INTRODUCTION

India and China, the two giants of Asia are two of the oldest and living civilizations of this world. Sindhu and Ganga gave birth to the Indian civilization which influenced South Asia, South-east Asia and some other regions in this belt. Similarly, Huanghe (Yellow River) and Changjiang (Yangtze river) gave birth to the Chinese civilization which influenced North east, South east Asia and the eastern region in the vicinity. Being neighbours, India and China had established trade and cultural relations since ancient times. Between first and third century AD. Trade and cultural relations, were brisk and it was during this period that the Chinese scientific and technological innovations such as silk, paper and steel reached India. At the same time Buddhism made its inroads in China. The second phase of cross-cultural currents is marked by the transformation and assimilation of the two cultures. Indian scholar Kumarjiva (343-413) went to China and Chinese scholar monks like Faxian (342-424), Xuanzang (600-664), and Yijing (635-713) visited India. During the third phase during the Song and Yuan Dynasties the prosperity and glory of the second phase declined but the trade activities went unhindered. The cross-cultural currents resuscitated again during Yuan and Ming dynasties. Trade was brisk, and diplomatic activities reached new heights between the South and East Indian Kingdoms and China. Maritime silkroute played an extremely important role between the two countries. This was the time when Zheng He sailed across the Indian Ocean. From the third phase onward till India jumped into the torrents of freedom struggle and China intensifying its anti-feudal and anti-imperialist crusade, the
cross cultural currents between them went unnoticed. The relations carried on by the two were interrupted by the drastic domestic changes and more importantly by the gradual eastward expansion of western colonialism. Following this India was completely colonized by the British and China was gradually transformed into a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. Though colonization did not result in severing the centuries old friendship of India and China, it did make its pace slow and sluggish. However, because of their long association, and having suffered the same fate they extended mutual support and sympathy.

It is necessary to give a brief history of Sino-Indian cross-cultural currents as it is almost impossible to understand this inter-cultural or civilizational factor unless we study the socio-historical background of India and China.

The struggle of the Indian and Chinese people of this period could be termed as anti-imperialist as it was essentially aimed at imperialist forces and an attempt to dislodge them. The anti-imperialist upsurge was at first instance, a contradiction between the Indian nation and the British colonialists, the interest of the Indian people and the interest of colonialists. It was also the result of colonial policies of exploitation, extortion and impoverishment. Speaking on the British policies and the need of reforms in India, John Bright said on June 26, 1856, "what's it we have to complain in India? What is it that the people of India if they spoke by my mouth, have to complain of? They would tell the house that the population of India are in a condition of great impoverishment of great
dejection and of great suffering."\(^1\)

Bright’s words spoke volumes of the contradiction between British interests and the Indian interests. Speaking on contradiction Mao Zedong wrote: "When imperialist wages a war of aggression against a society like China (semi-feudal and semi colonial) the classes inside, excluding a few rebels, would unite and wage a national war against imperialism, on contrary all contradictions of internal classes (including the main contradiction between feudalism and the masses) become a secondary thing for the time being. In China, from Opium War of 1840, Sino Japanese War of 1894 and Boxer revolution of 1900 to present Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) all are of this nature."\(^2\)

The approach and dimension given to my entire research is historical with political nuances and above all it is inter-cultural and holistic in nature. This essentially is also a civilizational study and synergy between the two great oriental civilizations of India and China. Inter-cultural, because the cross-cultural currents continued eventhough both the nations were fighting for their freedom and liberation and both manifested them well against a common enemy - the imperialist. In this anti-imperialist crusade whoever-thought of dislodging the imperialist, whether they were the early nationalists or revolutionaries or the pacifist leader Gandhi, were all looked upon as the savior of nation in India as well as in China and were supported by the people of two countries.

The question may arise-Why is the thesis one of civilizational study? Essentially


because, the civilizational means forced the imperialists to leave the country as they could not withstand its force. Even the period from 1905-15 and later from 1913-30 when the nationalists and revolutionaries thought of dislodging the imperialist in their own way and collaborated with Sun Yatsen and Zhang Taiyan in Japan and China, it was this civilizational force and the force of cross-cultural current that brought them closer to each other and enabled either side to understand their problems. It was on these foundations that the idea of Sino-Indian Alliance and Oriental Oppressed People’s Association was born in the minds of early nationalists of India and China. Zhang wrote in the People’s Tribune that “both India and China are neighbours and both had good friendly relations in the past and therefore should extend mutual support”3 in their anti-imperialist struggle. This objective they thought should not be limited to India and China alone but should extend to other Asian countries as well since all were fighting the imperialists. Therefore the civilizational factor should extend this alliance to the entire East and thus the Organisation for Asian Harmony with other such organisations came into being. This symbolizes that anti-imperialist struggle was imbued with the feature of ‘Asianism’. It could be argued that Indian revolutionaries also established bases in U.K., U.S.A. Germany and other countries, and was not restricted to Asia alone. Yes, but the civilizational factor, the inter-cultural factor and the synergy between the cultures of India and these countries were prominently absent.

The anti-imperialist struggle was also a contradiction between spiritual management and spiritual mismanagement. The former was represented by Gandhi and

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3 Min Bao, (The people’s Tribune), Vol.3, No.20, p.3.
was prevalent throughout his leadership during our freedom movement and the later by western imperialism and colonialism. Now the question may be asked- Didn’t China also stand for this ‘spiritual mismanagement’ as it rejected Gandhian pacifist techniques of resisting the imperialists outright? This is not a correct interpretation. Because, the difference between the Chinese armed struggle and the imperialist was that one was a subjected nation and the other was an aggressor. It may be noted that Gandhi also deemed Chinese armed struggle as just and didn’t criticise her. Instead he said, "according to accepted standard her behaviour is strictly correct."\(^4\) Gandhi showed his sympathy for China when Japan invaded Manchuria in 1932 when he said: “As regard to Japan and China our sympathy is bound to be on the side of the latter.”\(^5\)

However, Gandhi did ask China to go non-violent as he knew that was not going to happen. In fact the entire philosophy of Gandhi and the Gandhian movement was that of spiritual management i.e. to stop bloodshed, teach the people language of peace and abjure violence for he stood for purifying the human society as a whole.

During our Freedom movement the most turbulent years when the British rule shook to its roots were in the periods 1857-58, 1905-8, 1920-21, 1930-34 and 1942. My thesis will concentrate on these great tidal waves; nevertheless, will take other important historical events into consideration. The last tide - The Quit India Movement is not being discussed in detail, and instead will focus on the second World war period. The main


\(^5\) ibid., vol. 49. p. 199.
thrust of the thesis is on the common struggle of India and China and mutual support and sympathy rendered during this struggle which was essentially a confrontation between the institutions and the ideals established by the two great civilizations of the East and the entire West.

The first salvo of the contradictions between Indian people and the imperialist and anti-imperialist struggle of the Indian and Chinese people was fired when some of the Indian sepoys stationed in China joined the Taipings and fought together the common enemy. The 1857-59 war of independence in India and 1850-64 uprising in China were two of the greatest of their times. One basic difference between the two was that, while the Indian uprising aimed at restoring the old monarchical order; the Taipings established a new system of government - 'egalitarian theocracy' aimed to dislodge the Qing government. Both were successful in this attempt to some extent. Despite all the short comings in both, the aim of both in broader terms, was the same and was influenced with the spirit of 'save country and save people'. One aspect that was amply clear was that during the Indian involvement in Taiping uprising the switching over of sides by Indian troops was never planned nor were there any contacts between the organisers of these uprisings. In China it was also a spontaneous rebellion against the British by Indian sepoys as it happened during 1857 in India. Having differentiated between good and the evil the sepoys looked upon the Taipings as their own, viewed the cause of the Taipings as their own and sacrificed their lives along with them in their anti-imperialist and anti-Qing struggle. These events are discussed in Chapter I which is considered as a prelude to the Freedom Movement in the context of the Sino-Indian relations from
1905-1947.

It was due to the incursions on the established institutions and ideals of India and China that anti-imperialist feeling was exhibited on a comparatively large scale during these two most virulent uprisings in Asia. During the Swadeshi Movement it got a chance to reach the masses but the feeling was not that strong, the reasons being; the movement just demanded annulment of the partition of Bengal not independence for India. Moreover in the following years Congress supported the British in World War I (1914-1918), as it thought that the war was being fought for freedom and democracy. However, during the same period the anti-imperialist feeling was too strong among some nationalists and revolutionaries who escaped India and searched for allies abroad for their anti-imperialist and struggle for independence. The outcome was, the establishment of various revolutionary bases across the world. In East they collaborated with Chinese nationalists and worked out various ways to dislodge the British from India.

Taking root from these uprisings the revolutionaries of both India and China did establish contacts in their anti-imperialist upsurge during the first half of the twentieth century. The Indian revolutionary outfits in Beijing and Shanghai did call on Indian sepoys deployed in China to revolt against the British and support the Chinese people. The nascent nationalism and concept of sovereignty developed during the 1857 uprising and Taiping inspired the people of both these countries, and the struggle thus developed into a full fledged anti-imperialist struggle till both India and China attained freedom.

Discontent and disappointment prevailed among the nationalists after the appeasement policies of the moderates in the Congress. The self respecting Indians
followed their own path and techniques in their resolve against the colonialism. Chapter II reveals the contacts of Indian nationalists and revolutionaries with the Chinese nationalists in China and Japan: from 1905-1915 many Indian patriots met Sun-Yatsen (1866-1925) and Zhang Taiyan (1869-1936) in Japan and China and got their support. Zhang Taiyan rendered support of Chinese people to India by publishing many articles in The People’s Tribune. The paper also carried many articles from The Sociologist, Bandematram and The Free Hindustan. In the words of Zhang Taiyan the publication was aimed at making the Chinese people aware of the Indian situation while propagating the voice of Indian people outside India.

The nationalist movement had evolved an anti-imperialist ideology from the very beginning which later developed into a clearcut anti-colonial and anti-imperialist thinking. Like Indian nationalists, the Chinese nationalist leader Sun Yatsen also grasped that the essence of colonialism lay in the subordination of the Indian economy and society as a whole to the needs of the British economy and society. He remarked that India is the life line of Britain and the foundation of British economy lies in India. He said that Australia and Canada will be tasteless for Britain, for they would not be able to sustain the consumption of British industrial goods. If India is lost, that would mark the very collapse of British colonialism. The Indian nationalists together with the Chinese formed an Organisation of Asian Harmony spearheaded against the imperialism and colonialism with clear objectives.

Many Indian revolutionaries including M.N. Roy, Rash Behari Bose and Baraktulah secured support of Chinese nationalists whether they were in Japan or China.
Their contacts were further consolidated by Nehru with the leaders of kuomintang (KMT) at Brussels in 1927 at the International Congress against imperialism. Thus started an era of establishing contacts on organizational levels by INC and KMT and the joint declaration issued by Indian National Congress (INC) and KMT at Brussels showed the determination of Indian and the Chinese people to strengthen the unity and cooperation between two in their anti-imperialist upsurge. Chapter III is exclusively attributed to the Ghadr activities in China.

Under Mahatma Gandhi’s leadership the Indian Freedom Movement evolved a concrete technique of mass action. Thus the anti-imperialist upsurge took a great leap forward. In the words of Bipin Chandra, "it was in the Gandhian phase that a better understanding and practice of the dialectic between the masses and the leader or between spontaneity and organisation were evolved." Since Gandhi took over the leadership of Indian National Movement he and his techniques were a continuous topic of debate and discussion in China. A large number of articles by prominent scholars and nationalists appeared in leading newspapers and journals such as *New China Daily, New Youth, Eastern Miscellany, Shen Daily* etc. Sun Yatsen called the period when Gandhi resumed the leadership of freedom movement as - the awakening of India. In 1924 while explaining his three democratic principles he said that Gandhi’s principle though passive, is indispensable during the struggle. He viewed that passive resistance would severely attack the imperialists economically. Others called the Gandhian phase a new revolution and a new method to resist the evil powers. There were also differences of opinion; the

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critics termed Gandhian policies 'as an act of surrender' and one of cowardice. His supporters in China termed the Satyagraha as one of the strongest and sharpest-weapon against imperialism. However it may be noted that the debate in China to some extant was influenced by the domestic politics between the Communist Party and the KMT and the directives of Communist International. Whatever the differences between two factions be, one established fact was that Gandhian struggle was anti-imperialist in nature. Gandhi never looked upon the British people as the enemy. He drew a distinction between the colonial rulers and the British people. Moreover the approach and opinion of Gandhi were under continuous change excepting for his commitment to human values. He enthusiastically responded to the Chinese seeking his help. One instance is his appeal to the British not to use Indian troops against innocent Chinese and other when he called on the Japanese to desist from aggression in China. Gandhi had developed a feeling of sympathy for the Chinese from the days of South Africa where he counselled for them and rendered all support. This has been covered in Chapter IV.

The anti imperialist struggle of the Indian and Chinese people reached its climax during the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-45). China's all out resistance to the naked aggression of Japan attracted world wide attention specially the support from the people of oppressed nations. India, itself being in the abyss of sufferings supported the cause of Chinese people by sending a medical mission of five doctors with other material support. One among them Dr. Kotnis sacrificed his life for the Chinese people at a very young age of 32. Nehru visited China in 1938. He became very popular in China. He held the leaders of both KMT and Communist Party in high esteem but at times openly
criticized Jiang Kai-Shek for his non-resistance policy against Japan. Other Indian national leaders including Nobel laureate Rabindernath Tagore expressed their support and sympathy for China. This has been discussed in Chapter V.

Finally, the last chapter "India and China during Second World War" shed light on the cooperation between India and China during World War II and this includes Jiang’s India visit. Jiang on many occasions urged British to change their policy of repression in India and respect Roosevelt-Churchill proclamation. He also pressed the British to transfer real political power to the Indian people. More importantly, the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist policy of Indian leaders and Indian National Congress during this time integrated that with the liberation movements of colonial and semi-colonial countries. Nehru especially viewed with concern the growth of fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany and militarism and fascism in Japan. British rule was also looked upon by him as fascist, as the British had denied freedom to India. Nehru not only held British regime in India as a fascist regime but also held it responsible for appeasing the Nazis and the Japanese. In the words of Nehru, "...the submission (of Britain) and the repeated surrender to Hitler’s demands are not merely accidental. They are the result of a calculated policy of surrender to fascist aggression. ...the deliberate (British) policy has been one of siding with fascism everywhere, either in Asia or in Africa."7 Gandhi also looked at imperialism and fascism as two evils, as he had remarked, "I see no difference between the fascist or Nazi powers and the allies. All are exploiters, all resort to ruthlessness to the extent required...". As regards America and Britain he said, "they have

7 National Hearld, January 10, 1939.
no right to talk of human liberty and all else, unless they have washed their hands clean of the pollution.”

But, Gandhi was not for use of force or violence against these two evils for the known reason that he always opposed it on moral grounds. He even suggested his weapon of non-violence and satyagraha to the Chinese but at times also justified China’s armed resistance. Other leaders in the Congress may not sound as sensitive as Nehru in regard to national and international issues for they thought of setting India free first and then join fight against fascism and, Nazism. But in principle they were also opposed to these two evils.

Finally, the entire thesis concentrates on the anti-imperialist nature of our Indian Freedom Movement and mutual support and sympathy rendered by the people of India and China during this period.

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8 Tendulkar, D.G., Mahatma, vol.6 (1940-45). Delhi, 1953. p.103.