

## Concept of Nation in B.P. Koirala's *Atmabrittanta*

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DOI: 10.3126/hj.v16i1.76367

### Abstract

*The paper explores B.P. Koirala's late-life reflections recorded by Ganesh Raj Sharma and published in 2070 V.S. (1998/2001), titled, Atmabrittanta. The book serves as mine of memories from a prominent Nepali political leader who led the first popular revolution against the Rana-oligarchy, providing deep insights into Nepal's social, political and historical landscape. Among the various issues discussed, this paper specifically focuses on how the text presents the evolution of the concept of the nation in a modern socio-political context. Using the modern theoretical definition of a nation, the paper delves into Richard Burghart's definition of the nation and applies it to analyse koirala's narrative. The research examines the concept of the nation as muluk under the Rana regime (1846–1951) as expressed in B.P. Koirala's Atmabrittanta (1998/2001). While analysing the text, the concept of country as muluk gradually fades away as the narrative develops, then the country as a conceptually and emotionally shared geography emerges. Finally, the textual analysis unearths the concept of nation as a shared geography of the people, rather than being owned by an oligarch or a family.*

**Keywords:** B.P. Koirala, democracy, muluk, nation, Rana-oligarchy.

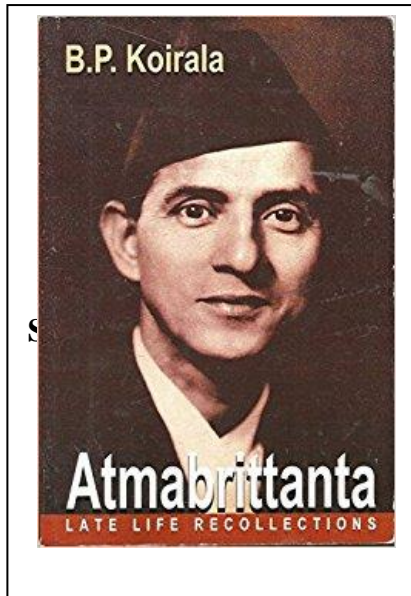
### Contextualizing the Koirala's *Atmabrittanta*

With the publication of B.P. Koirala's *Atmabrittanta* (1998/2001), the political and social history of Nepal, spanning from the late Rana regime to King Mahendra's coup (1946–1962), is illuminated through the perspective of one of the key figures in Nepali politics during that time. On October 26 1981, B.P. Koirala was diagnosed with throat cancer and was informed that he had not only six months to live. Faced with this limited time, Koirala visited the residence of Ganesh Raj Sharma, the man behind this book, and expressed his desire to record his reflections on his late-life struggle for democracy (Sharma, 2001).

Ganesh Raj Sharma (2001) agreed to record Koirala's reflections. However, it was not a traditional interview but rather an uninterrupted account of Koirala's life, without a structured chronology. Sharma writes, "These Recollections were taped by me between 1 December 1981 – 22 May 1982. Even though I had to be with him for an hour every morning, due to his infirmity it was not possible to tape on every occasion". As a political

document, B.P. Koirala's reflective conversations evoke "memory to tell a retrospective narrative of the past and to situate the present within that experiential history" (Smith and Watson as quoted in Lamichhane, 2023).

He spoke freely, as thoughts arose in his mind, and Sharma assisted him in connecting his reflections whenever he wandered emotionally into reminiscences that were unrelated to the conversation. B.P. Koirala spoke to Ganesh Raj Sharma, essentially from his deathbed, sharing a great deal of his thoughts, and Sharma recorded them all on a tape recorder. These recordings were later transcribed and compiled into book form. In his preface to the 1998 Nepali edition, Sharma (2001) writes, "I had transcribed all the tapes in 1983, within six months of BP's demise".



The text made a significant impact on the Nepali academic world, opening the door to various interpretations of Nepali political and social history- a history that spanned the transition from Rana regime to the people's regime, and ultimately to the end of democracy. These fourteen years in Nepali history marks a fundamental epoch in the nation's politics, as the process of redefining its identity as a sovereign country within the international geo-political sphere took shape. The book was regarded as a valuable resource for gaining insight into Nepal's political history and the general psychology of the people during Koirala's political era. Koirala being the author of several highly acclaimed works, his writings had a profound impact on nepali literature. His short stories, rooted in social and cultural realities, included works like *Doshichasma* (2032 VS), in which he exposes the servile attitude of bureaucrats toward their superiors,

critiquing their lack of commitment to serving the public. Koirala's works reflect the social, cultural, political, psychological, and historical aspects of his characters and the worlds they inhabit. His later reflections, particularly in *Atmabrittanta*, were well-received by both the general public and literary critics, given his established literary reputation. The language he used carried significant socio-political meaning, framed within a memory of a specific space and time, which resonated deeply in the political history of contemporary Nepal. His style is non-structured, characterized by deeply personal narratives that are often interrupted by emotions and reminiscences of his political past. Koirala employs a first-person narrative, which resembles a stream-of-consciousness monologue. Ganesh Raj Sharma later shaped this into a more coherent first-person narrative, maintaining the essence of Koirala's reflections while making them more accessible to readers.

*Atmabrittanta* (1998/2001) is the text version of first-hand autobiographical audio recordings of Nepali Congress Party leader Bisheswor Prasad Koirala (commonly known as B. P. Koirala) conducted by Ganesh Raj Sharma during the final phase of B. P Koirala's life. These recordings were made in the aftermath of 1979 nationwide student protests, which

forced the monarchy to accept a referendum. The book provides valuable insights into Koirala's political ideology, personal life, and the socio-political context of Nepal during his time.

Since, it serves as an unofficial history of Nepal, covering the period from 1946 to 1962, as told by the head of the first democratic revolution and the government formed after it, *Atmabrittanta* raises important questions about the authenticity of the official history of Nepal. Professor Abhi Subedi observes that, “B.P. Koirala's orality has deconstructed some well-written, deeply entrenched beliefs about himself, some well-known political personalities and the time” (Subedi, 2001). Indeed, the text has opened the door to new theoretical approaches for analysing the political and social history of Nepal. Furthermore, writer and critic Kanak Mani Dixit (2001) highlights that, “*Atmabrittanta* contains a rich trove of material from one of two principal actors in Nepal's transition to the modern era (King Mahendra was the other one)”.

B.P. Koirala's reflections play an inspirational role for freedom-seeking individuals, especially when set against the backdrop of the oppressive colonial regime in neighbouring countries. It “serves as a manual for resisting hegemonic power blocs. It focuses on giving, developing, and encouraging self-agency” (Lamichhane, 2023).

Since the text is multi-layered, some scholars have examined the identification and body politics within its narrative. Mahendra Bhushal (2024) argues that the text's narrator, B.P. Koirala, “uses his body rhetoric to convey the message that he has a noble purpose of liberating people from the fetters of autocracy and monolithic regime”.

Likewise, Yoga Raj Lamichhane (2016) argues that B.P. Koirala's reflections represent an act of rewriting history, especially as he was politically marginalized by King Mahendra. Lamichhane primarily focuses on the section of *Atmabrittanta* (1998/2001) where Koirala recounts the sorrowful and adventurous incidents from his revolutionary days. During this time, as a conscious citizen, Koirala led the revolution against the Rana oligarchy to establish a democratic nation. He writes, “The narrated [mainstream] history overstates the common role of rulers and understates the suffering throbbing, and cry of the common people. In the name of countering the mainstream history, the latest inclusive edition of true history – *Atmabrittanta* – doesn't argue for the not-historical past”.

Last but not least, John Whelpton (2008) emphasizes that “both before and after the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1950–51, Nepali nationalism was an important factor in the struggle for political power, with all sides appealing to nationalist sentiments as a means of mobilizing support”. The text reflects the political and social upheavals of the period, during which the country was at the centre of significant change. However, no authors have yet suggested that the emergence of the nation-state concept lies at the heart of the text.

This paper sheds light on an unexplored aspect of B. P. Koirala's autobiography. It argues that *Atmabrittanta* (1998/2001) captures the process of the formation of the concept of the nation-state, which gradually replaced the notion of *muluk* a concept established by the Shah and Rana oligarchy that ruled Nepal until 1951. The paper explores the formation

of concept of nation in the text, particularly in the context of Nepal's political history, from the era of unification to the fall of the Rana regime. The narrative of the nation, as imposed by the ruling regime, was ingrained in the Nepali people's consciousness prior to 1951. According to this narrative, the country was the personal property of the Shah Kings and the Ranas. This paper argues that B.P. Koirala's auto-biography presents a pivotal shift in the Nepali people's consciousness, particularly, in relation to the old regimes' narrative about the concept of the country. By analyzing the text, this paper seeks to explore how the concept of nation evolved within the broader framework of Nepal's political history.

The objective of this research is to explore the concept of the nation in B.P. Koirala's autobiography *Atmabrittanta*. The paper also aims to highlight the shifts in the narrative of the concept of a country, from being the personal property of a ruler to becoming a shared geography of people. The paper is significant for those interested in Nepal's political and social history, as it provides insight into the stages leading to the establishment of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. The paper sheds light on the ongoing transitional phase of consolidating the concept of the republic among the people, many of whom once believed the motherland was the property of the ruler and some still hold that belief today.

The article is limited to analysing *Atmabrittanta* in light of the modern theory of a nation.

To contextualize critical analysis of the text, which is a recorded reflection of B.P. Koirala, the paper follows Rishikesh Shaha's (2001) approach to dividing the history of Nepal into distinct periods: the early Shah period (1769-1846), the Rana period (1846-1951), a transitional period from 1951 to 1962, the Panchayat period (1962-1990), the Democratic Constitutional Monarchy (1990-2006) and the Federal Republic of Nepal (2006-present). However, when discussing the concept of nation, the paper primarily utilizes historical source materials from A.D. 1769 to A.D. 1962.

### Methodology

This qualitative study applies Richard Burghart's modern concept of the nation as a theoretical framework and follows the seventh edition of APA style for references and in-text citation. The study employs textual analysis as its primary research method. It critically analyses *Atmabrittanta* based on Richard Burghart's concept of nation-states, which he defines as "a form of government that is seen to be an expression of the will or character of culturally unique people and whose political boundaries are delimited with reference to the territorial distribution of people" (Burghart, 2008).

In the textual analysis, the paper focuses on the section of *Atmabrittanta* where B.P. Koirala expresses his patriotic thought about the land, which was considered *muluk* by the Rana regime (1846-1951). To support this analysis, the research relies on secondary sources related to B. P. Koirala's life, his literary and political works, and historical texts that reflect the political ideology of the Rana oligarchic regime. Additionally, the paper incorporates texts that are essential for defining the theoretical concept used as the analytical framework.

### Discussion and Analysis

Nepal had been a monarchic and feudal state ruled by kings until 1846 when Junga Bahadur Rana took control of the ruling power. With his rise, the country transitioned into a monarchic, feudal, and oligarchic state, with the land considered a *muluk* by the rulers until 1951. During this time, the people regarded the land as belonging to the rulers and their families. The entire country's land was more of a personal possession that they could be given as *birta* or sold, rather than a public resource where citizens could claim rights to cultivation. The inhabitants were seen as mere tillers, making a living off the land, but sharing the benefits with the owners. These working hands, or *raiti*, were not considered citizens in the modern sense; they were instead labourers serving the rulers, with no rights to participate in state affairs. The king or the Rana ruler, "In the administration of his possessions he saw himself as a landlord (malik) who classified exhaustively and exclusively his tracts of land according to tenurial categories and the assigned, bestowed, licensed, or auctioned the rights and duties over the tracts of land to his subjects" (Burghart, 2008). The concept of *muluk*, which was initially constructed by the Shah Kings of Gorkha, persisted until the end of the Rana regime. As Richard Burghart (2008) outlines, "At the turn of the Nineteenth century the Gorkha rulers referred to their territorial domain in terms of a Persian loanword meaning possession (*muluk*), or more precisely 'the entire possessions of the King of Gorkha' (Gorkha raj bhar muluk)".

Until 1951, Nepal did not exist as a nation-state in the sense that could accommodate the internationally accepted idea of a nation. The government during the Rana regime, as depicted in *Atmabrittanta* (1998/2001), was not formed by the will of the people, nor did it express their unique cultural character. The people were not allowed to participate in the formation of the government. Instead, those who attempted to remind the regime of the concept of a nation where citizens have a role were exiled, as was B. P. Koirala's father. Until 1951, Nepal did not exist as a nation-state in a way that could accommodate the internationally accepted concept of a nation. The government during the Rana regime, as depicted in *Atmabrittanta* (1998/2011), was not formed by the will of the people, nor did it reflect their unique cultural identity.

B.P. Koirala's recollection of his father's conversation with the Indian man—whose son had died fighting against the British colonialism—reflects a deep psychological connection with the desire to free Nepal and its people from Rana regime's *muluk*. This conversation illustrates B. P.'s growing realization that without the active participation of its people, a country cannot truly be considered a nation, but rather a *muluk*, as in the case of the Rana regime. In the Rana system, the government was formed exclusively by the ruling oligarchy to serve their own interests, without any regard for or response to the living conditions and welfare of the general populace. B.P. Koirala's recollection of his father's conversation with the Indian man—whose son had died fighting against British colonialism—reflects a deep psychological connection with the desire to free Nepal and its people from the Rana regime's *muluk*. This conversation illustrates B.P.'s growing



realization that without the active participation of its people, a country cannot truly be considered a nation, but rather a *muluk*, as in the case of the Rana regime. In the Rana system, the government was formed exclusively by the ruling oligarchy to serve their own interests, without any regard for or response to the living conditions and welfare of the general populace. As Mary Slusser (1998) points out, “The absolute power was vested within the Rana oligarchy, and Nepal was administered as their private estate. Sealed off from the outside world by Rana command to protect Rana interests, Nepal was bypassed by modernizing currents”. This reinforces the idea that under the Rana regime, the country operated as the private property of the ruling elite, keeping the people isolated from any political participation or modernization.

B. P.'s father, witnessing the country slipping into darkness under the oppressive *muluk* system, planted the seed of nationhood in the hearts of his sons. This idea was one that would inspire them to fight against the Rana regime, which stifled the people's ability to build and shape their own nation. Under the Rana administration, even those who worked within the system were essentially expected to wait for orders from above. They had no role in decision-making or governance; their purpose was solely to carry out the master's will, with no autonomy or participation in the process. For them the nation meant a governmental administration and that meant a man in the throne. That's why to follow the king's order blindly was to be an exemplar of an obedient citizen.

Under the Rana regime, people were not permitted to voice dissent or critique the actions of the oligarchy. The very idea of expressing opinions against the government was considered treasonous. As Shah (2001) points out, “It was clearly laid down that anything said or written that might adversely reflect on the interest of the regime would be treated as a punishable offence in law and harsh punishment from rigorous imprisonment to death sentence was prescribed for those who were found guilty of violating the rules framed to regulate the working of the constitution”.

Under the oppressive regime, the people endured not only political and economic subjugation but also extreme social injustice, such as slavery and bonded labour. It is obvious that national feeling in populace was almost eradicated by the harsh and savage treatment of the rulers. We can gather one example among many from B. P.'s recollection. He says, “My father was also very keen that the *kamara* system of slavery, very prevalent in Nepal back then, be ended.... It seemed to be their biggest sadness was that, while they looked after us, they did not have a family life of their own” (Koirala, 1998/2001). Although, slavery was abolished by Rana government, it was more of a death penalty than freedom for the slaves. They were moved to the place where no human could survive because of malaria and wild-beasts. In Timothy Whyte's (1998) account, “Amlekhgunj, as the town is known, is said to be the settlement place of slaves freed at abolition in 1925. History books use Amlekhgunj, as a symbol of modernization and progress. In practice, however, few slaves settled there and none of their descendants remain. The received history is thus more about ruler's ideology than the experiences of freed slaves”.

The national income served Rana family's personal interests which were lavish and luxurious. In contrast to their extravagant living, the people were suffering in tatters, working day in, day out for a hand-to-mouth existence. Deeply touched by the suffering of the people and angered by the irresponsible governance, B. P's father (Koirala, 1998/2001) wrote to Chandra Sumsher: "Sarkar, I am sending this parcel so that you can see the difference between your clothes and the public's clothes. The packet might smell when it is opened, so please have it unpacked at a distance". It was an attempt on the part of B. P's father to remind Chandra Sumsher of the people's condition and his duty towards them as the head of the nation, as the Rana claimed himself to be. The voluntary action of B.P.'s father shows that reminding the rulers the plight of their fellow citizens is the responsibility of an individual as a concerned citizen of a nation. To add to this point in B.P.'s words, "Father was very fond of freedom of expression. Every evening, we used to have debates, and some subject would have been chosen" (Koirala, 2001). The very family, in which different ideas were debated provides a picture of a nation where everybody's voice counts.

The text illustrates that national sentiment is often stronger among those living in exile, as shown in the narrative. While the people in their homeland, Nepal, were deprived of freedom of speech, those far from home discussed and wrote about the nation. B. P's poetry recitation at a school during his exile in India is a powerful example of his deep love and fervour for his motherland. Koirala (1998/2001) recites, "I vow to my country all earthly things above, / Entire and whole and perfect, service of my love". The concept of the nation was deeply rooted in the heart and mind of young B.P., who expressed his feeling despite the possible threat posed by the British imperial regime. Upon returning home from exile, he shared this very idea with the people of the country. He recalls, "That journey of ours to Kathmandu across the hills also gave us an opportunity to introduce our political party to the people. We were able to place our ideas before the locals. They used to come to us with yogurt straight from the wooden *thekis* as a form of greeting". The new seed of idea of having one's own nation and a sense of duty towards it was sown in the hearts and minds of the people who, until then, considered Nepal as king's private estate (*raja ko muluk*). People from one region could not travel freely to another region as citizens. If they did, it would be considered trespassing on private property and punishable. Rishikesh Shah (1975) writes that, "until 1951, even the people from the Tarai region of Nepal needed a permit from their own government to visit Kathmandu". The feudal attitude of the ruling Rana family obstructed the rise of the concept of nationhood among the people, while simultaneously paving the way for revolutionary forces to indoctrinate the idea of being a citizen of a nation. The Rana regime was in perpetual fear of the people's longing for a national identity. The regime worked tirelessly to prevent the people from recognizing their citizenship. "The orientation of the Ranas was towards furthering the fortunes of their family, not the country, and patriotism was even regarded suspiciously as a threat to their personal interests" (Bista, 1999).

This very orientation helped foster the revolutionary movement, driven by a desire for sovereign nation and national identity. On one hand, the people were swept up in the

global wave of nationalism following the post-world war era. On the other hand, the Ranas continued steering their family regime against the current. “They were unable to realize the significance of the new forces of nationalism, anti-imperialism and communism that were already at work in the post-war world” (Shaha, 2001). Despite the suggestions and advice from all quarters, the Ranas were uninterested in seeing Nepal as a nation. At one point, B.P. even went so far as to advise Rana Prime Minister Padma Shamser to allow the people participate in nation’s affair. He mentions, “I even wrote to him when he became [sic] assume the office, suggesting that he begin the process towards democracy by allowing people to engage in politics” (Koirala, 1998/2001). The Rana regime’s anti-nationalism encouraged people to listen to revolutionary leaders, who were spreading the idea of country as a nation, not as the Rana’s family property; the value of being a citizen, and the disgrace of being a *raiti*. The concept of nationhood and citizenship gradually took root in the hearts and minds of the people as the revolutionaries continued their movement. People began to listen to the revolutionaries, learning about the nation and the role it could offer to its citizens within society. B.P. recalls the moments when he was hiding in Kathmandu as a revolutionary leader: “One after another, people started coming to meet me. I began sharing my thoughts on responsible government. I emphasised the need to establish democracy through the active participation of the people and said that our goal was responsible governance” (1998/2001).

The idea that a nation is an entity formed by the will of the people grew stronger during the struggle movement led by B.P. and other fellow leaders. They were in the process of replacing the meaning of a *muluk*— the private possession of kings and Ranas—with the concept of the nation as a country, or *desh*. The revolutionary leaders worked tirelessly to awaken the sense of nationalism in the people, a sentiment that had been dormant for ages. Addressing the countrymen B.P. (1998/2001) defines: “The nation is not the accumulation of rivers big and small. It is the people. If the people disappear due to some magic, there will be no Nepal here”. In this definition, the countrymen find their identity as citizens. In this redefined territory of the people, nations were “assumed to be the permanent real categories of the social world: if they had not manifested themselves politically in earlier periods, this was only because they had been 'asleep', and the nationalist saw himself as, above all, an awakener” (Gellner, 1999). It is not an overstating to say that B.P. is an awakener, more than that, he is a definer of Nepal as a nation-state. The definition by B.P. in no way contradicts the internationally acclaimed definition of Ernest Renan (1998/2001), who says, “Man is a slave neither of his race, nor of his language, nor of his religion, nor of the course of the rivers, nor of the direction taken by mountain chains. A large aggregate of men, healthy in mind, and warm in heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation”.

To redefine the country as a nation-state was one thing that the revolution achieved, but to materialise it was other, and B.P. struggled hard after demolishing the concept of *muluk*. He recollects, “The large and powerful landowners were also angry with me. Landed gentry all over the country were feeling very insecure. As far as *birta* land was concerned, our plan was to abolish it completely. I was also thinking of land reform, and this was being



discussed among the public” (Koirala, 1998/2001). B.P. was trying to modify the concept of the nation by reforming the existing system established by the monarchy and the Rana regime. *Birta* and landed gentry were a part of remains of *muluk* which B.P. sought to abolish in order to activate the marginalized public into nation-building by providing them with land security. It was an attempt from B.P.'s part to modify the concept of nation among people. As Ernest Gellner (1999) considers, “the celebrated 'going to the people' was concerned more with the definition or modification or reestablishment of the 'true content' of the national culture than with its actual creation”. Although, B.P. could not complete his mission of land reform during his time in government, it was under his guidance that “... the term *mohiyani hak* (was brought) into use and (he) emphasised the need to protect tenant's rights” (Koirala, 1998/2001) that provided the farmers with a sense of ownership over the land they tilled.

Modifying the country as a nation-state within is not enough to strengthen its identity; the country must also establish its identity in the international geo-political sphere. *Atmabritnata* captures this major task of introducing Nepal as a sovereign nation-state internationally. The process of asserting the nation-state's identity to the outside world begins with B.P.'s team, with him as the head of the government, participating in the United Nations. It is important to note that, B.P. reflects, When a head of government visit, “the treatment he receives can be very significant. That was an important session of the General Assembly, and many heads of the governments were there, with me representing Nepal” (1998/2001). The other task was to maintain balance in Nepal's relationship with its neighbouring countries, particularly with India and China, when India presence as a neighbour was more dominant in nature. B.P. understood this dynamic fully. He worked to establish bilateral relations with neighbouring countries as well as with other nations around the world. One relationship B.P. considers important was “the friendship with China, which did away with the over-abundance of talk about India's dominance over Nepal's affairs” (1998/2001). Naturally, this relationship was not well received by India, which led to a cooling of attitudes toward B.P. He reflects, “The main reason for this chill towards me, I believe, was that I was engaged in developing an independent policy for Nepal” (Koirala, 1998/2001). The establishment of Nepal's image in the international geo-political arena as an independent and sovereign nation-state must have made India uncomfortable, as it would be politically difficult to assert dominance over a fully independent country.

In retrospect, it is meaningful to quote B.P.'s response to the court regarding how Nepal, as a geography, transformed from the personal property of the Ranas to a shared geography. In his explanation during the trial, in which he was charged with treason, he reminded the judges of the monarchy and the kings. He emphasized that the joint struggle of King, Tribhuvan, and the people against the Rana oligarchy freed the country from being the confined property of the Rana family and transformed it into a nation—a shared geography belonging to all the people. He reiterated the principle that the country, as a shared geography of people, emotionally attached and constitutionally responsible, was established in 1951 (2007 V.S.).

## Conclusion

In the discussion thus far, *Atmabrittanta* presents Nepal as an independent country, identifying with the concept of a nation in the international geopolitical sphere as a modern state. Richard Burghart (2008) notes, “The concept of the nation-state in the governmental discourse of Modern Nepal is identifiably European; that is to say it is an intercultural equivalent of the modern western concept and is intended by the Nepalese government to be recognised as such by its citizen and by the other states”. However, the concept of the nation as the shared land of the people was not equally anticipated by all citizens of the new democratic country, as society remained deeply divided along caste and economic lines. Only those with education could fully understand the change, while for the majority, the land was still perceived as the property of the ruler.

B.P. Koirala led the first government in Nepal’s history to be elected by the people after his party won the majority of votes in the General Election of 1959. For the first time since the unification of Nepal in 1769, the people participated in their nation’s affairs by electing representatives who would speak on their behalf and create legislation to govern the country. However, it was not easy for people who, under the hierarchical subjugation of the caste system, had been accustomed to serving the Ranas as masters and viewing themselves as tillers of the masters’ land, to accept such a sudden shift in identity. King Mahendra later exploited the people’s ingrained habit of viewing the ruler as a master rather than a leader.

Finally, B.P.’s *Atmabrittanta* portrays Nepal as a nation-state that embarked on a political journey, transitioning from a *muluk*—the private domain of the king and the Ranas—during the period of the country’s unification (1769) to a democratic nation (1951). B.P. Koirala’s later-life narrative effectively captures the evolution of the nation-state concept, illustrating the idea that *Rashtra* (nation) represents a sovereign, shared geography of people and communities to which they are bound both emotionally and legally. However, the text leaves ample room for further analysis. One potential avenue for analytical research could be exploring the origins of the political dynasties within the multiparty democracy of modern Nepal. Finally, B.P.’s *Atmabrittanta* portrays Nepal as a nation-state that embarked on a political journey, transitioning from a *muluk*—the private domain of the king and the Ranas—during the country’s unification (1769) to a democratic nation (1951). B.P. Koirala’s later-life narrative effectively captures the evolution of the nation-state concept, illustrating the idea that *Rashtra* (nation) represents a sovereign, shared geography of people and communities to which they are bound both emotionally and legally. However, the text leaves ample room for further analysis. One potential avenue for analytical research could be exploring the origins of the political dynasties within the multiparty democracy of modern Nepal.

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