

**STRATEGIC CULTURES AND POLICY FORMULATION: THE DRAGON
WITH THE SNOW LEOPARD AND THE ELEPHANT WITH THE
KAYAK: SINO INDIAN APPROACHES AND PERSPECTIVES
TOWARDS TIBET AND KASHMIR**

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Asia has always fascinated the world with its culture. Still, the Asian nations have completely not yet explored the jubilant role that culture and soft power can play while framing policies though it has proved effective whenever put to use. The two Asian giants have always enjoyed the benefits of using cultural diplomacy and soft power. Their strategic culture did bring them unexpected rewards and recognition. In spite of this, India and China had been thoroughly scrutinized and had to face criticism regarding their treatment towards Tibet and Kashmir respectively. This paper aims to look at the effect the cultural and national ideologies make on the two nations while they frame domestic policies for these regions.

Indian way of regarding Kashmir is as a prestige and honour -very different from the Chinese perseverance of Tibet as an issue of pride. China with all its might had only been trying to silence Tibet and has never really made any efforts to reach out to the Tibetans. China and its ideology has discouraged criticism and has always had a sceptical approach towards anyone who tries to interrogate and deviate from common thought process. Though the attitude has softened over the years, it still exists as part of the popular strategic culture of China. Yet it is of interest here due to the manner in which both nations portray these regions as integral territories.

The effect the Indian and Chinese soft power has on the world is different. The differences in ideologies and policy formulations had created and are creating troubles in the relations between these nations. The time has not yet become a villain who will not allow the wounds to heal, thus it should be taken care of that no further disturbances will occur above the surface or in the comfort level on the thin line of cordial relations that India and China have taken pains to frame during the recent years.

India and China can gain a lot and would be declared invincible powers if they decide to work together and this can be possible only if they apply cultural diplomacy while dealing with each other.

Introduction

The world is waiting for the scenario where the two nations- the rising powers of Asia- India and China would emerge as major economic powers ahead of USA in terms of GNP.

The media in the west has painted the two nations in different manner inspired by their respective culture and civilization. While China is perceived and portrayed as a dragon (a danger in western perspective); India is shown as an elephant (profound and clever but lingering); neglecting the true meaning of these symbols in the native culture of the two nations.

For Indians the elephant symbolizes mental strength, serenity and responsibility. The tusker symbolizes dignity, intelligence, power and tolerance. For China dragon depicts wisdom, tremendous energy, and power. The dragon is said to symbolize and sustain balance in everything in nature for the Chinese.

The lack of understanding and mutual awareness had led to conflicts in the past and recent times; the Sino-Indian relationships though clear in all directions, remain as though in terra incognita while dealing with one another.

Strategic culture is an acquired set of political and military concepts, based on common historical and social occurrences. This can shape the policy of a nation towards other nations and vice versa. The perception of a culture and its images go a long way in determining policy of nations. The cultural approach is seen as part of a nation's soft power.

The paper aims to see how cultural aspect of a country affects its policy formulation. Indian attitude towards Kashmir and Chinese attitude towards Tibet would be briefed and viewed in this perspective.

CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT IN POLICY FORMULATION: SINO INDIAN SCENARIO

Chinese language and manuscript unified the Mandarin and Cantonese speakers. A major share of Indian languages attributes their origin to Sanskrit. Language is seen as a unifying force to overcome diversity and differences; within the nation. It is a tool seeking identity. While pictorial descriptions and figures are of great importance to the Chinese, Indians followed tradition of oral history. The Indian role models are rooted in mythological figures while the Chinese have a great admiration for their historical figures.

China due to its profound attachment with Confucianism still follows the tradition of moving with vigilant steps from a top to bottom process. The proverb "look before you leap" or "crossing the river by feeling the stones" shows the nature of functioning of the Chinese. Though determined; all actions are closely monitored and scrutinized. This might be the reason why in spite of being energized by local units of administration to attempt various administrative experiments and changes; but a failure in which might be an assurance of punishment to the local officials of the party. Though willing to amend and adapt, the sceptical nature disables China to change and adapt as described. Careful examination, dedication and hard work is put in all activities rather than a deep passion for the same.

The existence of the union of India would have been nearly impossible if it was not for the diversity it sustains within. This has in fact given Indians an ability to adapt to any environment. Indians are taught and brought up in a manner; where an individual can survive and move ahead by following two directly opposite views; and this is the reason why one can find an astronomer and astrologer in the same person in India. The same person without a second

thought or doubt follows both. This enable Indians to embrace risk and adapt accordingly instead of relying heavily on the success or failure of the action in question. This trait of Indians has amazed China as the Chinese way of scrutinizing and the on- the-toes attitude towards hard work has drawn praises from India.

These traits have in fact influenced the countries in their policy formulation and administration too.

India finds it difficult to maintain a common structure and pattern of governance across its large strips of national territory. China's inflexible nature in its administration has paved a way for detachment of its outlying provinces. When India cannot claim victories in mobilizing public opinion in favour of swift progress in health, education and infrastructure, China though was able to achieve this, yet the process for raising mass mobilization led by bureaucracy has drawn criticism and often been termed as harmful and coercive.

The Indian philosophy and tradition have been influencing the leaders of not only India but also the world. While Nehru perceived idealism, Gandhi practiced tolerance. India is the land where Arthashastra was born- the base of Indian strategic culture and political tradition. If pondered upon critically and analytically Mahabharata also talks of military and political strategic planning.

Chinese strategy and planning are claimed to be more of a violent and coercive nature as stated in Sun Zi's Art of War. While India is portraying the mantra to hope for peace even while preparations are made for war, Chinese tradition shows to prepare for war believing in conquest. Both nations had been colonies of imperial powers once and their independence struggle had the tinge of the mentioned means to their end.

India and China are trying hard to gain 'amigos' and sympathies towards their respective horizons to validate their policies and actions in South Asia and emerge themselves as 'powers' by making their presence felt. Any action to be noticed and recognized on the world stage has to pass the test of the American eagle eyes, and this would be why the two nations chose America as a soft power battle ground. To further validate this, let the visit by the heads of governments of these two nations to United States be considered. Both leaders were well received by the respective native population residing in United States. Both of them described and tried gaining attention of the world media and downplaying the mistrusts Americans had in them. One cannot completely trust Narendra Modi when he ensures to bring forth a business friendly India free of red tapism and Xi Jinping fails to initiate faith in Chinese attitude towards South China Sea, cyber theft and further devaluation of Yuan. Xi went on to praise American literature and his love for television series like House of Cards.

There was a clear soft power battle between India and China in the US. Though Xi and his wife made an impressive mark, in the world by their American visit, yet only the Indian Prime Minister could receive calls of invitation by the leaders of Iran and Germany to halt and meet them on his return to India.

In the contest for popularity Modi had gained as he made use of cultural scenario of India to a great extent. He portrayed himself as the democratically elected leader along with showcasing his abilities as a democratic leader by narrating the schemes and policies introduced. The idea of involving public opinion and suggestions through social media before and while framing policies; increasing administrative transparency through e-governance and finally establishing personal relation and contact with the public through the 'my government portal';

further enhanced this image of Modi. Indian democratic culture hence had a clean win over Chinese culture of democracy.

India with its potential, is attempting to become a reliable balancing power to China; the major hindrance being the effect of a strong economy on diplomacy. India is slowly moving from curative diplomacy to preventive diplomacy; to fight the cheque book diplomacy of China.

Family is of great relevance to India and China, where generally children like to spend their whole lives with their parents. Care, trust, love and loyalty are synonyms of such family units. Yet one cannot imagine Xi Jinping weep and break down while talking about his mother in a public gathering sharing his dice with Silicon Valley tycoons. Narendra Modi made sure the emotional quotient is triggered while he did so.

The Indian Prime Minister and former American President had greeted each other, forgetting their official roles in bear hugs, as Narendra Modi and Barack Obama- two long lost friends. It is highly awkward to imagine the Chinese leader follow the suit. Even the handshakes they had exchanged showed a physical language lacking amicability and engaging more on terms of duty bound roles. The melting of ice takes a long time here.

All these can be considered part of strategic policy formulation. The Indian strategic culture has been so since independence. One cannot hide his smile on seeing the cartoon where J.L. Nehru is running with open arms shouting 'Hindi -Chini Bhai Bhai' towards Mao Zedong, responding to which the leader of China only has a scorn on his face and hidden behind the mountains are the noses of the rifles of Chinese soldiers. This cartoon in fact encompasses the behavioural patterns of both the nations.

Dragon with the Snow Leopard: China and Tibet

China had believed that the post Mao era was exhibiting a more understanding and conciliatory picture of China. This was proved to be false and the Chinese government considered itself humiliated and embarrassed through the actions of Tibetans demanding independence from the Chinese regime. The event happened the very year Dalai Lama the former ruler of Tibet was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace (1989) and the acceptance speech further infuriated the Chinese as it called for global actions by narrating the human right violations in Tibet. It cannot be denied that Tibet had similar experiences under different foreign regimes; but with China the issue is different, as the Tibetan government had signed the seventeen point agreement recognizing Chinese regime in return for the Chinese potential and promise of protecting Tibet's political structure and the Buddhism the Tibetan Government patronized. Chinese claimed of liberating and emancipating Tibet from the feudal serfdom and brutality.

Tibet was now not just a concern but a valued possession attached with Chinese honour. From a region of reduced importance during the rule of Qing Dynasty, Tibet now rose to be the most prized possession of China. The red flags entering Tibet and the Chinese ecstatic shouts for merging Tibet with the great motherland had an adverse effect on the Tibet population. The popular culture of Tibet and prominently the promises made by China were now challenged.

The Chinese language has already attacked and taken over Tibetan language. Native Tibetan children are now completely unaware of their mother tongue. Language was the most efficient weapon that China used for social engineering in Tibet. When one loses the attachment with native language, native culture becomes a stranger and finally a cultural annexation can guide them to be part of the conqueror culture and ultimately follow and recognize the regime of

the conqueror. When Tibetans are thus transformed socially to be Chinese, no differences can wander out to create issues like minority right violations. The aura of Chinese language overshadows Tibetan language. We must also remember dragon is said to attack after threatening its opponent using its charisma and magnificence.

China considers it a responsibility to check the influence of ‘God King Dictator’- Dalai Lama on Tibet. The proposed ‘Middle way’ approach of Dalai Lama is only regarded a part of the Dalai Lama clique of calling for peace and friendship. Though a world renowned leader, the real danger to Tibet Autonomous Region in China is him, according to the Chinese government. He is held responsible for instigating the happy and content Tibetans against the Chinese regime. This strategic approach of China can be traced to Sun Zi’s Art of War that stresses on coercion, cohesion and belief in conquest in spite of difficult times.

China throughout has only acquainted with a centre with strong and broad powers and has never experienced the effects of granting supremacy on certain issues to regions within. Thus the term ‘autonomy’ has been misinterpreted in this scenario- a legislative, executive and judiciary with independent powers is one of the major criteria to call a region autonomous. The reluctance in adapting so and being sceptical of influences of any such amendments in administration process is the result of the Chinese attitude and culture of monitoring all actions closely as discussed earlier in the paper. Hard work and results and not passion drive the Chinese primarily. Even the majority of the National People’s Congress has little say in the legislature. The dictum of enforcing complete agreement and unity in decisions aborts autonomy. The argus eyed check over the state leaves no room for true self government.

One might wonder why China in spite of all the difficulties and accusations is adamant about Tibet. It is not only because Tibet has become an issue challenging national pride and honour but also because of the Chinese faith and past rooted in Confucianism. A culture of hoping for victory with a never-dying spirit in spite of any danger and hindrance in the path to the ultimate aim can be traced to their roots in Confucianism.

No matter how the Tibetan question is portrayed one has to realize that Tibet is a less developed region wanting skilled people, which, is in abundance in China. The scenario should be so created that no Tibetan should feel the necessity to immolate himself for his land’s liberation. Hence the Chinese dragon, the symbol of benevolence to the Chinese can show path to the snow leopard in the land of thick snow and darkness, but it should ensure that the leopard is allowed to wander as it desires and the dragon should not spit fire on the one it claims to liberate.

TIANXIA SHOULD NOT BE ANY MORE A TABOO FOR TIBETANS

An autonomy to Tibet with less Chinese supervision can do marvels in the region. Let us not forget the dictum ‘the government that governs the least is the best government’.

The Elephant with the Kayak: India and Kashmir

Indian kings were known for paying heed to the complaints and criticisms that their subjects and neighbouring kingdoms had. Yes, we practised and preached tolerance. Beginning with the first Indian Prime Minister Nehru to the serving Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Kashmir was always treated and handled with paternal care and maternal love. Nehru did not want his

homeland and inhabitants to be away from the nation of which he was the Prime Minister. Kashmir was to adore the head of India as a Crown according to Nehru. The present Indian Prime Minister too has boldly made inroads in the strategies of the prolonging Indian policy towards Kashmir. His engagement with the separatist leaders regarding the efforts to be made in Kashmir, his uninvited presence at the party of Nawaz Sharif all should be viewed in the lines of Indian culture of entertaining criticisms and planning accordingly. India has always tried accommodating Kashmir and taken it as a matter of prestige and honour to preserve the state's interests as far as possible since independence.

Patel in May, 1948 wrote to Nehru; "Reports have reached me of considerable discontent both amongst the public, in general, and refugees in particular, in regard of our failure to prevent the inflow of Muslims from Pakistan"; to which Nehru answered, "You will remember that we came to the conclusion two or three months ago that the areas in Delhi city which are now predominantly Muslim should be reserved for Muslims. It is perfectly true that this continuing migration is a tremendous problem for us and I cannot suggest an obvious remedy. It is largely due to deteriorating economic conditions and the Pakistan Government is hardly capable of improving these conditions. Then again how would one pick out Muslims who are undoubtedly citizens of India, to be sent to East Bengal? It is of utmost importance that in spite of political differences between party and party, a general atmosphere of confidence and stability amongst Hindus should be steadily promoted". Nehru had wanted the Hindus to not feel threatened by influx of Muslims into their villages and cities. The sense of national unity and integrity was to be promoted. This was the scenario in the newly independent India. Along with the refugee issue, India also had to showcase the presence in Kashmir and uphold a Hindu state in Muslim surroundings and Pakistan felt it a moral duty to protect the Muslim population which it felt was being done unsuccessfully by India.

India upheld its values of tolerance and compassion during such times. As Arthashastra had stated that happiness of the subjects give a greater boost to the ruler, the framers of Indian policy ensured that their attitude towards Kashmir followed on these grounds. Giving recognition and confidence to Muslim population in regions of Delhi and West Bengal was a strategy to ensure the faith of Kashmir Muslims in Indian administration. Thus, Kashmir, for India became the most efficient gem to showcase its inflexible attitude towards secularism.

To begin with, the indecision of the Kashmir 'raja' King Hari Singh on what he wanted his kingdom to do and his open discussion of an independent Kashmir only served to infuriate Pakistan and irritate India. It was a desperate cry for Indian help from Hari Singh that followed the Pakistan aided tribal infiltration into Kashmir. The Chanakyatantra was applied again. As Chandragupta Maurya was forced to marry daughter of SelucusNicator to avoid further tensions in the Magadh Kingdom by the Greek, similarly, Hari Singh was asked to accede to Indian dominion to avoid any further speculations and tensions in India. Indians have acted effectively only under pressure and this decision of Nehru is considered to be pressurized and influenced by Patel as he believed this was the only time they could convince Raja Hari Singh to act according to how they desired. Now Nehru made a promise, - taking control of Kashmir administration completely, only after a plebiscite, confirming the minds of Kashmir population. Appeasement was the necessity of the time and it is the support of the public according to Kautilya that gives the rulers the power to govern and he described the support was to be gained not from using any form of coercion or force.

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The first elections in Kashmir (1951) though was criticised by UN on the grounds that it is not to be considered similar to the plebiscite, primarily as the goals for both were different, India went ahead with its Kashmir policies. The election of Sheikh Abdullah and his subsequent fall had its effect on the Kashmir population. For India-baiters the allegation was India was now playing the role of saviour of democracy and the role was to be well enacted and maintained. Sheikh Abdullah became the traitor- the democratically elected leader who decided to get autocratic. Indian government through Article 370 gives Kashmir special status and internal autonomy, preserving with the Centre the complete right to decide on defence, foreign affairs and communications. By 1956 Kashmir is allowed to frame and adopt a constitution for itself by India. Very soon India would challenge the UN claim that all these measures would not prove Kashmir to be part of India and the verdict of people of Kashmir is to be considered. A rotting one in the 'apple basket'

Then the next important phase in the Kashmir policy was undertaken during Pakistan's Operation Gibraltar in 1965. The humiliating defeat in the 1962 war with China it was a stab in the back for the Nehruvian policies and it was a tempting necessity for India to uplift her morale and Kashmir by now had become a prestige issue as it was taken to the United Nations. India projected herself as a peace loving and tolerant nation that believes to practice co-operation, mutual trust and respect. To uphold these major values enumerated in Panchasheel, Nehru thought it was better to not gain control of Azad Kashmir. The Indian Army was asked to stop and wait for further correspondence. Many consider this a terrible mistake. India had whole hearted support of Kashmir, Pakistan had an impression they could win over people. But the efforts of public mobilization that Pakistan undertook before the operation was met with a cold shoulder by the Kashmir inhabitants. Nehru did not want to lose the faith the Kashmir had in Indian government. He did not want to project India as an offender or a state that engages in means of violence to meet its ends and get its demands and wishes fulfilled.

Elephant though calm and composed during most of the times, when provoked, turns angry cannot be tamed easily. The Kargil War proves this.

The 'vijishu' (ambitious king or leader) is one who commands and symbolizes power or strength and this strength should be used with wisdom and utmost care to achieve happiness and sustainable development. There should be internal stability, righteousness and an intelligent use of power to enable the state achieve this according to Kautilya. The current approach towards Kashmir and Indian foreign policy is resembles this. The Elephant will not allow the shadow of the crescent moon to fall on the kayak it guards further.

The communication between the Intelligence agencies of India and Pakistan resulted in the recent killing of three of the ten terrorists who were said to have planned to attack on Shiv Rathri this year. It has been a practice by Pakistan to threaten Kashmir to create strains in India. In the early 1990s, training nearly 1000 Kashmiri youth from Kashmir, Pakistan challenged Indian government to the task of maintaining peace in the region. Kashmir assembly was attacked in 2002. Pakistan always had followed a policy of unconventional war which has been subjected to alteration recently due to efforts from the Indian and Pakistan governments. While dealing with Kashmir the government has to also keep in mind that, the other Indian states also are facing various difficulties with administration and the dictum all are equal but some are more equal cannot be applied every time an issue arises in Kashmir. This attitude of Indian government has been exploited to the extent of demanding and flourishing separatism. Removal

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of the AFSPA in certain regions of Kashmir should not merely be viewed as a tool used to win votes but as an appeasement policy. Many claim this would give Kashmir the ability to handle unfavourable situations on its own. Kashmir has to fight all insurgency measures and tensions of separatism, on its own terms too.

Indian government should first try and end the alienation felt by the Kashmiri population towards Kashmir from within, by, if not completely eliminating but at least considerably reducing the favouritism and special affection it is said to have been providing Kashmir. The policy towards Kashmir should be propagated and practised assertively giving a feeling that all Indian states are equal and fall under the shade of the same federal umbrella. This will surely give the Kashmiri brethren an elevated sense of self-reliance, belonging and equality on par with all other Indian states.

Conclusion

The transformation of India's 'Look East' to 'Act East' has pressurized China to involve more actively in the Pacific Ocean. Chinese have grown doubtful of Indian interests in East Asia. The effect has in fact proved to the advantage of India. Increased cooperation, avoiding conflict and an increase in confidence building measures in the border territories, regular dialogues between leaders of the two nations and call for further role in commercial ties between China and India has changed the course of events to benefit both. If both countries avoid misinterpretations, then India and China can evolve by gaining from each other. The new energy that the two nations are experiencing have aided in rewriting the alphabets of India-China relations. According to Manish Chand as he states in his article "Forging A New Vocabulary, India – China Relationship: Transforming Ties", it has converted to A for Asia, B for Business, C for Culture and D for Diplomacy and Development. The Indosphere and Sinosphere has agreed to realize and recognize each other for bettering themselves.

India China relations "are experiencing stable development and facing broad prospects" said a gleaming Chinese President Xi Jinping sitting on a swing with Narendra Modi in Sabarmati. Xi for the first time had hosted a foreign head in his ancestral house.

Indian PM was mesmerized by the visit to Terra Cotta temple preserving the translations of Sanskrit works with the difference in attitude of both leaders invoked a new perspective in diplomacy. The influence of culture cannot be considered merely as a thread in the fabric of policy making here, but it should be considered as the sturdiest and most durable yarn used to strengthen the fabric.

The Indian creativity merged with Chinese techniques and innovation can do marvels. When the Indian actresses run through the mesmerizing flower beds in China, and the Chinese actors fight it out to the rhythm and beats of Bollywood, the end result is not only a treat to the eyes but also acts in bringing out the best in both culture. The moralism that is said to form the base of the philosophies, religions, social norms have been embodied in the popular political cultures of these nations. Though different, the strategic cultures are going to prove beneficial and durable in the inter relations of India and China. The rebirth of Silk Route and the initiative of OROB – are to be considered from this perspective.

The rich culture and past can be commonly traced and put into use in multiple tasks. The Indian application of Kautilya's Mandala system in her foreign relations has necessarily done her victorious stakes while dealing with China. Kautilya's teachings on prakrtikopa [anger of the

people] and dividing rebellion into two- 1] rebellion by people due to unjust policies 2] rebellion by people in the interior or outer regions instigated by the enemy, is still very relevant today for these two nations. Let China and India try and evolve a policy towards Tibet and Kashmir respectively by combining and following the teachings of their military and political experts – Sun Zi and Kautilya.

The recent changes in world politics and international political economy needs to be realized and understood in lieu with the changes it evokes in these Asian powers and Asia as whole. The changing American diplomacy and perspective can be highly influential in this regard.

China's strategy of propagating its culture as the Asian culture can only find a true competitor in India. If India and China draw themselves closer to one another rather than towards Russia and Pakistan respectively, the Asian drama would be the perfect mixture of a Bollywood movie that is admired all around the world.

Soft power and strategic cultural planning have been the winning stakes for India and China most of the time. The two nations have to come together to mould the key to unlock the Asian century. The Doklam incident can be viewed as the perfect example of blending of the soft powers of these nations. The institute at Kunming as yet another. The concept of 'long-xiang' [dragon-elephant] the Chinese perception of their shielding deity of Buddha, itself shows how culture and history can be used to bring these nations together.

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