

INDIAN FOREIGN POLICIES AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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UNIT - III

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INDIA AND JAPAN : A STUDY OF BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The post-Cold War strategic environment is in a state of dramatic flux, as evident from changing power equations, as well as the formation of new strategic partnerships and military arrangements. There are no stable power relations as before during the decades of bipolarity. Instead, new power centers are emerging. In the fluid and uncertain post- Cold War era, the Asia-Pacific region is at the threshold of unprecedented developments. (Ghosh 2008). In the post-Cold War era, the parameters of India's foreign policy are undergoing major changes as the country strives for a larger regional and global role for itself. One can argue that New Delhi has demonstrated a surprising ability to take bold initiatives. Forging a strategic partnership with the

U.S., the quest for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, rapprochement with China and Pakistan, and aspirations for a “blue water” navy are all indicators of a major shift in India’s foreign policy approach. As a corollary, India’s low-intensity relationship with Japan has also undergone a remarkable turnaround in the new millennium, acquiring a new dimension focused on mutual security and strategic interests.(Ghosh,2008).

Throughout history, India-Japan relations have been devoid of any kind of dispute, ideological, cultural or territorial. (Faliero, 2014) It has reflected a unique phenomenon of warmth cooperation and friendly gestures and sentiments of standing by each other at all times.

Indo- Japan relationship dates back to historical period. Political contact between India and Japan was established as early as in the 16th century with Portuguese colonies in India. Relationship between the two nations have continued since then, but direct political exchange began only in the Meiji era(1868–1912), when Japan embarked on the process of modernisation. Throughout history, India–Japan relations have traditionally been strong and based on solid foundation. Japan’s emergence as a power in the early 20th century was positively viewed in India and symbolised what was seen as the beginning of an Asian resurgence. In India, there was great admiration for Japan’s post-war economic reconstruction and subsequently a rapid growth. It is pertinent to note that Suresh Chandra Bandopadhyay, Manmatha Nath Ghosh and Hariprova Takeda were among the earliest Indians who paid their visit to Japan. As seen in the historical documents, we find a friendship between Japanese thinker Okakura Tenshin and Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore, Okakura Tenshin and Bengali poet Priyamvada Banerjee. As part of the British Empire, many Indians resented the British rule. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance ended on 17 August 1923. It is seen that during the two World Wars, the INA adopted the principle of “an enemy of our enemy is our friend” attitude. This legacy was a boon for the Indians for its fight for freedom against the British Imperialist rulers.

Further, Japan was regarded as an asylum for the Indian freedom fighters. Many Indian independence movement activists escaped from British rule and took shelter in the territory of Japan. One of the prominent leaders of the Indian Independence movement, Rash Behari Bose contributed a lot for India–Japan relations. Further, Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai, Pan-Asianist Mitsuru Tōyama and other Japanese supported the Indian Independence movement.

A significant step with regard to the Indo-Japan relationship was the establishment of a Chair in Sanskrit and Pali in the Tokyo Imperial University in the year of 1899, with a further chair in Comparative Religion being set up in 1903. In this environment, a number of Indian students came to Japan in the early twentieth century, founding the Oriental Youngmen's Association in 1900. Their anti-British political activity caused consternation to the Indian Government. Relations between the two nations reached a brief low in 1998 as a result of Pokhran-II, an Indian nuclear weapons test that year. Japan imposed sanctions on India following the test, which included the suspension of all political exchanges and the cutting off of economic assistance. These sanctions were lifted three years later. Relations improved exponentially following this period, as bilateral ties between the two nations improved once again. A step forward in this dimension was the event of being chief guest on the part of the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe at India's 2014 Republic Day Parade.

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT AND JAPAN

So far as the Indian Independence movement is concerned, Japan has always been helpful and extended helping hand to India in this regard. History bears the testimony of Japan's cordial assistance to India during India's fight for Independence from the clutch of British rulers. The Japanese Government built, supported and controlled the Indian National Army and the Indian Independence League. Again, the Japanese forces included INA units in many battles. The offensive culminated in Battles of Imphal and Kohima where the Japanese forces were pushed back and the INA lost cohesion. In fact, during the Second World War, Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army fought under the Japanese Imperial Army against the British rulers.

There is no denying the fact that Subhas Chandra Bose used Japanese sponsorship to form the Azad Hind Fauj or Indian National Army (INA) which aimed to end the British Raj through military means. The INA was composed mainly of former prisoners of war from the British Indian Army who had been captured by the Japanese after the fall of Singapore. They joined primarily because of the very harsh, often fatal conditions in POW camps. The INA also

recruited volunteers from Indian expatriates in Southeast Asia. Bose was eager for the INA to participate in any invasion of India, and persuaded several Japanese that a victory such as Mutaguchi anticipated would lead to the collapse of British rule in India. The idea that their western boundary would be controlled by a more friendly government was attractive.

POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP

So far as the political relationship between India and Japan is concerned, Japan established political contact with Portuguese colonies in India as early as in the 16th century. The Japanese initially assumed that the Portuguese were from India and that Christianity was a new "Indian faith". These mistaken assumptions were due to the Indian city of Goa being a central base for the Portuguese East India Company and also due to a significant portion of the crew on Portuguese ships being Indian Christians. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, Indian *lascar* seamen frequently visited Japan as crew members aboard Portuguese ships, and later aboard British ships in the 18th and 19th centuries. All these led to a better cohesion in the establishment of good political relationship with Japan.

It is recorded that during the anti-Christian persecutions in 1596, many Japanese Christians fled to the Portuguese colony of Goa in India. It was by the early 17th century that there was a community of Japanese traders in Goa in addition to Japanese slaves brought by Portuguese ships from Japan. It was in this way that the infiltration took place.

It should be said that relations between the two nations have continued since that time, but so far as the direct political exchange is concerned, as already said, it began only in the Meiji era (1868–1912), when Japan embarked on the process of modernisation. A step forward in the political relationship between India and Japan was the establishment of the Japan-India Association which was founded in the year of 1903. Therefore, so far as political relations between India and Japan are concerned, the relationship status between the two nations has remained warm since the time of India's independence.

The visit of Dr. Manmohan Singh, the then Prime Minister of India is definitely significant in making a strong bond of relationship between India and Japan. Undoubtedly Japan, through this visit, was obviously moving from words to deeds and clearly signaling how seriously it took the summit with the Prime Minister Singh and the Indians who accompanied him, such as, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Kamal Nath, National Security Adviser, M K Narayanan, Foreign Secretary, Shiv Shankar Menon, Commerce Secretary, Gopal Krishna Pillai, India's Ambassador to Japan, Hemant K Singh, and others who comprised the PM's entourage. (Vivek, 2006-2007)

The visit of the then Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Japan in the month of December, 2006 culminated in the signing of the "Joint Statement towards Japan-India Strategic and Global Partnership". It was definitely an important milestone in strengthening the Japan India bilateral relations. There is no denying the fact that Japan has extended its helping hand in many infrastructure projects in India. Mention should be made of most notable Delhi Metro system without which the scheme could not reach to a success level as estimated.

The recent visit of the Indian Prime Minister, Sri Narendra Modi, added a new dimension in the Indo-Japan political relationship. In 2014, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Japan. It should further be stated that during his tenure as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Sri Narendra Modi had maintained good ties with the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. His 2014 visit further strengthened the ties between the two countries, and resulted in several key agreements, including the establishment of a "Special Strategic Global Partnership" which might take the Indo-Japan relationship to a long way.

COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP

India and Japan maintains a close trade and commercial relationship. World famous Japanese companies, like Sony, Toyota, and Honda, have manufacturing units in India, and with the growth of the Indian economy, the trade relations between the two countries flourished further. Again, India is definitely a big market for Japanese firms. Japanese firms in fact, were some of the first firms to make investment in India. So far as the collective Indian perception is concerned, there was a strong admiration for Japan's post-war economic reconstruction and subsequent rapid growth of economy and industry. This aspect was reaffirmed after a generation

later by the unique role of Maruti-Suzuki in revolutionizing industrial technology and management concepts in the pre-economic reform India. This, in fact, embarked upon a new era in Indian society. The most prominent Japanese company to have an investment in India is automobiles multinational Suzuki, which is in partnership with Indian automobiles company Maruti Suzuki, the largest car manufacturer in the Indian market, and a subsidiary of the Japanese company. This partnership between India and Japan has definitely accelerated the pace of commercial boom in the sphere of economy between the two countries and contributed for economic growth in both the countries.

The political visits definitely contributed for the acceleration of commercial relationship between India and Japan. In August 2000, Japanese Prime Minister Mori visited India. During the visit, Japan and India agreed to establish "Japan-India Global Partnership in the 21st Century." To reciprocate, the then Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee paid his visit to Japan in the month of December, 2001. During the visit, both the Prime Ministers issued "Japan-India Joint Declaration", consisting of high-level dialogue, economic co-operation, and military and anti-terrorism co-operation. The next visit of the Japanese Prime Minister to India was also significant. In April, 2005, Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi visited India and signed a Joint Statement on "Japan-India Partnership in the New Asian Era: Strategic Orientation of Japan-India Global Partnership" with the then Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. Again, it was during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Japan in 2010 that both the countries agreed to foster increased business exchanges, people-to-people contact and signed a memorandum of understanding to simplify visa procedures so that it can be beneficial on the part of each other's citizens. Under the memorandum, any Japanese coming to India for business or work will be straightway granted a three-year visa and similar procedures will be followed by Japan. Other highlights of this visit includes: abolition of customs duties on 94 per cent of trade between the two nations over the next decade. As per the agreement, tariffs will be removed on almost 90 per cent of Japan's exports to India and 97 per cent of India's exports to Japan. This greatly contributed for the better ties between the two countries.

It is significant to note that Japan is currently India's fourth largest source of foreign direct investment. So far as statistical figure is concerned, Japanese companies have made cumulative

investments of around \$2.6 billion in India since 1991. So far as market condition and market economy is concerned, the 2007 annual survey conducted by the Japan Bank for International Co-operation ranked India as the most promising overseas investment destination for Japanese companies over the long term. (Faliero, 2014). As has already been pointed out that in recent years, Japan has assisted India in infrastructure development projects such as the Delhi Metro Rail Project. The discussions regarding the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project and Dedicated Freight Corridor Projects on the Mumbai-Delhi and the Delhi-Howrah routes are on the anvil. The Japanese government has also expressed interest to help to establish a Chennai-Bangalore Industrial corridor and a Dedicated Freight project in the south, connecting the cities of Bangalore and Chennai. If materialized, it is going to make a far reaching impact on the Indian economy towards advancement.

As of March 2006, Japan was the third largest investor in India with an estimated total investment of US\$2.12 billion. This is definitely a booming step in the Indian trade and commercial arena. The year 2008 is a landmark year in the Indo-Japanese commercial relationship. With a view to attach more importance and give a new thrust to their bilateral trade relationship, the two countries began negotiations in January 2007 to forge a new “economic partnership agreement” as recommended by the India-Japan Joint Study Group. This definitely accelerated the pace of better commercial relationship between the two countries. Japan’s eagerness to deepen its economic ties with India was clear during the August 2007 visit of the Japanese Prime Minister Abe to India. During the visit, he laid special emphasis on strengthening bilateral economic relations. During his maiden visit, the Japanese Prime Minister led the biggest-ever corporate delegation to India, consisting of about 200 business leaders from top Japanese companies. Secondly, in his speech to the Indian Parliament, Prime Minister Abe urged rapid completion of the economic partnership. He stated, “It is incumbent upon me to urge the Japanese negotiators to work to conclude promptly a comprehensive high quality economic partnership agreement between Japan and India which will set an example for the world.” Thirdly, the two Prime Ministers confirmed a shared commitment to triple the level of bilateral trade within three years, setting a target of \$20 billion by 2010. Fourthly, Japan agreed to fast track an ambitious \$90 billion project to help India develop a 1,500 kilometer-long industrial corridor connecting New Delhi with Mumbai, along with a high-speed rail link to move larger loads at a faster pace. Fifthly, during Prime Minister Abe’s visit, India and Japan also agreed on

a currency swap designed to mitigate a short-term liquidity crunch. These developments clearly indicate that India and Japan are keen on transforming their asymmetrical pattern of economic engagement into a robust economic partnership, thus further enhancing their evolving “strategic” relationship in the global order. Further, in October 2008, Japan signed an agreement with India under which it would provide the latter a low-interest loan worth US\$4.5 billion to construct a railway project between Delhi and Mumbai. This is the single largest overseas project being financed by Japan and reflected growing economic partnership between the two nations.

The year 2011 may be regarded as a land mark year in the Indo-Japan trade relations .On 16 February 2011, the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement was signed by the Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Mr. Anand Sharma and the Japanese Foreign Minister Mr. Seiji Maehara. A Joint Statement was issued regarding “Vision for India-Japan Strategic and Global Partnership in the Next Decade” and a Joint Declaration on the India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

We should also refer to the recent developments of the Indo-Japan commercial relationship. After the bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Akasaka Palace, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced his country’s intention to invest 3.5 trillion yen (Rs 2.1 lakh crore) in India over the next five years. This large scale funding, which will be both public and private, will be invested on the rejuvenation of Ganga, smart cities, transport systems, skill development and next generation infrastructure among other projects. It is significant to note that Abe and Modi also agreed to set a target to double Japan’s FDI and the number of Japanese companies in India within five years as part of the “Japan-India investment promotion partnership”. The realization of the agreement would definitely contribute for commercial up gradation on the part of both the countries. Undoubtedly, Japan’s cooperation with India to improve infrastructure by providing loans and technology, including the metro rail system, has contributed a lot to transform India’s urban landscape. Japan has clearly sent a signal that it considers India a good place to put money and build businesses. Japan will invest \$35 billion over the next five years in India. This is a massive commitment as Japan has only committed about \$10 billion over five years in external investment to any country. Japanese firms have done well here. New investments in infrastructure and manufacturing will certainly follow. Mega

industrial parks and factories will be the focus of this new Japanese investment thrust into India. The political capital invested by both leaders into the relationship will give confidence to the business establishments in New Delhi and Tokyo.

However, it must be admitted that any relationship is based on some interests and if one accepts the maxim that foreign policy is conducted in line with national interests and objectives, then Japan is clearly furthering its strategic objectives by strengthening its domestic economy through foreign trade and investment relationships with India. (Vivek 2006-2007)

CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP

So far as the relationship of India and Japan is concerned, it is extended also in the cultural field. Cultural Exchanges between India and Japan are said to have begun in the 6th Century A.D. It was with the introduction of Buddhism to Japan. In fact, Indian culture was filtered through Buddhism. It had left a great impact on Japanese culture and thought, and this is perhaps the major factor that contributed to the source of Japanese people's sense of closeness to India. In the true sense, the cultural agreement between Japan and India was signed in 1956 and took effect the following year.

Historical records show that the people of India and Japan have been engaged in cultural exchanges for centuries. It was primarily as a result of Buddhism which spread indirectly from India to Japan, via China and Korea. The Indian monk Bodhisena arrived in Japan in 736 to spread Buddhism and performed eye-opening of the Great Buddha built in Tōdai-ji. There is no denying the fact that Buddhism and the intrinsically linked Indian culture had a great impact on Japanese culture. It is still felt today and resulted in a natural sense of amicability between the two nations. In fact, Buddhism definitely contributed as a bonding factor in this regard.

As a result of the link of Buddhism between India and Japan, monks and scholars often embarked on voyages between the two nations. Buddhist monks from India had been visiting Japan as early as from the 8th century. The records of Nalanda University library describe scholars and pupils who attended the school from Japan. One of the most famous Japanese travelers to the Indian subcontinent was Tenjiku Tokubei (1612–1692), named after

Tenjiku ("Heavenly Abode"), the Japanese name for India. It is therefore clear that the monks played a key role for the establishment of good relationship with India.

The cultural exchanges between the two countries created many parallels in the folklore of both the countries. Modern popular culture based upon this folklore, such as works of fantasy fiction in manga and anime, sometimes bear references to common deities (deva), demons (asura) and philosophical concepts. There are some similarities between the Goddesses of India and Japan. The Indian goddess Saraswati for example, is known as Benzaiten in Japan. Brahma, known as 'Bonten', and Yama, known as 'Enma', are also part of the traditional Japanese Buddhist pantheon. In addition to the common Buddhist influence on the two societies, Shintoism, being an animist religion, is similar to the animist strands of Hinduism, in contrast to the religions present in the rest of the world, which are monotheistic. Sanskrit, a classical language used in Buddhism and Hinduism. It is still used by some ancient Chinese priests who immigrated to Japan, and the Siddham script is still written to this day, despite having passed out of usage in India. It is also thought that the distinctive torii gateways at temples in Japan may be related to the torana gateways used in Indian temples.

A step forward in the matter of cultural relationship is definitely the Japan-India Association which was founded in 1903. Further cultural exchange occurred during the mid-late 20th century through Asian cinema, with Indian cinema and Japanese cinema both experiencing a "golden age" during the 1950s and 1960s. Indian films by Satyajit Ray, Guru Dutt were influential in Japan, while Japanese films by Akira Kurosawa, Yasujiro Ozu and Takashi Shimizu have likewise been influential in India.

It should be stated that Japan and India have strong cultural ties which is based mainly on Japanese Buddhism and this remains widely practiced throughout Japan today. The two nations announced 2007, the 50th anniversary year of Indo-Japan Cultural Agreement, as the Indo-Japan Friendship and Tourism-Promotion Year, holding cultural events in both the countries. Osamu Tezuka, kamisama of manga wrote biographical manga Buddha from 1972 to 1983. Recently, Japan has also supported the reconstruction of Nalanda University, an ancient Buddhist centre of learning and has agreed to provide financial assistance, and recently approached the Indian government with a proposal. Again, Bollywood has become more

popular among the Japanese people in recent decades and the Indian yogi and pacifist Dhalsim is one of the most popular characters in the Japanese video game series Street Fighter.

India-Japan cultural exchanges reached a pick in the 1980s with Japanese local governments becoming involved in exchange activities with their Indian Counterparts. It was upgraded with the traditional Indian performing arts being shown in Japan. The observance of the Japan Month was held in October and November in the year of 1987. This had greatly contributed towards the close cultural ties between the two countries. The attachment of importance by the political leaders in India also accelerated the rate of cooperation. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi attended the April 1988 opening ceremony of the Festival of India. The opening of Japan Foundation in New Delhi was a step forward for a closer cultural tie between the two countries. In January 1994, the Japan Foundation opened an office in New Delhi. This foundation has been playing a positive role and is constantly engaged in cultural exchanges since 1978. Apart from this, Japan has been extending cultural grant-in-aid to research institutes, universities, and cultural faculties to encourage their activities in India, In addition to these, through the UNESCO, Japan Trust Fund for Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage, Japan is helping with the preservation and restoration of the Buddhist monuments of Sanchi and Satdhara by sending experts who might help in the preservation and maintenance of these historical monuments in India.

A major landmark in the Indo-Japan relationship is definitely the visa matter. Starting from July 3, 2014 Japan issues multiple entry visas for the short term stay of Indian nationals.

MILITARY TIES

India and Japan also have close military ties. They have shared interests in maintaining the security of sea-lanes in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean, and in co-operation for fighting international crime, terrorism, piracy and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Frequent joint military exercises between the two nations have been held frequently. A significant step in this regard is definitely the Security Pact on India and Japan which was concluded on 22 October 2008. Again, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is regarded by some to be an "Indophile". The increasing bitterness and tensions with regard to territorial disputes with Japan's neighbors,

has perhaps led to closer security cooperation with India. A recent case may be cited in this regard. In July 2014, the Indian Navy participated in Exercise Malabar with the Japanese and US navies, reflecting shared perspectives on Indo-Pacific maritime security.

VISIT OF MODI AND AFTERMATH

The visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Japan on August 30, 2014 has been regarded by many as a milestone in Indo-Japan relationship. The Japanese officials while announcing Modi's visit to the media stated that it is his “first full-fledged foreign trip as Prime Minister, excluding neighbouring countries.” The statement is a reflection of Japan’s sense of satisfaction that the Indian Prime Minister chose Japan as his “first” destination outside South Asia for a bilateral official visit which carried multi dimensional message not only for Indo-Japan relationship but also for the world politics. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan has provided a clear template to develop future relations between Tokyo and New Delhi.

The visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Japan is definitely a significant part in the field of Indo-Japan relationship. The statement of Prime Minister Modi carries much importance in the bilateral relationship between the two countries. “I have decided to set up a Japan-plus special management team directly under the PMO to facilitate proposals from Japan. I also propose that you nominate two people from Japan who would be part of a team which looks into business proposals, and they can be a permanent part of our decision-making process,” It was categorically pointed out by the Indian Prime Minister that the India-Japan ties have been elevated from a “strategic and global partnership” to a “special strategic and global partnership”. Stating that adding “special” is not just a “play of words”, he said, it signifies Japan’s increasing role in India’s economic development, increased political dialogue and new thrust to defense ties among other issues. It has rightly been said that "This has been a transformational trip by Prime Minister Modi. It has made an impact both in sentiment among the Japanese and in substance. India for Japan has long been an attractive idea, now it is a substantial opportunity. We believe that Japanese firms will follow up on the mega investment plans that have been lined up. There is a new belief that India is a place where you can do business," said Bharat Kaushal, Chief

Executive Officer of India operations of Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation. There is no denying the fact that Prime Minister Modi's visit has created new opportunities for expanding bilateral trade which is just \$9 billion at present. This is definitely small compared with Indo-Chinese trade worth about \$51 billion. However, a large part of India's Chinese trade is with Japanese-owned firms and this could slowly change as Japanese investment grows in India. Prime Minister Modi's trip to Tokyo has elevated the Indian-Japanese relationship from important to strategic. Much work, however, remains to be done in New Delhi to ensure that the Prime Minister's promise of a red carpet welcome to Japanese Prime Minister should be materialized. Therefore, Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan has definitely created a new paradigm of cooperation.

CONCLUSION

Despite the success story of India-Japan relations, signing a nuclear cooperation agreement with Japan, which remained on top of the negotiating table between the two governments, has remained unfinished. In the present context, Japan and India view each other as partners that have responsibility for, and are capable of, responding to global and regional challenges in keeping with their global partnership on a solid foundation. There is no denying the fact that a strong, prosperous and dynamic India is, therefore, in the interest of Japan and vice versa. In the above context and in view of the current international situation, it has been decided to reinforce the strategic focus of the global partnership between India and Japan which would take both the countries to a great height of prosperity and development. Both Japan and India have greater concerns about China as their geographic neighbor.

Despite the success story of India-Japan relations, signing a nuclear cooperation agreement with Japan, which remained on top of the negotiating table between the two governments, has remained unfinished. In the present context, Japan and India view each other as partners that have responsibility for, and are capable of, responding to global and regional challenges in keeping with their global partnership on a solid foundation. There is no denying the fact that a strong, prosperous and dynamic India is, therefore, in the interest of Japan and vice versa. In the

above context and in view of the current international situation, it has been decided to reinforce the strategic focus of the global partnership between India and Japan which would take both the countries to a great height of prosperity and development. Japan and India are both in the process of globalizing, each of course in their own way, and responding to their compulsions. Ultimately, what is important is that the underlying sentiment is one of convergence rather than of competition. Goodwill is present on both sides for a better to best of relationship but it is only the future which can tell what will be the pattern and course of relationship between India and Japan.

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