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**RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY**

**ASSIGNMENT: DISCUSS ANCIENT CHINESE DIPLOMACY**

**INTRODUCTION**: According to Wills (2010) there were several periods on Chinese isolationist tones, because of the view that the rest of the world was poor and backward with little or nothing to offer. Nevertheless, China was a Center of trade from early on its history. Many of China’s interactions with this included, during the 2nd century AD, contacts with representatives of the Roman Empire and during the 13th Century, the visits of venetian traveler Marco Polo.

**Chinese Diplomacy During Various Imperial Dynasty**

**Qin Dynasty**: According Edward (2007) Qin Dynasty in 221BC under the leadership of Ying Zheng was able to conquer the different vassel state under Zhou Dynasty, as well other non-sinicized state. Also, Chinese domain under Emperor Zheng was extended into inner Mongolia and Manchuria to the North and with naval expeditions sent to the south, the indigenous Baiyue of Modern-day. Guangdong and Northern Vietnam on (the latter called Jiaozhi and then annam during the tang dynasty) were also quelled and brought under Chinese rule.

**Han** **Dynasty:** For Ebrey (2010) the time of the Han Dynasty (202 BC-AB220) was a groundbreaking era in the history of imperial China’s foreign relation during the long reign of Emperor Wuohan (141-87BC),the travels of the diplomats at Zang Qian opened up China’s relations with many different Asian territories for the first time. While travelling to the Western Regions in order to seek out an alliance with the Yuezhi against the Xiangou, Zhang Qian was imprisoned by the Xiongnu for many years, but he brought back detailed reports of lands that had been previously unknown to the Chinese. This included details of his travels to the Greek-Hellenized Kingdoms of Fergana (Dayuon) and the Greco-Baclrian Kingdom (Daxia) as well as

reports of Anxi (Persian Empire of Darthia). Tiaozhi (Mesopotamia). Shendu (India), and the Wusun central Asian nomads after his travels, the famous land trading route of silk road leading from China to the Roman Empire was established.

Large (2012) noted that emperor Wu was also known for his successful campaigns against the Xiangnu. He warred against the Kingdom of Wiman Joseon in order to establish the four commandries of Han in Mandiuria, one of which was establish in Northern Korea.

The empire expanded to Southern China and Northern Vietnam, even to the Baiyue kingdom. By the first 1st century, the Chinese also established relations with the kingdom of Funan, centered in what is now Cambodia, but also stretched partly into Burma, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnarn.

Emperor Wu sent his emissary Gan Ying even further in order to reach Rome Mark (2007) revealed that there was subsequent Roman embassies to china years later.

**Sui Dynasty**: Skaff (2009) revealed that 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 which result in Northern Vietnam being 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 Gogurgeo during the three kingdom of Korea depleting not only in troops but ultimately much of the government’s revenue.(Kim,2002)

The grand canal was completed during the Sui dynasty, enhanary indigenous trade between Northern and Southern China by Canal and river traffic. One of the diplomatic highlights of his shortlived dynastic period was Prince Sholoku’s Japanese embassy to China led by Ono Nolmoko in AD 607.

**Tang Dynasty**: The Tang dynasty (618-907) represents another high point for China in terms of its military might, conquest and establishment of vassal and tributaries, foreign trade, and its central political position and cultural status in East Asia. One of the the most ambitious rulers of the dynasty was Emperor Taizong (r. 626-669). He initiated several significant war campaigns in Chinese history, most of them against powerful Turkic group of central Asia. This includes campaigns against Eastern Tuje, Tuyuhun, and the Xueyantuo. Armies were dispatched to invade the oasis states of the Tarim Basin.

The kingdom of Karasahr was captured by Tang forces in 644 and the kingdom Kucha was conquered in 649. The western expansion of the Tang Empire. Continued under Emperor Taizongs successor. Emperor Talzong’s successor, Emperor Gaozong who conquered the Western Turk in 657 led by the Turkic sqaghan Ashina rlelu with an army under the command of General Su Dingfang.

Tang Dynasty: in terms of trade and commerce, Tang dynasty was extended further west to the Arabian Peninsula, East Aprica and Egypt. Also, the seaport at Guangzhou in Southern China became one of the largest seaport in the world, hosting foreign traveler through out maritime Asia. At the time, Guangzhou was a major port along the maritime silk road and involved in heavy with Japan. Tang capital city of Chang’an became well known as a multicultural metropolis filled with foreign travelers, dignitaries, merchants, emissaries and missionaries. So despite the turbulent political environment of the 9th century China, her economy continued to thrive by foreign trade. The Japanese were sending embassies to the Tang Empire as Late as 894.

**Song Dynasty**: This was the period of Chinese weakness (966-1279 AD). In her diplomacy. During the Northern Song Dynasty, Chinese emperors were forced to accept the Khitan Khaghan, rule of the Khitan-led Liao dynasty, as their equals. With powerful sinicized kingdom to its North such as the Tongu-led Western Xia, the Song dynasty was forced to engage in skillful diplomacy. The famous statesman and scientist Shen Kuo and Su-Song were both sent as Song ambassadors to the Liao dynasty in order to settle border disputes.

There were several notable diplomatic missions sent to China from foreign countries during the Song dynasty. This included the embassy of Al-Hakim bi-Amir of Fatimid Egypt for the court of Emperor Zhenzong in 1008, as well as the embassy of Emperor Kulothunga Chola I of the imperial Indian Choladynasty to the court of Emperor shenzong in 1077 AD (Geoff, 2009)

**Yuan Dynasty** (1271-1368): Experienced some level of diplomacy. One of the diplomatic highlights of this period was Chinese embassy to the Cambodian Khmer empire under indravarman III led by the envoy Zhou Daguan (1266-1346) from the years 1296 to 1297. In his report to the Yuan Court, Zhou Daguan described places such as Angkor Wat and everyday life of the Khmer Empire it was during the early years of Kublai reign that Marco Polo (1254-1324) visited China, presumably as far as the previous Song Capital at Hang Zhou, which he described with a great deal of admiration for it science beauty (Harrison,2017)

**The Ming Dynasty** (1368-1644): During this era Hongwu Emperor allowed foreign envoys to visit the capitals Ninjin and Beijing, but he enacted strict legal prohibitions of private maritime trade by Chinese merchants wishing to travel abroad. After the death of Timur, who intended to invade China the relations between the Yongle Emperor’s China and Khruch’s state in Persia and Transoxania state considerably improved.

The greatest diplomatic highlights of the Ming period were the enormous maritime tributary missions and expeditions of the admiral Zheng He (1371-1433), a favoured court eunuch of the Yongle Emperor (r. 1402-1424). Zheng He’s missions docked at ports throughout much of the Asian world, including those in Borneo, the Malay State of the Malacca Sultanate, Sri Lanka, India, Persia, Arabia and East Africa. Meanwhile, the Chinese under the Yongle Emperor invaded northern Vietnam in 1402 and remained there until 1428, when Le Loi led a successful native rebellion against the Chinese occupiers (Kang, 2010).

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