

# Bharat's Body

India and its maps



Master Thesis

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## Introduction

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2011, *The Economist* published an article on the relations between India and China. This article is part of the continuing coverage by *The Economist* on the various border disputes between India, Pakistan and China. The article featured extensive maps illustrating the claimed territories by all parties involved.<sup>1</sup> In the Indian publication, readers found a small disclaimer instead of said maps, explaining that the Indian government does not allow the publication of any maps that do not conform to Indian claims. The text accentuates that ‘it (India) is more intolerant on this issue than either China or Pakistan’.<sup>2</sup> The actual text of the article is in no way censored and fully explains the differences in claims and border alignment. It seems that, a physical map portraying borders is more threatening than an explanation of what the map shows.

India’s censorship of these maps reveals its peculiar relationship with maps. India treats maps that are counter to Indian claims with the same severity it reserves for indecent content such as pornography and swearing. Indian law allows the censorship of any material that ‘threatens the unity, integrity, defense, security or sovereignty of India’.<sup>3</sup> In 1961, an amendment was enacted making it illegal to publish any maps or “representations” of maps counter to those published by the Survey of India.<sup>4</sup> This type of censorship implies a powerful anxiety toward maps showing a discordant shape of India as they seemingly threaten the state.

This thesis aims to investigate India’s relationship with maps by exploring its colonial origins, its post-independence transformation and its response to the Chinese border dispute. More precisely, this thesis focuses on the question of how India’s conception of the nation was influenced by the interaction between cartography, imagery and nationalism from the colonial period until it’s border dispute with China in 1962.

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<sup>1</sup>The Economist, ‘Pakistan and India: a rivalry that threatens the world’(version 19 May 2011),

<sup>2</sup> Full text: Missing Map?: Sadly, India Censors maps the current effective border, insisting instead that only its full territorial claims be shown. It is more intolerant on this issue than either China or Pakistan. Indian readers will therefore probably be deprived in the print edition of this petition. Unlike their government, we think our Indian readers can face political reality. Those who want to see an accurate depiction of the various claims can do so using our interactive map.

<sup>3</sup> The Telegraph India, ‘Uncle Dictates, cyber boys dispose – Sibal to work on norms for social sites’ (6 December 2011) [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1111207/jsp/nation/story\\_14848886.jsp#.T3g8OPC17Lk](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1111207/jsp/nation/story_14848886.jsp#.T3g8OPC17Lk) (10 March 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Government of India, ‘Criminal Law Amendment Act’ (New Delhi 1961), <http://www.helpinelaw.com/docs/THE%20CRIMINAL%20LAW%20AMENDMENT%20ACT,%201961> (10 March 2012).

The year 1962 is regarded as a turning point in Indian policy and domestic politics. It marked the end of Jawaharlal Nehru's Non-Alignment policy, the rise of mainstream Hindu politics and a marked shift in India's economy. 2012 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the conflict and any resolution seems more implausible than ever, as international competition between China and India in the pursuit of natural resources and the expansion of their respective militaries increases. Experts claim that especially India's attitude toward the border dispute has made a peaceful resolution impossible.<sup>5</sup> The 1962 dispute seemingly scared the Indian national psyche so profoundly that it is still relevant fifty years later.

This thesis means to contribute to the relatively new field of study of critical cartography which focuses on a postmodern approach to maps, nationalism and politics. Within critical cartography, maps are treated as expressions of power and knowledge. It aims to examine the social relevance of mapping, its ethics, politics and power relations. The examination of power and mapping has revealed that cartography and national identity are profoundly intertwined. The shape of a country as it is drawn on a map is identified as being the nation. Various concepts, ideologies and practices become connected to this cartographic representation. To explore the relationship between maps, nationalism and imagery this thesis will apply the concept of the geo-body to India.

Thai historian, Thongchai Winichakul has explored the relationship between cartography, popular imagery and nationalism in his book *Siam Mapped* by introducing the concept of the geo-body.<sup>6</sup> In this book, Thongchai posits that a nation is given its shape or "body" through cartography and this body subsequently becomes a national symbol through the interaction between politics and imagery. He calls this imagining of the nation upon a map, the geo-body.

According to Thongchai, nationalism exists through belief in the identity of the nation. Territory is the constitutive element of nationhood in that it is the most solid point of reference for this identity. Cartographic demarcation (defining of territory) literally forms the national body, the entity in which the nation and its citizens reside. Territory draws a spatial line to demarcate the domain of such an identity, whilst simultaneously differentiating it from others. The formation of this national body demarcates the positive, what constitutes

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<sup>5</sup> Neville Maxwell, 'Why the Sino-Indian Border Dispute is Still Unresolved after 50 Years: A Recapitulation', *China Report* vol. 47 No. 2 (2011) 81-82.

<sup>6</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation* (Honolulu 1994).



the nation, and the negative, what does not belong in the nation.<sup>7</sup> The spatial drawing of the nation's territorial shape and the connotations it carries is what creates the geo-body.

On the map, the geo-body is imagined as occupying a certain portion of the earth. Through the scientific character of the map, the shape and extent of the geo-body is totally objective. The spectator views it as concrete, natural, having a long history and being independent from technology. Thongchai shows that this is not the case, as the geo-body is constructed through the technology of mapping. The geo-body communicates the sense that this constructed national body is a natural territorial entity existing through shared culture and history.

The cartographic shape of the geo-body instills certain practices and concepts of legitimacy upon the nation: territorial integrity, sovereignty and border control being most prominent among them. This legitimacy in turn validates control over national economic policy, tax collection, trade regulations and education within the territory. Within the geo-body, only the nation is permitted to influence these affairs.

The case of India differs from the case of Siam in that the process of mapping and naturalization of the geo-body was split in the British colony. The British created the shape of the geo-body, while Indian nationalists infused it with nationalist ideas and connotations. The application of the geo-body concept to India makes it possible to use the same tools as Thongchai to examine the evolution of India's relationship between its national identity and its maps.

Thongchai's focus was more on iconography and imagery than cartography. Though this thesis means to spend ample time analyzing the image aspect of the geo-body, it concerns itself more with the examination of cartographic practices and power relations within those practices. Critical cartographers have been studying this aspect of maps since the inception of their field.

Territoriality and border demarcation issues have been a central topic of International Relations studies since its inception following the First World War. In this field, cartographic representations of borders and territories have usually been viewed in an unproblematic manner, until fairly recently. Writers and other map users would view maps as being a 'scientific' representation of reality. Cartography was viewed as a professional, skilled and unproblematic exercise in precision, which would only become more accurate as

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<sup>7</sup> Thongchai calls this Thai-ness.

technology advanced. The map-medium was non-controversial and fully objective.<sup>8</sup> The map was seen as a device of communication in the same way an airplane is seen as a device of transport.

In the late 1980's, this notion of objective cartography was challenged. Influenced by ideas of social constructivism and post-structuralism, Brian Harley and David Woodward became the founders of critical cartography. Their collaboration on the *History of Cartography* from 1987 until 1998, posited critical questions regarding mapmaking and the representation of power.<sup>9</sup> To them, maps are documents that maintain discourses of power and cannot be viewed solely as scientific representations of geography. Cartography to Harley and Woodward is a form of language and maps are texts to be deconstructed in the same way that Derrida and Barthes deconstructed literature and architecture. In his later work, Harley surmised, in Foucauldian fashion, that maps are in essence instruments of power. In particular by drawing attention to the maps' symbolic and practical role as a tool to assert and communicate proprietorial and territorial rights. If power, as Foucault claims, is about space then space is created through the exercise of power.<sup>10</sup>

Amongst the critical cartographers, a group of historians and social scientists have looked at maps and especially at their political workings. Jeremy Black explores the relationship between the map-maker and the map-user, focusing especially on the eighteenth and nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> He argues, among other things, that the map-user is largely oblivious to the political workings of maps. The mapmakers often make these maps to serve a certain interest or to be outright propaganda material. However maps only work within their own discourse of mapmaking. A map currently perceived as propagandistic might have been normal and acceptable for its time. Christian Jacob focuses more on the political workings of the map, in regard to its representation and imagery.<sup>12</sup> In his work, he explores the political connotations map dedications imply and relations of power conveyed through seemingly decorative elements of maps. Jacob tries to discern what the mapmaker wanted to show and what he inadvertently communicates to the user. He looks at

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<sup>8</sup> Jeremy Black, *Maps and Politics* (Chicago 1997) 17.

<sup>9</sup> J. Brian Harley, and David Woodward (ed.), *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago 1987).

<sup>10</sup> Black, *Maps*, 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>12</sup> Christian Jacob, *The Sovereign Map; Theoretical Approaches in Cartography throughout History* (Chicago 2006).

mapmaking practices such as decorations at the border, accents shown in the legend and the use of certain colors to create political divides. To him the relationship between the map-user and map-maker is different from Black's. To Jacob the map does not create or force a new discourse on the viewer it simply reaffirms the already existing discourse of the viewer. Maps that contradict the dominant discourse are subsequently regarded as erroneous or weird.

Thongchai's theory falls within this group of the critical cartographers, as he similarly explored the relationship between maps, politics and discourse creation. Since Thongchai's book came out in 1994, relatively little has been written about the geo-body, despite the book receiving positive reviews.<sup>13</sup> With the recent rise in critical cartography writing, researchers have returned to *Siam Mapped* and adopted Thongchai's idea of the geo-body.

William Callahan wrote an extensive piece on the Chinese geo-body and its character of humiliation.<sup>14</sup> Callahan argues that Chinese nationalism was focused on fighting back against foreign incursions. The image was propagated that China had lost its former glory due to foreign imperialism. Based on maps from the 1940s and 1950s, he focuses on how the Chinese geo-body revolved around reconquering lost territory taken by imperialist nations in the nineteenth century. Jefferson Fox applied the method of *Siam Mapped* upon Cambodia.<sup>15</sup> He further expanded it by focusing on the current day implications and local governance. Fox and Callahan's work showed how the concept of the geo-body is not only applicable to Siam but also to other countries. Other authors have followed their lead to apply the geo-body to India.

Regarding India and her geo-body, only two articles have recently been published that apply the geo-body concept. David V. Zou and M.S. Kumar wrote an article on the recreation of the kingdoms of Manipur and Assam into the colonial Northeast by British cartographers.<sup>16</sup> These cartographers were creating a borderland geo-body and reimaged local history to fit this new discourse. Sumathi Ramaswamy focuses more on the body aspect

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<sup>13</sup> Prasenjit Duara, 'Review: Siam Mapped by Thongchai Winichakul', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 2 (1995) 477-479, Richard A. O'Connor and 'Review: Siam Mapped by Thongchai Winichakul', *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 56, No. 1 (1997) 279-281

<sup>14</sup> William A. Callahan, 'The Cartography of National Humiliation and the Emergence of China's Geo-body', *Public Culture* 21 (2009) 141-173.

<sup>15</sup> Jefferson Fox, 'Siam Mapped and Mapping in Cambodia: Boundaries, Sovereignty, and Indigenous Conceptions of Space', *Society and Natural Resources* 15 (2002) 65-78.

<sup>16</sup> David V. Zou and M. Satish Kumar, 'Mapping a Colonial Borderland: Objectifying the Geo-Body of India's Northeast', *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 70, No. 1 (2011) pp. 141-170.

of the geo-body. He studied images of Bharat Mata (Mother India) as a personification of the nation.<sup>17</sup>

Other writers have written about topics that relate to the geo-body of India. Edney and Barrow have both written extensively about the creation of the cartographic shape of India by the British in the eighteen and nineteenth centuries.<sup>18</sup> Aside from Ramaswamy, Charu Gupta has studied the origins of the Bharat Mata imagery in northern India.<sup>19</sup> Partha Chatterjee, in his landmark book *The Nation and its Fragments*, explored the origins of Indian nationalism and its characteristics. Lucy Chester's examination of the process by which the Partition occurred, gives insight into the cartographic ideas of Indian nationalists at the time.<sup>20</sup> Work by Zamindar, Yusin and others has already analyzed India's Partition trauma, especially in relation to borders and territoriality.<sup>21</sup> Maxwell and Mey have each studied the run up to the 1962 dispute and its political fallout.<sup>22</sup> This thesis aims to bring all these various works, and others, together with primary source analysis to examine the evolution of India's geo-body, as to better understand India's relationship towards maps.

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<sup>17</sup> Sumathi Ramaswamy, 'Visualizing India's geo-body: Globes, maps, bodyscapes', *Indian Sociology* No. 36 (2002) 156-189.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an empire : the geographical construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago 1997) and Ian J. Barrow, *Making history, drawing territory : British mapping in India, c.1756-1905* (Oxford 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Charu Gupta, 'The Icon of Mother in Late Colonial North India: 'Bharat Mata', 'Matri Bhasha' and 'Gua Mata'', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.36 No. 45 (2001) 4291-4299.

<sup>20</sup> Lucy P. Chester, *Border and conflict in South Asia; The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Partition of Punjab* (New York 2009).

<sup>21</sup> Jennifer Yusin, 'Beyond nationalism: The border, trauma and Partition fiction', *Thesis Eleven* vol. 105 (2011) pp. 23-34 and V.F.U Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia; Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Neville Maxwell, *India's China war* (London 1971) and Leo van der Mey, *Nehru's droom voorbij, 1962 als keerpunt in India's verhouding tot China* (Utrecht 1990).

## *Subject*

To understand the creation of India's geo-body we need to be conscious of the duality between its colonial cartographers and the nationalist adopters. Chapter 1 will revolve around exploring this duality by analyzing the mapping and border demarcation practices of the British and the subsequent reimagining of British India's cartographic shape by Indian nationalists through religious iconography.

Following chapter 1, I would posit the question of how the, now symbolically empowered, Indian geo-body was transformed amongst nationalists on the road to independence. A process of naturalization and homogenization of the geo-body occurred leading up to the 1940s that was very similar to the creation of "Thainess" in Siam. Instead of creating a modicum of unity as it did in Siam, in India this process of naturalization caused an ethnic and religious split amongst nationalists that resulted in the Partition. The Partition of India constituted a detrimental blow to the Indian national identity and the geo-body. In the second chapter of this thesis we will examine how the Partition led to a profound shift in India's attitude toward borders as they became a symbol of national trauma. The actions of the now independent Indian government, following the Partition, in laying claim to Hyderabad, Kashmir and Goa will subsequently show how India's geo-body became an empowered tool that validated the means employed to safeguard the territorial unity of the nation.

The Chinese territorial claims along the northern border constituted the first threat to India's newly attained territorial integrity. To understand India's response to this threat, the final chapter will analyze various diplomatic communiqués, parliamentary debates, maps, speeches and letters to understand the Indian attitude towards borders and territorial integrity. An examination of the fallout of the conflict in 1962 will clarify the utter change in

## Chapter 1: The Twin Geo-bodies

Under British rule India became cartographically drawn into one geographic entity. This entity reflected British dominance over an area that by the end of the nineteenth century extended from modern day Burma until Pakistan. Mapping served as one of the tools of British rule in the subcontinent. It communicated the cultural and scientific superiority of the British and legitimized their rule across this massive stretch of territory full of diverse people and cultures. This resulted in a geo-body not based on imagined natural rule but on foreign dominance and control. British India's borders became the stage on which Britain and Russia clashed over influence in Asia. This would leave the colonies borders ambiguous. Simultaneously, the cartographic entity the British had created was reimaged by Indian nationalists to serve as a symbol for independence. It would be this symbol that helped turn the various people of India into "Indians".

### Shaping India

#### *The Drawing of British India*

Before the arrival of the Europeans, Indian cartography was very diverse. Maps ranged from religious maps, military diagrams and sea charts. The common religious maps showed the locations of shrines and temples in a certain area.<sup>23</sup> Western cartographers introduced the globe to Indian cartography, which became very popular with the Mughal emperors. The work of these cartographers in actual mapping remained rather limited until the expansion of the British onto the Indian subcontinent.

From the seventeenth century onward, the British East India Company expanded along the coast of the Indian subcontinent. The Company established trading posts in Surat (1612), Madras (1639), Calcutta (1668) and Bombay (1690). Its growing influence brought it into conflict with other powers. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the Company defended its trade interests against both the Dutch East India Company and the Mughal Empire. After the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the East India Company gained the right of *diwan* (revenue collector) from the Mughal emperor and wrested control over Bengal. This marks

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<sup>23</sup> Susan Gole, *Indian maps and plans: from earliest times to the advent of European surveys* (Delhi 1989).



the beginning of the Company acquiring expansive territories across the subcontinent. In 1772, the Company settled its capital in Calcutta, from where it started to expand its influence through direct conquest or treaties into the interior. To facilitate this expansion and the collection of revenues, the territories under Company control had to be mapped.

More knowledge of the hinterland was needed to foster trade, military mobility and the collection of revenue. On the surface, this was the main goal of the Company's mapping activities. But with the creation of maps, the Company also attempted to legitimize their control of its Indian holdings. The first large scale survey of Company territory, *A Bengal Atlas*, was completed in 1780 by James Rennel. He combined maritime surveys of the coastline with data gathered from his own route surveys to create a precise and detailed map.<sup>24</sup> During the time of publishing, the Company had been marred by financial and political scandals. These scandals had damaged the Company's favor with the public and threatened its royal patronage and stock prices. The situation was so dire that Parliament attempted to gain control over Company holdings. A large pamphlet war ensued. Public opinion turned against the Company and started questioning its rule over colonial holdings. *A Bengal Atlas* was a part of the Company's campaign against its detractors. The *Atlas* shows more than just roads, towns, rivers and mountains. It showed readers in the eighteenth century that the Company was representing British interests and was very successful.<sup>25</sup>

The Company's goals are clearly demonstrated by the dedications of the *Atlas*. Dedications are panels placed on the side of a map clarifying either the contents of the map or in whose name the map was created. In the main dedication, all possessions within the map are shown as being *British* and are a result of the *Distinguished Abilities* of the Company. The *Atlas* also attempts to evoke history. Throughout the *Atlas*, Rennel dedicated parts to certain military victories and their respective commanders. These parts call upon the 'British Nation' to honor the bravery of the Company, which gave them the 'Sovereignty' over Bengal. Another section even holds a miniature map showing troop positions during one of the Company's victories.<sup>26</sup> Aside from these dedications, the representation of Bengal itself also reflects victory. All areas of Bengal were shown with the same coloring and the only threat seems to be the Maharatta border to the south. It evokes the idea that within

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<sup>24</sup> Barrow, *Making History*, 34-37.

<sup>25</sup> Barrow, *Making History*, 40-43.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, 45-58.

Bengal all opposition was pacified and that it was homogenously populated. This use of colors to convey a sense of homogeneity is an important attribute of maps according to Christian Jacob.<sup>27</sup> In truth, much of the area was under indirect control and subject to internal ethnic conflicts. Throughout Rennel's own travels he fell under attack by local lords forcing him to flee and even sustaining injury on certain occasions. Attacks that befell Rennel but also larger military clashes are depicted as crossed swords in the *Atlas*. The crossed swords mark this as a spot of British victory and pacification of the area. These images of pacification made the rule of the Company seem just, strong and legitimate. In short, elements of Rennel's maps attempted to appeal to eighteenth century British national sentiments in the hopes of legitimizing the Companies beleaguered rule in India .

Even though Rennel's work was initially well-received, nineteenth century cartographers voiced strong criticism on his cartographical methods. Rennel and his compatriots used the route survey method. This method meant that a surveyor traveled along a certain route, often rivers or roads, and used notable landmarks to base their maps on. This often resulted in very detailed maps that had a strong journey-like quality focusing more on descriptions and picturesque images. But the route survey failed to take into account the depiction of latitudes and longitudes and was very unsuitable when trying to survey larger tracts of territory. It was also perceived as being more prone to errors due to the absence of a universal method. Company officials used maps in all their work and the demand for more accurate maps was always high. The most common request was not the mapping of new territory but the more precise mapping of areas that were already explored. Around 1800, cartographers deemed the route survey method as inadequate to fulfill these demands and therefore turned to a new approach. <sup>28</sup>

A trigonometrical survey uses triangulation in its mapping. In the simplest sense, it entails that on either ends of a set baseline the angles can be calculated to determine the distance to a third point by creating a triangle. Points within the triangle can be accurately pinpointed by making a mesh of smaller triangles. The universal basis of this mathematical method allows for cartographers to review each other's work more easily as they all worked off the same starting data. This minimizes the occurrence of errors and makes them easier to track down.

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<sup>27</sup> Jacob, *The Sovereign Map*, pp. 151-153

<sup>28</sup> Barrow, *Making History*, pp. 38, 58-59, 63-77.

The Great Trigonometric Survey was a project by the Survey of India to draw British India and map the Himalayan mountains. This baseline needed to be accurate because all subsequent calculations were derived from it. The chief champion of the Survey and its subsequent implementer, William Lambton found a piece of flat land close to Madras and laid a large chain across it totaling seven and a half miles in 1806. This would be the baseline for all of the surveying in India. Lambton projected that the Survey would require five years to finish mapping all of the Company's holdings in India. Due to mismanagement, financial insecurity and internal power struggles, the Survey took over 60 years to complete and was taken over when the British Raj was instituted in 1857.<sup>29</sup>

The Great Trigonometric Survey was a paragon of what the Enlightenment Era envisioned as an objective and scientific method. The survey utilized extensive amounts of data, sophisticated instruments to make measurements and adhered to a universal method, as requiring all other surveyors to rely upon its results for their success. It allowed the world's complexities to be classified not by an arbitrary structure but by a scientific one. As Company territory in India grew, Company directors urged surveyors to stick to the "scientific principles". They collected, measured, observed, classified and described. Indians were thought of as being unfit to participate within the scientific field, making the mapping of India a solely Western endeavor.<sup>30</sup>

By making the mapping of India a scientific enterprise, the Company added the rhetoric of progress to their validation of power. Science replaced the unknown and the threatening character of uncharted areas with a sense of knowledge and security. It is not surprising that the Survey of India was the largest and most visible scientific department, serving as a sign that this supposed progress occurred under Company rule.<sup>31</sup>

When mapping British India, cartographers had to name newly charted places and areas. Naming infers ownership, dominance and knowledge. It was an important part of legitimizing colonial rule.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the mapping process, naming played an essential role. During the early Company rule, places were named by the cartographers. Often these names were meant to be close to traditional local names. Places such as Calcutta, Madras,

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<sup>29</sup> Edney, *Mapping an Empire*, 121- 292.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, 293-332.

<sup>31</sup> Barrow, *Making History*, 84.

<sup>32</sup> Eric Worby, 'Maps, Names and Ethnic Games: The Epistemology and Iconography of Colonial power in Northwestern Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 20, No 3 (September 1994) 371-392.

and Bahar were named based on a limited understanding of local language and culture. Calcutta and Bahar were Anglicized names and Madras came from a small fishing village where the British had erected a fort in the seventeenth century.<sup>33</sup>

In 1857, the British Raj took direct control of British India following the Indian Rebellion. Most Company institutions were directly transferred to Raj control, amongst them the Survey of India. As more and more territory became mapped additional areas had to be named. The most prominent example of British naming was the that of Mount Everest. Where naming before was based mostly around interpreting local ethnic histories, correctly or incorrectly, here the British attempted to put their own direct stamp on the region. During the British mapping of the Himalayas, British surveyors named peaks with either a number or a European name. The naming of Mount Everest formed the pinnacle of this process. Even though British surveyors were aware of the local names for the Himalayas tallest mountain they still put a foreign name on it. The mountain was named after George Everest, the former head of the Survey of India.<sup>34</sup>

An even more telling example of control through naming occurred in the North Indian border areas. The kingdoms of Assam and Manipur came under British control over the course of the Anglo-Burmese wars. When British surveyors mapped the conquered areas they named it British Assam. Before British control, the Kingdom of Assam only stretched across the Brahmaputra Valley. After being mapped, British Assam encompassed all of Northeastern India including, amongst others, the Princely state of Manipur. By renaming Northeastern India, the British created a new identity and history, which replaces the pre-colonial history.<sup>35</sup>

The naming of Mount Everest, renaming Northeastern India to British Assam and the Anglicization of city names shows the relationship between power and names in British India. Firstly, it illustrates the victory of British science over the unknown. For more than two centuries, British surveyors have mapped the Indian subcontinent. Naming the highest mountain in the world after an English surveyor was the ultimate statement of British scientific dominance. Renaming an entire region after one polity implied possession; it was theirs so they could decide its name. Secondly, the surveyors and their superiors felt that it

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<sup>33</sup> Barrow, *Making History*, pp. 90-99.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 99-121.

<sup>35</sup> Zou and Kumar, 'Mapping a Colonial Borderland', 141-170.

was in their right to name the mountain or a conquered area. It was the surveyors that calculated the height of the mountain or the extent of Assam's territory, it was up to them to name it. They were able to conquer an area with science and well within their rights to name or rename.<sup>36</sup>

The combination of British nationalism, scientific progress and naming defined the mapping of India. A map is more than just a guide or tool for administrators, it is a miniature expression of power. The dedications and icons on maps showed victory and control over certain areas. The history, created or altered more often than not, that was tied to these dedications and icons legitimized this control. The process of mapmaking created a sense of benevolent power. The British were not conquerors but enlightened rulers that brought progress to the Indian subcontinent. By naming or renaming areas under their control, the British instilled a sense of possession. The name is connected to a constructed history. This history conveys a narrative of control and power of the name-giver. These three facets of colonial mapmaking made maps into tools to communicate the idea that British rule in India was appropriate, natural and responsible.

### *India's Northern Borders: The Great Game*

Following the Indian Munity of 1857, the Company rule came to an end and the British Raj was instituted. The British Raj put British India under direct control of the crown. The first objective of the Raj was to reorder the central and local administration of India in attempts to create a uniform state system.<sup>37</sup> Under the Raj, border demarcation became a priority especially during the auspice of Lord Curzon (1899- 1905). Curzon had a strong sense that India's borders needed to be well demarcated if Britain meant to retain India. Thusly, mapping the north of India became the Survey of India's highest priority. Previously borders were of a lesser priority as British India was less threatened by foreign incursions since the end of the Anglo-Nepalese war. The border with Burma had been demarcated after the Anglo-Burmese wars and Afghanistan had become a British protectorate securing the

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<sup>36</sup> Barrow, *Making History*, 121-122.

<sup>37</sup> Denis Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger: The Rise and Fall of the British Raj, 1600-1947* ( New York 2004) 91-95.

western and eastern borders.<sup>38</sup> Delimiting the northern border required careful consideration. Curzon envisioned a border following defensible natural obstacles but was reluctant to incorporate tribes that would be hard to control. The Himalayas were deemed the barrier that met these requirements. In the north and northeastern parts of the Himalayas, the mountains were inhospitable and hard to navigate. With Nepal and Bhutan acting as buffer states, this border would give the British very little trouble.<sup>39</sup>

It was the northwestern frontier that gave the administrators of the British Raj the greatest worry at the start of the twentieth century. Tsarist Russia had been expanding into Central Asia and the British saw this as a primary threat to the security of British India. Afghanistan had already been successfully turned into a buffer state but Russia's southward expansion would soon reach Kashmir. British officials knew that with access to Kashmir, Russia would be able to move troops into British India rapidly. The British Foreign Office hoped to have the ailing Qing Empire of China serve as a counter to Russian expansion. Russia and China had already come into conflict after the Russians started to threaten parts of Xinjiang. To curry favor with China, the British urged the Maharaja of Kashmir to end his territorial claims in both Xinjiang and Western Tibet.<sup>40</sup>

Tibet had been a part of the Qing empire since the early eighteenth century. From the middle of the nineteenth century onward, Chinese influence in Tibet had become miniscule. Beijing maintained an illusion that it had full control over Lhasa and conducted its foreign policy. The British therefore had always regarded the Chinese as the suzerain overlords of Tibet. Negotiations about the Sikkim-Tibet border were conducted without any input of the Tibetans. Sikkim is nestled between Nepal and Bhutan and was a culturally viewed as a part of Tibet by Lhasa. Tibetans in the region rebelled against the decision of giving Sikkim to India, prompting the British to respond with force. By 1912, the British attitude toward Tibet was changing. The illusion that China controlled Tibet had withered away with the fall of the last Qing emperor.<sup>41</sup>

The years leading up to 1912 had made the situation complex. Before the fall of the Qing Empire in 1911, a convention was reached between Russia and Great Britain on diplomatic agreements with Tibet. British attempts at initiating diplomatic relations with

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<sup>38</sup> Alistair Lamb, *Asian Frontiers, Studies in a Continuing Problem* (London 1968) 80-110.

<sup>39</sup> Lamb, *Asian Frontiers*, 131-145.

<sup>40</sup> Maxwell, *India's China War*, 19-38.

<sup>41</sup> Alistair Lamb, *Tibet, China & India 1914-1950, a History of Imperial Diplomacy* (Hertfordshire 1989) 2-4.



Lhasa had failed a number of times and officials in Delhi started to worry when word reached them that a Russian delegation was at the court of the thirteenth Dalai Lama. Great Britain and Russia agreed to only communicate with Lhasa through Chinese channels. Britain hoped to succeed in reaching out to the Tibetans through the Chinese whilst simultaneously blocking Russian efforts. On top of that, the Government of India feared that Chinese troops might return to Tibet, leading to destabilization throughout the region. To reconcile these issues, the British persuaded the new Kuomintang regime to send a representative to India to negotiate with the Tibetans, with the British serving as brokers. This conference was held in the hill town of Simla and laid the foundation for the Sino-Indian border dispute in 1962.

The Simla Conference of 1914 was initially meant to discuss Sino-Tibet borders and suzerainty issues. The British delegation was led by Sir Henry McMahon. The multilateral talks continued for over five months. During this time, McMahon entered secret bilateral talks with the Tibetan representative. McMahon suggested agreeing on a new demarcation of the northeastern border. By establishing this McMahon Line, the British would annex the territory up to the monastery town of Tawang. The British believed that the McMahon line provided the most defensible option. The belief was that Tibet would eventually be overrun by the Russia or even Japan. A defensible position in Tawang would secure India against further expansion. The Chinese delegation found out about this agreement and ended the conference feeling cheated. The Anglo-Tibetan agreement regarding the McMahon line was signed but never accepted by the Chinese. McMahon initially planned to discuss the northwestern Aksai-Chin border but put this issue on hold, due to the fragility of the newly created Tibetan state. As the Tibetans accepted the treaty the McMahon line should have come into effect but the British decided not to enforce it. Most importantly, the Anglo-Russian convention of 1911 made the Anglo-Tibetan treaty hard to enforce as the Chinese had left the negotiations. The Government of India also did not want to infuriate Beijing any further. The British hoped to keep China as an ally against Russia.<sup>42</sup>

By 1921, the Anglo-Russian convention that regulated Tibetan relations, was considered void. However, in the intermittent years the McMahon line was forgotten and relations with Tibet were put on the backburner. The British Raj was preoccupied with

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<sup>42</sup> Jason G. Cons, *Claiming Territory: Colonial State Space and the Making of India's North-Western Frontier* (Cornell 2005) 53-56 and Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, 11-13.

stopping the growing influence of, now Soviet Russia along the Afghanistan border and northern Kashmir. They also supplied weapons to Chiang-Kai Chek's Republic of China against its communist opponents. The McMahon line was largely forgotten following the end of WW I only to be rediscovered as the situation in China deteriorated. In 1937, Britain decided to enforce the McMahon line and started depicting it on their maps as a part of India. The McMahon line added around 75.000 km<sup>2</sup> to Indian territory. In 1938, the British sent a small military force to inform the Tawang monastery that it had become a part of British India. After this force left, Tibet asserted administrative control over the area again. The British decided not to pursue the issue as to foster better relations with the Himalayan kingdom. By this point the British viewed China as weak and assumed it would be overrun by the Japanese within the near future. It was therefore deemed wiser to move toward a more cooperative relationship with Tibet and a later official recognition.<sup>43</sup>

Until 1947, the borders remained intentionally vague. Most border issues remained unsolved due to the constant shifting political landscape. As seen in the case of Tibet, the Government of India was much more concerned with its relations with Russia and China than with solidifying its own borders. As early as Lord Curzon's tenure as viceroy, the Government of India had been adhering to a general policy that worked toward the eventual withdrawal of Britain from India and thus left the issue unresolved.<sup>44</sup> It is thus not surprising that the British did not enforce the McMahon line. It held little short-term advantages and would be a large expense. Britain's political games would leave independent India with uncertain borders.

### *The Colonial Geo-body*

The shape of India was created by British nationalism and political dealings. As in the case of Siam, the geo-body of British India formed due to military expansion and consolidation. The incorporation of new territories required their inclusion into the geo-body of British India. This meant that the Indian cartographic shape was constantly being revised. The resulting British Indian geo-body is very different from the Siam's. The geo-body of Siam was based on "natural" rule. The kings of Siam were its fathers and their rule was construed as natural.

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<sup>43</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, 14-21.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*, 237-251.

The Siamese felt that the people they incorporated had a shared history with them, making their inclusion legitimate.<sup>45</sup> The British on the other hand were not Indian but foreign dominators. Their mapping was a way to legitimize their control over India. Through mapping, they legitimized their rule as the creators of the body. The absence of any natural claim resulted in the sense that British India was never finished as British expansion was not guided by an idea of what India should be. It is therefore not surprising that the British only checked their expansion when they encountered formidable natural barriers or strong political entities. In essence, the British had created a colonial geo-body. The colonial geo-body is meant to show why the foreigner legitimately rules a territory it has no natural claim to. It did not undergo a process of naturalization such as Siam's geo-body did through belief in the monarchy and the creation of "Thainess". In short, the colonial geo-body never turned Indians into British Indians. Instead, it would be transformed into a national geo-body through Indian iconography.

### **The Creation of Bharat Mata**

As the British had created India's cartographic shape through its colonial geo-body, a new cultural image of India was created by Indian nationalists. Originating from poetry and literature, a geographic image of India was created within popular cartography. Popular cartography entails artistic images, which heavily feature maps. It is within these images that Indian nationalists created their own geo-body.

The British meant to turn the Indian populace into faithful subjects by making Indians see the progress the British had brought. From the middle of the nineteenth century, the British had started educational projects to achieve this goal. The goal was to validate British rule over British India. A prominent approach was to have Indian youths understand maps and the way they represented British rule. Through the use of globes and maps they hoped to create a certain level of 'map-mindedness', as to understand what place India had in the world and in relation to other countries. The hope was that through maps, Indians would understand that India belonged within the British Empire. These educational projects reached only the most privileged of Indian youths but it would be these youths that would

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<sup>45</sup> Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 131-135

head the nationalist movements. They were profoundly influenced by the British mapping of India, adopting the drawn cartographic shape. The future Indian nationalists accepted the British created India as *their* India. At the start of the twentieth century they transformed map of British India into Bharat Mata (Mother India).<sup>46</sup>

The term Bharat Mata originated from a play by Bengali nationalist Kiran Chandra Bandyopadhyay with the same name first performed in 1873. Set during the famine of Bengal in 1770, a housewife and later her husband have to flee into the jungle and fall in with a group rebels. A priest takes them into a temple to show them the Mother India.



**Image 1**, Mother India, Intiya 1909. Reproduced from R. A. Padmanabhan, *Cittira Bharati* (Madras, Bharatiyar Sangam, 1982), 60; as seen in S. Ramaswamy, 'Maps and Mother Goddesses in Modern India', *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 53 (2001), p. 104.

Emboldened by this, they lead a rebellion which culminates in the defeat of the British.<sup>47</sup> The concept of Bharat Mata caught on with Indian nationalists as a nationalist symbol. The image of Bharat Mata started to appear in Indian nationalist publications at the start of the twentieth century. The depictions of the Mother India are quite varied but adhere to a few essential characteristics. It always features a woman in a sari in the foreground being depicted with or in relation to a cartographic representation of India.<sup>48</sup> Bharat Mata images come in a wide variety incorporating elements such as a nationalist hero standing next to the mother, a lion and other attributes.

Regardless, Bharat Mata images essentially always convey the same set of characteristics.

Firstly, is the Hindu character of the image. The image of Bharat Mata herself was an amalgamation of iconography originating from depictions of the Hindu mother goddesses Lakshmi, Druga and Sita. A woman with long black hair and a crown who looked directly at

<sup>46</sup> Ramaswamy, 'Visualizing', 156-158.

<sup>47</sup> Sumathi Ramaswamy, 'Maps and Mother Goddesses in Modern India', *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 53 (2001) 104.

<sup>48</sup> Ramaswamy, 'Visualizing', 164.

the viewer had been popular ways of depicting these goddesses. Through these depictions, the geo-body of India underwent a process of sacralisation. Bharat Mata became synonymous for the cartographic shape of India. This made the cartographic shape of India a holy entity. One of the most telling examples of this is found with a young nationalist movement in Bengal in 1903. The men of this group would, upon joining, swear in front of a map of India to fight until their deaths for the freedom of Bharat Mata.<sup>49</sup>

Secondly, Bharat Mata harbors a very inclusive and exclusive character. On many depictions of Bharat Mata, iconography related to Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism is incorporated. This reflects the universal character many Indian nationalists strived for in an independent India. It also illustrates a hierarchy of religions. Hinduism is the most prevalent one and therefore the dominant religion. Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism are set up as being lesser groups as they exist only in the grace of Bharat Mata. These religions are still far above Islam, Christianity and the shamanistic faiths of eastern India as references to those religions is never shown in any Bharat Mata depictions. These religions are excluded from India itself in many of these images.<sup>50</sup>

Thirdly, the feminine characteristic of Bharat Mata is telling. Bharat Mata wears all the markers of the ideal traditional Indian woman. She is demurely clad in a sari and with an expression of submission and acceptance. Through this, the Indian national territory is given all the characteristics associated with an Indian woman. A woman is the place where the Hindu honor resides.<sup>51</sup> This personification of the nation as a woman in India shows similarities with the French Marianne or the Dutch Maiden. The association of India with a woman means that the nation should be cared for in the same way as an Indian woman, with paternalistic care and protection. However, it also means that India is under the guardianship of her sons, the men of India. In a paternalistic world, a woman becomes the possession of the men and so India is the possession of Indian men. This can be viewed as one of the first steps to reconstitute the colonial space into national property.<sup>52</sup>

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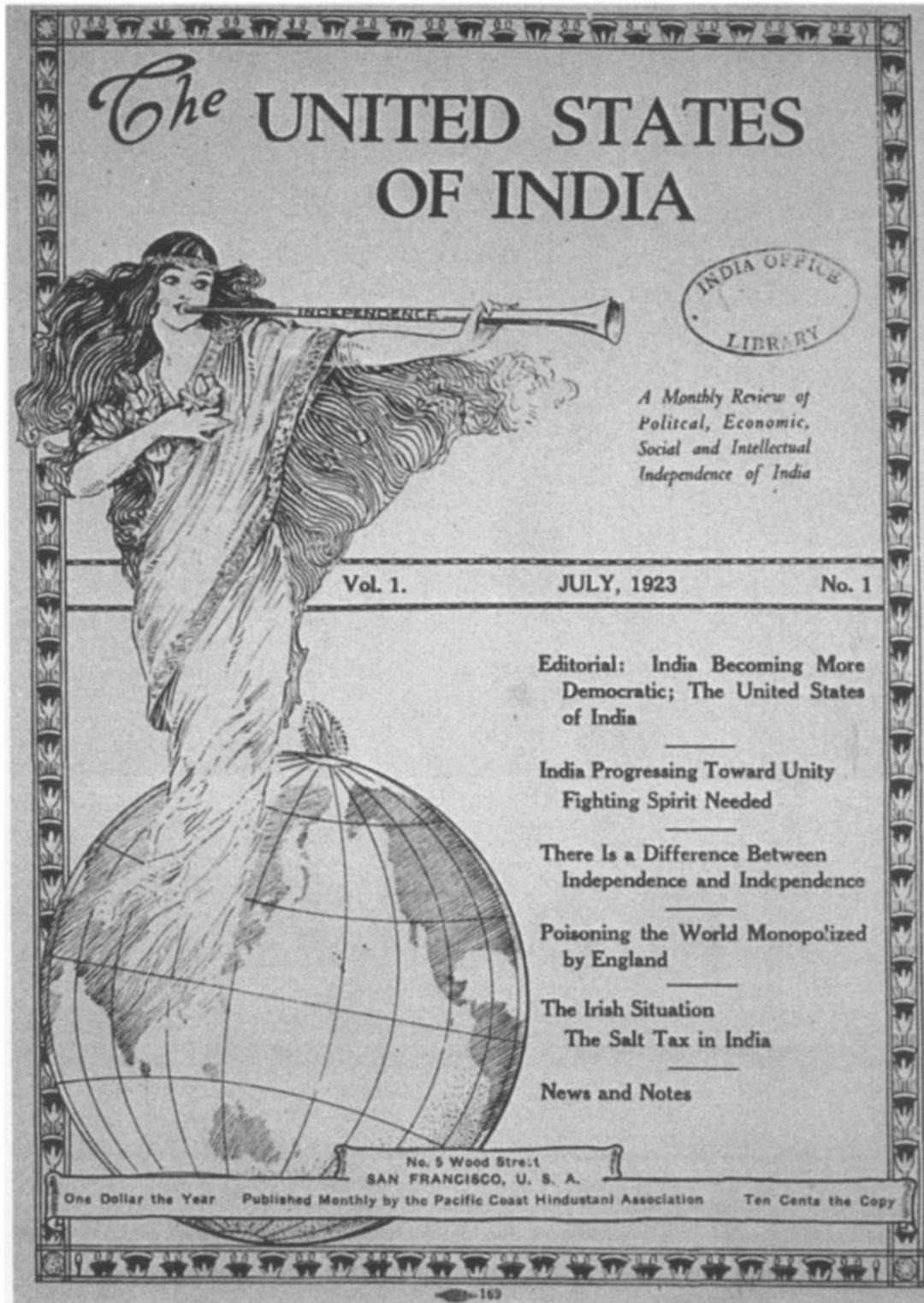
<sup>49</sup> Gupta, 'The Icon of Mother', 4291-4292.

<sup>50</sup> Ramaswamy, 'Visualizing', 180.

<sup>51</sup> Peter van der Veer, 'Gender and Nation in Hindu Nationalism', in: Stein Tønnesson and Hans Antlöv (ed.), *Asian Forms of the Nation* (Richmond 1996) 131-150 .

<sup>52</sup> Gupta, 'The Icon of Mother', 4295-4296.





**Image 2**, The United States of India. From Graham Shaw and Mary Lloyd, eds, *Publications Proscribed by the Government of India: A Catalogue of the Collections in the India Office Library and Records and the Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books*, British Library Reference Divin (London, The British Library, 1985), facing p. 23; as seen in S. Ramaswamy, 'Maps and Mother Goddesses in Modern India', *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 53 (2001), p. 101.

The fourth and last characteristic that defines Bharat Mata is the iconography of power, legitimacy and freedom. The sari is Bharat Mata's most common and important attribute that shows this characteristic. Her sari is often seen as flowing over the entirety of



the Indian subcontinent as she stands on a map. In certain images, the map disappears completely and the sari takes the familiar cartographical shape of British India. The sari shows the shape and size of the Indian nation, everything under the sari is the geo-body. In certain depictions of Bharat Mata she holds a spear as a weapon implying power. In other cases Bharat Mata will be accompanied by a lion, the protector of India and the emblem of India's most famed emperor, Ashoka. In many cases, she seemingly sprouts from India itself



**Image 2,** 'Bharat Mataa Poster: 1920-1930', (version 23 November 2006), [http://3.bp.blogspot.com/\\_TqVEWBx7H0U/StDWOjqKxcl/AAAAAAAAAoM/f47jX9LSEv0/s1600-h/early\\_BM.jpg](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_TqVEWBx7H0U/StDWOjqKxcl/AAAAAAAAAoM/f47jX9LSEv0/s1600-h/early_BM.jpg) (2 April 2012).

showing that she *is* India. In nationalist writings, Bharat Mata is often imagined to having been chained by British oppression. In certain images people can be seen as tearing down the chains to give the Mother freedom. When she has this freedom she will soar higher than all other above the world. Other items Bharat Mata holds are flags of India or great trumpets with the word Independence etched on the side.<sup>53</sup>

Through the Bharat Mata imagery Indian nationalists attempted to enchant the abstract cartographic entity of India into the mother of all Indians and for whom they would be willing to die.<sup>54</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru saw India as defined by its geographical barriers. Through geography India had been defined by its natural barriers, 'the Himalayas and by the sea produced a sense of unity'.<sup>55</sup> Nehru postulates that it is within these natural "borders" that India existed. This shows that Indian nationalists saw India as ranging from the ocean to the Himalayas. In their eyes the British had mapped a country that culturally existed before their arrival. Certain Bharat Mata images show both the Himalayas and the ocean as being the extent of India.

Bharat Mata served as the first introduction to India's cartographic shape for most Indians. Through posters, postcards and pamphlets all levels of Indian society were

<sup>53</sup> Ramaswamy, 'Visualizing', 181-183.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, 181.

<sup>55</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (London 1946) 452.

introduced to Bharat Mata. According to- Nehru, peasants needed the image of Bharat Mata for them to truly feel connected to the new country they were creating.<sup>56</sup> Bharat Mata served as a way to bind all Indians together. As such, it gave the viewer certain nationalist ideas of what India should look like.<sup>57</sup>

The cartographic component of Bharat Mata varied strongly from image to image. On some, the shape of India would be clear and other countries would be obviously visible. Bharat Mata simply resides within these borders. On others, Bharat Mata would obscure certain parts of the map blurring out borders. In other cases the cartographic component disappears. Bharat Mata instead is the cartographic shape, often through her sari. It was as if India spread out into the world, its influence spreading worldwide.<sup>58</sup>

Through the imagery of Bharat Mata, the cartographic shape of India became a 'logo'. Benedict Anderson introduced the idea of the map-as-logo through the use of a certain set of colors. A color on a map makes the cartographic shape recognizable and over time it would attain 'logo' status. All members of the nation would immediately recognize the icon before them as being their country. Attainment of logo status can be identified once it is reproduced on a large scale in the form of letterheads, pins, stamps, official seals and textbook covers.<sup>59</sup>

Bharat Mata fulfilled the role of color to turn India's cartographic shape into a logo. As Bharat Mata became India, the shape of India became a rallying point for the nationalist movement. The culmination of this occurred in 1936 with the opening of the Bharat Mata temple in Varanasi. Within this temple, there are no statues or paintings as you would find in most Indian temples but a giant marble floor relief showing a detailed cartographic representation of India. Its title is Bharat Mata.<sup>60</sup> The temple was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi stating that the marble map would 'contribute to a feeling of unity, peace and love in this country'<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> Nehru , *Discovery*, 60.

<sup>57</sup> Ramaswamy, 'Visualizing', 174-178.

<sup>58</sup> Ramaswamy, 'Maps and Mother Goddesses', 104.

<sup>59</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London 1991) 170-175.

<sup>60</sup> C. Gupta, 'The Icon of Mother', 4297.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 4292.



**Image 4**, *Vande Mataram* (Homage to Mother) Coimbatore, 1937; as seen in S. Ramaswamy, 'Maps and Mother Goddesses in Modern India', *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 53 (2001), p. 201.

## **One Body, Two Creators**

As we have seen in British India, the creation of India's geo-body was divided among the British and the nationalist Indians. The British created the shape India through mapping to validate their rule over such a large and foreign country. British education meant to teach the cartographic body of British India to its subjects. Instead, Indian nationalists adopted and transformed this cartographic body as a symbol of national pride and entitlement. Through iconography Indian nationalists in turn naturalized the cartographical shape of India as a logo to rally around in their struggle for independence.

This division between the mapping and naturalization of India's geo-body is what distinguishes India from Thongchai's Siam case. The cartographic representation of India was meant to show British dominion over the subcontinent both to themselves and the local population. Instead the map of India became an inspiring symbol for Indian nationalists. These nationalists had accepted the authority of the British map and taking over its conception of India. Through the Bharat Mata image, Indian national identity became intrinsically linked to the cartographic shape of India. Indian nationalists had little to no knowledge of geography or cartography as this was solely under British control. By accepting the British concept of India, national unity was faced with a problem. Bharat Mata imagery was meant to legitimize the Indian nationalists claims over the Indian subcontinent. The Bharat Mata image excluded India's minorities. To these minorities Bharat Mata and therefore Indian nationalism did not represent their nation of a free India but represented Hindu oppression.

## Chapter 2: The Geo-body realized: Hindu Nationalism, Partition, Trauma and Annexation

As nationalism developed in the early twentieth century, the idea of what being “Indian” entailed began to change. What being Indian meant became highly connected to Hindu values and ideas. Thongchai explains this in the case of Siam as ‘Thainess’. He argues that being Thai entails being a Buddhist and believing in the monarchy. ‘Thainess’ overrides all other forms of nationalism of minority groups, envisioning instead a homogeneous and unified country.<sup>62</sup> In Siam, this “naturalized” the geo-body by making it Thai. By making the geo-body Thai, it excluded any other forms of nationalism to exist within it. A similar process of cultural homogenization occurred in India from the 1920s onward. The defining difference was that India’s largest minority, the Muslims, did not fit within this new idea of the “Indian”, and refused to conform to it. The Muslim split resulted in the Partition. The attainment of independence was thus coupled to the terrors of the Partition, creating a national trauma visible upon the imagination of the geo-body requiring a reorientation of identity and cartographic consolidation.

### The Road to Partition

The image of Bharat Mata had a very distinct Hindu make up. During the early twentieth century, Bharat Mata became increasingly popular amongst the Hindu population. This imagery is indicative of the growing sway the Hindu religion was gaining in Indian nationalism and amongst the Indian constituency.

#### *The Rise of Hindutva: Political particularism and nationalism*

When Indian nationalism started to develop in the late nineteenth century amongst the Indian middle class, religion played a cultural role. Early nationalists such as Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) and Mahendrantha Gupta (1854-1932) imagined the nation through art, writing, music and film utilizing Hindu aspects. They re-imagined their own nation using

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<sup>62</sup> Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 164-170.



Hindu religion by incorporating Hindu gods, goddesses and related myths. These religious aspects were used to imagine what it meant to be an “Indian” or what constituted the Indian community.<sup>63</sup> This type of nationalistic imagination was largely reserved for affluent Indians who had the resources and time to spend on it.

By the early 1920s, members of the Indian National Congress realized that they needed new methods to galvanize the Indian populace if they were ever to achieve independence. The Congress understood that they needed support from all layers of the Indian society to be able to pressure the British Indian Government. Sardar Patel and others worked to resolve disputes between the British colonial rule and disenfranchised peasant villages. These arbitration activities were very effective in tying grassroots support to the Congress but were too slow and localized to have a wide scale effect upon an area as large as British India.<sup>64</sup> In order to gain support from India’s large and diverse populace an image or ideal to rally around was required. Bharat Mata became the image that signified independence and *swaraja* (self-governance) became a connected idea.

The most successful at this initially, was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Having returned from South Africa as a hero in 1915, Gandhi meant to give India its *swaraja*. Gandhi fervently believed that the best hope for an independent India was through secularism. He was convinced that the “common” people, who had lived side by side regardless of religion for centuries, represented India. Following this vision, he reshaped the Indian National Congress into allowing all who could afford the membership fee to join. Gandhi largely felt ambivalence toward religious differences contributed to his popularity amongst the lower classes of Indian society.<sup>65</sup>

Taking into account Gandhi’s hopes for India makes his choice of rhetoric very jarring. As Gandhi started to speak at rallies and other gatherings for his “Quit India” movement he often used Hindu infused language. He described himself as; ‘Every fiber of my being is Hindu’.<sup>66</sup> His clothing, ascetic lifestyle, linguistic skills (speaking only Gujarati and Hindi) and *swaraja* were perceived, especially by Muslim nationalists, as being exclusively Hindu. Regardless, Gandhi would maintain strong support from the Muslim community until the

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<sup>63</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments; Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton 1993) 35-54.

<sup>64</sup> Narhari D. Parikh, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel* (Delhi 1977) 55.

<sup>65</sup> Allen H. Merriam, *Ghandi vs Jinnah; The Debate over the Partition of India* (Calcutta 1980). 32-33.

<sup>66</sup> Merriam, *Ghandi vs Jinnah*, 88.



early 1940s, when the Muslim League successfully painted him as an enemy of Muslims. Under the influence of Gandhi's success, other Congress members started to apply his methods to gain popular support. It was also during this time that the image of Bharat Mata came to play a much more prominent role in Indian nationalism.<sup>67</sup>

At the same time as Congress members started to use Hindu language to appeal to rural Indians, a new subset of Indian nationalism started to develop in the southern part of the country. In 1923, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar published a pamphlet called *Hindutva: Who is Hindu?*.<sup>68</sup> This pamphlet for the first time introduced a distinct form of Hindu nationalism he called *Hindutva*. *Hindutva* entails decolonization and the protection of Hindu traditions and communities. Savarkar felt that any Indian government had a divine duty to protect Hindus from violence such as the ethnic clashes that occurred in Kashmir during the 1920s. In the pamphlet, he also conveyed ideas of Hindu racial superiority and dominance. Savarkar was co-founder of the *Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha* (All-Indian Hindu Assembly) party, which was created as a response to the secular Congress. The Hindu Mahasabha would remain a fringe party for almost its entire existence. From the *Hindutva* ideology, other right wing organizations sprouted of which the Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (RSS) was the most prominent.<sup>69</sup>

In 1925, after the publication of Savarkar's pamphlet, Hedgewar founded the RSS. Hedgewar was a doctor who joined the revolutionary movement against British rule. The RSS was created as a paramilitary organization that had two main goals. One was to organize Hindus into a strong, tight-knit society with a strong militarist character. The other task was to assimilate the non-Hindus into the mainstream. The RSS saw Muslims as lost Hindus that had been forcibly converted to Islam. This claim would often be based on Muslims having last names that had Hindu roots. These people would have to be liberated and brought back into the Hindu fold. In India, there could only be Indians and Indians could only be Hindus. The RSS and other such organizations portrayed Muslims as leeches that only thrived at the expense of Hindus.<sup>70</sup> Both these goals were meant to recreate British India into a fully Hindu nation, saffron flag and all. The RSS was quickly outlawed by the British government and would subsequently be banned by the Congress government after 1947 as well. It would not

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 64-67.

<sup>68</sup> Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who is Hindu?* (1969).

<sup>69</sup> Shamsul Islam, *Religious Dimensions of Indian Nationalism* (Delhi 2006) 205-212.

<sup>70</sup> Chatterjee, *The Nation*, 102-106.

be until the 1960's that the RSS would start to grow into the political powerhouse it is today. But its creation, and of organizations like it, illustrates how Hinduism was evolving into becoming an important part of India's nationalist spectrum as independence grew closer.<sup>71</sup> The widespread violence committed during the Partition makes Hindu nationalism's influence even more apparent.<sup>72</sup>

Hindu nationalists such as Savarkar and Hedgewar created a geographical idea of the Hindu nation. They did not imagine the cartographic shape of the nation along geographical boundaries but by cultural and literary perspectives. The cultural perspective was based around religious pilgrimage sites. These sites marked the spread of the Hindu religion and culture and therefore the extent of the nation. The literary perspective constituted the way India was portrayed in ancient Sanskrit sources.<sup>73</sup> These two perspectives made that Hindu nationalists had no defined shape of India. They had a vague idea of the geographic extent of India, which largely seemed to reflect the Bharat Mata image.

A strong hegemonic character that essentially means to override any other type of nationalism pervaded Hindu nationalism. Many Hindu nationalists, both at the fringes and in the Congress party, believed that India should have a predominantly Hindu character. Through the reinvention of its own history, Muslims and to a smaller degree Christians, were portrayed as the enemies of Hinduism by right-wing Hindu nationalists. The abrahamic religions were equated to imperialism in *Hindutva* rhetoric, following the Mughal and British rule. The oppression by these foreign religions and powers had kept Hindu's from become a nation. But in a new independent India, it had to be Hinduism that became supreme, making all others subservient. Being Hindu began to equal to being Indian. All non-Hindus could not possibly be Indian and could only be the "Other". The hegemonic, highly exclusive and ethnic, character that pervaded the *Hindutva* and RSS ideology meant to eradicate all other colonial symbols of power and differences, replacing them with nationalist ones.<sup>74</sup>

This sense of Hindu hegemony was strongly reflected in the Bharat Mata imagery. The explicit Hindu iconography of the Mother India was married with symbols of battle and regal power. Bharat Mata instills the sense of homogeneity by not allowing any space for

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<sup>71</sup> Islam, *Religious Dimensions*, 58-66.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 228-246.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton 1999) 65-66.

<sup>74</sup> Chatterjee, *The Nation*, 74. Note: Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism were considered akin to Hinduism, in: Christophe Jaffrelot, *Hindu nationalism: a reader* (Princeton 2007) 15.

Muslim icons within the cartographic representation of India. To the spectator, there is no place for the Muslims within the borders of Mother India as it was Hindu.

Fringes of the Congress party advocated policies that reflected Hindu nationalist ideals such as making Hindi the only national language and adopting a Hindu hymn as the national anthem. To what degree the members of the Congress adhered to the *Hindutva* and RSS ideology is difficult to discern but the party leadership feared that the expansion of these right-wing ideas. Nehru fought the encroachment of Hindu nationalism within the Congress Party most visibly while he was its president, to little avail.<sup>75</sup> Nehru, Gandhi and Patel never were in any way the rulers of the party nor was it a monolithic organization.<sup>76</sup> The Congress Party was showing at the very least sympathy to the ideals of Hindu nationalism.<sup>77</sup>

The rise of both Gandhi's *swaraja* style rhetoric and Hindu nationalism illustrates how pervasive particularism in India's political climate had become by the 1940s. Political particularism entails the ability or attitude amongst politicians to appeal to narrow interests, to further their own goals.<sup>78</sup> This type of politics is geared toward appealing to a nation's majority group's religious and ethnic identity whilst simultaneously superseding minority rights. The success of both the Congress and Hindu nationalists in utilizing this type of politics drove Muslim nationalists to question their place in an independent India.

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<sup>75</sup> Shown in numerous speeches given throughout his career. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Independence and After, A Collection of Speeches 1946-1949* (New York 1950) 43-54.

<sup>76</sup> B.R. Nanda, *Jawaharlal Nehru; Rebel and Statesman* (Delhi 1995) 115.

<sup>77</sup> Madhu Limaye, *Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru; a Historic Partnership (1916-1947)*; Vol III (Delhi 1990) 45 and Saad R. Khairi, *Jinnah Reinterpreted: The Journey from Indian Nationalism to Muslim Statehood* (New York 1996) 379-384.

<sup>78</sup> Alejandro Gaviria et al., 'Political Institutions and Growth Collapses' (version March 2000) 4-5, [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=220452](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=220452) (30 April 2012).

### *The Muslim response*

By the early 1930's, Muslim Indian nationalists were roughly split into two groups. On the one hand, were the Muslims nationalists that made up the various smaller parties in the Punjab and Muslim majority regions, on the other the Muslims who were members of the Congress. They felt drawn to the universal and secular ideals of its leadership. The most important of these nationalists was Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the eventual founding father of Pakistan.<sup>79</sup>

Jinnah, a lawyer, became the Muslim League's leader in 1935 and worked closely with the Congress to combat communal violence in the spring of 1936. At this point, Jinnah felt akin to the ideals of the Congress party and wanted to ensure that the minorities of British India, the Muslims prominent among them, were protected.<sup>80</sup>

In 1935, the provinces of India had gained a modicum of local autonomy through the Government of India Act and subsequently held elections. Congress won these elections by a landslide. The Muslim League, the largest Muslim party, only won 4,5 % of the votes, prompting Nehru to claim that in the process toward independence only two parties mattered, the British and the Congress. Legislation proposed shortly afterwards drove this point home. In late 1937, Congress members suggested forcing non-Hindus to perform an oath of loyalty and adopting the *Bande Mataram* (invocation to the Hindu goddess Kali) as the national anthem.<sup>81</sup>

Following the elections, Jinnah's attitude toward Congress changed seemingly overnight. Using much more hostile language, Jinnah no longer believed in the Congress's secular and universal ideals. He was convinced that the party and its members represented only the Hindu population of India. By 1940, he had lost all belief in Muslim-Hindu unity due to the actions of the Congress and the rise of Hindu extremist nationalism. In his March 1940 speech in Lahore at the Muslim League Assembly, Jinnah laid out his two-nation theory. He emphasized that Hindus and Muslims had lived so segregated from each other, that a unified nation would not be possible. His largest fear was that Muslims in a unified India would be dominated by the Hindu majority and would have no protection against religious communal

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<sup>79</sup> Khairi, *Jinnah Reinterpreted*, 432-433.

<sup>80</sup> Merriam, *Ghandi vs Jinnah*, 37-49.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 56-57.

violence. He said that any enacted laws ‘would just be scraps of paper unless they were backed up by power’<sup>82</sup>, power Jinnah believed would never be used to protect Muslims.

Over the next few years, Jinnah expanded the League’s political power through communal politics. Using the particularism style rhetoric that had proved successful to the Hindu right and elements of the Congress party, Jinnah meant to shape the Muslims of India into an effective political bloc that the British could not ignore. He traveled across the country speaking in Muslim communities, always styling himself as a “servant of Islam”, and told all who would listen that a partition would not divide India; India was already divided. Jinnah was extremely successful in portraying Gandhi and the rest of the Congress as the enemies of the Muslim people. For the next six years, Gandhi and Nehru attempted to change Jinnah’s mind but failed miserably.<sup>83</sup>

Jinnah and the Muslim League never developed an idea of what Pakistan, at this time still called Muslim India, would entail geographically. Geography never seemed to play an important role for the League. They believed that their nation should encompass all Muslim-majority territories within British India. Geographic unity would be impossible. The closest thing to a fully-fledged idea of what this country should be was discussed in late 1937, when the League met in Bombay. Muslim India would encompass the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Balochistan, which were Muslim majority provinces. Jinnah rejected this, believing that every other Muslim state should join Muslim India.<sup>84</sup> This high level of ambiguity over what Pakistan was to be shows that Indian Muslim nationalists still needed to develop its own conception of a geo-body.

The Hindification of Indian nationalism alienated the Muslim minority population. The newly created “Indian” was saturated with Hindu ideals and iconography. From the Bharat Mata images to Gandhian communal politics, being Indian had been equated to being Hindu. The geo-body of India had become “Hindu” as Siam had become “Thai”. Within its borders Muslims no longer felt there was a place for them. Muslims, fearing Hindu dominance, rallied under the auspice of Jinnah to create their own country, even if they had no idea what that country would look like.

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<sup>82</sup> Khairi, *Jinnah Reinterpreted*, 313-320.

<sup>83</sup> Merriam, *Ghandi vs Jinnah*, 88-110, 78, 158-163 and Nanda, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, 150-154.

<sup>84</sup> Khairi, *Jinnah Reinterpreted*, 353-355.

## Dismembering the Nation

As the League and Congress were at each other's throats and the Punjab and Bengal were rife with communal violence, Great Britain decided to pull out of India. At the beginning of the Second World War, the Cripps Mission (1942), in an attempt to foster support from the Indian nationalists, promised to give British India its independence after the war. By 1945, the nationalists had ramped up the pressure on the British Raj to fulfill its promise. Initially British officials did not mean to rush independence forward but domestic and international factors forced their hand. Prominent amongst these were the relations with the United States and the economical deadweight that British India had become. As a result, British officials felt it wisest to work toward the fastest possible withdrawal from British India. At the same time, the transfer of power had to be perceived as orderly and have the Indian nationalists lead the process. In March 1947, Lord Mountbatten arrived in India with a June 1948 deadline.<sup>85</sup>

### *The Radcliffe Commission*

Mountbatten knew that the British could not leave India in an orderly fashion without first defining what entity or entities they would leave behind. On June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1947, Mountbatten announced that British India would be partitioned. Congress originally wanted an unconditional British withdrawal. The League fully rejected these terms as they would not accept any independence without the creation of Pakistan, due to fear of the Hindu base not allowing there to be a Pakistan after the transfer of power.<sup>86</sup> Congress and the League could not reach an agreement except that the commission should be made up of legal experts. The failure to reach an agreement forced Mountbatten to steer the two groups towards a consensus. He suggested that four judges be appointed, two of each side, and one impartial head of commission. The Commission would make its decision primarily based on the locations of the various religious communities. Beyond that the League championed the addition of a line, within the Commission's mandate, that 'The Commission will also take into

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<sup>85</sup> Lucy P. Chester, *Border and conflict in South Asia; The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Partition of Punjab* (New York 2009) 9-17.

<sup>86</sup> Merriam, *Ghandi vs Jinnah* 98.

account other factors'. What these 'other' factors entailed was never clarified and gave the Border Commission a lot of flexibility. The fighting between Congress and the League required the British to demand certain commitments. They set up a clause requiring both sides to accept the ruling of the Commission upon completion, which both sides agreed to. Nehru later explained that he agreed to this section because he was convinced that after independence, relations between the two countries would be friendly and any border alterations could still be made.<sup>87</sup>

This part of the negotiations show that both the Congress and the League were in favor of a very rushed process to independence. The question is why the parties would agree to Partition?

In 1947, Jinnah had reached the age of 70 and had been battling tuberculosis since 1940 and knew his time was running short. He most likely wanted a transfer of power quickly in order to be able to lay the foundations for Pakistan as he envisioned it. Moreover, the League had never constructed an idea of what the geographical shape of Pakistan should look like at the time and were more concerned with actually creating it.<sup>88</sup>

The Congress's eventual acceptance of the Partition was the result of both political and personal exhaustion and not a loss of faith in the unity of Mother India. Congress had championed a unified India for decades and had fought the League on the issue for over five years with barely a hint of compromise. Looking back on the years leading up to the Partition shows us that Congress was mostly exhausted by June 1947. During the 'Quit India' movement of 1942, the majority of the Congress leadership had been imprisoned, not to be released until late 1946. After their incarceration, the Congress leadership found that the Muslim League had grown in power and was now considered essential in the road to independence. Sardar Patel was the first of the Congress leadership to agree with the idea of Partition. The rise of communal violence and the boycott of any progress by the League without the promise of partition made Patel feel that they had no choice.<sup>89</sup> Nehru had always been a strong believer in Indian unity and had been an important voice against the Partition. But over time even he felt the Partition was the only option. Nehru expressed the

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<sup>87</sup> Chester, *Border and conflict*, 32-39.

<sup>88</sup> Khairi, *Jinnah Reinterpreted*, 359-375.

<sup>89</sup> V. P. Menon, *Transfer of Power in India*, (New Delhi 1957) 385.



sentiments that moved him and the majority of the Congress leadership toward agreeing to the hasty process of the Partition;

'The truth is that we were tired men and we were getting on in years too. Few of us could stand the prospect of going back to jail again and if we had stood for United India, we wished it, prison obviously awaited us. We saw fires burning in the Punjab and every day of killings. The plan of partition offered a way out and we took it.'<sup>90</sup>

Gandhi was the only member of the leadership that did not consent to the Partition. It was a unified India or nothing. But Gandhi's 'Quit India' movement had lost him most of his political clout with the British, barring him from many decision-making negotiations.<sup>91</sup> In essence, the Congress was faced with a Hobbesian choice and deemed Partition as the lesser of two evils. At least now they could control the process and only divide British India in two pieces instead of multiple states

The main weakness of the Border Committee was its inability to compromise. The four judges had received instructions from their respective parties that there would be no room for concessions. This essentially brought the Committee to an impasse on the most critical issues. It fell to Radcliffe to resolve these issues. The Committee also had a mere five weeks until independence, planned for the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1947, causing many issues to be left unresolved.<sup>92</sup>

Hearings were held in which the League and Congress were able to make their pleas for how the Partition should look. During these hearings, both sides presented maps that supported their respective border alignments. Both sides were faced with the problem that the Hindu and Muslim populations intertwined to such a degree that proper border demarcation was impossible. Instead, both sides drew highly biased maps. Congress would largely ignore the size of Muslim populations behind its created borders, claiming these were merely minor pockets. The maps they submitted supported this claim by showing that on either side of the border the people were either Hindu or Muslim. The use of maps by the Congress and the League to support their desired border alignment marks the first time that

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<sup>90</sup> Leonard Mosley, *The last days of the British Raj* (New York 1962) 248.

<sup>91</sup> Nanda, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, 50 and Limaye, *Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru*, 271.

<sup>92</sup> Chester, *Border and conflict*, 45-55.

nationalists in British India utilized maps. The use of color is especially telling.<sup>93</sup> An entire area would be given one color, ignoring the vast diversity that existed in that area. Once again, as under the British, the use of colors conveyed a sense of homogeneity.<sup>94</sup> These maps illustrate how both sides were using cartography to create a homogeneous image to validate their border alignment. Bharat Mata images had already communicated this sentiment but for the negotiations the Congress needed proper maps that communicated an ontological representation of the situation in the Punjab. Both sides believed their maps reflected the “truth”. It is therefore not surprising that both sides responded so furiously when the British ignored their arguments and maps.

Radcliffe was never present at any of the hearings where the maps were presented. Radcliffe eventually received all relevant documents as he made his decision in Delhi. What exactly happened at this point is very hard to discern as Radcliffe had the habit of destroying all his work documents. The exceptions were the maps Radcliffe used to make his award. Looking at the maps submitted, the Congress and League showed that it was impossible to make a practical border whilst adhering to the spread of the various religious communities. A big problem Radcliffe faced was that of useable maps. All the maps Radcliffe received gave very conflicting cartographic representations of the region. Next to that Radcliffe had a large shortage of official maps. The Survey of India had been understaffed since the end of the war and maps in the scale Radcliffe required were often not on hand. In short, Radcliffe faced a Herculean task of wading through all the given data, attempting to identify the objective from the subjective and thus deciding his award. On August 12<sup>th</sup> Radcliffe presented his report to Mountbatten.<sup>95</sup>

On August 16<sup>th</sup>, Mountbatten presented the report to the League and Congress. Both were furious. The League was especially outraged about the award of the Muslim majority area of Gurdaspur to India as it gave India land access to Kashmir it would otherwise not have had. The League and later Pakistan claimed Congress had unlawfully colluded with the British to gain this tract of land.<sup>96</sup> Mountbatten suggested that an amendment to the report could be discussed. Both sides rejected this on the grounds that it would only make the

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<sup>93</sup> Chester, *Border and conflict*, 63-72.

<sup>94</sup> Jacob, *The Sovereign Map*, 151-153.

<sup>95</sup> Chester, *Border and conflict*, 73-80.

<sup>96</sup> Alistair Lamb, *Crisis in Kashmir, 1947 to 1966* ( London 1966) 42.

situation worse or allow either side to “steal” more territory from the other. In the end, both sides grudgingly agreed, mostly due to the pre-Partition agreement.<sup>97</sup>

### *The Partition trauma*

The days after the Partition are now known as one of the largest and most violent mass migrations in human history. One of the largest problems was that no one knew exactly where Pakistan ended and India began. This confusion left many lost with no idea of where to go. The Punjab became literally a no-man’s-land where people were uncertain to which country they belonged. Many also did not understand the gravitas of what was happening around them and didn’t leave their homes leaving themselves vulnerable. When the mass migration started to get underway, the first reports of communal violence came trickling in. During this time, it was hard to discern fact from rumor and communal militias would exact vengeance for offenses both real and imaginary. The fighting raged on for two months and only started to dissipate as all minorities had fled the Punjab. When the dust had settled somewhere between 500,000 and 1 million people had been killed and over 12 million displaced.<sup>98</sup>

The damage the Partition left within the national memory of India is difficult to assess. Besides the massive loss of life during the Partition, many people lost their country and fell outside of both India and Pakistan. Some were now Indian and others Pakistani. Even others were neither and would be cut from their families and lost in the bureaucratic mess that was the post-Partition India. Memories of the Partition resulted in inflamed nationalist rhetoric and hatred for the foreign other.<sup>99</sup>

The trauma of the Partition is also visible upon the image of the geo-body. New elements were introduced into Bharat Mata images to reflect the changes brought on by the Partition. One of the most obvious consequences is the pull back of the sari from the part of the world that had become Pakistan. Pakistan was now a part of the “Other”. More careful observation shows us changes in the conception of the border that defines the Indian geo-body. Certain images focus primarily on the border. Images would show India’s body being

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<sup>97</sup> Chester, *Border and conflict*, 109-112.

<sup>98</sup> Vazira F.U. Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia; Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York 2007) 6-7.

<sup>99</sup> Yusin, ‘Beyond nationalism’, 25.

chopped up with blood flowing at the borders.<sup>100</sup> Mother India images introduced the lion guarding the border of India. The lion in pre-Partition Bharat Mata images always looked at the viewer, often from behind the mother Goddess. In a portion of the post-Partition images a small alteration is visible as the lion's snout is altered by 90 degrees (Image 5). His snout and face are positioned over the Punjab and his manes cover the Rann region.<sup>101</sup> His eyes are looking at Pakistan, seemingly implying watchfulness. The Partition is thus made into an actual feature of the geo-body. Even though these new elements are not found in a majority of the Bharat Mata images, it does follow a similar tendency more predominantly found in Indian literature regarding borders and the trauma of the Partition.

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<sup>100</sup> Sumathi Ramaswamy, *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India* (Durham 2010) 234.

<sup>101</sup> A region that was not properly partitioned resulting in more tension between Pakistan and India. Lamb, *Crisis in Kashmir*, 112-134.

ब्रह्म एवं क्षत्रतेज की खान भारत माता का वन्दन



रत्नकराद्यौतपदां हिमालयकिरीटिनीम् ।  
ब्रह्मराजर्षिरत्नाद्यां वन्दे भारतमातरम् ॥२६॥

Image 5: 'Bharat Bhakti',

[http://freeindia.org/bharat\\_bhakti/page28.htm](http://freeindia.org/bharat_bhakti/page28.htm) (2 April 2012).

The trauma caused by the Partition is probably most apparent in Indian literature. Literary research into the trauma of the Partition gained high profile in 1997, thanks to Krishna Sobti's article in *Indian International Centre Quarterly*, highlighting that the memory of the Partition is 'living history'.<sup>102</sup> She reinvigorated the field of Partition studies with a focus on interviews, art and literature to examine the shared memories of the Partition. Most recently, the emotional damage of the Partition was explained by Zamindar in her book,

*The Long Partition* where she argues that it is still affecting all those in the region due to memories of insecurity and trauma.<sup>103</sup> Jennifer Yusin analyzed Partition literature and the relation it illustrates between trauma and the creation of borders. During the Partition, the borders became dynamic entities for the confrontation between national spaces and identity. The newly drawn borders had created profoundly new places with new identities. The trauma of not knowing the location of one's home was profound, as the map of the land changed while new borders were drawn and thus places were just swept under new national banners. Yusin argues that this trauma, this confusion of what is the "Self" and who us the "Other" pervades throughout the nation. The Partition and the border refer to the insecurities within identity, the trauma of losing one's nation.<sup>104</sup> The Partition happened because Indians did not control India's geography. Without control over the shape of a country, the national identity loses an important point of reference, the geo-body.<sup>105</sup> India

<sup>102</sup> Krishna Sobti, 'Memory and history of the partition', *India International Centre Quarterly* 24 (1997) 55-78.

<sup>103</sup> Zamindar, *The Long Partition*, 1-16.

<sup>104</sup> Yusin, 'Beyond Nationalism', 27-32.

<sup>105</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, 'Maps and the Formation of the Geo-Body of Siam', in: Stein Tønnesson and Hans Antlöv eds., *Asian Forms of the Nation* (Richmond 1996) 70-72.

learned this lesson from the Partition and in the years after would assert its geographical control.

### **Creating Unity: The Unbounded Kingdoms**

The Partition resulted in the dismemberment of British India into two separate countries requiring a reorientation of geographical identity. In the wake of the Partition, the goal of unity became even more important. India was still faced with the problem of the Princely States and the colonial holding of Portugal in Goa. India had to solve the problem of ambiguous space within its geo-body. This problem arises when the cartographic shape of the geo-body has been constructed but within its body exist political entities independent of the nation. The existence of these entities threatens the legitimacy of the geo-body's unity. Siam was faced with a similar problem. It incorporated, previously independent, smaller political and ethnic entities and made them a part of the geo-body. Officials in Bangkok would use pretexts such as unity to validate the claim upon these smaller states.<sup>106</sup> India found itself in a comparable situation after 1947. Places like Hyderabad, Goa and Kashmir formed a similar problem for the newly created Indian Republic. Their existence within India's cartographic borders questioned the validity of the geo-body as a legitimizing tool. Leaders of Congress would use the same rhetoric of unity to validate their military incorporation of independent states.

#### *Hyderabad*

The princely state of Hyderabad was founded as a rebellious offshoot of the Mughal Empire in 1724. As the British expanded their influence on the subcontinent, the Nizam of Hyderabad maintained friendly relations with the new colonial power. This diplomatic attitude allowed the state to remain autonomous until 1948. Hyderabad was the richest and

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<sup>106</sup> Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 74-77 and 148.

largest of the princely states in India and was held in such high esteem that it received a 21-gun salute in the Raj's elaborate diplomatic protocols.<sup>107</sup>

The state of Hyderabad boasted a large rural Hindu population comprising of around 85 % and a ruling urban Muslim elite making up around 10%. Until the late 1930's, Hyderabad had mostly been free of any communal politics and violence but by 1938, a Hindu independence movement called the Hyderabad State Congress had formed which severely upset the peace between Hindus and Muslims. This movement held both ties with the Indian Congress and the right wing Hindu Mahasabha. Still tensions were initially not as high as in places like the Punjab. The main weakness of the independence movement was that it was unable to galvanize the rural, uneducated, Hindu population. As such, the Nizam maintained full control of the state.<sup>108</sup>

As British withdrawal from India became a reality, Nizam Osman Ali Khan made it apparent that he did not wish to join either Pakistan or India. Instead he hoped Hyderabad would become an autonomous state under the British Common Wealth. This request was denied as the British wanted to fully pull out of India. Subsequently, Hyderabad gained independence on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1947. As other Princely States ascended to either Pakistan or India, Hyderabad held out. It would not pledge to either country. In the following months, violence escalated in Hyderabad. The Nizam was bent on staying independent and in doing so started importing weapons and arming his forces. At this time he felt highly pressured and saw what a superior bargaining position the Government of India was in based on how rapidly the smaller princely states ascended especially the forceful ascension of Junagadh. As Hyderabad armed itself, rumors of an alliance with Pakistan surfaced further worrying the Indian Government. This resulted in negotiations breaking down.<sup>109</sup>

Subsequently, Indian Home Minister Sardar Patel's attitude became more aggressive. Patel had led the negotiations with Hyderabad and wanted to stay close to the Congress's ideal of non-violence. For over a year the Indian government had made it very clear that it wanted to defend the wishes of Hyderabad's majority and demanded a referendum on the question of ascension. The Nizam refused. By 1948, it was clear that Patel was out of patience as he described an independent Hyderabad as an 'ulcer in the heart of India', that

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<sup>107</sup> Lucien D. Benichou, *From autocracy to integration: political developments in Hyderabad State, 1938-1948* (Chennai 2000) 8-18.

<sup>108</sup> Benichou, *From autocracy to integration*, 19-27.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, 212-227.



could only be removed surgically so that its people could return to Mother India. In the White papers, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs' private documents, it was stated that there were highly practical reasons that made an organically unified India an imperative goal. National security, economy and infrastructure were the priorities; no mention was made of the wishes of the people of Hyderabad.<sup>110</sup> On September 13<sup>th</sup>, India invaded the state of Hyderabad and after five days of fighting and over eight hundred deaths the Nizam surrendered and the state was annexed.

### *Kashmir*

Simultaneously with the developments in Hyderabad, the princely state of Kashmir still needed to join either Pakistan or India. The northern Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir was created by the British at the end of the Anglo-Sikh war (1845-1846). It brought together a number of disparate kingdoms that consisted of varying religious and ethnic groups. The British reorganized the region in the hopes of it acting as a strong buffer state. They placed the Hindu Dogra dynasty in power. In terms of demography, the state was the opposite of Hyderabad, boasting a population of 77 % Muslims and 20 % Hindus. Over the next century, the Muslim population became extremely impoverished and their population grew exponentially resulting in ethnic violence.<sup>111</sup>

As August of 1947 drew near the Maharaja of Kashmir had not decided which country to join. The Muslim majority of Kashmir was anxious as they preferred to join Pakistan over India, fearing worse treatment from a Hindu ruled country based on their experiences over the last century. In July of that same year, a Muslim revolt broke out in the northern province of Poonch. From this area, over 40,000 soldiers had been recruited to serve in the Second World War. When these men returned home, they grew ever more dissatisfied with the Maharaja's rule and formed the Azad (Free) Kashmir movement. The Poonch Revolt progressed rapidly and by late August their forces controlled most of Kashmir. By early October, they had encircled the capital city Srinagar. The Government of India felt that it had to intervene, flying in a battalion of Sikh's that turned the tide. The Maharaja ascended shortly afterwards to the Republic of India.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 253.

<sup>111</sup> Lamb, *Crisis in Kashmir* 17-34.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 35-45.

Pakistan immediately imposed an economic blockade of Kashmir and began supplying Muslim tribal fighters. The Pakistani government claimed that India was using military might to maintain an autocratic oppressive regime. Over the next seven months, Jinnah and Nehru rejected each other's proposals for a resolution of the crisis. By the end of winter, the Indian army had pushed the Azad Kashmir forces to the area of Gilgit-Baltistan and a stalemate followed as neither side could gain the upper hand. The territory held by the Azad forces joined Pakistan, taking the name Azad Kashmir.<sup>113</sup>

As fighting went on until 1949, Nehru approached the UN Security Council to interject in the conflict. India presented the case on the grounds that Kashmir's ascension to India had been legitimate and that Pakistan had no right to support insurgents within its sovereign territory. Pakistan in return claimed that the Indian government oppressed the people of Kashmir and just tried to protect its Hindu brothers. In the following negotiations both sides agreed a referendum had to take place to decide the fate of Kashmir but the terms were never agreed upon. Pakistan demanded India's withdrawal of troops, which it staunchly refused. For seventeen years, the UN would show no progress in solving the conflict.<sup>114</sup>

India felt disillusioned by the actions of the UN. The Indian government believed that the UN would side with them as they were, in their eyes, legally in the right. Subsequently, the United States started building an alliance with Pakistan. India felt that it was being impeded within the, in their eyes imperialistic, international community.<sup>115</sup> This possibly strengthened V.K. Menon's and Nehru's convictions in following the Non-Alignment ideology.

As the crisis in Kashmir developed, Indian politicians rallied popular support. Hindu extremist politicians proclaimed that it was the government's duty to protect the Hindu's of Kashmir from the violence of Islam. Congress leaders voiced similar ideas but then pointed to the cultural link between India and Jammu Kashmir making it an integral part of the state.<sup>116</sup> During this time, the Kashmir conflict started to appear in Bharat Mata imagery. These depicted an Indian soldier kneeling in front of the Mother goddess offering their arms to her and their lives. These soldiers were clothed in mountaineering gear, the same

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 50-51.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 52-65.

<sup>115</sup> Sisir Gupta, *Kashmir; A study in India-Pakistan relations* (New Delhi 1967) 421.

<sup>116</sup> Gupta, *Kashmir*, 447-453 and Lamb, *Crisis in Kashmir*, 40.

regularly worn at the Kashmir front. Not surprisingly, none of the soldiers featured ever wore a turban dismissing the majority of troops in Kashmir at the time being Sikh's.

## *Goa*

The Portuguese colony of Goa was founded in 1510 and over the next four centuries would expand to encompass almost four thousand square kilometers including parts of Karnataka and the islands of Daman and Diu. By 1947, armed groups were fighting to liberate Goa from its Portuguese masters, which in turn responded with a hard crack down. When India gained its independence, Portugal made it clear it was not going anywhere.<sup>117</sup>

In 1950, India attempted to reopen the negotiations with Portugal that did not lead to any progress. The Government of India pressured the European nation for the next 11 years through visa restrictions, the recall of its ambassador and appealing to the UN. All these efforts seemed in vain as Lisbon would not budge.<sup>118</sup>

The Government of India was mostly held back by protests from the US. Also, Indian military concerns in Kashmir made the government cautious of engaging in any new conflicts. However, amongst the Indian populace the cry for military action started to grow. Indian volunteers, spurred by right-wing Hindu rhetoric, attempted to cross the Goa border in 1955. Indian troops had to open fire on the volunteers to stop them. The public outrage that followed was massive and only strengthened the demand for Indian unity.<sup>119</sup>

The following five years after that were relative peaceful as fighters from India were no longer able to enter Goa. It was not until a Portuguese ship fired upon an Indian liner, assuming it was a military landing party that the Indian government had to act. Domestic pressure increased, as people demanded military action. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 1961, Indian forces invaded the Portuguese colony and annexed it within two days.<sup>120</sup>

Winning the war against Portugal was met with jubilation and celebration all over India. People celebrated two things they viewed as national important accomplishments. Firstly was the defeat of a European power, the same kind of power that had ruled them for so long. By defeating Portugal, the public felt India could defend itself against anyone.

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<sup>117</sup> Peter W. Prabhakar, *Wars, Proxy-wars and Terrorism; post independent India* (New Delhi 2003) 35-37.

<sup>118</sup> Prabhakar, *Wars*, 38.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 39- 40.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 41-42.

Secondly, they celebrated the return of Goa to Mother India.<sup>121</sup> With the annexation of Goa the future looked bright to Indian nationalists, as it seemed they could handle anything the world threw at their young nation.

### **The Empowered Geo-body**

During India's struggle for independence, the geo-body gained a predominantly Hindu character due to the prevalence of political particularism in Indian politics. By and large, Hindu nationalism remained at the fringes of the political establishment until the 1960s, due to the power of the Congress but it still appealed to many of the Hindu Indians. The violence that accompanied the Partition accentuates just how much the racial and cultural ideas of Hindu nationalism had pervaded society. Congress members, who were at the least placating and at the worst ardent believers of these ideals, even further illustrate that India was already trending away from being a secular state. Secularism was much more an ideal than it ever was a reality. Muslim nationalists releasing this, saw no other choice then to labor for Partition.

In line with Hindu nationalist thought, the Partition should have been the moment when Indians regained control of their Bharat Mata. It was meant to be the time that Hindu's regained their self-governance after almost a millennium of domination. Instead, the Partition became a political power game helping maintain Britain's international image. It resulted in what can best be described as a national trauma. The violence and displacement left a deep scar on the geo-body itself. The border with Pakistan is now a constant reminder of war and death that birthed the nation and the confusion and insecurity that accompanied it. At the same time, the Partition fully vilified Muslims in eyes of Hindus and remains the foundation for the strained India-Pakistan relations. A fear developed that giving up even the smallest portion of territory, as a little bit would be the start of losing everything. India would never lose control of its geographic unity again.

India gaining its independence and sovereignty also meant it was time to realized Bharat Mata . Mother India had come to symbolize the Hindu hegemony, having independent states within that hegemony was not a viable option. The Indian Government

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<sup>121</sup> J. Fernandes, *In Quest of Freedom* (New Delhi 1990) 143.

shared this vision, as their main concern was to bring about a unified and centralized India. All other arguments seem to be overridden by this goal especially when placed in context with the developments in Kashmir. From the Indian National Congress's perspective all the states that were geographically located within their idea of India's geo-body had to be integrated to achieve the next stage of India's independence. Nehru described how he felt in those days in a 1952 parliamentary speech;

‘Our economic and social ideals had to be shelved, because they could not have flourished unless India was united...’<sup>122</sup>

If the people within these states were in agreement, all the better, if not, any means to ‘obtain’ their agreement to join India had to be used. Even if that meant giving up their ideals of non-violence, showing the reality of India's attitude toward territorial issues.

By the 1950's, Indian national sentiment was predominantly optimistic. Indian unity had become a reality and with the belief that India had become a fully-fledged member of the international community. It had attained geographic control and would not let it go for anyone in fear of a repeat of the Partition.

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<sup>122</sup> Nehru, *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, 28.

## Chapter 3: The Siege of India

The 1962 Sino-Indian conflict constitutes a major shift in India's policy and nationalist identity. The conflict was more than a mere escalated border dispute, to India it was an attack on its very validity as a nation. An analysis of diplomatic and domestic Indian political documents of the years preceding 1962 will show the emotional weight concepts of territorial integrity, destiny and cartography carried with not only Indian officials but the whole of the Indian society. The examination of the fallout of the conflict will show how the nation's attitude toward maps changed as the idea of its place in the world shifted from an internationally respected power to a nation besieged on all sides.

### **The Sino-Indian border dispute**

#### *Early relations*

The Sino-Indian border dispute finds its roots in the early 1910s. Since 1911, the Chinese Nationalist Government complained repeatedly about discrepancies in the border alignment of British India to Delhi, which were ignored. British officials had hoped to postpone the border issue as long as possible whilst China was still preoccupied with its domestic troubles. British policy meant to turn the Himalayan states into a buffer zone. When India became independent, it meant to maintain this British policy. In February 1947, the Chinese government made their first complaint to the Indian mission in Beijing, again receiving a dismissal. India continued the British policy in the Himalayas and hoped to maintain Tibet as a separate nation.<sup>123</sup>

In the years preceding the invasion of Tibet, India had grown concerned with China's attitude toward the Indian borders. Chinese maps published in 1949 laid claim to Tibet and various areas along the Indian-Tibetan border. In one of his first meetings in 1950 with China's premier, Zhou Enlai, Nehru brought up the issue of the border inconsistencies as shown on Chinese maps. Zhou's response was that these were merely outdated Kuomintang maps that had not yet been updated due to a lack of resources. Nehru took this statement on good faith.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Maxwell, *India's China War*, 67-69.

<sup>124</sup> CIA, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute Section 1: 1954-1959* (1963, released 2007) 9.



Nehru believed that a strong relationship with China was essential for stability and peace in the region. India was therefore one of the first nations in the world to recognize the communist regime in Beijing. He championed the People's Republic of China's (PRC) admittance to the UN. The Indian government hoped to discourage China from annexing Tibet because of two reasons. One, India hoped to continue the British policy of having the Himalayan kingdom's serve as a buffer zone to China. Secondly, India, and especially Nehru, wanted China to become a full-fledged member of the UN. The PRC on the other hand, stated that Tibet had never been independent from China, as neither they nor their Kuomintang predecessors had recognized Tibet as an independent country. Therefore, they were not invading Tibet but merely reasserting *de facto* control.<sup>125</sup>

In the months preceding the invasion of Tibet, India positioned itself as a broker of peace and a friend to both Tibet and China. As such, India tried to dissuade China from invading the Himalayan kingdom. In the exchanged notes, India portrayed itself as the paragon of peace, stating: 'Every step that the Government of India have taken in recent months has been to check the drift to war all over the world.'<sup>126</sup> With the use of this type of language, India presented itself as an idealistic nation that distances itself from more common *Realpolitik* considerations. India felt that it would guide the non-western world to a new way of approaching international conflicts.<sup>127</sup> The PRC instead, cast India's considerations to the wind and invaded Tibet in October of 1950. By May 1951, the PRC had successfully annexed Tibet.

Incorporation of Tibet by the PRC left Nehru feeling insecure about the border situation. Nehru wanted India's borders defined and demarcated. In November 1950, he publicly remarked: 'Our maps show that the McMahon Line is our boundary and that is our boundary, map or no map. That fact remains and we stand by that boundary and we will not allow anybody to come across that boundary'. This unilateral proclamation of the official border was meant to force China to either deny or accept it. China instead did not respond. This left Nehru and his administration suspicious. Nehru voiced his personal anxiety; 'There is perhaps some advantage in our not ourselves raising this issue. On the other hand, I don't

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<sup>125</sup> Jawaharlal. Nehru, 'Policy Regarding Tibet and China', *J.N. Collection* (November 1950).

<sup>126</sup> 'Memorandum of the Government of the Republic of India on the question of Tibet, delivered by the Indian Ambassador on 21 October 1950, to the Chinese Foreign Ministry in Peking' in; M. Carlyle (ed.), *Documents on international Affairs 1949-50* (Oxford, 1953) 550.

<sup>127</sup> Mey, *Nehru's dream*, 26-28.

not quite like Zhou Enlai's silence about it when discussing even minor matters.' Nehru's inner circle eventually convinced him to consider China's silence as tacit acceptance and to just let sleeping dogs lie.<sup>128</sup>

Between 1950 and 1954, relations markedly improved. Any further border issues were postponed in large part to the close relationship between Zhou and Nehru.<sup>129</sup>

### *Panscheel period*

In 1954, China and India signed the Panscheel Agreement (the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence) to solidify the relations for the next eight years. Nehru drafted the Panscheel Agreement with two objectives in mind. Firstly, he wanted assurances that China would respect India's territorial integrity. Secondly, Nehru did not want to jeopardize the relations with China while doing so. The five principles laid out in the preamble of the agreement are formulated as: 1) 'mutual respect of 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', and 5) 'peaceful co-existence'.<sup>130</sup> Nehru's explanation that accompanied the agreement stated;

'It is a matter of importance to us, of course, as well as I am sure, to China that these countries, which have now almost about 1,800 miles of frontiers, should live in terms of peace and friendliness and should respect each other's sovereignty and integrity, should agree not to interfere with each other in any way, and not commit aggression on each other. By this Agreement, we ensure peace to a large extent in a certain area of Asia. I would earnestly wish that this area of peace could spread over the rest of Asia and indeed over the rest of the world.'<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Mey, *Nehru's dream*, 50.

<sup>129</sup> Nehru, 'Policy regarding China', *J.N. Collection* (18-10-1950).

<sup>130</sup> United Nations, *Treaties Series: Treaties and international agreements registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat of the United Nations* Vol 299 (1958) 57.

<sup>131</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations: Indian Parliament* (New Delhi 1962) 155.

To Nehru, the creation of the Panscheel Agreement served as a code of conduct that both countries had to adhere to. He also saw it as a template for other countries around the world to follow. It distanced India from the *Realpolitik* practices that dominated the international community. Through the Panscheel Agreement, Nehru hoped to create a great alliance between India and China. Zhou on the other hand, believed the agreement put the border issue merely on hold.<sup>132</sup>

The primary weakness of the Panscheel Agreement was that it did not define what the territory of India encompassed. No maps were exchanged nor were there any discussions on the border situation. Nehru felt that the situation was resolved as he, erroneously, thought strong relations were as important to China as it was to India.<sup>133</sup>

Following the signing of the agreement, India wanted to further affirm its borders. In 1954 the McMahon Line and the Aksai Chin region of Ladakh were shown as being Indian on the newly issued official maps, as to once again proclaim the nation's borders. The previous maps had depicted the pre-1936 borders that did not follow the McMahon Line.<sup>134</sup> Again, China remained silent on the subject.

Until 1958, the relations between the two countries continued to improve. Nehru and Zhou developed a repertoire of mutual respect.<sup>135</sup> Incidents involving Indian and Chinese forces continued to occur but were largely resolved thanks to this relationship. In July of 1954, the first border transgressions perpetrated by Indians were reported by China to the Indian Embassy in Beijing.<sup>136</sup> India responded by claiming that its forces were on the Indian side of the border and thus not in violation. In the same note they complained that Chinese forces had crossed into Indian territory. These back-and-forth allegations became quite common in the exchanged notes and letters. The language used in many of the communiqués features a high amount of cartographical terminology. The Indian side constantly reiterated coordinates and landmarks to explain where they believed the border aligned. The Chinese on the other hand always stated that incursions had taken place but never fully clarifying where they believed the border lay.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> United Nations, *Treaties Series*, 57-72.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 73-82.

<sup>134</sup> Maxwell, *India's China War*, 83.

<sup>135</sup> Mey, *Nehru's dream*, 63-66.

<sup>136</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, *Notes, Memoranda and letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between The Governments of India and China 1954 –1959, WHITE PAPER I* (New Delhi 1959) 7.

<sup>137</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, *WHITE PAPER I*, 19.

Unbeknownst to India, China was constructing a road in Aksai Chin. A traditional caravan route that connected the Xinjiang region and Tibet ran through this inhospitable area. Aksai Chin is essentially a high altitude desert making it totally uninhabited. For China, it formed the most direct connection to Tibet making it strategically important. In March 1956, three thousand workers started laying the asphalt road that would allow for motorized vehicles. When word reached Delhi in late 1958, the Indian government sent patrols into the area for the first time in five years and discovered this finished road. India immediately complained that the road crossed into its territory.<sup>138</sup> This signaled the deterioration of the relations between the two countries.

### *Road to War*

From late 1958 onward, Sino-Indian relations came under increased pressure as the border incidents piled up. India maintained a dismissive attitude toward the Chinese accusations. Due to all the back and forth allegations of border transgressions, frustration on both sides increased. Neither side felt the other was taking its arguments seriously. While India accused China of violating its territory, it rarely ever addressed allegations coming from the Chinese side. The Chinese would eventually grow so agitated that they started to out rightly ask India why it was ignoring its complaints.<sup>139</sup> India's dismissive and non-compromising attitude had been apparent as early as 1956. Then China had proposed that both sides pull their forces and administrators out of the disputed areas. After the full retreat, the two sides would meet to discuss the border issue and possible realignments.<sup>140</sup> This suggestion by the PRC supports the view, posited by Yaacov Vertzberger that China perceived India's borders as illegitimate.<sup>141</sup> In the eyes of the Chinese government, neither the Chinese nor the Tibetans had ever accepted the border India claimed. This entailed that the border between the two countries needed to be drawn, preferably through a peaceful agreement. Until such an agreement, China would enforce the borders as they were in 1912. India dismissed the Chinese suggestion curtly and instead of offering a new option, reiterated its former arguments that the border was based on 'geographical features'. On many occasions, India

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<sup>138</sup> CIA, *The Sino-Indian Border*, 5.

<sup>139</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, *Notes, Memoranda and letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between The Governments of India and China WHITE PAPER II* (New Delhi 1959) 24-28.

<sup>140</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, *WHITE PAPER I*, 16-17.

<sup>141</sup> Yaacov Vertzberger, 'India's Border Conflict with China: A Perceptual Analysis', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (1982) 609-610.

would attach maps to clarify their territorial claims. India viewed its arguments as irrefutable and saw no reason to discuss the border issue.<sup>142</sup>

In 1958, eight Indians were captured by Chinese forces at Tahunglituan which China deemed to be in its territory. The men were carrying with them; 'instruments for surveying and photographing'.<sup>143</sup> Indian airplanes were also spotted over this area, allegedly flying reconnaissance sorties. Indian officials were seemingly mapping the border region as to further strengthen the cartographical evidence that supported their territorial claims.

Aside from its cartographic activities along the border, India made an issue out of the names used by China. In the exchanged notes much confusion occurred on both sides as they used different names to refer to certain locations. India argued that the names it used to denominate disputed places were based on the original Sanskrit names. The names China used were more modern names created by the Chinese.<sup>144</sup> Names and language plays an essential role in Indian nationalist identity. Peter van der Veer pointed out that Sanskrit is a fundamental part of Hindu nationalism. Sanskrit was seen as an essential part of Aryan civilization and Brahmin culture. These two aspects together make up Hindu culture in Hindu nationalist ideology. The spread of Sanskrit names therefore indicates the spread of Hindu culture and the Aryan people.<sup>145</sup> India posited the Sanskrit names as the legitimate names. In this way, it essentially illustrates the extent of India itself.

Relations took a crippling blow when the Tibetan uprising erupted in March 1959. In Lhasa, an armed revolt erupted, allowing for the escape of the Dalai Lama to India. Simultaneously, an armed resistance movement formed which would frustrate Chinese forces until the middle of the 1960s. The Dalai Lama fled to India and was accommodated by certain Indian officials. China called India out as a collaborator of the Tibetan resistance. China made many allegations that India was harboring Tibetan fighters across the border. Chinese officials believed that India was supplying them with weapons and safe passage to operate raids from the Tawang area.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, *WHITE PAPER II*, 24-28.

<sup>143</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, *WHITE PAPER I*, 32.

<sup>144</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, *Notes, Memoranda and letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between the Governments of India and China*, *WHITE PAPER III* (New Delhi 1960) 109.

<sup>145</sup> Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism; Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley 1994) 166.

<sup>146</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, *Notes, Memoranda and letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between the Governments of India and China*, *WHITE PAPER V* (New Delhi 1961) 5-6.

In August of that same year, an Indian reconnaissance force near the Tarsi River moved into the hamlet of Longju where they established a border station. Longju is located on the McMahon line. When Chinese forces came across this new Indian border station, an incident occurred. What exactly happened here is unclear. Both sides claimed that the other had opened fire and they only defended themselves. When the dust had settled the Chinese had captured one Indian soldier. In October, a Chinese patrol had surrounded a patrol of Indian police officers resulting in nine Indian casualties. From this point on, relations between the two countries went into a freefall.<sup>147</sup>



Image 6: [http://2.bp.blogspot.com/\\_vA-vZ7A30vw/S6zUy-k4VYI/AAAAAAAAAc/clxrdJ-UTTQ/s1600/mcmahonline2.JPG](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_vA-vZ7A30vw/S6zUy-k4VYI/AAAAAAAAAc/clxrdJ-UTTQ/s1600/mcmahonline2.JPG)

As the border incidents became increasingly frequent, the language used by the Indian side continued to reinforce an image of passivity and peace. In November 1959, India handed a massive note to the Chinese Embassy outlining twenty points regarding the border dispute. The last four points reiterate the view that India will only look for a peaceful solution and that it has done so throughout its history;

‘It is recognized the world over that India stands for peace and is

<sup>147</sup> James B. Calvin, ‘The China-India Border War: Subject Area Warfighting’, (version April 1984) Chapter II, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1984/CJB.htm> (7 March 2012).

entirely opposed to the use of warlike methods for the settlement of international disputes. Even in their struggle for independence, the Indian people adhered to peaceful methods.<sup>148</sup>

All these actions and attitudes fit with India's image of the world. Nehru and others in the political establishment believed that India should take a leadership position for all other post-colonial nations.<sup>149</sup>

Zhou and Nehru at this point still worked toward a resolution in hopes of saving the failing relations. The leaders agreed to preliminary negotiations, during which the varying perspectives of both sides would be presented. China, simply put, wanted India to renounce the McMahon line and deem the British created borders as illegal. Following that, the PRC's leadership was willing to recognize the McMahon line as the official border in return for India giving up all claims to the Aksai Chin region. India on the other hand, felt that it had irrefutable proof for its territorial claims.<sup>150</sup>

These negotiations were held in a committee of diplomats and cartographers from both countries. Both sides were allowed to explain their claims. India initially began with a long exposition of cartographical data and maps. The Indian representatives focused primarily on the scientific angle by illustrating where the watershed was located and how natural features seemingly defined the border. The argumentation goes along the vein of;

'It then runs along the crest of the Aghil watershed through the Aghil Pass (Long. 760 37' E and Lat 360 11' N), the Marpo Pass (Long. 770 14' E and Lat 350 43' N), and the Shaksgam Pass (Long 770 28' E and Lat. 350 34'N) to the Karakoram Pass (Long 770 50'E and Lat. 350 31' N) From the Karakoram Pass the boundary lies along the watershed the Shyok (belonging to the Indus system) and the Yarkand and runs through the Qara tagh pass (Long 780 20'E and Lat. 350 43'N) to cross the eastern bend of the Qara Qash river (north west of Haji Langar) and

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<sup>148</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, *WHITE PAPER II*, 37.

<sup>149</sup> Mey, *Nehru's dream*, 29.

<sup>150</sup> CIA, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute*, iii-vi.



to ascend the main Kuen Lun Mountains.’<sup>151</sup>

Through this use of cartographic language, India tried to show that the border they had delimited followed natural geographic features and was therefore legal.

The Indian historical arguments were based on two types of sources; documents from Himalayan kingdoms from as early as the tenth century and travel descriptions originating from the colonial era. From all these sources, the Indian representatives pointed out that they all adhered to the same border alignment throughout history.<sup>152</sup> Indian representatives meant to show the historical continuity of its border alignment, in that way legitimizing its territorial claims.

According to Vertzberger, India’s claims were based on four main beliefs: 1) the continued validity of past agreements on the border issue regardless of regime changes or alterations of conditions on the ground, 2) the tacit acceptance of India’s borders by China after not responding to the cartographic declarations from 1950 onward, 3) the historical possession of territories, acceptance of traditional borders or past *de facto* control by Indian predecessors and 4) the argument of natural geographical borders which were defined by the watershed line and mountain ranges.<sup>153</sup>

The Chinese rebuttal dismissed almost all of India’s evidence and arguments. The historical evidence was dismissed on the grounds of either misinterpretation of sources or the invalidity of British claims in a post-colonial world. India’s cartographic data was dismissed as merely ‘arbitrary’.<sup>154</sup> From this moment on, the negotiations took a turn for the worse. One of the Chinese representatives implied that borders are always being redefined and cites the case of Hyderabad as a precedent. An Indian representative responded fiercely to this:

‘Director Yang then mentioned Hyderabad. This has no bearing at all on the problem we are considering. Hyderabad has always been a part of

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<sup>151</sup> Claude Apri, ‘India-China Official’s Negotiations -1960’, [http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded\\_pics/1960BorderTalksbetweenIndiaChina.pdf](http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/1960BorderTalksbetweenIndiaChina.pdf) (22 February) 8.

<sup>152</sup> Apri, ‘India-China Negotiations’, 17-23.

<sup>153</sup> Vertzberger, ‘India’s Border’, 608-609.

<sup>154</sup> Apri, ‘India-China Negotiations’, 47.

Indian territory and its administration has always been in Indian hands.<sup>155</sup>

The negotiations deteriorated at this point as the Indian representatives started calling China “imperialist” on several occasions, which was something they had not done before.<sup>156</sup> This outburst shows the emotional commitment, fraught with a sense of righteousness and justice, Indian officials and politicians had toward the validity of their arguments.<sup>157</sup> This emotional commitment is seemingly connected to the sacrality of the national soil. Even though the Indian representatives never directly referred to Bharat Mata, their emotional commitment to the shape of India, as conveyed through the Bharat Mata images, is evident. Any contradiction of said arguments forced the Indian’s to lash out in reluctance to altering their perspective. In December 1960, the negotiations broke down. Diplomatic communiqués became more hostile as well and plans for new negotiations were never made.

The negotiations illustrate the tension between the emotional Bharat Mata and the “rational” cartographic borders of the nation. The emphasis by the negotiators on “natural” boundaries, legal theory and treaties seems to indicate that they were trying to marry the, inherently vague, geo-body with the precise nature of cartography. It is therefore not surprising that the Chinese viewed the borders suggested by the Indians as merely arbitrary. In their eyes the suggested borders had no tangible basis of legitimacy.

By 1961, both countries were planning to employ military force. Nehru initiated the ‘Forward Policy’, which made any peaceful resolution impossible. This policy aimed to set up over sixty border posts that would circumvent the Chinese positions. This started a back and forth game of military probes meant to gain a favorable position over the enemy.<sup>158</sup> Both sides subsequently started to accuse each other of imperialism and expansionism.<sup>159</sup>

In October 1962, Chinese forces crossed the McMahon Line. The People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) troops started a two-pronged attack that meant to remove the Indian forces from Aksai Chin in the west and capture the town of Tawang in the east. Chinese forces outmatched their Indian counterparts on all fronts. Nehru attempted to reopen negotiations

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>157</sup> Vertzberger, ‘India’s Border’, 613.

<sup>158</sup> Calvin, ‘The China-India Border War’, Chapter II.

<sup>159</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, *Notes, Memoranda and letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between the Governments of India and China WHITE PAPER VI* (New Delhi 1962) 75-76.

when a lull in the fighting occurred but failed to gain any response from Zhou. By November, Indian forces were in a full route. On the Western front, all Indian posts had been captured while on the Eastern front, Chinese forces had almost reached the province of Assam. At this point, Nehru and the Indian leadership were in a panic, requesting Great Britain and the United States to intervene. On November 21<sup>st</sup>, China announced a unilateral ceasefire and fell back behind its delimited borders. China felt that it had secured its border and humiliated India sufficiently to discourage new border skirmishes.<sup>160</sup>

*Cartographic legitimacy and the attainment of destiny.*

India's attitude and handling of the border dispute from 1950 until 1962 shows two aspects that constitute an integral part of India's conception of the nation on the map and its national identity, namely cartographic legitimacy and the attainment of destiny.

In the Panscheel period (1954-1959), we see that India attempted to strengthen the legitimacy of its cartographic integrity by proclaiming its exact borders hoping that China would accept it. When, by 1958, border skirmishes increased, India used language that "naturalized" the borders and presented China as the "alien" threat. At the same time, India sent out surveyors to map the area similarly to how the British surveyed the region, to shape the border in the nineteenth and twentieth century. As discussed previously, the surveying of an area instills control and power over a region. India believed that detailed maps would assert its claim on the border areas. In the 1960 negotiations, this attitude comes to the foreground predominantly. As the Indian representatives presented their case with extensive maps, cartographical data and coordinates, their insecurity is revealed as they reject all data disproving their arguments. Maps submitted by China were dismissed largely out of hand. When given the opportunity to compromise the representatives refused, believing their arguments irrefutable. Through cartography and naming, India attempted to illustrate the legitimacy of its territorial claims. Their maps were fully authoritative and could not be denied. Indians felt that their maps showed that India's national body was natural due to geographical features and local history. India's non-compromising attitude made China end the negotiations and resorting to military humiliating India.

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<sup>160</sup>Calvin' The China-India Border War, (version April 1984) Chapter III, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1984/CJB.htm> (7 March 2012).

The responses and steps taken by India in the years leading to the 1962 conflict show the pervasiveness of cartographic legitimacy. The search for cartographic legitimacy seemingly stems from the trauma of the Partition, as explained by Yusin and Zamindar, in which national integrity was not under the nation's control. Instead, it was being defined by the "foreign" and the "alien". The resulting fear is that the cartographic integrity of the nation is inherently weak as it lacks legitimacy. To create this legitimacy, it needs to be proclaimed in maps, through language, politics and images. At the same time, it makes a discussion about what this cartographic integrity constitutes impossible as any counterargument is viewed as a threat to the nation's integrity. India's actions and language were not only influenced by cartographic legitimacy but also by a sense of destiny, righteousness and entitlement.

According to the work of Anthony Smith, a sense of destiny is an integral part of nationalist ideology.<sup>161</sup> He argues that nationalists imagine a national history that produces a national destiny. This destiny is a strongly emotional aspect. To the nationalist, the nation's destiny is always glorious and perfect in the same way as the nation's distant past was glorious. The attainment of this destiny is essentially the golden past of the nation that will overthrow the oppression of the present. It is coupled to the idea that all citizens of the nation need to contribute to the attainment of the national destiny. This results in an emotional commitment to the idea of fulfilling the destiny. This emotional commitment gives the attainment of destiny an absolutist quality. If all of history seemingly points to the destiny of the nation then how could anyone deny or block the nation's attainment to this destiny?

Destiny has been an important part of Indian nationalism since the early twentieth century. Indian nationalist writers imagined a rebirth of the original Aryan Indus civilization. This civilization was perceived as being the most pure and perfect form of Indian society. They imagined the return of this perfect society resulting in India becoming the greatest or most glorious nation in the world.<sup>162</sup>

Indian nationalists from Nehru to Savarkar had their own idea of what India would become, either a secular nation or a Hindu one, but all shared the central belief that it would

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<sup>161</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (Cambridge 2001) 8.

<sup>162</sup> Alec Tickell, 'Writing the Nation's Destiny: Indian Fiction in English before 1910', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (2005) 525-541.

the glorious nation its destiny promised. Savarkar's *Hindutva* propagated the belief that India was a Hindu nation created by the Aryans but subsequently suppressed by foreign oppression.<sup>163</sup> Leader of the RSS, Golwalkar foresaw the world under Hindu supremacy if Indians only would reawaken their race-spirit.<sup>164</sup> In *The Discovery of India*, Nehru goes through the ages of Indian history and envisions India as the country that would become the protector of the Third World against imperialism and oppression. Through his economic reforms and Non-Alignment policy, India would become a beacon of peace.<sup>165</sup> Nehru's famous *Tryst with Destiny* speech not only alludes to the national title in the title but also in the wording. The whole speech is very heavy on the themes of destiny and future. One, relatively short sentence sums up what the people hoped India could be;

'It is a fateful moment for us in India, for all Asia and for the world. A new star rises, the star of freedom in the East, a new hope comes into being, a vision long cherished materializes. May the star never set and that hope never be betrayed!'<sup>166</sup>

The attitudes shown in both the diplomatic exchanges and India's political landscape illustrate the attainment of destiny aspect that exists in relation to India's geo-body. As the Sino-Indian border dispute dragged on, the opposition started to weigh in on the debate around it. The opposition became more vocal in its disapproval of Nehru's policies. They asked critical questions in Parliament and organized demonstrations titled 'no surrender manifestations' during Zhou's visit in 1960. Despite the disapproval of Nehru's actions regarding China, the opposition held same ideas about India as Nehru did. Nehru's most prominent detractor, Atal Bihari Vajpayee of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) party spoke out in an extensive debate on the border dispute in 1959. Whilst criticizing Nehru's policy, Vajpayee said India is a country that;

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<sup>163</sup> Islam, *Religious Dimensions*, 208.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 232.

<sup>165</sup> Nehru, *The Discovery*, 49-69.

<sup>166</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, Tryst with Destiny speech held in the Indian Constituent Assembly (Version 14-15 August 1947), <http://www.svc.ac.in/files/TRYST%20WITH%20DESTINY.pdf> (5 March 2012).

‘adopted the policy of remaining free from the different groups quarrelling between themselves, because we believe that not only it is in the best interests of our country, but it is also the right policy in the interest of the world-peace. By this policy India has got some prestige. We are respected. When people of the world are in trouble, they turn towards our Prime Minister, not because we are powerful militarily speaking, not because we have weapons, but because we have adopted a policy based on a moral understanding.’<sup>167</sup>

Vajpayee shows that the ideal of India as a pacifist and normative nation was shared by the entire spectrum of the Indian political establishment. Vajpayee’s BJS party had close ties to the RSS and shared many of its ideals of *Hindutva*.

This notion of destiny was also prevalent within Indian public opinion even though it only paid little attention to the border dispute until the war broke out.<sup>168</sup> In the years following independence, the attainment of India’s national destiny became a common theme outside of the political establishment. The unification of India through the annexation of Hyderabad and Goa was an important step toward the fulfillment of India’s destiny. In 1957, the movie *Bharat Mata* was released.<sup>169</sup> In this melodramatic nationalist film, the titular Mother India, Radha, has lived a life full of hardship that the audience gets to see through flashbacks. Over time, she loses many of her children to famine, disease and violence. All the hardship in her life leads to her being able to open a new water canal that bring abundance and prosperity to the fields of her village. The flashbacks are an allegory for the pre-independence times whilst the present is one for independent India having overcome its hardships.

The national destiny is featured prominently within the Bharat Mata imagery. Mother India sprouts from the earth spreading her sari over the subcontinent. At the same time she towers over all the other nations around her. This image shows us two things. Firstly it communicates a sense of place, the image seemingly says, ‘I am the nation and this is my place in the world’. Secondly, it has an air of superiority. Mother India rises above all the

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<sup>167</sup> Atal Bihari Vajpayee, ‘Speech held on China and Tibet in the Lok Sabha’, (Version 21 August 1959), [http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded\\_pics/Vajpayee\\_in\\_the\\_Lok\\_Sabha.pdf](http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/Vajpayee_in_the_Lok_Sabha.pdf) (6 March 2012) 7.

<sup>168</sup> Mey, *Nehru’s dream*, 199.

<sup>169</sup> Mehboob Khan, ‘Mother India (1957)’, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0050188/> (13 March 2012).

other nations in the world accentuating her greatness. Vajpayee's notion of the other nations of the world looking to India, echoes this idea.

The attainment of destiny in regard to the Sino-Indian conflict made all of India's claims highly absolutist. Which did not seem to be the case for the Chinese, as they were willing to negotiate. The sense of destiny creates an attitude of non-compromise as all arguments that feel counter to the nationalist rhetoric seemingly deny its potential to attain that destiny. By denying the borders as India envisioned them was in essence denying India's territorial validity. As Thongchai explains, the geo-body is the life of the nation and its territory is the constitutive element of nationhood.<sup>170</sup> Thus to deny its territory is to, in a sense, deny the nation. Even though the attainment of destiny factor is apparent in the twelve years before the Sino-Indian war, it played a more prominent role in the aftermath as India reassessed its place in the world.

The cartographic legitimacy and attainment of destiny factors influenced the Indian decision making, as it shows how India struggled with post-colonial legitimacy. As Chatterjee explains, post-colonial India struggled with the ambiguity of legitimization as it attempted to form a modern nation out of various cultural and religious communities that felt little sense of unity.<sup>171</sup> Cartography as a tool creates a sense of unity through maps. Any doubt about the legitimacy of those maps undermines the unity of the nation. The sense of destiny also instills a sense of unity and shared history within the nation, according to Smith. Thus both cartographic legitimacy and the attainment of national destiny were ways in which the Indian government and nationalists attempted to resolve the problem of ambiguity.

### **The Besieged Geo-body**

The cartographic legitimacy and attainment of destiny facets of the Indian geo-body contributed to the disastrous handling of the Sino-Indian border dispute. The violent response by the PRC shocked India to its core. The Indian military was humiliated as Chinese forces had steamrolled over them with little to no effort. After the PRC felt that India had been sufficiently humiliated, it announced a unilateral ceasefire and withdrew its troops

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<sup>170</sup> Thongchai, 'Maps and the Formation', 69.

<sup>171</sup> Chatterjee, 'The Nation', 216-219.



back to what it called, the “Line of Actual Control” (LAC). The LAC defined China’s view of where the border should be.<sup>172</sup>

In the initial months after the conflict, India molded the discourse about the Sino-Indian relations. India retained its image of peace it had been creating since its independence. China was being portrayed as a chauvinist, bellicose and militarist nation that wanted to keep India down. The reality was quite different. Beijing invited Delhi back to the negotiation table on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 1962 to try and move toward a sort of reconciliation.<sup>173</sup> Delhi fully refused any of Beijing’s advances. Nehru said to only want to reopen negotiations when Chinese troops had retreated. China felt that even doing that would not sway Delhi:

‘It has always been the attitude of the Indian Government that it completely denies the existence of a boundary question between China and India. It arbitrarily holds that the alignment it claims is the fixed boundary between China and India; and at most it admits the existence of some minor ‘differences’ ..... In these circumstances, it can be foreseen that no results will be obtained even though the boundary negotiations are held.’<sup>174</sup>

Over the years, Indian politicians and writers perpetuated the image that India was the aggrieved party even though they never moved toward a peaceful solution.

Following the end of the Sino-Indian conflict, a sense of pessimism and defeat arose. India had been betrayed by its so called friend and action had to be taken. Parliament was in an uproar and accepted a resolution stating: ‘With hope and faith, this house affirms the firm resolve of the Indian people to drive out the aggressor from the sacred soil of India, however long and hard the struggle maybe be.’<sup>175</sup> This attitude of perceiving the national territory as sacred made any negotiations that might result in the loss of territory

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<sup>172</sup> Maxwell, *‘India’s China War’*, 417.

<sup>173</sup> ‘Letter from Chou En-lai to the Prime Minister of India, 28 November 1962’, *Notes, Memoranda and letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between The Governments of India and China, WHITE PAPER VIII* (New Delhi 1963), 45-52.

<sup>174</sup> Maxwell, *‘India’s China War’*, 433.

<sup>175</sup> Nehru, *‘Sino-Indian Relations’*, 139.

impossible. Indian politicians still use this rhetoric of the sacred Indian soil to block any border negotiations with both China and Pakistan up to the present day.<sup>176</sup>

The defeat of India by Chinese forces heralded the end of Nehru's Non-Alignment policy. The Third World countries had not assisted or even spoken up for India while it was under attack. This fostered a strong resentment toward these countries. Only the western nations gave their support. Both the US and Great Britain supplied India with arms following the end of the conflict.<sup>177</sup> Nehru still proclaimed that only the policy concerning China needed reassessment. In reality, India was moving toward closer ties to both the US and Soviet-Union.<sup>178</sup> Under Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, India strengthened ties with the Soviet-Union from 1966 onward, leaving the dream of Non-Alignment behind.

In the years after the war, China solved its border dispute with Pakistan peacefully and relations between the two nations strengthened. In 1965, China sided with Pakistan in the Kashmir war. External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh stated that Sino-Pak cooperation was meant: 'to help Pakistan to attain its objectives in Kashmir and also subserve Chinese aims against India.'<sup>179</sup> The Sino-Pak alliance became the image of the foreign power keeping India down. This mirrored the nationalistic imagined history of India being dominated by Muslims and the British for centuries. The feeling that enemies now surrounded India influenced various facets of the nation such as policy, mapping, history and imagery.

Nehru had believed that India should focus primarily on modernizing its industrial sector to make the country a modern nation. After the war, this changed. The defense budget was more than doubled, amounting to 3,6 % of the country's GDP. This left the government with less financial maneuverability, which in turn hampered economic growth.<sup>180</sup> At this time, India also shifted its policy regarding nuclear weapons. Before 1962, India had always rejected any desire to acquire nuclear weapons. By the end of the war, fear for a nuclear attack from China resulted in politicians considering the possibility of nuclear armament.<sup>181</sup> Foreign policy went from global to regional. India no longer concerned itself

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<sup>176</sup> Maxwell, 'Why the Sino-Indian Border', 81-82.

<sup>177</sup> Maxwell, 'India's China War', 428-432.

<sup>178</sup> Mey, 'Nehru's dream', 215-218.

<sup>179</sup> Swaran Singh, 'Speech in Lok Sabha (15 October 1965)' as seen in: Mey, *Nehru's dream*, 225.

<sup>180</sup> Ved P. Gandhi, 'India's Self-Inflicted Defense Burden', *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 9 No. 35. (1974) 1485-1494.

<sup>181</sup> Mey, *Nehru's dream*, 209-210.

with matters that did not affect it directly. Under Nehru, India had been an important player on the international stage. That same influence seemed to have been lost.

With the shift to a more regional focus also came the sense of securing cartography. Pre-1962 India had shown its maps readily in efforts to legitimize its claims. Post-1962 that had seemingly changed as maps pertaining to India's border disputes became classified.<sup>182</sup> The maps preceding and following 1962 are still available. Maps of before 1947 show certain borders of India as undefined. On maps released after 1962, these same borders are shown as fully demarcated by the Survey of India.<sup>183</sup> India had become protective of the way its nation was depicted. Maps that disproved India's own claims were to be censored. Sankaran Krishna describes this attitude toward maps as cartographic anxiety.<sup>184</sup> Instilled in this anxiety is the fear that "alien" influences are trying to undermine the unity and integrity of the nation. Cartography becomes a powerful part of the unity discourse and cannot be undermined.



Image 7:

<http://bharatabharati.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/aghoshpublishers2008092614052b530.jpg?w=180&h=300&h=197>

Nehru put his resentment of the RSS and other Hindu nationalist organizations aside following the end of the war. In 1963, he invited the previously banned RSS to march in the India Republic day parade. In the coming years, the RSS would gain an aura of patriotism.<sup>185</sup> Following the Sino-Indian border dispute and India-Pakistan war of 1965, Hindu nationalism would become an ever more prominent political force in India.

In the years following 1962, as with any relevant historical event, a stream of publications was released on the Sino-Indian war. Predominantly among them

<sup>182</sup> Ananya J. Kabir, 'Cartographic Irresolution and the Line of Control', *Social Text* 101 Winter (2009) 48.

<sup>183</sup> Royal Tropical Institute Amsterdam, *Maps of Northern Kashmir and Pamirs*, Reference numbers: Su-Fu Azië Topo-Serie 2 ISN 7542, Azië Topo-Serie 1 ISN 3551.

<sup>184</sup> Sankaran Krishna, 'Cartographic Anxiety: Mapping the Body Politic in India', *Alternatives* 19 (1994) 507-521.

<sup>185</sup> Jaffrelot, *Hindu nationalism*, 299-302.

were books by Indian authors that painted the war as a logical result of China's expansionist tendencies against India's inherently peaceful society. In 1971, Neville Maxwell's book, *China's India War*, attempted to counter the picture painted by Indian writers. He argues that India's uncompromising attitude inevitably would have led to war. Maxwell received criticism from Indian writers who called his work anti-India or pro-China.<sup>186</sup>

This defensive attitude, that seemingly dominated India after 1962, is also evident within Bharat Mata images. Bharat Mata would be shown as being surrounded by foreign powers that meant to hurt and molest her or as calling her children, the Indians, to defend her. One image shows Mother India being surrounded by the Muslim, Christian and Chinese Communist (Image 7). Other Bharat Mata images called Indians to the defense of the beleaguered Bharat Mata (Image 8). This popular image from the early 1960s likely originated from Northern India. In this image, the Mother India calls men and women to war. In the background are military defensive positions within a mountainous area making reference to the Himalayan front. Krishna showed that from the 1960s onward maps and map-related images played an increasingly important role in Indian provincial politics. He shows that parties would use the image of India combined with threatening rhetoric that, 'hammered home this theme of the nation in danger'.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Mey, *Nehru's dream*, 12-13.

<sup>187</sup> Krishna, 'Cartographic Anxiety', 510.

It is in this way that the besieged geo-body was constructed following the Sino-Indian war. The idea that all the countries bordering India were its enemies, attempting to hinder India's attainment of the national destiny, was the cornerstone of the besieged geo-body. Dora Kostakopoulou introduced the concept of the besieged state.<sup>188</sup> She states that a besieged state is one in which the fear for an outside enemy legitimizes actions counter to a states ideals. The Indian ideals of peace, Non-Alignment and diversity were merely moved to the wayside to ensure the security of national territorial integrity. India's eventual alliance with the Soviet-Union, the persecution of Maoists, Bharat Mata imagery and cartographic anxiety all indicate that India had become a nation that felt it was under a constant foreign threat. This perceived threat became the defining attribute in the historical narrative of the nation of India.

The besieged geo-body results in an attitude which makes any form of compromise in regard to border disputes impossible. It wouldn't be until 1995 that India would recognize the Line of Actual Control but even then not as an official border.

How the besieged geo-body of India developed both through the actions preceding the 1962 conflict and its fallout, indicates how the geo-body of India differed from Thailand's geo-body. India's geo-body is essentially wrought with anxiety. Thongchai explains that the



**Image 8:** The Call of the Mother, c.1966 as seen in S. Ramaswamy, 'Maps and Mother Goddesses in Modern India', *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 53 (2001).

<sup>188</sup> Dora Kostakopoulou, 'How to do Things with Security Post 9/11', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 28, no. 2, (2008) 317-342.

cartographic boundary of the geo-body defines the national identity. It separates the national citizen from the foreigner.<sup>189</sup> From the initial drawing of India till the Partition, nationalists had little to no control over the demarcation of their nations borders. The Sino-Indian conflict escalated this fear of having the “foreign” controlling that which constitutes the nation, its geo-body. This loss of control left a scar on the national psyche. It is this scar, or trauma, from which India’s anxiety toward its cartographic representation originates.

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<sup>189</sup> Thongchai, ‘ Maps and the Formation’ 89-91.

## Epilogue

India's geo-body developed initially along similar lines as Siam's geo-body described by Thongchai. The interaction between Western cartography and indigenous Indian culture created the discourse of the geo-body. British mapping bound an entire subcontinent, diverse with cultures and ethnicities, into one cartographic entity. Through imagery infused with religious and cultural elements, the map of India became more than a representation of a section of the world: it became the sacred body of the nation, inspiring loyalty and patriotism. It is here that we see the first difference with the Siam case. The divide between British mapping and Indian naturalization gave the geo-body a dual foundation. This duality entails that Indian nationalists did not define the geographic extent of their nation. They had little to no understanding of cartography or what the borders of their nation constituted, as they had imagined these borders culturally.

The second difference with the Siam case was that India's ethnic diversity proved an insurmountable hurdle in creating a sense of national unity. The failure to incorporate the large Muslim minority into the national idea of the "Indian" resulted in the Partition. This dismemberment of the nation required a reorientation of the geo-body. Indian nationalists realized that their borders had to be as much political constructs as cultural. With this reorientation a sense of 'never again' was born, resulting in a guarded attitude toward borders and the possible loss of territory. This fostered an attitude where India published maps of the now independent nation, proclaiming the extent and shape of the geo-body in an attempt to legitimize the existence of the national body. Simultaneously, a feeling of achievement was born following the independence and the unification of India's geo-body through the annexation of Hyderabad and Goa. Kashmir's return to India seemed imminent to the Indian government in the 1950s as the validity of their claims seemed irrefutable. Unification was one of the first steps toward India catching up to the West. In doing so, India would live up to its envisioned national destiny of being a super power and representative of the post-colonial Third World countries. This mixture of cartographical legitimacy and national destiny led to an attitude of self-righteousness, non-compromise and superiority in the face of the Sino-Indian border dispute. This attitude made a peaceful resolution of the border issue impossible.



The Indian humiliation at the hands of China changed India's national identity from a positive and assertive one, to one defined by defensiveness and isolation. India's foreign policy made a seeming reversal, leaving behind many of its Non-Alignment ideals. Certain Indian maps became highly classified, obscuring the details in contested areas. Indian nationalists did not want to show the wounds its geo-body now bore and chose instead to censor any publication of them. Indian Bharat Mata images became increasingly defensive and militaristic due to a sense of encirclement following China's seeming alliance with Pakistan. The year 1962 became the defining moment of the new historical narrative of the nation. This narrative has seemingly only become more prevalent following the Indo-Pakistani war of 1966 and 1971. It could even be argued that the Mumbai attacks of 2008 even further strengthened this narrative.

Various writers have studied how important this sense of foreign incursion still is to Indian nationalism in the twenty-first century.<sup>190</sup> Maps and map-related images communicated this sense of Indian society and any infringement upon this image is censored as the maps within *The Economist* on the border issues. Even illicit suggestions regarding India's shape are met with outcries of betrayal. Artist M.F Husain painted two controversial pictures in 2006 and 2008 respectively. The first one was titled

*Bharatmata* and depicts a naked women in the shape of India (Image 9). Her hands are either chopped off or blurred out and should be covering North Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh. The second painting is called the *Rape of India* (Image 10), depicting a woman in the throws with two cows. Both of these paintings resulted in protests and death threats,

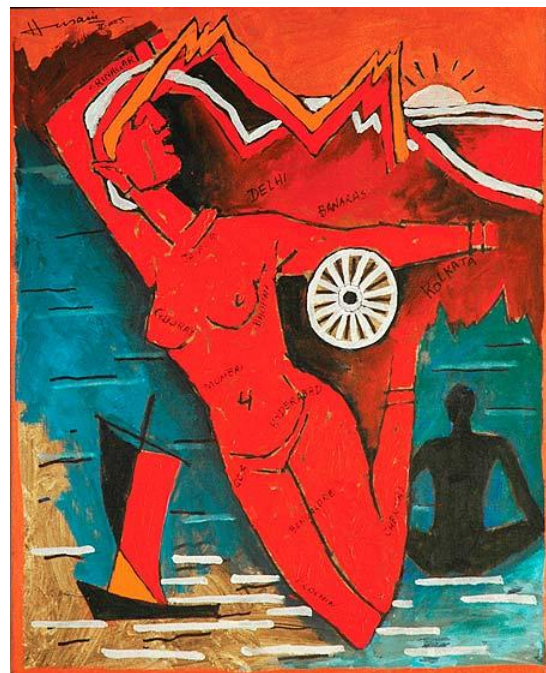


Image 9: Bharatmata by M.F. Husain 2006

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<sup>190</sup> Kabir, 'Cartographic Irresolution', 45-66 and Krishna, 'Cartographic Anxiety', 507-521.

calling Husain a traitor to India and calling for his deportation. Husain eventually gave up his Indian nationality in favor for a Qatari one. The Husain controversy shows how sacred the depiction of Bharat Mata is and how altering the image is received.

India shows the inherent instability of a post-colonial national geo-body. India's geo-body was created out of an amalgam of different states, ethnicities and religions by the colonial dominator. When the colonial dominator gives up its control, the validity of the existence of the nation as a unit weakens. Indian nationalists had applied Bharat Mata and maps to reinforce a nationalist sense of unity. As a result, maps and images constituted a sacred way of showing India whilst ignoring the divides within the nation. Acknowledging these divides would mean recognizing that the nation was a colonial construction and not natural. Any recognition of these divides is met with either censorship or the cry of national betrayal. The problem of the ambiguity of legitimacy seemingly partially stems from the colonial drawing of the nation.

Throughout Asia and beyond, countries are looking to the future developments of the Sino-Indian relations. As both countries have become economic juggernauts, the competition for resources and influence has increased as well. After fifty years, the still unresolved Sino-Indian border dispute looms its shadow over all of the China's and India's dealings with each other. Recently, Neville Maxwell wrote an article regarding what steps should be taken to resolve the issue. Maxwell believes that if India is willing, China will compromise. He stated that this would only happen if the Indian government would be willing to return to the table with the possibility of losing some claimed territory. Maxwell deemed this highly unlikely due to Indian political attitude of 'never giving up an inch of sacred Indian soil' that has existed since 1962.<sup>191</sup>

With the increased rise of Hindu nationalist and provincial parties, it seems that no political actor will arise to offer China the olive branch. It seems that the sacred nature of India's geo-body is stronger than ever. As long as this attitude persists any border resolution, be it with China or Pakistan, is impossible without the application of force. Any military conflict between these nations would likely leave India's geo-body more scared than it already is.

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<sup>191</sup> Maxwell, 'Why the Sino-Indian Border Dispute', 81-82.



Figuur 10: Rape of India by M.F. Husain 2008.

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