1911 Xinhai Revolution. Along with religious rituals and court ceremonial, the Ministry of Rites also oversaw the imperial examination and China's foreign relations. Its functions include;

* Management of imperial court ceremonies and ritual offerings.
* Registration and supervision of Buddhist and Taoist priests within China.
* Management of the Imperial examinations.
* Foreign relations.

***MANDATE OF HEAVEN***: The Mandate of Heaven (Tianming), also known as Heaven’s Mandate, was the divine source of authority and the right to rule of China’s early kings and emperors. The ancient god or divine force known as Heaven or Sky had selected this particular individual to rule on its behalf on earth. An important element of the mandate was that although the ruler had been given great power, he also had a moral obligation to use it for the good of his people, if he did not then his state would suffer terrible disasters and he would lose the right to govern.

***THE EMPEROR*:** The emperors of ancient China had tremendous power and responsibility. Called the ‘Son of Heaven’, he (and once she) was given a divine right to rule over all people but was expected to promote their best interest and not his own. An absolute monarch, although in practice dependent on an inner circle of advisors, the mystique of the emperor was enhanced by his invisibility to ordinary people, secluded as he often was in the imperial palace. To gain a personal audience with the emperor, even if he still remained hidden behind a screen while he sat on his golden dragon throne, was the highest of honours. Perhaps no other ancient ruler was ever as remote or as revered as the Emperor of China.

REFERENCE

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