

Deoli Days: The Internment of the Ethnic Chinese of India, the Overseas Chinese Identity and Nation-Building in South Asia

Joita Das, National University of Singapore, Singapore

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Abstract

Chinese migration to South Asia (India) was part of the same trade and indentured labour diaspora that brought Chinese to Southeast Asia between the 18th and 20th centuries. While there is considerable scholarship on the overseas Chinese of Southeast Asia, there is comparably less work done on their counterparts in India. This paper examines the state-sponsored persecution of the ethnic Chinese in the Republic of India during the 1962 border conflict between China and India, popularly referred to as the 1962 China-India War. As a result of the 1962 China-India War, approximately 3000 ethnic Chinese residents of India were arrested and interned in concentration camps in Deoli by the then Indian government on suspicion of having links to Communist China. The internment of the ethnic Chinese is a less widely known fact of India's postcolonial history. What does the persecution of overseas Chinese communities in South Asia tell us about nationalism and state-building in postcolonial India? My research method combines existing literature with oral historical accounts of former Deoli internees. During this war, the Indian government brought into effect draconian measures of persecution which, this paper argues, enforced a particular image of the Indian nation-state along ethnic lines. The 1962 China-India War and the exclusion of the overseas Chinese identity from India's national imaginary illustrated an ethnicization of the nation.

Keywords: Chinese-Indians, Internment, Overseas Chinese, Deoli, Ethnicity

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Introduction

Today, there are over forty million Chinese living overseas. Nearly 75% of these overseas Chinese live in Southeast Asia (Tan 2013, pp 1-12). Chinese migration to South Asia (Kolkata, India) was part of the same trade and indentured labor diaspora that brought Chinese to Southeast Asia between the 18th and 20th centuries. While there is considerable scholarship on the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, there is less work done on their counterparts in India who came and settled down in British-ruled Bengal towards the latter half of the 18th century. This paper focusses on the ethnic Chinese of India (known colloquially as the Chinese-Indians) during the 1962 China-India War.

The 1962 China-India War and the general distrust of Communist China among countries in Southeast Asia towards the latter half of the twentieth century saw the overseas Chinese having to negotiate their Chinese identities in significant ways amidst a flood of anti-Chinese sentiments. The 1962 China-India War demonstrates how the overseas Chinese in India were subject to similar forces of communalism, nationalism and state-sponsored persecution as their Southeast Asian counterparts. China's response to these persecutions were also similar across South and Southeast Asia and involved repatriating thousands of ethnic Chinese from India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam on grounds that the ethnic Chinese were being mistreated in these regions. This research aims to bring the Chinese-Indians into conversation with the larger Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia. It specifically focuses on the state-sponsored persecution and internment of nearly 3000 ethnic Chinese in India by the then Indian government.

It was because of the 1962 China-India War that several ethnic Chinese who had historically resided in Kolkata, a former capital of British India and currently the capital of the state of West Bengal in eastern India, were arrested and transported across the breadth of the Indian subcontinent and interned in Deoli, a small town in the western desert state of Rajasthan. Between 1962 and 1967, the Indian government arrested ethnic Chinese from Kalimpong, Darjeeling, Siliguri, Kolkata and Makum – all in northeast India-and sent them to internment camps on very flimsy and superficial grounds. Simply because this community 'looked' Chinese, had Chinese-sounding surnames or had Chinese spouses, they could have affiliations with enemy China and thus needed to be detained (Omar, 2017, pp181-196). Internees sometimes spent up to four years in the internment camp, being released only in 1967 although the China-India War ended in 1962 itself and the reasons which arguably necessitated the Chinese's internment no longer existed.

The internment of the ethnic Chinese is a less widely known fact of India's postcolonial history. What does the persecution of overseas Chinese communities in South Asia tell us about nationalism and state-building in postcolonial India? This essay will first summarize the events leading up to the 1962 China-India War (Part 1). It will then look at oral histories of former Deoli internees, many of whom have gone on to write autobiographical accounts of their time in the internment camp (Part 2). Finally, it will look at what the persecution of the Chinese reveals about India's postcolonial nationhood (Part 3).

Part 1. The 1962 China-India War: Causes and Consequences

The 1950s marked the heyday of China-India congeniality (Ghosh 2017, p.698). Mainland China had just fallen to Communism. India, on the other hand, had recently gained independence from British colonial rule in 1947 and was set to become the leader of the postcolonial world under Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first Prime-Minister. The

atmosphere between the two countries was marked by cultural and intellectual vibrancy (Passin, 1961).

Despite having rich cultural exchange, however, the political scene between the two countries was strife. First, there was great interest among the larger global community to see which country would emerge as the leader of the post-colonial world (Luthi, 2017, pp.29-47). Perhaps that is why in spite of this apparent India-China bonhomie, there may have been a sense of competitiveness and a mutual suspicion brewing between the two countries. Second, there had always been border disputes between India and China dating back to the colonial times. Indian political scientist, Ashis Nandy explains that “China and India were...civilizations which overlapped in a great measure. Culturally, China was partly inside India and India was partly inside China,” (Ghosh, 2017, p.703). This indicates that the two countries historically had very fluid boundaries. As India and China both sought to define their territories more stringently, in the twentieth century the historical fluidity of areas and permeability of borders was overlooked. British India did not have clearly territorially circumscribed borders either (Luthi and Dasgupta, 2017, pp.1-26). As such, the postcolonial Indian nation-state inherited what were essentially regions without clearly delineated borders from its colonial predecessors. Sustained border issues between India and China was one of the main causes of the 1962 China-India War.

One of the main triggers for the 1962 War was the contentious McMahon Line. Chinese forces advanced into India and occupied territories south of the McMahon Line, which was the historical frontier between Assam in India and Tibet (that China claimed suzerainty over). China did not recognize the McMahon Line as the true border between British India (and later independent India) and Tibet. Even though by 1959 a line had been clearly drawn delineating which territories belonged to China and India, both India and China were pre-empting areas which they considered to be of strategic or practical value to them. China had started building a highway across the Aksai Chin region, which India claimed fell under its sovereignty (Mehra and Mehra, 1970, p.412). Tensions had already been high between India and China since India agreed to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama in 1959. India aiding him was seen by China as a betrayal of the earlier ‘Hindi-Cheeni bhai-bhai’ period (translated: ‘India and China are brothers’). China’s building of the highway further exacerbated tensions between the two countries. China began setting posts along the China-India border. India followed suit in a Forward Policy which could have been the ultimate trigger for the war. China attacked India on 26 October 1962. India suffered a humiliating defeat. On 19 November 1962, the Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai declared a ceasefire. The War affected India’s international standing and marked an important juncture in India’s post-colonial history. The repercussions of the War were felt for several years after especially among the Chinese-Indian community.

In 1962, India declared its first state of emergency as a newly independent nation. A state of emergency is issued during wartime or during periods of external aggression, armed rebellion or internal disturbances (Omar, 2017, pp.181-196). In 1962, it was because of perceived external aggression against China that the newly independent Indian nation-state declared its first state of emergency. During this national emergency, several branches of the Indian government were granted permission to pass orders that may have been detrimental to Indian citizens’ constitutional rights. This included suspension of a person’s right for assembly, movement and their freedom of speech (Omar, 2017, pp.181-196). The emergency period lasted from 1962 to 1969 even though the China-India War itself ended in 1962. The war disproportionately affected those Indians who were of ethnic Chinese origin.

During the War, the Defence of India Ordinance was promulgated in October 1962 (Zhang, 2022, p.417). Along with the Ordinance, the Defence of India Act, 1946, as well as the Foreigners Law Ordinance, was used to imprison and intern ethnic Chinese from India's border areas in northeast India. The Defence of India Act, 1946 allowed the Indian government to "detain...any person engaging in acts prejudicial to India's defense and safety," (Luthi and Dasgupta, 2017, p.21). The Foreigners Law Ordinance similarly required all foreigners, defined as "any person not of Indian origin who was at birth a citizen or subject of any country at war or committing external aggression against India," (Roy, 2007, pp.186-87) to undergo a registration process. As a result, Chinese in India's north-eastern border areas had to periodically report to their neighbourhood police stations. A further ordinance stated that people of 'hostile origin' could be apprehended without a warrant by relevant authorities (Omar, 2017, pp.181-196). A person of 'hostile origin' was defined as follows: "any person who, or either of whose parents who, or any of whose grandparents was, at any time a citizen or subject of any country at war with, or committing external aggression against India." (Roy, 2007, p.187). In 1962, this definition branded all ethnic Chinese in India as 'hostiles' since most members of the community did have ancestral links to China. In January 1963 India passed yet another order – Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order- which listed the areas in which 'foreigners,' (in this context almost exclusively referring to the Chinese residents of India), were not allowed entry. Restricted areas included all of the states of Assam and Meghalaya and several parts of the state of West Bengal (Zhang, 2022, p.417). These were places where the Chinese had historically resided.

Therefore, the Chinese community in India had severe restrictions put on their movement during the 1962 War. They required permits if they wished to stay out of their registered address for more than 24 hours. These curtailments were in effect till the 1980s and was completely removed only in 1996. During this time, everyone who was of Chinese descent had to continuously report to the Indian authorities for some form of registration and assessment (Bannerjee, 2017, pp.215-232). Government orders during the 1962 War thus enabled the arrest and internment of several second and third generation ethnic Chinese. There were about 2,100 Chinese interned at Deoli although the total number of Chinese who were detained nation-wide was much higher and could be closer to the 10,000 mark (Omar, 2017, pp.181-196).

Now, arguably, the mass arrests of the Chinese during wartime may have been standard operating procedure (Ma and D'Souza, 2020). Nevertheless, India's continued internment of the Chinese after 1962 violated several articles of its own penal code and international law, which dictated that all "restrictive measures taken regarding protected persons shall be cancelled as soon as possible after the close of hostilities," (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.292) and that every internee should be released "as soon as the reasons which necessitated his internment no longer exist" (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.292). Arguably, the initial mass arrests of the Chinese could be attributed to the state's perceived threat of an invasion or a war, and its need to then swiftly move and intern a potentially dangerous group of people because there was no time to examine individual cases. However, this did not justify India's continued internment of the Chinese well after the War had ended (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.292).

Ethnic nationalism and anti-Chinese sentiments got codified in state policies during the 1962 War. Scholars note that a "state's...codification of exclusions and expulsions were...stamped on to the blue-print of national belonging through a suspension of various civil liberties, mass arrests...deportation, and finally, internment in detention camps," (Bannerjee, 2017, p.215). The Chinese-Indians' internment of Deoli was one instance where the Indian state codified its exclusion of the Chinese from its national imaginary. The Chinese-Indians were being treated

like Chinese prisoners-of-war. In addition, the Chinese who were not interned in Deoli were still subject to harassment, larceny, arson and even physical assault by the ethnic majority of India during the 1962 War. These constituted what Payal Bannerjee calls the “‘extra-judicial’ corollaries of the state’s discriminatory actions,” (Bannerjee, 2017, p.215-232). During the 1962 War and following the arrests of many landed and propertied Chinese-Indians, there was also mass-scale asset-appropriation exercises. There were also forcible deportations taking place during this time. Many Chinese-Indians, even though they had no relationship with China, were sent to Madras in southern India, put on ships and sent away to China. When the last prisoners were released from Deoli in 1967 (several years after the China-India War had ended), many were still denied citizenship rights and had to deal with property and job losses (Luthi and Dasgupta, 2017). Whilst a *jus soli* criteria for citizenship was reinstated after the War, there were still many restrictions imposed on the Chinese community in India and these stayed in effect till the 1990s. Some Chinese remained stateless. They were issued residence permits, to be renewed annually (Zhang, 2022). Therefore, even though the 1962 China-India War was rather short-lived, the consequences of the war especially with regards to how it affected the lives of ordinary Chinese-Indians were felt for several years thereafter. The following section explores how ordinary Chinese-Indians who had been interned in Deoli during the War recount their experiences of 1962.

Part 2. Arrests and Internments: Anecdotes from Former Deoli Internees

Oral histories are particularly important to help shape the history of the Chinese-Indian community. The Chinese-Indians are a numerically small and politically weak community. This has meant that their voices often don’t get reflected in historical records. That is why projects like the one undertaken by Joy Ma and Dilip D’Souza in *The Deoliwallahs* that provide anecdotal evidence of the interment of Chinese-Indians, is important.

Joy Ma, who co-authored *The Deoliwallahs* with Dilip D’Souza, an award-winning Mumbai-based journalist, is a member of the Chinese-Indian community. Although she did much of her schooling in India, she moved to the U.S. for graduate school and has since settled down in California. She was born in the Deoli camp in Rajasthan when her parents were taken prisoners during the 1962 China-India War. Joy Ma’s family was arrested on the day of Chinese New Year on 25 January 1963 and released four and a half years later on 29 June 1967. But even after their release, she remembers her father being constantly harassed by the Crime Investigation Department, even being jailed for six months after he was released from Deoli (Ma and D’Souza, 2020, p.126).

The Deoliwallahs consists of interviews Ma conducted with members of the Chinese-Indian community, at the time settled in North America. Most of Ma and D’Souza’s interviewees were part of the Association of India Deoli Camp Internees 1962 (henceforth referred to as the ‘AIDCI’). The AIDCI hope to raise awareness about the internment of Chinese-Indians by the Indian government in 1962 and are currently lobbying from Canada, demanding reparations from the Indian state. The Indian state has not issued any apology for the atrocities committed against the Chinese community in 1962. Neither has the state issued any material evidence to these internees of their arrests and detention further making it difficult to write an archival history of this community’s internment. It is in light of this that Ma and D’Souza’s work is so revealing. Ma and D’Souza draw parallels between the internment of the Chinese-Indians at Deoli by the then Indian government led by Jawaharlal Nehru, and the similar internment of Japanese-Americans in the U.S. during World War 2, under Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was several years later that the American government acknowledged the atrocities committed

against the Japanese-Americans, apologized for this injustice and even mobilized funds for reparations (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.12). The Japanese-Americans found strong lobbyists and supporters in the U.S. Congress to support their demand for reparations. The Chinese-Indians don't enjoy the same support in India and it is unlikely that their demands for an apology or reparations will be addressed soon. Nevertheless, it is important to document the voices of the Chinese-Indian community-dispersed as they may be now across India, the U.S. and Canada-given that the 1962 War and the community's internment is a less widely known aspect of India's postcolonial history.

The Deoli camp had been used previously to house prisoners of war, but never civilians until the internment of the Chinese there. During the Partition of India in 1947, many Sikhs took refuge in this camp, as well. In 1962, when 3000 Chinese-Indians were housed there, it came to be called a 'Chinese camp' (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.103). Although not as severe of an incarceration as the Jews by the Nazis, the Deoli camp definitely fits the bill of a concentration camp. Historian Andrea Pitzer states that concentration camps are "places of forced relocation of civilians into detention on the basis of group identity," (qtd. in Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.103). Furthermore, the detention is usually because of a community's "racial, cultural, religious, or political identity, not because of any prosecutable offence" (qtd. in Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.103). The internment of the Chinese at Deoli agrees with Pitzer's definition of a concentration camp. The laws and ordinances promulgated during the War ended up denying the hundreds of Indian citizens, who happened to be of Chinese descent, proper citizenship rights and subjected them to the same restrictions as Chinese foreign nationals in India (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.275). Internment, as already mentioned before, was based on very arbitrary parameters. It was based on police officers' discretion and whether they considered a person's name or their outward appearance 'Chinese enough' to warrant an arrest and internment. Below, I summarize the stories of three Deoli internees who recounted their experiences of being taken prisoners by the Indian state during the war.

Ying Sheng Wong lived with his family in Shillong in northeastern India during the time of the 1962 China-India War. On 19 November 1962, policemen entered the Don Bosco school where Wong was studying and arrested several Chinese students, including Wong. In the Shillong jail, Wong met other Chinese families who had been brought down to Shillong from the neighboring states of Assam and Meghalaya. Wong reunited with his family in the jail. From there, Wong and his family boarded the train to Rajasthan. Wong recounted the harrowing train journey to Rajasthan. Crowds of people would gather at the train stations and throw rocks at the train carrying the Chinese internees. The words 'ENEMY TRAIN' had been written on the side of the compartments, presumably by mobsters (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.34). When Wong's family returned to Shillong several years later, their property and assets had been seized. Wong and his family later migrated to Canada in 1993 (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.34-43).

Andy Hsieh was another Chinese interned at Deoli. He was the former President of the AIDCI. Initially, Hsieh and his brothers attended a Chinese school in Kolkata, the Kinkuo Hok Hao, before moving further east to Assam for high-school (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.54-61). There were several Chinese schools in West Bengal and other parts of northeast India. Many of these schools were funded by the Chinese and Taiwanese governments (Xing, 2010). Hsieh recalled how the Chinese community in Assam was very diverse. It included those whose parents and grandparents had migrated to India from China several decades ago. It also included Kuomintang soldiers who had helped fight off the Japanese in Assam and parts of West Bengal. Like Wong, Hsieh was also taken by policemen from his school in Assam and sent to Deoli. He and his family were only released in 1966.

Finally, Steven Wan was also taken from his home on 19 November 1962. Wan's father had escaped Chengdu during the Japanese invasion of China and settled down in Shillong. The Japanese invasion had triggered a migration out of China and although most made their way to Southeast Asia, some, like Wan's father, came to India. Wan remembers that when he and his family were arrested, his father was put in solitary confinement for several days when he failed to declare the family's assets properly. When the family was finally released on 9 September 1964, they were not allowed to return to their home in Kalimpong and were sent to Kolkata instead. Wan and his family also left India for Canada (Ma and D'Souza, 2020, p.68-74).

What becomes increasingly evident through all these anecdotes is the complete isolation and alienation of the Chinese from the Indian state. Even though the then Home Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri had visited the Deoli camp and assured the internees they would be able to return to their homes soon, for the most part there was very little aid provided by the Indian government. In addition, India even prevented the Chinese Embassy from visiting its own interned nationals (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.303). Despite Shastri's promises, it was several years before the internees returned to their homes and for most of them there wasn't much of their 'home' left to return to. This turned many internees bitter and against the Indian state.

The Chinese Red Cross on several occasions did provide humanitarian aid to the internees at Deoli. Yin Marsh's *Doing Time With Nehru* is another autobiographical account of the author's experience of being taken prisoner in Deoli in 1962. She recounted how it was precisely because the Chinese Red Cross and government were providing relief support and even arranged for boats to repatriate internees, that many internees felt compelled to go to China instead of staying on in Deoli. They felt the Chinese government cared more for the plight of the Deoli internees than did their own Indian government since the former had been more proactive in sending aid. During the War, India repatriated over 2000 Chinese (and their dependents) to China (Marsh, 2015).

The Chinese during the 1962 War occupied a rather precarious position. On one hand, places like Chinatowns were arguably ethnic ghettos that led to the further re-enforcing of their ingroup Chinese identity. However, on the other hand, most Chinese in India during the War had little to no connection with the People's Republic of China. In fact, during the 1962 China-India War, many Chinese found that they were being forced to demonstrate and assert their 'Indianness' in the face of widespread persecution. For example, the Chinese community publicly condemned Communist China, pledged their loyalty to India and even contributed to India's Defense Fund (Cohen and Leng, 1972, p.276).

The internment of the Chinese during the War demonstrates how 'citizenship' is ultimately a process of systematic inclusion and exclusion. In 1962, the Chinese-Indian identity was excluded from the Indian national imaginary because of racial and ethnic differences between the Chinese and the rest of the ethnic majority of India. The 1962 China-India War accelerated the "ethnicization of the nation," (Roy, 2007, p.186), i.e. imagining the Indian nation-state exclusively in ethnic and racial terms. The 1962 War and incarceration of the Chinese raises questions about the nature of India's post-colonial, national identity, who it considered a foreigner and by extension, who it left out of its national imaginary. The 1962 China-India War in many ways marked a point of no return for the Chinese-Indians. It cemented the community's distrust of the majority ethnic population of India and the Indian government. There has been an exodus of Chinese-Indians to Toronto, Canada following the War. Toronto currently has a sizeable Chinese-Indian community.

Part 3. Imagining Nationhood: The Ethnicization of the Nation

The nation-state has had many iterations. Benedict Anderson most famously described the nation as an 'imagined community,' brought together via some shared sense of horizontal camaraderie. In Anderson's theorization the nation is "imagined as both limited and sovereign," (Roy, 2007, pp.1-32). But the 20th century and persecution of the Chinese presents us with different iterations of the nation-states-ones that were not necessarily territorially limiting but rather transnational in character.

While I have focussed thus far primarily on Indian nationalism and India's response to its ethnic Chinese in the light of the 1962 War, it is also important to look at China's involvement with the ethnic Chinese in India during this time. The persecution of the ethnic Chinese in India (and other parts of Southeast Asia, as well) towards the latter half of the 20th century and China's response to these events revealed a particularly aggressive brand of Chinese nationalism that was at play during this time. China practised a form of long distance nationalism where it considered the overseas Chinese as still part of China (Levitt and Schiller, 2004, pp.1002-1039). The Chinese state evacuating ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia and South Asia citing anti-Chinese hostilities and unfair treatment of this community at the hands of the governments of these countries, poses interesting questions about the links between ethnicity, diasporic identity and nationality. China labelling its repatriates from Southeast Asia (and presumably those from South Asia that China repatriated as well although there is significantly less scholarly work done on these repatriates) as 'returnees' instead of 'refugees' similarly suggested that the Chinese state considered overseas Chinese as ultimately being an extension of the Chinese national Self (Ho, 2012, pp.599-611). For overseas Chinese repatriated by the Chinese state in the twentieth century-including those from India, none of whom had any prior links to China and were mostly second or third generation descendants of Chinese immigrants to these regions in the preceding centuries-their movement back to China constituted counter-diasporic migration. Arguments about co-ethnicity and extra-territorial kinship were used to justify the 'return' of overseas Chinese to China. Nation here was understood not as a political entity. Rather, it alluded to more of a spiritual or cultural continuity -much like the idea of Israel-between the overseas Chinese and the ancestral land (Godley, 1980, p.46).

Furthermore, national identity is based on people understanding the importance of territorial location and history in the formation of a cohesive national identity (Martin 2005, pp.97-102). Anyone who stands outside that location or does not share the same history is othered. The events of 1962 in India points to the ethnicization of the nation, i.e. imagining the nation, nationhood and national identity exclusively in ethnic and racial terms. In 1962, the Chinese-Indian identity was excluded from the Indian national imaginary because of racial and ethnic differences between the Chinese and the rest of the ethnic majority of India. The exclusion of the overseas Chinese identity from the larger Indian national imaginary got codified in state ordinances and policies. The war was what Srirupa Roy calls a "structuring event," (Roy, 2007, p.27) that attempted to establish new idioms for the idea of a nation-state. The war led the State to ideate on who it considered an 'ideal' citizen along ethnic lines. Therefore, during the China-India War, the Chinese-Indian community's hybrid identity (where many were Indian citizens but of Chinese ethnicity) became a basis for their exclusion from the Indian national imaginary.

Certainly during the 1962 War it becomes evident that the State is seminal in selecting and transforming group identities such that they fit into its own conceptions of nationhood (Roy, 2007). In that matrix, only certain group identities (non-ethnic Chinese) were recognized as constituting the larger 'Indian' identity. What is important to note, however, is that it is precisely

during moments of tension, i.e. during war, when the nation-state is encountered that the idea of nationhood and a national identity is formed. Therefore, the arrest and internment of the Chinese at Deoli was not merely a result of the monocultural aspirations of the nation-state, i.e. not merely *based* on the conception of a nation as being for a particular race or ethnicity. Rather, the internment of the Chinese *brought into existence* and actualized a race and ethnicity-based notion of nationhood.

Conclusion

The Chinese-Indian community was at its peak in the mid-20th century, numbering at about 50,000 across the entire South Asia (Xing and Sen, 2015, p.205-226). But the community's numbers have rapidly dwindled after the 1962 China-India War and there are only a few thousand that remain in the city today. The exodus of Chinese from Kolkata to mainly Canada was almost a direct result of the 1962 China-India War and the internment of this community at the hands of the Indian government at that time. Many Chinese-Indians feared that racial and ethnic differences would continue to ostracize the Chinese from the ethnic majority of India (as they had during the war) and thus chose to relocate. This paper has summarized the events that led to the 1962 China-India War and provided anecdotal evidence of the harsh measures the newly independent Indian nation-state took to protect itself during wartime that included the mass arrest and internment of about 3000 ethnic Chinese in Deoli. These measures ultimately ended up reinforcing India's national identity along racial and ethnic lines.

Finally, a note on interdisciplinarity (the main theme of the 13th Asian Conference on Asian Studies) and the discipline of Asia and Area Studies. In recent years, there has been a key shift in Area Studies research. Increasingly, scholars are trying to move beyond the nation-state, land and territory as the only meaningful units of analysis in area studies work and instead look at migrations, flows, seas, maritime networks and borderland areas as worthy of study as well, especially when looking at global and regional connections. A community like the Chinese-Indians with their own unique history of immigration and subsequent emigration into and out of India lends itself to this kind of theoretical framework. I hope my research and this paper is an important first step in this newly emerging field of comparative and interdisciplinary Area and Asia Studies.

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Contact email: dasjoita@gmail.com