

**Nationalism as subtle presence in the socialist
writings of Premchand and Lu Xun (鲁迅)**

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Nationalism (爱国主义)

- Modern Nationalism comes from the concept of a nation or nation-state and the emphasis on loyalty, devotion or alliance to it, however, traditionally in the civilizational state it is associated with respect and protection to the motherland.
- There are different theories of nationalism however, the core dispute centres between modernists, who believe the nation to be entirely modern in origin, and ethno-symbolists who believe that the nation is mostly modern but is built on cultural and ethnic antecedents from the past.

Nationalism in Indian Classics

- The concept of nationalism in India is not new, however, as one of the oldest civilizations, Indian ideology comes as glorifying the own beloved motherland and keep the respect for others. There are many ancient Indian classics advocate the glory of motherland.
- अयं निजः परोवेति गणना लघुचेतसाम् । उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैवकुटुम्बकम् ॥
(महोपनिषद्, अध्याय ६, मंत्र ७१): “This is mine, that belongs to others this is for those who have small mind, for those who have big heart the whole world is family for them”

Nationalism in Indian Classics

- Indian ideals of nationalism doesn't recognise extremism. It believe in the respect of others freedom. The Ideal of Ram-Ravan War can be found in the freedom of Bangladesh in the modern history.
- "अहं राष्ट्री - संगमनी वसूनाम," - ऋग्वेद (१०/१२५/३), I am the ruler of the whole nation "Rigveda".
- " वयं राष्ट्रे जागृयाम - पुरोहित : " - यजुर्वेद ९/२३, " We will keep the nation awake and alive "Yajurveda".
- माता भूमि : पुत्रोहम पृथिव्याः - (अथर्व वेद १२|१|१२) The earth is the mother, and we the citizens are their children. "Atharv Veda".

Nationalism in Chinese classics

- The first dynasty emerged in China is Shang Dynasty and nationalism was associated with the empire. Traditionally it is believed that Chinese interests were served by a powerful Chinese state.
- Chinese Nationalism is often associated with Han Nationalism. However, the modern nation state is different from the traditional empire.
- Sun Yat Sen's nationalism is a form of civic nationalism. However, the modern nationalism emerged from foreign aggression in Qing Dynasty.
- Further it develops in isolation of the communist Chinese state.

Nationalism in Chinese classics

- Although the Identity of Chinese people were present earlier and the foreigners who entered China felt the discrimination before also however, some Chinese scholars believe the Chinese nationalism flourished in the early 20th Century.
- The concepts of the Chinese nation (Zhonghua minzu) and the Chinese people (Zhong guo ren), were introduced to China around the early twentieth century by the intellectual elite (Zhao, 2004: 45R46) From the outset, the concept of sovereignty (guojia zhuquan) became the most prominent theme of Chinese elite nationalism (Zhao, 2004: 49).

Nationalism in India & China

- India and China are modern nation state. Both the countries take pride in calling themselves as Civilizational state.
- The steamship networks that linked China and India from the mid-nineteenth century were a key facet of the British colonial presence in both places. -**Anne Reinhardt**

Lu Xun's Nationalism in early 20th century China

- New Nation was created out of Imperialism in China.
- Nation must be created in the heart and mind of the people.
- Found countrymen sick in spirit and paralysed by slavish dependencies.
- The spiritual paralysis caused by the Confucianism of the late Qing Dynasty.
- Wrote to liberate the Soul or spirit of the people.
- Lu Xun not only was sensitive about national issues but also, he participated in many events to express his ideas in this speeches.

Lu Xun's Nationalism in early 20th century China

- Lu Xun made a special trip to Hong Kong on 18 February 1927. On that night, he gave his first speech entitled 'Silent China'. He delivered his second speech 'The same old tune has come to an end' the next day. His third trip to Hong Kong was on his way to Shanghai via Hong Kong from Guangzhou in September (Lu 2005a: 3, 9, 38).
- According to Zhao Jinsheng, the British imposed tight regulations in Hong Kong after the Guangdong–Hong Kong General Strike-Boycott, and thus he attempted to 'break down the oppressive atmosphere to arouse the Hong Kong people's revolutionary enthusiasm' by inviting Lu Xun to visit Hong Kong in the name of the Daguang newspaper or Ta Kwong Po, 大光報 (ibid.).
- Lu Xun transposed his anxiety onto the colonial Hong Kong context. He attempted to use 'silent Hong Kong' to criticise both the 'silent' Hong Kong and China.

Premchand's Nationalism in early 20th century colonial India

- Premchand believed that writing is not possible without social purpose. He had the insight to see the identity between the demand of the society and the demand of the literature.
- He could see the society from the angles of Oppressed, persecuted and deprived.
- At the level of sentiment, for Premchand, Nationalism was the struggle against alien imperialism.
- At another level it so operated as to promote the material interests of some sections within the large fraternity, without, of course, forgetting to make vague generalised promises to all once freedom had been won.

Premchand's Nationalism in early 20th century colonial India

- Premchand was the supporter of complete political independence from colonial regime. His works touch nationalism with a very realistic & sensitive approach.
- He published a collection called “*Soz-e- Watan*” (*The Dirge of the Nation*), that was banned by the British Government.
- Some of his characters from the stories like *Samar (Battle)*, *Jail*, *Julus*, *Thakur ka Kuan* etc. highlight the atrocities of the British government.
- The main protagonists of his stories, male and female, both are often struggling with socio-economic issues and at the same time facing the challenges of colonial rule.

Significance of Lu Xun and Premchand's writing

- The early 20th century was the period of transition in both the countries.
 - The nationalist mobilization in China and India starts from the mid-nineteenth century were a key facet of the British colonial presence in both places. By the early twentieth century, Japanese aggression was an important reason of nationalist mobilization in China as well.
 - After the end of thousands of years of imperialism in China, it was still struggling for development. India was struggling against British colonialism and the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa provided the new hope to Indians.
 - Both the authors recognized the need of the people and the requirement of the nation. Lu Xun remained very critical to feudal Chinese society, similarly Premchand was also critical to many orthodox social practices.
 - Premchand wrote more than three hundred short stories, one incomplete and seventeen completed novels, biographies, plays, articles and translations from writers like Tolstoy and Gorki. Premchand's writing is not only an important document of the nationalist movement, but also of peasant conditions at this time.
- Devleena Ghosh**

Conclusion

- The two authors recognise the Socio-Eco-Political suppression of People.
- They express social transformation as the main goal.
- It is found the subtle recognition of national identity in their writings.
- Premchand is more vocal for nationalism because of British colonial rule in India and their suppression to common people.
- Lu Xun is more subtle because China was going through socio-Political transformation.
- Lu Xun is also popular in India as Premchand is also popular in China. Their writings were translated in many languages and became popular in the two countries along with other parts of the world because of their sensitivity towards social issues, connect to the common people and the national interests against the foreign aggression.

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