

Article

Jawaharlal Nehru's Asianism and Japan

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This paper discusses that the Asian theme throughout the history played a significant and major role in all stages of the relation and interaction between India and Japan. The objective of this paper is to analyze the origin of Nehru's Asianism and main aspects of his Asian ideas and concerns. Also, this study attempts to examine the major factors and sources of influence to Nehru's Asianism and his Asian ideas. The study finds that there are various sources of influence to Nehru's Asianism, such as: Japan and its victory over Russia in Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905; The eminent leaders of the Indian National Congress in 1920s; Nehru's visit to Soviet Union in November 1927; Rabindra Nath Tagore's ideas on Asian identity and unity; Sun Yat-sen's Pan-Asianism and Greater Asianism; Japan's policy of 'Asia for Asians'; Subhas Chandra Bose's thoughts on foundation of Pan-Asiatic Federation and creation of a new Asia through elimination of all vestiges of colonialism and imperialism, etc. Moreover, Nehru's attitude and policy towards Japan during the different periods of his life and political career in the context of his Asianism and also Indo-Japan relations have been examined. As implications of this study, the author observed that, Nehru from 1905 since the victory of Japan over Russia until 1920s was admirer of Japan, an island Asian nation, which defeated a European military power. Japan's war with another Asian nation China was disappointment for Nehru and his sympathy was with China. For Nehru, Japan's image changed from a model nation in Asia to aggressor and breaker of peace and solidarity in Asia. During WWII Nehru chose an anti-Japanese policy and a hard line towards Japan. He was against Japan's control of Asia. Finally, after WWII due to his Asianism and Asian concerns Nehru changed his policy towards new and non-militaristic Japan and laid a foundation of positive and cordial postwar relations between both countries India and Japan.

Keywords: *Nehru, India, Japan, Asia, Asianism, Asian unity, Pan-Asianism, Asiatic Federation.*

*Asia fascinates me, the long past of Asia,
the achievements of Asia through millennia of history,
the troubled present of Asia and the future that is taking shape almost before our eyes¹*
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Introduction

The theme of Asia, Asianism and Asian identity plays a significant role in bilateral ties between Japan and India. The Asian theme historically was a symbol of interaction, friendship and closeness of the Japanese and Indian nations. Asian theme was of special significance for unity, understanding, acquaintance and interaction between Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin) with great Indian Bengali poet Rabindra Nath Tagore and Hindu spiritual leader also from Bengal Swami Vivekananda. Okakura Tenshin, 'a man ahead of his time in early modern Japan and a type of Renaissance man'², who declared

1 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, V.2, 406.

2 Abe, 'Confluence of the Two Seas', Speech by H. E. Mr. Shinzō Abe, Prime Minister of Japan at the Parliament of the Republic of India, August 22, 2007, MOFA Japan homepage <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/>

that 'Asia is one'³, was life-long friend of Rabindra Nath Tagore - the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913⁴.

During the first few years after independence Asia remained one of India's important external concerns. This marked continuity with the pre-independence Asian-orientation of Indian nationalism. Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the leaders of independence movement and the first prime minister of independent India has emphasized, that "The maintenance of the independence and sovereignty of Asian countries as well as the end of colonial and foreign rule are essential for the prosperity of Asian peoples and for peace of the world."⁵

This paper serves as an addition to the academic literature examining and exploring Nehru's Asianism and its relation with Japan. It draws together the main conclusions of literature relevant to the topic. Previously, some scholars like Braillard, Datta-Ray, Deshingkar, Gokhale, Heptulla, Holslag, Rao A, and Rao B. G., Sareen and others have discussed and opined about Nehru's Asianism or Asian ideas in their works. Deshingkar found Nehru as unilaterally pan-Asian and unilaterally a self-appointed mediator in Asian and world affairs.⁶ Gokhale, who examined the origin and development of Nehru's vision of Asia, is of opinion that the concepts of Nationalism and Asianism... remained constant in his thought for over half a century.⁷ Heptulla argues that Pan-Arabism of Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser joined hands and merged in the broader Pan-Asianism of Nehru.⁸ Asianism of Nehru has been characterized as 'pacifist and benevolent', which differs from the somewhat aggressive Pan-Asianism of Japan.⁹ Nehru's Pan-Asianism was 'tempered with realism' as argued by Datta-Ray.¹⁰ As observed by Holslag, Chinese leader Mao saw Nehru's Pan-Asianism in conflict with his own ambitions 'to become Asia's ideological and political shepherd'.¹¹ Rao A, and Rao B. G. find Nehru's Asianism as a 'useful gambit'.¹² According to Acharya, regionalism proposals, like Nehru's Pan-Asianism, Nasser's Pan-Arabism, and Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism were failed attempts and had few successes.¹³

Among all abovementioned authors only Sareen relates Nehru's Asianism to the Japan's mission of Asian unity, which Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had endorsed during the Second World War (Sareen, 1986, 1993, 2007). As per findings of this paper, most of those previous authors occasionally and briefly opine about Nehru's Asianism or Pan-Asianism in their work mainly focusing on Nehru's biography, his foreign policy, his ideology and thought, India's foreign relations, etc. Therefore, the paper tries to highlight unresolved issues and fill the gap within the body of existing literature and understandings and to examine Nehru's Asianism in the context of India-Japan relations. The position of this paper within the existing academic literature is that, Japan and its victory over Russia in Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 laid the foundation of Nehru's Asianism and stimulated his nationalism. The paper

speech-2.html (accessed 29 June 2009).

- 3 For further reading see, e.g., Tankha, B., ed., *Okakura Tenshin and Pan-Asianism: shadows of the past*, Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2009.
- 4 Sen, 'Tagore and His India', The Official Web Site of the Nobel Prize, 28 August 2001, http://130.242.18.21/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1913/tagore-article.html (accessed January 2011).
- 5 Nehru, Jawaharlal, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches*, September 1946–April 1961 (Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publications Division, New Delhi), 1971, 263.
- 6 Deshingkar, 'The Nehru Years Revisited', 405.
- 7 Gokhale, 'The Failure of Nehru's Asianism', 97-115.
- 8 Heptulla, *Indo-West Asian relations: the Nehru era*, 4.
- 9 See, Braillard and Djalili, *The Third World and international relations*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1986.
- 10 Datta-Ray, 'Asia's 'Coca-Cola Governments'', 74.
- 11 Holslag, *China and India: Prospects for Peace*, 37.
- 12 Rao A, and Rao B. G., *Six thousand days: Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister*, 206.
- 13 Acharya, 'The Third World and World Order in the Twenty-first Century'.

concludes that Nehru's Asianism didn't have a proper success and was a failed legacy.

Nehru had too complex mind to nearly categorize.¹⁴ Moraes characterized Nehru as 'a Marxist theorist wedded to democratic practices'.¹⁵ Nehru's youngest sister Krishna Nehru Hutheesing has described him as 'terribly bad communist'.¹⁶ But many scholars have viewed Nehru as a socialist (Mirsepassi, 2010; Hardgrave and Kochanek, 2008; Mohanty, 2004; Patil, 1987; Dutt, 1981), a 'democratic socialist' (Tripathy, 2009; Moraes, 2007; Lemoine, 2001; Tummala, 1996; Mishra, 1989; Singh, 1989; Dube, 1988; Copland, 1980; Anand, 1978; Pradhan, 1974; De Bary, 1958), a 'socialist theoretician' (Agarwalla, 1994; Mehrotra, 1990; Joshi and Hebsur, 1987; Karunakaran, 1979; Pradhan, 1974) etc. Above all, Nehru himself made clear in his Presidential Address to the Lahore Congress on December 1929 by confessing frankly that he is 'a socialist and a republican and...no believer in kings and princes'¹⁷ Later, after over a decade again he declared that he stands for socialism and, he expressed hope that, India too will stand for socialism. Nehru wanted India to be a socialist state.¹⁸

The paper consists of introduction, two sections and conclusion. The first section focuses on the origin of Nehru's Asianism and factors which influenced his Asian ideas. The author tries to explore and present the origin and evolution of Nehru's Asianism and Asian concerns before and during WWII and his Asian doctrine after the war. The second section covers Nehru's Asianism in the context of Indo-Japan relations. The issue of Nehru's Asianism in relation with Japan during different periods is under concentration. The paper also attempts to describe the impact of Nehru's Asianism to the foreign policy of independent India and international affairs. Also, other aspects of Nehru's Asianism, such as the China factor have been examined.

2. The origin of Nehru's Asianism

Within India itself, the eminent leaders of the Indian National Congress party during 1920s were the source of influence for Nehru's Asianism and Asian ideas. Nehru may have been inspired and influenced by the thoughts and ideas of some of the following Congress party leaders in the 1920s like Chittaranjan Das, Srinivasa Iyengar, Mukhtar Ansari, who believed in Asian idea and were serious about promoting a federation or union of Asian nations, especially of those which were under colonization and political oppression. For example, Chittaranjan Das, a political guru and patron of Subhas Chandra Bose, in his presidential address at Gaya session of the Congress in 1922 stated that India could not remain outside an Asian union. Formation of a Pan-Asiatic Federation was one of the programs of the Swaraj Party formed by Chittaranjan Das after his resignation from the Congress presidentship.¹⁹ Srinivasa Iyengar at Guwahati on December 1926 was even more eloquent in expounding the Asian federation idea. In his words: "The time has perhaps come for us seriously to think of a Federation of Asiatic peoples for their common welfare... We have too long neglected the possibilities of a cultural and business union with all Asiatic Countries."²⁰

Besides, another leading figure S. Satyamurthi at the Calcutta Session of the Congress in December 1928-January 1929 moved his resolution authorizing the Congress Working Committee to take steps on organizing the first session of a Pan-Asiatic Federation in India in 1930. Satyamurthi at that session of

14 Gokhale, 'The Failure of Nehru's Asianism', 30.

15 Moraes, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 216-217.

16 Hutheesing, *We Nehrus*, 74.

17 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.4, 192.

18 Nehru, *Independence and after: a collection of speeches, 1946-1949*, 349.

19 Roy, 'The Funeral Ceremony at Gaya, 218-228, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/roy-evelyn/1923/04/x01.htm> (accessed 11 June, 2010).

20 Murthy, *India and Japan: Dimensions of Their Relations (Historical and Political)*, 121.

Congress stated that ‘nothing less for the future of India than that she should be the leader of a reascent Asia’.²¹ However, very few in Congress party were supportive of Pan-Asiatic ideas and Satyamurti’s proposed session of Pan-Asiatic Federation in India was never organized and called. It was ignored by the Congress leadership. The long clash between Japan and China disturbed the Congress leadership as it was against the spirit of Asianism. Leading figures in Congress were of view that the war between Japan and China destroys Asian unity, when it was needed very much.²²

Jawaharlal Nehru, who at times was realistically circumspect in discussing the idea of an Asian federation, was among the delegates at the 1927 Brussels International Congress against Imperialism as the representative of the Congress. There he found the ‘strong desire’ of the Asian delegations for establishment of some Asiatic federation and closer bond among Asian countries, an ‘interesting feature’.²³ But, as he points out, he ‘could not understand how an effective Asiatic organization could be built up’.²⁴ At Brussels Congress, Nehru and his fellow Asian delegates decided that at that time it was ‘premature to talk of any special Asiatic organization’.²⁵

Nawani argues that, another event which influenced Nehru’s Asianism was his three-day visit to the Soviet Union in November 1927 for the Tenth Anniversary celebrations of October Revolution. This short visit of Nehru to Soviet Union ‘gave his Asian humanist optimism a new meaning and great stimulus’.²⁶ Nehru felt ‘the fascination of this strange Eurasian country’.²⁷ He observed that “In Moscow Asia peeps out from every corner, not tropical Asia but the Asia of the wide steppes and the cold regions”.²⁸ According to Nawani, Nehru found that in Soviet society his Asian brethren moved about freely²⁹ without suppression.³⁰

Nehru was the only leader in Congress, who as to quote Murthy ‘remained firmly convinced that India’s future was inseparable from both Asianism and internationalism’.³¹ Nehru’s ideas on Asianism and Internationalism were compatible. He advocated the principles of internationalism to realize the creation of the ideal of One World centered on the United Nations and emphasized the significance of UN as a forum representing the world community.³² At the same time, Nehru championed Asianism focusing on Asian unity, peace and development.

Nehru’s Asianism and Asian concerns were much influenced by eminent figure Rabindra Nath Tagore. Rabindra Nath Tagore was one of the first major exponents after WWI of the idea of Asia as the continent united by the common bond of spiritualism. He is characterized by Indian people and scholars not only as the great literary luminary, but also as the pioneer in Asian relations.³³ Tagore has influenced Nehru with his interest in Asian affairs. For Nehru, Tagore was more than any other Indian, who has helped to bring into harmony the ideals of the East and West, and broadened the bases of Indian

21 Report of the 43rd Session of the Indian National Congress, Calcutta, 1928, 94.

22 Murthy, *India and Japan: Dimensions of Their Relations (Historical and Political)*, 120.

23 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.2, 289.

24 Ibid., 290.

25 Ibid.

26 Nawani, *Writings on Nehru*, 64.

27 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.2, 381.

28 Ibid., 387.

29 One may argue with Nawani that the Asian people of Soviet Union were not really free.

30 Nawani, *Writings on Nehru*, 64.

31 Murthy, *India and Japan: Dimensions of Their Relations (Historical and Political)*, 123.

32 Nehru, ‘Towards A World Community’, Speech in the United Nations General Assembly, New York, December 20, 1956, The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, Statements, <http://www.un.int/india/ind14.pdf> (accessed 10 January 2011).

33 Nag, ‘Tagore: Pioneer in Asian Relations’, 9–13.

nationalism. Nehru was inspired by Tagore's ideals of the East and West. In his speech in the Constituent Assembly of India on 8 March 1949 Nehru characterized India as a 'meeting ground' between the East and West.³⁴ Nehru has acknowledged that he was a "queer mixture of the East and the West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere".³⁵ Nehru saw Tagore and Gandhi as the two dominant figures of the age. Nehru during the period of serving as Indian Prime Minister was a follower of Tagore in seeking a synthesis of tradition and modernity, in taking from the West what India needed, while preserving the civilization antiquity of India.³⁶ Nehru's Pan-Asianism, and his policy of non-alignment during the Cold War, 'bear the mark of Tagore's thought'.³⁷ Through Tagore's provocation not only Nehru, but Mahatma Gandhi also developed a theory of nationalism.³⁸ Rabindra Nath Tagore eloquently advocated the revival of Asian culture and the unity of Asia, but was against political nationalism. Tagore's vision of an Asian identity and a federation of an Asian cultures fascinated Nehru. Nehru followed Tagore in spirit in promoting the ideal of united Asia giving peace to a troubled world. According to Murthy, Tagore's lasting influence on Nehru was in turning India's Asian concern into a quest for enduring India-China friendship, a theme which remained dominant even after India became independent.³⁹ Tagore's deep appreciation of Chinese culture and philosophy has much influenced and originated Nehru's love for China.

Some Indian scholars relate Nehru's Asianism or Asian concerns to the Japan's mission of Asian unity, which Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had endorsed during the Second World War (Sareen, 1986, 1993, 2007). Indeed, Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the most influential & greatest leaders in the Indian independence movement, was supportive of creation of a new Asia, where all vestiges of colonialism and imperialism would be eliminated. Let us look at the following extract from Subhas Bose's Presidential address to the East Asia Delegates Conference at Singapore on 4 July 1943, where he said: "Japan was the first Asiatic Power to successfully resist foreign aggression – and Japan knows, more than any other Asiatic power, that, so long as the enslaved Asiatic nations are not emancipated, no Asiatic nation can feel completely safe from the menace of aggression."⁴⁰ Bose also was supportive of 'Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' (GACPS)⁴¹, with India and Japan playing a leading role. He believed in the idea of an Asiatic Federation. Subhas Bose's political scheme has been characterized as a 'synthesis of nationalism, a greater regionalism and internationalism',⁴² which was followed by Nehru. Subhas Bose's short-lived Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) and Indian National Army (INA) found an alliance with Imperial Japan. According to former Prime Minister of Japan Abe Shinzō, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's name⁴³, who had spoken of the need for Japan and India to assume leading roles in Asia, 'is a

34 Nehru quoted in Gujral, *Viewpoint: civilisation, democracy and foreign policy*, 145.

35 Nehru, *An Autobiography*, 596.

36 Guha, 'What Nehru owed to Tagore', *The Hindu*, 23 November 2008, <http://www.hindu.com/mag/2008/11/23/stories/2008112350110300.htm> (accessed 4 May 2010).

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Murthy, *India and Japan: Dimensions of Their Relations (Historical and Political)*, 124.

40 Bose, 'Hunger, Thirst, Privation, Forced Marches and Death', Presidential address to the East Asia Delegates Conference at Singapore, 4 July 1943, in S.C. Bose, *Chalo Delhi: Writings and Speeches 1943–1945*, Netaji Collected Works V.12. Kolkata & Ranikhet: Netaji Research Bureau, Permanent Black, 2007, 42–43.

41 Mission Netaji, 'Netaji's Philosophy of Life', <http://www.subhaschandrabose.org/biography/philosophy04.html> (accessed 8 January 2011).

42 Ibid.

43 For further reading on Subhas Chandra Bose, his ideology, legacy, policies and approach to Indian independence movement, see e.g., A. Pelinka, *Democracy Indian Style: Subhas Chandra Bose and the Creation of India's Political Culture*, 2003; L. Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj — A biography of Indian Nationalists Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, 1990; T. Sareen, *Indian Revolutionaries, Japan and British Imperialism*, 1993; T. Sareen,

much respected name in Japan'.⁴⁴

Subhas Chandra Bose attended the Assembly of Greater East-Asiatic Nations held in Tokyo in November 1943 as the Head of the Provisional Government of Free India'.⁴⁵ At his speech Bose mentioned that the Greater East Asia Charter was a declaration of a 'new charter of liberty in world history', 'a charter for the suppressed nations of the whole world'⁴⁶. Bose stated that the establishment of GACPS is of 'vital interest', not only to the East Asian people, but 'to the whole of Asia and to mankind in general'. He emphasized the significance of the GACPS for the entire Asian people and the role of India as the more than a bridge between East and West Asia. He characterized the foundation of GACPS as step 'in the direction of real international society'.⁴⁷ Subhas Bose believed that the establishment of the GACPS would pave the way for a Pan-Asiatic Federation.

During WWII Nehru and Bose perceived Japan absolutely differently. In Nehru's perception Japan was an enemy, aggressor, militaristic and reactionary force. But, for Bose, Japan was a friend, ally and the Asian nation which could eliminate Western rule in Asia, including India. Nehru was an anti-imperialist, anti-racialist and anti-fascist. But, Bose's cooperation and seeking help from Nazi Germany and other Axis powers in the struggle for Indian freedom against Britain have been the cause of arguments among academicians, historians and politicians. Anti-Bose authors accuse him of fascist sympathies⁴⁸, while pro-Bose authors in India and abroad have been more sympathetic towards the realpolitik that guided his social and political choices. Bose's comment was that if he had to shake hands with the devil for India's freedom he would do that.⁴⁹ Let us look at the following extract from Moraes, which further illustrates this issue: "If Churchill, they argued, was willing to shake hands with the devil and embrace Stalin in order to save Britain, why should not Subhas have sought aid from the Japanese or the Germans in order to liberate India?"⁵⁰ Subhas Bose himself already in 1943 made clear that "If the almighty British Government can go round the whole world with the begging-bowl asking for help everywhere – even from the enslaved and impoverished people of India – there is nothing wrong in our taking help from outside, if we are forced to do so."⁵¹ Moreover, Subhas Bose was never unmindful of taking Japan's help in his struggle for India's freedom. In every opportunity he made acknowledgement to convince other Asian leaders to trust and have faith in Japan.⁵² But, he was not a puppet of Japan and

Japan and the Indian National Army, 1986; etc.

- 44 'Shinzo Abe visits Netaji Bhavan, sees notion of a 'Broader Asia'', The Hindu, Online edition of India's National Newspaper, August 24, 2007, <http://www.thehindu.com/2007/08/24/stories/2007082453761500.htm> (accessed 18 May 2010).
- 45 Address of Prime Minister General Tojo Hideki before the Assembly of Greater East-Asiatic Nations, in Joyce Lebra, ed., *Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in World War II: Selected Readings and Documents*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975, 89.
- 46 Bose, 'Speech Of Subhas Chandra Bose, Head of The Provisional Government of Azad Hind', The Assembly of Greater East-Asiatic Nations, Tokyo, Japan, November 6, 1943, <http://www.worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/Germany/boosespeech43.htm> (accessed 6 May 2010).
- 47 Bose, 'Netaji at the Assembly of Greater East Asia Nations' 150–152.
- 48 For further reading on Subhas Chandra Bose and fascism see, e.g., M. J. Getz, *Subhas Chandra Bose: a biography*, 2002; A. Montgomery, 'Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle for Independence', Institute for Historical Review, *Journal of Historical Review*, March-April 1994 (Vol. 14, No. 2), 2–5, http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v14/v14_Montgomery.html (accessed 23 June 2010).
- 49 Bose quoted in F. Moraes, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 291; C. Aydin, *The politics of anti-Westernism in Asia: visions of world order in pan-Islamic and pan-Asian thought*, 185–186.
- 50 Moraes, *Witness to an Era: India 1920 to the present day*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974, 67.
- 51 Bose, 'Why I left Home and Homeland', Speech delivered at the mass meeting held at Singapore on 9 July 1943 in S. C. Bose, *Chalo Delhi: Writings and Speeches 1943–1945*, eds., S. K. Bose and Sugata Bose. Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 2007, 53.
- 52 Sareen, 'India and Japan in Historical Perspective', 43

was independent in his thoughts and actions.⁵³ From Bose's correspondence one may find that he deeply disapproved of the racist practices of, and annulment of democratic institutions in Nazi Germany. In his letter to Dr. Thierfelder dated March 25, 1936 Subhas Bose wrote: "Today I regret that I have to return to India with the conviction that the new nationalism of Germany is not only narrow and selfish but arrogant..."⁵⁴ As about what kind of economic and political system he would like India to have, Bose suggested a synthesis of two rival systems National Socialism and Communism and to embody the good points of both.⁵⁵ He didn't admire fully the National Socialism of Germany and Communism of Soviet Union.

A leading extremist Indian freedom fighter and revolutionary leader Rash Behari Bose⁵⁶ who was one of the key figures of the Ghadar Conspiracy and the Indian National Army (INA), throughout his life and activities, especially in Japan called for Asianism and liberation of Asia with Japan as the leader. He escaped to Japan from the British intelligence in 1915 and soon became a Japanese citizen in 1923. Rash Bose has stated that Asia's liberation 'had to be based on cooperation under the principle of equality' and he rejected a special status for Japan in Asia. He continuously emphasized the need for complete cooperation and solidarity between India, China and Japan and was much supportive of this idea.⁵⁷ He has actively taken part in Pan-Asiatic conferences, which were held under Japanese patronage at Nagasaki and Shanghai. Rash Behari Bose published *The New Asia-Shin Ajia*, a monthly periodical in a dual English and Japanese language format. Rash Bose had appealed that Western colonialism should be destroyed by cooperation between Japan and India.⁵⁸

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, known as Mahatma Gandhi was not influential to Nehru's Asianism. Gandhi himself did not much subscribe to either Asianism or internationalism. He was a 'visionary and practical' politician and his main concern was Indian nationalism above all concerns.⁵⁹ Only after India's freedom, and a little before his tragic assassination he explicitly linked India with Asia. Gandhi's hope was India to become a source of inspiration for all 'exploited races of the earth, whether in Asia, Africa or in any part of the world'.⁶⁰

When Nehru became a Vice-President of the Executive Council in the Interim Government⁶¹ of India in September 1946, one of his priorities was to organize and host a conference of Asian countries in India, which was an old proposal of the Indian National Congress. The purpose of holding such a conference was to discuss problems of mutual interest like economic development, freedom movements, migration and racial problems, and the status of woman. The Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi from 23rd March to 2nd April, 1947, arranged by Nehru, was of great importance and event of 'considerable

53 Ibid., 45.

54 Bose, *The Essential Writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, Edited by Sisir K. Bose & Sugata Bose. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997, 155.

55 Bose, 'The Fundamental Problems of India', An address to faculty and students of Tokyo University, November 1944 in S. C. Bose, *Chalo Delhi: Writings and Speeches 1943-1945*, Edited by S. K. Bose and Sugata Bose. Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 2007, 298-299.

56 Not relative of Subhas Chandra Bose. Rash Bose was instrumental in persuading the Imperial Japanese government to stand by the Indian nationalists and to support the Indian freedom movement in East and South-East Asia. He was a founder and leader of the Indian Independence League before handing over its leadership to Subhas Chandra Bose in 1943.

57 Nakajima, *Bose of Nakamura*, 212-214.

58 For further reading on Rash Behari Bose see, e.g., T. Nakajima, *Bose of Nakamura: An Indian Revolutionary in Japan*. New Delhi & Chicago: Promilla & Co. and Bibliophile South Asia, 2009.

59 Murthy, *India and Japan: Dimensions of Their Relations (Historical and Political)*, 122.

60 Ibid.

61 Although originally headed by the Viceroy of India, it was transformed into a council of ministers with the powers of a prime minister bestowed on the vice president of the council, which was held by INC leader Jawaharlal Nehru.

historic significance' for him.⁶² The Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) was asked by Nehru to convene the conference. Two hundred and forty three delegates from twenty eight countries attended the conference.⁶³ Nehru was interested on Japan to participate in the Asian Relations Conference. With such an interest Nehru wanted to place Japan as an equal with other Asian nations.⁶⁴ But the Japanese delegation to the conference was not allowed to participate, because of the change in Japan's status from a dominant nation to a nation defeated in the war, which is under the occupation of the Allies.⁶⁵ The Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers General MacArthur issued an order that Japanese delegation was not allowed joining the conference.^{66,67} Nehru, who was keen on Japanese delegation to participate, refused the call of the Conference to make a special representation to General MacArthur. The general attitude was that Asian nations should start the Asian Relations Conference with a clean slate. 'It is an Asian conference, and Japan is an Asian country'. India's position was that animosity and hatred between countries caused by and during WWII should be forgotten.⁶⁸

Refusing the point made by some sections of the foreign press that the conference was "some kind of a pan-Asian movement directed against Europe or America"⁶⁹, Nehru stated: "We have no designs against anybody; ours is the great design of promoting peace and progress all over the world. For too long have we of Asia been petitioners in Western courts and chancelleries. That story must now belong to the past. We propose to stand on our own legs and to co-operate with all others who are prepared to co-operate with us. We do not intend to be the playthings of others."⁷⁰ The plenary session of the conference decided to set up an Asian Relations Organization with a Provisional General Council and also academies for promotion of Asian studies. Nehru at his speech in the Asian Relations Conference emphasized that "The idea of having an Asian Conference is not new and many have thought of it. ... the idea of such a Conference arose simultaneously in many minds and in many countries of Asia."⁷¹ Pandey points out that it was the Burmese leader General Aung San, who suggested to Nehru a conference of representatives of Asian countries.⁷² A gathering of this kind was not repeated, though the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian countries (1955) might be considered as the direct outcome of this.⁷³ During the conference Nehru realized that there was a little Asianness among the participants.⁷⁴ Each country had own problems and concerns. The only undeniable outcome of the Asian Relations Conference was that it pushed Nehru on to the world stage. Asianism became a 'useful gambit' to Nehru.⁷⁵ Trygve Lie, the first Secretary General of the United Nations has stated that Nehru's mind was 'imprisoned by the concept of Asia'.⁷⁶

Nehru criticizes the Western world that it 'somehow ignores Asia' and 'does not see Asia in proper perspective'.⁷⁷ He notes this as an unfortunate and unrealistic and expresses that one cannot solve any

62 Nehru, 'Asia's Dynamic Role', 588–589.

63 Nehru, 'A New Era in Asian Fellowship', 501.

64 Sareen, 'India and Japan in Historical Perspective', 46.

65 Murthy, *India and Japan: Dimensions of Their Relations (Historical and Political)*, 180.

66 Sareen, 'India and Japan in Historical Perspective', 46.

67 Gotō, *Tensions of empire*, 249.

68 Sareen, 'India and Japan in Historical Perspective', 46–47.

69 Nehru, 'A United Asia for World Peace', 506.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., 504.

72 Pandey, *Nehru*, 257.

73 Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, V.1, 1889–1947, 345.

74 Deshingkar, 'The Nehru Years Revisited', 406.

75 Rao A, and Rao B. G., *Six thousand days: Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister*, 205–206.

76 Ibid., 206.

77 Nehru, 'Asia's Dynamic Role', Speech at a reception given to the delegates to the Asian Regional Conference of

problem if one excludes Asia today. According to him, “Most people in other countries hardly know anything about the history of Asia and have very vague notions about this huge, sprawling continent. Asia has very much to learn from other countries and proposes to learn it, but perhaps there might be many things that Asia also can teach others if they are prepared to learn... Time has come when we should judge in proper perspective what is happening in the world today and the dynamic role that Asia is beginning to play in it.”⁷⁸ Nehru recognized the importance of Europe as vital part of the world, however he characterized that Europe is not the entire world.⁷⁹ Moreover, Nehru in his address to the third session of the U.N. General Assembly at Paris on 3rd November 1948 stated that he honors Europe for its culture and for the ‘great advance in human civilization...’. But at the same address he also mentioned that “The world is something bigger than Europe, and you will not solve your problems by thinking that the problems of the world are mainly European problems”.⁸⁰

Scholars are not in the same opinion regarding the origin of Nehru’s Asianism. For instance, Deshingkar points out, that “Unfortunately for Nehru, however, the leaders of other Asian countries and colonial territories were barely conscious of Asia as anything more than a geographical term; they certainly did not share any sentiment of Asianness. No eminent Chinese leader, communist or non-communist, ever did. Nehru probably did not realize that for East Asians particularly, Japan was not an Asian brother but a deadly enemy even before the turn of the century. Apart from Nehru no other Asian leader seems to have thought of holding a pan-Asian meeting”⁸¹ One may argue with Deshingkar that, firstly, some other Asian leaders, like Chinese leader Sun Yat-sen shared the sentiment of Asia, its unity and freedom. Sun Yat-sen, who has been called by Nehru as ‘the great architect of Asian freedom’⁸², has much spoken and done efforts on ‘unification and independence movement of the Asiatic peoples as a whole’, ‘unity of all the peoples in East Asia’⁸³ Sun Yat-sen advocated Pan-Asianism and Greater Asianism in order to restore the former status of Asia, as the ‘origin of the various civilizations of the modern world, such as the West, Greece, Rome’.⁸⁴ Secondly, since the end of WWII except Jawaharlal Nehru, there were some other Asian leaders who also advocated and proposed an Asian Union. On 11 July 1949 the President of the Philippines Elpidio Quirino together with Chinese nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek and South Korea issued a joint manifesto on formation of united front and Pacific Union against communism. The Philippines President Elpidio Quirino convened an Asian Conference of Southeast Asian and neighboring states also known as Baguio Conference on 26–30 May 1950, where representatives of seven Asian nations attended. Nehru rejected an invitation and India did not send its representative to the conference. From the cables exchanged between Nehru and his sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit, who was an Indian Ambassador in Washington, we found that, Nehru considered and regarded Quirino’s Asian Conference ‘as a move against communism in general and Communist

the International Labour Organization, Delhi, 8 November 1947, in *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, V.4. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1986, 589.

78 Ibid.

79 Nehru, ‘The Importance of Asia’, 288-289.

80 Nehru, ‘The Role of the United Nations’, Address to the third session of the U.N. General Assembly, at Palais de Chillot, Paris, 3 November 1948. File No. 42(12)/48-PMS, in *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, V.8. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1989, 291. Also available online: The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, Statements, <http://www.un.int/india/ind13.pdf> (accessed 10 January 2011).

81 Deshingkar, ‘The Nehru Years Revisited’, in Tan Chung, ed., *Across the Himalayan Gap: An Indian Quest for Understanding China*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1998, 405.

82 Nehru, *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, V.2, 508.

83 See, Sun Yat-sen *The Vital Problem of China*, 1953 and *China and Japan: natural friends--unnatural enemies: a guide for China's foreign policy*, 1941.

84 Ibid.

China in particular'.⁸⁵ Nehru was against such kind of Asiatic bloc to prevent the spread of communism in Asia.

3. Nehru's Asianism in the context of Indo-Japan Relations

Pan-Asian thought, which began to acquire an ideological framework in late nineteenth-century Japan, engendered a widespread response during the Russo-Japanese War from a range of Asian leaders including Sun Yat-sen, Aurobindo Ghose and Rabindra Nath Tagore. Nehru's attitude and policy towards Japan was different and controversial during different phases of his life and political career. The victory of Japan over Russia in Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905) became a reason that he heard about Japan for the first time.⁸⁶ Since then he became interested in Japan, its example and methods of success. This event laid the foundation of Nehru's Asianism. However, Nehru's positive image of Japan did not last long. It was destroyed as a result of Japan's war with China. Nehru clearly has expressed that, he had sympathy with Japan and the Japanese people till their 'unprovoked attack on China'.⁸⁷ Japan's war with another Asian nation - China disappointed Nehru and most of the leaders of Indian National Congress (INC). As regards to Murthy, the image of Japan in India damaged after 1920s and it changed from 'Japan the model' to 'Japan the breaker of peace and solidarity in Asia'.⁸⁸ Sareen observes that Japan's aggression towards China moved the Indian national leaders away from Japan, although initially they were receptive of Japan's Pan-Asianism.⁸⁹

So far as Japanese militarism was concerned, its slogans 'Asia for Asians', 'India for Indians', 'New Order' etc only invited aversion in Rabindra Nath Tagore and Nehru. Nawani has emphasized that, clear 'condemnation of Japanese barbarism in China' became classic of antifascist literature.⁹⁰

Nehru, like other Congress leaders, who earlier, after 1905 were admirers of Japan and its example, now took a position favorable of China, and strongly criticized 'fascist brutality of Japanese imperialism'.⁹¹ He condemned Japan for its aggression and 'wanton frightfulness perpetrated' over China.⁹² Indian nationalism, as emphasized by Murthy could not come to a compromise with any kind of imperialism, European or Asian in origin.⁹³

During WWII, Nehru took hard line towards Japan and declared that Congress should not recognize Japanese and Italian aggression.⁹⁴ Japan was excluded from Nehru's Asian concern before and during the Second World War because of these reasons:

- Japan lost the confidence and trust of the Congress in late 1920s⁹⁵;
- Nehru and Congress were against Japan's brand of control on Asia and its rising militarism, although it spoke about Asia for Asians and India for Indians;
- Nehru during the mentioned period became anti-Japanese and pro-Chinese politician, due to Japan's long war with China and its militaristic action in Asian countries;

85 Nehru, *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, V.12, 389–391.

86 Nehru quoted in O. Itagaki, 'India-Japan Relations', 585–586.

87 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.12, 248–249.

88 Murthy, 'Japan in the Indian Mirror', 79.

89 Sareen, 'India and Japan in Historical Perspective', 38.

90 Nawani, *Writings on Nehru: some reflections on Indian thoughts and related essays*, 68.

91 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.9, 210.

92 *Ibid.*, 139.

93 Murthy, *India and Japan: Dimensions of Their Relations (Historical and Political)*, 127.

94 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.10, 155.

95 Murthy, *India and Japan: Dimensions of Their Relations (Historical and Political)*, 126.

Nehru ignored the possibility of Japan's invasion of India and other countries of subcontinent.⁹⁶ For instance on 16 July 1939 at his interview to the press in Colombo, Ceylon he stated that at that time he does not see a necessity of thinking about Japan as a 'menace to India or Ceylon'.⁹⁷ During his addresses, speeches and statements in different places and podiums he mentioned some factors why he thinks so:

- ▶ Japan geographically is located far from India, than England, for all practical purposes⁹⁸;
- ▶ The land route is entirely closed and impossible of passage, even for aircraft; The sea route is very long and terribly dangerous and cannot be negotiated till Japan is master of the sea and air⁹⁹;
- ▶ Japan cannot think of invading India till she has absorbed the whole of China, or if China is completely subjugated by Japan, a task almost certainly beyond her competence and resources¹⁰⁰;
- ▶ Japan cannot come to India till Britain and the United States have been wholly disabled¹⁰¹ and there is no danger to Japan from the US or Soviet Union¹⁰²;
- ▶ It will not be possible for Japan to conquer or dominate China¹⁰³;
- ▶ Before India or Ceylon is threatened, Japan is likely to think of war with nearer countries like Indo-China, the Dutch East Indies, Australia and the Philippines.¹⁰⁴

However, Nehru's view regarding the Japan's invasion of India totally changed when for example Rangoon was occupied by the Japanese army on 7 March 1942. Now, for him it was quite probable that within a few months the Japanese may attack India. Nehru foresaw that some big cities of India may be subjected to air raids and Calcutta may be bombed by the Japanese army.¹⁰⁵ He absolutely rejected and did not trust Japan's intention to liberate India and its appeal 'India for Indians'. He considered that if Indians think that Japan will give or secure them freedom means just to deceive themselves.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, Nehru noted that in India's history foreigners have never done any good to Indian people.¹⁰⁷ Bringing an example of establishment of British Empire in India and Japanese empire in China and Korea he said: "The British people came to India and made us fight among ourselves... We admit that the Japanese are Asiatics but theirs is a Big and Bloody empire. They have established their empire in China and Korea. Only fools can think they will grant independence to the Indians if they come to India. We have therefore to take any foreign nation, whether it is European or Asiatics, as our enemy if it attacks us with a view to ruling over us."¹⁰⁸ Further he stated: "They (Japanese) are not coming to this country at my invitation. I think it is my duty to oppose and fight them. I am not prepared to put faith in the slogan that the Japanese are coming to India to liberate us. The past history of India goes against the claim. Nobody has ever come to this country to liberate."¹⁰⁹ The reason why Nehru repeatedly expressed his rejection and distrust of Japan's intention to liberate India, was an influence of British

96 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.10, 117.

97 *Ibid.*, 8.

98 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.9, 649.

99 *Ibid.*

100 *Ibid.*

101 *Ibid.*

102 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.10, 8.

103 *Ibid.*

104 *Ibid.*

105 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.12, 161–162.

106 *Ibid.*

107 *Ibid.*

108 *Ibid.*

109 *Ibid.*, 248–249.

propaganda. During the war British made popular a myth of Japan's invasion (not liberation) of India in order to win the support of the Indian people and to defame Japan.¹¹⁰ A known Indian scholar and historian Sareen, who have worked in the National Archives of India for year, finds that there is no evidence to say that Imperial Japan 'had any territorial intentions towards India'. Further, Sareen observes that even Britain after questioning of Japanese Imperial military officials, admitted that Japan never considered the invasion of India and it was not of Japan's ambition.¹¹¹

Nehru wanted Indian people 'to resist the Japanese to the uttermost', resist them in the way chosen by Congress, that is, not giving supplies and embarrassing them in every way that a widely spread population can...He considered distrust or dislike of the British Government as the 'fundamental factor', which is not pro-Japanese sentiment.¹¹² He believed that anti-British sentiment led people to state pro-Japanese opinions. Nehru estimated this as a 'short-sightedness', 'slave's sentiment' and 'slave's way of thinking'.¹¹³ Moreover, Nehru more harshly characterized the whole past history of Japan as the 'one of dominating others'.¹¹⁴ Further, he stated that if he gets an opportunity to resist Japan's aggression, he will withstand it with swords and guns. He emphasized that only the state and people of free countries can use swords and guns. According to him, slave nations 'can simply shout slogans and make noise' that is why Indians have failed to defend.¹¹⁵ Nehru believed and considered that Japan's victory and her domination of Asia in WWII would be an 'intolerable situation'.¹¹⁶

During WWII Indian troops under the British Empire fought Japanese troops and Indians under the Indian National Army (INA) which was established outside India and fought the British with Japanese support. Indian independence leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi clearly mentioned their position regarding Japan and India's participation in the war. In the text of war resolution drafted by Mahatma Gandhi it was stated, that "Japan's quarrel is not with India. Japan's war is against the British Empire. India's participation in the war has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were freed, her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan".¹¹⁷ However, Mahatma Gandhi's draft was strongly opposed by Nehru. Both Gandhi and Nehru presented their draft of the war resolution. At discussions of the Congress Working Committee on War Resolution, Nehru opposed Mahatma Gandhi's draft and emphasized that if Gandhi's approach and draft is accepted, India becomes 'a passive partner of the Axis powers'. Nehru feared that Gandhi's draft weakens the position of Allied powers and they will treat India as an enemy country and 'reduce it to dust and ashes'. He concluded that the whole thought and background of the Gandhi's draft is one of favoring Japan. Nehru thought that, it was Gandhi's feeling that Japan and Germany will win the war, so 'this feeling unconsciously' governed Gandhi's decision.¹¹⁸ As a result, Gandhi's draft of War Resolution was rejected by the Congress Working Committee and Nehru's draft passed. Subhas Chandra Bose, who at that time already was fighting for India's freedom outside India was watching and analyzing the political situation at home. He was aware of Gandhi's and Nehru's draft of war resolution.

110 Sareen, 'India and Japan in Historical Perspective', 45.

111 Ibid.

112 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.12, 223–226.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.

115 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.12, 343–344.

116 Ibid.

117 'Text issued by the Government of India of the original "Quit India" Resolution drafted by Mohandas K. Gandhi and rejected by the All-India Congress Working Committee in favor of the modified version submitted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru'. *New York Times*, August 5, 1942, available: <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1942/420427a.html> (accessed 10 May 2010).

118 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, V.12, 286–292.

In contrast to Nehru, Bose supported Gandhi's draft and declared that if the British accept Gandhi's resolution and make it effective, he "guarantee that not a single Japanese soldier will set foot on Indian soil" and the Japanese troops which already are in India will be withdrawn 'at once'.¹¹⁹ Nehru's hard line towards Japan influenced Mahatma Gandhi, especially when the Congress Working Committee supported Nehru's views and adopted his draft of war resolution and Gandhi's draft with his pro-Japanese views was rejected. As a result, Gandhi also took a hard line position towards Japan and shortly after the adoption of War Resolution he wrote a letter on July 18, 1942 addressed 'To Every Japanese'.¹²⁰ In his letter Gandhi warned Japanese people that Indian people would not welcome Japan and strongly resist it, in case if she invades India.

There was different perception of Nehru's Asianism or Asian concerns, especially by West. There were suspicions and ideas in some countries that Nehru is trying to establish an Asian bloc¹²¹, with India playing a key role. Nehru's answer for these kind of opinions was "India is the natural leader of South East Asia if not of some other parts of Asia also. There is at present no other possible leadership in Asia, and any foreign leadership will not be tolerated. Nevertheless it is entirely wrong for any representative to talk in terms of India being the leader in any part of Asia, or to discuss the formation of any Asian bloc. This does not help us in any way and merely irritates others and creates suspicion."¹²² Nehru had stated that he believed in 'Asian unity, an alliance not against any country or power but a union for the economic betterment of the Asian countries'.¹²³ He rejected the talks and allegations against him that, with his efforts on Asia he wants India to be a leader of Asia. Let us look at the following extract from Nehru's speech to the Indian Council of World Affairs on 22 March 1949: "Some people talk rather loosely, and, if I may say so, rather foolishly, of India becoming the leader of this or the leader of that or the leader of Asia. Now, I do not like that at all."¹²⁴ However, in the same statement Nehru affirmed that it is true that, 'a certain special responsibility is cast on India'. But, he also mentioned that this 'responsibility is not necessary for leadership'. Nehru has described India as the 'meeting point' between Western, Northern, Eastern and South-East Asia.¹²⁵ The similar statement was made by Subhas Chandra Bose earlier in 1943 when he emphasized the role of India as the more than a bridge between East and West Asia.¹²⁶

From the Japanese perception, Yamaguchi is of opinion that: "For several decades in the postwar period of Japan...no other world leader was given so much attention as Nehru during the 1950s and early 1960s. He became almost the undisputed leader of the Third World in the minds of Japanese people".¹²⁷ The same author further emphasizes that for post-war Japanese people Nehru was a

119 Bose, *Chalo Delhi: Writings and Speeches 1943-1945*, 245.

120 Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, V.76.

121 Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Historical Publications, 36 Kevin Department of External Affairs, Cablegram 10 New Delhi, [6 January] 1949, 6.55 p.m. Confidential [http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/\(LookupVolNoNumber\)/15~36](http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/info/historical/HistDocs.nsf/(LookupVolNoNumber)/15~36) (accessed 6 May 2010).

122 Nehru, 'Basic Principles', Guidelines for the coming session of the United Nations General Assembly, 12 September 1948. J. N. Collection. Extracts, in *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, V.7. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1988, 611.

123 Nehru, *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, V.12, 436-437.

124 Nehru, 'An Evolving Policy', Speech to the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, on 22 March 1949, in Appadorai, *Select Documents on India's Foreign Policy and Relations 1947-1972*, Volume I. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982.

125 Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, V.2, 506.

126 Bose, 'Netaji at the Assembly of Greater East Asia Nations', 150-152.

127 Yamaguchi, 'Japanese Perceptions of India in Modern Times, in H. Yamaguchi & H. Yanagisawa, eds., *Tradition and Modernity: India and Japan towards the Twenty-first Century*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1997, 90.

messenger of peace and hope for future.¹²⁸ President Soekarno of Indonesia on several occasions spoken of Nehru as 'the real leader of Asia' and also stated that 'if we follow him, there is nothing to fear'.¹²⁹ Nehru on several occasions in 1946, 1947 and 1948, referred again to the 'essential unity' of whole Asia, 'the mother of continents', 'united Asia for world peace', 'neighboring countries in Asia should become still closer' and etc.¹³⁰

There is a distinction between Nehru's thinking about Asia before and after World War II. Before the war Asia was no more than a subject of peripheral interest to Nehru. Among his writings up to WWII we may find occasional references on Asia. His pre-war references on Asia were in the general context of world-wide movements like imperialism, socialism, nazism and fascism and their impacts on different regions. After the war, Nehru initially took the view that any talk of an Asian federation was premature, and he spoke only of the inevitability of regional associations, such as closer union between India and South-East Asia on the one side, and Afghanistan, Iran and the Arab world on the other.¹³¹ Under Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership, India reengaged with East Asia. Nehru, a chief architect of the foreign policy of independent India set about formulating a positive foreign policy.

Postwar Japan gave up with its prewar Pan-Asianism, the idea of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere and the concept of 'Asia for Asians', which were endorsed by the leader of Indian independence movement in Southeast Asia and East Asia Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose during the war. Since the end of war no other Asian country or its leader advocated Asianism or idea of Asian federation or unity. It was Jawaharlal Nehru, who took up Japan's mission of Asian unity.¹³² Nehru's Asian concerns and ideas about development in Asia had both geographical and geopolitical dimension. Only the leaders of Burma and Indonesia showed interest to Nehru's Asian ideas and policy and truly supported them.

Forming a common cause with Asian leaders such as Indonesian president Sukarno and Chinese premier Chou En-lai on decolonization, Western imperialism, socialism, national sovereignty, equality and developing-world solidarity, Jawaharlal Nehru helped to forge the "Bandung Spirit" of 1955, which became the precursor for the Non-Aligned Movement and the Asia-Africa Summit. Nehru, Nasser and Sukarno played pioneering roles for Bandung Conference.¹³³

India's Asian concern remained prominent till the mid-1950s during which period Nehru again and again reverted to the Asian theme and stressed the need for 'freedom of all parts of Asia', 'cooperation of all Asian countries and their peoples for freedom and peace', 'readjustment of relations between Asia and Europe', recognition and proper appreciation by the councils of the United Nations of 'the problems of Asia, the outlook of Asia, the approach of Asia', 'economic freedom for Asia', the 'torment in the spirit of Asia', and the problems of Asian development. Nehru's Asianism suffered erosion in 1950s and he began to pay more attention to *realpolitik*. The second Bandung Conference of 1955 was never organized. As observed by Singh, similar to the Asian Relations Conference organized in Delhi on the independence eve in 1947, the Bandung Conference had no tomorrow.¹³⁴ After the Bandung Conference Nehru's Asianism became less strong¹³⁵, he less spoke of Asia and as Gokhale states 'he probably ceased

128 Ibid., 91.

129 Nehru, *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, V.6, 473.

130 Nehru, Cable to Aga Khan, 25 Sept. 1946; 'An Independent Foreign Policy', Interview to the press, New Delhi, 26 Sept. 1946; Message to Ho Chi Minh, Printed in *Hindu*, 13 Oct.1946, in *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, V.1. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984, 492–493, 519–520.

131 Nehru, *New India speaks*, 27.

132 Sareen, 'India and Japan in Historical Perspective', 46.

133 Ghosh, *International Relations*, 166.

134 Singh, *Between Two Fires*, V.2, 317.

135 Pandey, *Nehru*, 325.

to believe in it'.¹³⁶ The Bandung Conference demonstrated that Asia is divided by the Cold War politics. Nehru tried to win adherents to his policy among Asian countries, but since Asia herself was divided between Communist Asia, anti-Communist Asia and neutralist Asia, his policies for Asia and its unity had a very limited success. As regards to Mazower Nehru's Asianism 'turned out to be a dead end'.¹³⁷ The border war of India with China in 1962 during which India was defeated, marked an end to Nehru's 'Asian values'¹³⁸ and Asian doctrine. It put an end to his Asianism and his ideas on Asian unity. It shattered his dream of new Asia.¹³⁹ Moreover, this war shattered Nehru's longtime dream¹⁴⁰ and efforts for India-China friendship and close relations.

4. Conclusion

The theme of Asia has brought both countries India and Japan much closer to each other throughout the history. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister and architect of the foreign policy of independent India was an Asianist and mediator in Asian and world affairs. The concepts of Nationalism and Asianism remained constant in Nehru's thought for over half a century.

The study finds that there are various sources of influence to Nehru's Asianism, such as: 1). Japan and its victory over Russia in Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905; 2). The eminent leaders of the Indian National Congress in 1920s; 3). Nehru's visit to Soviet Union in November 1927; 4). Rabindra Nath Tagore's ideas on Asian identity and unity; 5). Sun Yat-sen's Pan-Asianism and Greater Asianism; 6). Japan's policy of 'Asia for Asians'; 7). Subhas Chandra Bose's thoughts on foundation of Pan-Asiatic Federation and creation of a new Asia through elimination of all vestiges of colonialism and imperialism, etc.

Japan and its victory over Russia in Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 had a key role in formation of Nehru's Asianism. Japan's victory over Russia surprised a sixteen years old student Nehru and gave the strong psychological impression. This event significantly influenced his nationalism and nationalistic ideas filled his mind. It demonstrated to Nehru that how an Asian island nation like Japan could defeat one of the greatest European military powers by hard work. However, Japan's war with another Asian nation - China disappointed Nehru and most of the leaders of Indian National Congress (INC). Japan's aggression towards China moved the Indian national leaders away from Japan, although initially they were receptive of Japan's Pan-Asianism.

Japan was excluded from Nehru's Asian concern before and during the Second World War because of these reasons: 1). Japan lost the confidence and trust of the Congress in late 1920s; 2). Nehru and Congress were against Japan's brand of control on Asia and its rising militarism, although it spoke about 'Asia for Asians' and 'India for Indians'; 3). Nehru during the mentioned period became anti-Japanese and pro-Chinese politician, due to Japan's long war with China and its militaristic action in Asian countries.

Nehru absolutely rejected and did not trust Japan's intention to liberate India. In contrast, Subhas Chandra Bose believed in sincerity of Japan's Asian policies and concept of 'Asia for Asians' and premier Tojo's promise of 'India for Indians'¹⁴¹. The main reason of Nehru for becoming much harsher critic of Japan during WWII was Japan's full political, financial and military support to Mahatma

136 Gokhale, 'The Failure of Nehru's Asianism', 406.

137 Mazower, 'Jawaharlal Nehru and the Emergence of the Global United Nations', 187.

138 Ibid., 188.

139 Gokhale, 'The Failure of Nehru's Asianism', 97.

140 Scalapino, *Asia and the road ahead: issues for the major powers*, 112.

141 Bose, *AZAD HIND*, 6.

Gandhi's rival Subhas Chandra Bose, his Indian National Army (INA) and recognition of his Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India). Nehru wanted a united Asia with India playing a leading role in it. But Subhas Bose wanted Japan and India to assume a leading role together in Asia.

Based on the abovementioned arguments, the paper emphasizes that the issue of changes in Nehru's Asianism and his controversial attitude towards Japan during the different periods of his political career, are interrelated.

It deserves to mention that the great poet, first Asian Nobel Prize winner in literature Rabindra Nath Tagore's ideas on Asian unity were much influential to Nehru's Asianism, than his patron Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi himself did not much subscribe readily to either Asianism or internationalism and his main concern was Indian nationalism above all concerns.

There is no a single definition of Pan-Asianism or Asianism. Encyclopedias and dictionaries define it differently as 'nationalism', 'imperialism', and 'expansionism', etc. In this regard, one may consider Nehru's Asianism as another one in the line of Sun Yat-sen's Asian Doctrine or Greater Asianism, Japan's Pan-Asianism, Nasser's Pan-Arabism, Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism etc.

Nehru's Asianism, including the themes of Asian unity, India-China friendship, and Greater India, has been a difficult legacy for the post-independence Indian foreign policy. It was not a glorifying success. The new Asia Nehru wanted to build with other Asian nations never materialized. China had a little regard for Nehru's Asianist ideas and positions. Moreover, Nehru's Asianism did not focus on India's immediate neighborhood in South Asia. As a result of border war with China and India's defeat in 1962, the basic principles of Nehru's foreign policy were put under doubt. India was characterized as a weak nation by many countries and lost interest of a certain nations, including Japan. Nehru although since his country's failure in India-China border war of 1962 understood the real situation of relations with China; he did not terminate and refuse the policy of non-alignment, did not break a diplomatic relations with China, and also was not against the membership of communist China to the United Nations. India-China friendship and harmony formed the basis of independent India's Asian policy under Nehru's leadership. He foresaw that both nations India and China would come together as a unified force. However, Nehru's long-time efforts for friendship and brotherhood with China failed. The India-China border war of 1962 shattered his Asianism, China myth, and calls for friendship, cooperation and unity of Asian nations. It shattered his dream of new Asia. It caused a decline in the role of India in Asian and international affairs. The China factor had a significant role in Nehru's Asianism and the foreign policy of India during the first two decades of its independence. But this factor put an end to Nehru's Asianism and Asian ideas. Nehru's Asianism failed like other regional proposals, as Nasser's Pan-Arabism, Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism and Japan's Pan-Asianism during WWII.

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