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Japan cannot rely on India to counter China

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China's President Xi Jinping, the first leader of major power to visit India after the establishment of the new Indian government, has finished his state visit. This was the first state visit of China's president to India in eight years.

Xi met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 64th birthday at his home state of Gujarat. This visit was a symbol of mutual respect between India and China, and has been seen as the first step in establishing a personal relationship between the top leaders of the two countries.

Mr Modi was on a state visit to Japan early this month. Some commentators in Japan suggested that the leaders of Japan and India were aiming to build a strategic counterweight to China.

The suggestions are groundless.

India, the 'giant elephant' of South Asia, operates an independent foreign policy. No major powers - including Japan and the U.S. - will succeed in imposing their will on India. India's prudent foreign policy is decided by India's practical interests.

Indian leaders often point out that you can choose your friends but you cannot choose your neighbors. It is of indispensable strategic value for India to cooperate with China on a friendly basis. How India manages its other relationships is another story. To be good neighbors with China has significant geopolitical implications, and is of all-around benefit to both India and China.

Friendly relations between neighboring countries are a basic precondition for health in other foreign affairs, and this applies especially to India today. It can be clearly asserted that the stronger the Sino-India relationship is, the better India will be able to manage its relationships with the U.S. and Japan.

China is widely considered to be the biggest rival to the U.S. and Japan. Both the U.S. and Japan are inclined to look for allies to help them counter China. These two countries will try to discourage India from any rapprochement with China if the two countries seem to be getting too close. However, they will want bilateral relationships to be improved if there is a downturn.

China is comparable to Japan on a global strategic level. It is stupid of Japan to try to oppose China.

China is seeking long-term benefits from its relationship with India. The Sino-India relationship is of independent strategic value and it has nothing to do with relationships with America and Japan. The Sino-India bond has been improving for many years, better than many other foreign relationships. Rationality and perspective play dominant roles in Sino-India relationships.

The governments of China and India take a practical and positive approach when it comes to territorial disputes between the two countries, in order not to damage their bilateral relationship. This is a most reasonable approach in dealing with territorial disputes in Asia. It also provides the two countries with a new angle to manage this kind of dispute.

It is necessary to understand that China and India are complementary to each other.