

# Panchsheel Agreement

The Panchsheel Agreement, otherwise known as the Five Principles of Coexistence, are a set of principles to govern relations between states. They were first codified during an agreement between Indian and China in 1954.

Panchsheel is an important topic covered under the International Relations segment of the UPSC Mains exam.

## History and Principles of the Panchsheel Agreement

The Panchsheel Agreement served as the foundation for India-China relations. It would advance economic and security cooperation between the two nations. The implied assumption of the Five Principles was that newly independent states after decolonisation would develop a more pragmatic approach towards international relations.

The Five Principles of the Panchsheel Agreement are as follows:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
2. Mutual non-aggression
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs,
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful co-existence

The 5 principles were emphasized by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Premier Zhou Enlai in a broadcast speech made at the time of Asian Prime Ministers Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka after signing the Sino-Indian Agreement in Beijing.

The five principles were subsequently modified in a form of a statement of ten principles issued in April 1955 at the historic Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia. The conference itself would lead to the foundation of the Non-Aligned Movement which gave shape to the idea that the post-colonial nations had something to offer to the bipolar world of the Cold War.

It has been speculated that the five principles had partly originated as the five principles of the Indonesian state. In June 1945 Sukarno, the Indonesian nationalist leader had proclaimed five general principles, or Pancasila, on which future institutions were to be founded. Indonesia became independent in 1949.

China has emphasized the Panchsheel Agreement at the start of the negotiations between India that took place in Delhi from December 1953 to April 1954 between the delegations from the two countries. The negotiations were about the disputed Aksai Chin and what China calls South Tibet and India Arunachal Pradesh. The 29 April 1954 agreement was set to last for eight

years. When it lapsed, relations between the two had deteriorated leaving the prospects of its renewal minimal. The Sino-Indian War of 1962 would break out between the two which would put an enormous strain on the Panchsheel Agreement in the coming decades.

## Analysis of the Panchsheel Agreement

The Panchsheel Agreement began to break down when the Dalai Lama and his followers were given asylum in India on humanitarian grounds. This, as far as China was concerned, was a blatant violation of one of the five principles of the Agreement: Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Closer to home, Bhim Rao Ambedkar in a speech at the Rajya Sabha questioned how seriously did the Chinese take the principles of the Panchsheel seriously, taking into account that principle of peaceful coexistence was violated when China invaded Tibet.

While India agreed to the principles, China showed an inconsistent and contradictory attitude by agreeing with many reservations. So five decades of no war is seen as mainly due to the evaluation of the high price of war and not due to love for peace. Due to recent clashes in the Doklam Valley in 2014 and the Ladakh incursions in 2020, it has been widely speculated by defence analysts in India that the time has come to move beyond the principles of the Panchsheel that would benefit both the countries.

In contrast to previous confrontations, India has been proactive and aggressive in its posturing in Doklam and Ladakh. This newfound assertiveness of India has left China stumbling for a gambit. Peace is undoubtedly the best way to resolve the conflict but its application should not be selective and devious.

## Relevant Question about the Panchsheel Agreement

### **Who propounded the principles of the Panchsheel Agreement?**

The principles were emphasized by the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, in a broadcast speech made at the time of the Asian Prime Ministers Conference at Colombo just a few days after the signing of the Sino-Indian treaty in Beijing.

### **What is the essence of Panchsheel?**

That is the essence of Panchsheel is the emphasis on "peaceful co-existence" and cooperation for mutual benefit.

### **Who signed the Panchsheel Agreement and adopted its principles officially?**

The Panchsheel Agreement was signed by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Premier Zhou Enlai. It was presented by India, Yugoslavia and Sweden at the United Nations General Assembly on December 11, 1957, and adopted by the international body on the same date.

