

PRITHWINARAYAN SHAH  
IN THE LIGHT OF  
*DIBYA UPADESH*

*By*

L. F. STILLER, S.J.



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PRINTED AT THE CATHOLIC PRESS, RANCHI, BIHAR, INDIA

## PREFACE

WRITING a book of this sort on the Father of Nepal is indeed a bold move for a foreigner in Nepal. The pages of the history of Nepal already bear the mark of too many foreign misunderstandings and over-simplifications. While a graduate student at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, I was confronted at every turn with the perplexities caused by well-intentioned but, at times, erring foreign writers of our history.

It should be understood, then, from the very outset of this effort that I am most willing to be corrected where I err and that my aim in this work is simply to search for the historical truth. I say this at the very beginning of this book, because I think it is inevitable that the reader will find things in these few pages that will depart from accepted ideas and even traditions. This is not meant as an effort at achieving notoriety or a seeking of novelty. It is, I think, the natural result of the fact that I bring to this work a different background and different attitudes than those of many who are engaged in the work of research into the history of Nepal here in Kathmandu.

This difference in background and attitudes could lead to some useful insights, it seems to me, but at the same time this very difference is apt to be misleading. The idiom of Nepali history is not only the language of Nepal, it is the total fabric of custom and tradition that have evolved through the years. My twelve years and more of residence in Nepal have not persuaded me into thinking that I have acquired more than a few threads of that fabric.

Where I err, I hope my readers will be kind enough to attribute that error to my own inadequacy, rather than to any negligence on the part of those scholars with whom I have had the pleasure of working. Where at times I strike closer to the truth, I freely acknowledge — and gladly so — my indebtedness to the History Department of Tribhuvan University, where the material contained in this book was first accepted as a thesis.

I have elected to confine my study of Prithwinarayan Shah to the policies enunciated in his *Dibya Upadesh*, a document too little known and too little appreciated.

I have based my study on the edition of *Dibya Upadesh* edited by Yogi Narharinath, published in 2016 B.S. I propose to divide my study into three parts. The first will try to situate Prithwinarayan Shah historically. The second part will present my own translation of the document itself, with such notes as may be required to understand the general meaning of the text. In the third part I shall analyse and comment on the foreign policy and the internal policy of Prithwinarayan Shah as enunciated

in this document. As I conceive this, the analysis will require a systematic statement of these policies, followed by an attempt to trace them in the life of Prithwinarayan Shah, and, finally, an attempt at a critical appraisal of the policy in question.

A word should be said about the translation. I have deliberately tried to employ an English style that would compare with the style of the Nepali text. My reason for doing this was more than the simple employment of a stylistic device. It is my own conviction that this brings us closer to what Prithwinarayan Shah actually said, and therefore is a more faithful translation than would be possible if a more flowing and finished English style were used.

In transliterating names and words from the Nepali-Devanagari script, I have tried to reproduce the word as it is now pronounced in the country. Although Nepali employs the Devanagari script, pronunciations differ considerably in some instances from the Sanskrit pronunciations. In doing this, I have deliberately elected not to follow the standard diacritical markings for such words. Since this is a book written in Nepal for Nepalis, I felt that I owed to them this recognition that Nepali is a distinct and living language with its own characteristics, even though it employs an international script. Scholars from abroad, into whose hands this book might fall, will, I am sure, agree with the justice of this course of action.

In the course of this book I have found it necessary to be rather critical of some opinions of historians of Nepal. It should be said here that historical criticism is a searching for the truth. In no way does it reflect on the integrity and sincerity of the authors involved nor on their contribution to the sum total of our knowledge of the history of Nepal. In all cases I have tried to follow the very learned Latin dictum: "*Tanta auctoritas quanta probatio.*"—A man's authority is as good as the proof he offers.

To conclude this brief preface, I would like to thank publicly those who have been such a great source of encouragement and help to me in this study: Tulsi Ram Baidya, who suggested the initial research; Baburam Acharya, who with his staff greatly assisted in the translation and understanding of the *Dibya Uṣa-desh*; Ram Nath Khanal, who gave valuable time to checking the accuracy of certain parts of the translation; Fr. James Donnelly, S.J., who painstakingly prepared the text for the press; and, above all, to Dr. Hit Narayan Jha, whose patient and purposeful guidance made this book possible. Thanks are also due to Tribhuvan University for their permission to publish the results of my research.

Kathmandu, Nepal

June 28, 1968

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- Acharya *Nepalko Sankshipta Brittant*, Kathmandu; 2022 B.S.
- Bhandari *Nepalko Aitihāsik Bibechana*, Banaras; 2015 B.S.
- Chaudhuri *Anglo-Nepalese Relations*, Calcutta; 1960.
- Gyawali *Nepal Upatyakako Madhyahalin Itihas*, Kathmandu; 2019 B.S.
- Hamilton *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, Edinburgh, 1819.
- Kirkpatrick *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, London; 1811.
- Mahajan *British Rule in India and After*, Calcutta; 1958.
- Majumdar *An Advanced History of India*, Calcutta; 1963.
- Masani *Britain in India*, Calcutta; 1960.
- Narharinath *Dibya Upadesh*, Banaras; 2016 B.S.
- Pannikar *A Survey of Indian History*, Bombay; 1963.
- Regmi *Modern Nepal*, Calcutta; 1961.
- Sen *The Groundwork of Indian History*, Calcutta; 1951.
- Sharma *Nepalko Aitihāsik Ruprekha*, Banaras; 2008 B.S.
- Wright *History of Nepal*, Calcutta; 1958.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

ALTHOUGH Nepal is small in size, she is one of the oldest countries of the world and possesses a very bright record of philosophical, religious, poetic and artistic activities of her people. In all the ages, she has been the pure fountain of spiritual salvation to all the Hindus. Numerous books have been written in her praise. The inhabitants of this country have always endeavoured to keep vigil against the foreign tormentors of this holy land and thus have preserved her cultural heritage by all means.

The second half of the 18th century in Nepalese as well as Indian history is remarkable indeed. It was during this period that the British East India Company began to engage itself in making plans of strategy for the establishment of its hegemony over the land stretching from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. The internal condition of this land was favourable to the realization of this aim. Jealousies and intrigues were the order of the day, and corruption and inefficiency had sapped the vitality of all the States. Under such circumstances, not only the freedom of the people but also their rich culture was in great peril. Realizing the troubles ahead, Prithvinarayan Shah took upon himself the task of keeping the banner of freedom and cultural heritage high by unifying the minor States under his leadership. He exhorted the people to make sustained efforts to meet the danger any time. To make a correct assessment of the works of such a great personality is, in reality, greatly needed.

Possessing deep and wide knowledge of Nepalese history and her people, and having a genuine scientific approach, Sri Ludwig F. Stiller, on our advice, started working on Prithvinarayan Shah in the light of *Dibya Upadesh*. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to the pursuit of this subject, and I had the privilege of seeing him at his work from time to time.

Sri Stiller's work is divided into five chapters. In the first chapter, an attempt has been made to examine carefully the political condition of India and Nepal with special attention to the situation in North India, British manipulation in Oudh, and early contacts between the Company and Nepal. Factors responsible for the weakness of the Kathmandu Valley have been scientifically analysed here.

The second chapter deals with a short account of Prithvinarayan Shah's exploits and a "better evaluation of the document *Divya Upadesa*." Sri Stiller has discussed in this chapter the conquest of Kirtipur in some detail and has come to the conclusion that with the fall of the Kathmandu Valley

ended Prithwinarayan Shah's personal campaigning. The author feels that since then Prithwinarayan Shah entrusted himself to the task of consolidating his newly acquired vast territory.

A good translation of the *Divya Upadeśa* is the content of the third chapter. In the fourth chapter a very critical review of Prithwinarayan Shah's foreign policy has been made. It is convincingly suggested here that he followed a policy of negotiation for settling matters between Nepal and Tibet, which was being supported by China, and the Company. The author lays emphasis upon the fact that Prithwinarayan Shah was intelligent enough to understand clearly the intentions of the English and hence he pursued a policy of firm "opposition to their efforts to infiltrate Nepal."

Prithwinarayan Shah's internal organization of the government has been critically examined in the last chapter. There it is also stated that the King possessed a "real sense of justice." Even though the author has shown his great appreciation for Prithwinarayan Shah's ability as a general and his vigour and wisdom as an administrator, his eyes have not been dazzled by the brilliance of those great qualities. Very keen observer as he is, he has aptly pointed out the defects of Shah's policy, especially the trade policy. In the conclusion, however, he has befittingly remarked — "But when the accusations against Prithwinarayan Shah and his failures are placed together in one side of the scales and weighed against his achievements, the scales show clearly that he was a great man."

The work on the whole is good and may be said to bear evidence of the author's genuine research work. I have no doubt his painstaking and scholarly work will receive due appreciation from those who are interested in the study of the history of Nepal.

In the end, I sincerely thank Sri Stiller for having given me the privilege of writing this Introductory Note.

Department of Nepalese  
History, Culture and Archaeology  
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Chaitra 2, 2025

HIT NARAYAN JHA

## CHAPTER I

### THE SETTING

**P**RITHWINARAYAN SHAH stepped onto the stage of Nepali history at a time when the whole Indian subcontinent was in a ferment. The sap of the Mughul Empire had dried up, and the leaves were withering on the branches. Rot had set in, and there was no lack of those who were prepared to seize the advantages such a collapse presented. The Marathas in the west, the schemes of Haider Ali in the south, and, not least of all, the relentlessly growing influence of the British factory at Kalighat (Calcutta)<sup>1</sup>, all were more than sufficient to shred the peace of the land. If, in addition to these, one were to take into consideration the efforts of individual petty rulers to carve out of the dying empire a niche for themselves, a picture of genuine confusion is the result. This was the situation in India at the time when Prithwinarayan Shah entered into Nepali history.

In Nepal things were hardly different. To the west of the Kathmandu Valley, nestled in tiny valleys formed by the great ridges of the high Himalayas and the lesser wrinkles thrown up in the earth's crust by the inner Himalayas, lay two score and more of petty kingdoms, dividing the land and the loyalties of the peoples of what is now modern Nepal. In the Karnali region, the kingdoms were known under the collective title of the *Baisi Rajas*. Of these we know little, practically nothing beyond the title. The kingdoms in the Gandaki area, the *Chaubisi Rajas*, are a little better known. But any attempt to demarcate these principalities will prove, at the present, a task doomed to frustration. A few facts can be sketched of several of these. The rest lies in the darkness of the past — a darkness, one might add, that has until the present stubbornly refused to yield to the interest and reasearch of historians.

The situation in Kathmandu Valley is somewhat better. A great deal is known of this area and of the political evolution of the kingdoms that were there at the time of Prithwinarayan Shah. It would be unpardonably rash to assert that the history of this area is an open book. It is far from that. Many an obscure point remains to be clarified. But a great deal of hard work has been done in this field, and the results are encouraging.

The plan of this first chapter will be to sketch out in more detail the three divisions mentioned above: the situation in North India, the situation in the *Chaubisi* and *Baisi* areas, and

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1. Masani, p. 11.

that inside Kathmandu Valley at the time of Prithwinarayan Shah. The reader is encouraged to make liberal use of the various tables supplied as an appendix to this chapter. These should prove helpful in guiding one through the various intricacies of the history of these sections at this time.

## A. THE SITUATION IN NORTH INDIA

### 1. Background

Early efforts by the East India Company to establish themselves in the north of India were marked by a certain degree of success. The factory in Bengal, established in 1651 at Hugli by Mr. Bridgeman, reached a certain level of prominence under Job Charnock. But the English were foolish enough to quarrel with Aurangzeb, and the results were nearly disastrous. This difficulty with Aurangzeb was not an accident. It was the direct result of a policy set by the court of directors in 1687, a policy communicated by letter to the chief of trade in Madras. This policy was summed up by Sir Joshiah Child, governor of the East India Company, in a letter to Fort William on December 12, 1687, in which he says: "That which we promise ourselves in a most especial manner from our new President and Council is that they will establish such a Politie of civil and military power, and create and secure such a large revenue to maintain both at that place, as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded, sure English Dominion in India for all time to come."<sup>2</sup>

This decision to establish themselves firmly, plus the harassing circumstances of raids, petty taxation, impositions by local officials, etc., led the servants of the Company to take action that was firm, but decidedly impolitic. The English, goaded on by these very harassments, had sacked Hugli and stormed the Mughul fortifications in Belasore and Hijli in 1686.<sup>3</sup> They had gravely misjudged the power of the Mughuls and were forthwith driven out of Hugli and down the river to a fever-stricken island. Negotiations by Job Charnock gained them a momentary respite, but a second English attempt to secure by force the position they wanted ended in complete failure. They were forced once more to negotiate, and they were permitted, on the basis of these negotiations, to begin anew at Sutanuti. The establishment of a "firm politie of civil and military power" would have to await more favourable circumstances.

But the circumstances surrounding the factory at Sutanuti were in a process of change from the very inception of the factory. Time, patience, and work would do the rest. Almost immediately the Company's fortunes began to improve when *zamindari* rights over the three villages of Sutanuti, Kalikata,

2. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

3. *Majumdar*, p. 640.

and Govindapur were given in 1698. These *zamindari* rights were important because they gave to the Company in Bengal an official and legal share in the *administration* of a part of the Mughul empire. The Company's Bombay holdings were held on behalf of the Crown, with no Indian prince having jurisdiction there. At Madras its powers were based on the acquiescence of the Indian princes and its charter. But in Bengal the Company was accepted as a *part* of the government, a part, obviously, that could be expanded and exploited.

During the next forty years the expansion of the Company's trade and influence in Bengal was gradual and quiet. In 1717 the imperial *firman* granted to the Company the privilege of trading in Bengal free of all duties, subject to the payment of Rs. 3,000 per year; and they were also granted the permission to rent additional properties around Calcutta. These privileges, along with those granted to the Company in Madras, Hyderabad, and Bombay, formed the *Magna Charta* of the Company; and from that time onwards their expansion was assured.

### The Company Steps Forward

In 1740, Ali Vardi Khan, a Turk who had accepted service in Bengal in 1726 and later secured for himself the governorship of Bihar, became the nawab of Bengal. He was a strong ruler, virtually independent of Delhi. It was a firm rule with him that the foreign trading companies should never be permitted to fortify their factories. He was strong enough to enforce this rule, even when the English and French were nervously preparing for the Seven Years' War. His death in 1756 was the signal for the British to fortify, and they did just this. Siraj-ud-dhau-la, the grandson and successor of Ali Vardi Khan, protested vehemently against this action and ordered the fortifications destroyed. The British refused to comply. Adding insult to injury, they not only refused to turn over to Siraj-ud-dhau-la a rich merchant of Bengal, Krishna Das, whose surrender he demanded but also espoused the cause of Siraj-ud-dhau-la's rival, Shaukat Jang. Siraj-ud-dhau-la, showing a determination that the British had not expected, attacked and took Calcutta, destroying the fortifications that had been begun there. At this time there occurred the unfortunate incident known to history as the "Black Hole of Calcutta," which served as a rallying cry for the British forces under Clive and Watson, who easily re-took Calcutta. Further attempts of Siraj-ud-dhau-la were easily repulsed, and negotiations were begun. Siraj-ud-dhau-la restored the rights granted by the *firman* of 1717 and allowed the British to fortify Calcutta. But the damage had been done. Clive was determined to replace the nawab, and experience convinced him that it could be done.

A battle had to be fought to achieve this, but Clive insured the successful outcome of this battle by conspiracy. The conspiracy between Clive; Mir Jafar, the commander-in-chief of

Siraj-ud-dhaura's forces; Rai Durlab, the nawab's treasurer; and Jagat Seth, the richest banker in Bengal, completely undermined the nawab's position. The Battle of Plassey, so important in the history of the growth of the Company in Bengal and in India in general, was a puppet show in which the forces of the nawab collapsed absolutely when Mir Jafar, as arranged, fled from the field. Siraj-ud-dhaura himself fled, but was later captured and killed by Mir Jafar's son, Miran.

The details given here, sketchy as they are, have been given as a prelude to the very significant results of this battle. In addition to the obvious results in cash and authority that were transferred to the Company for its part in the battle, Plassey opened the eyes of the Company's council in Calcutta to the rich possibilities that could be theirs by manoeuvring in the fertile field of Mughul politics. There was money to be had merely by lending its support to one aspirant to the throne or to a subordinate position in preference to another. Concomitantly, each such transaction further weakened the Mughul rulers, introduced greater corruption into the government, and opened the door to British rule a little wider.

### Friction among Rulers

In a brief and disastrous interlude, Ali Gohour, later to be known as Shah Alam II, attacked Patna, where he was defeated by Clive. Mir Jafar, the nawab of Bengal, rewarded Clive for this defence of his territories with a personal *Jagir* to the south of Calcutta. In 1760 Shah Alam attacked again, and once more he was defeated. The emperor's finances were now all but exhausted, and he was forced to sue for mercy.

Mir Jafar, the nawab of Bengal, was deeply in debt, a poor administrator, and an open target for anyone who seriously aspired to the throne of Bengal. Mir Kasim<sup>4</sup> was such an aspirant. Heavy bribes paid to Vansittart, Holwell, and other members of the council, plus promises of additional land to the Company, were sufficient to gain his end. Vansittart informed Mir Jafar that Mir Kasim was now to be associated with the rule of Bengal, and Mir Jafar resigned with alacrity, retiring to Calcutta.

Though the situation between the nawab and the East India Company was obscure at this time, it was gradually emerging "that, while the nawab claimed to be an independent ruler, the English authorities in Bengal had been acting in a manner which was incompatible with that position. It was evident that sooner or later the matter must come to a head."<sup>5</sup>

The matter did come to a head very quickly, and the point on which the dispute hinged was the payment of transit dues or tolls. By imperial *firman* the English Company was exempt

4. This is the same Mir Kasim who attempted to reconquer Makwanpur from Prithwinarayan Shah. cf. below, p. 31.

5. Majumdar, p. 671.

from such payments. The private servants of the Company, however, insisted that they also enjoyed this privilege. Indeed, it was a source of some considerable profit to them to be able to trade for their personal benefit under such ideal conditions. That this was unfair to all other traders, including Indian traders, is obvious. Mir Kasim ordered that the private servants of the Company, trading in this private capacity, *were* subject to the tolls. The English protested. Mir Kasim then determined that *no one* would be subject to the tolls, in an effort to give equal advantage to his own traders. This the English would not accept. Finally, near the end of 1762, Vansittart travelled to Mir Kasim's capital at Monghyr and concluded a treaty with Mir Kasim, by which Vansittart agreed to surrender the rights of private servants of the Company to carry on trade. But, since this treaty was concluded without consultation with Calcutta, the treaty was flatly rejected.

Ellis, the chief of the English factory at Patna, violently asserted the rights of the Company to preferential treatment and even attempted to take the city of Patna by force. The attempt failed, but it was one more step towards war with Mir Kasim.

### Buxar Decides

On June 10, 1763, the English finally took the field against Mir Kasim. He suffered a steady series of reverses that drove him to the astonishing crime of killing in cold blood one hundred and fifty prisoners held in Patna, after which he left his own territories, going to Oudh.<sup>6</sup>

In Oudh, Mir Kasim, with a view to regaining Bengal, formed an alliance with Shah Alam of Delhi and the nawab vazir of Oudh, Shuja-ud-daula. Mir Kasim was to finance the expedition, paying eleven lakhs a month expenses, beginning from the time that Shuja-ud-daula's forces crossed the Ganges into enemy territory.<sup>7</sup> The battle between the Company's troops and Shuja-ud-daula was fought at Buxar on October 22, 1764. Shuja-ud-daula was routed and fled. The survivors of his army succeeded in escaping in boats along the Ganges, but the battle itself was a decisive victory for the English under their capable commander, Munro.

The importance of the events here outlined cannot be stressed sufficiently. The Battle of Plassey, as has already been seen, was no fair fight. Its outcome had been determined more by conspiracy than by strength. But the Battle of Buxar was another matter entirely. As Majumdar says: "The defeat of *Mir Kasim* cannot be explained away by any sudden and unexpected treachery — It was a straight fight between two rival claimants for supremacy, each of whom was fully alive to its possibilities

6. *Britannica*, Vol. XII, p. 166A.

7. Mahajan, p. 35.

and forewarned of its consequences.”<sup>8</sup> And the English won. To make matters worse, the former nawab of Bengal was one of the most astute men of the age, a man who brought to the battle the best policy he could contrive and an army fitted out and trained to the very limit of his resources. The shock-waves, then, of the Battle of Buxar were to have far-reaching repercussions.

## 2. British Manipulations in Oudh

Peace between Shuja-ud-daula, the nawab vazir of Oudh, and the British was concluded in 1765 by the Treaty of Allahabad. First, the emperor, Shah Alam II, was given an annuity of twenty-six lakhs of rupees a year and the two districts of Allahabad and Kora, in return for which the emperor bestowed on the Company the *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa in perpetuity, as well as a formal grant of the Northern Sarkars, which were already *de facto* under the control of the Company. Secondly, the nawab vazir, Shuja-ud-daula, had to pay an indemnity of fifty lakhs of rupees to the Company, in return for which he was allowed to remain in power. Thirdly, the nawab of Bengal was divested of his administrative responsibilities and granted a fixed pension.<sup>9</sup>

This treaty was the work of Clive, who had returned to Bengal as Governor earlier in the year. Also Clive's work was the system of dual government then inaugurated. The nawab of Bengal as viceroy of the emperor exercised two functions, the *nizamat*, concerned with executive government and criminal justice, and the *diwani*, concerned with revenue and civil justice. For all practical purposes, in February, 1765, Mir Jafar, who had replaced Mir Kasim as the nawab of Bengal, had conferred the *nizamat* on the Company; and in August, 1765, Shah Alam II had conferred the *diwani* on the Company by the treaty signed at Allahabad. The Company thus held the *nizamat* from the nawab and the *diwani* from the emperor. The Company was, then, in a position to exercise the full powers of government.

However, the servants of the Company did not directly assume their responsibilities as *diwan* or *nizam*. The nominal head of government was a deputy nawab, appointed by the nawab on the recommendation of the Company. A similar deputy was appointed to head the government in Bihar. For many years the whole administration was carried on by native servants. The only English supervision was the appointment of supervisors in districts, who were known as collectors. The difficulty arising from this type of government is evident. The British had the power, but admitted to no responsibility to afford good government. The native servants had the full care of the administration, but they had no real power. The result

8. Majumdar, p. 672.

9. Sen and Raychaudhuri, p. 311.



was large-scale corruption. A petition submitted to the Calcutta council by a group of Bengali zamindars is enlightening. "They (the English gentlemen) trade... in all kinds of grain, linen, and whatever other commodities are provided in the country. In order to purchase these articles they force their money on the *ryots* and having by these oppressive methods bought the goods at a low rate, they oblige the inhabitants and shopkeepers to take them at a high price, exceeding what is paid in the markets. They do not pay the customs due to the Circar... There is now scarce anything of worth left in the country."<sup>10</sup> The terrible Bengal famine and the systematic stripping it of its treasures were due in large part to the double anomaly of rule without power and power without responsibility.

### Hastings in Oudh

Clive was followed immediately by several minor personages in the office of governor, and only in 1772 did a man of importance and ability take charge of the fortunes of the East India Company in Bengal. Warren Hastings was appointed governor-general of Bengal in 1772. Two aspects of Warren Hastings' rule only will be discussed here: his Oudh policy and the Chait Singh affair. Much more could be discussed, but these two points should prove sufficient to provide the background for Nepal's relations with the East India Company.

The avowed purpose of the Company's Oudh policy was to provide a buffer state between the Company's territories and the marauding Marathas. This policy led Hastings to an unfortunate intervention in Oudh that did much to spread dissatisfaction with the Company in that area, a close neighbour of Nepal.

In 1770-71 the emperor of Delhi, Shah Alam II, had placed himself under the protection of the Marathas. In 1773, as a consequence, Hastings reclaimed from the emperor the two districts of Allahabad and Kora and returned them to Oudh. This was done in the Treaty of Benares in 1773. This treaty further provided for the maintenance in Oudh of a Company garrison, financed by an annual subsidy from the nawab vazir, and for a payment of fifty lakhs of rupees to the Company.<sup>11</sup>

The very presence of these troops in Oudh and the security they lent to the nawab vazir brought the British into the Ruhela War. For, in 1772, in the presence of Sir Robert Barker, a treaty for mutual defence against the Marathas was signed by the Ruhelas and the nawab vazir. The treaty provided "that if the Marathas invaded Ruhelkhand, the nawab of Oudh would expel them, for which the Ruhelas would pay him forty lakhs of rupees."<sup>12</sup> In 1773 the Marathas invaded Ruhelkhand and were repulsed by the nawab with the help of his British troops.

10. Quoted in Pannikar, p. 201.

11. Majumdar, p. 692.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 692.

Internal difficulties prevented the Marathas from further incursions. The nawab then demanded his forty lakhs of rupees, which were not forthcoming. On the basis of the Treaty of Benares, the nawab demanded, in 1774, the help of the Company to coerce payment. The results were foregone. With the aid of the British, the nawab invaded Ruhelkhand, defeated the Ruhelas in a decisive battle at Miranpur Katra, and their province was annexed to Oudh. The fact that the British had absolutely no interest in this affair and that by prosecuting it they had deprived some six million people of a government that they found highly satisfactory, replacing it by the corrupt government of Oudh, marks this as a dangerous and unhappy precedent.

The Chait Singh affair was evidence of even more arbitrary interference on the part of Hastings. Chait Singh had been a feudatory noble under Oudh. He had accepted the overlordship of the Company by a treaty in 1775, promising to pay them an annual tribute of twenty-two and a half lakhs of rupees. With the commencement of Anglo-French hostilities in 1778, Hastings demanded a further five lakhs as a war contribution. Further demands made on the raja were such that he found it impossible to comply. He provided as much as possible of the amount demanded, but Hastings was in no mood to accept anything less than he had proposed, and consequently imposed a fine of fifty lakhs of rupees on the raja. As Hastings said: "I was resolved to draw from his guilt the means of relief to the Company's distress. . . in a word I had determined to make him pay largely for his pardon."<sup>13</sup> To further his plan Hastings ordered the raja to be placed under arrest. The raja submitted quietly enough, but his soldiers, aghast at this treatment of their raja, rebelled. A number of English sepoy and three officers were killed. In consequence, Chait Singh was expelled from his territory, and it was conferred on his nephew, on payment of an annual tribute of forty lakhs, a considerable increase over the original twenty-two and a half lakhs.

The little factory in Sutanuti had indeed come a long way. The desire for trade and profit had slowly led to a quest for power that in itself depleted the coffers of the Company. And this depletion in turn led to political manoeuvrings and an avarice that prompted arbitrary interference, exactions, and fines. The result was utterly corrupt government and an increasingly impoverished peasantry.<sup>14</sup> This, then, is the East India Company with which Prithwinarayan Shah had contact.

Before moving on to describe the early contacts between the East India Company and Nepal, however, one thing must be pointed out. The aspect of the British rise to power that put Prithwinarayan Shah on his guard against them more than anything else was the rapidity with which they achieved their goal. In 1742-43, when Prithwinarayan Shah was just beginning to

13. *Ibid.*, p. 695.

14. Masani, p. 13.

pursue the Gorkha dream of the conquest of Kathmandu Valley, the Company was a negligible factor in the politics of India. By the time he had completed his conquest, the Company had almost complete control of the government of the whole of North India; and there was no reason to suspect that the tactics that had achieved this remarkable feat in such a short time would not be sufficient to extend their authority even wider. For a canny man who knew what conquest meant this must have been a very sobering realization. The long description of the Company's growth in power fits into our account of Prithwinarayan Shah precisely in this way. It forms the most vivid of backgrounds for the foreign policy he would eventually embody in his *Dibya Upadesh*.

### 3. Early Contacts Between the Company and Nepal

Three things seem to have influenced the impression of Nepal that was entertained by the Calcutta council. The fact that gold often came out of Nepal seems to have given the English the idea that there were gold mines in Nepal. That this gold was really coming out of Tibet into the hands of the Mallas as a result of coinage arrangements between the two countries seems to have been entirely unknown.

A second factor was the rich timber stands of the Nepal terai. This timber, as well as the tar that could be produced from it, was much in demand for ship repairs and was of a high quality. Though this was never exploited, it was certainly the subject of much correspondence between the factors in northern Bihar and the council.<sup>15</sup>

That the trade with Nepal was substantial is evidenced by the great quantities of rice exported by the Nepal terai into the northern regions of Bihar and the rich trade in cloth. The fact that the technical advantages of the industrial revolution had not yet made it possible for England to produce cheap cottons for the trade in India meant that her major cloth exports were still woollens. It is quite readily seen that there would be no great market for these in India. Nepal, however, was quite another thing. Any market survey would reveal Nepal as a rich potential market to be exploited, a point not overlooked by the traders of the Company and which was the third factor in the dealings between the Company and Nepal.

The Nepal with which the Company was concerned was the Nepal of the Mallas and the Sens, whom we shall discuss later. Prithwinarayan Shah was to them a hill prince with strong aspirations to conquest and one with whom contact was not especially attractive. The *status quo* that maintained in Nepal offered to the Company, or so it seemed, the best possibility for future development.

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15. Chaudhuri, p. 14.

But the *status quo* in Nepal was impossible to maintain. That the British elected to defend it put them in a position of disadvantage with Prithwinarayan Shah and his successors in power in Nepal. The Kinloch mission of 1767, full of hopes and doomed to failure, was the Company's first serious effort in Nepal. It must be discussed at greater length later, but first a brief survey of the Sen family in Nepal and of the situation in the Valley of Kathmandu at the time of Prithwinarayan Shah's conquest is essential.

## B. INSIDE NEPAL

### 1. The Sen Kings of the Chaubisi Rajas

As Bal Chandra Sharma says, "It is not possible to trace the royal families of the *Chaubisi Rajas*."<sup>16</sup> Some information is available in the chronicles on the rise of the Sen family, and Hamilton supplements this with interviews conducted at the time of his visit to Nepal in 1802-3 and later along the southern borders of Nepal.<sup>17</sup> Except where it is otherwise noted, this section will follow substantially what is found in Hamilton as well as Sharma's interpretation of the facts presented by Hamilton.

According to one chronicle of the Sen family, and this is far from definitely established, two nephews of Chitra Sen, the king of Chittaur, first entered the foothills of the Himalayas along with seven hundred soldiers. They took service with one Karma Singh, who ruled in the Bhabhar area west of the Gandaki. Since he was of low caste, it was relatively easy for the Sens, who were Ksyatriyas, to replace him. According to this chronicle Ajil Sen, one of these two brothers, was succeeded by Tulasen, Dala Bhanjan Sen, Gajapati Sen, Rudra Sen, and Mukunda Sen I.

There is a great deal of discrepancy in the chronicles on this whole line. For the purposes we have, however, this early phase of the Sen family's actual line of descent is not important. But with Mukunda Sen I things are much more definite and much more important. Baburam Acharya gives the dates for Mukunda Sen's rule as 1575-1610 B.S.<sup>18</sup> The exact extent of Mukunda Sen's territories is not known, but from the fact that the Mallas appealed to him for assistance against the Tibetans, it seems that he had assumed a position of great importance even in the early stages of his career.<sup>19</sup>

Mukunda Sen's youngest son, Lohangga, was a man of some considerable ambition. He extended the Sen territories to include the whole terai region in what is now the Morang district. That he was able to achieve this, even before he was admitted

16. Sharma, p. 198.

17. Hamilton, pp. 128-194.

18. Quoted in Sharma, p. 200. The period cited is *Bikram Sambat*.

19. Sharma, p. 200.

to a share in the control of the Sen state, was due not only to his own ability but to a timely alliance with the Kiratis, coupled with the death of the king of Bijayapur, Vijayanarayan, at the very time when Lohangga was in the area and was prepared to attack. But regardless of the circumstances that delivered Morang into Lohangga's hands, the fact remains that with Lohangga's conquests the kingdom of his father, Mukunda Sen I, had taken on significant proportions. In fact, were it not for Mukunda Sen's unwise decision to divide the kingdom among his sons, he might well have laid antecedent claim to the title of "Father of Modern Nepal," which was later won by Prithwinarayan Shah.

### Splintering the Sen Kingdom

But Mukunda Sen I did divide his kingdom. Mukunda Sen's eldest son, Manikya, was given Palpa. Binayak Sen received Butwal. Bhichang Sen received Tanahun. Lohangga Sen received the areas that he had conquered, based on the fortress capital of Makwanpur. Mukunda Sen's nephew, Ram Sen, was given Rising; and his grandson, Chandra Sen, was given Rajpur.

The kingdoms of Butwal and Palpa merged when the line of Manikya Sen died out. The new capital was set up at Tansen, making the newly formed kingdom of Palpa-Butwal one of the most powerful of the Gandaki area. Rising and Rajpur very soon were merged with the kingdom of Tanahun, after the failure of the ruling dynasties there. The Sen kingdoms of the Gandaki area then very quickly consolidated into two powerful kingdoms. The Kosi-Sens, however, tended to divide, making the history of that area far more confusing. However, since the Makwanpur section of this kingdom is the only part of the Kosi-Sen domains that is of immediate concern, the actual branches of the Sen family that should be considered are the Tanahun Sens, the Palpa Sens and the Makwanpur Sens.

When the Palpa line died out and the two kingdoms of Palpa and Butwal merged, Ambar Sen moved the capital of the combined kingdoms to Tansen. Ambar Sen was succeeded by Gandharva Sen, who defeated the Bajhang Magar kings with the help of the kings of Kanchi and Gulmi, thus acquiring for Palpa authority over a large part of the hills and the rich terai. Gandharva Sen was succeeded by Udaya Sen, who in his turn was succeeded by Mukunda Sen II. It should be noted that Mukunda Sen II's aunt was married to Narbhupal Shah, the king of Gorkha. Her name was Kaushalyavati. She became the mother of Prithwinarayan Shah, the future conqueror of Nepal.

Mukunda Sen II was succeeded by Mahadutta Sen, a contemporary of Prithwinarayan Shah's grandson, Rana Bahadur Shah. It was Mukunda Sen's son who paved the way for the Gorkha conquest of the western *rajyas* by assisting Damodar Pande in his conquest of the *Chaubisi Rajas*, betraying his allies and kinsmen, and receiving for his pains a very tiny share of the spoils.

The royal line of the Palpa-Butwal Sens came to an end with the death of the son of Mahadutta Sen, Prithwipal Sen, in Kathmandu. He was killed by order of Bhim Sen Thapa because he allegedly took part in a conspiracy that ended in the murder of the ex-king Rana Bahadur Shah. With his death, Palpa was added to the Gorkha possessions. It should be mentioned before leaving this branch of the family, however, that the Palpa Sens were very close friends of the nawab vazir of Oudh; and this perhaps more than anything else accounted for the very long resistance Palpa put up to the Gorkha forces of expansion.

Turning our attention to Tanahun, we find that within three generations after the division of Mukunda Sen's kingdom, the tiny principalities of Rajpur and Rising were joined to Tanahun. The ruling families of these principalities had died without leaving heirs, and so the authority over these districts was assumed by Tanahun. The links between this section of the Sen family and the Shah family of Gorkha were many. Digvijaya Sen, the first king to control Rising and Rajpur as well as Tanahun, gave his daughter Mallikavati to Birbhadra Shah, the eldest son of Prithwipati Shah, the king of Gorkha. The son born to her in Tanahun after the untimely death of her husband was Narbhupal Shah, the grandson of Prithwipati. Since the only other surviving son of Prithwipati was Chandrarup Shah, who had only one eye, Narbhupal was declared the heir and succeeded Prithwipati on the throne of Gorkha.

Digvijaya Sen left the kingdom of Tanahun to his son Kamrajdutta Sen. Kamrajdutta Sen gave his daughter Subadravati in marriage to Narbhupal Shah of Gorkha. And at this time relations between Tanahun and Gorkha seem to have been good. Tribikram Sen, however, who succeeded his father, Kamrajdutta Sen, on the throne of Tanahun did not get on well at all with Prithwinarayan Shah of Gorkha. Baburam Acharya describes an incident that illustrates the ill-will between them.<sup>20</sup>

It is not surprising in the light of this animosity that had sprung up between the kings of Gorkha and Tanahun that

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20. The following is a translation of the account of the incident as it occurs in Acharya, p. 17: "While Prithwinarayan Shah was staying at Bhaktapur, a woman whom he had kept at Nuwakot was stricken with tuberculosis; and, wishing to send her to Kasi to die, he sent her on the Deoghat road. At this time King Tribikram Sen was staying at Jogimara. He had the curtain of her palanquin opened and looked at the woman's face, then sent her on her way. When Prithwinarayan Shah heard of this, he was furious. Yet he concealed his anger and sent for Tribikram Sen through the nephew of Narbhupal Shah's guru, who stayed in Tribikram Sen's court. This man coaxed Tribikram Sen to come to Jyamiraghat on the Gorkha side of the Marsyandi River to consult with Prithwinarayan Shah on affairs of state. Soldiers who had been secretly stationed there seized Tribikram Sen and brought him to the Gorkha Durbar, where he was put in chains. Because of this affair, the kings of Kathmandu, Lamjung, Kaski, etc., were angry with Prithwinarayan Shah and opposed him. That the situation might not further deteriorate, Prithwinarayan Shah later released Tribikram Sen. After he was released, the chastened Tribikram Sen returned quietly to Tanahun."

Tanahun consistently joined forces with Lamjung in opposing Prithwinarayan Shah's plans. Throughout much of Prithwinarayan Shah's life, Tribikram Sen was on the throne of Tanahun; and Tribikram Sen was almost as fanatically opposed to Prithwinarayan Shah as were the kings of Lamjung.

Tribikram Sen was succeeded on the throne by his son, Kamaridutta Sen. Kamaridutta Sen, also, incurred Prithwinarayan Shah's displeasure and ended his life a suicide. When Prithwinarayan Shah and his brother Surpratap Shah had quarrelled, Surpratap Shah came to Tanahun and asked asylum of Kamaridutta Sen. Kamaridutta Sen allowed Surpratap to remain with him, and in February-March, 1772, Prithwinarayan Shah attacked Tanahun to give vent to his anger.

Harkumar Dutta Sen, who succeeded Kamaridutta Sen, was a man of an entirely different stripe. He was forced to accept a treaty with Prithwinarayan Shah, but, though defeated, he was not cowed. Later, when the Gorkha kazi Bhamsharaj Pande imprudently attacked the western Nuwakot at a time when his forces were insufficient for the task, and while he was deep in enemy territory, Harkumar Dutta Sen led a combined attack against him in which the Gorkha forces were badly mauled and forced to surrender. It was this defeat that halted Gorkhali ambitions in western Nepal until, in the time of Bahadur Shah's regency, Mahadutta Sen of Palpa unwisely betrayed the alliance and assisted Damodar Pande to overthrow many of the *Chaubisi Rajas*.

### **Makwanpur Divides Again**

Lohangga Sen, the youngest son of Mukunda Sen I, had inherited the Makwanpur kingdom, which included large areas of the eastern terai. It is to this region that we must now turn our attention. Lohangga was succeeded in turn by Raghav Sen and Harihar Sen. Harihar Sen, who added to his titles "Hindupati," was not a very strong man; and the agitation in his family over the succession caused him not only worry, but even forced him to suffer a period of confinement. At length, dissatisfied with his eldest sons, he divided the kingdom between his youngest son, Shuba Sen, and his newly born grandson, Indubidhata Sen. Both Shuba Sen and his nephew Indubidhata Sen were betrayed by their ministers to the nawab of Purniya, Isphandar Khan. Though they were initially successful in their struggle, they were eventually taken and sent as prisoners to the emperor in Delhi, where they suffered a loss of caste. However, Shuba Sen's two sons, Mahipati Sen and Manik Sen, were spirited away to protection in the Kirat district. Later they were able, with the help of Bidya Chandra Rai, to regain the thrones taken from their father and cousin. Manik Sen held the area to the west of the Kamala River, with his capital at Makwanpur. He was succeeded by his son Hemkarna Sen.

Hemkarna Sen, *Hindupati* of Makwanpur, married his daughter Indrakumari to the prince of Gorkha, Prithwinarayan Shah. The story of Prithwinarayan Shah's attempt to take the bride to his own home immediately after the wedding forms an important chapter in his life and will be treated both in the account of his life in the following chapter as well as in the *Dibya Upadesh*, which will be found in Chapter III.

Hemkarna Sen's son Dighbandan Sen succeeded to the throne of Makwanpur. And the Sen line of Makwanpur ends with the defeat of Dighbandan Sen at the hands of Prithwinarayan Shah in 1762. One of Dighbandan Sen's sons escaped to the territories of the East India Company, where he acquired as *birta* two villages.

Two things should stand out from this description of the Sen family. First, because of the bond of relationship between many of the more powerful kings of the *Chaubisi Rajas* there was a natural alliance against Prithwinarayan Shah when his plans threatened the balance of power or their well-being. Secondly, marriage alliances between the house of Gorkha and other powerful families of the *Chaubisi Rajas*, which were many, did not necessarily win the cooperation of the allied houses for Prithwinarayan Shah's plans.

The development of the Sen family in its various branches, and the many contacts between this family and the royal family of Gorkha, may make confusing reading. Once again the reader is urged to consult the tables given as an appendix to this chapter to sort out the tangle. The Palpa Sens will be found described in Table I and Table II, the Tanahun Sens in Table I and Table III, and the Makwanpur Sens in Table I and Table IV.

## 2. The Khan Family<sup>21</sup> of Lamjung and Gorkha

One of the aspects of the history of Gorkha and of Prithwinarayan Shah's long campaign that led to the conquest of Kathmandu Valley that must be considered now is the perpetual feud that existed between Gorkha and Lamjung.<sup>22</sup> Lamjung lay to the north-west of Gorkha at a distance roughly equal to three times the distance from Kathmandu to Bhadgaon. The two capitals were separated by the Chepe and the upper reaches of the Marsyandi River. Lamjung, since it was so close and also since it was always so hostile to Gorkha, played an important part in all of Prithwinarayan Shah's planning. What was the basis for this hostility?

### The Feud Begins

To explain this it will be necessary to go back some distance into the history of Lamjung. The people of Lamjung, finding themselves without a king, went to Kalmardan Shah, the king

21. Later this became Shah. Wright, p. 169.

22. Sharma, p. 209; also Regmi, p. 16.



of Kaski-Nuwakot,<sup>23</sup> who had seven sons,<sup>24</sup> and asked him to give them his son Kalu Shah as their king.<sup>25</sup> This Kalmardan agreed to do. But, whether by design or accident, Kalu Shah was killed while on a hunting trip with people of the Sekant tribe.<sup>26</sup> The people in shame once again approached Kalmardan Shah and explained what had happened. They asked a second time for one of his sons to be their king and succeeded in overcoming the king's well-founded objections.<sup>27</sup> This time they chose as their king the youngest son of Kalmardan Shah, Yasobam Shah.<sup>28</sup>

Yasobam Shah was succeeded on the throne of Lamjung by his eldest son, Narhari Shah.<sup>29</sup> Another son of Yasobam Shah, Drabya Shah, who was unwilling to remain at home in the shadow of his elder brother's rule, carried out a successful military campaign on the surrounding areas that culminated in his conquest of Gorkha. Drabya Shah then declared himself king of Gorkha.<sup>30</sup> Narhari Shah, whose troops and support had made the campaign possible, naturally insisted that the kingdom of Gorkha be added to the territories of Lamjung.<sup>31</sup> Drabya Shah was equally adamant that Gorkha was his and proceeded to rule it.<sup>32</sup> Drabya Shah, however, was too much of a realist to think that this could be done without adequate precautions. He acted quickly, seizing the high points that controlled the principal routes through the area.<sup>33</sup> Thanks to his mother's intervention — she demanded in the strongest terms imaginable that during her lifetime there be peace between the two brothers<sup>34</sup> — Drabya Shah had time to consolidate his position in Gorkha, so much so that inside its boundaries he was quite safe from any attack from his brother. After the death of their mother, however, Drabya Shah was lured to Lamjung. But though he felt obliged to go for religious reasons, he kept his wits about him and his eyes open; and when he realized that Narhari Shah had every intention of turning the occasion into a trap, he quietly slipped away and returned safely to Gorkha.<sup>35</sup> Thus was laid the foundation for the feud between Lamjung and Gorkha that was to last for generations.<sup>36</sup>

For some years Gorkha remained just another petty principality among the *Chaubisi Rajas*. It was Ram Shah who

23. Western Nuwakot, i.e. not the Nuwakot near the Valley.

24. Wright, p. 169.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

26. Regmi, p. 15.

27. Wright, p. 169.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

29. Sharma, p. 209.

30. Wright, p. 170.

31. Sharma, p. 209.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

35. Regmi, p. 16.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

succeeded in raising Gorkha to a position of some eminence among these princes.<sup>37</sup> During his reign he introduced sweeping reforms that extended well beyond the purely social to such practical aspects of life as weights and measures. The reforms were badly needed, and the simplicity they introduced impressed the other kingdoms.<sup>38</sup> When they, too, introduced these same measures, Gorkha's position of preeminence was guaranteed. We must not think of the *Chaubisi Rajas* as a confederation, nor must we imagine that Gorkha's new position was that of *primus inter pares*. It was just a matter of psychological fact that when the reforms introduced in this small kingdom were accepted by others a certain prestige was accorded to Gorkha. For the rest, Gorkha had to be ready to fight for and maintain with vigour all that was hers. Ram Shah ruled Gorkha in 1614.<sup>39</sup> He was succeeded by Dumbar Shah, Krishna Shah, and Rudra Shah.<sup>40</sup>

This fact of life among the *Chaubisi Rajas* was made abundantly clear some time later, during the reign of Prithwipati Shah of Gorkha, the grandfather of Prithwinarayan Shah.<sup>41</sup> Lamjung had encroached to a considerable extent on Prithwipati's territories. Prithwipati himself, for reasons best known to himself, did little or nothing about this, and the territories of Gorkha were, consequently, steadily shrinking.<sup>42</sup> Prithwipati's youngest son, an enterprising lad, however, conceived of a strategem that would undo the mischief and at considerable danger to himself proceeded to put it into effect. He feigned a quarrel with his own family and went over to Lamjung, abandoning forever, as he said, his home in Gorkha. He was received with suspicion at first, but when his sincerity seemed to be genuine, he was put in charge of the administration of that very area that had been taken from Gorkha. Evidently this was done on the theory that a man who had become so hostile to his own family would be the safest one to administer property taken from them. When he was well established in these territories, the young man merely sent word secretly to Gorkha and handed the land back to his father.<sup>43</sup> We can imagine that this act, bold and daring as it was, did little to improve the relations between Lamjung and Gorkha. In fact, Regmi mentions eleven engagements between Lamjung and Gorkha during a nine-year period of Prithwipati's reign.<sup>44</sup>

When Narbhupal Shah, Prithwinarayan Shah's father, was king of Gorkha and Ripumardan Shah was king of Lamjung,<sup>45</sup> there was another serious clash between the two kingdoms.<sup>46</sup>

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37. Sharma, p. 210; also Regmi, p. 17.

38. Sharma, pp. 210-11.

39. Regmi, p. 22.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

41. Sharma, p. 211; also Regmi, p. 22.

42. Sharma, p. 211.

43. Sharma, pp. 211-12; Regmi also mentions this.

44. Regmi, p. 23.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 24; also Sharma, p. 213.

46. Regmi, p. 24.

This is the background of the conflict between Lamjung and Gorkha. It was a situation calling for vigilance and preparedness, as can well be imagined. This is why Narbhupal Shah's queen Chandraprabhavati was so concerned about the affairs of state in Gorkha when Narbhupal Shah, after his defeat at Nuwakot in 1737, withdrew from all concern for government.<sup>47</sup> This situation also explains her eagerness to associate the young crown prince, Prithwinarayan Shah, in the affairs of the government as early as possible. It was necessary that Gorkha have in control someone well acquainted with government,<sup>48</sup> and if Prithwinarayan Shah were soon to succeed his father, as seemed likely, then it was imperative that he begin to learn the realities of rule in Gorkha. How apt a student he proved to be will be made apparent by the events of the following chapter.

### C. THE SITUATION IN KATHMANDU VALLEY BEFORE THE CONQUEST

The situation in the Valley can be explained briefly under three headings: the tension between the three kingdoms of the Valley, the anarchy that existed in Patan in the middle of the eighteenth century, and the fact that the *darbar* of Kathmandu was a house divided against itself. All three of these are separate strands of the same rope. Discussion of them will necessarily result in some distortion, but the general picture of confused and sporadic defence combined with internal intrigue and self-centred alliances should appear. This is the sole purpose of this section.

For almost 150 years, from the division of the kingdom of Nepal in 1482 until the time of Jagat Prakash Malla,<sup>49</sup> Bhadgaon had been more or less under the influence of Kathmandu.<sup>50</sup> Jagat Prakash Malla was the first to oppose this policy strongly,<sup>51</sup> but once the break was made, successive kings were determined to maintain it.<sup>52</sup> This made it almost impossible for Ranjit Malla to cooperate wholeheartedly with Jaya Prakash Malla of Kathmandu to stave off the Gorkhali attack on the Valley.<sup>53</sup> This also explains much of the friendship between Ranjit and the Gorkhali king. And, quite naturally, it was a cause of severe tension and suspicion between Ranjit Malla and Jaya Prakash Malla.<sup>54</sup>

Another cause of tension arose out of the very lucrative arrangement for the minting of Tibetan coins in Bhadgaon and Kathmandu. Ranjit Malla earned a lakh of rupees a year by minting Tibetan coins.<sup>55</sup> Patan and Kathmandu also shared

47. Sharma, p. 214; cf. also Gyawali, p. 199.

48. Regmi, p. 45; also Sharma, p. 214.

49. Jagat Prakash Malla ruled 1632-1680. Gyawali, pp. 100-11.

50. Gyawali, p. 111.

51. Ibid., p. 112.

52. Ibid., p. 112.

53. Ibid., p. 112.

54. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, p. 255.

55. Sharma, p. 152.

in this very profitable occupation.<sup>56</sup> As Surya Bikram Gyawali has pointed out, the towns in the Valley that constantly changed hands during this period were towns lying along the trade route to Tibet, a definite indication that the one who controlled this route controlled as well the major share in the Tibetan profits.<sup>57</sup>

These tensions were aggravated by Prithwinarayan Shah, who was anxious to keep the feud between Jaya Prakash and Ranjit Malla alive.<sup>58</sup> Since Ranjit Malla had a deep distrust of Jaya Prakash and his intentions in Bhadgaon,<sup>59</sup> he accepted all the help he could get from Prithwinarayan Shah.<sup>60</sup>

The second factor in the weakness of the Valley was the anarchy prevailing in Patan.<sup>61</sup> A group of Pradhans succeeded in establishing themselves as "king-makers," and were able to control the throne of Patan from the time of Rajya Prakash Malla to the last of the Patan Mallas, Tej Narsingh.<sup>62</sup> Since their motive for removing and establishing kings was personal gain,<sup>63</sup> the possibility of good government and effective defence against Prithwinarayan Shah was very slight. Just how slight that possibility was has been conclusively proved by history. These Pradhans were able to attain such power through the instability of the throne caused by a succession of kings who ruled for a very short term or who left the throne in the hands of infants, or who, as Rajya Prakash, spent more time in private affairs than in the business of government.<sup>64</sup> Eventually these Pradhans became so strong that even Jaya Prakash and Dal Mardan Shah were unable to hold the throne once the Pradhans had turned against them.<sup>65</sup>

The third factor to be considered in explaining the weakness of the Valley, and the last to be enumerated here, is the division within the Kathmandu *darbar*. It must be recalled here that in the time of Narbhupal Shah of Gorkha "most of the Magars deserted Gorkha to take refuge in Nepal."<sup>66</sup> Also, it must be kept in mind that Ratna Malla, the first king of Kathmandu after the division of the kingdom of Nepal by Yaksha Malla, had recruited an army of Khas Magars.<sup>67</sup> These Magars made a very definite faction at the Kathmandu *darbar*.<sup>68</sup> They strongly opposed Jaya Prakash Malla's succession.<sup>69</sup> This opposition prompted

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56. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

57. Gyawali, address to Tribhuvan University History Association, Annual History Association Function, June, 1966.

58. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, p. 251.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 251.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 251.

61. Gyawali, p. 187.

62. Sharma, p. 160.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

65. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, p. 363.

66. Regmi, p. 24.

67. Gyawali, p. 196.

68. Sharma, p. 173; also cf. Gyawali, p. 117.

69. Sharma, pp. 173-74.

them to champion Jaya Prakash Malla's younger brother Narendra Prakash<sup>70</sup> after Rajya Prakash had been removed from the kingdom of Kathmandu.<sup>71</sup> This in turn engendered suspicion of the loyalty of the hillmen in Jaya Prakash Malla and prompted him to enlist plainsmen in his army.<sup>72</sup> The situation was acerbated when Jaya Prakash Malla used these troops from the plains to kill Kasiram Thapa and other nobles after the defeat at Nuwakot.<sup>73</sup>

The aftermath of this killing of Kasiram Thapa was very unfortunate. It gave the friends of Kasiram an opportunity to plot more effectively against Jaya Prakash Malla, resulting in his overthrow and temporary exile.<sup>74</sup>

This intemperate killing of Kasiram Thapa also serves to illustrate the violent temper of Jaya Prakash Malla, a temper coupled with imprudence that led to the killing of two of the Pradhans of Patan and the public insult rendered to others.<sup>75</sup>

It seems, then, that Jaya Prakash Malla, who was the only one of the kings of the Valley to understand the threat posed by Prithwinarayan Shah, had just those defects of character that made it impossible for him to rally others around him.

Prithwinarayan Shah himself saw that the cities of the Valley were effete, and this softness undoubtedly contributed heavily to the inconstancy of purpose evidenced by the kings of the Valley in opposing him.

70. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II., p. 184.

71. Sharma, p. 174.

72. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, p. 184.

73. *Ibid.*, II, p. 188.

74. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 189-90.

75. *Ibid.*, II, p. 366.

TABLE 1 — DIVISION OF KINGDOM BY MUKUNDA SEN

<i>Rudra Sen</i> → <i>Mukunda Sen I</i> (1483-1518)                      (1518-1553)	— <i>Manikya</i> — Palpa cf. Table II  — <i>Binayak Sen</i> — Butwal cf. Table II  — <i>Bichang Sen</i> — Tanahun cf. Table III  — <i>Ram Sen</i> (nephew) — Rising cf. Table III  — <i>Lohangga Sen</i> — Makwanpur cf. Table IV  — <i>Chandra</i> (grandson) — Rajpur cf. Table III
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Table based on Hamilton and Sharma.

TABLE II — TANSEN (PALPA-BUTWAL) SENS

*Manikya Sen*  
Palpa

*Binayak Sen*  
Butwal

|  
*Jasu Sen*

|  
*Damodar Sen*

|  
*Bal Bhadra Sen*

|  
*Ambar Sen*

(In the time of Ambar Sen, Mukunda Sen's eldest son, Manikya Sen's line died out, and the kingdom of Palpa was joined to Butwal.)

joint capital moved to

→ Tansen ←

*Gandharva Sen*

(with the help of the kings of Kanchi and Gulmi defeated the Bajhang Magar kings, acquired authority over large part of the hills and terai)

|  
*Udaya Sen*

|  
*Mukunda Sen II*

(Narbhupal Shah married the aunt (*phupu*) of Mukunda Sen II, Kaushalyavati, the mother of Prithwinarayan Shah)

|  
*Mahadutta Sen*

(contemporary of Rana Bahadur Shah — on basis of old family ties, and with unpardonable greed as well, assisted Damodar Pande in conquest of Chaubisi Rajas)

|  
*Prithwipal Sen*

(called to Kathmandu for coronation of Girbhanayuddha Bikram Shah, imprisoned, and later freed — shortly after this, again recalled by Rana Bahadur Shah on pretext of marriage and again imprisoned — later killed as conspirator in death of Rana Bahadur Shah)

Table based on Hamilton and Sharma.

TABLE III — THE TANAHUN SENS

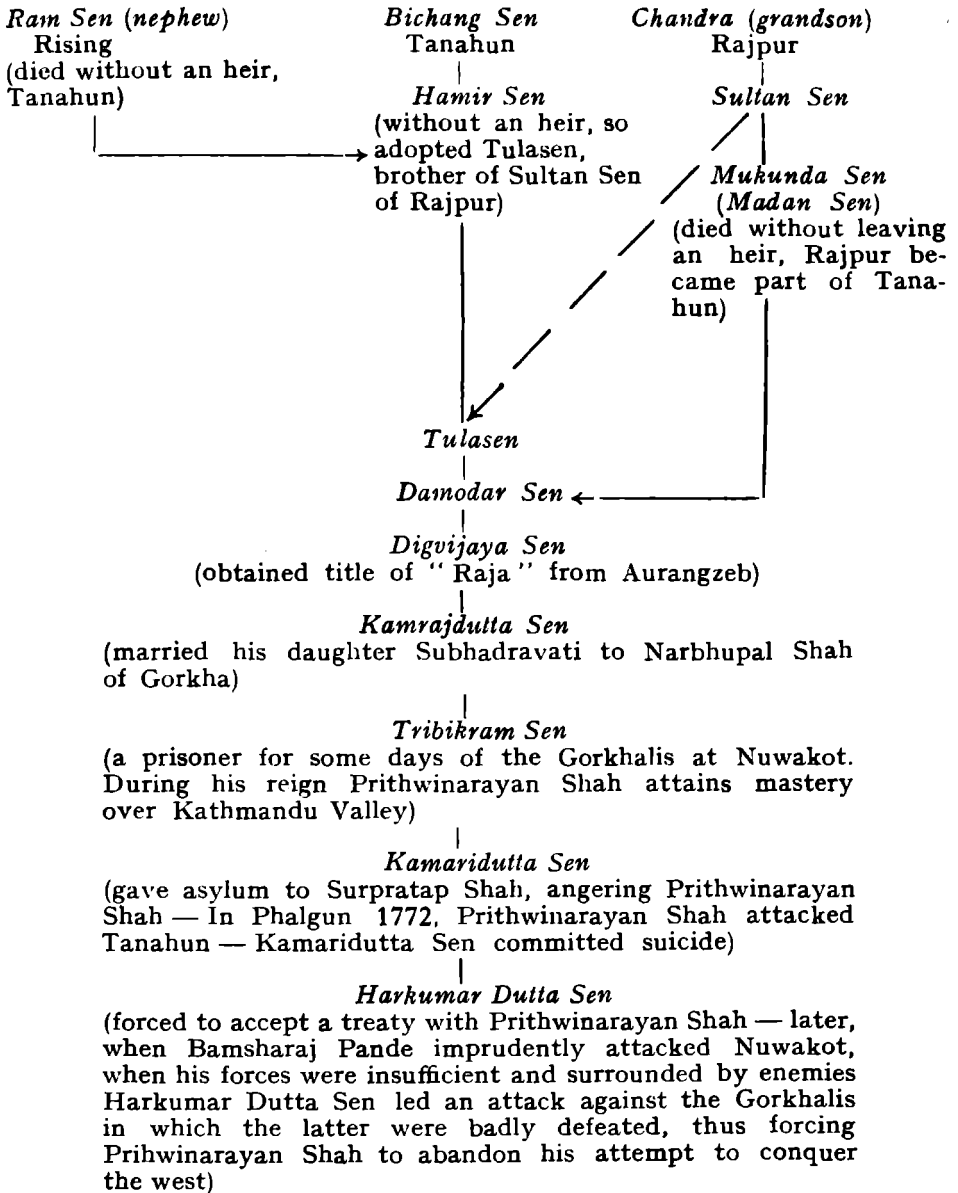
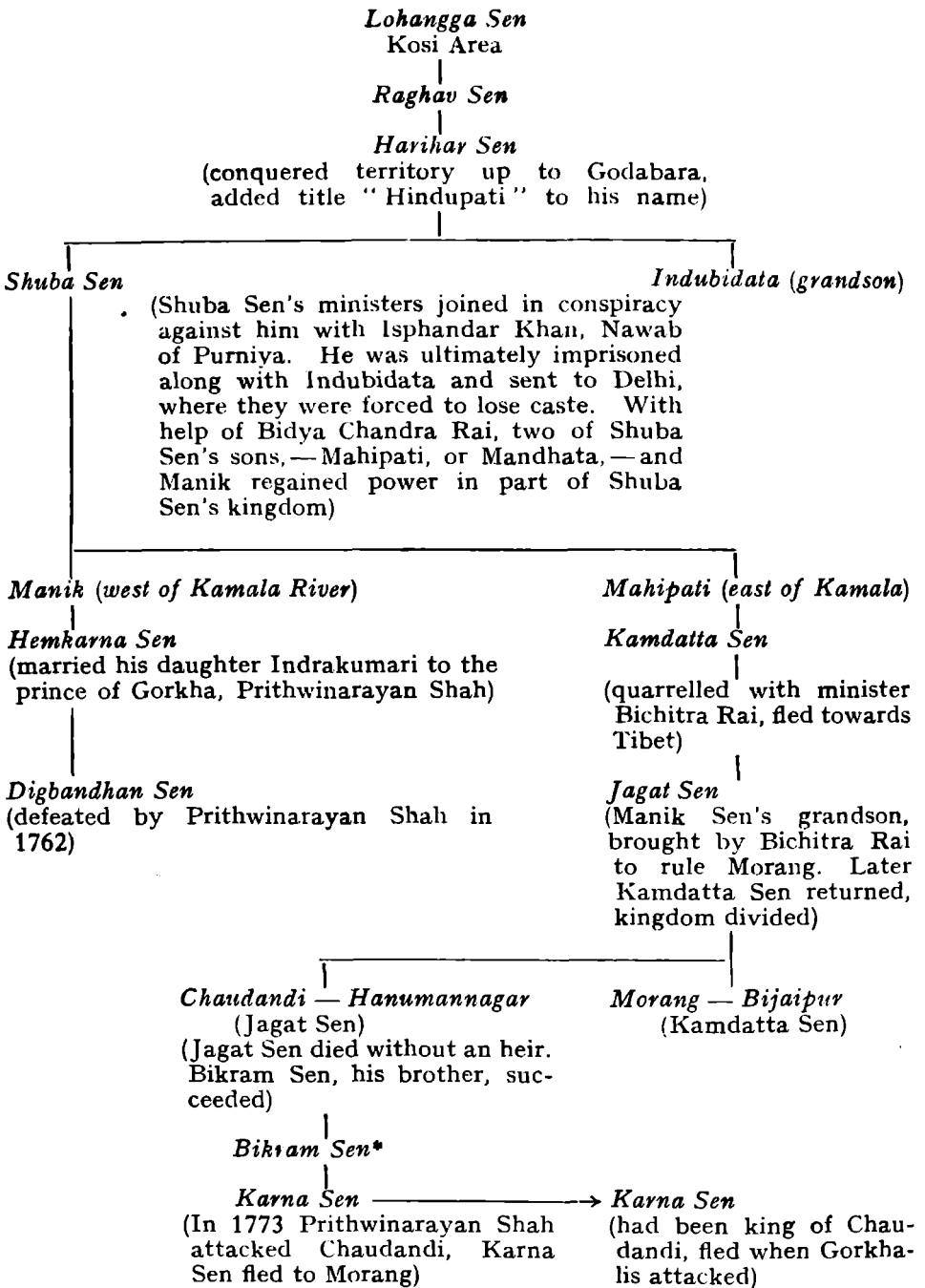


Table based on Hamilton and Sharma.

TABLE IV — THE MAKWANPUR SENS



\*Acharya says Jagat Sen was succeeded by his brother Mukunda Sen IV who was succeeded by his brother Tribikram Sen.

Table based on Hamilton and Sharma



TABLE V			
1800			
			3rd Mysore War 1790 Pitt's India Act 1784 2nd Mysore War 1780
1775			
		Shah Alam II (1759-1806)	
		George Washington (1732-1799)	
		Frederick II (1740-1786)	
			Regulating Act 1774
			1st Mysore War 1767 <i>Diwani</i> rights 1765 Battle of Buxar 1764
1750	Shah (1742-1775)		Plassey 1757 " Black Hole " 1756
	Hyder Ali 1721-1781		
	Jehandar (1702-1754)		
			Nadir Shah's expedition to North-West 1739
1725	Prithwinarayan		
			Imperial <i>Farmans</i> to Company 1717

## CHAPTER II

# PRITHWINARAYAN SHAH

**I**N the previous chapter the background of Prithwinarayan Shah's life was discussed in terms of the situation in North India, the situation in western Nepal among the *Chaubisi Rajas*, and, finally, the situation in Kathmandu Valley among the Malla kings of the Valley. It is now time to present a summary of Prithwinarayan Shah's life.

At the outset it must be understood that this chapter will make no pretensions to being a complete account of the life of Prithwinarayan Shah. That in itself would make a rather formidable book. What is aimed at in this chapter is merely sufficient facts from his life to make possible a better evaluation of the document *Dibya Upadesh*. Except where some treatment of Prithwinarayan Shah's internal and foreign policy is required for the sake of coherence in this treatment of his life, these matters will be relegated to subsequent chapters.

Prithwinarayan Shah was the son of Narbhupal Shah,<sup>1</sup> the king of Gorkha. His mother was Kausalyavati Devi, the second queen of Narbhupal Shah<sup>2</sup> and the daughter of the king of Palpa,<sup>3</sup> Gandharva Sen.<sup>4</sup> Narbhupal Shah's eldest queen, Chandraprabhavati, was childless,<sup>5</sup> but she it was who actually raised Prithwinarayan Shah and formed him.<sup>6</sup> After Narbhupal Shah's attempt to capture Nuwakot ended in failure, he lost all interest in the affairs of his kingdom,<sup>7</sup> as has been mentioned above.<sup>8</sup> His eldest queen, Chandraprabhavati, saw the danger to which Gorkha was thus exposed, with its king holding himself aloof from the affairs of state, and took the care of government into her own hands.<sup>9</sup> Not only this, but she also began to associate Prithwinarayan Shah in the problem of government. It was thus that Chandraprabhavati not only raised Prithwinarayan Shah as a boy, but first introduced him to the complex task of government.<sup>10</sup>

1. Sharma, p. 217.

2. Regmi, p. 41; also Acharya, *Sri Panch Baramaharajadhiraja Prithwinarayan Shahko Sankshipta Jivani*, geneological table, appended at conclusion of book.

3. Ibid., p. 41.

4. Sharma, p. 214.

5. Ibid., p. 214.

6. Ibid., p. 214.

7. Ibid., p. 215.

8. Cf. above, p. 20. 17

9. Sharma, p. 215.

10. Regmi, p. 45.

It is evident, then, that Chandraprabhavati had a profound influence on Prithwinarayan Shah, an influence which certainly exceeded that which his own mother exercised over him.

Though there is some disagreement among the authors about the actual date of Prithwinarayan Shah's birth, it seems fairly certain that he was born in January, 1723. It is true that Sharma gives the date as September 25, 1722,<sup>11</sup> but Regmi puts it in the second week of January, 1723;<sup>12</sup> Baburam Acharya places it on January 7, 1723,<sup>13</sup> Regmi and Bhandari both agree on the Nepali date Pausa 27, 1779 B.S.;<sup>14</sup> and Devi Prasad Bhandari also agrees with this date in his detailed analysis of the data.<sup>15</sup>

### Marriage and Ambition

In 1737 or 1738<sup>16</sup> Prithwinarayan Shah was married to the daughter of Hemkarna Sen, the king of Makwanpur. This was very shortly after Narbhupal Shah's defeat at Nuwakot,<sup>17</sup> and the marriage formed an integral part of the plan Narbhupal and his advisers had formed for the expansion of Gorkha at the expense of the kings of the Valley.<sup>18</sup> The *Dibya Upadesh* of Prithwinarayan Shah, as well as all the major histories of this period, testify to a considerable disagreement that arose between the Gorkhalis and the court of Makwanpur on the occasion of the wedding.<sup>19</sup> The Gorkhalis, in accord with their custom, intended to take the bride back to Gorkha with them. The Makwanpur party were equally determined to follow their own custom and keep the bride with them for some time. The joy of the occasion dissolved into heated and acrimonious argument, and Prithwinarayan Shah was compelled to return to Gorkha empty handed.<sup>20</sup>

Prithwinarayan Shah and his party returned to Gorkha by way of Kathmandu. The account of this in the *Dibya Upadesh* creates a problem in chronology. Historians agree that at some time Prithwinarayan Shah spent a period as the guest of Ranjit Malla, the king of Bhadgaon.<sup>21</sup> It has been assumed by most that this took place before his marriage, and Regmi goes so far as to date the visit as happening during the year 1736.<sup>22</sup> But

11. Sharma, p. 214.

12. Regmi, p. 94.

13. Acharya, *Sankshipta Jivani*, p. 96.

14. Bhandari, p. 176; also Regmi, p. 44.

15. Devi Prasad, "Narbhupal Shahko Samayaka Nischit Sambat ra Tithimitiharu," *Purnima*, I, No. 4, pp. 56ff.

16. Regmi, p. 46; also Sharma, p. 214.

17. Sharma, p. 214.

18. Regmi, p. 46.

19. *Dibya Upadesh*, p. 2.

20. Sharma, p. 215.

21. Regmi, p. 45.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

in his *Dibya Upadesh*<sup>23</sup> Prithwinarayan Shah's description of his return to Gorkha from Makwanpur after the above-mentioned disagreement indicates that he saw the kingdoms of the Valley then *for the first time*.<sup>24</sup> At least there seems to be no other way of interpreting the passage: "From Chandragiri's top I asked: Which is Nepal? They showed me, saying: That is Bhadgaon, that is Patan, and there lies Kathmandu."<sup>24</sup> However, despite the fact that it is difficult to date this visit, there is general unanimity that it took place and that it was a rather long one.

It is evident that such a visit would have given Prithwinarayan Shah an excellent chance to see at first hand the conditions in the Valley that have been described at the end of the previous chapter.<sup>25</sup> This alone, for a man of Prithwinarayan Shah's temperament, would have been sufficient invitation to plan an attack on these kingdoms, so wealthy in comparison with Gorkha. The fact that his father, Narbhupal Shah, had conceived such a plan before him<sup>26</sup> would surely have prompted him to take the proper measures in this direction.

### Prithwinarayan Shah Takes Control

In 1739 Prithwinarayan Shah was appointed co-regent along with Chandraprabhavati and began to acquire practical experience in the affairs of government.<sup>27</sup> Three years later, in 1742, Prithwinarayan Shah succeeded to the thorne of Gorkha.<sup>28</sup> Once he became king one of his first acts was to carry into execution the plan he had been nourishing for the conquest of Kathmandu Valley, beginning with an attack on Nuwakot.<sup>29</sup> This attack, however, was neither well planned nor wisely prepared.<sup>30</sup> As a result the Gorkhali troops were overwhelmed<sup>31</sup> by the troops sent by Jaya Prakash Malla to turn back the invading Gorkhalis.<sup>32</sup>

Defeat must have been bitter for the young king of Gorkha. But there is a resilience in youth that is not found in the aged, and Prithwinarayan Shah took this defeat only as a momentary setback to his plans. His goal remained the same, the conquest of the Valley.

It was at this time that Prithwinarayan Shah went on a pilgrimage to Banaras.<sup>33</sup> It was an important pilgrimage, and the

23. *Dibya Upadesh*, p. 3.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

25. Cf. above, Chapter I.

26. Gyawali, p. 196.

27. Regmi, p. 46.

28. Sharma, p. 215; also Gyawali, p. 197; Regmi, p. 47; and Bhandari, p. 170.

29. Regmi, p. 47; also Sharma, p. 215 and Bhandari, pp. 170-72.

30. Regmi, pp. 47-48.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

32. Gyawali, p. 197.

33. Described at length in *Prithwinarayan Shahko Jivani*, published by Bir Library. There is no indication of the source of this document.

information he gathered there in addition to the experience he acquired along the way were to leave a lasting impression on his mind. The pilgrimage, of course, was not for purely religious purposes. While there he married the daughter of Abhiman Singh,<sup>34</sup> which turned out to be an important alliance, because Abhiman Singh succeeded in helping Prithwiranayan Shah to acquire some rifles<sup>35</sup> to assist him in the fulfilment of his plans.<sup>36</sup> Prithwinarayan Shah's return journey took him through a number of the small principalities that dotted central Nepal.<sup>37</sup> It was a leisurely journey, allowing for much conversation with kings and princes along the way. The accounts of these meetings show his firm determination to conquer not only Nuwakot, but the Valley of Nepal as well.<sup>38</sup>

The *Dibya Upadesh*<sup>39</sup> as well as the other sources speak at this juncture of Prithwinarayan Shah's concluding of a treaty with the *Chaubisi Rajas*, and with Lamjung in particular. The *importance* of this will not be lost on the reader in view of what has been said in the previous chapter about the hostility that existed between Lamjung and Gorkha on the one hand and the proximity and position of Lamjung and Gorkha on the other. It was essential to the success of Prithwinarayan Shah's plans that when he moved towards Kathmandu Valley in the east the situation on his western borders be secure. Kalu Pande proved himself an astute diplomat in working out these various treaties, and this recommended him above all others for the post of kazi<sup>40</sup> in Prithwinarayan Shah's government.<sup>41</sup> It was a popular choice and one that Prithwinarayan Shah would never regret. Kalu Pande served in this capacity for almost twenty years, until his death at Kirtipur in 1757<sup>42</sup> ended a brilliant and faithful career.

## Nuwakot Revisited

With these preparations completed, Prithwinarayan Shah was ready to make his second attempt to capture Nuwakot, the third Gorkhali attempt to take the fort in the space of seven years.<sup>43</sup> In his *Dibya Upadesh* Prithwinarayan Shah gives us a telling description of the method he used to make his

34. The actual date of this marriage is not clear.

35. Sharma, p. 216.

36. Satish Kumar in his *Rana Polity in Nepal*, p. 9, claims that Prithwinarayan Shah was the first to use rifles in Nepal.

37. *Prithwinarayan Shahko Jivani*, pp. 16-20.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-20.

39. *Dibya Upadesh*, pp. 6-7.

40. *Kazi*: at the time of Prithwinarayan Shah the leading member of government outside the royal family. He performed most of the functions of a chief minister and often led the army. Several kazis might be appointed for this latter function.

41. *Dibya Upadesh*, 7; also Bhandari, p. 173; Regmi, p. 49; and Sharma, p. 217.

42. Regmi, p. 84.

43. Gyawali, p. 197.

approach on the fort without arousing the suspicions of Jaya Prakash Malla's garrison.<sup>44</sup> The attack was carried off successfully this time, and the important site of Nuwakot fell into Prithwinarayan Shah's hands in 1744.<sup>45</sup> An inspection of a map of Nepal will reveal the importance of this fort. It was not only the gateway to the Valley from the west, but also it dominated one of the two main arteries of the Nepal-Tibet trade. This trade, it will be remembered, was the major source of income for the kings of the Valley,<sup>46</sup> and on it the economy of the Valley rested. Thus with the conquest of Nuwakot Prithwinarayan Shah not only opened the way for attacks on the Valley itself, but also cut off an important source of income for the Valley's economy. It was a crucial victory.<sup>47</sup>

The importance of this victory is further heightened by the immediate steps undertaken by Jaya Prakash to recapture Nuwakot. This attack, led for Jaya Prakash by Kasiram Thapa, was repelled, and the Gorkhals could call themselves masters of the strategic fort of Nuwakot.

Connected with this battle for Nuwakot, however, there are two incidents that can at best be described as unfortunate. One of these was on the Gorkhali side, and the other lay on Jaya Prakash Malla's side. They interrupt our narrative slightly, but they must be mentioned because of the light they shed on the incidents that follow. The first of these was the treatment meted out to the captured Jayant Rana, the commander of the Malla troops at Nuwakot.<sup>48</sup> Jayant Rana had been in the service of Gorkha, but had left Gorkha in disrepute after Narbhupal Shah's defeat at Nuwakot. He then took up service with Jaya Prakash Malla and was, in the course of time, assigned as commander of Nuwakot. Prithwinarayan Shah had tried to induce him to return to the Gorkhali service, but Jayant Rana insisted that he must remain "true to his salt" and refused.<sup>49</sup> After the victory Prithwinarayan Shah ordered him to be flayed alive. Were this act allowed to remain in its own context, it would arouse no great wonder. It was a harsh act in an age when war was full of harsh acts. But when as noteworthy a person as Baburam Acharya tries to explain the act in terms of higher motivation, we must necessarily look at it more closely. Baburamjyu tries to explain this act on the grounds that it was *necessary* in order to prevent disloyalty among Prithwinarayan Shah's troops. It is his contention that Prithwinarayan Shah was familiar with the success the French and the East India Company had enjoyed in the field by using Indian troops to fight Indians and that Prithwinarayan Shah

44. *Dibya Upadesh*, p. 9.

45. Sharma, p. 218; also Ghawali, p. 197; Bhandari, p. 175; Regmi, p. 55; and Acharya, p. 12.

46. Cf. above, Chapter I, pp. 17-18.

47. Regmi, p. 49.

48. Sharma, p. 219.

49. Bhandari, p. 175, note.

wanted by this act to prevent any such occurrence in Nepal.<sup>50</sup> But this explanation encounters some difficulties. The time element alone becomes a problem. This was 1744. It was not until four years after this that the western powers began to use native troops with any degree of success, and then it was the French who originated the policy.<sup>51</sup> The British did not accept this practice until much later. Secondly, at this time the British were still an insignificant force in Indian affairs. This was the period of Maratha ascendancy.<sup>52</sup> Also Baburam Acharya-jyu's statement that as a result of this one action no Gorkhali soldier connived with the enemy against Gorkha for seventy years,<sup>53</sup> even if this action could be accepted as conniving with the enemy, is a statement that would be as difficult to prove as it would be to refute. Lastly, if it could be shown that in fact no Gorkhali did consort with the enemy for such a period, would it be a greater achievement to have secured this by such an act (for the act then would have to be considered premeditated), or to have obtained such outstanding loyalty by the force of leadership and inspiration? It is not necessary for us to go to such lengths to justify Prithwinarayan Shah's act. As has been said, it was a harsh act in an era when warfare had its harsh aspects. But even more to the point, Prithwinarayan Shah at this time was a young man with the impetuosity of youth and possessed of a temper that at times got out of hand.<sup>54</sup> It was an isolated act, not Prithwinarayan Shah's habitual manner of dealing with opponents. Why make a serious issue of it by trying to sublimate it?

The second incident that followed on this battle for Nuwakot and which has been described as unfortunate was the treatment Kasiram Thapa received from Jaya Prakash Malla. Jaya Prakash Malla had assigned Kasiram Thapa to lead the counter-attack on Nuwakot. Kasiram Thapa was defeated in this battle,<sup>55</sup> and this aroused the suspicions of Jaya Prakash Malla as to Kasiram's loyalty. This suspicion was deepened when Kasiram Thapa fled to his home after the defeat, instead of returning to Kathmandu.<sup>56</sup> He was hunted out and killed along with seven other chieftains by a detachment of Jaya Prakash Malla's plainsmen.<sup>57</sup> The implications of this act have been discussed earlier, in the background notes on the situation in the Valley at the time of Prithwinarayan Shah. Here it will suffice to say that this act resulted in increased hostility towards Jaya Prakash Malla in his own court<sup>58</sup> and made it possible for Prithwinarayan

50. Acharya, p. 13.

51. Majumdar, pp. 650-52.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 545-49.

53. Acharya, p. 13.

54. Compare Prithwinarayan Shah's treatment of Tribikram Sen, the Kirtipur incident, and his quarrels with Hemkarna Sen.

55. Gyawali, p. 199.

56. Acharya, p. 13.

57. Gyawali, p. 199.

Shah to influence more of Jaya Prakash Malla's followers than would otherwise have been possible.<sup>59</sup> It also tends to emphasize the fact that this was an era when war had its harsh aspects.

With Nuwakot safely in his possession, Prithwinarayan Shah could easily extend his efforts throughout the Bagmati area. In the period extending from his conquest of Nuwakot in 1744 to the time of the first attack on Kirtipur in 1757 his efforts were largely minor. He concentrated on solidifying his position and increasing his hold on the approaches to the Valley by taking the villages to the north and east of the Valley.<sup>60</sup> It is interesting to note that during all this time Prithwinarayan Shah was able to conceal from Ranjit Malla his real intentions and actually to convince the old king that Bhadgaon and Gorkha were fighting for a common cause. It was only when the Gorkhals took over the Kabbre region to the east of Bhadgaon (and Bhadgaon territory) that Ranjit Malla realized that Prithwinarayan Shah had deceived him; and that was in 1759,<sup>61</sup> fifteen years after the conquest of Nuwakot.

### Kirtipur, Strife and Dispute

In 1757 Prithwinarayan Shah made his first attempt to take Kirtipur,<sup>62</sup> a town occupying the only important height inside the Valley proper and commanding the entrance to the Valley from the west. It was a well-fortified place, which the Gorkhali leaders did not feel that they were strong enough to attack with success.<sup>63</sup> Kalu Pande was especially opposed to the attack, but Prithwinarayan Shah goaded him into taking part.<sup>64</sup> It was a terrible mistake. The disunity of the kings of the Valley was in no way mirrored by the people. They were strongly united and equally strongly opposed to the idea of a Gorkhali conquest of the Valley.<sup>65</sup> The battle of Kirtipur was a fierce one, with both sides suffering heavy losses. For the Gorkhals the heaviest loss of all was that of Prithwinarayan Shah's kazi Kalu Pande, who was killed in the action.<sup>66</sup> Prithwinarayan Shah himself barely escaped death on the field of battle.<sup>67</sup>

When this first attempt to take Kirtipur failed, Prithwinarayan Shah had to return again to his policy of isolating the Valley. His next move in this programme was the conquest of Makwanpur. This kingdom lay to the south-west of Kathmandu Valley,

58. Regmi, p. 55.

59. Acharya, p. 13.

60. Sharma, p. 13.

61. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, p. 253.

62. Acharya, p. 21; also Regmi, p. 58; Bhandary, p. 181; Sharma, p. 178; and *Purnima*, No. 8, p. 25.

63. Sharma, p. 222.

64. Acharya, p. 19.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 20; also Sharma, p. 222.

67. Sharma, p. 222.



but it controlled all the southern approaches to the Valley. The Gorkhals accomplished this objective easily in 1762.<sup>68</sup>

The relations between Makwanpur and Mir Kasim, the nawab of Bengal at that time, had been excellent. It will be remembered that this same Mir Kasim was at the time in serious disagreement with the East India Company.<sup>69</sup> Mir Kasim had just completed the reorganization of his army in order to strengthen his hand against the East India Company. He now determined to come to the rescue of Makwanpur, and thereby render assistance to an old friend and at the same time test the army he had developed. The engagement with the Gorkhals was intended to be a mere flexing of the army's muscles, and the results were confidently expected to be an overwhelming victory for Mir Kasim. Gurgin Khan led the invading troops, but the result was far from the easy victory expected. Mir Kasim's army suffered a terrible loss.<sup>70</sup> Much of their valuable equipment fell into the hands of the hardy Gorkhali troops, including rifles and ammunition in significant quantities.<sup>71</sup> In addition Mir Kasim suffered a great loss of prestige, and the outcome of this battle effectively discouraged other native states from interfering in the affairs of Gorkha.<sup>72</sup>

Meanwhile elements of Prithwinarayan Shah's army were continuing to extend their conquests to other small towns on the edges of the Valley. Pharping and Chowbar on the west and Bisankhu near the route between Patan and Bhadgaon fell to Prithwinarayan Shah's men during this period.<sup>73</sup> The stage was now set for the second attack on Kirtipur, which had to be captured before a direct attack could be made on the three cities of the Valley.

After thorough preparations, *including* the chastisement of Lamjung, which had been encroaching on Gorkha again,<sup>74</sup> Prithwinarayan Shah sent his army a second time against the fortified town of Kirtipur. The leaders of this expedition were Prithwinarayan Shah's brothers Surpratap Shah and Kirtimahoddam Shah.<sup>75</sup> They planned to use ladders to scale the walls and then to engage the defenders of Kirtipur in hand to hand fighting inside the city. But their plan suffered a serious setback when Surpratap Shah was struck by an arrow that pierced his eye.<sup>76</sup> Casualties were heavy on the Gorkhali side, and this serious wound suffered by one of the Gorkhali commanders threw confusion into the ranks of the Gorkhali forces, leading to a hasty

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68. Gyawali, p. 202; also Acharya, p. 25; Regmi, p. 61; and Sharma, p. 223.

69. Regmi, p. 63.

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-65; also Acharya, pp. 25-26.

71. Acharya, p. 26.

72. Regmi, p. 66.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

74. Sharma, p. 224.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

76. Acharya, p. 31.

withdrawal.<sup>77</sup> The date for this battle is generally set as the fall of 1764.<sup>78</sup>

The next two years were filled with minor engagements in and around the Valley and a *further* chastisement of the *Chaubisi Rajas*, which was as much a deterrent from future intervention in the affairs of Gorkha as a punishment for past encroachments.<sup>79</sup>

It is interesting to note that at this time the *Pradhans* of Patan invited *Prithwinarayan Shah* to become *king* of Patan.<sup>80</sup> This either indicates an incredible naïvete on the part of the *Pradhans* or else demonstrates the effectiveness of the economic blockade of the Valley being enforced by Prithwinarayan Shah. Prithwinarayan Shah declined the offer as far as he himself was concerned, but sent his brother Dalmardan Shah to rule Patan. Extant coins attest to the fact that Dalmardan Shah did serve as king of Patan for a time.<sup>81</sup> It is, however, difficult to ascertain the actual period during which he ruled.<sup>82</sup>

A major development in Prithwinarayan Shah's campaign took place with the capture of Kirtipur. This fortified city had stubbornly and successfully fought off two attacks, and in the process had inflicted great damage on the Gorkhali army. In the first attack, Kalu Pande, the trusted and able kazi of Prithwinarayan Shah had been killed, and in the second Prithwinarayan Shah's own brother had been pierced in the eye with an arrow. In short, for ten years this city had defied the best efforts of the advancing Gorkhalis. This is mentioned here, because it *may* have influenced Prithwinarayan Shah's treatment of the people in the captured city.

The date for the conquest of Kirtipur has been variously given as March, 1766,<sup>83</sup> (Chaitra, 1882 B.S.)<sup>84</sup> and December, 1767.<sup>85</sup> At the present the best that can be said is that the city was taken some time during the year and a half period of 1766-67. Just how the surrender of the fort was brought about is also not clear. There is one eyewitness account, but most Nepali historians seem to feel that his is a biased view and tend to discount it. In view of this fact, and without further documentation on the part of the authors, it is only possible to list the opinions set out by the various writers on this period. Regmi mentions merely a surrender, but speaks of *negotiations* being carried on before the surrender.<sup>86</sup> Baburam Acharya says that the defender of the town, Sinkwal Pradhan, on the advice of Bamsharaj Pande, opened the gates of the city during the night so that overzealous

77. Ibid., p. 31.

78. Gyawali, p. 202; also Acharya, p. 31; and Bhandari, p. 186.

79. Acharya, p. 32.

80. Gyawali, p. 192; also Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, p. 363.

81. Ibid., p. 192.

82. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, II, p. 363.

83. Acharya, p. 34.

84. Regmi, p. 84.

85. Ibid., p. 78.

86. Ibid., p. 78.

defenders of the city might not attack the Gorkhalis and rouse their wrath after the surrender.<sup>87</sup> Gyawali, however, is of the opinion that the defenders of Kirtipur were forced by circumstances to surrender.<sup>88</sup> Sharma thinks that Bir Narsingh, who was the son of Dandawant Kazi, the defender of Kirtipur (note the divergence from Baburam Acharya as to the name of the defender of Kirtipur), was captured by the Gorkhalis and forced to write a letter summoning his father to Nuwakot to surrender. This the distressed father did, forcing Kirtipur to surrender.<sup>89</sup> Bhandari tells us only of the surrender, adding that Kirtipur had to surrender since no help came from the kings of the Valley.<sup>90</sup>

Leaving aside Bhandari's account for the moment, it is clear from the others that: (1) there were some sort of negotiations before the surrender of Kirtipur was effected; (2) the Gorkhalis did not actually conquer the city, but the city opened its gates to them; (3) the basic difference between the accounts lies in the nature of the negotiations that took place.

Fr. Giuseppe, the Capuchin, who was an eyewitness, says that the defenders of Kirtipur surrendered to Prithwinarayan Shah only on the assurance that a general amnesty would be given.<sup>91</sup> Though there is no other supporting evidence for this opinion other than the fact that it purports to be a first-hand observation, it does fit the major outlines of the other opinions given. It also fits well with Bhandari's opinion, if we visualize the situation in which no help was forthcoming from Kathmandu. The defenders of Kirtipur would not necessarily have to surrender simply because they had no help coming to them from Jaya Prakash Malla—they had, after all, successfully beaten off a previous attack, and there is every indication that they were still successfully holding off the Gorkhalis at this time. But coupled with a promise of amnesty, they might well have decided that the time was opportune to yield.<sup>92</sup> In short, I see no intrinsic difficulty in accepting Fr. Giuseppe's account along with the others. Acceptance or rejection of Fr. Giuseppe's treatment is really reduced to a question of his bias, and this question is actually raised only when he treats of the events that followed the surrender of Kirtipur. These events must be discussed at this time before proceeding.

It is said that Prithwinarayan Shah punished the people of Kirtipur by having the noses and lips cut off of all the adult population, excepting only those who played on wind instruments. This is stated here merely as the fact under discussion, without any charge being made concerning it. Baburam Acharya, of

87. Acharya, p. 39.

88. Gyawali, p. 203.

89. Sharma, pp. 179-80.

90. Bhandari, p. 186.

91. Fr. Giuseppe's eyewitness account. Trans. by John Shore, Esq., *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. II, pp. 306-22.

92. Acharya, p. 17.

course, rejects this. The fact that he offers no substantiating proof for his opinion seems to weaken his statement, and we can only hope that when his detailed treatment of this period is published, as we are promised it will soon be, he will set forth the basis for this position. He does, however, admit that some ten or fifteen of the population of Kirtipur were punished in this way, because, as he says, they offered resistance to the Gorkhali troops.<sup>93</sup> Regmi mentions the Chronicle treatment of this and also quotes Fr. Giuseppe's eyewitness account, but concludes: "All this seems unduly exaggerated, and an historian has to be cautious in giving credence to it."<sup>94</sup> It would, of course, have been more convenient if Regmi had treated each of these two accounts separately, since there are some substantial differences between the two. Sharma and Gyawali accept the incident as historical and accept Fr. Giuseppe's account of it.<sup>95</sup> For an historian it would seem at the present the more prudent thing to accept Fr. Giuseppe's account, at least until some further evidence is found to give a firm basis for rejection or revision. In fact, the strength of three independent sources such as Fr. Giuseppe's account, the Chronicle account, and the Sanskrit poem dealing with this that Sharma and Gyawali report,<sup>96</sup> plus the fact that Kirkpatrick had some of the survivors of this event serving as coolies in his entourage some thirty years later<sup>97</sup> almost forces one to believe that the event reported was not an exaggeration but a plain statement of fact. This seems even stronger in view of the fact that neither Regmi nor Baburam Acharya have yet brought forward anything stronger than historical interpretation and opinion in order to call in question the historicity of the event.

As far as Fr. Giuseppe's treatment of the whole series of events at Kirtipur is concerned, it would seem the prudent course of action would be to correct him where we have definite historical evidence, and to accept at least on a tentative basis what he has to say where we have no such correcting evidence. Not to do so would, I fear, render us suspect of the same charge of bias.

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93. Ibid., p. 34.

94. Regmi, pp. 78-79.

95. Sharma, p. 180, and Gyawali, p. 203.

96. Sharma, p. 180; also Gyawali, *Prithwinarayan Shah*, p. 143.

97. Kirkpatrick, p. 164; "The reduction of this place (Kirtipur) cost the Goorkhali so much trouble, that in resentment of the resistance made by the inhabitants, he (Prithwinarayan Shah) barbarously caused all the males he captured in it to be deprived of their noses. *We came to the knowledge of this fact in consequence of observing among the porters who transported our baggage over the hills a remarkable number of noseless men, the singularity of this circumstance leading us to inquire into the cause of it.*" Emphasis added.

Mr. Redko in an address to the Tribhuvan University History Association in July, 1967, mentioned that A. Minaiyev, the first Russian to visit Nepal, failed to observe this same phenomenon. This is hardly surprising, if Minaiyev visited Nepal in 1875, as stated, over one hundred years after the incident took place.

## British Intervention

The final obstacle to the conquest of the Valley was thrown in the path of the Gorkhals by the East India Company. The attempted invasion of Nepal by the forces of the East India Company in 1767 has been the subject of a great amount of speculation and writing. It is unfortunate that we have to rely almost entirely on East India Company sources for our knowledge of this incident, thus allowing room for much too much speculation. The East India Company account has been admirably written up by Chaudhuri<sup>98</sup> and Sanwal,<sup>99</sup> and there will be no need to reproduce more than a sketch of the events here for the purposes of this chapter.

In 1767 Jaya Prakash Malla, seeing that the war was going very badly and suffering greatly from Prithwinarayan Shah's economic blockade of the Valley, contacted the Company's agent in Bettiah, Mr. Golding, through his *vakils*<sup>100</sup> Umda and Ram Das.<sup>101</sup> Jaya Prakash Malla invited the Company to send troops to intervene in this war between Prithwinarayan Shah and the Malla kings. Golding and the Company's Chief at Patna, Rumbold, thought this an excellent opportunity to further the Company's interests in Nepal, which, it will be recalled, were considerable.<sup>102</sup> Correspondence between Rumbold and the select committee in Calcutta pursued the matter, and at length it was determined to send a force under Captain Kinloch to break Prithwinarayan Shah's blockade of the Valley.<sup>103</sup>

Kinloch's mission was doomed to failure before it got underway. Ignorance of the hill terrain, ignorance of the Gorkhali soldiers and their fighting methods, lack of adequate preparations and provisions, and the weather were all heavily against success for Kinloch.<sup>104</sup> The Gorkhali forces, meanwhile, prepared to meet the English and their Indian sepoys in a manner totally novel to the troops of the plains. Unorthodox weapons such as nettles, mud balls containing wasps, and rocks to be thrown from the heights were prepared. And the deadly *khukari*, a weapon never yet experienced by the plains troops, was there to supplement these.<sup>105</sup> The result, when battle was finally joined, was confusion followed by defeat for the Company. Casualties amounted to one thousand for the Company as compared with three hundred Gorkhali casualties.<sup>106</sup>

The outcome of this battle was important for several reasons. The Gorkhals gathered as spoils more of the precious rifles that

98. Chaudhuri, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations*, Calcutta, 1960

99. Sanwal, *Nepal and the East India Company*, Bombay, 1969.

100. Chaudhuri, p. 13.

101. Acharya, p. 37.

102. Chaudhuri, p. 13.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

104. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-24.

105. Acharya, pp. 39-40.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

were so hard to obtain in the hills, and the victory itself was a great fillip for the morale of the Gorkhali troops. With this victory achieved the Gorkhalis were more than ever convinced that nothing could stand before them. On the other hand, the gloom that descended on the kings of the Valley can only be imagined.

For Kinloch it was a stunning setback. He tried to improve upon his record by taking the Gorkhali territories of Bara, Parsa, and Hilwall in the Nepal terai;<sup>107</sup> but in doing this he deceived himself. These areas were to prove not worth the trouble of maintaining sufficient force there to protect them, and the act of taking them served to sour Anglo-Nepal relations in the years immediately ahead.<sup>108</sup>

### Success in the Valley

The final conquest of the three kingdoms of the Valley reads almost as an anti-climax. On the night of Indraajatra, September 25, 1768,<sup>109</sup> Prithwinarayan Shah's forces entered Kathmandu. The attack was a three-pronged one, coming by way of Nar Devi, Bhim Sen Than, and the Tundikhel.<sup>110</sup> Regmi says the fight was minimal but lasted four hours.<sup>111</sup> Jaya Prakash succeeded in escaping from the *darbar*; and whether the route for this flight was deliberately left open, as Baburam Acharya suggests,<sup>112</sup> or Jaya Prakash contrived to flee, the fact is that Jaya Prakash Malla managed to reach Patan, where he found asylum with Tej Narsingh.<sup>113</sup> Prithwinarayan Shah crowned the night's events by seating himself on the throne in front of the *darbar*, thus honouring the custom of the Indraajatra festival that called for the king of Kathmandu to seat himself there on this night of the festival.<sup>114</sup>

The date and circumstances under which the fall of Patan took place are by no means clear. Bhandari suggests that the conquest of Patan took place as long as four months after the fall of Kathmandu.<sup>115</sup> Most authors give a time shortly after the fall of Kathmandu, between ten and fifteen days, for the fall of Patan. Prithwinarayan Shah seems to have achieved this with a minimum of bloodshed.<sup>116</sup>

Bhadgaon, the last of the kingdoms to fall into Prithwinarayan Shah's hands, was left in peace for almost a year. Ranjit Malla was an old friend of Prithwinarayan Shah, and Prithwinarayan

107. Chaudhuri, p. 23.

108. Ibid., p. 23.

109. Sharma, p. 181; Gyawali, p. 203. Acharya gives the 26th, but cf. Pant in *Purnima*, No. 9, p. 85.

110. Acharya, p. 44.

111. Regmi, p. 86.

112. Ibid., p. 86.

113. Acharya, p. 44.

114. Regmi, p. 80.

115. Bhandari, p. 115.

116. Acharya, p. 46.

Shah seemed sure that he would be able to take the city without a battle.<sup>117</sup> But this was not to be. The Gorkhali troops entered the city by night, swarming over the roof tops, until the great *darbar* was surrounded.<sup>118</sup> A brief, sharp battle followed, with the result inevitable. The soul of the defence was Jaya Prakash Malla, the former king of Kathmandu, who fought valiantly throughout the day.<sup>119</sup> When he was wounded in the leg while climbing from one section of the *darbar* to another, the defence collapsed.<sup>120</sup> Ranjit Malla then signalled, or had one of his men signal, with his *pagari* his willingness to surrender.<sup>121</sup> The date was November 13, 1769.<sup>122</sup>

With the fall of the three capitals of the Valley, Prithwinarayan Shah's personal campaigning seems to have ended. Further Gorkhali attempts at expansion were carried out, but Prithwinarayan Shah seems to have concerned himself more with the consolidation of his now vastly increased kingdom. We read no more of him leading expeditions or of his being near scenes of battle. His armies to the west enjoyed initial success, but were finally trapped and defeated at Satahun some time in 1772.<sup>123</sup> Further Gorkhali expansion to the west was postponed until the time of Rajendra Lakshmi and Bahadur Shah. In the east Prithwinarayan Shah's armies had considerable success. This area was already badly torn by internal strife,<sup>124</sup> and the armies of Gorkha had little trouble in taking control of these small, fragmented kingdoms. It was, in fact, in the midst of this career of success that the word of Prithwinarayan Shah's death came to them.<sup>125</sup>

Baburam Acharya tells us that just before his death Prithwinarayan Shah was in Nuwakot, where he had delivered his most important comments on government, his *Dibya Upadesh*, in December, 1774. Shortly after this, while he was still at Nuwakot, he was attacked by fever, and died at Devighat near by, on the morning of January 10, 1775.<sup>126</sup>

117. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

120. Sharma, p. 225.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

122. Acharya, p. 48.

123. Sharma, p. 204.

124. *Ibid.*, pp. 205-07.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

126. Acharya, pp. 67-68, but cf. Pant, *Purnima*, No. 9, pp. 90ff.

## CHAPTER III

### DIBYA UPADESH

#### OF

### HIS MAJESTY PRITHWINARAYAN SHAH DEV

#### (Prithwi's Instruction)

**A**FTER His Majesty captured the three cities of Nepal (*tin sahar Nepal*) and the *Hindupati Raja*,<sup>1</sup> he went to Nuwakot<sup>2</sup> for the last time.<sup>3</sup> He summoned his priests, teachers, household,<sup>4</sup> family, nobles, and his tutor, Surath Singh Rana, and all the elders and spoke to them thus:

When an old man dies, his words die with him, so they say. What you who are gathered here will hear from me, pass on to your children, and they to ours; and this kingdom will endure.

#### Upranta<sup>5</sup>

Our mothers were three.<sup>6</sup> Of three bridal chambers we brothers came, *avatars* of the Pandavs. My own marriage took place in Makwanpur. The bride was not given to me.<sup>7</sup> I went to Makwanpur to take the bride and return by way of Nepal (*Nepal pani dekhi bhani au bhani*). When I arrived, I said to Dikbhanda Sen: "If you will give me the one-tusked elephant and the nine-

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1. *Hindupati Raja*: the kings of Makwanpur and Bijayapur had taken this title. Sharma, p. 205; also Acharya, p. 60.

2. There are three well-known towns named Nuwakot; this one is on the left bank of the Trisuli River. Narharinath, p. 1, note.

3. Narharinath and Acharya give the date for this as 1774. Narharinath, p. 1, note 7; Acharya, p. 67.

4. *Thar Ghar*: one or more members of the families of those men who had helped Drabya Shah capture Gorkha always sat on the councils of Gorkha. The six *thars* in question were those of Ganesh Pande, Narayandas Arjyal, Bhagirath Pantha, Gangaram Rana, Sarbeshwar Khanal, and Keshav Bohara. They were called colloquially the *Thar Ghar*. Narharinath, notes, p. 24.

5. *Upranta*: Indicates a new train of thought.

6. This does not seem to agree with the accepted historical tradition assigning *four* wives to Narbhupal Shah. Cf. Regmi, p. 46. However, it is possible that this means that all the sons of Narbhupal Shah came from *three mothers*, in which case it would agree with the tradition, since the eldest queen was childless.

7. "It is said that the quarrel started over the custom of allowing the bride to remain at her father's place for some time further, which the Gorkhals were intending to break." Regmi, p. 46.



lakh necklace,<sup>8</sup> I will take the bride. If you refuse, I will take her and cut my way through with the sword." Threats were made. That the king of Nepal might not recognize me and seize me, I covered my shoulders with a *ghum*<sup>9</sup> and moved up the banks of the Rapti. Companions to me were Bhanu Jyotisi, Kulananda Jyotisi, and others of my family. From Chandragiri's top I asked, "Which is Nepal?"<sup>10</sup> They showed me, saying, "That is Bhadgaon, that is Patan, and there lies Kathmandu." The thought came to my heart that if I might be king of these three cities, why, let it be so. At this same time these two astrologers said to me, "O King, your heart is melting with desire." I was struck with wonder. How did they know my inmost thoughts and so speak to me? "At the moment your gaze rested on Nepal (*Nepalma*) you stroked your moustache and in your heart you longed to be king of Nepal, as it seemed to us." "Will this come to pass?" I asked. "You, O Prince, have held at all times great respect for cows, Brahmins, guests, holy men, the gods, and goddesses. Also, in our hands lies the blessing of Saraswati. You will one day be king of Nepal." And I said: "Beyond Thankot's great pass, a day and a night beyond Kalleri Ghat, up Dhading and beyond Champabati River, under the protecting arms of Ligligkot, I have three men. Jyotisi, send a letter to call them." "Their names?" he asked. "Ranjit Basnyet," I said, "Man Singh Rokaya, Birbhadra Pathak." "Come straightway, without sleeping, to Maidhi," I wrote. And they came. I spoke privately to these three. "I have exchanged threats with Dikbhanda Sen; I have come to Nepal and have seen it. And I have decided it must be mine. What say you?" "Attack, O Prince," they said. And they agreed with me. But I asked them, "If I go to seize another's kingdom, will not another come to seize my kingdom?" "Yours, O Prince, is the voice to frighten elephants. If those *Baisi* and *Chaubisi* princes come, a river of blood will flow in the Chepa," they answered. We rose from our secret place and went to Gorkha. My uncle<sup>11</sup> had taken the Deoghat road to have darshan of Nilkuntha and Pasupati. After having darshan of Nilkuntha and Pasupati, he came to Gorkha to have darshan of Gorkhanath. After his worship, he met me. And I said: "Uncle, I have gone to

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8. "The party of the bridegroom asked as a dowry a valuable necklace (the bride had it during the ceremony) called Navlakhia and one particular elephant (Ekdantey) with one tooth, which earlier the owner had refused to present to the Nawab (Mir Kasim)." Regmi, p. 46, quoting the *Gorkha Vamsavali*.

9. A kind of rain shelter measuring about two and a half by four feet, folded longitudinally. It is made of thin bamboo lattice-work frames, between which a layer of plantain leaves is spread.

10. One does not see how this should be interpreted, in view of the tradition that as a youth Prithwinarayan Shah had spent some years with Ranjit Malla of Bhadgaon. Regmi assigns the years 1736-37 to the stay in Bhadgaon, and Prithwinarayan Shah's marriage he places in 1740. If this is so, there is a serious discrepancy, it seems, between this account and *Dibya Upadesh*.

11. Udyat Sen, *yuvraj* of Palpa.

Makwanpur. I reached Nepal and saw that kingdom. I have decided I must attack that kingdom. What must I do to succeed? Instruct me, if you will." And he answered: "At the time of *Pancharatri* I had a dream. There was a great war in which there were five men, *avatars* of the Pandavs, as it were. Without war Nepal will not be conquered. Lamjung is called a *Garud*. Gorkha is called a snake. Nepal, a frog. The snake must deceive the eyes of the *Gurud*, and then it can eat the frog." "I have," I said, "four clans of warriors. Which of these must go, if the work is to be finished quickly?" "Which are the clans?" he asked. "Brahmin, Khas, Magar, Thakuri," I said. "Which of these should go to finish the task quickly?" "The Brahmin goes as a bullock," he said; "if he goes, it will be sin everywhere. The Thakuri goes as a lion; afterwards comes his craft. The Magar goes as a mountain pony. He will be slow. The Khas goes as a swift Arabian steed. If the Khas goes, it will be quickly done, or so it seems to me." And with this he gave me much other advice. I took his advice, and then I went to meet the king of Lamjung, Ripumardan Shah. We met at Chepe Ghat. We spoke of a treaty and of home affairs. The matter for which we would agree to conclude a treaty was as a knot in my heart. This thing Kalu Pande did. And the treaty was strong and lasting. And I was in wonder. But I was also pleased. He, with whom the people are pleased, he it is who is made kazi, so the *shastras* say. I consulted the wishes of the people and found that the people also wanted him. If Kalu Pande is made kazi, all the people will be pleased, I was advised. Then I looked to the *Baisi* and the *Chaubisi* princes. And they told me that if Kalu Pande were made kazi, the home and foreign policy would be strong. It was in my mind to make Biraj Bakheta kazi. But Kalu Pande was thought to be wiser, and Kalu Pande was made kazi. Now I made a marriage bond between the Pandes and the Basnyets. "Give your daughter to the son of Shivaram Basnyet, Kehe Singh Basnyet," I said. And I married them and made the bond between the Pandes and the Basnyets. I made a Pande the shield (foreign policy) and a Basnyet the sword (war minister) and prepared to ascend to Nepal.

I stationed Ranjit Basnyet, Man Singh Rokaya, and Birbhadra Pathak at Ligligkot for the protection of Gotan Birai and went to have darshan of the devi at Sallyan Kot. They say she gives inspiration. I went to learn the auspicious time. To Sallyan I went, and I camped there. And I asked the headmen of the fort if one might have darshan of the devi. "To go into the temple for darshan is for the priests only," they said. "So be it," I answered. "But might one have darshan at the gate?" "This is permitted," they answered. So morning and evening I sat at the gate, reading, worshipping, and praying. One night I had a dream. A seven or eight-year-old maiden came to me, bearing a sword in either hand. She covered her head with a pale rose-coloured cloth and came close to me. I asked her who

her father was. She answered that she was the daughter of the Rana (Magar) priest of the temple. Saying this, she placed the swords in my hands. Then she took from her bosom a small object shaped like the *arasi* and placed it on my lips, saying: "This also you must swallow. Then, whatever you wish for, you will receive. I also have a request," she added. "Receive this and go." And so saying, she took steps and vanished. At this, I awoke. I called for Bhanu Jyotisi and Kulananda Jyotisi as well as the Rana priest, and I asked them to explain this to me. The astrologers and the priest said that this was the devi and that I had received darshan. At this moment I presented incense, lights, flags, and a feast. For the permanent worship I added seven buffaloes and seven goats and the income from Borlang Ghat and the ridge near the Ghat. This same hour I took my leave, travelling without pause until I camped at Simalchaur Chautara. My intention was to take Nuwakot, but to outward appearances I went to Kinchyat<sup>12</sup> for farming and digging irrigation channels. I used to go by boat regularly to the Temple of Indrayani at Betravati Beni, where I worshipped. I had darshan of the devi of Sallyan Kot and of the bairabi of Indrayani. At Mahamandal the *Savata* of Nuwakot was being held.<sup>13</sup> In Mahamandal there was a Gyami Rana. "Be one of us. Leave Mahamandal. Come with me." Thus the message I sent to him. And he answered that it was true, that he did belong to me.<sup>14</sup> "But," said he, "I have eaten the salt of Jaya Prakash Malla, and I will be true to this until death." One day I sat in council. I sat there dreaming. And in my daydream I was sitting at the temple of Indrayani. "One week from today there will be a very auspicious time. That day's omen will be the cure of Nuwakot," I heard. I asked the astrologer to look into his book and see. "That day, a week hence," he said, "early Saturday morning is an auspicious time. On this same auspicious day let us climb Mahamandal." And we fought...<sup>15</sup> My

12. Kinchyat lay on the eastern border of the kingdom of Gorkha. One of the two rivers in question is the Trisuli. Maps of the area indicate the other as probably being Phalangu Khola. The confluence is certainly at Betravati, and perhaps Phalangu Khola also goes by the name of Betravati. The Gorkhali tactics of having the soldiers cover their operations by posing as farmers and preparing the land gives an interesting sidelight on the methods used by the hill troops.

13. *Savata*: Variant explanations are given by pundits for this word. It could be *Sauteni* or co-wife, in which case Mahamandal would be taken as a rival of Nuwakot. I have taken it to be the seven days of religious readings from the *shastras* with the accompanying lectures. I confess neither interpretation satisfies me completely, and I suspect that only a very thorough knowledge of the geography of the area will make it possible to accept or reject the *Sauteni* interpretation mentioned in this note.

14. Jayant Rana, who had led Nurbhupal's attack on Nuwakot and then later, when suspicion of collusion with the enemy fell on him, had gone over to Jaya Prakash Malla. Jaya Prakash Malla had placed him in charge of the troops at Nuwakot. Cf. Gyawali, pp. 196 and 198.

15. There follows here a short passage whose meaning is obscure owing to a lack of historical reference, according to Baburam Acharya. (*Hamra nun ka lesh le jhukai dine pantha*).

twelve-year-old brother, Dalmardan Shah, struck the Rana on the head with his sword and ended the battle. We crossed beyond Nuwakot, setting up posts at Kakani and Sheopuri and digging entrenchments. Parsuram Thapa<sup>16</sup> gave his hand to me, saying, "Come, attack Nepal." And he sent his brother to make offers to the *Chaubisi* princes and to stir them up to attack us from the rear. I learned of this, and I asked where he had gone. "To Hatiya Pass near Pokhara. There he stayed." "Who can go and put an end to him?" I asked in council. They could think of no one. I said I thought Jhagal Gurung could do it, and so I sent for him and gave him the command to go. Before he left, I gave him my *khukari*. Jhagal Gurung put on a minstrel's clothing, carried a fish pole in one hand and his *sarangi* in the other, with a few dharnies of fish over his shoulder. When Parsuram's brother's soldiers were eating, he saw his chance, put an end to him, and came back. Later, after I had strengthened the rear, I opened Nepal, joined the east and west, and took Nepal.

## Upranta

This country is like a gourd between two rocks. Maintain a treaty of friendship with the emperor of China. Keep also a treaty of friendship with the emperor of the southern sea (the Company). He has taken the plains. He will realize that if Hindustan unites, it will be difficult, and so he will come seeking places for forts.<sup>17</sup> Prepare forts, without burdening the people. Set traps in the trails. One day that force will come. Do not go down to the plains to fight. Withdraw to the hills to fight. Chure Pass will be much used. Store arms and ammunition there for five to seven generations. The Ganga is also a line of defence. If this does not suffice in war, regardless of trickery or schemes, the strength of Nepal lies in her forts. If he takes these, the four emperors will come.<sup>18</sup> God has given us the places for these forts. There is no need to ask where. 1. Shivapuri, 2. Phulchowki, 3. Chandragiri, 4. Mahadevpokhari, 5. Palung, 6. Dapcha, 7. Kahule. At these places permanent forts should be built. Behind the forts, on a higher place, cannon should be placed. In

16. The brother of the slain Kasiram Thapa. He was sent by the conspirators against Jaya Prakash Malla to summon Prithwinarayan Shah to Kathmandu. Gyawali, p. 200. The sense of the passage here seems to indicate that he went over to the *Chaubisi Rajas* after making these overtures to Prithwinarayan Shah.

17. There is some difference of opinion on the interpretation of this passage. Dr. Malhotra (*Historical Glimpses of Modern Nepal*, Prof. G. C. Shastri, Kathmandu, 2024, p. 8) translates it: "When they shall become masters of the whole of India, they would create trouble for us." I see no justification for this translation either in the Nepali or in the context. The passage is this: "*Hindusthana dabai rashe chha. sarajimi ma pari rahe chha. Hindusthana jamyo bhanya. kathin parla . . .*" p. 12.

18. Narharinath (p. 26, note) suggests these four emperors as India, China, Russia, and Rome. One wonders why he speaks of Russia and Rome.

the gaps in the mountains an iron door should be built.<sup>19</sup> Behind each door, on a higher place, cannon should be set up and a band of five soldiers stationed at each place. If this is done there will be no opportunity for ambush, spying, routing, destroying, sneaking, trouble-making, murder, or anything like these. Even if the four emperors come, they will avail nothing.

## Upranta

I observed the arrangements of King Ram Shah. I saw the arrangements of Jayasthiti Malla, also. I saw, too, the arrangements of Mahindra Malla. If it is God's will, I would like to make this sort of arrangement for the 12,000.<sup>20</sup> Roads to the east and to the west being closed, I would open the roads of Nepal.<sup>21</sup> I would arrange that each class (*jat*) do its own special work. This three-cities Nepal is a cold stone. It is great only in intrigue. With one who drinks water from cisterns, there is no wisdom; nor is there courage. There is only intrigue.<sup>22</sup> My wish is to build my capital at Dahachowk. And I would build around me houses for the leaders and priests of my people, my family, my court, the leaders and chiefs of the hill states. My capital would be set apart. In these cities, apart from my capital, let there remain empty pomp and pleasure.

## Upranta

Do not let the merchants of India come up from the border. If the merchants of India come to our country, they will leave the people poor. We have won for homespun the three cities of Nepal, the nine lakhs of Kiratis, and the *Hindupati Raja*. Forbid the use of cloth made in India. Show samples to those who know how to make our cloth. Teach them and begin to make clothing. If this is done, our money will not go abroad. Send our herbs to India and bring back money. When you acquire money, keep it. If the citizens are wealthy, the country is strong. The king's storehouse is his people. In our country

19. Narharinath quotes in his notes an old poem (p. 27, note) that speaks of such an iron door as being found at Sindhuli and Chisapani up to the time of Rajendra Bikram.

20. The reference is to the Gorkhalis. Originally there were 12,000 households in Gorkha, according to Narharinath. Later, even when the population numbered far in excess of three lakhs, the reference was still made to the Gorkhalis as the 12,000. Narharinath, p. 27, note.

21. The sense of this passage seems to be that the roads to the east and west of the Valley would be closed to traders from the plains who attempted to gain an illicit share in the trade with Tibet by by-passing the Valley or to trade with Nepal. The roads would be closed to such travellers, but the roads throughout Nepal would be open to Nepalis.

22. It is interesting to compare this statement with that of Desiderius, who passed through Nepal at the close of 1721. He says, "These Neuars are active, intelligent, and very industrious, clever at engraving and melting metal, but unstable, turbulent and traitorous," Desiderius, *An Account of Tibet*, ed. Filippo De Filippi, London, 1937.

there should be no tax farming. Let the government set the rates and collect the taxes and have an annual audit taken. Whether a man be selected as a soldier or as a courtier, let him not acquire wealth. Give a man only honour, and that according to his worth. Why? I will tell you. If a rich man enters into battle, he cannot die well; nor can he kill. In a poor man there is spark. If my brother soldiers and the courtiers are not given to pleasure, my sword can strike in all directions. But if they are pleasure-seekers, this will not be my little painfully acquired kingdom but a garden of every sort of people. But if everyone is alert, this will be a true Hindustan of the four *jats*, greater and lesser, with the thirty-six classes. Do not leave your ancient religion. Don't forsake the salt of the king. Do not take the chamberlain's post from Kalu's family. Do not take the care of the foreign policy for Tibet from the hands of Kalu Pande's family. In giving the kazi's post to the Pandes Basnyets, Panthas, and Magars, give it to them each in turn. They are the true servants of my salt. Even if they should commit some crime deserving of death, do not kill them yourselves. Instead, give them the kaziship or command and send them into battle. If they come back alive, it is well. If they are killed, it is well that they be killed by another in place of you. Let the king not kill a servant in his house. Let the king see that great justice is done. Let there be no injustice in our country. Justice is crippled when bribes are given and when bribes are taken. If either of these is done, it should not be considered sinful to confiscate all their property. These are the great commands of the king.

## Upranta

An important point is that the soldiers required for the king should be given their house and land and that they farm it, so that they can support themselves by both means. Then, without concern for their family's welfare, whether they are in the capital or in the field, they will be stout-hearted. And in the annual *pajani*<sup>23</sup> make up companies of one hundred rifles. Appoint as commander of them one who has tested himself in four or five battles. In choosing a *sat pagari* commander, choose one who has been successful in several battles. In placing his *sohra havildar*, let him appoint a man he has tested as a man of courage. The *sohra havildar* should choose soldiers whom he knows from experience to be courageous. In their own companies enlist Khas, Magars, Gurungs, and Thakuris, and only these four *jats*.<sup>24</sup> In time of war such an army will be strong. Let

23. *Pajani*: annual reappointment of soldiers and officers.

24. This was more or less the practice of the hill kingdoms. Though Sanwal (p. 44) seems to indicate that the secret of Prithwinarayan Shah's success lay in the fact that he chose from these four classes, while others chose only the Thakuris, the Magars formed an important part of the army in the Valley as well. Cf. Gyawali, p. 196.

these four *jats* only serve in the military, and in time of war all will be strong; and the enemy and heaven itself will tremble. If the enemy had thousands of bows and thousands of flintlocks, thousands of swords and thousands of cannon, heaven would tremble. In battle, both those who press the attack and those who act in support are equally important. In giving *jagirs* and *birta* lands, these should be equally rewarded. If a soldier is killed, give his land to his son until the boy is ready for military service; then raise him to a *jagir*. If the king is discerning, the soldiers will also be confident. If these instructions are carried out, the nation will have experienced soldiers. Soldiers are the very marrow of the king. If the soldiers and the peasants are with the king, he is wise. Join the soldiers and the peasants and there will be no insurrection. Keep the soldiers prepared. A soldier who is alert and prepared does not play favourites, and his work is straight. Gurungs, Magars, and Khans are very loyal. Their nobles, chieftains, and headmen, and the very old families should be tested and placed close to the king. The Chettris and Brahmins of the east and west should not be permitted to enter the court. "Why?" I will tell you. Outsiders do not obey the court traditions. Keep the command of the king firmly.

I made three peaks very strong. To their headmen I gave signal flags and drums. I gave them also sufficient money.<sup>25</sup> Whatever Sallyan, Liglig, and Dhading set their face to do was done successfully. This is God's work. Always arrange to keep your old, tested servants near you; and your nation will be strong. If the king is wise, he will keep the soldiers and the peasants on his side. Don't allow them to play favourites and seek bribes, but let them be loyal.

### Upranta

Keep the mint pure. In the courts put tested Thakuris as judges and tested Magars as clerks. In each court put a man skilled in the law. Conduct the courts according to law. Money collected in the courts must never be used for the palace. Use it to feed holy men, guests, yogis and sanyasis. If any money is left over, let the money be used to buy offerings of dhotis and cloth for these holy men. If this is done, there will be no false accusation. In a place where there are minerals, even though a village be situated there, the village must be moved and the mine worked. In places suitable for paddy, canals should be dug, fields cultivated, even if it means moving a house.

### Upranta

At one time I came to help, and they had called me. But later they betrayed me and caused me great sorrow by trying to stir up the *Chaubisi* and *Baisi* princes against me. But I secured the rear and took Nepal. They brought Nagas from the south

25. Literally, a bundle of Rs. 240/-.

at Jaya Prakash's behest, but I conquered them in seven villages. Kasim Khan attacked Makwanpur, but I defeated him with 120 men with *khukaris*, and took the equipment of his men. Hardy Sahib came to attack Sindhuli Gadhi with three or four companies.<sup>26</sup> I defeated him also and took his flintlocks. Three mussulmen came from Lucknow seeking to enter my service. They came to Nuwakot. They repaired rifles. These three mussulmen were artisans. I made them adjutants: Sekhjar, Bar Mama, Bherekasim; and they gave my men training. In the history of Nepal I saw that the Turks, the Magars, and the Mughals might attack Nepal. The Turkish attack had come.<sup>27</sup> But I am a Magar king.<sup>28</sup> To meet the Mughal threat, I established forts, and I gathered companies. I made the companies mixed, half with *khukaris* and half with rifles. With a company of 100 rifles, the work will be easy. With such a company of 100 rifles, I can resist 1,000 men. Placing one company at each fort, divide the ridges, maintain reserves.

### Upranta

I am in doubt about one thing. Which thing? Muglan (India) is near. In that place there are singers and dancers. In rooms lined with paintings, they forget themselves in melodies woven on the drum and *sitar*. There is great pleasure in these melodies. But it drains your wealth. They also take away the secrets of your country and deceive the poor. Let no one even practice the *ragas*. Let no one open the mountain trails for these classes of people. If they are needed for *Holi*, bring a few; but send them away quickly, and they will not discover your country's secrets. For your own enjoyment, according to the *shastras*, bring some of the Newar dancers of the three cities of Nepal. This is quite all right. If anything is given to these, it remains inside your own country. If this is done, your country will be well protected.

26. It is interesting to note that no mention is made here of any Capuchin connection with the Kinloch mission, called here the Hardy mission. In fact, the omission of *any* mention of the Capuchins in this document, despite the rather detailed account of traders, singers, and military dangers seems significant. Gyawali, Sharma, Regmi, Sanwal, Chaudhuri, Malhotra, Bhandari, Aryal, and the English historians always seem to link the Capuchins with this mission of Kinloch. Yet no mention is made here of the Capuchins, nor do the historians in question offer any reference as support of their statements. The fact that the authors mentioned differ as to significant details, combined with this lack of supporting references, raises the interesting question of their accuracy in this regard.

27. Shams ud-din Ilyas. Cf. Petech, *Mediaeval History of Nepal*, Rome, 1958, pp. 118-20, for the best documented account of this raid.

28. This passage is indeed confusing. The sense of it seems to be something like this: There were to be three invasions of Nepal, one by the Turks, one by the Magars, and one by the Mughals. The Turkish invasion had come and gone. The Magar invasion is that carried out by Prithwinarayan Shah himself. The Mughal invasion was that of Mir Kasim. Prithwinarayan Shah seems to be trying to show that the predictions of the *Chronicle* are fulfilled with these three invasions mentioned.



## CHAPTER IV

# PRITHWINARAYAN SHAH'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE LIGHT OF *DIBYA UPADESH*

**P**RITHWINARAYAN SHAH begins his chapter on foreign policy in *Dibya Upadesh* with the statement: "This country is like a gourd between two rocks."<sup>1</sup> Herein he shows his fundamental appreciation of the fact that a small nation such as Nepal, lying as it does between two great and relatively powerful nations, has a very delicate position to maintain.

The position of Nepal was, of course, rendered delicate, not by mere juxtaposition with such powerful neighbours. It was the complex problem of trade from the north and the south, joined to the problem of divergent spheres of influence and the expansionism of the East India Company. There is no way of knowing how deeply Prithwinarayan Shah understood the problem in all its ramifications. His efforts to promote the trade of Gorkha<sup>2</sup> and his caution against letting foreign traders, even of Indian origin, into the country, enunciated in *Dibya Upadesh*,<sup>3</sup> indicate his awareness of the need for trade and the dangers involved. But there is not sufficient evidence to allow one to hazard an estimate as to the extent of his appreciation of the problem of coexistence with such neighbours as Nepal had.

The document *Dibya Upadesh* does, however, indicate the need for a healthy fear of the British.<sup>4</sup> It also shows an appreciation of the delicacy of the situation<sup>5</sup> and the necessity of maintaining relations of friendship with these powers.<sup>6</sup>

December, 1774, is the date Baburam Acharya assigns to *Dibya Upadesh*.<sup>7</sup> We are at a loss as to just how he sets the date, but if we assume that it is an acceptable date, we must likewise assume that this document is the fruit of a lifetime of experience. This chapter, then, will discuss those events in

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1. *Dibya Upadesh*, p. 12; translation (Chapter III), p. 42.

2. Gyawali, p. 199; also Acharya, p. 22.

3. *Dibya Upadesh*, pp. 13-14; translation, p. 42.

4. "One day that force will come." *Dibya Upadesh*, p. 12; translation, p. 42.

5. "This nation is like a gourd between two rocks." *Dibya Upadesh*, p. 12; translation, p. 42.

6. "Maintain a treaty of friendship with the emperor of China. Keep also a treaty of friendship with the emperor of the southern sea." *Dibya Upadesh*, p. 12; translation, p. 42.

7. Acharya, p. 67.

Prithwinarayan Shah's life that seem to have led him to formulate the instructions contained in *Dibya Upadesh*, specifically in regard to Tibet and the East India Company.

### A. TIBET

The only point of real contact between Prithwinarayan Shah and Tibet was that of trade. The efforts of Gorkha to establish trade relations with Tibet date from the time of Ram Shah,<sup>8</sup> who entered into a trade agreement with Patan and brought to Gorkha Newari traders to help him carry on trade, perhaps with a view to taking over the Tibetan trade that passed through Kyrung.<sup>9</sup> This was the early seventeenth century.<sup>10</sup> Over a hundred years later, when Prithwinarayan Shah became king of Gorkha and began to mint his own coins, this same purpose seems to have been in his mind.<sup>11</sup> There seems to be no other reasonable explanation for the fact that he made his own coins to match in weight the Malla coins minted for use both in Nepal and in Tibet.<sup>12</sup> We have seen that the minting of coins for Tibet was an important source of revenue for the Malla kings of the Valley.<sup>13</sup> Regardless of the actual amount of trade carried on between Nepal and Tibet, the profit accruing from the minting of such coins could become an equally important source of income for Prithwinarayan Shah. Immediately after his conquest of the Valley, he began to substitute his own coins for the Newar coins.<sup>14</sup> The fact that Prithwinarayan Shah's coins were pure silver<sup>15</sup> and the Newar coins were debased<sup>16</sup> presented a problem of exchange. Because the Tibetans would not agree on the terms of substituting the Shah coins for the Malla coins already in circulation,<sup>17</sup> the trade between Nepal and Tibet was closed for five years. Prithwinarayan Shah sent a delegation to Tibet to convince the Tibetans of the need for removing the old coins from circulation and substituting the new Shah coins.<sup>18</sup> This delegation was sent in 1774.<sup>19</sup> It would seem that this contact was more than sufficient for Prithwinarayan Shah to realize the difficulties and the dangers involved in having Tibet as a northern neighbour. Tibet was a hard rock against the fragile gourd that was Nepal;<sup>20</sup> yet, if Nepal's trade

8. Gyawali, p. 195.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

11. Acharya, p. 67.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

13. Cf. above, Chapter I, pp. 17-18.

14. Sanwal, p. 74; also Acharya, p. 67.

15. Acharya, p. 67.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

17. Sanwal, p. 74.

18. Acharya, p. 67.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

20. *Dibya Upadesh*, p. 12; translation, p. 42.

was to prosper, friendship must be maintained with the emperor of the north.<sup>21</sup> That Prithwinarayan Shah's fears in this regard were not unfounded is clearly indicated by the Nepal-Tibet War, which was fought over this same issue just seventeen years after his death.<sup>22</sup>

## B. THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

The question of relations with the British, i.e. the East India Company, is not so easily discussed. It is proposed to treat these relations under three headings: 1. The Bara, Parsa, and Rautahat affairs; 2. the Sanyasis affair; and 3. the Chaudandi and Bijayapur affair. In each of these cases, the situation will be briefly explained, the problem presented by the situation will then be outlined, and the solution or proposed solution arrived at by Prithwinarayan Shah will be given.

### 1. The Bara, Parsa, and Rautahat Affair

When Prithwinarayan Shah was pressing the attack on the Valley, the East India Company made some effort to intervene on behalf of the kings of the Valley.<sup>23</sup> The attack was easily beaten off,<sup>24</sup> and Captain Kinloch, the leader of the expedition, returned to the terai with his battered detachment.<sup>25</sup> Here he occupied some thirteen pargannas plus some villages, all Gurkha territories.<sup>26</sup> This land lay between the northern border of Bettiah and Nepal.<sup>27</sup> Captain Kinloch was of the opinion that these territories, properly managed, could yield revenue to the extent of ten lakhs of rupees per year.<sup>28</sup> He persuaded the Company to maintain them, but this move on the part of Captain Kinloch was ill-advised. The immediate effect of his expedition and this occupation was to confirm the Gurkhas in their suspicions of the expansionist designs of the Company.<sup>29</sup>

This situation was aggravated by the over-eagerness of some of the Company's officers who sought to take even more of the Gorkhali territories, by dispossessing the Nepalese authorities.<sup>30</sup> Local officers of the Company repeatedly appealed to the council to move against the Gurkhas.<sup>31</sup> Fortunately, the higher officials of the Company were now aware that they had made a serious mistake in attempting to assist the Newar kings in their

21. *Ibid.*, p. 12; translation, p. 42.

22. Sanwal, pp. 75-76.

23. Cf. above, Chapter II, pp. 35-36.

24. Chaudhuri, pp. 22-23.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 23; also Regmi, p. 75.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 23; also Regmi, p. 75.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-44.

fight against Prithwinarayan Shah.<sup>32</sup> Anxious to regain what had been lost in the way of trade and perhaps even to open a route through Nepal to Tibet,<sup>33</sup> the Company was quite willing to settle by negotiation the problem of these *jagirs*.

Dinanath Upadhyaya, who was the *vakil* who brought these negotiations to a favourable conclusion for the Nepalis,<sup>34</sup> had been a clerk for Kehar Singh Basnyet, the former governor of Makwanpur.<sup>35</sup> Dinanath Upadhyaya was fully cognisant of the intricate relationship that had existed between the former king of Makwanpur and the Mughul nawabs,<sup>36</sup> whose position the Company had now taken as *diwan*. In view of this, Dinanath was sent to negotiate with the British on the basis of the Gurkha replacement of the raja of Makwanpur and the willingness of the Gorkhali ruler to honour the former raja's obligations to the Bihar *subba*.<sup>37</sup> That this mission was concluded successfully is evidenced by a letter from the Patna council to the governor-in-council in Calcutta, which states: "The tribute, you will observe, was valued in Alamgir's time at Rs. 1,200/-; it was afterwards raised to ten thousand and afterwards to Rs. 12,000/-, which is the present valuation, but has always been paid in elephants, not in money. Peeternarayan (sic) the Goorkha Rajah has this year sent five small elephants on account of this and the last year's tribute, amounting according to the existing valuation to about rupees 15,000/- and we have no reason to complain of his committed any acts of hostilities as yet, whatever may be apprehended of him hereafter."<sup>38</sup>

The situation here disclosed is a potentially explosive one on the Nepal border. The Company was inclined towards a settlement rather than expansion, despite the wishes of local officers of the Company in the terai and near-terai regions. Whereas in other areas, it seems, Prithwinarayan Shah was quite willing to try the patience of the British,<sup>39</sup> in this case where very substantial *jagirs* were at stake he sent his most knowledgeable *vakil* and negotiated with tenacity and understanding.<sup>40</sup>

In this instance the negotiations ended extremely favourably for Nepal. Nepal received the positive right to the *jagirs* in question and had to pay for these fertile lands only nominal rent. The Company, negotiating as much for goodwill as for positive achievement, accomplished little more than a peaceful

32. *Ibid.*, Chapter II, pp. 34-38.

33. Gleig's *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, Vol. I, p. 310, quoted in Chaudhuri, p. 53.

34. Acharya, p. 58.

35. Acharya, p. 58. Kehar Singh died in the battle of Saptahun, in which the Gorkhals were defeated by the *Chaubisi Rajas*. Regmi, p. 92.

36. Acharya, p. 58.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

38. Quoted in Chaudhuri, p. 44.

39. It is said that at times he sent *vakils* to discuss matters with the British without telling the *vakils* what the matter was about and without giving them any authority to act.

40. Acharya, p. 59.

settlement of this particular border problem, with no further trade advantages or territorial rights.

## 2. The Sanyasi Problem

The sanyasi rebellion was one of the most formidable that the British had to face at the beginning of their rule in Bengal.<sup>41</sup> Hindu sanyasis and Muslim fakirs, supported by the peasantry, disbanded soldiers and dispossessed zamindars, initiated the movement.<sup>42</sup> From 1763 onwards they made almost annual incursions into Bengal.<sup>43</sup> After the great Bengal famine, they increased their activities considerably; and in 1772 they defeated a company of sepoy sent against them, killing its commander.<sup>44</sup> In 1773, still another British detachment was cut off by a band of some 300 sanyasis, with only twelve sepoy escaping.<sup>45</sup>

It is not to be wondered at that the governor requested the raja of Nepal, Prithwinarayan Shah, to assist him in blocking the route these sanyasis used for their escape.<sup>46</sup> According to the Nepali records these sanyasis used to come from Hardwar, raiding towards the east.<sup>47</sup> They attacked Ambal, Sarang, Champaran, Bijayapur, and Dinajpur, looting and destroying.<sup>48</sup> When they were attacked in numbers that constituted a danger to themselves, they disappeared into the jungles of the Nepal terai and so escaped.<sup>49</sup> Life in the villages was upset,<sup>50</sup> and though many of the peasantry may have supported this action against the new British masters,<sup>51</sup> the damage to the economic life of the countryside, added to the losses suffered in the famine, must have been difficult for the village people to endure. It was essential that this escape route be blocked, if the sanyasi threat were to be properly handled by the Company.

Prithwinarayan Shah responded to the governor's request by suggesting that he be allowed to extend his dominions up to the River Gandak.<sup>52</sup> This would make it possible for Prithwinarayan Shah to cut off their retreat completely. As it was, he was not allowed to cross to the Gandak, which was the point where the sanyasis entered into British territories.<sup>53</sup>

The governor, Mr. Hastings, failed to reply to this request of Prithwinarayan Shah. But both British and Nepali sources

41. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*. Calcutta, 1962, Vol. I, pp. 135-36.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

46. Chaudhuri, p. 52.

47. *Itihas Prakashma Sandhi-Patra Sangraha*, Benares, 2022. B. S., Vol. I, p. 9.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

51. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement*, Vol. I, p. 136.

52. Chaudhuri, p. 52.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

indicate that some sort of agreement was reached, since both sources describe the incident and state that the sanyasis were blocked.

The India Office records say: "At that time a number of armed Nagas used to come in a body from Hardwar through the Teracee to the Eastward as far as Dinajpur and to ravage the Company's territories every year. When the troops advanced to drive them back they always retired and concealed themselves in the Teracee where the troops were unable to pursue them. In this manner the country was laid waste. At length the English entered into arrangement with the Raja of Nepal that he should prevent the passage of the Nagas."<sup>54</sup>

The Nepali sources say that some companies of troops were stationed in the terai and *the road was closed to the Nagas.*<sup>55</sup>

What consideration was paid for this service, if any, is not known. The situation is one more instance of cooperation between Prithwinarayan Shah and the British in cases where it could be done with no sacrifice of sovereignty or without allowing foreign troops or traders to enter into the country. It is also typical of the negotiations of Prithwinarayan Shah that he should endeavour to turn this service into some positive advantage for his country.

### 3. The Chaudandi and Bijayapur Affair

To understand the background of this very intricate problem, one must recall the unusual form of government enjoyed in Bijayapur and Chaudandi. The two principalities had the same customs, since they were one in origin and were divided only at about the time when Prithwinarayan Shah came to the throne of Gorkha.<sup>56</sup> The raja was, in most cases, little concerned with the affairs of government, which were taken care of by the chautariya, but was surrounded by very loyal Rajput and Khas retainers.<sup>57</sup> Next in rank to the raja was the chautariya, who seems always to have been a Kirati of the family that had governed this nation before its union with the Rajputs under Lohangga.<sup>58</sup> The chautariya signed all commissions and orders, while the raja merely applied his seal.<sup>59</sup> The raja might punish the chautariya, even to the point of death; but he was not permitted to deprive him of his rank or deprive the chautariya's son of his regular succession.<sup>60</sup> Recalling that the people governed were Kiratis, it is clear how powerful the Kirati chautariya was.

54. *India Office Records, Home, Misc.*, Vol. 648, p. 206, quoted in Chaudhuri, p. 53.

55. *Sandhi-patra Sangraha*, p. 9.

56. Hamilton, p. 140.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 146-47 and 135-36.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

He received as financial reward for his services one tenth of the income of the state.<sup>61</sup>

The actual conduct of government was normally in the hands of a kazi, to which post the raja might appoint anyone he pleased.<sup>62</sup>

The office of dewan was hereditary in a family of Brahmans.<sup>63</sup> The task of the dewan was to manage the whole of the collections of the territory on the plains. His income was probably higher than that of the chautariya.<sup>64</sup> This fact plus his rights as a Brahman probably gave the dewan almost as much power as the chautariya.<sup>65</sup>

In the two principalities under discussion, then, it seems there were three hereditary offices of great power: that of raja, chautariya, and dewan. Each had influence, financial power, and strength accorded by the laws of succession. Each had a strong vested interest in the country. Struggle between them was inevitable.

Karna Sen,<sup>66</sup> the last of the Sen rajas of Chaudandi and then, after the Gorkhali conquest of Chaudandi, the last effective Sen ruler of Bijayapur (Morang),<sup>67</sup> not only inherited this complicated governmental machinery, he also inherited the struggle for power that had gone on in Bijayapur since the time when Kamdatta Sen and Bichitra Rai had fallen out.<sup>68</sup> The Kiratis had always been involved in the government of Bijayapur. But in addition, at this time appeals were made on behalf of the raja and the chautariya to the Company in Calcutta<sup>69</sup> and to the raja of Sikkim.<sup>70</sup>

### Karna Sen and Prithwinarayan Shah

Karna Sen, in his turn, quite naturally called on external help to bolster his rule. Chaudhuri says that "It appears that Coran Sein (sic), Rajah of Moraung, was the *leader* of the petty rajas of the hills in the Terai."<sup>71</sup> A careful study of Hamilton, who had his information from Agam Singh, the last chautariya of Bijayapur before the Gorkhali conquest,<sup>72</sup> will show, I believe, that Karna Sen was far from being the leader of the petty rajas of the hills in the terai. He was the last effective spokesman of the Sen family in the Kosi area, ruler of a small fragment of the original Makwanpur kingdom of Lohangga.<sup>73</sup> He was, then,

61. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

66. Called "Coran Sein" by Chaudhuri.

67. Hamilton, p. 140.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

71. Chaudhuri, p. 47.

72. Hamilton, p. 133.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

extremely vulnerable. From the time he acceded to the throne of Bijayapur, his days were numbered. The Gorkhali forces were steadily advancing, and his own health seems to have been poor, since he died within eighteen months of his accession.<sup>74</sup>

In view of this, it does not seem strange that Karna Sen should have made repeated efforts to involve the Company in the affairs of Bijayapur. The fact that Karna Sen had ample supplies of excellent timber to offer the Company<sup>75</sup> promised to make that involvement a profitable one for the British. Records show that as early as 1772 correspondence on the subject of this timber trade was being carried on by Karna Sen and one Mr. Peacock, on behalf of the Company.<sup>76</sup> At that time Karna Sen coupled his offer of assistance in procuring timber with a request for military assistance from the Company.<sup>77</sup>

But the point of military intervention in the affairs of Bijayapur had already been raised by Mr. Ducarel, the British supervisor in Purnea.<sup>78</sup> In the period when Kamdatta Sen, Karna Sen's immediate predecessor, and his chautariya, Buddhakarna Rai, were struggling for power, Kamdatta Sen managed to oust Buddhakarna Rai temporarily.<sup>79</sup> Buddhakarna Rai then proceeded to plot against Kamdatta Sen and eventually succeeded in having him murdered.<sup>80</sup> It is not clear whether Kamdatta Sen was succeeded on the throne at this time. It may be that during a short interregnum the uncle of Kamdatta Sen, Raghunath Sen, ruled Bijayapur. At any rate, during this period Buddhakarna Rai harassed the peasants of both Bijayapur and the neighbouring areas of the Company. The throne of Bijayapur sought from the Company assistance against him.<sup>81</sup> Mr. Ducarel urged that assistance be given.<sup>82</sup> The select committee, however, ruled that the policy of non-intervention then being followed should be maintained, unless the interests of the Company rendered military intervention necessary,<sup>83</sup> which was not the case in Bijayapur. Military aid to Bijayapur was thus deferred.<sup>84</sup>

When Karna Sen requested aid of this type from the Company a year or so later, the policy had already been formulated. Such aid was not to be given at this time.<sup>85</sup>

However, when Buddhakarna Rai had instigated the murder of Kamdatta Sen, he brought Prithwinarayan Shah into the

74. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

75. Chaudhuri, pp. 45-46.

76. *Public Proceedings, 1748-1800*, June 8, 1772, No. 2(a), quoted in Chaudhuri, p. 48.

77. Chaudhuri, p. 48.

78. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

79. Hamilton, p. 140.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 140; Chaudhuri, p. 50; also Acharya, p. 61.

81. Chaudhuri, p. 50.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 48.



picture.<sup>86</sup> Kamdatta Sen was the first cousin of Hemkarna Sen, Prithwinarayan Shah's father-in-law.<sup>87</sup> If the Gorkhali ruler required an excuse to invade these eastern lands, he now had it. Both Hamilton and Baburam Acharya assign as the cause of the Gurkha invasion of Bijayapur Prithwinarayan Shah's desire for vengeance.<sup>88</sup> But before his attack, Prithwinarayan Shah wrote to the Company, complaining of Buddhakarna Rai's action and announcing his intention to punish him for it.<sup>89</sup> It is this letter and the diplomacy that accompanied it that is of significance here. The mode of Prithwinarayan Shah's conquest of the area and its consequences are questions of minor importance in the present context.

This, then, was the problem. The background of Bijayapur was one of internal struggle and requests for external aid.<sup>90</sup> British interests were affected, but not to the point where interference was deemed necessary.<sup>91</sup> Into this situation Prithwinarayan Shah introduced his own solution. 1. He informed the Company in advance of his intentions to invade Bijayapur and gave his reasons for this action. 2. He proposed to assume control of the Bijayapur *jagirs* on the basis of his relationship with the murdered king, Kamdatta Sen.<sup>92</sup> 3. He sent his *vakils* to Calcutta to represent his claim, producing the necessary *patta*, duly sealed by the naib of Asimabad, to support his claim.<sup>93</sup> 4. He asked, through his dewan, Deota Shahi,<sup>94</sup> that these *jagirs* now be signed over by the Company to himself. 5. He asked, in addition, that since this was a punitive mission, no help be sent to Buddhakarna Rai.<sup>95</sup>

Considering the times, it was a masterful approach. To the British it offered the possibility of settling a disturbed area without their intervention — a settlement to be brought about by a king with whom the Company wished very much to be conciliated and with whom it wished to work in close harmony. His letter and subsequent negotiations enabled them to conclude the matter without suffering any loss of prestige. On the other hand, Prithwinarayan Shah's appreciation of the value of the negotiations is revealed by his sending Dinanath Upadhyaya to continue the discussions when the governor general requested more reliable *vakils*.<sup>96</sup> The affair was settled in favour of Prithwinarayan Shah, and Dinanath Upadhyaya was accredited as an ambassador of the Nepal government during his stay in Calcutta.<sup>97</sup>

86. Acharya, p. 61.

87. Cf. Table IV, Chapter I above.

88. Hamilton, p. 141.

89. Chaudhuri, pp. 51-52.

90. Cf. above, pp. 53-54.

91. Cf. above, p. 54.

92. Chaudhuri, p. 53.

93. Ibid., p. 52.

94. Ibid., p. 52.

95. Ibid., p. 54.

96. Ibid., pp. 52-53.

97. Ibid., p. 54.

It was while Dinanath was in Calcutta carrying on these negotiations that Prithwinarayan Shah retired to Nuwakot to plan the further consolidation of his kingdom, plans that were very soon interrupted by his death in January, 1775.<sup>98</sup>

### C. CRITICISM

Three things should be noted from the diplomacy and foreign policy of Prithwinarayan Shah as stated in this chapter.

Firstly, Prithwinarayan Shah shows throughout an appreciation of the superior strength of both Tibet, backed as it was by China, and the East India Company. At no time does he attempt to use force against either of these powers. The basic problems that confronted him in relation to both Tibet and the Company he carefully negotiated. While holding to his claims he tried in each instance to support these claims with acceptable argument and proof. In each situation he sent his most able negotiators. In his choice of Dinanath Upadhyaya he demonstrated a shrewdness basic to diplomatic endeavour, sending, as he did, a man who not only knew the complete details of the case, but one who joined to the quality of personal acceptability the capacity to push negotiations through to a successful conclusion. One can only conclude that Prithwinarayan Shah, despite the surroundings in which he was reared and in which he ruled, was gifted with a native intelligence that quickly adapted itself from the narrow field of the diplomacy of the hill areas to the wider areas of international relations.

Secondly, in all of his contacts with the Company, Prithwinarayan Shah showed himself true to his basic suspicion of the intentions of the Company and firm in his opposition to their efforts to infiltrate Nepal. There seems to be no doubt that this policy of virtual isolation could and did prove harmful to Nepal's development when carried to its extreme, but during the period when Prithwinarayan Shah ruled, it seems to have been a well-calculated course. One could, I believe, argue some of the details involved in a *total* application of his policy, but in its basic outlines it seems to have been sound and imaginative.

Thirdly, Prithwinarayan Shah showed a great wisdom in insisting that friendship be maintained with his powerful neighbours. His willingness to negotiate, his ability to cooperate when it was clearly to his advantage to do so, and his skill at parrying requests he considered to be harmful to his kingdom without flatly refusing them, indicate a sound sense of national self-preservation. He demonstrated, as it seems to this writer, a ready understanding that, between the path of total acceptance and total rejection, there lay the way of negotiation coupled with firm adherence to the principles that formed his frame of reference.

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98. Acharya, p. 67.

To pass judgement on the morality of the principles invoked by Prithwinarayan Shah or the manner in which he adapted these principles to the treatment he meted out to the hill rajas is neither to the point of this study, nor is it, as it seems, the task of the historian. It seems sufficient to add here that the foreign policy evolved by Prithwinarayan Shah and incorporated in his *Dibya Upadesh* was sufficiently sound to bring the newly born kingdom of Nepal safely through more than thirty years of very troubled times before the clash between Nepal and the Company occurred. This was no small achievement in the subcontinent in the eighteenth century.

## CHAPTER V

### PRITHWINARAYAN SHAH'S INTERNAL POLICY IN THE LIGHT OF *DIBYA UPADESH*

**P**RITHWINARAYAN SHAH'S internal policy, as it is expressed in *Dibya Upadesh*, does not lend itself to easy historical analysis. There are three major reasons for this. First, external sources give us nothing that dates from precisely this period. Foreigners were strictly excluded from the kingdom at this time.<sup>1</sup> As a result, there is no extant external reference material for the conduct of affairs inside the newly united Nepal. Secondly, Nepali sources tend to be more concerned with the task of expansion to the east than with the organization of affairs within the conquered territory. Thirdly, Prithwinarayan Shah's rather premature death, at the age of fifty-three,<sup>2</sup> left him very little time to carry out this organization. He had scarcely six years after the conquest of Bhadgaon until his death.<sup>3</sup> Hence many of the teachings contained in *Dibya Upadesh* could not have been put into practice by Prithwinarayan Shah himself.

The analysis of Prithwinarayan Shah's internal policy, then, will have to be almost entirely a statement and explanation of the most desirable ideas of Prithwinarayan Shah on this subject in his *Dibya Upadesh*. Before arriving at this decision to treat the subject in this way, several alternative methods were considered. Since each of them has some merit, it is only fitting that we set out clearly our reasons for not following these alternative procedures.

One possible approach would have been to compare the policy set forth in *Dibya Upadesh* with that of Ram Shah or Jayasthiti

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1. "Prithwinarayan Shah was anti-British and anti-European. He believed that once a foreigner from off the seas set foot on any part of the soil of Nepal, the very independence and welfare of his people lay exposed to danger. . . . He was equally opposed to granting equal rights of trade to people outside of Nepal." Regmi, p. 100.

2. Prithwinarayan Shah was born in January, 1723 (Acharya, *Sankshipta Jivani*, p. 96) and died January 10, 1775 (Sharma, p. 231). Regmi, p. 97, unaccountably, after giving Prithwinarayan Shah's birth date as January, 1723, and giving his date of death as January, 1775, says, "He was just fifty at the time."

3. Bhadgaon fell in 1771 according to some authors (Gyawali, p. 204 and Sharma, p. 152) and in 1769 according to others (Acharya, p. 48 and Regmi, p. 85). If we take the later date, Prithwinarayan Shah had only four years to reorganize the kingdom. The earlier date would have given a maximum of six years.

Malla. It was thought, however, that this would bring us no closer to an understanding of Prithwinarayan Shah's mind, which, above all, is the object of this study.

Again, a comparison could have been made between what is stated in the *Dibya Upadesh* and the conditions in Nepal as they are reported by Kirkpatrick some twenty years later. But this would suppose that Prithwinarayan Shah's immediate successors actually carried out the policy he outlined. In addition, as Kirkpatrick points out, he was able to observe *very little* of the political institutions of the government.<sup>4</sup> And Kirkpatrick was the first foreign observer to write on actual conditions in Nepal after Prithwinarayan Shah's death.

It is proposed, then, in this chapter to discuss the major teachings of Prithwinarayan Shah's internal policy directly from *Dibya Upadesh*. The discussion will touch on the following points: first, the general principles of Prithwinarayan Shah's government; second, the various functions of government mentioned by him; third, military and defence, on which he lays much emphasis in the latter half of the *Dibya Upadesh*; fourth, trade; and fifth, development, which Prithwinarayan Shah touched on very briefly.

This method of procedure is not without its dangers. As an historian one is hardly qualified to pass expert judgement on such varied aspects of internal policy. However, if the discussion is limited as far as possible to the historical ramifications of each of these points treated in *Dibya Upadesh*, it is felt that some contribution can be made that will be of service to historians.

## A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

The first thing Prithwinarayan Shah aimed at was a simple, even an austere, government.<sup>5</sup> The court life as it was known in Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhadgaon he rejected: "My capital would be set apart."<sup>6</sup> "My wish is to build my capital at Dahachowk."<sup>7</sup> "In these cities, apart from my capital, let there remain empty pomp and pleasure."<sup>8</sup> It is clear that Prithwinarayan Shah did not live long enough to achieve this. His capital remained at Kathmandu. But it is equally clear from the passages cited that he wanted this move and that his reasons for wanting it were far from sentimental. He had seen the intrigues and the low state of morality of the Valley, and he was repelled by it.

Before the conquest of the Valley, Prithwinarayan Shah had seen ample evidence of court intrigue. In Kathmandu he had seen

4. Kirkpatrick, *Nepal*, p. 87.

5. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation pp. 42, 44, and 45.

6. *Ibid.*, translation, pp. 42-43.

7. *Ibid.*, translation, pp. 42-43.

8. *Ibid.*, translation, pp. 42-43.

the trouble Jaya Prakash Malla had experienced with his courtiers.<sup>9</sup> Patan had suffered a long period of anarchy, and its king-making Pradhans had moved kings on and off the throne at their whim.<sup>10</sup> Even Prithwinarayan Shah's own brother had been summarily removed.<sup>11</sup> Bhadgaon had not suffered so much as the other two capitals, but even there intrigue and betrayal had weakened the kingdom.<sup>12</sup> Hence Prithwinarayan Shah's condemnation: "This three-cited Nepal is a cold stone. It is great only in intrigue."<sup>13</sup> If possible, he wanted to avoid this.

This intrigue, however, was not an isolated phenomenon. The general morality of the country is to be considered when intrigues reach such a pitch. Regmi discusses this question of the morals of the Valley at some length, reaching conclusions unfavourable to the Valley.<sup>14</sup> One hesitates to pass a blanket judgement on the morals of a country from the conduct of its nobles. But it seems that at least at the level of the courtiers there *was* much to be desired. Conspicuously lacking was the loyalty to the throne and to the ideals of the country, whereas passion for power was much in evidence.<sup>15</sup> This usually indicates a cleavage between the activities of the courtiers and the welfare of the citizens, to the detriment of the latter. It was, perhaps, to correct this that Prithwinarayan Shah declared: "Whether a man be selected as a soldier or as a courtier, let him not acquire wealth. Give such a man only honour, and that according to his worth."<sup>16</sup>

This point, dealing with the type of reward to be given to those in the service of the crown, will be discussed under the aspect of its influence on government. Here it is desired to bring out a principle of government. Service at this highest level in the state was meant to be an honour and the fulfilment of a duty to the state, and not a source of personal enrichment. It seems to have been Prithwinarayan Shah's intention to try to eliminate court intrigue by eliminating much of that which makes intrigue attractive.

In this connection, it would be to the point, of course, if we had some account of the sort of court that Prithwinarayan Shah actually kept. It would be an excellent check on the depth of conviction he had on this subject. It is hard to fault his directives in this regard, especially when he subjoins the statement that "If the citizens are wealthy, the country is strong. The king's storehouse is his people."<sup>17</sup> However, the historian prefers to deal in facts. The most, then, that this writer can venture by

9. Cf. above, Chapter I.

10. Cf. above, Chapter I.

11. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*. Vol. II, p. 363.

12. Regmi, p. 88; cf. also Wright, p. 156.

13. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, pp. 42-43.

14. Regmi, pp. 88-89.

15. Sharma, pp. 156-61.

16. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, pp. 43-44.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

way of criticism is that the enunciation of this ideal of simplicity and austerity in government showed a clear realization of the situation that existed in the kingdoms of the Valley as well as some understanding of the root of the difficulty. One must honestly say, however, that his solution seems very like trying to bring the life and spirit of sacrifice of the military camp into high places. If this was the case, it was an unfortunate decision; for history has not recorded any occasion when this experiment has proved successful over any length of time. Hence it seems that this solution, at least as far as the rewards offered for services are concerned, was something of an oversimplification.

Perhaps Prithwinarayan Shah was himself aware that something more than this idea was required. It seems likely that this was so, at least *if* we accept Regmi's comment: "It was said that both Ranjeetmalla and Jayaprakash warned Prithwinarayan Shah against the intriguing climate of the Valley, and that it was *for this reason* that the latter used the most cruel measures of killing a large number of men in an endeavour to eliminate the least possibility of a hostile underground base of intrigue against himself."<sup>18</sup>

Before leaving the subject of morality and government, mention must be made of Prithwinarayan Shah's ban on the use of imported dancers and singers.<sup>19</sup> He cites as reasons for this ban: the drain of wealth such performers occasion,<sup>20</sup> the deception they practise on the poor,<sup>21</sup> and the fact that such performers prove very successful spies.<sup>22</sup> The ban is extended to include not only the performers but also the melodies used by these performers. They are simply outlawed.<sup>23</sup> One is reminded sharply of Plato's treatment of music for his ideal state: outlaw music that is soft and effeminate.<sup>24</sup>

## B. FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

The first thing that strikes one's eye in the passages in the *Dibya Upadesh* dealing with government<sup>25</sup> is the heavy insistence on keeping specific offices within certain families and alternating the kaziship among a select few families. "Do not take the chamberlain's post from Kalu's family.<sup>26</sup> Do not take the care of the foreign policy with the south from Shivaram Basnyat's family. Do not take the policy for Tibet from the hands of Kalu Pande's family. In giving the kazi's post to the Pandes, Basnyats, Panthas,

18. Regmi, p. 88.

19. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, pp. 43-44.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

24. Plato, *Republic*, Book III, 1. 399.

25. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, pp. 44-45.

26. *Kalu*: Lakida Khadga Magar, cf. Narharinath, p. 38.

and Magars, give it to them each in turn.”<sup>27</sup> And again we find: “In the courts put tested Thakuris as judges and tested Magars as clerks.”<sup>28</sup>

There are several possible reasons for this decision to keep the more important governmental posts in the hands of certain families. One, perhaps, was the distrust of the existing corps of civil servants in Nepal at the time of the conquest. Another, very likely, was the desire to reward those who proved themselves most loyal during the campaign. The former reason would justify this for a short-term policy, until trustworthy local people could be selected to be associated with government. The latter would be understandable for the first few years after the conquest. But as a long-range policy, it seems not only inadequate but also harmful to the idea of “oneness” of the people.

In this latter day we are, of course, accustomed to the idea that those who are most deserving of a post should have the opportunity to fill it, or at least that they should not be barred from it *a priori*. This is, perhaps, a judgment of modern times that should not be applied without distinctions to an age some two hundred years ago. Still, this policy of favouritism, for such it seems, was not the policy of the Mughul court.<sup>29</sup> And it seems quite certain that the Mughul court had a great influence on the kingdoms of West Nepal and on Gorkha itself.<sup>30</sup> Why did Prithwinarayan Shah adopt it?

In criticism, it seems, at least to this writer, that Prithwinarayan Shah was inclined to reward former loyalty<sup>31</sup> rather than to encourage and reward ability. This, if true, would seem to promote security at the cost of good government. In short, it is a policy that is difficult to accept as being truly constructive as a long-term policy.

## Justice

Prithwinarayan Shah's comments on the courts and on justice seem far more to the point and deserving of comment.<sup>32</sup> He said of these: “Let the king see that great justice is done.”<sup>33</sup> “Justice is crippled when bribes are given and when bribes are

27. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, pp. 43-44.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

29. Pannikar (p. 158) sums up the Mughul attitude thus: “The policy of *carriere ouverte aux talents* converted the Moghul empire in one generation from a foreign government into a national state.”

30. Even the title *Shah* indicates this, as Sharma (p. 208) says: “Because he had pleased the emperor in Delhi Kulmandan received the title of Shah from him.” Also, cf. Kirkpatrick (p. 87) “. . . little as I had an opportunity of observing the political institutions of this (Nepal) government, I saw enough to satisfy me that many were drawn directly from that source (the court of Delhi).”

31. “Always arrange to keep your old, tested servants near you; and your nation will be strong.” *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 45.

32. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, pp. 44-45.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 44.



accepted."<sup>34</sup> "In each court put a man skilled in the law. Conduct the courts according to law. Money collected in the courts must never be used for the palace...if this is done there will be no false accusations."<sup>35</sup>

It must be noted first that justice is still the task of the king, and he is to prosecute it: "Let the king see that justice is done."<sup>36</sup> Historically speaking, it was many years before the first attempts to establish an independent judiciary were made in Nepal.<sup>37</sup> As long as the executive and the judiciary are combined in one person, there is always danger that justice will be made to serve expediency. Here, Prithwinarayan Shah tried to mitigate this danger to some extent by insisting that moneys taken in fines should not be placed at the use of the palace. And to see that they would not profit anyone who would be in a position to exact heavier fines to increase income, he stated that the money should be "used to feed holy men, etc."<sup>38</sup> The very fact that some safeguard was proposed is an indication that the danger of injustices being perpetrated in the name of justice was clear to him. But one cannot but express the opinion that for judicial courts lying outside the immediate supervision of the palace, this safeguard was one all too easily circumvented. Perhaps here, as in the case cited above,<sup>39</sup> some less idealistic solution to the problem of justice was also employed. Prithwinarayan Shah's dictum, however, that the courts must be conducted according to law,<sup>40</sup> indicates a real sense of justice and must surely be marked down to his credit.

The punishment recommended for those who gave or accepted bribes was severe but certainly calculated to discourage this practice: confiscation of all the offender's property.<sup>41</sup> The problem of bribery in government was not one that was peculiar to the new Nepal. It is everywhere, and its eradication is not easy. The elimination of bribery from government presents two problems to good government, that of detection and that of punishment. The detection of bribery depends as much on the cooperation of the citizens as it does on the government itself, and little can be done in the way of legislation to insure this cooperation. The punishment here suggested was certainly such as would discourage the practice, once it was clearly known that this sanction would be applied without exception.

There is no way of knowing just how successful this directive was, since we have no available records of this aspect of Prithwinarayan Shah's administration of justice. But the specification

34. Ibid., p. 44.

35. Ibid., p. 45.

36. Ibid., p. 44, emphasis added.

37. This was attempted in the time of Bhim Sen Thapa. Cf. Chittaranjan Nepali, *Bhim Sen Thapa ra Talkalin Nepal*, Kathmandu, 2013 B.S., pp. 224-229.

38. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 45.

39. Cf. above.

40. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 45.

41. Ibid., p. 44.

of the punishment as well as its severity illustrates how important he thought it.

In this connection, however, it must be suggested that the low pay of government officials indicated above<sup>42</sup> may well have some bearing on the question of the acceptance of bribes.

## Finance

Another point that Prithwinarayan Shah insisted on, and one which we know he practised, was his monetary policy. He summed up his views on this in one pithy statement: "Keep the mint pure."<sup>43</sup> The whole problem of the Tibetan trade and the long negotiations attendant on it<sup>44</sup> found its expression here. The Gorkhalis had never been known for their ability in the field of trade. Ram Shah's importation of Newari traders to handle the trade of Gorkha was evidence of this.<sup>45</sup> But Prithwinarayan Shah did realize the importance of pure coins in the field of trade. As has been pointed out, pure coins were always negotiable. Regardless of the inscription the coin bore, if it were pure, it was acceptable on the basis of its weight.<sup>46</sup> Any attempt to increase the amount of money in circulation by debasing the coins was destined for frustration, and that was especially true in a nation of traders. The advice Prithwinarayan Shah gave on this point was extremely sound. Today, as a rule, coins do not contain metal as valuable as the value designated on them. There are many reasons for this. Their redeemable value, however, outside the country minting them is regulated by international agreement, not their intrinsic worth. And in the days of Prithwinarayan Shah, international monetary agreements were yet to be developed. Coins of pure and true weight, then, were an essential part of good trading practices; and it is to Prithwinarayan Shah's credit that he recognized this.

One last item must be treated under the heading of government, that of taxes. Prithwinarayan Shah made three points in his directives on this subject: "In our country there should be no tax farming. Let the government set the rates and collect the taxes and have an annual audit taken."<sup>47</sup> It would be enlightening to compare the situation in North India at this time (1774) with the proposals of Prithwinarayan Shah on taxation. Unfortunately, this is impossible, because at this time in North India a situation approaching fiscal chaos existed.<sup>48</sup> The system

42. Cf. above.

43. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 45.

44. Cf. above, Chapter IV, pp. 49-51.

45. Regmi, p. 22.

46. Tulsiram Baidya, *Lecture*, Tribhuvan University.

47. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, pp. 43-44.

48. "In 1772 bodies of banditti were reported to be plundering the north of Bengal to the number of 50,000; even as late as 1810 Lord Minto referred to a monstrous and disorganized state of society due to the great bodies of armed banditti who robbed or burned villages, and murdered or tortured their inhabitants. Scarcely were law and order established in one

of farming out taxes used in India even at a much later date was a very great evil that worked untold harm to the villagers. Prithwinarayan Shah proposed a system far more just and merciful to the villagers.

In criticism it must be said that if the government were sufficiently strong to employ such a system as Prithwinarayan Shah wished, there could be none better. It is the only way to get the maximum benefit for government from the taxes imposed, without unduly burdening the citizens. Prithwinarayan Shah said nothing about tax *rates*, and, of course, these also must be considered. But little could be said to improve upon the actual system of tax collecting suggested here. It implies a real awareness of the harm done by the system of tax farming and proposes an intelligent substitute for it, rather than making an effort to regulate a system of tax farming. The annual audit is a very desirable check and, if carried out well, would go far towards eliminating tax injustices.

### C. MILITARY AND DEFENCE

Three points have been grouped under this heading: the treatment of soldiers,<sup>49</sup> the organization of the army,<sup>50</sup> and the suggested measures for defence.<sup>51</sup>

The soldiers and the peasants were, for Prithwinarayan Shah, the backbone of the nation.<sup>52</sup> He arranged in his *Dibya Upadesh* for the financial security of the military on whom the welfare of the state rested in a special way. "An important point is that the soldiers required for the king should be given their houses and land and that they should farm it, so they can earn by both means."<sup>53</sup>

This was, of course, not done from an altruistic motive. Soldiers have one purpose only, to fight and fight well. To Prithwinarayan Shah this meant that they must be financially secure. It was not his intention that they have an abundance of wealth, for he said: "Whether a man be selected as a *soldier* or a courtier, let him not acquire wealth. . . . If a rich man enters into battle, he cannot die well; nor can he kill. In a poor man there is spark."<sup>54</sup> The purpose of having his soldiers financially secure was not intended to mean they should be well off. Rather, it was meant to relieve them of unnecessary worry and strain, so that single-mindedly they might enter into battle. As he said, "Then, without concern for their family's welfare, whether

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tract when the process had to be repeated in another, etc." Majumdar, *The History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1962, Vol. I, p. 44.

49. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 44.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

they are in the capital or in the field, they will be stout-hearted."<sup>55</sup>

Prithwinarayan Shah went on to insist on other measures that would give added security to his troops. All distinction in the way of rewards between those who were in the attack forces and those who acted in reserve in a supporting role was to be eliminated. Both tasks are essential to the successful conduct of the war.<sup>56</sup> Finally, if a man should fall in battle, his son was to be taken care of; and the lad's use of his father's land was to be assured until the boy was old enough to be recruited into the army.<sup>57</sup>

Brief as this set of instructions on the care of soldiers was, it showed a very deep understanding of the psychology of the fighting man of those days. It was this sympathetic understanding of the fighting man that won the complete loyalty of Prithwinarayan Shah's troops and forced Kirkpatrick to conclude his evaluation of Prithwinarayan Shah on a note of recognition: "In fine, we may conclude from the respect in which (Prithwinarayan Shah's) memory is yet held by the Purbutties, *and especially the military part of them*, that... he was not inattentive to the means of conciliating those on whose support he principally depended."<sup>58</sup>

Prithwinarayan Shah ended his short instruction on the care of soldiers with the statement: "If the king is discerning, the soldiers will also be confident; and if these instructions are carried out, the nation will have experienced soldiers."<sup>59</sup> "Soldiers are the very marrow of the king."<sup>60</sup>

## Army Organization

The *organization* of the army reflects the character of the Gorkha State. Before the attack on Nuwakot, the army of Prithwinarayan Shah was quite small by modern standards. His troops at that time consisted of several companies, each with one hundred riflemen, under a subedar and sixteen havildars. In addition, there were some men who used only the *khunda* and *khukari*.<sup>61</sup> We may presume that as time went on this army was somewhat larger, but it is doubtful if it became significantly larger. With this in mind, it is possible to understand somewhat better the instructions Prithwinarayan Shah left for the organization of the army.

Another necessary preliminary consideration is the annual *pajani*. This was a grand council composed of the principal ministers of government and such other persons as the head of state chose to invite to it. The task of this council was to examine

55. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

58. Kirkpatrick, p. 271. Emphasis added.

59. *Dibya Upadesh*, pp. 44-45.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

61. Regmi, p. 49.

into the conduct of all the public officers during the preceding year, to degrade, punish, or reward them on the basis of their performance. Government offices were then newly assigned, either to the former holder or to a new man. Military commands and *jagirs* were handled in the same way.<sup>62</sup> It will be apparent from the sections of the *Dibya Upadesh* discussed below that the military companies were also reorganized at this time, at least at the time of Prithwinarayan Shah.

Prithwinarayan Shah advised that at the time of the annual *pagani* the authorities should "make up companies of one hundred rifles and appoint as commander of them one who has tested himself in four or five battles."<sup>63</sup> Hence, his first requirement was experience and bravery. This had the twofold advantage of ensuring experienced leadership and inspiring loyalty in the troops.

Experience was also the touchstone in choosing a *sat pagari* commander.<sup>64</sup> Prithwinarayan Shah asked that such an officer be one who "has been successful in several battles."<sup>65</sup> It is also interesting to note that the commander is the one who chooses his subordinate officers, both the *sat pagari* commander and the sixteen havildars who serve under him.<sup>66</sup> This, of course, is a situation that should have served to guarantee the maximum of compatibility among the men, and, if the instruction on experience was followed, to provide a well-knit and competent fighting force. The sixteen havildars were to choose their own subordinates: "The sixteen havildars should choose soldiers known from experience to be courageous."<sup>67</sup> In a small fighting force it was inevitable that all the men would be known to one another, but by having each officer choose his own subordinates, the composition of the company would be such that a very strong unit could be put into the field.

Recruitment was to be made only from certain *jats*. Each of these *jats* should form its own companies. "In their own companies enlist Khas, Magars, Gurungs, and Thakuris, and only these four *jats*."<sup>68</sup> The reasons for this restriction as to the *jats* to be enlisted would seem to lie in the fighting record and abilities of each group, while the reasons for enlisting each *jat* in its own company were probably found in the varying customs of each particular *jat*. Discrimination in recruitment would provide an added bond of union with the company. The theory that only these four *jats* had fighting qualities cannot stand up to the test of history. An unprejudiced view of the various battles for Kirtipur will be ample evidence that there were other skilful fighters in Nepal.

62. Kirkpatrick, p. 86.

63. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, pp. 44-45.

64. Narharinath (p. 29, note) speculates the seven *pagaris* to be jamadar, sergeant, nisan, adjutant, ghata, priest, and bajanaik.

65. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 44.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Prithwinarayan Shah has not enlarged a great deal on his organizational instructions. But there is no doubt that the instruction comes from a person well acquainted with the military needs of the times. It is here, as it seems to this writer, more than any other part of the *Dibya Upadesh* that the real qualities of leadership show through in Prithwinarayan Shah, a leadership tempered by experience.

## Defence

In treating of the defence of Nepal, Prithwinarayan Shah discussed three points: forts, fortifications, and strategy. Taking the question of strategy first, he insisted that when the British came, as come they would,<sup>69</sup> the Nepali force should not go down to the plains to meet them. "Do not go down to the plains to fight. Withdraw to the hills to fight."<sup>70</sup> Considering the size of Prithwinarayan Shah's army,<sup>71</sup> this would seem to be an obvious instruction. In the hills a few well-placed men could easily stave off hundreds of attackers, whereas in the plains, a large attacking force could easily surround and cut off a Gorkhali army. Yet, if the opinion of Prinsep is accepted, this simple advice was not always followed.<sup>72</sup> It is true that the conduct of the Anglo-Nepal War did take place in the hill areas, but the initial skirmishes were fought in the lowlands. This whole question of the skirmishes on the lowlands is a vexed one. It would seem that Prithwinarayan Shah's policy was directed towards negotiation in the lowlands,<sup>73</sup> with the military reserved for the highlands.<sup>74</sup> Prinsep, and others following him, indicate that this policy underwent some change. To discuss this question thoroughly here would take us far afield, and is a subject actually dating from the post-Prithwinarayan Shah period. The question is raised here merely to emphasize the fact that though this advice on strategy seems obvious at first sight, it is advice that deserves careful thought. Was Prithwinarayan Shah's advice followed, obvious as it seems? The increasing power of the East India Company, of course, made it necessary for Nepal to *adapt* her policy to changing circumstances. But was it necessary to *change* it? In the light of this brief instruction on strategy, one can well wonder whether Prithwinarayan Shah would have conducted his affairs with the British in quite the same way that later authorities did.

This advice on strategy was followed by Prithwinarayan Shah's carefully exposed ideas on defence. Forts were to be sited on certain key hills.<sup>75</sup> In situating these forts, the primary concern

69. Ibid., p. 42.

70. Ibid., p. 42.

71. Cf. above, p. 66.

72. Prinsep, Henry T., *History of the Political and Military Transactions of the Marquess of Hastings*, Vol. I, pp. 63-65.

73. Cf. above, Chapter IV.

74. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 42.

75. Ibid., p. 42.

was the protection of the Valley, with four of the seven forts mentioned being on the hills surrounding the Valley.<sup>76</sup> The other three forts mentioned were located in such areas that they could protect the approaches to the Valley.<sup>77</sup>

In connection with these forts, the more important passes were to be guarded with iron doors, which were to be built in them<sup>78</sup> (and, it seems, actually were built).<sup>79</sup> These would permit a small band of men to hold a much larger invading force in check until reinforcements could be brought. Both forts and fortifications were to have cannon situated on higher ground, where they would prove most effective.<sup>80</sup> These precautions, added to the Gorkhals' intimate knowledge of the hills and the hill trails, would be sufficient under normal circumstances for them to defeat a vastly superior force and, if circumstances were favourable, to inflict serious damage on *any* invading force.

It will be seen that the strategy indicated in *Dibya Upadesh* was amply supported by the defensive posture assumed by Nepal. For the Nepal of Prithwinarayan Shah, it was admirably suited to the needs of the country. It was frankly aimed at preventing British entry into the country, and nothing was said of the other enemies of Nepal to the east or west. The changing dimensions of Nepal would necessitate an adaptation of this outlook, but for the Nepal of Prithwinarayan Shah it was more than adequate.

#### D. TRADE

Prithwinarayan Shah's treatment of the subject of Nepal's trade in the *Dibya Upadesh* is very brief.<sup>81</sup> It speaks of three points: foreign traders entering into Nepal, exports, and the use of homespun materials.

The question of foreign traders entering into Nepal is dismissed almost curtly: "Do not let the merchants of India come up from the border."<sup>82</sup> Both the Company's agents and the Kashmiri merchants, who had costly Indian-made cloth for sale, were forbidden entry.<sup>83</sup> The reason given for this exclusion is the currency-drain which constant importing of costly materials would involve: "If the merchants of India come to our country, they will leave the people poor."<sup>84</sup> There is also the possibility that these merchants would carry away information about Nepal that would be of use to the Company, and this danger, too, must be taken into account. It was an essential part of Prithwinarayan

76. Shivapuri, Phulchowki, Mahadevpokhari, and Chandragiri. Cf. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 42.

77. Palung, Dapcha, Kahule. Cf. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 42.

78. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 42.

79. Narharinath, p. 27, note.

80. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, pp. 43-44.

81. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

83. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43; cf. also Regmi, p. 100.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Shah's scheme for the defence of Nepal that the secrets of the hills be known only to the Nepalis.<sup>85</sup> As for homespun, which Prithwinarayan Shah advocated,<sup>86</sup> it was a very suitable cloth for use throughout Nepal; and its manufacture certainly was an industry that it was wise to promote. One suspects that homespun was, by and large, the standard type of cloth used in the hills even without this strong recommendation to continue and expand its manufacture; but evidently the danger of imported cloth replacing this was very real to Prithwinarayan Shah.

On the question of exports, it seems to this writer, Prithwinarayan Shah showed he was fundamentally less a trader than a soldier. He urges the Nepalis to "send our herbs to India and bring back money."<sup>87</sup> This is an admirable aim, to carry on an export trade without imports. But it is not done. It is doubtful whether such a policy could ever be made to work. One could offer any number of reasons why Prithwinarayan Shah wanted this to be the case, but none of them make for sound economics. This is not said in disparagement of the man to whom Nepal owes so much. It merely acknowledges the fact that his policy was governed more by reasons of security than by economics.

One can expect the objection here that it is always good economic policy to have a vast excess of exports over imports. This is based on a widespread belief in the desirability of a "favourable" balance of trade. "A 'favourable' balance of trade exists when merchandise exports exceed merchandise imports. This situation is called 'favourable' on the ground that the balance will be paid in gold. In popular language, 'It brings money into the country.' An 'unfavourable' trade balance exists when merchandise imports exceed merchandise exports. It is considered 'unfavourable' because in this case gold tends to flow out of the country to restore the balance. To bring money into a country is thought to make it wealthy, while to reduce the stock of money is believed to make it poor. Exports, consequently, are to be stimulated in every way possible, and imports discouraged. . . . To hold such a belief implies ignorance both of the fundamental principles of trade and the nature of money. Imports are paid for, not by sending out of money, but by exports; curtailment of imports tends to reduce exports."<sup>88</sup>

## E. DEVELOPMENT

Development is treated very briefly in the *Dibya Upadesh*. Two cases are cited: mining and agriculture. In the question of a mine, Prithwinarayan Shah urges that it be developed, even

85. *Ibid.*, p. 46, in connection with singers and dancers.

86. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

87. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

88. Bye and Hewett, *Applied Economics*, New York, pp. 357-58.



if it means moving a whole village and re-siting it.<sup>89</sup> It was widely believed in India that Nepal contained several gold mines.<sup>90</sup> This was incorrect.<sup>91</sup> But even if the mines did not exist, there lurked in the hearts of the masters of Nepal the hope that such mines might be discovered. In addition, Nepalese copper was a valuable export. In fact, for some time Nepalese copper had a sort of monopoly in the North Indian markets for its quality, until imports began to undersell it.<sup>92</sup> Newly discovered deposits of such an important source of income, quite naturally, should be developed. Moving a village would be a small price to pay for the added wealth, especially in those days.

Farming has been considered here, under development, because the *Dibya Upadesh* does speak briefly of the development of new fields and the consequent increase in the national product. Prithwinarayan Shah said, "In places suitable for paddy, canals should be dug, and fields cultivated, even if it means moving a house."<sup>93</sup> For the most part, this reflects the average village mentality that seeks to produce the most from the land. Nepal's terraced mountain slopes and intensive cultivation show the desire for this. Prithwinarayan Shah's contribution may be summed up as *emphasis* on the need for developing such potentially fertile areas, even, as he says, "if it means moving a house"<sup>94</sup> to do so.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter on Prithwinarayan Shah's internal policy has shown that Prithwinarayan Shah had very definite ideas about the internal development of the country. His basic assumption that simplicity and a certain austerity were most in keeping with the Nepalese character he has developed throughout his treatment of government, military organization, trade, and the development of resources. It was, in the eyes of this writer, a sound vision. It would not be historical to assume that Prithwinarayan Shah's vision went beyond those exigencies that brought him to this basic assumption. We can only conclude, as historians, what the facts justify. But vision is often nothing more than an insight into the real nature of those exigencies that force one to act. Such an insight leads one to arrive at conclusions that have greater value and more far-reaching effects than acts performed precipitately or without a deeper understanding of the issues involved. This was the vision Prithwinarayan Shah possessed. There are those, of course, who accuse historians of making Prithwinarayan Shah more than they will

89. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 45.

90. Chaudhuri, p. 4.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

93. *Dibya Upadesh*, translation, p. 45.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

admit he was. This is a possibility. There is a definite danger that whatever weaknesses of character he suffered will be glossed over. At the same time, one must be true to the facts that history places inexorably before us. At a given time in history, under given circumstances, Prithwinarayan Shah *did* rise above his fellowmen. Not *all* that he did was perfect. Some of the acts he placed were clearly wrong and appeared so even to him.<sup>95</sup> But when the accusations against Prithwinarayan Shah and his failures are placed together in one side of the scales and weighed against his achievements, the scales show clearly that he was a great man. This chapter, as well as those that went before it, was intended to outline the man in the light of his achievements and his final instructions to his people. It is hoped that in the process of doing this the writer has been able to bring into relief something of Prithwinarayan Shah's greatness, without exaggeration and with fidelity to the historical facts in our possession.

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95. Cf. Baburam Acharya's treatment of Prithwinarayan Shah's reaction to the death of Kalu Pande. Acharya, pp. 20-21.

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