

# Great Traditions Of Statesmanship In The Works Of Ancient Chinese And Indian Thinkers

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## ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the early geopolitical doctrines, the reasons for their emergence and their role in the development of international relations. The views of thinkers who greatly contributed to the development of early geopolitical knowledge in ancient China and India are highlighted. The location of their country, form of government, natural-geographical, socio-economic, logistical possibilities are highlighted in their views. In the analysis of processes in the region, the methods of analysis and synthesis, historicity and logic, comparative comparison, and generalization are appropriately used.

**Keywords:** Central Asia, Turan, Great Silk Road, geography, logistics, national interest, geographical environment, geopolitical factor, demography.

## INTRODUCTION

Further development of relations with our country's traditional partners, giving priority to expanding the geography of foreign relations, and broadening cooperation with traditional strategic partners in the Asia-Pacific region constitute important directions of our foreign policy based on good-neighborliness and a practical spirit [1]. China and India have long played a significant role as key branches in foreign economic relations conducted through the Great Silk Road. Naturally, the historical roots of economic relations with these regions go back to very ancient times.

In the earliest periods of human history, human communities chose places on earth that were most favorable for their livelihood and settled there. By "favorable conditions," one should understand the level of development of the productive forces achieved by humanity at that particular stage. Within the scope of their intellectual and practical knowledge, humanity developed its traditions of statehood within its own "oikumene" — the inhabited and known world. At the same time, people gradually expanded the sphere of their activities in their

own unique ways. Due to the existence of different civilizations in various parts of the world, this expansion soon led to conflicts of interests and disputes.

Geopolitical processes and doctrines did not emerge in a vacuum, nor did they arise as a result of any accidental social impulse. From the very beginning of the formation of early statehood traditions, analyzing and studying processes caused by various forms of collective human activity, as well as developing and implementing appropriate measures, have always carried great importance. Considerable attention was paid to understanding how a particular political decision, its consequences, and its impact on the development of society were connected with the geographical position of the state. Therefore, when developing political theories related to geopolitical processes, thinkers considered it necessary to take into account the interconnection and mutual influence between political norms and geographical space.

As in Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India, the first civilizations in China also began to emerge around the

great rivers Huang He and Yangtze during the 3rd–2nd millennia BCE. The ancient Chinese state arose in the middle reaches of the Huang He (Yellow River). Since the Huang He, also described as the “wandering river” and the “river bringing a thousand disasters,” frequently changed its course and often flooded, the population sought refuge on elevated lands.

At the end of the second millennium BCE, representatives of the Zhou tribe began the unification of Chinese lands and established the great state known as “Zhou.” Because of the vastness of the state, its rulers referred to it as the “Middle Kingdom” or the “Victorious Kingdom,” while they called themselves the “Sons of Heaven.” Nearly all of Central China became part of this empire.

During the 8th–7th centuries BCE, due to a number of reasons, the central authority of the Zhou state began to weaken. Governors of certain peripheral provinces sought independence from royal authority. Taking advantage of the attacks of nomadic tribes on China, populations in the frontier regions separated and began establishing their own states. Thus, the long historical period of the 6th–5th centuries BCE became known as the era of the “Warring States.” At the same time, the “period of contending kingdoms” also began in China. Wars between the supreme rulers of the “Middle Kingdom” empire and the rulers of the seceded states continued for more than 200 years. This period ended in the 3rd century BCE when the ruler of the Qin state eliminated all rivals and established a unified state.

The process of unifying China into a single state was led by the ruler of the Qin state, one of the Chinese kingdoms. The ruler of Qin defeated his rivals and united China under his authority. Thereafter, he adopted the name Qin Shi Huangdi (246–210 BCE), meaning “The First Emperor of Qin.” The ruler divided his state into 36 provinces and appointed imperial governors to administer each of them. *Aslida qattiqqo‘l odam bo‘lgan Sin Shixuandi o‘z raqiblarini shafqatsizlarcha qirib tashladi. Sin Shixuandi hukmronligi davrida yagona va markazlashgan davlat tiklandi. Sin Shixuandi dehqonchilik, hunarmandlik va savdo-sotiq rivojlanishiga imkon bergan bir qancha islohotlar o‘tkazdi. Buyuk geografik kashfiyotlar davridan Xitoyni yevropaning ba‘zi tillarida “China” (Sun, Sin so‘zlari talaffuzi) deb atala boshlandi. Keyinchalik mamlakatning shimoliy yerlarini mo‘g‘ullarga mansub kidan jamoasi tomonidan egallanadi. Mo‘g‘ulcha “kidan” etnonimi turk tillarida “xitoy” deb talaffuz etila*

*boshlandi*[2].

The Qin state was surrounded on the western and northern sides by vast deserts. These boundless territories were inhabited by the Xiongnu tribes. The struggle against the Xiongnu occupied a special place in the geopolitical strategy of Chinese rulers. The Himalayan mountain system in the south of the country and the endless ocean in the east created major obstacles to entering the international arena. However, through the Gobi Desert it was possible to establish connections with Davan (Ferghana), and through it with Iran and the countries of the Mediterranean, thereby developing socio-economic relations. For this reason, during the reign of Qin Shi Huangdi, the construction of the Great Wall of China was initiated in order to protect China from the constant attacks of the nomadic Xiongnu. In ancient times, the wall served as a serious obstacle for enemy armies, since cavalry forces could not easily cross it, while nomadic peoples were still unable to capture fortresses through direct assault.

The ancient Chinese thinker Laozi, who lived during the 6th–5th centuries BCE, served as an archivist at the court of the Zhou rulers. Dissatisfied with the events taking place at the royal court and in the surrounding environment, the thinker decided to leave the kingdom. The head of the border customs post demanded that Laozi pay a customs duty in order to cross the border. Having no possessions, Laozi was forced to give the guard his work *Daodejing*. After this event, Laozi was never seen again. The *Daodejing* (“The Book of the Way and Virtue”), consisting of 5,000 hieroglyphs, cannot be regarded entirely as a geopolitical treatise. Nevertheless, it contains information of a geopolitical nature [2]. For example, when discussing large and small kingdoms, Laozi touched upon the hydraulic theory of statehood — namely, the role of rivers in the development of states and societies. He also paid considerable attention to the importance of agreements, alliances, and coalitions in the occupation and control of geopolitical space.

Although Laozi’s disciple Confucius is primarily famous for his moral teachings, geopolitical elements can also be found within his doctrine. According to his ideas, if the strong but cruel and despotic state of Qi were transformed, it could be compared to the morally weak kingdom of Lu. If reforms occurred in Lu, it could achieve the highest level of ethical governance [3]. The teachings of Mencius (Mengzi) also contain geopolitical aspects. In particular, he emphasized that within the “four seas,” meaning all four

corners of the world or the four geostrategic directions, Confucian ideas such as respect for elders, care for people, and compassion should be widely disseminated. For a ruler, the principal task was considered to be the subjugation of unruly rulers and the elimination of pressure from barbarian tribes. During this period, ancient China had fragmented into nine kingdoms. Concerning whether the state of Qi could resist the remaining eight kingdoms, he drew the following geopolitical conclusion: “The small cannot withstand the great, the few cannot resist the many, and the weak cannot prevail against the strong” [4].

If we pay attention to ancient Chinese writing, we can see that it employed a hieroglyphic script in which entire words were represented by individual characters. Initially, the Chinese wrote on bamboo strips. They cut bamboo into long narrow tablets and inscribed hieroglyphs on them with sharpened wooden sticks using ink prepared from tree sap. Since it was only possible to write vertically on these thin and long strips, the tradition of writing from top to bottom was preserved in later periods as well.

The country of India occupied the Indian subcontinent as well as parts of the valleys of the Indus and Ganges rivers in Asia. In terms of natural conditions, the country resembled Egypt and Mesopotamia. A warm climate, together with broad rivers carrying fertile silt, created favorable conditions for the emergence and development of agriculture. The Himalayan mountains served as a natural defensive wall in the northeast, protecting the region from enemies and cold winds.

During the first millennium BCE, several states emerged in India, including Magadha, Kosala, Malla, and others. After conquering Central Asia, Alexander of Macedon invaded the territory of Punjab in 327 BCE. The rulers of the states located in this region offered fierce resistance to the invaders. With great difficulty, Alexander managed to reach the Indus Valley, but in 325 BCE he returned to Babylon. By 318 BCE, the Greek-Macedonian armies had been completely expelled from India. The struggle against the Greek and Macedonian forces was led by the famous Indian commander Chandragupta. After the expulsion of the Greek and Macedonian armies, Chandragupta became the founder of the Mauryan state, which incorporated all the states of Northern India into its structure.

In ancient India, during the reign of Chandragupta I, the founder of the Mauryan Empire (4th–3rd centuries BCE), the Brahmin Kautilya, who served as a court official,

composed the work Arthashastra (“The Book of Politics”). This work is considered an important heritage of ancient Indian culture and broadly illuminates various aspects of Indian social life. According to some sources, the Arthashastra was written over many years by several authors. The work pays great attention to carefully considered and practically tested principles, such as attracting and settling populations in conquered or uninhabited territories, organizing the central districts and administrative regions of the kingdom, establishing settlements, allocating land plots to different social groups, granting privileges to new settlers, exempting them from taxes [5], and similar matters.

Based on the analysis of the emergence of early geopolitical knowledge, the need for it, and its role in the development of international relations, the following conclusions may be proposed:

First, the emergence of early geopolitical knowledge and the need for it demonstrate that geopolitical factors have occupied a particular place and significance in everyday life since the very appearance of human society. Even in periods when people were not engaged in intellectual labor, they still sought to choose the most suitable space and conditions for sustaining their livelihood and ensuring a decent way of life.

Second, when analyzing the extent to which political decisions adopted by governments concerning society and social life were effective or ineffective, as well as evaluating their positive or negative consequences, it is important to take geopolitical factors into consideration.

Third, although all doctrines, programs, and concepts developed either by individuals or governments are products of intellectual activity based on social reality, they are implemented within a geographical space. In other words, geography has served as the arena in which the above-mentioned political theories, teachings, programs, and doctrines find their realization and practical application.

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