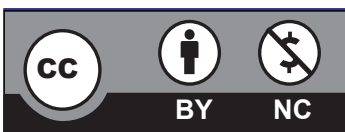


Soft Power- Track Two Diplomacy: Insights into Nepal-Japan Relations

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Abstract

The study delves into the cultural exchanges and historical context that have shaped these ties, particularly emphasizing the role of Buddhist Sanskrit scriptures. A key figure in this narrative is Rev. Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese Buddhist monk whose efforts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries exemplify the principles of scripture diplomacy and soft power. The primary aim is to analyze how Kawaguchi's activities contributed to enhancing Nepal-Japan relations and to draw broader implications for soft power diplomacy in contemporary international relations. The article employs qualitative analysis, examining historical documents, cultural exchanges, and the impact of educational initiatives on diplomatic relations. The results underscore the significance of cultural and educational interactions in fostering and sustaining diplomatic relations. Kawaguchi's contributions highlight the potential of soft power as a diplomatic tool, suggesting that cultural diplomacy can effectively strengthen bilateral ties. This study provides valuable insights into the role of soft power diplomacy in modern international relations, particularly through the lens of Japan and Nepal's historical connections. It emphasizes the importance of educational and cultural exchanges in building and maintaining diplomatic relationships.

Keywords: soft power, track 2 diplomacy, Nepal-Japan relations, cultural exchange, Buddhist Sanskrit texts, Ekai Kawaguchi

Introduction

The term "diplomacy" has evolved significantly over time, tracing its roots back to ancient Greece. The word originates from the Greek "diploun," meaning "to perform double," suggesting the dual nature of diplomacy in negotiations. The term "diplomas" referred to the copper identity cards used by ancient Greek police officials to patrol roads, representing the early formalization of diplomatic functions.

In the modern era, the Oxford Dictionary defines diplomacy as "the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys" (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). This definition highlights the key aspects of diplomacy as the administration of international affairs through negotiations, particularly carried out by state officials.

Historical narratives, such as the settlement of the border dispute between the city-states of Lagash and Umma in 2850 BCE and the treaty between Egypt's Pharaoh Ramesses II and the Hittite prince Hattusilis in 1280 BCE, demonstrate the long-standing importance of diplomacy in international relations (Doe, 2020; Smith, 2018). These early examples showcase the use of diplomacy in conflict resolution and the establishment of diplomatic ties between civilizations.

Modern diplomacy is the art and practice of managing international relations with a focus on communication, negotiation, and dispute resolution. It involves the use of various tools and strategies to promote national interests, maintain peace, and foster cooperation between nations.

Rational of the Study

Although Nepal and Japan have maintained diplomatic and cultural ties for an extended period, a significant knowledge gap exists regarding the impact of soft power and scriptural diplomacy on these bilateral relations. This gap is particularly evident in academic literature, where the historical and cultural exchanges—especially concerning the transmission of ancient Buddhist Sanskrit texts—have not been adequately explored.

The lack of comprehensive studies hampers the recognition of the substantial contributions that cultural and educational exchanges make in fostering mutual understanding and collaboration between the two nations. Understanding the role of soft power in this context is crucial, as it illuminates how non-coercive strategies have been employed to strengthen ties and promote cooperation.

The study's conclusions highlight the value of educational and cultural contacts in establishing and maintaining diplomatic ties. Soft power diplomacy has broader ramifications in modern international relations, and this study emphasizes the achievements of Rev. Ekai Kawaguchi by examining the historical background, cultural interactions, and the role of Buddhist Sanskrit scriptures. It underscores the importance of soft power and scriptural diplomacy in fostering stronger bilateral ties and offers insightful perspectives and suggestions for future diplomatic initiatives.

Furthermore, with the increasing influence of China in the region, it is essential to reassess and highlight Japan's unique approach to soft power, which emphasizes low-profile engagement and cultural diplomacy. Japan's efforts in humanitarian assistance, educational exchanges, and cultural initiatives have the potential to enhance its standing in Nepal, contrasting with the more overt and sometimes coercive strategies employed by other nations.

In light of these factors, this research aims to fill the existing gaps in knowledge by examining the historical context and contemporary implications of soft power and scriptural diplomacy in Japan-Nepal relations. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how these dynamics shape bilateral ties and influence broader international relations.

Objective of the Study

To investigate the cultural and historical connections between Japan and Nepal while evaluating the effects of scriptural diplomacy and soft power, with the aim of providing analysis and recommendations for future diplomatic procedures.

Literature Review

Historical Context and Evolution of Diplomacy

The name of an ancient Greek language has historically been used to explain the origin of the word "diplomacy." Over a very long period, the idea underwent substantial evolution. The Greek word "diploun," which means "to perform double," is where the word "diplomacy" originates, indicating the dual character of discussions. The word "diplomas" refers to the copper identity cards that ancient Greek officers used to patrol roads and marks the beginning of the formalization of diplomatic functions. The Oxford Dictionary defines diplomacy as the administration of foreign affairs by means of negotiations, particularly carried out by envoys or ambassadors.

Early historical narratives, such as the settlement of the border dispute between Lagash and Umma in 2850 BCE and the treaty between Egypt's Ramesses II and the Hittite prince Hattusilis in 1280 BCE, demonstrate the importance of diplomacy. It is acknowledged that modern diplomacy is the art and practice of managing international relations with a focus on communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution (Doe, 2020; Smith, 2018).

Soft Power Diplomacy: Definition and Mechanisms

Soft power diplomacy refers to the approach wherein a nation uses persuasion and encouragement, as opposed to coercion or exchange of money, to achieve its foreign policy goals. Joseph Nye introduced this idea, which contrasts with hard power, which depends on financial and military force. By using cultural influence, political principles, and foreign policies that are viewed as justifiable and moral, soft power seeks to sway other people's preferences through attractiveness and appeal (Nye, 2004).

Soft power diplomacy operates through several channels that increase a nation's appeal and clout. These include educational exchanges that draw in foreign students and promote a country's principles; diplomatic initiatives that forge alliances and promote goodwill; and cultural diplomacy, in which nations export their cultural

heritage via music, movies, and other artistic mediums. Communication and the media are essential for the dissemination of political ideas and cultural values. Furthermore, a nation's soft power can be greatly increased by its foreign policy if it is seen as legitimate and consistent with international standards (Nye, 2008).

Types of Soft Power Diplomacy

Soft power diplomacy comes in a variety of forms, each of which makes use of distinct facets of a nation's influence:

Cultural Diplomacy

Consists of advancing cultural resources including literature, the arts, and historical legacy. Initiatives such as international film festivals, art exhibitions, and cultural exchange programs are examples of this (Cull, 2008).

Public Diplomacy

Directly interacts with foreign audiences in order to start a conversation with the goal of educating and influencing them. This includes social media outreach, foreign broadcasting services, and public speaking engagements by well-known people (Nye, 2008).

Educational Diplomacy

Aims to draw in researchers and students from throughout the world by establishing networks of influence through collaborative research projects, educational exchanges, and scholarships (Loomis, 2011).

Economic Diplomacy

Builds positive ties and fosters growth through the use of trade policies, investment, and economic help; this improves a country's standing and influence internationally (Saner & Yiu, 2003).

Scripture Diplomacy

This is the practice of promoting intercultural and interfaith communication using sacred texts and spiritual principles. "Scripture diplomacy" is an important instance of soft power in the Nepalese setting. One notable example is when Japanese Buddhist monk and scholar Ekai Kawaguchi offered the Tripitaka to Nepal's then-prime minister, Chandra Shamsheer Rana (Deshar, 2020).

The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines (Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā), which was given to the French Republic in 1898, is another noteworthy example. This manuscript was presented by Deb Shamsher, the prime minister of Nepal, and given to Sylvain Lévi, a professor at the Collège de France, by Chandra Shamsher, Deb Shamsher's brother and future prime minister (College de France, n.d.). It is a part of the collection of Sanskrit manuscripts at the Institute of Indian Studies Library. These actions serve as an example of how Nepal strengthened its soft power and established diplomatic ties by utilizing its rich religious and cultural legacy.

Multi-Track Diplomacy and Soft Power Diplomacy: A Holistic Approach to International Relations

A comprehensive method to conflict resolution known as "multi-track diplomacy" entails numerous interconnected activities and players operating at various societal levels (Diamond & McDonald, 1993). It places a strong emphasis on talking and negotiating with different societal players to promote peace. Multi-track diplomacy is enhanced by soft power diplomacy, which emphasizes the use of attraction and persuasion over coercion to achieve foreign policy objectives. The notion of soft power, as proposed by Joseph Nye (2004), emphasizes the significance of political principles, cultural impact, and policies that are viewed as just and moral. To increase the efficacy of peacebuilding initiatives, soft power diplomacy is frequently incorporated into multitrack diplomacy strategies.

Thanks to technical improvements and globalization, soft power diplomacy has evolved into an important field in the post-Cold War era. Soft power has become an essential part of multi-track diplomacy as countries realize the importance of media influence, educational exchanges, and cultural diplomacy (Nye, 1990). This integration is part of a larger strategy that uses soft power activities at the official, informal, and grassroots levels to address underlying problems, foster conditions that are favorable to conflict resolution, and establish trust (Cull, 2008).

Tracks of Multi-Track Diplomacy

Based on societal interactions in conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes, multi-track diplomacy is commonly divided into three primary tracks (Diamond & McDonald, 1993):

Track I

This entails formal talks on ceasefires, peace negotiations, treaties, and other formal agreements between senior military and political figures. Track I is frequently restricted to a small group of national stakeholders and is commonly linked to power-based, deal-brokering diplomacy by external mediators.

Track II

This section covers unofficial, casual exchanges between academics, religious authorities, and civil society organizations, among other non-governmental entities. These initiatives seek to increase mutual trust, deal with underlying problems, and foster an atmosphere that is favorable to formal talks. Since Track II diplomacy uses public, cultural, and educational diplomacy to promote understanding and goodwill amongst people, it is closely related to soft power diplomacy.

Track III

This includes community-based initiatives involving private industry, people, and local communities. Track III activities center on encouraging community-level peace initiatives, addressing local complaints, and developing social cohesion.

Conceptual Framework

With a particular focus on relations between Nepal and Japan, the conceptual framework for this study is based on the interaction between soft power diplomacy and multi-track diplomacy. The following essential elements are highlighted by the framework:

Soft Power Diplomacy

Soft power diplomacy involves the use of cultural, educational, and religious exchanges to influence and attract other nations. This study examines how Nepal and Japan have utilized

soft power, particularly through the exchange of Buddhist Sanskrit texts and the efforts of individuals like Ekai Kawaguchi. Soft power is characterized by the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction rather than coercion or payment (Nye, 2004).

Multi-Track Diplomacy

Multi-track diplomacy encompasses various levels of diplomatic engagement, including official (Track I), unofficial (Track II), and grassroots (Track III) efforts. This study explores how these different tracks have been employed to foster Nepal-Japan relations. Multi-track diplomacy emphasizes the importance of engaging various societal actors to foster peace through dialogue and negotiation (Diamond & McDonald, 1993).

Scripture Diplomacy

A unique aspect of soft power diplomacy, scripture diplomacy involves the use of religious texts and spiritual values to build cultural and diplomatic ties. This study focuses on the role of Buddhist Sanskrit texts in enhancing Nepal-Japan relations. Notable examples include the presentation of the Tripitaka to Chandra Shamsher Rana by Ekai Kawaguchi and the gift of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines to the French Republic (College de France, n.d.).

Cultural and Educational Exchanges

Cultural and educational exchanges are critical mechanisms of soft power diplomacy, facilitating mutual understanding and cooperation. This study investigates the impact of cultural and educational exchanges on bilateral relations between Nepal and Japan. These exchanges include the promotion of cultural assets, public diplomacy, and academic collaborations (Cull, 2008; Loomis, 2011).

Theoretical Background

The theoretical background of this study is grounded in several key theories and concepts that provide a foundation for understanding the mechanisms and impact of soft power and multi-track diplomacy in Nepal-Japan relations.

Soft Power Theory

Introduced by Joseph Nye, soft power theory posits that countries can achieve their foreign

policy objectives through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payment. Soft power relies on cultural influence, political values, and foreign policies that are seen as legitimate and moral (Nye, 2004). This theory provides the foundation for understanding how Nepal and Japan have leveraged cultural and educational exchanges to enhance their bilateral relations.

Multi-Track Diplomacy

Developed by Diamond and McDonald (1993), multi-track diplomacy is a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution and international relations that involves multiple interconnected activities and actors working across different levels of society. This approach emphasizes the importance of engaging various societal actors to foster peace through dialogue and negotiation. The study applies this theory to analyze the different tracks of diplomacy employed in Nepal-Japan relations.

Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy involves the promotion of cultural assets such as arts, literature, and heritage to enhance a country's attractiveness and influence (Cull, 2008). This concept is integral to understanding the role of cultural exchanges in Nepal-Japan relations, particularly through the transmission of Buddhist Sanskrit texts.

Educational Diplomacy

Educational diplomacy focuses on attracting international students and scholars, creating networks of influence through educational exchanges, scholarships, and joint research programs (Loomis, 2011). The study examines how educational exchanges have contributed to the strengthening of Nepal-Japan relations.

Scripture Diplomacy

This concept involves the use of religious texts and spiritual values to foster intercultural and interfaith dialogue. The study explores how the exchange of Buddhist Sanskrit texts has served as a form of scripture diplomacy, enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation between Nepal and Japan.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the role of soft power and track 2 diplomacies in Nepal-Japan relations, with a particular focus on the historical and cultural exchanges facilitated by Buddhist Sanskrit texts. The methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms and impact of these diplomatic strategies.

Literature Review

A thorough review of existing literature on soft power, track 2 diplomacy, and Nepal-Japan relations was conducted. This includes academic articles, historical texts, and relevant documents that provide insights into the evolution and mechanisms of soft power diplomacy.

Historical Analysis

The study involves a detailed historical analysis of the interactions between Nepal and Japan, focusing on the contributions of Ekai Kawaguchi and the transmission of Buddhist Sanskrit texts. Primary sources such as Kawaguchi's writings and historical records from Nepal and Japan were examined to understand the context and significance of these exchanges.

Case Study Approach

The research adopts a case study approach to analyze specific instances of soft power and scripture diplomacy. The case of Ekai Kawaguchi's visit to Nepal and his subsequent cultural and educational exchanges serves as a primary case study. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of the processes and outcomes of these diplomatic efforts.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study was carried out through the following methods:

Archival Research

Extensive archival research was conducted in national archives and libraries in Nepal and Japan. Key documents, manuscripts, and historical records related to Nepal-Japan relations and Buddhist Sanskrit texts were identified and analyzed.

Data Analysis

The data collected through archival research and document analysis were analyzed using qualitative methods. The analysis involved the following steps:

Thematic Analysis

The data were coded and categorized into themes related to soft power, track 2 diplomacy, cultural exchanges, and the role of Buddhist Sanskrit texts. Thematic analysis helped in identifying key patterns and insights from the data.

Contextual Analysis

The historical and cultural context of the data was considered to understand the significance and impact of the diplomatic efforts. This involved cross-referencing historical records with contemporary accounts and scholarly interpretations.

Comparative Analysis

The study compared the findings from different sources and case studies to draw broader conclusions about the role of soft power and track 2 diplomacy in Nepal-Japan relations.

Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to ethical guidelines for conducting qualitative research. Archival materials and documents were used in accordance with the regulations of the respective institutions. The analysis and interpretation of these documents were conducted with careful consideration of their historical and cultural context, ensuring the integrity and accuracy of the findings.

Findings and Discussion

Ekai Kawaguchi's Contributions to Nepal-Japan Relations

Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese Buddhist monk, played a pivotal role in establishing strong bilateral relations between Nepal and Japan. His initial visit to Nepal in 1899 aimed to reach Tibet, which was closed to foreigners at the time. Kawaguchi chose Nepal due to its rich repository of Sanskrit manuscripts, making his journey both scholarly and spiritually significant (Deshar, 2020).

Cultural and Educational Exchanges

Kawaguchi's interactions with academics and authorities in Nepal laid the groundwork for enhanced educational and cultural ties between the two nations. In a noteworthy instance of scriptural diplomacy, he presented Tripitaka scrolls to Nepalese Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher in 1905. These manuscripts, preserved in Nepal's National Archives, symbolize mutual respect and a shared Buddhist heritage (Deshar, 2020). As a result of Kawaguchi's influence, the first group of Nepalese students visited Japan in 1902, marking the beginning of academic exchanges that have since strengthened relations between the two countries. These interactions underscore Buddhism's role in fostering enduring friendship between Nepal and Japan. His achievements in scripture diplomacy, characterized by the sharing of academic knowledge and religious texts, exemplify how soft power diplomacy can enhance international understanding and collaboration (Deshar, 2020).

Insights from “Three Years in Tibet”

In his travelogue "Three Years in Tibet," Kawaguchi provides a comprehensive account of his journeys from Japan through India, Nepal, and Tibet. The book details his travels, encounters, and the religious and cultural environments he experienced. The fifth chapter focuses on Kawaguchi's travels, accommodations, and interactions with Nepal's royal figures. He met a Nepali official named Jibbahadur in Calcutta, who provided him with letters of introduction to influential individuals in Nepal. During his visit to the Shākyamuni Buddha-honored Buddhagayā on January 20, 1899, he encountered Mr. Dharmapala from Ceylon. Kawaguchi spent the night meditating beneath the Bodhi tree after agreeing to bring a Buddha relic and a volume of the Tripitaka to the Dalai Lama at Dharmapala's request (Kawaguchi, 2024). Upon arriving in Nepal, Kawaguchi met prominent figures, including Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher Rana. The presentation of the Tripitaka to the Prime Minister signified the exchange of religious and cultural ideas among Ceylon, Tibet, and Nepal,

marking a significant moment during his visit. This chapter highlights Kawaguchi's interactions with scholars and members of Nepalese royalty, emphasizing the importance of these encounters in promoting respect and understanding between the two countries (Kawaguchi, 2024).

Diplomatic and Soft Power Impacts

Kawaguchi's journey exemplifies soft power diplomacy, where religious and cultural exchanges played a crucial role. His writings and shared experiences contributed to the development of spiritual and cultural ties between Tibet and Japan, emphasizing the promotion of international relations through religious diplomacy (Kawaguchi, 2024). In addition to his experiences in Tibet, Kawaguchi documented his observations of Nepalese culture and religious rituals, which are intricately linked to Tibetan traditions. His narratives provided valuable insights into the interconnected cultural and religious heritage of the Himalayan region, fostering a broader regional dialogue and enhancing understanding of Nepalese culture in Japan (Kawaguchi, 2024).

Analysis of Kawaguchi’s Initiatives as Best Practices in Soft Power Diplomacy

Kawaguchi's initiatives exemplify best practices in soft power diplomacy for several reasons:

Cultural Exchange and Mutual Respect:

His commitment to learning the language and immersing himself in Nepalese culture demonstrated profound respect for his host country, fostering mutual understanding.

Educational Contributions

Through sharing knowledge and documenting his experiences, Kawaguchi significantly contributed to academic and cultural interactions, benefiting both Japan and Nepal.

Personal Diplomacy

His direct interactions and relationships with scholars and monks in Nepal exemplify the effectiveness of people-to-people diplomacy, forging enduring connections beyond formal diplomatic channels.

Implications for Current and Future Diplomatic Practices

Kawaguchi's accomplishments offer valuable lessons for contemporary and future diplomatic missions. Emphasizing interpersonal relationships, mutual respect, and cultural exchange can significantly strengthen bilateral relations. Continuing to promote grassroots initiatives, cultural events, and educational exchanges can further enhance the relationship between Nepal and Japan, building on the foundation laid by pioneers like Kawaguchi.

Discussion and Analysis

The historical and cultural connections between Nepal and Japan illustrate the effective use of multi-track diplomacy and soft power, particularly in disseminating ancient Buddhist Sanskrit writings. According to Joseph Nye, soft power is the ability to achieve foreign policy goals through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. This strategy has been vital in fostering cooperation and understanding between Nepal and Japan. Kawaguchi's 1899 trip to Nepal and his subsequent educational and cultural interactions exemplify soft power diplomacy. The presentation of the Tripitaka manuscripts to Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher in 1905 symbolized the mutual respect and shared Buddhist heritage between the two countries. This act of scripture diplomacy underscored the importance of cross-cultural and religious interactions in international diplomacy. Thanks to Kawaguchi's efforts, the first group of Nepalese students visited Japan in 1902, initiating a series of educational exchanges that have strengthened bilateral relations ever since. These discussions highlight the significance of Buddhism in maintaining the enduring friendship between Nepal and Japan. Kawaguchi's initiatives—cultural interaction, educational contributions, and personal diplomacy—serve as exemplary practices in soft power diplomacy.

Cultural and Educational Exchanges

The relationships between Japan and Nepal have been permanently impacted by the

cultural and educational exchanges initiated by Kawaguchi. These interactions promoted mutual respect and knowledge of one another's cultures, strengthening and extending diplomatic ties. These encounters have centered around the role of Buddhism as a shared cultural and religious legacy, underscoring the importance of religious diplomacy in promoting international relations. Mishra et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of educational initiatives, such as virtual farming industries, as a model for integrating technology into traditional practices. This approach can be adapted to develop educational programs that focus on Buddhist studies and cultural heritage, fostering deeper academic ties between institutions in both countries through social learning management (Mishra, 2022 a&b).

Scripture Diplomacy and Preservation of Buddhist Sanskrit Texts

The study and preservation of ancient Buddhist Sanskrit writings represent an important yet underexplored aspect of the connections between Nepal and Japan. These scriptures carry a rich cultural and theological legacy shared by both countries, having traveled from Nepal to Japan via India, China, and Korea. However, historical narratives often refer to these writings as Indian Sanskrit literature, neglecting Nepal's critical role as a hub for Buddhist study and as a geographical conduit for the dissemination of Buddhism to China and Tibet. A detailed study is necessary to ascertain the precise origins, script distinctiveness, and historical relevance of the ancient Buddhist Sanskrit texts that are extant in Japan. By employing cutting-edge conservation methods and digital archiving, this academic endeavor is crucial to preserving these sacred artifacts. Currently, there are few comprehensive studies, plans, or projects in this field. To close this gap and ensure that these ancient manuscripts' cultural and religious legacy is acknowledged and preserved for future generations, a concentrated effort must be made to document, analyze, and conserve these manuscripts. This theme aligns with the findings of Ananda et al. (2023), who discuss the operationalization of cultural frameworks in the context of Web 3.0, suggesting that digital platforms can enhance

the accessibility and dissemination of Buddhist texts. Mishra (2022) highlights the significance of teaching and research operations at institutions like Pokhara University, which can serve as a model for collaborative digital initiatives. By establishing joint digital archives, both countries can ensure the preservation and accessibility of their shared cultural artifacts. Mishra and Nepal (2022) further highlighted to incorporate society in the center for sustainable academic operation which illustrate the learning from Japan for Nepal in the contemporary conditions.

Proposed Initiatives for Enhancing Nepal-Japan Relations

To fortify bilateral connections, comprehensive academic studies and digital projects aimed at conserving ancient Buddhist Sanskrit writings are necessary. Among the suggested initiatives are:

Academic Conferences and Workshops

Joint conferences and workshops exploring the historical and cultural significance of Buddhist Sanskrit texts should be organized to promote deeper knowledge and academic interchange.

Digital Archives

Developing digital archives that house ancient manuscripts and related scholarly work can facilitate broader access to these texts. Utilizing Web 3.0 technologies, as discussed by Ananda et al. (2023), can enhance user engagement and promote collaborative research efforts across borders.

Exchange Programs

Creating exchange programs for academics and students with a focus on Buddhist studies can enhance cross-cultural understanding and academic cooperation.

Cultural Exhibitions

Organizing exhibitions of historic Buddhist writings and artifacts can encourage public understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage.

The potential for research collaboration between Nepal and Japan is vast, particularly in the context of Buddhist studies, cultural diplomacy, and educational exchanges. By leveraging the historical contributions of figures like Ekai

Kawaguchi and embracing modern technological advancements, both countries can enhance their bilateral relations. Collaborative initiatives focused on preserving and promoting their shared cultural heritage will not only strengthen academic ties but also contribute to a deeper mutual understanding and respect between the peoples of Nepal and Japan.

Conclusion

The historical and cultural connections between Nepal and Japan offer a unique opportunity to enhance bilateral relations, particularly through the exchange of ancient Buddhist Sanskrit writings. This study has highlighted the importance of track 2 diplomacy and soft power in promoting mutual understanding and collaboration between the two countries. The efforts of Japanese Buddhist monk Ekai Kawaguchi serve as an example of the successful use of scripture diplomacy, where religious and cultural interactions have been essential to the establishment and maintenance of diplomatic ties.

Despite the strong ties, there remains a significant gap in the two countries' efforts to preserve and study their shared history. Extensive research is necessary to ascertain the precise origins, script originality, and historical relevance of the ancient Buddhist Sanskrit scriptures, many of which had their beginnings in Nepal. By employing cutting-edge conservation methods and digital archiving, this academic endeavor is crucial to the preservation of these sacred artifacts.

Currently, there are few comprehensive studies, plans, or projects in this field. To close this gap and ensure that these ancient manuscripts' cultural and religious legacy is acknowledged and preserved for future generations, a concentrated effort must be made to document, analyze, and conserve these manuscripts. Through the utilization of soft power measures like digital preservation, academic research, and scriptural diplomacy, Nepal and Japan can strengthen their cultural bond and establish a more robust and cooperative partnership.

The study's conclusions highlight the value of educational and cultural exchanges in strengthening bilateral ties. The promotion of

mutual respect, interpersonal relationships, and cooperative academic endeavors can be essential in fortifying Nepal-Japan relations. These efforts should be supported by future diplomatic practices, which should be built on the foundation established by historical luminaries such as Ekai Kawaguchi.

In summary, Nepal and Japan have strong historical and cultural linkages, which present a unique opportunity to enhance bilateral relations. This is especially true of the ancient Buddhist Sanskrit literature that have been transmitted between the two countries. Both countries can build a stronger and more enduring collaboration, advancing the field of Buddhist studies and cultural preservation, by filling the existing gaps and utilizing soft power diplomacy.

Limitations

The availability of historical data and the possibility of bias in oral narratives are two limitations of the study that are acknowledged. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the study offers a thorough and sophisticated analysis of track 2 diplomacy and soft power in Nepal-Japan relations

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