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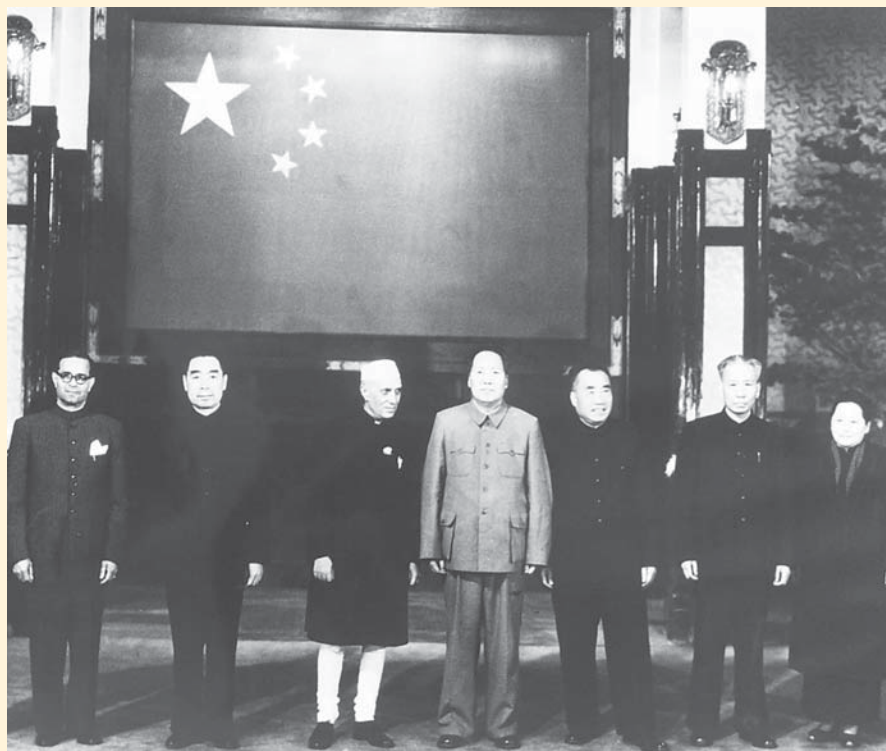
Panchsheel

Panchsheel

Panchsheel was born fifty years ago in response to a world asking for a new set of principles for the conduct of international relations that would reflect the aspirations of all nations to co-exist and prosper together in peace and harmony. Fifty years later, on the golden anniversary of *Panchsheel*, the chord that was struck in 1954 still rings pure and true in a world yet seeking the lodestar that will guide it into the harbour of peaceful co-existence.

Panchsheel, or the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, were first formally enunciated in the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India signed on April 29, 1954, which stated, in its preamble, that the two Governments “have resolved to enter into the present Agreement based on the following principles: -

- i. Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty,
- ii. Mutual non-aggression,
- iii. Mutual non-interference,
- iv. Equality and mutual benefit, and
- v. Peaceful co-existence.”



(From left to right) Amb. N. Raghavan, Premier Zhou Enlai, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Chairman Mao Zedong, Zhu De, Liu Shaoqi and Song Qingling
in Beijing, October 19, 1954



(From left to right) Premier Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Vice President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Chairman Mao Zedong, Amb. R.K. Nehru, Liu Shaoqi, Li Jishen and Guo Moruo
★ Shri K. Natwar Singh, China 1957

Two months later, during the visit of Premier Zhou Enlai to India, he and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru issued a Joint Statement on June 28, 1954 that elaborated their vision of *Panchsheel* as the framework, not only for relations between the two countries, but also for their relations with all other countries, so that a solid foundation could be laid for peace and security in the world. *Panchsheel*, as envisioned by its creators, gave substance to the voice of newly established countries who were seeking the space to consolidate their hard won independence, as it provided an alternative ideology dedicated to peace and development of all as the basis for international interaction, whether bilateral or multilateral. At that time, the two Prime Ministers also expressed the hope in the Joint Statement that the adoption of *Panchsheel* “will also help in creating an area of peace which as circumstances permit can be enlarged thus lessening the chances of war and strengthening the cause of peace all over the world.”

This vision caught the imagination of the peoples of Asia and the world. *Panchsheel* was incorporated into the Ten Principles of International Peace and Cooperation enunciated in the Declaration issued by the April 1955 Bandung Conference of 29 Afro-Asian countries. The universal relevance of *Panchsheel* was emphasised when its tenets were incorporated in a resolution on peaceful co-existence presented by India, Yugoslavia and Sweden, and unanimously adopted on December 11, 1957, by the United Nations General Assembly. In 1961, the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations in Belgrade accepted



Premier Zhou Enlai arriving for the Banquet at Rashtrapati Bhavan with Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Mrs. Indira Gandhi, June 26, 1954

Panchsheel as the principled core of the Non-Aligned Movement. Down the years, the ethos of *Panchsheel* continued to be reflected in world events even if there was no conscious attribution, finding expression in the position of the developing countries in the North-South dialogue, and in other groupings.

The timeless relevance of *Panchsheel* is based on its firm roots in the cultural traditions of its originators, two of the world's most ancient civilisations. The linkage that was established by the spread of Buddhism in China laid the historical basis for the formulation of the principles of *Panchsheel* by India and China.

On the 50th anniversary of *Panchsheel*, we can without hesitation say that its relevance, as embodied in the Joint Statement of 1954, shines as brightly today as when it was first conceived. *Panchsheel* was developed in the context of a post-colonial world where many were seeking an alternative ideology dedicated to peace and development of all. Fifty years later, the world is now searching for an alternative to the adversarial constructs that dominated the Cold War era. Countries all over the world are focusing on creating extended and mutually supportive arrangements, and attempting to define a new economic, social and political world order in the context of globalisation, non-traditional security threats and the quest for multi-polarisation.



Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Premier Zhou Enlai and Mrs. Indira Gandhi at the reception in New Delhi on June 26, 1954

Panchsheel can provide the ideological foundation for this developing paradigm of international interaction, allowing all nations to work towards peace and prosperity in cooperation, while maintaining their national identity, spirit and character. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru rightly said that “those who desire peace for the world must know once for all that there can be no equilibrium or stability for either the East or the West unless all aggression, all imperialist domination, all forced interference in other countries’ affairs end completely.” Today, *Panchsheel* can help the world move away from the traditional concepts of balance of power and competitive security, the consequent searching for an enemy, and the predicating of activities on conflicts rather than cooperation.

However, in today’s world, it is not enough that *Panchsheel* be promoted as an alternative ideology that empowers the less-developed. It should be made clear that *Panchsheel* is an ideology for the entire world, and is as relevant to the developed countries of the globe as it is to the less-developed. What should be stressed today is that the principles of *Panchsheel* are not just empowering principles, they are also guiding principles that enshrine a certain code of behaviour. Their essence is the non-use of power, the approach of tolerance, “of living one’s life, learning from others but neither interfering nor being interfered with”, and the obligation to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. It may not be out of place in a world searching for moral certainties to emphasise this message of *Panchsheel*.

“The Prime Ministers reaffirmed these principles and felt that they should be applied in their relations with other countries in Asia as well as other parts of the world. If these principles are applied not only between various countries but also in international relations generally, they would form a solid foundation for peace and security, and fears and apprehensions that exist today would give place to a feeling of confidence.

The Prime Ministers recognised that different social and political systems exist in various parts of Asia and the world. If, however, the above-mentioned principles are accepted and acted upon, and there is no interference by any one country with another, these differences should not come in the way of peace or create conflicts. With assurance of territorial integrity and sovereignty of each country, and of non-aggression, there would be peaceful co-existence and friendly relations between the countries concerned. This would lessen the tensions that exist in the world today and help in creating a climate of peace.

(Joint Statement issued on June 28, 1954 during the visit of Premier Zhou Enlai of China to India)



Premier Zhou Enlai at the Banquet held in his honour by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on June 27, 1954

“These principles are good not only to our two countries but for others as well...each country would have freedom to follow its own policy and work out its own destiny learning from others, cooperating with others, but basing itself essentially on its own genius.”

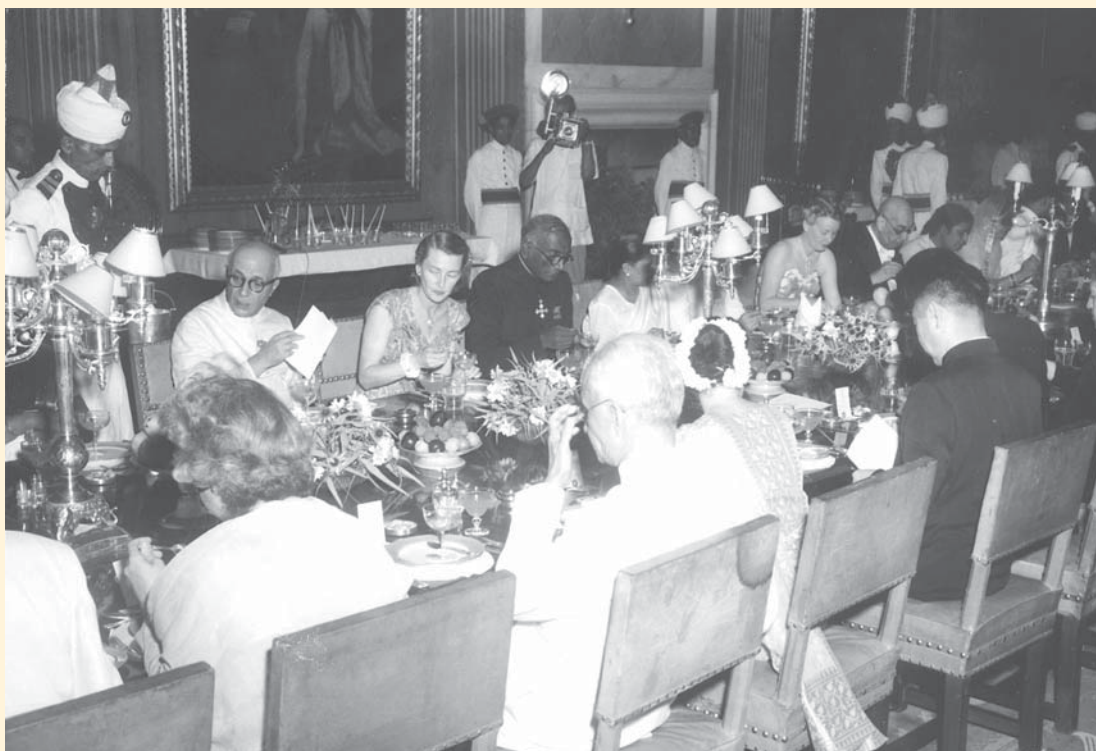
(Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking at banquet held in honour of Premier Zhou Enlai in New Delhi on June 26, 1954)



President Dr. Rajendra Prasad presenting a personal memento to Premier Zhou Enlai at Rashtrapati Bhavan on June 27, 1954

“It is in no spirit of pride or arrogance that we pursue our own independent policy. We would not do otherwise unless we are false to everything India has stood for in the past and stands for today. We welcome association and friendship with all and the flow of thought and ideas of all kind, but we reserve the right to choose our own path. That is the essence of *Panchsheel*.”

(Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking in the Lok Sabha, September 15, 1955)



A view of the Banquet held by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in honour of the Chinese Premier

“I do think it was a very considerable achievement for the United Nations, and for the world, to have passed such a declaration unanimously and accepted in substance those principles. The principles represent the approach of tolerance, of non-interference, of living one’s life, learning from others but neither interfering nor being interfered with.”

(Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, referring in January 1958 to the UN Resolution on Co-existence adopted on December 11, 1957)

“Only with coexistence can there be any existence. We regard non-interference and non-intervention as basic laws of international behaviour.”

(Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in her inaugural speech at the Seventh NAM Summit, New Delhi, March 7, 1983)

Panchsheel

“In 1954, India and China enunciated the *Panchsheel*, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The principles we commended commanded scant acceptance then. The world was too intent on pursuing the path of confrontation to consider the alternative path that *Panchsheel* represented. Now, thirty tortured years later, the trajectory which the Five Principles indicated for the evolution of the world order is beginning to emerge as the world’s path. We believe, as you do, that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence provide the best way to handle relations between nations. Bloc politics and spheres of influence lead only to conflict, sharpening international relations.”

(Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Beijing, December 19, 1988)



*Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru with the Chinese Premier
at the Banquet held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on June 26, 1954*



President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Vice President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru with the Chinese Premier at Rashtrapati Bhavan on June 26, 1954

“The two sides emphasized that the Five Principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, which were jointly initiated by India and China, which have proved full of vitality through the best of history, constitute the basic guiding principles for good relations between states. These principles also constitute the basic guidelines for the establishment of a new international political order and the New International Economic Order. Both sides agreed that their common desire was to restore, improve and develop India-China good-neighbourly and friendly relations on the basis of these principles.”

(Joint Press Communiqué issued on December 23, 1988 during the visit of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to China)



*Premier Zhou Enlai at the Banquet at
Rashtrapati Bhavan on June 26, 1954 with Vice President
Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Mrs. Indira Gandhi*

“The two sides reaffirmed their readiness to continue to develop friendly, good neighbourly and mutually beneficial relations on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence jointly initiated by India and China, for they believed that cooperation between India and China is in the fundamental and long term interests of the peoples of the two countries and is conducive to peace and stability in Asia and the world.”

(Joint Press Communiqué issued on December 16, 1991 in New Delhi during the visit of Premier Li Peng to India)

“The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as the two sides), have entered into the present Agreement in accordance with the Five Principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence and with a view to maintaining peace and tranquillity in areas along the line of actual control in the India-China border areas.”

(Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas signed on September 7, 1993 in Beijing.)

“...We have already shown the ability to conceptualise the principles that should guide international relations when we, together, evolved the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, or *Panchsheel* as they are known in India. These principles remain as valid today as they were when they were drafted.”

(Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, Beijing University, September 9, 1993)



Premier Zhou Enlai bids farewell to K.M. Pannikar at New Delhi, June 28, 1954

“Believing that it serves the fundamental interests of the peoples of India and China to foster a long-term good-neighbourly relationship in accordance with the Five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence.”

(Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures in the Military Field Along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas signed on November 29, 1996.)

“...I believe that in the world as it is emerging there is an area of larger issues on which India and China can cooperate in the international field, for peace and stability in the world, for equality and justice for the developing countries, for an equitable world trade order, in short for implementing the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence.”

(President K.R. Narayanan, Beijing University, May 30, 2000)



Premier Zhou Enlai seen off at New Delhi by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on June 28, 1954

“Both sides are committed to developing their long-term constructive and cooperative partnership on the basis of the principles of *Panchsheel*, mutual respect and sensitivity for each other’s concerns and equality”

(Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation Signed on June 23, 2003 in Beijing.)

“One cannot wish away the fact that before good neighbours can truly fraternize with each other, they must first mend their fences. After a hiatus of a few decades, India and China embarked on this important venture a few years ago. We have made good progress. I am convinced that, with steadfast adherence to the Five principles of peaceful coexistence, with mutual sensitivity to the concerns of each other, and with respect for equality, our two countries can further accelerate this process so that we can put this difference firmly behind us.”

(Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee, Beijing University, June 23, 2003)