

**INDO-NEPALESE RELATIONS**  
**(1858—1914)**

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*Dedicated*  
*To*  
*My Revered Parents*



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## PREFACE

The northern frontier of India is increasingly assuming new proportions. Nepal, with a common boundary of more than 500 miles, occupies an important strategic position along the Gangetic Valley. She is the heart of the Himalayas. From time immemorial, the relations between Nepal and India have been very close and cordial. The racial, religious, social, cultural, linguistic and political bonds have assisted in bringing the two countries nearer to each other. But in recent times, when our belief in the impregnability of the Himalayas has been so rudely shattered by the Chinese invasion in 1962, Nepal has assumed an added importance.

Indo-Nepalese relations provide an interesting study of the working of the European imperialism in the 19th and 20th centuries. It has generally been contended by the European writers that the British policy towards Nepal was not influenced by any ulterior motive and that it was determined solely by a desire of the East India Company to live in peace with its martial and aggressive neighbour. Such a view overlooks the facts of history, and is also against the basic, economic, strategic and imperialistic considerations, which governed the British policy not only towards Nepal but the entire northern frontier of India and Central Asia. The Anglo-Gurkha War of 1814—16 became inevitable not only because of the Nepalese policy of expansion and encroachment, but because the British Imperial interests hastened it. After the war, despite the declared policy of non-interference, the British Government had become such a great influence in the domestic politics of Nepal that no Nepalese Prime Minister could stay in power without the direct or indirect support of the British.

In this work the Indo-Nepalese political relations are the focus of study, and only brief references here and there are made to the relevant issues—border disputes, problem of border crime, extradition and trade relations. Chapter IX deals with the Modernization of Nepal which was the only result of Nepal's contact with the British although it is not directly connected with the Indo-Nepalese political relations.

The present work is based on original, unpublished records available in the various Archives in India. The National Archives of India, New Delhi, has a plethora of material and I am grateful to the authorities for the permission granted to me to make use of it. Documents and Secondary Sources preserved in the State Archives of U.P., the National Library of Calcutta, University Libraries and Public Libraries of Allahabad, Lucknow, Banaras, Agra and Delhi, the Indian Council of World Affairs Library, New Delhi, and the Durbar Library, Kathmandu, have also been consulted.

To justify its title, the approach in this book is based on the political relations. In order to avoid unnecessary details and keep within set limits I have had to shorten the available material.

The study was conducted under the supervision of Dr. S. R. Tyagi, Principal and Head of the Department of History, Vardhman College, Bijnor, and Dr. G. N. Dwivedi, ex-Principal and Head of the Department of History, K. N. Government College, Gyanpur (Banaras). My acknowledgements are also due to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, retired Head of the History Department, Allahabad University, late Dr. A. L. Shrivastava of Agra, Dr. R. C. Jain, Principal, J. V. Jain College, Saharanpur, Dr. Amba Prasad, Professor of History, Delhi University, Prof. L. L. Lala, Department of History, University of Jammu, Sri J. C. Shrivastava, Librarian, National Archives of India, New Delhi, Dr. Satish Kumar of the School of International Studies, New Delhi, and the authorities of the Indian Embassy in Nepal.



Above all, I have no words to express even a fraction of my gratitude to all those who encouraged and inspired me by their guidance all through the period of my labours on the work.

If this humble attempt helps to kindle the readers' interest in the subject the book will have justified itself.

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March 15, 1974.

Sushila Tyagi



## ABBREVIATIONS

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>Baburam Collections</i> | Private Collections of Baburam Acharya, Kathmandu.             |
| <i>B.G.P.C.</i>            | Bengal Government Political Consultations.                     |
| <i>B.J.P.C.</i>            | Bengal Government Judicial (Criminal) Proceedings.             |
| <i>B.M.A.M.</i>            | British Museum Additional Manuscripts.                         |
| <i>B.P.C.</i>              | Bengal Government Political Consultations.                     |
| <i>B.P.P.</i>              | Bengal Government Political Proceedings.                       |
| <i>C.P.C.</i>              | Calendar of Persian Correspondence.                            |
| <i>D.R.C.L.I.</i>          | District Records of Champaran, Letters Issued.                 |
| <i>D.R.C.L.R.</i>          | District Records of Champaran, Letters Received.               |
| <i>F.G.A.</i>              | Foreign Department Proceedings, General Branch, A Category.    |
| <i>F.I.A.</i>              | Foreign Department Proceedings, Internal Branch, A. Category.  |
| <i>F.I.B.</i>              | Foreign Department Proceedings, Internal Branch, B. Category.  |
| <i>F.M.</i>                | Foreign Miscellaneous Proceedings (Demi-official Letters).     |
| <i>F.P.A.</i>              | Foreign Department Proceedings, Political Branch, A. Category. |
| <i>F.P.B.</i>              | Foreign Department Proceedings, Political Branch, B. Category. |
| <i>F.P.G.</i>              | Foreign Department Proceedings, General Branch.                |
| <i>F.P.S.</i>              | Foreign Department Proceedings (Secret Branch).                |

- F.R.A.* Foreign Department Proceedings, Revenue Branch, A. Category.
- H.D.O.C.* Home Department Original Consultations.
- H.M.B.L.* Hodgson Manuscripts, Bodelian Library, Oxford.
- H.P.* Hobhouse Papers, British Museum Additional Manuscripts.
- H.P.C.* Home Public Consultations.
- I.C.W.A. Library* Indian Council of World Affairs Library, New Delhi.
- I.H.Q.* Indian Historical Quarterly.
- I.H.R.C.* Indian Historical Records Commission.
- I.O.R.H.M.* India Office Records, Hodgson Manuscripts.
- J.A.S.* The Journal of Asian Studies.
- J.A.S.B.* Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- J.B.O.R.S.* The Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
- J.R.A.S.B.I.* Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
- J.U.S.I.* The Journal of the United Service Institution of India.
- M.H.* Manuscript Hodgson, India Office Library, London.
- M.P.R.* Records of Miscellaneous Department Proceedings.
- N.A.I.* National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- N.R.* The New Review.
- N.R.R.* Nepal Residency Records.
- Nepal Summary* Summary of Political Events in Nepal, Cleveland Public Library, Ohio, U.S.A.
- P.B.A.* Private Letter Book of Lord Auckland.
- P.C.* Foreign Political Consultations.
- P.C.E.R.* English Records of the Patna Commissioner's Office.
- P.C. Supp.* Foreign Political Consultations (Supplementary).
- P.I.H.C.* Proceedings of the Indian History Congress.

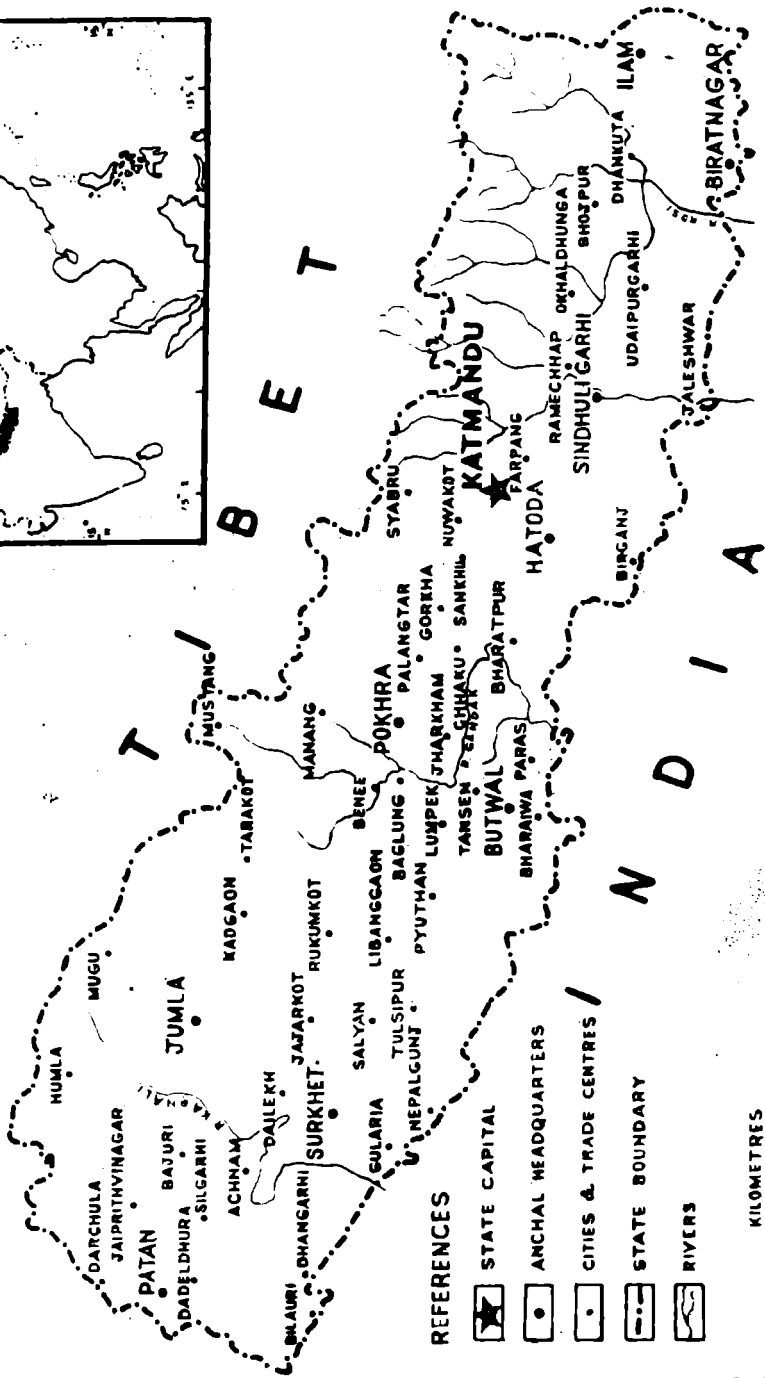
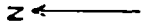
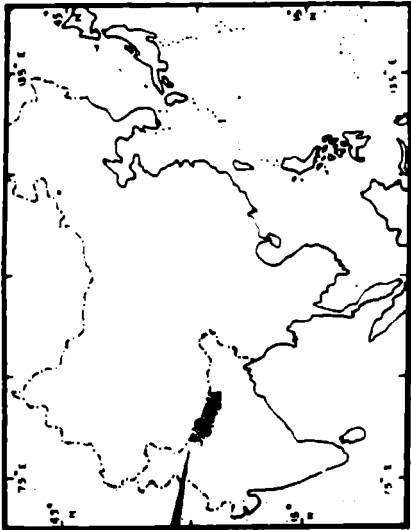
|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <i>P.I.H.R.C.</i> | Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission. |
| <i>P.J.B.</i>     | Padma Jang Bahadur.                                      |
| <i>P.T.</i>       | Principal Transactions.                                  |
| <i>S.C.</i>       | Foreign Secret Consultations.                            |
| <i>S.C.P.</i>     | Select Committee Proceedings.                            |
| <i>S.C.R.O.</i>   | State Central Records Office, Bihar, Patna.              |
| <i>V.S.</i>       | Vikram Samvat.   |



“चकास्त्युदीच्यां स्वगुणैर्विशिष्टैर्नेपालनामा विषयः सुरम्यः ।  
हिमाद्रिवर्ती स्थितिधर्मवित्तादिभिश्चिरं भारतबद्धसख्यः ॥”

In the North is a tract of land named Nepal known for its many attractions. Surrounded by Himalayan peaks it has always been tied in bonds of friendship with India, because of its geographical situation, religion and economic system.

# NEPAL and ITS LOCATION



## REFERENCES

- STATE CAPITAL
- ANCHAL HEADQUARTERS
- CITIES & TRADE CENTRES
- STATE BOUNDARY
- RIVERS





## CHAPTER ONE

### THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

#### Geography Of Nepal

Nepal, the largest of the Himalayan kingdoms, is properly the name of the valley of the Baghmata, which has now been applied to the entire political area administered by the Gurkha Government. Nepal is said to derive its present appellation from the founder of the Nymuni Dynasty during the Trêta and Dwaper. Legend is that the Valley of the Baghmata had been blessed by a great saint called "Ne" who practised the sacred and austere rites of meditation at the junction of the Baghmata and the Keshwata (now called Vishnumata) in the Nepal Valley.<sup>1</sup> All records of Hindu antiquity are affirmed to represent the present Valley of Nepal as an immense lake which, in the progress of ages, gradually retired between the banks of the Baghmata. The waving or broken nature of the ground which resembles, in a striking degree, the bed of a large body of water and the soil consisting, to a considerable depth, of a black, fat earth, the product of deposited mud, are particular circumstances of the most demonstrative kind.

#### Extent Of The Country

A glance at the map of northern India explains why Nepal remains the least known country of either hemisphere. The geographical position of Nepal has had almost as much to do with this as the unwillingness of man. The ice barrier of the Himalayas on the northern frontier of Nepal proved an impenetrable obstacle to any communication with Asia, China and India.

The independent kingdom of Nepal is included in the southern ranges of the Himalayas on the north-eastern fron-

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1. Ne—name of a Muni ; Pal—cherished, blessed ; hence Nepal. Capt. Eden Vansittart : *Notes on Nepal* (1896), p. 1.

tier of India.<sup>1</sup> It is a land "where India faces China". Nepal, the largest of the Himalayan kingdoms, is but a small country of approximately 141,400 square kilometres.<sup>2</sup> Its extreme length is 840 kilometres from east to west in an elongated rectangle along the area of the Himalayas and its extreme breadth from north to south is 160 kilometres. Nepal lies in the latitude 26°-20' and 30°-10' N and the longitude 80°-15' and 88°-15' E.

### **Boundaries**

Nepal is bounded on the north by Tibet ; on the east by Sikkim ; on the south by Bengal and the United Provinces ; on the west by Kumaon from which it is separated by river Kali. Like its neighbouring kingdoms, Nepal has borders with both India and Tibet. They are long borders and by nature difficult to cross. To the north the great Himalayas present a physical barrier which may be penetrated in only a few places. To the south the inhospitable swamps of the Terai and the rocky inclines of the Siwalik ranges impede passage into the interior. With the Tibetan plateau occupied by the troops of the aggressive Chinese Communist Government and the construction of Lhasa-Kathmandu road, the less penetrable northern border becomes geo-politically the more important of the two, not only to Nepal but to India as well. The factor that contributes most to the strategic importance of this Himalayan kingdom lies in the fact that a strong Nepal can deny Communist China access to the rich Gangetic plain and can contain the Communist sphere in the direction north of the Himalayas. To the south-east, the Nepal borders touch our districts of Betwee, Hazary, Rungamutty and Cooch-Bihar. To the south, the Nepal territories are bounded by certain contiguous Purgunnahs of Durbhungah, Trihoot and Champaran ; the towns which principally illustrated this frontier being Ummirpore, Jankipur, Bareh and Persa or Goalpussia. To the south-west lies Bulrampur of Gorakhpur and to the north-west Nepal borders are divided from Pilibhit, Rampur, Kashipur, Rudrapur and other districts of Rohilkhand by the Kumaon and Almora hills. In the north-west they are bounded by the dominions of Srinagar and Sirmour

1. Sir W. W. Hunter's *Gazetteer of India*—Article on Nepal.

2. B. D. Sanwal : *Nepal and the East India Company* (1965), p. 3.

of which Nahan is the capital. The frontier has been defined by treaties between Nepal and the East India Company in 1816<sup>1</sup> and between Nepal and the British Government of India in 1860.<sup>2</sup>

### **Geographical Structure**

Nepal may be divided into three geographical regions: the Great Himalaya, the Inner Himalaya and the Terai which differ from each other.

### **The Great Himalaya**

The high Himalaya country is one of the most mountainous areas in the world. The height of the Himalayan range, the transverse nature of its valleys and its bitterly cold winters not only contribute to the isolation of the country from the outside world but also complicate communication between inhabitants of the region. This is an important factor in the continued diversity of the nation's population.

The landscape of the great Himalaya at higher elevations is characterized by lofty serrated ridges, cirque-indented slopes and sharp peaks produced by glacial action. At lower altitudes the Kosi and the Gandak are several thousand feet below the crest of the adjacent ranges. Even the zone of the highest snow-capped ranges is deeply entrenched by rivers. Along the northern frontier stand many of the highest peaks of the Himalayan range, such as Dhaulagiri, Gaurishankar, Gosainthan, Mount Everest, Kinchinjanga and various other peaks. Its loftiest peak is Mount Everest, with an elevation of 29,141 ft., the highest known summit of the globe. These lofty mountains divide the chain of the Nepal Himalaya into three not very unequal portions—the western, the central and the eastern. The western division extends from the Nanda Devi to the Dhaulagiri and is about 200 miles in length. The central portion extends from 180 miles from the Dhaulagiri to the Gosainthan to the Kinchinjanga.

1. *F.I.B.*, Feb., 1894, 204—208; C. U. Aitchison : *Treaties and Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries* (Calcutta, 1929), XIV, 46.
2. *F.I.B.*, Feb., 1854, 204—208 ; C. U. Aitchison : *Treaties and Engagements and Sanads relating to Nepal*, Vol. II (1909), 116.

which are distant from each other by 130 miles. From the entire length of the central mountains numerous lofty ridges diverge, sometimes at right angles, but more generally at acute, to the Ghat line or the main axis of the range.

The Nepal Himalaya is traversed by several passes, e.g., (i) the Takla Khar Pass, (ii) the Mustang Pass through the Hindu shrine of Muktinath, (iii) the Kirong Pass, (iv) the Kuti Pass, leading to Lhasa from Kathmandu, (v) the Hatia Pass and (vi) the Velong Pass in the extreme east. The great Himalaya protects the lower southern part of Nepal from the bitterly cold winds associated with air masses generated in the Central Asian Source region.

### **The Inner Himalaya**

The region consists of an intricate system of ranges some 20 miles in depth lying between the Great Himalaya and the Churia hills bordering the Terai. The Mahabharat lake, extending from the Mahakali to beyond the Kosi valley, may be taken as a prototype of ranges of the inner Himalaya.

In the inner Himalaya, climate undergoes a marked change with variation in elevation. The winters range from moderately cool to severe and summers are warm and rainy.

### **The Terai And The Foot-hills**

The third region consists of the Churia hills, the Bhabar and the Terai along the southern border of Nepal. These foot-hills rise gently from the plains to about 2,000 ft. before becoming abrupt, almost perpendicular escarpments rising to an altitude of more than 4,000 ft. Within the zone, there is a succession of narrow ridges separated by more or less broad valleys known as "Doons". Southward lies the gravely and fairly steep talus slope known as the Bhabar. In the latter zone great rivers swirl down from the Himalaya.

South of the Bhabar and Churia hills is the Terai, a low, fertile, alluvial plain, a northward extension of the Gangetic plain of India. It is 20 miles wide at its broadest point and extends over most of the southern boundary of Nepal. The northern part of the Terai adjoining the Bhabar is a marshy malarious region. The southern portion, a belt some 10 miles

wide, contains rich agricultural land. The Terai is a densely populated area, full of rivers—the Kosi, the Baghmati, the Gandak and their tributaries—all subject to frequent floods.

All the rivers of Nepal are divided into four groups. The first of these extends from Kumaon eastward as far as Dhaulagiri, and consists of the affluents of the Kali (Sarda), the Sarju, the Karnali, the Eastern Sarju and the Rapti. The second group, known as Sapt-Gandaki, rises from the peaks between Dhaulagiri and Gosainthan and unites at Tribeni Ghat to form the Gandak. The third is a group of smaller rivers draining the great Valley of Nepal, the valleys of Chitlong, Benepa and Panouti and portions of the Terai around the Churiaghati range of hills. These are the various branches of the Bara Gandak, the lesser Rapti, the Baghmati and the Kumla. Last of this is the fourth group known as the Sapt Kosi, rising from the peaks between Gosainthan and Kinchinjanga and uniting to form the Sun Kosi which falls into the Ganges.

### The Valley Of Nepal

It is the heart, brain and centre of the whole hill country. P. Marco Della Tomba describes the Valley of Nepal as "Valle Bellissima" (the grandest of valleys). It is about 800 sq. km. at an elevation of 1,200 to 1,600 metres above sea-level.<sup>1</sup> Father Giuseppe calls it "the extensive plain of Nepal, resembling an amphitheatre covered with populous towns and villages".<sup>2</sup> In this Valley, the capital of the kingdom is situated. This lies directly to the south of the Gosainthan mountain and consists of an elevated plateau surrounded by hills and is situated between the country of the seven Gandaks on the west and that of the seven Kosis on the east. It is of triangular shape, its apex points towards the north and the same rests below the lofty extremity of the Dhiabang ridge.

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1. Computations of the area of the valley have varied greatly. Brian Hodgson says the valley is 16 miles by 16 miles ; Dr. Oldfield : 15 miles by 14 miles ; Dr. Wright : 16 miles by 9 miles ; Dr. Allen and Mr. Fergusson : 12 miles by 9 miles ; and Dr. Lyde (*In the Continent of Asia*) 25 miles by 15 miles.
  2. Father Giuseppe's account is reported in *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. II, p. 307 at seq.

The following valleys are comprised within the Valley of Nepal :

- (i) The valley of Chitlong, to the south-west of Nepal within its subordinate valley of the Panauni, a tributary of the Baghmati.
- (ii) The valleys of the Doon and the Kulpa watered by the tributaries of the Trisulganga.
- (iii) The valley of Nayakot.
- (iv) The valley of Banepa.

The Valley of Nepal, around which these subordinate valleys are collected, is a gently undulating plain of nearly oval shape. It is bounded on the north by Ghyanche (2,400 ft.) and Sheopuri (2,800 ft.), on the east by Manichur (2,200 ft.) and Nagar-kot (2,150 ft.), on the south by Phulchok (2,850 ft.) and on the west by Champadevi (2,450 ft.), Chandragiri (3,500 ft.) and Nagarjun (2,100 ft.). There are numerous inhabited localities in the valley, the most populous being Kathmandu (population over 1,00,000), the present capital of the kingdom, Patan, Bhatgaon and Kirtipur. The most important rivers of the valley are Baghmati, Karmanasha and Pravawati to the south of Kathmandu; Vishnumati and Bhadramati to the west of the city ; and Rudramati, Manimati, Hanumati and Ikshumati to the east of the city. The Valley of Nepal has two distinct and very well-marked levels :

- (i) The level of the upper or high lands which extend round the base of the mountains and project as promontories towards the centre of the Valley.
- (ii) The level of the low lands or plains which lie along the banks of the numerous streams which unite to form the Baghmati.

These lands are very thinly inhabited, as their lowness and dampness make them unhealthy, while their extreme fertility and productiveness cause them to be too valuable. All the cities, towns, principal villages are situated upon them. The valley has many places sacred to the Hindus and the Buddhists. These are the Hindu temples of Pasupatinath, Guheshwari, Telaju, Ganesha and Changa-Narayan and the Buddhist shrines of Swayambhunath, Buddhnath and Maha-Buddha.

### **Population, Climate And Agricultural Products**

The population of Nepal is locally estimated at about 10 million.<sup>1</sup> On an average, therefore, there are 42 men to a square kilometre in Nepal. This valley enjoys in certain respects the climate of some of the southern countries of Europe. Not only the tops of the surrounding mountains are sprinkled with snow for several days during winter but it sometimes falls in the valley below. Though lying in the vicinity of a region buried in snow yet its temperature is little or not affected. A north or Himalayan wind never blows in this valley. The seasons of Nepal are pretty. The rains commence a little earlier and break up towards the middle of October. Earthquakes are of frequent occurrence in Nepal.

The variety of Nepal climate is best manifest in the agricultural produce. The country is richest in its vegetable products. Peach, raspberry, walnut and all vegetables seem to grow in the country. Three crops are grown in the year. Wheat, barley or mustard in the winter, radishes and garlic or potatoes in the spring and Indian corn, rice or pepper during the rains. Ginger is a valuable product in the hill tracts. Besides various pulses and cereals, mustard, madder, sugarcane and cardamoms are also grown. Amongst the spontaneous productions of the soil are the cherry and the tea-tree. Several edible roots and herbs also grow wild. Richest dyes and the well-known intoxicants are also among the agricultural produce of the country.

### **Forestry**

“Not only are these Nepalese forests important on account of their extent, but conditions of climate and rainfall are most favourable to the vigorous growth of forest vegetation and those favourable conditions are reflected in the very high reputation the Nepal forests enjoy for the size and quality of their timber.”<sup>2</sup> Among timber trees, Terai Saal is extensively used all over Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Mimosa,

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1. Praduman P. Karan and William N. Jenkins : *The Himalayan Kingdoms—Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal* (1963), p. 95.
  2. J. V. Collier of the Indian Forest Service whom Sir Chandra Shumsher entrusted with the direction of the Forest Department in Nepal.

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  2. J. V. Collier of the Indian Forest Service whom Sir Chandra Shumsher entrusted with the direction of the Forest Department in Nepal.

Sisu and Bhanja are used for axles. Cotton trees, acacis and tree figs are not very frequent. They contain oak, holy, rhododendron, maple, chestnut, walnut, hornbeam, alpines and firs in abundance.

### Animals

Nepal is the home of almost all the wild animals—tiger, elephant, rhinoceros, leopard and deer.<sup>1</sup> Sheep is famous for its size and wool. Beautiful birds, bees reared for the preparation of wax and aromatic and sweet flowering shrubs are found in Nepal. The noble beast—the Nepal Dog—is found only in the Kachar.<sup>2</sup>

### Mineral Wealth

Iron ore is found near the surface. Sulphur and copper are easy of access and equally abundant. A great variety of stones is to be met, particularly Justa, Marvel and Jasper as well as lime-stone and slate. Nepal was regarded by Europeans as the home of gold mines but, according to Kirkpatrick, there was only a "small quantity sifted out of the sand of certain rivulets which pass through without rising in the Nepal territories, these latter produce not a grain of gold".<sup>3</sup>

Nepal contains copper and iron mines. There are ores of antimony or mercury. The western parts abound in arsenic and pyrites. With regard to volcanoes, there are some eruptions to the west.

### Arts And Manufactures Of Nepal

Among the manufactures of the country are iron and copper wares, cotton and woollen clothes, and brass and bell metal. The Newars have a knowledge of carpentry. They make paper out of the bark of a shrub. Their cutlery is by no means contemptible. They distil spirits from rice and other grains and also prepare a fermented liquor from wheat.

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1. *J.A.S.B., On the Mamalia of Nepal*, Vol. I, p. 335.
  2. *J.A.S.B., Life of Brian H. Hodgson* by Hunter, Vol. I, p. 346 ; *Fauna of Nepal* by S. G. Prater, Curator, Bombay Natural History Society ; *Flora of Nepal* published as Appendix XIV to *Landon's Nepal*, Vol. I.
  3. Col. Kirkpatrick : *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* (1811), p. 175.

## **Imports And Exports Of Nepal**

The countries which have a commercial relationship with Nepal are Tibet, China and India.

The Indian trade is carried on along a frontier line of 700 miles. Following are the principal articles of export from Nepal :

Rice and inferior grains, oil-seeds, ghee or butter, honey, cattle, falcons, parrots, timber, opium, musk, chirayata, borax, madder, turpentine, jute, hides and firs, dried ginger, cardamoms, yak-tails, elephants and their teeth, wax, behroza (pure resin of the pine), oranges, long pepper and its root, Taizpat, lamp oil and cotton.

The chief imports are raw cotton, cotton piecegoods, woollen cloth, shawls, rugs, silk-brocade, embroidery, sugar, spices, indigo, tobacco, aricanut, vermilion, lac, oils, salt, fine rice, buffaloes, sheep, oakum, sheet copper, copper and brass ornaments, beads, mirrors, precious stones, guns, gun-powder and tea from Kumaon and Darjeeling.

## **Religions**

Religious differences introduce another element of complexity in the country's political geography and make national cohesiveness more difficult to achieve. The two major religions of Nepal are Buddhism and Hinduism. Hinduism, the religion of the ruling class since the Gurkha conquest of 1769, claims more adherents in Nepal than any other faith ; there is a cult of mountain-gods which invests each mountain peak with a deity and which rules over the surrounding land.

## **Languages**

The cultural diversity is complicated further by a large number of mutually unintelligible languages spoken in Nepal. The multiplicity of languages creates serious barriers between peoples and plays a significant role in promoting regional and tribal sentiment. The official language of the nation is Nepali or Parbattiya. Sanskrit is as much studied in Nepal as in India. Besides this, the principal vernacular languages of this country are Newari, Dhenwar, Muggar, Kiranti, Hawoo, Limboo and Bhotia.

## Races Of Nepal

The portion in the Himalayas which is now consolidated into the compact kingdom of Nepal had practically no relation with any kingdom. "Thus isolated from Hindustan, the hill Rajas and their subjects became 'peculiar people'."<sup>1</sup> This was the only Hindu State which had not been subjugated by Mohammedan conquerors or by foreign invaders. Morally, therefore, as well as physically, they looked and they still look upon themselves as superior to any of the Hindus in the plains.

"A small land of great diversity is Nepal." Its nine and a half million people are broken up into many identifiable ethnic groups living apart from each other in isolated mountain valleys. Each group follows its own cultural pattern, retaining tribal localities which make national unity difficult to foster. The Mongoloid tribes of Tibet and the Indo-Aryan people of northern India overflowing into the country from north and south since pre-historic times have come together to form a racial and cultural picture of great complexity. In short, we find that geography has introduced Tibetan blood into Nepal from the north and through Sikkim, and history has sent stream after stream of fugitives from the keen struggles for existence and annihilating conflicts of cultures and values into the different valleys of this country mainly from the south-west.

As a result of these processes Tibetan blood is predominant in the north and east of Nepal and Indian Rajput and Brahmin blood, as distinct from earlier Nepali blood, in the valleys of the Karnali and the Rapti, while some other parts of Nepal preserve to a certain extent the same racial complexion that they did about 1000 B.C. They have kept their descent, comparatively speaking, pure from the admixture which is the chief source of difficulty in classifying all other tribes from the Khas to the Mongoloid Murmis.<sup>2</sup>

Among the major tribal groups are the Newars, the principal native mercantile group, the Gurungs, a pastoral people closely resembling Tibetans, the Magars, inhabiting the Palpa

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1. William Digby : *A Friend in Need, 1857, Friendship Forgotten 1887,* (1890), p. 22.
  2. Abbe Hue : *Recollections of a Journey Through Tartary Tibet and China,* 1846.

district, the Gurkhas, famous soldiers of Nepal, the Rais, the Limboos, the Sunwars and the Bhutias. The Sherpas are the best known sub-division of the group. The Tharus are a group of people, possibly Dravidians in origin.

### **Chepang, Kusunda And Hayu Tribes**

The earliest known inhabitants of Nepal are the Chepang, Kusunda and Hayu tribes. Hodgson thought that they were "like fragments of an earlier population". They are very few in number. They live in the widest imaginable state of nature. "It is due, however, to these rude foresters to say that though they stand wholly aloof from society they are not actively offensive against it, and that neither the Government nor an individual taxes them with any aggressions against the wealth they despise—or the comforts and conveniences they have no conception of the value of."<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to decide that these tribes are all representatives of the protoaustraloid race or whether they represent an even earlier race—the Negritos. The Kusundas and the Chepangs are rarities in Nepal. They are like back-washes of civilization that linger against the processes of evolution and assimilation in human history.

### **Newars**

The main and underlying elements in the Nepalese population are formed by the group, namely the Mediterranean race. The most important representatives of the quasi-aboriginal races are the Newars in the valley of Kathmandu who have contributed most to the culture of Nepal. However, the Newars claim to be the original inhabitants of the Nepal Valley—which is still their centre and beyond which they do not penetrate far in any direction. The Newars are enlisted in the Nepalese Army, though in no great numbers and were never drawn upon as recruits for the Gurkha regiments in India. But they hold the palm in all Nepal for their industry, their art and agriculture.

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1. B. H. Hodgson: *Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet together with Geography, Ethnology and Commerce of these countries* (1874), p. 45.

The Newars are a civilized people. They devote their lives to the art of peace and the enjoyment of life rather than to military glory. Their temperament and psychological make-up won a great deal to their early civilization which must have flourished at the same time as the Mohanjodaro and Harappa civilizations.<sup>1</sup>

### **Tharus And Boksas**

They are found in the Terai and Bhabar area. They call themselves Hindus. Their main occupation is the cultivation of rice.<sup>2</sup> They are the poor relations of the Newars of the Valley and are undersized and scraggy but capable of great efforts of endurance.

### **Mechis**

The Mechis live in the hills about 800 metres above sea-level. They inhabit also the hottest valleys with immunity from malarious fevers. Hodgson said of them: "In their dark-hued skin, slender forms, oval faces, elevated features and peculiar dialect—barbarous patois as the last now is—may be traced, however, the indisputable signs of a southern origin."<sup>3</sup> They are akin to the Tharus and the Boksas. The Tharus inhabit the western half of Nepalese Terai and the Mechis the eastern half. "They are addicted to trade, are averse to military service, have no artisans among them, are truly in a very primitive state of society. They are, however, very cheerful, have no jealousy or prejudice towards strangers, are industrious and honest and crimes of violence are of rare occurrence among them."<sup>4</sup>

### **Thakurs And Khas**

The Thakurs claim Royal descent and the head of the purest blooded tribe of all, the Sahi, is the best. The Maharaj-

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1. K. P. Chattopadhyay : *Newars—An Essay on the History of Newar Culture* in *J.A.S.B.* (1923), p. 465.
  2. Crooke : *Castes and Tribes of North-western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. IV, pp. 380—406 ; also *Census of India, 1931, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part I.*
  3. Hodgson : *J.A.S.B.* (1840), p. 1121.
  4. *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. II (1839), p. 623.

adhiraj is a Sahi. They are excellent soldiers with good physique and appearance. The best Thakur clans are Sahi, Malla, Singh, Sen, Khas and Sunmal.

A Khas is the offspring of a slave-mother with a Thakur. The children of this union became Khas and their posterity retains the name. The Khas existed as a nation prior to 1100 A.D.<sup>1</sup> It seems certain that these tribes are in fact due to an emigration from India caused by the ravages of Mohammedan conquerors. It seems that a mixed breed must have sprung up and multiplied.<sup>2</sup> Oldfield says : "The progress of Mohammedanism in Hindustan daily drove fresh refugees to the Nepalese mountains. The Khas tribes availed themselves of the superior knowledge of the strangers to subdue the neighbouring tribes. They were uniformly successful and in such a career, they gradually merged the greater part of their own ideas in those of the Hindus."<sup>3</sup>

Brian Hodgson remarks : "The offspring of the original Khas females and Brahmins with the honours and rank of the second order of Hinduism got the patronymic titles of the first order, and hence the key to the nomenclature of so many branches of the military tribes of Nepal is to be sought in the nomenclature of the sacred order."<sup>4</sup> Thus the Khas are derived from three sources :

- (i) Progeny of Brahmins and Chatris with women of the hill tribes.
- (ii) Converted barbarians.
- (iii) Ekthariahs who were Brahmins and Rajputs and who sought refuge in these mountains from the Muslims.

1. Lt.-Col. E. Vansittart : *Gurkhas* (1906), p. 66.

2. It is interesting to recall the legend that when Emperor Ashoka came to Nepal in 250 B.C. he found living at Patan a man of such pure Chattri descent that he gave his daughter Charumatti to him in marriage. Moreover, the Sakyas from whom the Buddha sprang in the 6th century B.C. were Kshatriyas living within the present territory of Nepal. The presence of pure Rajput families with whom the refugees from Islam were able to intermarry may be accepted.

Quoted by P. Landon, *Nepal*, Vol. II (1928), Appendix XVII, p. 241.

3. H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal*, Vol. I (London, 1880), p. 135.

4. B. H. Hodgson : *Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet together with Geography, Ethnology and Commerce of those countries* (London, 1874), p. 37.

The Khas are in fact the backbone of the Himalayan population. They are temperate, hardy and brave and good soldiers having a high social standing in Nepal. Almost all the officers above the rank of lieutenant are Khas. They are very national in their feelings and look down upon the Magars and the Gurungs.

### **Gurungs**

Of the other tribes in Nepal, it may be said that the majority are clearly of Mongolian descent. These tribes have long been used by the dominant Gurkhas as soldiers and for that reason they have spread more widely. The original home of the Gurungs lay in the West of Nepal. Brian Hodgson asserts that though the Gurungs have been accepted as a Hindu tribe, they are denied the sacred thread.<sup>1</sup> Like the Magars their appearance is that which the outer world specially associates with the word "Gurkha". They are short, strongly built men, capable of extreme hardihood and endurance and born fighters. The following happy description of Col. Vansittart cannot be bettered :

"They are kind-hearted, generous and as recruits absolutely truthful. They are very proud and sensitive...they are very obstinate, very independent, very vain...They are intensely loyal to each other and to their officers in time of trouble or danger."<sup>2</sup>

They are of the Tartar race. They are a merry-hearted race, intensely fond of soldiering. The Gurung tribe consists of two great divisions : (i) Charijat, (ii) Solahjat. The four chief classes of the Gurungs are Ghali, Gotani, Lama and Lamachini.

### **Magars**

The principal set of the Magars belonged to most of the central and lower parts of the mountains. They resided near the Palpa from time immemorial. Although they were of Mongolian descent, their propinquity to India had diluted the

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1. B. H. Hodgson : *Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet together with Geography, Ethnology and Commerce of those countries* (London, 1874), p. 39.

2. Lt.-Col. E. Vansittart : *Gurkhas* (1906), p. 77.



northern blood of the Magars. There are six chief tribes : Ale, Pun, Rana, Burathoki, Ghanti and Thapa. Vansittart says : "Of all Magars there is no better man than the Rana of a good clan." The Thapas claim direct descent from the original Rajput invaders of the country and have so high a reputation that many claim to be Thapas who have no right to the name.

### **The Kiranti Group**

In the east of Nepal by far the most important group is that of the Kirantis. In spite of the interchange of blood each tribe has retained its own qualities. The Kirantis have played a great part on the stage of Nepal. They had reigned over Nepal from the valley of Kathmandu, but they occupied a semi-independent position for some time after Prithvi Narayan had established himself in Kathmandu. They represented the animistic superstitions of the aboriginal tribes of Tibet. They are among the oldest recorded populations of the country. Risley narrates the usual military theory that they are inferior in soldierly qualities to the Khas, Magar and Gurung tribes.

### **Murmis, Limbus And Rais**

Tibet sent a number of conquerors to Nepal mainly through Sikkim and the north-eastern passes. These invaders were partly absorbed by the conquered. The Murmis, the Limbus and the Rais are all descendants of Tibetan newcomers to Nepal. Although these races have a great deal of Tibetan blood, yet they all call themselves and want others to call them Hindus.

In the Nepalese Army there is one regiment recruited exclusively from the Limbus. They are good soldiers but very quarrelsome. The customs of the Rais are practically identical with those of the Limbus. The Murmis are the hewers of wood and drawers of water, coolies by heritage and ready to merge their individuality in almost any adjacent tribe.

### **Sunwars And Surpars**

These are of the same race and are distinguished only because the Sunwars live to the west of the Sunkosi and the Surpars to the east. The Sunwars live chiefly in the mountainous districts, north of the valley, between the Gurungs in the west and the Rais in the east. They are of Mongolian descent and, nominally at least, are Buddhists.

### **Geographical Bounds Of India And Nepal**

Geographically Nepal has an autonomous existence. As regards India and within Nepal herself the mountains have created numerous sub-divisions. Even today the easiest way to travel from eastern Nepal to western Nepal is to come down to the Indian Railway. Because of these communications, the Kirantis from eastern Nepal find themselves at home in Darjeeling. On the other hand the political power of the Gurkhas and the influence of Kathmandu as the capital tend towards a different goal. Still Kathmandu itself imports its culture and standards of social well-being from India and thus the influence of Indian thought and civilization gradually percolates to the remotest corners of Nepal. Other bonds of inter-communication between the two countries are : firstly, the recruitment of thousands of Gurkhas in the regular Indian Army ; secondly, the seasonal immigration of thousands of labourers into the adjoining Indian districts every year ; thirdly, the visits to Nepal especially to Muktinath and Pasupatinath of hundreds of Indian pilgrims ; fourthly, the import of Hindi books into Nepal ; and, fifthly, the import of luxury goods by the nobility of Nepal from or via India.

Nepal is the meeting ground of the Tibetan and Indian races. The Tibetan immigration into Nepal has brought influence of Mongolian languages with Nepal but the only thing that travelled up from India and Nepal to Tibet was Buddhism, the Sanskrit language and the culture. Because of her inaccessibility, Nepal seldom attracted the attention of Indian princes and she was allowed to develop her political institutions in isolation from the main currents of Indian history.

Situated on the southern slopes of the Himalayas as between Tibet in the north and India in the south, Nepal occupies a key position between the Democratic Republic of India and China. Even more than Bhutan and Sikkim, it is the northern gateway to the Indo-Gangetic plain. India's security and stability are inextricably tied up with the stability and security of Nepal. Closed for two centuries life remained frozen in the hermetically sealed kingdom. When the door was ultimately forced open in 1951, Nepal found herself unable to adjust to the outside world. Nepal is still busy

finding her feet in a new world-in-flux. Jawahar Lal Nehru expressed the importance of this beautiful country before the Indian Parliament in 1951 :

“From time immemorial, the Himalayas have provided us with a magnificent frontier. Of course, they are no longer as impassable as they used to be, but are still fairly effective...We cannot allow that barrier to be penetrated...to be crossed or weakened, because that would be a risk to our own country.”<sup>1</sup>

Nepal's geography helped her in preserving Nepal's independent entity, the forces of modernization, which became active in other parts of Asia, left her untouched until the middle of this century. Nepal's geographical position accounts in a large measure for the prolonged isolation as well as the fact of her slow political progress, economic immobility and social backwardness.

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1. P. P. Karan : *The Himalayan Kingdoms—Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal* (1963), p. 101.

## CHAPTER TWO

### INDO-NEPALESE RELATIONS IN THE ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL TIMES

Nepal, the home of many antiquities, is known as the only Hindu Kingdom in the world. The valley of Kathmandu was never regarded as outside India's sphere of influence; all forces—cultural or political—seem to have affected it. Kathmandu did not stand in strict isolation and at every period of history, its relation with India has been intimate. As early as the Mahabharat days, the rulers of Nepal figure in the great fight. Buddhism entered Kathmandu at its very birth. The Buddha himself visited Nepal which is definite by the undoubted conviction of the great Emperor Ashoka in 250 B.C. that the Buddha not only visited Nepal, but that some incident of unusual importance to the Buddhist faith had taken place there. For in Kathmandu Ashoka left more ponderous evidence of his visit than anywhere else in all his long career. To this day, the four great Stupas with which he surrounded Patan are still standing. Ashoka regarded Nepal as definitely included in his own empire. The birth-place of the Enlightened One was unquestionably a centre of pilgrimage, at least as important as were the other three great places—Buddha-Gaya, Sarnath and Kasia. The two Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hein and Huan-Tsang, visited Nepal and Piprawa was shown to them as the city of Suddhodhana. It is stated in ancient history that during the reign of Stunks, 14th king of the Kiranti Dynasty, Ashoka the Great came on a pilgrimage to Nepal about 230—250 B.C. accompanied by the venerable Upagupta, the great Buddhist monk.<sup>1</sup> He recorded the visit on a pillar

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1. P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. I (London, 1928), p. 7. Like the pillar in Rummindei, the relics of the visit of Emperor Ashoka constitute a definite proof of his visit in the middle of the 3rd century B.C. The

and married his daughter Charumitra to the Nepalese prince Devapala. Whatever his practical authority among these mountains, Ashoka regarded Nepal as definitely included in his own empire. Ashoka, by his journey to Patan and by the erection of four Stupas and one at Kirtipur, conferred for ever a permanent and localized distinction upon the centre of the Valley of Nepal. He also founded the two suburbs of Kathmandu, called Deo Patan and Chabihil.<sup>1</sup> Anand, Nagarjuna and other Buddhist monks visited the Valley several times. Next in order comes a slight but clear connection between the Jain religion and Nepal. Two Jains, Sambhuvijaya and Bhadrabahu—the author of the Mahavira—were jointly responsible for the direction of the Jain community until 321 B.C. In the year 312 B.C. Sambhuvijaya died, leaving his colleague in the curious position of being the sole initiate on earth who knew the 14 Purvas or chapters of the most ancient Jain scriptures. Soon afterwards a famine began in northern India which lasted for 12 years and Bhadrabahu went south to the Karnatic where food was plentiful. After the famine was over, Bhadrabahu returned, but at once resigned his headship of the Jain faith and retired to Nepal to spend the rest of his life in penitence.

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Rummindei Pillar inscription runs thus :

- (A) 1 “देवानं पियेन पियदसिन लाजिन वीसतिवसाभिसितेन”  
 2 “अतन आगाच महीयिते हिन्द बुधे जाते सभ्यमुनि ति” ।
- (B) 3 सिला बिगडभी चा कालापित सिला थामे च उष पापिते  
 4 हित भगवे जातेति
- (C) लुमिनिगामे उवलिके करे  
 5 अद भागिये च ।

It means :

“King Piyadasi, beloved of the Gods”—this was the formula used by Emperor Ashoka in his inscriptions—“having been anointed twenty years came in person and worshiped here saying, ‘Here Buddha the Sakyamuni was born’ and he caused a stone capital in the shape of a horse to be constructed and a stone pillar to be erected which declares, ‘Here the Blessed one was born’. King Piyadasi exempted the village community of Lumini from taxes and bestowed wealth upon it.”

1. Lt.-Col. E. Vansittart : *Gurkhas* (Calcutta, 1906), p. 67 ; Maj. W. Brook Northey, M.C. : *The Land of the Gurkhas or the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal* (Cambridge), p. 149.

But the monks, who had accompanied Bhadrabahu to the south, took up a different attitude. On their return—about 300 B.C.—they carried the war into the enemy's camp by re-proaching those Jains who had stayed behind in Magadha with laxity of morals and heresy. The local quarrel extended throughout the domain of Jainism. A council of Jains was called at Patliputra—which may be roughly identified with the modern Patna. The conference found itself in a position of difficulty, for Bhadrabahu was the only living soul who knew the mystic doctrines of the 14 Purvas. Without his co-operation, the tradition of Jainism must for the future have been uncanonical. So Sthalabhadra, a disciple of Sambhuvijaya, went to Bhadrabahu in Nepal and there obtained the 14 Purvas.<sup>1</sup> In this way a great schism in Jainism began. This division of the Jain sects in India remains to this day.

Apart from these religious contacts, in the 4th century A.D., the country was under the sovereignty of the Gupta Dynasty of India. In a panegyric to Emperor Samadra Gupta, found on a pillar at Allahabad, the King of Nepal is listed among those "paying tribute to and obeying the imperial master".<sup>2</sup> His name is found between those of two other princes, the kings of Katrapura and Kamrupa. His successor, Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya, visited the Valley and introduced his famous era (Vikram Samvat).<sup>3</sup> Shavism, the faith of the Gupta kings, spread in Nepal and it struck deep roots there. The Lichhavis, who gave Nepal a monarchical form of government, were related to the Guptas of India. During the 5th and 6th centuries B.C. a celebrated ascetic named Vasubandhu visited Nepal accompanied by some 500 disciples and founded religious schools in the country.<sup>4</sup> Shankaracharya, the prophet of Hindu renaissance, came to Nepal during

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1. P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. I (London, 1928), p. 15.

2. Sylvan Levi : *Le Nepal*, 3 Vols., Paris : Ernest Leroux, 1905, 1905, 1908 (typed copy of its English translation available in the library of the Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi), Vol. II, p. 67; W.B. Northey : *The Land of the Gurkhas or the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal*, p. 31 ; Ramakant : *Indo-Nepalese Relations 1816—1877* (1968), p. 1.

3. S. Levi : *Le Nepal* (Vol. II), p. 67.

4. W. B. Northey : *The Land of the Gurkhas or the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal*, p. 31.

the reign of Brikhadeva Verma, 18th king of the Solar Dynasty.<sup>1</sup> Further, Bana's "Harsha Charitra" gives evidence that the Indian ruler Sri Harsha invaded the country.<sup>2</sup> In the 7th century Chinese traveller Huien Tsang visited the country in the year 637 A.D. He writes : "The inhabitants of Nepal are all of a hard and savage nature ; to them neither good faith nor justice nor literature appeals, but they are gifted with considerable skill in the arts....Among them there are true believers and heretics. Buddhist converts and the temples of the Hindu gods touch each other."

During the Rajput period numerous attacks were made on this Himalayan kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

During the 8th and 9th centuries, the history of the Valley is obscure and only occasionally is Nepal mentioned as a vassal of Tibet. In the 11th century, the record becomes clearer again and in the early part of that period, a Rajput from the Deccan, Nanya Deva, is said to have conquered the whole of Nepal. He established a colony of soldiers who had accompanied him from the Nair country in the Malabar district of Southern India and it is from these that the Newars who form the bulk of the inhabitants of the Nepal Valley nowadays try to trace their descent. Although the attempt to identify "Newar" with "Nair" is somewhat far-fetched, the link between Nepal and the extreme south of India should not be lost sight of, for the connection is continually reappearing in early Nepalese history. It has left a distinct influence upon the manners and customs of the mountain State. To India also can be definitely traced the origin of the Malla Dynasty that was destined to play an important part in the later history of Nepal. Some of the early kings of India, however, had been given the title of Malla long before it was known in Nepal and here again recurs a link with south India.

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1. Daniel Wright : *History of Nepal*, p. 118.

2. S. Levi : *Le Nepal*, Vol. II, p. 67 ; Ramakant : *Indo-Nepalese Relations 1816—1877* (1968), p. 1.

3. Maj. W. Brook Northey : *The Land of the Gurkhas or the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal* (Cambridge), p. 35 ; S. Levi : *Le Nepal*, Vol. II, p. 67 ; Col. W. Kirkpatrick : *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* (London, 1811), pp. 184—185.

One of the first Indian kings to assume the name Malla was the ruler of Conjeevaram in the extreme south of India.

Geographic proximity and cultural affinities have thus far kept India's influence dominant in ancient times.<sup>1</sup>

With the coming of Muslims to India, Nepal came to acquire a special importance. As the Muslim rule extended in India, many families and tribes of India sought refuge in Nepal.<sup>2</sup> In 1322, Hari Singh Deo, a Sarju Bansi prince of Avadh, took refuge in Nepal and conquered the Valley.<sup>3</sup> His descendants, called Mallas, ruled over this country till their defeat at the hands of the Gurkhas (1767—68).<sup>4</sup> Similarly, a big exodus of refugees took place from Rajputana in the beginning of the 14th century.<sup>5</sup> A number of families of refugees emigrated from Rajputana to Nepal in this century. In 1303, when Alauddin Khilji attacked Chittor, freedom-loving Rajputs moved towards the Himalayan hills, settled down in Palpa and gradually organized their little principality around a village called Gorkha from which they drew the title of their race.<sup>6</sup> By 1750, the Gurkhas had organized their strength sufficiently to challenge the Rajas of the Malla Dynasty and extirpated them completely in the 1760s.<sup>7</sup>

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1. D. R. Regmi, however, disputes some of the facts regarding Indian pre-dominance over Nepal.
  2. Hamilton : *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p. 131 ; Daniel Wright : *History of Nepal*, p. 172 ; H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal* (London, 1880) Vol. I, Ch. XIII, p. 170.
  3. S. Levi : *Le Nepal*, Vol. II, p. 220 ; *J.A.S.B.* (1915), pp. 411—12 ; Lt.-Col. E. Vansittart : *Gurkhas* (Calcutta, 1906), p. 68.
  4. H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal* (London, 1880), Vol. I, Ch. XIII, p. 170. He writes that "the progress of Mohammedanism daily drove fresh refugees to the Nepalese mountains". Hamilton : *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* (Edinburgh, 1819), p. 10.
  5. Col. W. Kirkpatrick : *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* (London, 1811), p. 185.
  6. H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal* (London, 1880), Vol. I, Ch. XIV, p. 170.
  7. Sylvan Levi : *Le Nepal* (3 Vols.), Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1905, 1905, 1908 (English translation in typescript, Indian Council of World Affairs Library, New Delhi), Vol. I, pp. 320—356 ; D. R. Regmi : *Modern Nepal*, pp. 13—26 ; Daniel Wright : *History of Nepal* (Cambridge, 1877), Vol. I, pp. 167—78 ; H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal* (London, 1880), Vol. I, pp. 266—269 ; *M.H.*, Vol. 18, K. 481 ; *Hemraj Vamsavali*, 137, et. seq. ; Father Giuseppe : *An Account of the Kingdom of*  
: *Researches*, Calcutta, 1799) Vol. II, pp. 307—322.



The western portion of the Valley was rocked by a Muslim invasion. It happened in the reign of Jayarajadeva. From an inscription recently discovered at Swayambhunath it appears that Sultan Shamsuddin Illyas of Bengal invaded Nepal by taking advantage of its weak position.<sup>1</sup> Bendal gives an impression of a plate of his Chronicle V<sup>iii</sup> (Nepal Catalogue 1, Plate 8) which deals with the fact of the Muslim invasion. In 1936, however, K. P. Jayaswal correctly read the plate as well as recovered the inscription (an impression of this inscription lies in the Durbar Library) and also got the facts mentioned therein verified by Bendal's own find of the Chronicle V<sup>iii</sup> which gives an account of the reconstruction work taking place after the invasion. Thus the fact of the Muslim invasion of Nepal was fully established.

In Hamir Mahakavya, Alauddin Khilji is noted to have exacted tribute from the King of Nepal. A coin was struck in the name of Alauddin Mohammad Shah Khilji and the Nepalese rulers of the time owed allegiance to the Khilji rulers.<sup>2</sup>

Alauddin plundered the town and demolished images and temples including those of Pasupatinath. A few remains of the broken images are attributed to this orgy of mass demolition and incendiarism. The inscription is dated NS 492 (1271—72). This was prepared to inaugurate the restoration ceremony of the Stupa (Dharmadhatumandap) that was severely damaged by Sultan Shamsuddin of Bengal who invaded Nepal with himself at the head of a huge force in the month of Marghshirsha (Nov.-Dec.) in NS 467 (1346 A.D.).

Bengal's Chronicle V<sup>iii</sup> gives NS 167 as the initial year and speaking about the year NS 469 it adds that the treasury of Pasupatinath was opened and used to meet the expenses of the work of reconstruction after the widespread ruination the country sustained as a result of the invasion a little earlier by Sultan Shamsuddin. According to the chronicle Pasupatinath's image was thoroughly broken and entire Nepal was reduced to ashes. The inscription clearly mentions Bengal, and Shams-

1. *J.B.O.R.S.* (1936), Part II (Read Jayaswal's article).

2. *Numismatic Supplement* (1929), p. 37.

uddin Illyas was ruling in that period (1342—57 A.D.) independent of the Tughlaqs.

Besides these contacts Nepal was the main channel of trade between India and the trans-Himalayan States of Tibet and China right from ancient times.<sup>1</sup> However, Nepal was not a part of India as Bihar or Oudh had been. At times, no doubt, it formed part of the great Hindu empires but such periods were few and far between. During the entire Muslim period, except for a very brief period of occupation by a Tughlaq prince, Nepal remained entirely a separate entity and an independent State.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Markham : *Bogle and Manning*, p. 124 ; Col. Kirkpatrick : *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, pp. 203—255 ; *District Gazetteer of U.P., Gorakhpur District*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 78—79 ; *Pub. Cons.*, Oct. 31, 1769, 1, *Home Public Press List*, Vol. VI, p. 225 ; *Secret Letter to Court*, p. 94, (1765—67) ; Barkar's Letter to Select Committee, Mar. 6, 1766 ; Letter to Government in Council from Mr. Peacock, June 25, 1772 ; *Pub. Cons.*, June 8, 1772, 2 (A) ; *Pub. Cons.*, July 8, 1772, 3 (B).
  2. Ramakant : *Indo-Nepalese Relations 1816—1877* (1968), p. 20.

## CHAPTER THREE

### EMERGENCE OF MODERN NEPAL RELATIONS WITH THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

The earliest British relations with Nepal began with the ascendancy of the East India Company in Bengal. But the contacts were confined to commercial transactions between the Indian merchants of Bengal and Bihar and the Newars of the Valley with occasional correspondence between the British Agent at Bettiah and the Newar Raja of Kathmandu. He realized that the only dependable military power in Hindustan was the English Company. All the bordering districts of India carried on a brisk trade with Nepal. "Indeed the economic potentialities of Nepal were responsible for drawing the excluded land of mystery into the arena of Indian politics in the second half of the 18th century."<sup>1</sup> The Company sent English merchandise to the bordering districts from where it was sent to Nepal and beyond. The British wanted to link the Nepalese trade with Tibet and China.<sup>2</sup>

The Nepalese never desired closer relations. Geographically they were so much shut up by the natural barriers from the rest of the world that they could take no interest in what happened in the plains. During 1767-68 the British got the first opportunity of an actual political contact. When Prithvi Narayan Shah, the first Gurkha king, attacked Kirtipur, Jai Prakash Malla, Raja of Kathmandu, solicited British aid against the Gurkha invaders<sup>3</sup> and courted them out of sheer

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1. K. C. Chaudhari : *Anglo-Nepalese Relations* (Calcutta, 1960), p. 8.
  2. H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal* (London, 1880), Vol. I, p. 273.
  3. H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal* (2 Vols.) (London, 1880), Vol. I, pp. 267-268.

desperation.<sup>1</sup> The British attempted to extend their influence beyond the boundaries of India—to Nepal, Tibet and China. It became apparent when Warren Hastings despatched the famous missions of Bogle and Turner. The Company feared that the occupation of the Nepal Valley by these martial Gurkhas would destroy its trade.<sup>2</sup> Motivated by these apprehensions, Capt. G. Kinlock was sent with a small force during the rainy season of 1767 and he expressed hopes of a revival of Indo-Nepalese trade relations. But he was defeated in August, 1767, and was forced to retreat due to sickness and want of provisions.<sup>3</sup> Thus ended the first attempt on the part of the Company to revive trade relations with Nepal. By September, 1768, Prithvi Narayan Shah defeated the remaining Newar Rajas, completed the conquest of the Valley and set himself to organize Nepal as a nation<sup>4</sup>.

Once master of Kathmandu, Prithvi Narayan began to follow his policy of exclusion and expulsion of the Europeans with all strictness. He pointed out that his kingdom was “sandwiched between two giant powers”<sup>5</sup> (India and China), and advised his followers not to develop intimate relations with either of them.<sup>6</sup> The Capuchin missionaries were expelled from Nepal.<sup>7</sup> Kashmiri merchants connected with the Bengal trade were also expelled from Nepal.<sup>8</sup> The Newars were compelled to remain unarmed, and crushing taxes and fines

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1. Kirkpatrick : *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* (London, 1811), p. 268 ; Logan : *Memorandum to Verelst*, Oct. 31, 1769 ; S. C. Sarkar : *Some Interesting Documents : Bengal—Past and Present*, Vol. XLIV, sl. nos. 67—88 (1932), pp. 43—45 ; *Select Committee Proceedings*, Apr. 30, 1967, Vol. 1, pp. 197—198.
  2. K. C. Chaudhari : *Anglo-Nepalese Relations* (1960), p. 14.
  3. Rumbold to Select Committee, Aug. 6, 1767, *Select Committee Proceedings*, Vol. XIII, pp. 244—45 ; Nand Lal Chatterjee : *Verelst's Rule in India*, p. 30 ; Sardar Iqbal Ali Shah : *Nepal, the Home of Gods* (London, 1938), pp. 38—39.
  4. S. Levi : *Le Nepal*, p. 272.
  5. Yogi Narharinath and Babu Ram Acharya : *Rashtrapita Sri 5 Bada Maharaja Prithvinarayan Shah Deo ko divivya Upadesh* (Kathmandu, 1953), p. 15.
  6. *Ibid.*, 18—19.
  7. Cavenagh : *Rough Notes on Nepal* (Calcutta, 1851), pp. 123—24.
  8. Markham : *Bogle and Manning* (London, 1876), p. 124.

were levied on the merchants or they were expelled.<sup>1</sup> The Company could not regain its trade through Nepal for more than a century. Although it affected the State and deprived her of a lucrative source of revenue, even then Prithvi Narayan asked Tibetans to decline all relations with the British and refuse them admission to their country.<sup>2</sup>

Prithvi Narayan realized that with the white traders went the white soldiers and their trade soon degenerated into political intrigues. Further, by supporting the Newars, the British realized that they had backed the wrong horse and now they decided to appease the Gurkha Raja. Pressed by the necessity of finding more markets for their finished goods, the Court of Directors inquired on February 11, 1768, whether "trade can be opened with Nepal and whether cloth or other European commodities may not find their way from thence to Tibet, Lhasa and the western parts of China".<sup>3</sup>

The poor financial condition of the East India Company in Bengal, the Bengal Famine of 1770, the Industrial Revolution and the consequent need for wider markets for the new manufactures in England made the Court of Directors more interested in the expansion of the Company's trade in the backward and less exploited hilly countries to the north of India. Motivated by this desire James Logan was sent to Nepal in June, 1770, to convince Prithvi Narayan Shah of the friendly attitude of the Company and induce him to reopen the old trade relations between the two countries.<sup>4</sup> With the same consideration, the Mackwanpur Terai, which had been captured by Kinlock, was restored to the Gurkhas.<sup>5</sup> But there can be no doubt that the Logan Mission failed miserably. "Firringi was driven out of Nepal"<sup>6</sup> with the idea that the foreign traders would

1. Sylvan Levi : *Le Nepal*, Vol. II, p. 215.

2. P. Landon : *Nepal*, (London, 1928), Vol. I, p. 67.

3. Alistair Lamb : *Tibet in Anglo-Chinese Relations 1767—1842*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, Oct., 1957, Parts III and IV, p. 162.

4. K. C. Chaudhari: *Anglo-Nepalese Relations* (Calcutta, 1960), pp. 37—38.

5. H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal* (2 Vols.) (London, 1880), Vol. I, p. 265 ; K. C. Chaudhari : *Anglo-Nepalese Relations* (Calcutta, 1960), pp. 59—60 ; C.P.C., Vol. VI., No. 949.

6. Markham : *Narrative of the Mission of George Bogle* (2nd Edn.), p. 115.

make the country a desert by sucking all profits.<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-Nepalese relations stood at a standstill. Rather the relations took a turn for the worse and the subsequent years were characterized by repeated border conflicts. In January, 1784, again a mission under Foxcroft was sent to Nepal with presents and the Governor-General's letter to the Maharaja of Nepal.<sup>2</sup> The suspicions of the Gurkhas, however, could not be dispelled and the trade between the two countries went on declining. But it is remarkable that in spite of misunderstandings the two Governments always tried to follow a policy of avoiding hostilities.<sup>3</sup>

Soon a fortuitous circumstance brought the Company and the Nepal Government nearer each other and facilitated the signing of a commercial treaty between the two. The expansionist policy of the Gurkhas ever since Prithvi Narayan's time ultimately brought them into conflict with Sikkim and Tibet. At the time of the conflict between Tibet and Nepal and earlier in answer to Teshu Lama's letter for military assistance to Tibet, the Nepal Raja, Ran Bahadur Shah, had addressed a letter to the Governor-General intimating to him the fact that the Nepalese Army had been ordered to proceed against Lhasa since the latter had broken the terms of a treaty formerly entered into between Tibet and Nepal. He also requested that the Company should not render any military assistance to Tibet should any such request come from that quarter.<sup>4</sup> The conflict started between Tibet and Nepal and China interfered and sent a 70,000-strong Chinese army under a general for the help of Tibetans. The above conflict offered an opportunity for an Anglo-Nepalese trade agreement on March 1, 1792, to win the British friendship.<sup>5</sup> The treaty was solely for commercial purposes. It regulated the transit of goods, stipulated  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  ad valorem invoice duty and arranged for the security of the traders. It is quite obvious that the

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1. Ishwar Raj : *Naya Nepalko Itihash*, p. 109.

2. K. C. Chaudhari : *Anglo-Nepalese Relations* (Calcutta, 1960), p. 51.

3. Markham : *Narrative of the Mission of George Bogle* (2nd Edn), p. 118.

4. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence 1788*, p. 609.

5. C. U. Aitchison : *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads* (Calcutta, 1906), Vol. II, pp. 103—105.

Gurkhas were not motivated by a desire for peaceful commercial relations between the two countries.

The commercial treaty was more or less a counsel of despair, without any sincere desire to improve trade. Their motive was to deter the Chinese by the British alliance and also to secure the British neutrality in the coming contest. Soon after the conclusion of the commercial treaty the Gurkhas appealed to the British for armed aid against the Chinese threat.<sup>1</sup> The Panchon Lama of Tibet also appealed to Lord Cornwallis for help.<sup>2</sup> This put the Governor-General in a dilemma. The Chinese influence in Nepal would have made the Chinese territory contiguous to the richest British provinces of the Gangetic plain. This contiguity with the Chinese Empire would have given rise to border disputes and misunderstandings leading ultimately to disturbance of valuable trade at Canton. The problem was how to prevent such a situation from arising. As the only way out was British mediation it was offered to both the contending parties to bring about peace. The offer of mediation was accepted by the Nepalese. Col. W. Kirkpatrick was asked to proceed to Kathmandu. But before he even left Patna, the Chinese Army had got the better of the Gurkhas and Bahadur Sah sued for peace.<sup>3</sup> They were anxious to prevent Kirkpatrick from coming over to Nepal. Therefore, without any loss of time the conclusion of a treaty was announced.<sup>4</sup> According to the treaty, the Nepalese evacuated the Tibetan territories, secured certain trade privileges in Tibet and agreed to send a mission with presents to the Chinese Emperor every fifth year. Now the Nepalese wished to prevent Kirkpatrick from coming over to Nepal. Lord Cornwallis wanted that he should proceed to Nepal for settling sundry matters and to induce the Nepalese Government to act up to the Commercial Treaty of 1792. Kirkpatrick was courteously treated but was confronted with

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1. Report of 1837. (Cursory notice of the connections and transactions between the British Indian Government and Nepal from 1793 to 1812). *P.C.*, Sept. 18, 1837, 71, dated July 20, 1837.
  2. *Schuyler Camman*, no. 21, p. 115.
  3. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 7—8.
  4. Report of 1837 : *P.C.*, Sept. 18, 1837, 71, dated July 20, 1837.

most determined objections and evasions. Ultimately Kirkpatrick was compelled to return with nothing more than a treaty,<sup>1</sup> which politically remained a dead letter. Capt. Kirkpatrick's visit was important as he rendered valuable service to the East India Company by preparing an excellent account of Nepal and making her known to the English people. Thus ended one more British attempt to open the gates of Nepal for trade and political relations with it.

From 1793 to 1800 relations between Nepal and the Company were merely of a formal nature.

After the failure of Kirkpatrick, the British sent a trade mission in 1795 under Maulvi Abdul Qadir<sup>2</sup> to achieve anything for the improvement of the Anglo-Nepalese commercial relations or for the settlement of outstanding border conflicts between the two countries. But he could not induce the Durbar to either observe the Commercial Treaty of 1792 or to modify its policy of isolation. Thus ended Sir John Shore's attempt to forward the Anglo-Nepalese commercial relations and through them to extend the Company's trade to Tibet and China. The response from the Nepal Government was not at all warm, nor was the commercial experiment much encouraging.

If the Abdul Qadir Embassy did not succeed in improving the relations between the British and the Nepal Government, it did not worsen them either. The Nepal administration continued to follow its traditional manner of courting the English from a safe distance but did never show any warmth in friendly professions. From 1795, the Durbar was mostly busy in its internal politics. Bahadur Shah, the Regent, was deposed by his nephew, Maharaja Ran Bahadur Shah, in 1795. In March, 1799, Maharaja Ran Bahadur Shah abdicated and his infant son, Girwan Juddha Vikram Shah, was enthroned with the Junior Queen as the Regent. The Governor-General in Calcutta was requested by the Rajah to extend his kindness and friendship to the infant prince.<sup>3</sup> The British Government

1. K. C. Chaudhari : *Anglo-Nepalese Relations* (Calcutta, 1960), p. 73.

2. K. C. Chaudhari : *Anglo-Nepalese Relations* (Calcutta, 1960), pp. 76—97.

3. *Political Consultations*, Sept. 3, 1799, 7—8.



showed no interest in the internal troubles of Nepal but the Palace revolution of Nepal and the internal troubles provided them with an unforeseen opportunity. Perplexed by the court intrigues, Rajah Ran Bahadur arrived at Benaras and his arrival opened a new chapter in the Anglo-Nepalese relations and led to the signing of a fresh treaty between the two countries.<sup>1</sup>

Ran Bahadur's arrival at Benaras was considered by the British an excellent opportunity for the furtherance of the political and commercial interests of the Company<sup>2</sup>. Capt. W. D. Knox was appointed to attend to the Royal guest. It had the desired effect. History repeated itself. The rivals became apprehensive that the British Government might help the ex-Maharaja to regain the throne. Negotiations were held between the two Governments and a treaty of "commerce and alliance" was concluded on October 26, 1801.<sup>3</sup>

The treaty was, however, of a purely political nature. According to this treaty, in exchange of the honourable custody of the former Maharaja by the British, the two Governments agreed for the mutual reception of the representatives for the mutual extradition of the criminals taking refuge in each other's territories, for the annulment of the arrangement concluded in 1772, by which Nepal gave an elephant to the Indian Government annually for the cultivation of Mackwanpur lowlands, and for the amicable settlement of the future border disputes. By a separate article on October 26, 1801, the settlement of financial provisions for the maintenance of ex-Maharaja Ran Bahadur was made.<sup>4</sup> The conclusion of the Treaty of 1801 was a great stride in the Anglo-Nepalese relations since it marked the beginning of formal political-cum-commercial relations by the establishment of a British Residency at Kathmandu. Capt. Knox was appointed the first British Resident at Kathmandu. He arrived at Kathmandu in April, 1802, accompanied by Dr. B. Hamilton. The Nepalese Govern-

1. P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. I, pp. 70—72; Cavenagh: *Rough Notes on Nepal*, pp. 131—133.

2. *Secret Consultations*, June 26, 1800, 85.

3. Aitchison : *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Vol. II, 22, pp. 105—108.

4. Aitchison : *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Vol. II, 22, p. 109

ment sent three chiefs of the highest order to India as hostages for the proper treatment of the British Mission. Captain Knox was given very important instructions on his political, commercial, military and general duties. He was asked to give full effect to the Treaty of 1792 and to try to encourage the Durbar to revive British trade with Tibet and beyond which had remained blocked since the times of Prithvi Narayan Shah.<sup>1</sup> To enhance the British influence, he wanted to bribe three main pro-British chiefs, Bum Sah Cautria, Guru Gajraj Misra and Damodar Pande.<sup>2</sup> But they were men of strong character. Knox had also an influence over the Regent Maharani.

Meanwhile, the political setting of Nepal was taking a dramatic turn. The administration was in the weak hands of a woman—the Junior Maharani—which gave an opportunity to all the contending factions to conspire against each other. Suddenly the news came that Maharani Rajrajeshwari Devi was coming over to Nepal due to cruel treatment of Ran Bahadur Shah. The Regent Maharani compelled her to camp at a border village. In the meantime a number of chiefs, including the Junior Maharani's favourite, Kazi Kirttiman, were assassinated and Damodar Pande was suspected of it. She deposed the Prime Minister. Damodar Pande started conspiring to bring back Rajrajeshwari Devi. In February 1803, the Regent Maharani fled from the capital and Maharani Rajrajeshwari Devi assumed the Regency and Damodar Pande was appointed her Prime Minister. The new Regent expressed friendly feelings towards the British Government and promised to adhere to the recently concluded treaty. But the attitude of most of the Gurkha chiefs was not at all favourable towards the British. It led Knox to conclude that he was *persona non grata* and he should better leave Nepal. After a year of fruitless efforts for establishing closer connections, he left Kathmandu in March, 1803. In January, 1804, Lord Wellesley formally renounced the treaties of 1792 and 1801 with Nepal. It was resolved that Ran Bahadur Shah should be left at liberty to return to Nepal unconditionally. Ran Bahadur immediately

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1. *P.T.*, para. 11.

2. H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal*, p. 287.

repaired for Kathmandu. Damodar Pande prevented his entry into Nepal by force. Troops were in favour of Ran Bahadur and Damodar Pande was arrested. Thus ended another attempt by the British for establishing closer relations with Nepal. The British Government put its saddle on a wrong horse. Consequently, after 12 months of fruitless efforts for establishing closer relations, Capt. Knox left Kathmandu in March, 1803, and with his retirement Anglo-Nepalese relations were again relegated to the same state as in 1792.

Ran Bahadur's resumption of power was followed by the removal of Damodar Pande from Prime-Ministership. Bhimsen Thapa was appointed as the Prime Minister. These administrative changes occurred in both the internal and the external policy of Nepal. Ran Bahadur was wounded by his uncle Sher Bahadur and thus he died. Bhimsen was an able leader and efficient administrator. He raised a third queen, Rani Tripura Sundari Devi, as the Regent. He became the master of the situation with a minor on the throne and a Regent whose paramount he was.

With the rise of Bhimsen Thapa to power started another era in the history of the Indo-Nepalese relations. During his The prime-Ministership the relations between the two countries were at the lowest ebb and the War of 1814-16 was fought. The passive policy of Sir J. Barlow (1805-6) and Sir John Shore (1806—13) after Lord Wellesley and the prevailing condition in India encouraged Bhimsen to pursue his policy of expansion towards the south with greater vigour. The chief aim of his foreign policy was to save Nepal from the clutches of the British Imperialism and yet he had to provide employment to the military race of Nepal. He set before himself how to steadily encroach upon the British territory towards the south and yet to prevent British reprisals which might bring Nepal under the British ascendancy. Bhimsen adopted a policy of slow but steady encroachment along the Indian boundary so as to keep the soldiery busy and yet avoid provoking hostilities with the East India Company. For several years a systematic expansion of the Nepalese territory continued towards the south. The Indian Government was aware of these encroachments but due to employment of its resources against the French in the Deccan, Tipoo in Mysore and the Marathas in Central India, it could not

take steps against the Gurkhas, but they clearly realized that the Nepalese attitude formed part of a determined and steady policy of expansion. In spite of the aggressive character of the Gurkhas, the Indo-Nepalese War of 1814-16 was the result of the British activities who were trying to bring the Himalayan States under a sort of their influence. The Industrial Revolution had created the problem of markets for their goods. That was why the expeditions of Kinlock, Kirkpatrick and Knox were sent. All means of diplomacy had already been tried and war remained the only means to open the doors of Nepal. One of the other main objectives of the war given by Lord Hastings was the expulsion of Gurkha power from Kumaon and Garhwal and its immediate occupation by the British. Finally, absence of any political relationship between an imperialistic government and a growing frontier power refusing any closer connections was a very important consideration with the British. The British policy was motivated by a desire to cripple the Gurkha power.<sup>1</sup> These attitudes, policies and views of the two Governments made the war inevitable. The immediate cause of the outbreak of hostilities was border dispute on the Gorakhpur and Sarun frontiers. In 1812, both the Governments agreed to enquire into all the disputes. Lt. F. Young and Maj. Paris Bradshaw along with the Nepalese representatives conducted two consecutive investigations, but the disputes could not be resolved. Lord Hastings was worried by the fact that such a power had no understanding with the British Government. To cripple the power of Nepal on the issue of border disputes he assumed a very rigid attitude. He addressed a letter to the Maharaja of Nepal in April, 1814, demanding a peremptory evacuation of both the disputed territories on Gorakhpur and Sarun frontier within 25 days and ordered the Magistrate of Gorakhpur to occupy them if the order of the Maharaja did not arrive in time.<sup>2</sup> In the face of force the Nepalese evacuated the disputed lands and the British lost no time in occupying them. The letter of Lord Hastings raised the question of war and peace which was fully debated

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1. Marquess of Hastings, Summary of the Administration of the Indian Government from Oct., 1813, to Jan., 1823, 1824, p. 11.
  2. H. T. Prinsep : *Political and Military Transactions in India*, (London, 1825), Vol. I, p. 60.

in a grand council. But it was surprising how a man of Bhimsen's understanding and wisdom, who knew the reality of British power, could not realize the hopelessness of a contest with the East India Company. He had overestimated the strength of the mountains that protected Nepal.<sup>1</sup> After a long debate, the die was cast in favour of war.

Lord Hastings declared war on Nepal on November 2, 1814, and himself took the charge of operations. "The British Government has long borne the conduct of the Nepalese Government with unexampled patience, opposing to their violence, insolence and rapacity, a course of procedure uniformly just and moderate. But forbearance must have its limits and the British Government having been compelled to take up arms in defence of its rights, its interests and its honour...."<sup>2</sup>

The Nepalee could not push on with their military success because their tactics were purely defensive. The war terminated with the peace of Sagauli signed on December 2, 1815, and ratified in March, 1816, which gave important advantages to the British Government.<sup>3</sup> The acquisition of Kumaon Division comprising Nainital, Almora and Garhwal and Dehra Dun districts proved to be of great value. Parts of Simla district were made over by the Nepal Government to the British. With the cession of these territories the boundaries between India and Nepal as well as between Nepal and Sikkim became well defined. By Article 3 of the Treaty of Sagauli, the boundary between the two States was well defined as the Nepal Government ceded the following territories :

- (i) The whole of the lowlands between the Kali and the Rapti.
- (ii) The whole of the lowlands lying between the Rapti and the Gandak.
- (iii) The whole of the lowlands between the Gandak and the Kosi.

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1. H. T. Prinsep : *Political and Military Transactions in India*, Vol. I, Appendix A, pp. 457-61.  
 2. *Parliamentary Papers*, House of Commons, Vol. XI, 1817, p. 8.  
 3. C.U. Aitchison : *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads, F.I.B.*, Feb., 1894, pp. 204-208 (Calcutta, 1929), XIV, 46.

(iv) All the lowlands between the Mechie and the Teesta.

(v) All the territories within the hills eastwards of the Mechie including the fort, lands and the passes of Nagarkot.<sup>1</sup> Strategically it gave the British "the most valuable and important position of...north-west frontier line". It offered a complete barrier against any extension of the Gurkha power in the western direction, "a bulwark to the whole country in its rear". The British merchants had no longer to depend on the mountain chiefs for passage. In Kumaon, the Company secured rich mines of iron, copper, lead and hemp of a very superior kind and in the forests of the Terai, they secured most valuable timber and herbs of various kinds. No longer was there any danger of the Gurkha martial energy thriving at the cost of their weak neighbours. In Kumaon, Garhwal and Darjeeling, the British secured their best hill stations and summer resorts for the Europeans accustomed to cold climate. In the war the British met one of the best fighting soldiers in the Gurkhas. Immediately after the war local levies of the Gurkhas were raised. A British Resident had to be received at Kathmandu, an arrangement more distasteful to the Nepalese than loss of territories. But this treaty ushered in an era of friendly relationship between India and Nepal. The customary trade relations between the two States were gradually revived. Nepal remained a buffer between British India and Tibet. It suited British interests more than an outright annexation. The British aims in fighting the Anglo-Nepalese War were limited. They only wanted a peaceful and friendly country on the northern frontier, which they hoped Nepal would become on the basis of the relations established by the Treaty of Sagauli.

The permanent political relations between Nepal and the East India Company started in March, 1816, when, in accordance with the treaty, Hon. Edward Gardner resumed the charge of Resident in Nepal. The conclusion of the war did not solve all the problems of Bhimsen. In fact it had put him in an awkward position. He thought the British ineffective as an opponent and worthless as an ally. The war made him

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1. H. T. Prinsep : *Political and Military Transactions in India*, Vol. I, Appendix C, p 473.

realize the reality of the British power—"a power" which he called "crushed thrones like potsherds".<sup>1</sup> He was convinced that the era of conquest was over and resolved never to go for war again. The British had not only stripped off one-third of their kingdom, but also hemmed them in on three sides by their domains or those of its protected allies. The Resident meant an end of all the hopes of extending their empire and the most cherished martial professions.

After the war, the Nepalese were seething with bitterness, just baffled and full of vengeance. Bhimsen first of all kept his hold strong on the soldiery and kept them engaged and showed that peace was not so dishonourable. Recruitment was made, military stores were accumulated, ammunition was manufactured, parades were held, but this was just to keep the soldiery engaged. There was no intention of Bhimsen to break the treaty. The Resident was boycotted and treated with indifference. He was reduced to the position of an honoured prisoner. To the English Government otherwise he extended a hand of friendship. Formally and in private interviews with the Resident he assured peaceful intentions of his Government.<sup>2</sup> The Nepalese Prime Minister knew that peace was the best policy to preserve the independence of his country intact. As Bhimsen came to realize the English strength, the British also felt the taste of Gurkha character, and both came to respect each other. The Resident reported certain Gurkha intrigues and hostile preparations but he was told that his Government "have no motives for reducing the Nepal power and resources below their present state, which many powerful considerations suggest the expediency of avoiding a war with that people, however justly provoked..."<sup>3</sup> Lord Hastings aimed at converting Nepal from a troublesome neighbour into a peaceful and friendly frontier State. General instructions to Lt. Boileau were sent that his conduct "should be regulated on all occasions by a spirit of conciliation and prudence which may be expected finally to remove the characteristic jealousy of the

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1. Sir W. W. Hunter : *Life of B. H. Hodgson* (London, 1896), No. 40, Ch. I, p. 100.

2. *Political Consultations*, Dec. 23, 1816, 49.

3. *Secret Consultations*, Dec. 19, 1816, 29.

Nepalese Government and introduce confidence and reciprocal good-will into our intercourse with that State."<sup>1</sup> Lord Hastings insisted that the treaty must strictly be looked upon as the basis of new relations while Bhimsen followed a policy of rendering the treaty as much nugatory as possible. The Governor-General following his policy of reconciliation assured the Gurkhas that the British had no designs of territorial expansion and he restored whole of the eastern Terai from the Kosi to the western limits of Gorakhpur district along with the old southern frontiers. In exchange the Indian Government got the pension clause of the treaty annulled. The retrocession of the Terai produced a desirable effect on the Durbar. It gave rise to much-needed confidence in the minds of the Gurkhas regarding the English intentions. Bhimsen suggested that another treaty should be concluded in place of the treaty of Sagauli. The Governor-General proposed a supplementary treaty. This was in turn unacceptable to the Nepalese and the question was dropped for ever.

Defeat in the war could not daunt Nepal, nor could its limitation subdue her spirit. Eager to avenge the defeat and restore the lost territories, Nepal sought to incite the Indian powers against the British. Bhimsen Thapa, the all-powerful Minister of Nepal, kept up lively interest in the British activities in India and maintained close relations with the Indian powers. In the courts of the Marathas and the Sikhs, agents were maintained and tried emissaries were sent annually to different parts of India to report on the activities of the British.<sup>2</sup> Thus during the Third Anglo-Maratha War, the Nepalese endeavoured to form a confederacy of the Marathas and the Pindaris against the British. The British were fully aware of Nepal's intrigues, but they winked at these,<sup>3</sup> though Bhimsen did exploit the chance by sending emissaries to China, Lahore and Gwalior and one of the emissaries, Padam Pani, who was sent to Gwalior, had been caught by the British with his papers. No restrictive measure was taken against Nepal.

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1. *Secret Consultations*, May 4, 1816, pp. 69—70.

2. *Foreign Secret Consultations*, Oct. 14, 1829, 23.

3. Government to Gardner, Oct. 13, 1817, *N.R.*, Vol. I; *S.C.*, Dec. 19, 1816, 29.



A mild remonstrance alone was made with the Nepalese Durbar whose treacherous designs accorded ill with the "un-exemplified liberality" of the British Government. The British Resident's primary duty was to transform Nepal gradually into a friendly neighbour or at least a peaceful one.<sup>1</sup> With the consolidation of British hold on Indian States, Nepal's intriguing propensities registered a marked abatement though not absolute cessation.

The policy of Bhimsen was peaceful but not friendly; nor was it free from deep-laid distrust. He maintained a consistent attitude of jealous exclusion of the British from the internal affairs of Nepal and confined their unwelcome political intercourse to rigidly defined and closely guarded limits. The Resident was distrusted as the artery of British influence, deprived of any kind of social relation with anybody. He was virtually a pariah, kept under a perpetual surveillance. Jealous exclusion of the British from Nepal and non-intercourse with them were Bhimsen's cardinal principles adapted to preserve his country's independence. Under his fostering care, the Nepal Army became a "tower of strength". Single-handed it was impossible to fight the British at any time other than one of crisis. The barometer of Nepal's diplomatic and military activity was regulated by the frequency and intensity of British troubles. Except the Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26), the British were not involved in any major military operation. Emissaries were exchanged between Kathmandu and Ava, carrying what was suspected to be schemes of hostility towards the British. To lull the British suspicion, the King of Nepal offered military aid to them against the Burmese.

In the third decade of the 19th century a cloud of an unprecedented crisis gathered on the political horizon of India. To add to the British perplexities, the Nepalese court was now the centre of internecine strifes, the King, the Queens and the ambitious nobles belonging to rival groups scrambling for power. All were up against Bhimsen, the all-powerful Minister whose absolute monopoly of power for three decades had created intense jealousy, concealed animosity and suppressed

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1. *Secret Consultations*, May 4, 1816, 69-70, Major Ross of Blanderburg, The Marquess of Hastings (Oxford, 1900), p. 71.

rancour among his rivals. In 1832, the old Regent, Queen Lalit Tripura Sundari, the strongest prop of Bhimsen's power, died. After her death, a strong anti-Bhimsen faction was formed in the Palace. In July, 1837, took place the long-meditated and much-desired fall of Bhimsen. The fall of Bhimsen was a domestic revolution in Nepal and a land-mark in Indo-Nepalese relations. With his fall a bitter wrangle for power ensued. Indo-Nepalese relations entered upon a new phase—a phase of storm and stress as never before. Never before was such misunderstanding created between Nepal and the British Government as in the decade following the fall of Bhimsen. At this very time, the British were passing through one of the most critical phases of their career in India. The Indian States were in a state of sullen discontent, the north-west frontier was ablaze. China and Burma were hostile—in short all affairs were full of gloomy potents. Verily with the fall of Bhimsen the mainstay of Nepal's internal stability and pacific relations with the British was swept away.

Of all the parties sqabbling for power, the Pandes were emerging as the strongest. They were bitterly hostile to the British Government. This anti-British sentiment was the linch-pin of their policy. They knew that nothing was more popular with the army than war with the British and nothing more alluring than plunder of their opulent dominions. These Pandes gradually established their absolute ascendancy in the Nepalese Durbar. They constituted the "war-party" in contradiction to the "peace-party" formed of nobles advocating peaceful relations with the British. The peace-party was formed with Hodgson's support to offset the growing influence of the war-party led by the Pandes. The war-party's main policy was to spin a network of intrigues with the Indian powers. A horde of emissaries was sent to almost all the important States of India and to some beyond to find allies for Nepal's scheme of exploiting the political troubles of the British<sup>1</sup>.

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1. *P.C.*, Jan. 17, 1838, 30 ; *S.C.*, Aug. 22, 1838, 46—47 ; June 13, 1838, 10—11, 13—14 ; Aug. 22, 1838, 40—45 ; Nov., 1838, 156 ; May 16, 1838, 14—15 ; July 4, 1838, 11—12 ; July 25, 1838, 7—9 ; Aug. 1, 1838 35—39 ; Aug. 22, 1838, 19—29, 39 ; Oct. 17, 1838, 184—190, 153—156, 171 ; Nov. 21, 1838, 170 ; Nov. 28, 1838, 41, 172—173 ; Dec. 26, 1838, 65.

Situated close to the storm-centre in the north-west, Punjab was most prized by Nepal and consequently much dreaded by the British. The Jammu Rajas, particularly Raja Gulab Singh of Kashmir, were keen on forging an alliance with Nepal as a means of linking up the Sikh territory with the north-western border of Nepal. Meanwhile Persia besieged Herat. A malicious intrigue between Nepal and Herat was gradually ripening beneath the apparently harmless negotiations for trade in horses. In December, 1837, Saifullah, "the recognized envoy of Herat", arrived at Kathmandu.<sup>1</sup> Hodgson urged the taking of a "decisive course of action" to stem the rot before it had gone too deep. He was always in favour of get-tough policy to nip the growing anti-British spirit in the bud. But Lord Auckland advised patience and forbearance, for it was the "height of folly" to resort to "demonstration of anger".

War-like preparations in Kathmandu increased with the aggravation of British troubles in Afghanistan, Burma and China. The men and materials of war to the military posts east and west of Kathmandu, the constant exercise of soldiers in the capital, coupled with the harsh treatment to the Resident, left no doubt about Nepal's hostile intentions. Nepal made vigorous attempts to rally the Indian powers against the British. The Rajput and the Central Indian States, having anti-British feelings, extended a warm welcome to the Nepalese emissaries sent to their courts. The attitude of Raja Man Singh of Jodhpur and Apa Sahib, ex-ruler of Nagpur, was of keenest vigilance. As for the Maratha States, an alliance with Sindhia was the most prized object of Nepal. The ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II also co-operated in their project. Lord Auckland regarded these intrigues "rather originating in the struggles of faction than any determined and concerted scheme of hostility to the British power."<sup>2</sup>

Lord Auckland found that the intrigues had failed to ripen into any league of hostile powers although Nepal had been spinning them for long. In June, 1838, a treaty of alliance had been concluded with Ranjit Singh which gave a lie to the floating rumour and the key-stone of Nepal's in-

1. *Secret Consultations*, June 13, 1838, 9; *Political Consultations*, Jan. 17, 1839, 30.

2. *Secret Consultations*, Oct. 17, 1838, 178; July 25, 1838, 7-8.

triguing scheme was buffeted out. The Indian States were warned against entertaining Nepalese agents, strict watch was kept on their journey to the trans-Indus region. Lord Auckland thought that the "measures of precaution and preparation" would suffice. He did not want to strain his relations to the breaking point. Prevention of an open war at such a critical time was the core of Lord Auckland's policy in Nepal.

The King of Nepal and his councillors grew uneasy. They dreaded the precautionary measures adopted by the British as preludes to invasion of Nepal. The King wished to send a complimentary mission to Calcutta as a token of friendship and cordiality. Nepal strengthened her frontier posts as a defensive measure. The British had already launched a campaign far in Afghanistan. Soft-peddaling policy in Nepal was, hence, a painful necessity.

Meanwhile in the Durbar the war-party under the Pandes had got into stride and the peace-party was fast recoiling. The dreams of war went into the head of the King and the counsels. The intrigues with the Indian States, suspended for a while, were resumed, mostly under cover of bride-seeking missions. Kathmandu became, by the middle of 1839, a rendezvous of agents from Burma, Gwalior, Satara, Baroda, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Kotah, Bundi, Rewa, Panna, Lahore, besides many petty States in the Indo-Gangetic plain. Stories of the combination of the Sikhs, the Marathas, the Rajputs, the Chinese and the Burmese, the Persians, the Afghans and the Russians against the British were floated by the Pandes and there was always a hope of war.

By the end of 1839, the tone of the Durbar began to ring a little soft and the war-cry of the Pandes was for a while mellowed. The Durbar hastened to desist from intriguing activities and also allowed the Resident to move freely within 20 miles from Kathmandu—an unprecedented concession.<sup>1</sup> The Durbar even tendered its troops for employment against the Afghans. The dread of British arms had impelled the Pandes to make a pretence of burrying the hachet for a while. The Durbar

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1. Translation of an engagement with the Red Seal in the form of a letter from the Raja of Nepal to the Resident, Nov. 6, 1839, *Secret Consultations*, Dec. 25, 1839, 154 ; *C. U. Aitchison*, No. 19, p. 68.

pinned to its "new course" and needed a breathing spell for more hostility in future. At last, an engagement was signed by Hodgson and the Maharaja on November 6, 1839.<sup>1</sup> The Nepalese were provided the facility to search matrimonial matches in the plains for the Royal family. Hodgson put forward the British grievance of justice to the Indian traders and received a Khareeta to give redress to the British merchants. The question of the right of the British Resident to excursion in the Valley was also discussed. But on this point, the Nepalese attitude was quite obstinate and the issue was dropped. The fourth point of discussion was the secret intrigues of the Nepalese with the Indian States. Kashi Nath of Gwalior was dismissed as a foreign agent. No emissary came to, or went from, Nepal and thus the system of intrigues received a decided check. The Durbar promised to regard the Indian traders as its own subjects and assured to deal with their cases without delay. Article 6 of the engagement provided that no unauthorized duties would be levied on the Indian goods imported in Nepal. This was certainly an important achievement for the British. This engagement secured for the British many important gains for future and temporization for the present. The curious aspect of the present negotiations was the Nepalese offer of troops to the British.

In February, 1840, Ramjung Pande was confirmed as Minister. The jingo spirit in the Durbar reached its acme. The engagement of November, 1839, was honoured more in breach than observance. The difficulties of Hodgson became acutest and the danger of the British Government gravest. With the absolute preponderance of the Pandes, the Indo-Nepalese relations seemed destined for a violent breach. Intrigues with the Indian States were resumed with renewed zeal. In April, 1840, a band of Gurkha soldiers broke into Ramnagar State in Champaran district, already escheated to the British Government, and laid hold on 91 villages by forcible occupation.<sup>2</sup> Preparations for war were stepped up in Nepal. It

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1. *Secret Consultations*, Dec. 26, 1839, 162.

2. Joint Magistrate, Champaran, to Resident and Government, Aug. 12, 1840, *Secret Consultations*, June 8, 1840, 131; June 29, 1840, 88-89; July 27, 1840, 99-104; Aug. 17, 1840, 69-86; Aug. 31, 1840, 78-81.

was clear to Hodgson that if peace was to be maintained strong steps must be taken otherwise the Pandes and the Queen would do worse.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, from this time onwards till the instalment of the friendly ministry in January, 1841, Hodgson's attempts were directed at shaking the Maharaja's faith in the Pandes by threats and remonstrances and to convince him that they were leading the country towards disaster. Lord Auckland also realized that any delay or leniency would be fatal. The Pandes realized the failure of their schemes and were divided between the necessity of compliance and shame. They did their best to create a war atmosphere and foster a belief that China and Punjab would soon make a common cause against the British. The Indian Government took strict steps which had a sobering effect on the Maharaja. The British demanded for the evacuation of the disputed territory. Ultimately, the Durbar conceded all the demands except one. The Resident accepted the Durbar's reply on September 20, 1840.<sup>2</sup> The Gurkha troops had been withdrawn from Ramnagar, Rs. 6,000 had been given as compensation. As regards the extradition of the Indian dacoits taking shelter in Nepal, immediate orders for their surrender to the British authorities were issued and the Nepalese authorities were instructed to co-operate with them in future.<sup>3</sup>

On November 1, 1840, Ramjung Pande was deposed. A pro-British noble and a prominent member of the peace-party, Choutaria Fateh Jang Shah, was then made the Minister. He with Hodgson's active help, soon set up a regime under the "moral aegis" of the British Government and the protective influence of the Resident—a regime amenable to British wishes and conducive to their interests.<sup>4</sup> It was acknowledgedly a *pis aller*, a political expedient, to weather a crisis; but it was designed, as Hodgson its author himself admitted, to be "a nucleus of British influence in the Nepalese Durbar".<sup>5</sup> The

1. *Secret Consultations*, July 20, 1840, 59.

2. *Secret Consultations*, Oct. 5, 1840, 152-153.

3. *Secret Consultations*, Oct. 26, 1840, 135.

4. *Nepal Summary*, Nov. 1840, *Secret Consultations*, Nov. 23, 1840, 130.

5. Resident to Government, June 22, 1842; *Secret Consultations*, Sept. 7, 1842, 88.

pro-British regime lasted for almost three years, during which the predominant influence of the Resident kept Nepal thoroughly subdued, leaving no scope for indulgence in machinations with Indian States.<sup>1</sup> The King assured the Resident to remove other anti-British chiefs. The Maharaja again expressed his faith in friendly relations with the British and promised to uphold the present ministry.<sup>2</sup>

Matabar was retained under British custody till April, 1843, when, following the complete change in the British Government's Nepal policy, he was freed and allowed to return to Nepal. On December 26, 1843, Matabar, leader of the Thapa faction, became the Minister of Nepal.<sup>3</sup> He was an ambitious, revengeful and choleric character who could rest contented with nothing but supreme and exclusive power as Bhimsen enjoyed. By the end of 1843, the greatest crisis in the British rule had been over. Afghanistan was quiet and Burma relatively less bellicose. The most critical phase in the Indo-Nepalese relations was over by 1844. Nepal hereafter found herself torn by domestic feuds; the squabbles of the nobles for power were the main political events in the following two years. After the fall of Matabar Singh on May 17, 1845, a coalition ministry was in the saddle. During the Prime-Ministership of Matabar Singh he adopted a pro-British policy because he had first-hand knowledge of the British power. But British Resident Lawrence followed a policy of non-interference. Lawrence greatly admired his energy and ability, called him a hero, and remarked that "it would be difficult to find such a man in Nepal".<sup>4</sup> His downfall was due to the fact that a strong King and a strong Prime Minister could not live in Nepal together.<sup>5</sup>

During the rule of the coalition ministry, the relations with the Indian Government continued to be friendly. The Indian Government continued his policy of non-interference in the

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1. Hodgson's letters to various persons in *Hodgson MSS*, Bodleian Library (Oxford), Vols IX, X and XVI.

2. *Secret Consultations*, May 31, 1841, 162.

3. J. T. Wheeler : *Diary of Events in Nepal, 1841—1846* (Calcutta, 1878) p. 31.

4. *Diary of Events in Nepal*, May 18, 1845.

5. *Secret Consultations*, June 13, 1845, 15.

domestic affairs of Nepal. The First Anglo-Sikh War (December, 1845, to February, 1846) had a lasting effect on the Indo-Nepalese relations. With a view to maintaining friendly relations a marked cordiality was manifested in the form of an offer of 5,000 troops to the Indian Government.<sup>1</sup> The offer was several times repeated, but the Indian Government declined to accept it.

With the assumption of power by Jang Bahadur in September, 1846, a new era dawned in the Indo-Nepalese relations. Jang Bahadur's rise to power was the "triumph of British diplomacy".<sup>2</sup> The year 1846 is a great divide in the history of these relations. An epoch ended in the Indo-Nepalese relations and there began another. The era of active enmity ended and that of good faith, understanding and cordiality began. The policy of active hostility was abjured in favour of restricted friendliness and cautious deference to the British. Jang Bahadur realized that the good-will of the British was the sine qua non for the consolidation of his regime. His main aim was to convert the British Government from a source of menace to Nepal to that of strength for his own rule. Peace with the British was his settled policy, for, without it, he knew war-like spirits at Kathmandu would raise their head.

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1. *Secret Consultations*, July 25, 1846, 130, 131.

2. D. R. Regmi : *A Century of Family Autocracy in Nepal* (Kathmandu, 1958), p. 76.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### NEPAL UNDER JANG BAHADUR RANA (1846—1877)

#### Founder Of The Rana Hegemony

The history of Nepal for a long time was the study of a man, the enigmatic Jang Bahadur Rana—"a splendid soldier, patriotic statesman and strange ally of the English". Nature had given him the required wings ; fortune, the required buoyancy to the political atmosphere ; and he was lifted up to the pinnacle of power by the whirlwind of a revolution, which he controlled, guided and utilized by the force of his consummate genius. The study of political relations between the two countries during his life-time is largely a study of the actions of a single individual.

Jang Bahadur rose to the position of an all-powerful ruler from a very humble situation in life by sheer energy though often by questionable means. He was the son of Kazi Balnar Singh, a courtier in the Palace, and this had provided him an opportunity to enter upon a political career to push his own interests. When he attained maturity, says D. R. Regmi, "the court presented a pitiable scene of disruption and internecine strife, wherein ambitious individuals found easy field for the most unscrupulous kind of personal advancement using the inviolable name of the ruler who had been reduced to imbecility unknown before in the history of the Shah Dynasty".<sup>1</sup> King Rajindra Bikram Shah was a weakling and was doubly controlled alternatively by the Queen and the Prince, her step-son. The Queen's faith in Jang Bahadur, his own good fortune with a long train of faithful brothers and relatives and

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1. D. R. Regmi : *A Century of Family Autocracy in Nepal* (1958), p. 52.

his remarkable presence of mind and determination led to his rise. The court was divided into three parties and they owed loyalty to the King : Rajindra Vikram Shah, the Queen and heir-apparent Prince Surindra Vikram Shah. Since the murder of Jang Bahadur's uncle, Premier Matabar Singh, he was taken by the Queen as her confidant and Jang Bahadur thought of exploiting the situation for himself.

The stong trait in his character attracted British attention. He was favourably inclined towards British friendship and during the First Anglo-Sikh War he had advocated armed aid to them and won the favour of Col. Lawrence, the then Resident. Backed by the British might Jang Bahadur—the rising colossus of Nepal—proceeded to capture power with the most consummate skill. He was very shrewd and a master-hand in playing a double game. On the one hand, he championed the cause of the prince secretly aspiring to overshadow him. On the other, he was equally popular with the Queen and she took him to be no other than her loyal collaborator.

### **Kot Massacre**

Jang planned to kill Gagan Singh, Commander-in-Chief of the Nepal Army and one of his opponents. The only thing he was to achieve to carry the game to a successful fruition was to remove the last vestige of suspicion in the Queen's mind about his sincerity and loyalty so that he could very well lay the blame at the door of his opponents. On September 14, 1846, at 10 p.m. Gen. Gagan Singh was shot dead through a window while he was engaged in prayers. The Queen had not the least idea that Jang Bahadur could be the author of the crime.<sup>1</sup> She, therefore, kept consulting Jang Bahadur at every moment in the crisis.

Jang Bahadur for his own sake advised her to summon all the courtiers to her presence immediately. By 1 a.m. all the noblemen had assembled in the Palace courtyard. They were unarmed. Jang Bahadur alone had brought his regiments and kept them in readiness to meet any contingency. He now incited the Queen to avenge the murder. The King did not

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1. The details of the Kot Massacre have been taken from the *Narrative of Events in Nepal—1846*, para. 61—63.

taken any interest. Now, the Queen proceeded to the most ferocious part of the game. The event that followed was very tragic. All the courtiers including Bir Kishore Pande and Dal Bhajan Pande, summoned for the assembly, were done to death and a river of blood flowed through the gates of the Palace into the adjoining drainage and the aftermath found the arch conspirator, Jang Bahadur, and his six brothers in a supreme position of power, all having been nominated by the Queen as Ministers of State. This Kot Massacre was a master plan, premeditated "under the instigation"<sup>1</sup> of Jang Bahadur. The Queen conferred the office of Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief upon Gen. Jang Bahadur in recognition of the services he had rendered to her. The revolution was over and the storm abated. The struggle for power was over. Jang Bahadur now became "the pillar of a people's hope and the centre of a world's desire". "No selection could be more just, no appointment more popular, than that of him who had by force made his merit known, and grasping the skirts of happy chance and breasting the blows of circumstance had asserted the indubitable supremacy of his genius over the weak intellects of all his contemporaries."<sup>2</sup>

Jang Bahadur realized that the security of the heir-apparent from the Queen's wrath was also essential for him. He was aware how difficult and dangerous it would be to change the line of succession which the Maharani had actually desired. In a country where the King was worshipped as God, it would have been suicidal. She, in fact, "incessantly urged Jang to put the two princes (Surindra Vikram and Upendra Vikram) to death and prepare for the coronation of her own son ; but he continually evaded her request on the pretext of inauspicious days and such other false pleas..."<sup>3</sup> After a few weeks when he found his position stronger, he flatly declined to be a party to such plots and warned the Queen of the consequences. This naturally enraged her and she began to conspire against him. A conspiracy, in fact, was soon hatched with the

1. *Memorandum of Political Relations*, 1856, para 17.

2. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal* ; (Allahabad, 1909), p. 81.

3. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 83.

aid of Bir Dhuj Bashinait and Wazir Singh, the son of late Gagan Singh. Jang Bahadur was to be invited to Bandar Khel Palace, where picked soldiers had been posted to kill him. However, the plot leaked out, and the Prime Minister reached the Palace with full force. Bir Dhuj was killed at the spot and the rest of the conspirators were arrested. Subsequently, Jang Bahadur approached the King and placed the turban at his feet and requested that he might either be dismissed from service or be vested with full powers to put to death all the enemies of the heir-apparent. The King immediately gave him authority to deal with the conspirators, and Jang Bahadur lost no time in executing all of them and ordered the Queen to leave the country<sup>1</sup> for Benaras as an exile. On November 22, 1846, the Queen along with the King and her two sons left Kathmandu on pilgrimage to Benaras.

Having eliminated all his rivals Jang Bahadur assumed to himself the guardianship of the heir-apparent and the right to function in his name. On May 12, 1847, a year after he manoeuvred to discredit the King, he installed Surindra, the man of his choice, on the Royal seat. Prince Surindra easily became his tool and Jang Bahadur became the sole authority of the Kingdom of Nepal. He further secured a Sanad from the insane King which gave him all the powers of a hereditary ruler. All this proved a blessing to the British in Nepal. The Kot Massacre in 1846 A.D. gave a death blow to the nobility and to the martial spirit of the country. It was a triumph of the British diplomacy in Nepal<sup>2</sup> as the powerful anti-British nobles and courtiers were massacred in cold blood in the Kot Massacre of 1846 and her anti-imperialist King Rajindra was forced to abdicate the throne. British diplomacy finally won in Nepal when she followed a pronounced pro-British policy under the Ranas for full 100 years (1850—1950).<sup>3</sup> Rishikesh Shah credits the British envoy of the time with having had some hand in the machiavellian designs of Jang Bahadur to climb up "the ladder of power and eminence by enabling the latter to eliminate his

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1. *Secret Consultations*, July 31, 1847, 204.

2. D. R. Regmi : *A Century of Family Autocracy in Nepal* (Kathmandu, 1958), p. 76.

3. Rishikesh Shah : *Nepal and the World* (Kathmandu, 1953), p. 9.

political rivals along with other men of standing unacceptable to the British...".<sup>1</sup>

### Non-Intervention

A new period in the history of Nepal opened with Jang Bahadur's rise. The hero of the age and a man of sound common sense, Jang clearly understood the role that was forced upon Nepal by the new circumstances. But the British Government's reaction to the Kot Massacre was cautious and guarded. They regretted this horrid event, but forbore from any further action. It was "abhorrent to humanity", but the relations of the two Governments were not feared to be disturbed.<sup>2</sup> The British had by now been familiar with such domestic upheavals wrecking the Nepalese Durbar. It was hoped that Jang Bahadur would seek to ingratiate himself with the British Government than to estrange them. Jang Bahadur, after the Kot Massacre, hastened to assure the officiating Resident of his friendly disposition<sup>3</sup> and organized a grand reception for the new Resident, Maj. C. Thorsby, in January, 1847.<sup>4</sup> But for the British Government, neutrality and non-intervention were the best courses.<sup>5</sup>

There was panic and terror at Kathmandu. The new regime itself was far from stable. Resident Colvin reported: "About the future prospect of that unhappy country, my best conjecture...is that Jang Bahadur will get shot and his six or seven brothers destroyed or banished under the Raja's wily interference."<sup>6</sup>

Jang Bahadur was anxious to convince the Resident that he had all along acted with the due authority of the Queen and that he would remain friendly to the British. The Resident noted all, but observed keen vigilance and reserve in

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1. Rishikesh Shah : *Nepal and the World* (Kathmandu, 1953) p. 9.
  2. Government to officiating Assistant Resident, Oct. 3, 1846, S.C., Oct. 31, 1846, 157.
  3. S.C., Oct. 31, 1846, 153.
  4. S.C., Jan. 30, 1847, 196.
  5. S.C., Oct. 31, 1846, 167. Governor-General's despatch to Secret Committee, Oct. 4, 1846, 44 ; S.C., Oct. 31, 1846, 165.
  6. J. R. Colvin, ex-Resident (Feb.-Sept., 1846) to Hodgson (then living a retired life at Darjeeling), Nov. 9, 1846, *H.M.B.*, Vol. IX, 62-63.

keeping with the policy of non-interference.<sup>1</sup> Jang Bahadur was not inclined to play second fiddle to the Queen.<sup>2</sup> The Indian Government also could perceive that in Jang Bahadur was emerging a strong and dynamic force in Nepal.<sup>3</sup> They were aware of his pro-British attitude and, as such, felt no need of direct involvement in the internal affairs of the Kingdom.

The Indian Government soon got an opportunity to manifest its friendship towards Jang Bahadur. To exile Maharani Lakshmi Devi, Jang Bahadur ordered her to leave for Benaras. Her two sons expressed their desire to accompany their mother. Suddenly the Maharaja also desired to go to the holy city for pilgrimage "to expiate the massacre of September 14, 1846". On November 22, 1846, the Royal party left Kathmandu and the Maharaja delegated his authority to the heir-apparent during his absence.

In India, the King became the rallying point of the political emigres of Nepal; they made a common cause in the overthrow of Jang Bahadur, the usurper of the King's authority. Virulent campaigns were set off to undermine the new regime by intrigues. Simultaneously, the King appealed to the British Government for help against the Minister.<sup>4</sup> But the British Government was opposed to interference. While no obstacle was placed in the way of the political refugees' seeking asylum in India, they were positively discouraged to exploit their safe sanctuary for intrigues against the new regime, which promised "stability at home and friendliness abroad". No encouragement or moral support was given to the King's efforts; instead, prohibitory measures were taken against the intriguing activities of his principal followers.<sup>5</sup> Jang Bahadur maintained

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1. S.C., Oct. 31, 1846, 165.

2. S.C., Dec. 26, 1846, 155.

3. Written by Honoria Lawrence, wife of Resident Sir H. Lawrence, cited by Edwards, n. 64. Ch. VIII, p. 40.

4. S.C., June 26, 1847, 179, 185—186, 180—182; Mar. 27, 1847, 115—122; Apr. 24, 1847, 103—117; May 29, 1847, 135—137; Translation of Lal Mohar addressed by King Rajindra Vikram to the Army at Kathmandu; S.C., June 26, 1847, 193. P. J. B. Rana: *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 90—94.

5. S.C., Oct. 31, 1846, 158, 163; Sept. 25, 1847, 149, 166; June 26, 1847, 182; correspondence between Joint Magistrate, Champaran,

close relations with the Resident informing him of the subversive activities of the King and his followers, and of his own attempts to persuade the King to return to Nepal without the Queen and the emigres.

As stated above, in May, 1847, Jang Bahadur had declared Surindra Vikram as the King of Nepal in place of his father. But the way was kept open for the deposed King's return, on the distinct understanding that he would have no say in the administration of the State.<sup>1</sup> Thus a puppet was enthroned by Jang Bahadur. The British Government had no deviation from "the neutral policy hitherto observed". The Resident was informed :

"The Governor-General was prepared for the measure which, under the peculiar circumstances, is probably the best that could have been adopted for securing the tranquillity of the country ; and His Lordship is under no apprehension that the change in the ruling authority will deflect in any degree the present friendly relations existing between this Government and that of Nepal."<sup>2</sup>

The Resident was pointedly asked to observe strict neutrality and to express neither approbation nor otherwise of the recent measures. "Very much puzzled over his deposition", the King made many appeals to the British Government, but to no effect. He was warned against abusing his asylum for political purposes and thereby causing embarrassment to the British Government.<sup>3</sup>

The new King, Surindra Vikram Shah, hastened to get the recognition of the British Government. He made a special

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Resident of Nepal and Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces, *D.R.C.L.R.*, Vol. II ; *D.R.C.L.R.*, Vol. XXIII, pre-Mutiny records of Kumaon Districts, Political Letters received, S. III, Vol. I, No. 117, *Ibid* ; Political Letters issued, Vol. VI. 45 No. 51, Governor-General's despatch to Secret Committee, Oct. 22, 1846.

1. *S.C.*, June 26, 1847, 192—194 ; P. J. B. Rana, p. 795—96, *Hemraj Vamsavali* (V.S. 1947) 182.
2. Government to Resident, May 26, 1847, *S.C.*, June 26, 1847, 189, Resident not only justified the deposition but held that "it has been in a manner forced upon the parties concerned in its adoption", *Ibid.* 195.
3. *Ibid.* 197, Rajindra Vikram to Resident Thorsby, *S.C.*, June 26, 1847, 199—200, Government to Resident, June 7, 1847. *Ibid.* 201.

reference to his regime, that it was running smoothly under the able guidance of the Minister who had maintained cordial relations with the Chinese and the British Governments.<sup>1</sup> The Resident, Col. Thorsby, reinforced the King's pleadings by his own. He reported that there was absolute peace and tranquillity among the people. He held that "the general aspect of affairs would seem to indicate its "permanency". He urged that the Government should give it early recognition.<sup>2</sup> He considered it "a boon" to Nepal and expected that the new order would be favourable towards the establishment of confidence and good feelings between the two Governments. He remarked that so far he was neutral but he would have to give up his neutrality with a view to preventing plots against the life of the Prime Minister and, therefore, he advocated the early recognition of the new King which he thought would discourage the conspirators<sup>3</sup>. With the same object in view he also recommended that the intrigues of the refugees should not be tolerated in the Indian territories.<sup>4</sup> Lord Hardinge, Governor-General, admitted that the measure was the "best that could have been adopted for the tranquillity of the country". But he decided to defer the recognition of the new King till the line of policy of his father was fully ascertained.<sup>5</sup>

Col. Thorsby held Jang Bahadur in high esteem as an able administrator.<sup>6</sup> He lent a deaf ear to the deposed King's entreaties for aid. The Resident urged the Government for a "bold and decisive line of policy" in regard to the deposed King.

The Resident was insistent, the Government was in a fix. Lord Hardinge could hardly overlook that the new regime had been set up by means "most revolting to humanity". Hence recognition was withheld till an improved arrangement was effected between the father and the son.<sup>7</sup> He decided to

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1. Khareeta from King Surindra Vikram to Lord Hardinge, July 17, 1904, June 26, 1847, 195—196.
  2. S.C., July 31, 1847, 188—189.
  3. S.C., July 31, 1847, 196.
  4. S.C., Sept. 25, 1847, 149.
  5. Government to Resident, June 7, 1847, S.C., June 26, 1847, 201.
  6. S.C., June 26, 1847, 201—202.
  7. Lord Hardinge's Memo. on Nepal Affairs, July 23, 1847, S.C., July 31, 1847, 203.



remove the former from the border as his actions had kept a "friendly State" "in a state of suspense and agitation."<sup>1</sup>

On July 27, 1847, Jang Bahadur's troops defeated the King on the Champaran border and his authority was never restored. Rajindra Vikram addressed a Khareeta to Lord Hardinge absolving Jang Bahadur of all charges of oppression and usurpation.<sup>2</sup> The Khareeta of the ex-King made no impression on Lord Hardinge and held strong abhorrence and distrust of Jang Bahadur. The Governor-General noted about the policy :

"...the paramount British power should on these occasions inculcate the principle that the stability of the chiefs of native States and the security of property is a leading maxim of the British Government and that sudden changes brought about by violence and crime will always be discountenanced, inasmuch as this principle, just in itself, will be most conducive to permanency of British rule in India, and will gradually lead to the habits of order and tranquillity by encouraging a safe and legitimate succession to property to all classes of the the community."<sup>3</sup> Even then Lord Hardinge recognized the new regime which was a fait accompli.<sup>4</sup>

Lord Hardinge was convinced that the military power of Nepal was greatly overrated. "...one campaign would give us the country, but it would not pay and as an aggressive neighbour, Nepal is of no consequence." Hence "the best rule

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1. Hardinge to Hobhouse, June 9, 1847, *Hobhouse Papers*, British Museum Additional Manuscripts, 36475, 294 (National Archives of India) (In Microfilm) ; Hardinge to Queen Victoria, July 27, 1847, S.C., July 31, 1847, 346.
  2. S.C., Sept. 25, 1847, 150—153, 164, 180—193 ; P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana* (Allahabad, 1909) pp. 96—98, *D.R.C.L.I.*, Vol. XXIII Khareeta from Rajindra Vikram to Lord Hardinge, Aug. 15, 1847, S.C., Sept. 25, 1847, 173 ; Rajindra to Jang Bahadur, 1903, Marg Vadi 9, *Baburam Collections*.
  3. Lord Hardinge's *Memo. on Nepal Affairs*, Sept. 2, 1847, S.C., Sept. 25, 1847, 174—177.
  4. The Court of Directors approved of this recognition, *Political Despatch From Court*, Nov. 6, 1847, 1299.

of conduct is to interfere as little as may be necessary in its internal affairs".<sup>1</sup>

Jang Bahadur, on his part, started consolidating his power. His main aim was to convert the British Government from a source of menace to Nepal to that of strength to his own rule. Peace with the British was his settled policy ; for, without it, he knew war-like spirits in Nepal would raise their ugly heads ; these spirits would breed internal instability and court external danger. Stable political relations with the British could serve as the cement to his rule. Causes of misunderstanding with them were, therefore, removed ; in a couple of years, the outstanding boundary disputes, often caused by the changes in the course of rivers, were amicably settled.<sup>2</sup>

### **Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848-49)**

The Second Anglo-Sikh War in 1848 provided Jang Bahadur with a fresh opportunity of evincing his friendliness to the British. He offered them the services of eight regiments of Gurkha troops under his personal command. Lord Dalhousie politely declined the offer in spite of Col. Thorsby's assurance that it was symbolic of Jang Bhadur's sincere cordiality. Dalhousie realized that the friendly gesture was a much "gratifying circumstance", promising "well for the future peace of India", as it was suggestive of Jang Bahadur's anxiety to provide employment to the Nepalese Army.<sup>3</sup> In October the offer was repeated<sup>4</sup>, but it was again declined with thanks. Dr. Oldfield held the view that "in making this offer Jang Bahadur was not influenced by any sincere or active desire to see the British power increased in the north-west. He probably thought it a good opportunity to bring his name personally before the British Government under favourable circumstances and that...he should get the credit

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1. Hardinge to Hobhouse, June 9, 1847, *H.P.*, 36475, 294. Hardinge's general policy in Nepal was one of peace, H. Lawrence, *Essays on the Indian Army and Oudh* (Serampore, 1859), p. 65.
  2. Correspondence between Joint Magistrate, Champaran, and Resident, *P.C.*, Mar. 24, 1848, 165—170.
  3. Governor-General's minute, June 8, 1848, *S.C.*, June 24, 1848, 66, Resident to Government, May 27, 1848, *S.C.*, June 24, 1848, 64.
  4. *S.C.*, Nov. 25, 1848, 251.

with the British Government of at least friendly intentions and naturally hoped that in this way he might win the support of the British Government and by being looked upon as their friend, he might strengthen his own position in the Nepalese Durbar". It is also probable that although the mission to England was not then talked of publicly, it was privately in contemplation at that time, and that Jang thought that the offer of his and his army's service would ensure his receiving a cordial and flattering welcome on his arrival in England.<sup>1</sup> But the biographer of Jang Bahadur, Gen. Padma Jang, tries to refute that Jang Bahadur had any motives behind this offer.<sup>2</sup> But it was surely in his interest to win British friendship.

Jang Bahadur encamped in the Terai forests for hunting with the principal civil and military officers, 32,000 soldiers and 52 guns.<sup>3</sup> Lord Dalhousie thought it an attempt on the part of Jang Bahadur to create a diversion in favour of the Sikhs, by obliging the British to keep a force locked up in the Nepal frontier, and thereby preventing them from despatching additional troops to the Punjab.<sup>4</sup>

In April, 1849, Maharani Chand Kaur, ex-Queen of Lahore, who was imprisoned in the Fort of Chunar, escaped from there and succeeded in coming over to Nepal.<sup>5</sup> The Nepal Government gave her political asylum in the belief that she would have no communication with anybody in India. The British Government gave Jang Bahadur clearly to understand that his State would be accountable to the British for the Rani's escape.<sup>6</sup> In spite of the Resident's protest, Jang Bahadur insisted that as a matter of honour it would

1. H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal*, Ch. I, pp. 380—381.

2. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana*, Ch. I, pp. 101—102.

3. S.C., Jan. 27, 1849, pp. 61, 63, P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana*, p. 103.

4. Government to Resident, Dec. 28, 1848, Jan. 9, 1849 ; S.C., Jan. 27, 1849, 57—59, 62 ; Dalhousie to Hobhouse, Jan. 22, 1849 ; H.P., 36476, 332, Dalhousie to F. Currie, Resident at Lahore, Jan. 29, 1849 ; Ganda Singh : *Private Correspondence Relating to the Anglo-Sikh Wars* (Patiala, 1955) p. 160.

5. S.C., May 2, 1849, 136.

6. P.C., Mar. 22, 1850, 408 ; *The Friend of India*, May, 3, 1849.

not be possible for him to deny shelter to a woman.<sup>1</sup> However, he assured that all precautions would be taken to prevent her intrigues against the British and she would be punished if ever she tried to create any misunderstanding between Nepal and the Indian Government. The Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, gave a stern warning to Jang Bahadur and asked him to impose more rigorous surveillance on the Rani,<sup>2</sup> but he did not insist on demanding the surrender, which, he was sure, would have been refused.<sup>3</sup>

### **Jang Bahadur's Visit To Europe**

Jang Bahadur had now consolidated his power. His brothers and favourites held all the principal civil and military posts<sup>4</sup>. The General appearance of the country was peaceful. This was the best opportunity for him to proceed to England to see the greatness of the British people.<sup>5</sup> His aims were the gratification of personal vanity, enhancement of his own prestige and power by personal acquaintance with the Queen of England and fulfilment of certain political objects.<sup>6</sup>

Jang Bahadur started for England on April 7, 1850, from Calcutta with his two brothers and a stately retinue. In England, he was welcomed by Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, Prime Minister Russell, Directors of the East India Company and other dignitaries. Everywhere he received warm welcome. He returned to Kathmandu on February 6, 1851.<sup>7</sup> There in

1. S.C., June 30, 1849, 104.

2. *Secret Despatch from Court to Governor-General*, Sept. 4, 1850, 1428 ; P.C., Dec. 26, 1851, 187 ; Oct. 29, 1852, 16—17 ; Feb. 6, 1857, 1—3 ; Dec. 12, 1856, 48—49 ; Dec. 31, 1858, 4572—75 ; S.C., Nov. 27, 1857 ; 448—453.

3. S.C., May 25, 1849, 137.

4. *Commandari Kitab Khana, Jangi and Nizamati Phant Register*, for the years 1905—1907 (1948—50).

5. Resident to Government, Oct. 2, 1849, S.C., Oct. 27, 1849, 14.

6. *Report on the State of Nepal, its Government, Army and Resources* by Capt. Cavenagh, F.M., Vol. 360, 202—203, (Published under the title *Rough Notes on the State of Nepal—Its Government, Army and Resources* (Calcutta, 1851).

7. S.C., Oct. 27, 1849, 14—17, P.C., Oct. 4, 1850, 1—14, *Hemraj Vamsavali*, 184—93, *Cavenagh's Report* ; Kamal Dixit : *Jang Bahadur Ko Vilayat Yatra* (Nepali, Kathmandu, 2014 V.S.) (Madan Prusskar Pustakalya Patar, Nepal).

England, he persuaded the British to relax the Treaty of 1816 to arrive at a definite agreement with them regarding extradition of criminals ; to try to get the permission of the British Government to deal directly with them and to avoid the high-handedness of Residents. But all his political objects remained unfulfilled as the Government of England discouraged his attempts at going over the head of the Indian Government.<sup>1</sup> The trip, as the Resident held, was a "wild and daring project". Its effect on Jang Bahadur was considerable.<sup>2</sup> The spirit of admiration contributed to the shaping of his friendly policy to the British Government. His visit only served to strengthen Jang Bahadur's position in Nepal ; a man whom the Queen of England herself entertained was an arresting figure in Nepal in mid-19th century. Due to enlightened ideas he introduced social reforms like the abolition of Sati and slavery<sup>3</sup>. The Residency Surgeon was employed as the family physician of the Ranas, young Nepalese were sent to Calcutta for English education. Nepal participated in the London Industrial Exhibition in 1851 and 1861<sup>4</sup>. The British Government under Lord Dalhousie encouraged Jang Bahadur to solve the political and social problems. "The visit to England was a veritable triumph and installed Jang Bahadur and his country in the minds of the Government in a special category of their own."<sup>5</sup> Jang Bahadur was so much impressed by the British power that he told Capt. Cavenagh : "A cat would fly at an elephant if it were forced into a corner, but it must be very small corner into which the Nepalese would be forced before they would fly at the British or cease to be their faithful ally."<sup>6</sup> After Jang Bahadur's visit, the Indian Government

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1. O. Cavenagh, *Reminiscences of An Indian Official*, (London, 1884) pp. 125, 130—131, 106—190.
  2. Resident to Government, Oct. 2, 1849, S.C., Oct. 27, 1849, 15.
  3. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Jang Bahdur Rana* 152—153, Oliphant : *Journey to Kathmandu*, p. 20 ; H.A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal*, pp. 244, 246, 400 ; D. Wright : *History of Nepal* (Cambridge, 1877), pp. 45—46; O. Cavenagh: *Rough Notes on the State of Nepal, Its Government, Army and Resources*, (Calcutta, 1851), 118—119 ; Oliphant : *Journey to Kathmandu* (London, 1852), 122—123.
  4. P.C., Sept. 17, 1852, 17—19; Oct. 29, 1852, 14—15; Oct. 22, 1852, 63—64.
  5. P.C., Oct. 29, 1852, 14—15 : Dec. 29, 1852, 9.
  6. O. Cavenagh : *Reminiscences of An Indian Official* (London, 1884), p. 141.

started treating him as the *de facto* ruler of Nepal; and this change in the attitude was clearly demonstrated when Lord Dalhousie agreed to keep the Nepalese political prisoners in India soon after his return from England. The British now felt an interest in maintaining Jang Bahadur in power with a view to gradually inducing him to agree to the recruitment of the Gurkhas in the Indian Army and to throw open Nepal for trade and commerce.

### **Conspiracy Against Jang Bahadur**

In February, 1851, a conspiracy was hatched by two of his brothers—Gen. Bam Bahadur and Gen. Badri Narsingh—his cousin, Gen. Jay Bahadur, the younger brother of the Maharaja, Prince Upendra Vikram, and Kazi Karbeer Khattri. His Anglo-Phil policy was anti-national.<sup>1</sup> Gen. Bam Bahadur disclosed it to him and all the conspirators were arrested. Perplexed, Jang Bahadur requested the British Government to keep the offenders in their political custody for 30 years. Resident Erskine recommended the measure.<sup>2</sup> The Nepalese proposal put the Indian Government in a difficult position.<sup>3</sup> Lord Dalhousie found himself in an embarrassing situation. The safe custody of State prisoners of a foreign country for 30 years was a “very troublesome charge”. The Indian Government, however, relented and the offenders were lodged in the Allahabad Fort where Jay Bahadur died and the other prisoners were sent back to Nepal in 1854.

The event brings out a facet of British policy towards Nepal. Lord Dalhousie had no fear of armed hostility from Nepal: Jang Bahadur’s policy convinced him of his pacific and friendly disposition.<sup>4</sup> With his reforming spirit, he viewed it as “a duty” to extend moral support of the British Government to Jang Bahadur for the sake of “increasing civilization and tempering the ferocity and smoothening the rudeness of

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1. S.C., Mar. 28, 1851, 10–14, P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana*, pp. 155—158; H. A. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal*, pp. 388—400; Oliphant : *Journey to Kathmandu*, (London, 1852), p. 118.
  2. S.C., Mar. 28, 1851, 12.
  3. S.C., Mar. 28, 1851, 15.
  4. Minute of Dalhousie, Feb. 28, 1856, Selections from the Records of the Government of India (Home Dept.), No. 14, para 6.

law and custom" of "an allied State."<sup>1</sup> In India, Dalhousie could implement his reforming schemes, but in Nepal he could only give cordial aid in the form of moral support to its de facto ruler. This case marks an important step in the development of the Indo-Nepalese relations. It was for the first time that the Indian Government broke its avowed neutrality and openly supported Jang Bahadur. It is really surprising that Jang Bahadur took such an undiplomatic step as giving into the hands of the Indian Government his own enemies and thus providing it with a powerful check over him. But it was a policy to win over the favour of the British and in this aim he had now fully succeeded.

### **Extradition Of Criminals**

Extradition of criminals was an important issue between Nepal and British India. The offenders, after committing crimes as murder, mutilation, robbery, cattle-lifting and defalcation of public money, escaped from one State to another to avoid trial and punishment. Complete reciprocity suggested itself as the guiding principle in regard to the surrender of fugitive criminals. Even then the British officers on the border paid scant deference to this principle. While they urged the Nepalese officers to surrender all fugitives who were British subjects, they themselves were always reluctant to surrender the Nepalese criminals to the Nepal Government. Border crimes were very frequent between 1837 and 1854, creating much ill-will between the officials along the border.

The question of jurisdiction of the British and Nepalese courts of law and that of nationality of the offender, if he was an inhabitant of the border regions, complicated the issue further. The lack of a definite agreement on extradition of criminals was a serious hindrance to the solution of the vexed problem. Hodgson had arrived at such an agreement with the Nepal Government in 1839<sup>2</sup>. On top of it came the directive of the Supreme Government on December 30, 1848,

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1. Dalhousie's Minute, Apr. 9, 1851, S.C., Apr. 25, 1851 ; 11, R. Muir : *The Making of British India* (Manchester, 1915), p. 339.
  2. Aitchison, n. 41 XIV 67. Treaty with Nepal in 1801, which was dissolved in 1804, also contained a provision (Article 8) for the extradition of criminals.

which made the problem of extradition more difficult. Its result was confusion and dilatoriness in the extradition procedure and aggravated misunderstanding among border officials. The directives of the English Government were "the non-surrender of revenue defaulters is in point of fact a check against the continuance of any long period of such over assessment and oppression".<sup>1</sup> Thus in 1837, the Court of Directors enjoined upon the Government of India not to surrender anyone but heinous criminals. The resentment of the Nepalese Government was based on just grievances; they were more bitter when the British Magistrates followed the directive of December 30, 1848. All urged for the amendment of this "improper, unjust and derogatory"<sup>2</sup> procedure for the sake of better criminal administration on the border<sup>3</sup>. Strong opposition grew in the Durbar against the order of the British Magistrates for the surrender of Indian criminals sheltered in Nepal but Jang Bahadur was too soft with the British at the cost of his national interest. The Governor-General offered some proposals on December 22, 1852, on the principle of reciprocity.<sup>4</sup> The negotiations between the two Governments were, therefore, started in right earnest. Jang Bahadur agreed to sign the treaty modified by the Indian Government. On February 10, 1855, the first Extradition Treaty was ratified by the Maharaj-adhiraj of Nepal and on February 23, 1855, by Lord Dalhousie.<sup>5</sup> Although the terms of the treaty caused much disappointment to the Nepalese Government yet the value of the treaty lay in the fact that for the first time a clear system of extradition came into existence.

Soon after the conclusion of the treaty many requisitions were made by the Nepalese, but they were generally disallow-

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1. Political Letter from Court of Directors, No. 19 of 1835. Ibid. No. 3 of 1834.
  2. *P.C.*, Aug. 30, 1850, 99.
  3. *P.C.*, Nov. 24, 1849, 181—188; Dec. 29, 1849, 349, 354—356, 162—164; Aug. 30, 1850, 99; Jan. 3, 1851, 39—44, July 18, 1851, 43; Sept. 24, 1852, 34—35; Jan. 3, 1853, 115—134: *D.R.C.L.I.*, Vol. XXIII, Resident Erskine to Government, July 16, 1850; *P.C.*, Aug. 30, 1850, 99.
  4. *P.C.*, Jan. 14, 1853, 129.
  5. *S.C.*, Feb. 23, 1855, 12; *P.C.*, Apr. 21, 1854, 18—23; July 28, 1854, 27—28; Feb. 23, 1855, 18—19, Aitchison, 71, 118—126.



ed by the Indian officers either upon the ground of insufficiency or utter irrelevance of the evidence tendered to prove the guilt in question.<sup>1</sup> These refusals naturally caused much dissatisfaction to the Nepalese and the problem could not be solved till 1866 when the next extradition treaty was concluded.

### **Policy Of Mutual Co-operation**

The years 1846—1857 was a period of mutual co-operation and understanding between the Governments of Nepal and India. Jang Bahadur realized that the British Resident in Nepal was a political force and the British Government in India a formidable political power. Hence he tried to secure their recognition for his regime and cultivated friendly relations with them. In the beginning, the attitude of the British Government to him was a blend of abhorrence, distrust and hesitancy but very soon this was replaced by admission of his ability as a stern ruler.<sup>2</sup> Lord Dalhousie himself looked on him as a “very intelligent man” and an able ruler, peaceful and friendly to the British Government, though wily and ambitious, deserving careful vigilance.<sup>2</sup>

Both the British Government and Jang Bahadur understood each other. A strong peaceful Government in Nepal was a comforting political need of the British after the troublesome decade preceding 1846. This mutual understanding was put to a severe test in the years 1857—59, the years of Indian Revolt.

### **Nepal And The Revolt Of 1857**

Nepal's interest in Indian events was always suspected by the Britishers. But Nepal's active co-operation and military aid to the British during the Indian Revolt of 1857 laid the

1. *M.P.R.* 1854, para 2.

2. *Cavenagh's Report* (1852); F. Eggerton : *Journal of a Winter's Tour in India with a Visit to the Court of Nepal* (London, 1852), 2 Vols ; Oliphant : *Journey to Kathmandu*, p. 44 ; Taylor : *Thirty-eight Years in India*, N. 31, p. 48.

3. J. G. A. Baird : *Private Letters of the Marquis of Dalhousie* (Edinburgh and London, 1911), N. 32, p. 115, Minute, Apr. 9, 1851, *S.C.*, Apr. 25, 1851, 11.

firm foundation of the Anglo-Nepalese friendship which continued uninterrupted since then. An attempt was made to overthrow the British yoke in India under the leadership of Nana Sahib, Tantia Topi, Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi, the Begum of Oudh, Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur and Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah. The national revolt widely spread throughout the upper Gangetic Provinces. Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow and Gorakhpur became its storm-centres. The British power was on the verge of collapse but in May, 1857, firm as a rock in his friendship with Britain, Jang Bahadur offered 6,000 troops under his own command. In fact, Jang Bahadur had fully determined to help the British whole-heartedly. But Lord Canning, the then Governor-General, refused the offer on the ground that the entry of Nepalese troops might encourage the rebels in thinking either that the British could not handle the situation or that Nepal was advancing to their aid. Yet only 10 days after, Canning gratefully accepted Gurkha help and asked that the first contingent should be sent to Lucknow. Jang Bahadur despatched Dhir Shamsher with 3,000 Nepali troops to Lucknow, Benaras, and Patna and another 200 to Gorakhpur.<sup>1</sup> The help of Nepal was a "last necessity" and "last resource".<sup>2</sup> Jang Bahadur's farewell speech before leaving Kathmandu on December 10, 1857, testified to all his motives. He declared: "I have three motives for acting as I am now doing. First, to show that the Gurkhas possess fidelity and will pour out their blood in defence of those who treat them with honour and repose confidence in them. Secondly, that I knew the power of the British Government and were I to take part against, although I might have temporary success for a time, my country would afterwards have been ruined and the Gurkha Dynasty annihilated. Thirdly, that I knew that on the success of British arms and re-establishment of British power in India, his Government would be stronger than ever, and that I and my brother and my country would all then benefit by our alliance with you as your remembrance of our past sacrifices will render our

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1. S.C., Sept. 25, 1857, 489.

2. Telegram from Canning to Lawrence, May 16, 1857, S.C., Dec. 18, 1857, 570.

present friendship lasting and will prevent you ever molesting us."<sup>1</sup> The forces under Jang Bahadur restored British authority over Gorakhpur and Lucknow.<sup>2</sup> The success of the Gurkhas in Bihar, Gorakhpur, Azampur, Jaunpur, Allahabad and Oudh justified the trust reposed in them by the British.<sup>3</sup>

But Jang Bahadur's attitude after his return from Lucknow in March, 1858, and his march to home created much unpleasantness among the British officers. A cloud of misunderstanding could hardly be concealed beneath an appearance of cordiality. Jang Bahadur's own haughtiness and overweening presumption were a subject of annoyance and criticism in the British camps. Yet due to emergency the British had to put up a fair face and a show of friendship.<sup>4</sup> On the whole the presence of the Gurkha Army "had a fine moral effect" on the British as it helped in breaking the morale of the rebels.<sup>5</sup> As for the Nepalese, it offered an opportunity for a large body of soldiers to witness the British strength and their scientific methods of fighting, as a result of which the British prestige was greatly enhanced throughout Nepal. The British were also now convinced of the fidelity of Jang Bahadur and the Gurkhas and thus the foundation of the Anglo-Nepalese friendship, which was to last for nearly a century, was firmly laid. In future whenever an occasion arose the Nepalese Government promptly came forward with an offer of help to the British. In turn the British also supported the Ranas and helped in preserving their rule in Nepal for over a century.

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1. S.C., Jan. 29, 1853, 377.
  2. *The Times* (London) May 31, 1858; S.C., Apr. 30, 1858, 164-166, Mar. 26, 1858, 331, Campbell to Canning, Mar. 22, 1858; C. Ball; *History of the Indian Mutiny* (London, New York, ND), II, 271-273.
  3. Memorandum sent by Brigadier Macgregor to Government, Mar. 30, 1858; S.C., July 30, 1858, 119, H. R. Neville, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*; Gorakhpur (Allahabad, 1909), 189-193; P. J. B. Rana: *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 197-214; P.C., Suppl., Dec. 30, 1859, 962-964, 966, 972-973, 1388-1389.
  4. Secret despatch from Court to Governor-General, Mar. 23, 1858, 19-35.
  5. *M.P.R.*, 1858, para. 39.

From the military point of view the aid was not so substantial. There is no doubt that the Indian Revolt could have been crushed even without the Nepalese military aid. But had the Gurkhas joined the rebels the British would have been placed in a predicament.

### **The Rebels In Nepal**

The restoration of British authority in the regions affected by the tumult drove swarms of "rebels" to the Nepal Terai which became a political Alsatia, a safe sanctuary of malcontents of all types. The British repeatedly requested Jang Bahadur to prevent the "rebels" from getting asylum in his State, but without much effect. Begum Hazrat Mahal, her son Prince Brijis Qadir, Peshwa Nana Sahib Dhondu Pant, his brother Bala Rao, Devi Bux, Beni Madho, Jwala Prashad, Devi Din of Nasserabad Brigade, Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly, Mohammed Hussain—the Nazim of Gorakhpur—Raja Dig Vijay Singh, Maulvee Mohammed Surffaraz Ali and numerous others took shelter in the Terai to reunite their dispirited followers and also made desperate attempts to win over the support of Jang Bahadur.<sup>1</sup> The "rebels" attempted to organize an army with the help of Jang Bahadur<sup>2</sup>. Raja Ganga Dhar Rao and Bala Rao gave him temptations of a large amount of money if he helped them in recovering their lost ground.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Letter to Government, Mar. 20, 1858 ; Ibid ; S.C., ; Feb. 24, 1858, 170, 186 ; P.C., June 25, 1858, 72 ; Mar. 25, 1859, 155—161 ; Apr. 22, 1859, 195-203, 325 ; May 20, 1859, 260-272, 370-379 ; June 24, 1859, 107 ; Sept. 16, ; 1859, 109 ; Mar. 26, 1858, 155 ; June 13, 1859, 320—326 ; July 15, 1859, 236—241 ; Sept. 23, 1859, 40—50 ; Apr, 1860, 466, correspondence between District Magistrates in Bihar and Government of Bengal ; Letters from officers commanding field forces on Nepal frontier, *N.R.*, Vol. VIII ; J. W. Kaye and G. B. Malleson : *History of Indian Mutiny*, 1857—58 (London, 1889), V, p. 199—208.
  2. Letters from Nana Sahib, Bala Rao, Brijis Qadir, son of the ex-King of Oudh, Begum of Oudh, Beni Madho, Raja of Gonda, Mama Khan and others to Jang Bahadur and the latter's reply ; S.C., Aug. 27, 1858, 87—108 ; P.C., Nov. 19, 1858, 76 ; July 15, 1859, 229, 413 L ; Aug. 5, 1859, 267 ; Sept. 30, 1859, 205 ; Dec. 30, 1859, 560—61 ; Aug. 19, 1859, 183—193 ; P.C., Supp. Dec. 30, 1859, 556—557.
  3. P.C., Sept. 30, 1859, 532.

The British attitude towards the "rebels" and Nepal was quite clear.<sup>1</sup> Lord Canning did not like the British troops to cross the Nepalese frontier but hoped that the "rebels" taking shelter therein would be prevented by the Nepalese Government from making any aggression on the Indian territory. If the British troops were to cross the frontier without Nepalese permission it would have created a dangerous precedent, because the Nepalese political refugees often took shelter in India. Nor did the Governor-General desire that every rebel should be delivered over to the British authorities. Moreover, the Governor-General was aware that the sympathy of the Nepalese living on the border lay with the "rebels". As such, in spite of all the precautions, the operations of the British troops across the border would have created irritation and alarm and would have given rise to all sorts of complaints and misunderstandings. Therefore, only in case of aggression from the Nepalese territory, the aggressors were to be punished and pursued across the frontier. In this way the responsibility of clearing the "rebels" was shifted over to Nepal. Jang Bahadur told Dr. Oldfield, Residency Surgeon, that he was not certain whether his troops would obey him were he to order them to "expel rebels".<sup>2</sup> This was undoubtedly an exaggeration, but the Nepalese certainly did not like to deal with the "rebels" in a manner as the British did.<sup>3</sup> Nor was it possible for Jang Bahadur to expel all the "rebels" outright, since they had entered Nepal suddenly in large numbers and could have retaliated by plundering the Nepalese villages. In the beginning when the rebel leaders urged him to espouse their cause, Jang Bahadur asked them to surrender to the British.<sup>4</sup> To Lord Canning he frankly conveyed that it was beyond his power to prevent the "rebels" from intruding into the British territory and that he would consequently have no objection to the British forces entering Nepal in pursuit of the rebel forces.<sup>5</sup> He offered to defend the northern routes

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1. *P.C.*, July 15, 1859, 413 C. and 413 E.

2. *P.C.*, Dec. 30, 1859, 558.

3. *S.C.*, Apr. 22, 1859, 200.

4. *S.C.*, Aug. 27, 1859, 103.

5. *P.C.*, July 15, 1859, 413 J.

and passes if the British were to press them from the remaining three sides. However, following the good old Gurkha policy, he wanted that the British forces should not cross the inner range of hills. He also wished that in course of such operations the Nepalese subjects should not be harassed and that the cows and the Brahmins should not be killed in the Nepalese territory.<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with Jang Bahadur's wishes, the Governor-General ordered the British forces to enter Nepal and clear it of the rebels.<sup>2</sup> The British troops pushed the rebels back but Jang Bahadur's own plans to co-operate in expelling them could not be carried out successfully. Jang Bahadur had an interest in detaining the "rebels" in the Terai. He had heard Nana Sahib and other rebel leaders had immense wealth with them. It is alleged that Jang Bahadur also got immense wealth from them. The Resident wrote on March 21, 1859, about Jang Bahadur's visit to the Terai: "I have strong grounds to believe that the real motive of the trip was some business (connected with the "rebels" from whom he is said to have received some 5,000 muskets, spears, shields, talwars). I have known that he is supplying them Rasad which they are buying at an enormous price."<sup>3</sup> In this way time passed till the bad season commenced and operations from the Nepalese side had to be postponed.

The British operations across the frontier continued for many months but gave rise to frequent complaints and misunderstandings. In the beginning there were certain reports that Gen. Kelly's troops had plundered the Nepalese subjects. These reports put Jang Bahadur in an awkward position. They were exaggerated but the Prime Minister was impelled to listen to them. The border authorities and a large number of chiefs in Nepal had sympathies with the "rebels". Moreover, encouraged by the liberal monetary reward given by the Indian Government in lieu of the Gurkha military help, Jang Bahadur wanted to make these reports a basis of his future demand for compensation. "I have several times ex-

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1. *P.C.*, July 22, 1859, 199.

2. *P.C.*, July 22, 1859, 200.

3. *P.C.*, Apr. 22, 1859, 200.

pressed the view", remarked Ramsay, "that these charges have been encouraged with the view of some future preposterous claims for compensation from the Indian Government and I am convinced that it is the chief motive of the Prime Minister for his repeated urges".<sup>1</sup> Reports of plunder and outrages committed by the British troops on the Nepalese subjects continued to reach Jang Bahadur to his extreme annoyance.<sup>2</sup> He even declared that he would never again allow the British troops to cross the frontier. On September 23, 1859, however, he formally requested the Indian Government to prohibit the troops from crossing the frontier.<sup>3</sup> The Resident reminded Jang Bahadur that it was at his request that the British troops had been ordered to enter the Nepalese territory. He stated that his Government would comply with his wishes, but would not relinquish its right of pursuing the aggressors even into the Nepalese territory and expected Nepal to prevent the "rebels" from committing aggression on the Indian territory.<sup>4</sup> Thereupon, the Prime Minister withdrew his objections but requested that the complaints must be enquired into<sup>5</sup>.

Jang Bhadur himself went to the Terai with his troops in December, 1859, to expel the "rebels".<sup>6</sup> The real motive behind it was to claim the cost of expedition from the Indian Government.<sup>7</sup> Earlier, in October, 1859, he had proposed to pay a visit to the Governor-General with the intention of consulting him on the measures against the "rebels" and to open the issue of compensation for the alleged outrages committed by the British troops on the Nepalese population. The proposal, however, could not be accepted by Lord Canning on account of his other engagements.<sup>8</sup> The Indian Government expected him to clear Nepal of the rebels with his own men

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1. *P.C.*, Dec. 30, 1859, 548.

2. *P.C.*, July 1, 1859, 205.

3. *P.C.*, Dec. 30, 1859, 541.

4. *P.C.*, Dec. 30, 1859, 544.

5. *P.C.*, Dec. 30, 1859, 540, 546, 548.

6. *Foreign Consultations*, Jan. 2, 1860, 150.

7. *P.C.*, July 22, 1859, 208.

8. *P.C.*, Nov. 18, 1859, 120-121.

and measures.<sup>1</sup> The Resident was afraid that interference on the part of the British Government would be resented and might be made a pretext for evading the responsibility by the Durbar. In the fourth week of November, 1859, the Gurkka troops under Jang Bahadur and from the British side Brig E. A. Holdich took field in the Butwal Terai and cleared the areas of the "rebels" within a fortnight. Most of them surrendered, either they were handed over to British authorities or had already perished.<sup>2</sup> Jang Bahadur informed Lord Canning that Nana Sahib had died and the Indian Government accepted this information. Begum Hazrat Mahal, her son Birijis Qadir, families of Nana Sahib, his wife, Kashi Bai, and Bala Rao got permanent asylum in Nepal and were allowed to come over to Kathmandu, but written undertakings had been taken from them on April 7, 1860, that they would neither indulge in intrigues nor engage any servant without the Durbar's permission<sup>3</sup>, otherwise they were liable to punishment. By January 10, 1860, orders were issued to the British troops against crossing the Nepalese frontier, and thus ended a very tedious problem, which had given rise to serious misunderstandings between the two Governments.

Throughout the eventful period of 1857—59 Jang Bahadur's main aim was to impress the British with his personal cordiality and loyalty to them. The Mutiny came to Jang Bahadur as a veritable boon when he could play upon the fears of the British and bargain for his neutrality or alternatively demand a heavy price for his help. Lord Dalhousie clearly wrote :

"...If the Government suppose that Jang Bahadur is doing all for love, they are mightily mistaken. Jang is drawing a bill upon them—at long date, perhaps—but one which they will be called upon to pay, in return for value received some day or other, as sure as fate."<sup>4</sup>

1. *P.C.*, Dec. 30, 1859, 464.

2. *Foreign Consultations*, Jan. 20, 1860, 136, 150.

3. *F.P.A.*, July, 1860, 266.

4. Lord Dalhousie to Sir George Couper, Apr. 15, 1858 ; J. G. A. Baird : *Private Letters of the Marquis of Dalhousie* (Edinburgh and London, 1911), pp. 414—415.



### The Fruits Of Friendship

Maharaja Jang Bahadur's meritorious services were not allowed by Lord Canning to go without recognition or reward. A blue book was presented as a "substantial proof of its gratitude" and "confiding friendship", the British Government and Lord Canning himself personally expressed acknowledgements to Jang Bahadur. He made him a Grand Cross of the Bath (Military Division). The Collar and the badge appendant of a Knight Grand Cross (Military Division) of the Most Hon'ble Order of the Bath and the investment badge and star, a copy of the statutes of the Order and a sealed packet containing Her Majesty's Grant and Warrant or dispensation of investiture and a letter from His Royal Highness Prince Albert were delivered to Maharaja Jang Bahadur.<sup>1</sup> As a "lasting memorial" the British Government retroceded to Nepal the whole of the lowlands between the Kali and the Rapti and the whole of the lowlands lying between the Rapti and the district of Gorakhpur which was formerly wrested by the Treaty of Sagauli in 1816. The territory was 200 miles in length and of varying breadth.<sup>2</sup> But Jang Bahadur was dissatisfied as he wanted the Elaka of Khyreegarh to be added to the present restoration<sup>3</sup>. But the Resident characterized the Gurkha policy as "whatever you may give, please give us a little more".<sup>4</sup> Therefore, he adopted a firm attitude not to give Khyreegarh as it never belonged to Nepal.

As soon as the operations against the rebels were over the Indian Government appointed surveyors to demarcate a new frontier. In February, 1860, the Boundary Commissioners of the two Governments met in Northern Oudh at Bhagaura Tal. to start their work. The whole survey and demarcation was conducted amicably except for few other disputes and the Gurkha:

1. *P.C.*, Sept. 23, 1859, 8 ; P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 218—221, 226—228 ; *The Times*, July 7, 1858 ; *Parliamentary Papers* in the National Archives of India, New Delhi; Proceedings of the House of Lords, Vol. XV, p. 627, Paper 77 under the heading *Mutiny* (Honours to Native Princes of India) correspondence.
2. *S.C.*, Aug. 27, 1858, 124—125, C. U. Aitchison : *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads* (Calcutta, 1929), XIV, 71—72.
3. *M.P.R.*, 1860.
4. *F.P.A.*, Apr., 1860, 469.

representatives declared themselves satisfied.<sup>1</sup> The survey and demarcation being completed, on November 1, 1860, a formal treaty was signed by the Maharajadhiraj and the Resident.<sup>2</sup> It confirmed all the former treaties, defined the limits of the territory restored to Nepal and the newly demarcated boundary line was accepted by both the countries.

If the Revolt of 1857 was an "unfortunate occurrence" for the British in India, it was a fortunate one for Nepalese relations in general and for Jang Bahadur and his rule in particular. The event provided a test to the British policy of "let alone" in Nepal followed since 1842. Jang Bahadur showed his countrymen that his friendship with the British had earned them territory, wealth and honour without causing any impairment of their much cherished national independence while his predecessors' policy of hospitality towards the British had earned them nothing but chaos. The "bad neighbour" (Nepal) was turned into a faithful ally. The Revolt of 1857 was thus a landmark in the history of Indo-Nepalese relations.

### **Policy Of Touch-me-not Co-operation**

After 1857 the political history of British India passed its humdrum phase. So did the history of British relations with Nepal. The "Mutiny" was the last of the exciting events in the Indo-Nepalese relations. After it, the relations flowed through a settled course—the course of peace and stability. It was not that there were no rifts in the lute nor was the course always smooth. Misunderstandings did crop up, but they did not assume great complexity. There were jolts and jerks but not too many ups and downs, no crises, no breaches of relations. All this was due to Jang Bahadur's policy of peace and friendly isolation. His successors also followed this policy and this became the guiding maxim of Nepal in her relations with British India.

### **Boundary Disputes And Their Settlement**

After his return from India in April, 1858, Jang Bahadur clearly demarcated the Indo-Nepalese boundary with Bihar,

1. *F.P.A.*, Apr., 1860, 472, 518

2. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1860, 596.

Oudh, Rohilkhand and Gorakhpur in British India. The two States had a dispute over this ill-defined, ill-demarcated frontier. The rivers demarcating the boundary were often erratic in their course and they aggravated the problem. Jang Bahadur spent the last two decades of his rule in solving these problems.<sup>1</sup> The British Government framed the principle in regard to the disputed lands on the frontier, "that the deep stream should be taken to be the boundary, except in cases where land capable of identification was cut off by the ordinary process of alluvion and deluvion and that in the case of a sudden change in the course of the river, the country which rules over the territory cut off by the change should continue to rule over it, although the deep stream had formerly been the boundary".<sup>2</sup> If a chunk of land was suddenly cut off from one State by avulsion or a sudden change in the course of the river, and could still be identified, it should continue to be regarded as a part of the same State. But in case of slow process of alluvion, the land so separated would belong to the State possessing the bank on which the gradual increment took place.<sup>3</sup> Where the boundary line traversed the cultivated land, it followed the village boundaries "on the principle of give and take",<sup>4</sup> and when it passed through forests the line was carried straight from pillar to pillar. The principles were laid down but in their application, the British Government opposed to part with the disputed lands. To avoid these disputes the Magistrates of the border districts in India were asked by the Government to undertake annual tours and to report on the state of boundary pillars and other allied matters.<sup>5</sup> Along with

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1. *F.P.A.*, Apr., 1860, 479, 479—501 ; Dec. 1863, 331—335, (K.W.) ; Dec., 1861, 150—153 ; Apr., 1862, 103—110 ; May, 1862, 117—120 ; July, 1862, 142 ; Sept., 1862, 37—42 ; June, 1865, 181 ; Dec., 1864, 255—257 ; May, 1870, 339—345 ; Sept., 1863, 67—74 ; Jan., 1869 191 ; Aug., 1873, 29—44.
  2. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1861, 150—153, (K.W.) The Court of Directors instructed that in all cases of alluvion the main stream should be regarded as the boundary irrespective of other circumstances, but in cases of sudden change in the course of the river, the boundary in each case should be determined on its own merits.
  3. *F.P.A.*, Jan., 1859, 191, Oct., 1871, 654—676 (K.W.)
  4. *F.P.A.* April. 1860, p. 501,
  5. Memo. by Col. Bacon for Secretary, Foreign Deptt., Government of India, Apr. 29, 1871 ; *B.G.P.C.*, Sept., 1874, 15—17.

it, the irrigation projects of the British Government on the border districts bred misunderstanding, for they caused inundation of the bordering Nepalese lands.<sup>1</sup>

During the transfer and demarcation of the western Terai in 1860, Jang Bahadur laid claims over the left bank of the Sarada, which to his irritation could not be entertained by the Indian Government.<sup>2</sup> However, Mr. Probyn was commissioned by the British Government in 1861 to decide the dispute. On May 22, 1861, he decided that from Moondia Ghat to Bunbassa the middle stream of the Sarada was the boundary, while, according to the terms of the restoration, the Indian Government had the full possession of the river.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter a serious mistake was discovered in the map by which the whole river along with a long strip of land on the right bank was given to Nepal.<sup>4</sup> The Durbar had never laid its claim over the right bank of the Sarada till the mistake was detected in the map in July, 1862. But Jang Bahadur claimed it and put various arguments for it. The Governor-General refused to entertain the Nepalese claim and only ordered the map to be corrected.<sup>5</sup> These Ghats had importance to the Nepalese and their transfer would have given them complete command over the Sarada.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, Jang Bahadur protested strongly against the Governor-General's decision which would deprive Nepal of Rs. 3,000 per annum of tolls. To avoid the critical position and with a view to reaching an amicable settlement, the Governor-General decided that the Nepalese would be allowed to collect the whole income derivable from ferry tolls all along that portion of the river—from Moondia Ghat to Bunbassa Ghat—but they would collect the tolls of both the sides from the left bank

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1. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1877, 49—50. The British Government experienced much difficulty in persuading Jang Bahadur to exchange some lands in Nepal for an equivalent or more land in the British territory. Necessity for this exchange arose while implementing the Sarada Canal Project. Foreign Deptt. Revenue Irrigation-A, Dec., 1870, 1—11 ; Jan., 1871, 2—3 ; Feb., 1872, 1—23 ; July, 1872, 8—10.
  2. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1860, 570.
  3. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1864, 225.
  4. *F.P.A.*, June, 1864, 85.
  5. *F.P.A.*, Sept., 1862, 37, 41.
  6. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1864, 225.

and would keep no establishments on the right one.<sup>1</sup> The boundary was to remain as decided by Probyn, i.e., the mid-stream of the Sarada, with the left bank in Nepal and the right bank in India. Jang Bahadur gladly accepted this arrangement.

The rivers that formed the Indo-Nepalese boundary had always proved a headache to the Boundary Commissioners. Out of 276 miles of the Oudh-Nepal boundary alone, a 137-mile portion was demarcated by rivers.<sup>2</sup> Since no river kept the same course, this boundary was very much uncertain and the application of a single principle to the whole of this uncertain frontier was difficult. In 1861, the Rapti suddenly changed its course and reverted to its old bed leaving 970 bighas on the Indian side. According to the principle laid down in July, 1860, the whole river and this tract belonged to Nepal. But the question was which part of the deserted bed should be the boundary? The Governor-General decided that mid-stream of the abandoned bed should be the boundary and the Durbar accepted it too.<sup>3</sup>

During the last years of Jang Bahadur an important boundary dispute—Doondwa Range dispute—arose which led to protracted negotiations and could only be settled by direct talks between him and the Viceroy, Lord Northbrooke. In the course of the survey of 1869, a question arose about the position of the boundary line between east of Bhongra Tal and "Arra Nalla".<sup>4</sup> It was then decided that between these two points the boundary line running along the water-shed of the Doondwa Range and the two phrases, "Doondwa Range" and "Water-shed", should be identical. This decision was conveyed to Jang Bahadur who had no objection to it. In 1874, however, he laid claims over all the slopes of the Doondwa Range and contended that the boundary lay along the foot of the hills.

The Nepalese claims were based on the right of prescription that they had an uninterrupted possession of that territory since last 70 years. The Indian claims to the slopes up to the Water-shed were based on the ground that the Raja of Behrampur who was under British protection had contracts

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1. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1864, 527.

2. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1879—K.W. of 443—444.

3. *F.P.A.*, Sept., 1863, 76.

4. *F.P.A.*, Apr., 1874, K.W. of 257—265.

of grazing grounds up to 1872 and collected forest dues on the lands up to the Water-shed and since then the Forest Department of the Indian Government realized them. Moreover, the Raja of Tulseepur had forts on those hills.

However, as the term Water-shed could be interpreted differently, the Governor-General ordered on April 2, 1874, for a new investigation by Joint Commissioners who were to decide the issue by majority vote. Before any inquiry, some boundry pillars had been erected by the Indian surveyors which led the Durbar to think that the Indian Government was determined to fix the boundary along the Water-shed and Jang Bahadur strongly protested against it.

The whole issue was taken up afresh in October, 1874, when Jang Bahadur visited Calcutta. It was decided that a commission of two officers—one Nepalese and the other British—would investigate the dispute and in case of a difference between them the verdict of a third officer would be final. With mutual consent, Sir T. D. Forsyth was appointed as the third officer. The other two were Lt.-Col. I.F. Mac-Andrew and Col. Sidhman Singh. The Governor-General instructed the British investigator to give the Nepalese all the territory down to the foot of the hills as far as they could prove it within their possession since 1815, provided its transfer would not affect the interests of a third party.<sup>1</sup>

Both the investigators came to the conclusion that this part of the boundary was never before demarcated. After taking this into account Col. Mac-Andrew inferred that the boundary lay along the Water-shed. The Nepalese could not establish their claim but following the instructions of his Government, he agreed to fix the boundary along the “foot of” the “lower spurs” of the hills on the following two conditions with a view to protecting the interests of the Indian subjects<sup>2</sup> :

- (i) “That the subjects of the British Government who came to the hills for bankas (a type of grass) shall have it at the rate of payment they have been used to make to Tulseepur.
- (ii) “That the Nepal Government shall accept the boun-

1. *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1874, 119.

2. *F.P.A.*, May, 1875, 262.

dary laid down by the surveyor at the foot of the hills as a final settlement of the question.”

This agreement being accepted by the two Governments, it was ratified on June 7, 1875.<sup>1</sup> The work of demarcation was started and Capt. Sammuells and Subah Padam Nath succeeded in demarcating the houndary line from Bhaura Tal to Arrah Nalla to the satisfaction of the two Governments.<sup>2</sup>

### **Problem Of Crimes On Border And Extradition**

In the latter half of the 19th century, the crime situation on the Indo-Nepalese border assumed a disquieting magnitude. Cattle-lifting, revenue defalcation and affrays by subjects of either side were frequent in the region north-eastward of Motiharee and between the Kosi and the Mechi. The border, being an open one, the criminals of one State could easily escape to the other to avoid punishment. The border police of both the States was inefficient. The insalubrity of the Terai area made it impossible for Jang Bahadur to station permanent police posts there. The British Government organized an efficient police force on the Oudh border and introduced some form of village responsibility for the crimes; they suggested to Jang Bahadur to do so in his State.<sup>3</sup>

The problem of extradition of criminals continued to be as irritating as it was before the Treaty of 1855. The British Government showed uniform reluctance to surrender the fugitive Nepalese criminals. The said Treaty was called the “Reciprocity Treaty”; but it was a misnomer, for the Resident himself admitted that “...not a single criminal has ever yet been given up under its terms to the Nepalese Government”.<sup>4</sup> But the British Magistrates insisted for the extradition of Indian offenders holding that the Nepalese officers should surrender those fugitives “not as a matter of obligation, but as a matter of comity”. The Nepalese regarded that treaty as a one-sided arrangement. Hence, they were disobliging, discontented and evasive to the requisitions of the British Magistrates.

1. C. U. Aitchison : *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Ch. I, p. 124.

2. *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1877, 383,

3. *F.P.A.*, Mar., 1865, 226—228 ; Dec., 1864, 41—49.

4. Resident to Government, June 13, 1864, *F.P.A.*, July, 1864, 62 ; Sept., 1864, 87; July, 1863, 111—112.

Jang Bahadur was against the Treaty of 1855, for it did not provide for the extradition of cattle-lifters and revenue defaulters. The legal technicalities made the procedure all the more cumbrous and dilatory and it annoyed Jang Bahadur. It irked the British sense of justice as well. The Resident himself said :

“The Extradition Act is so faulty, the process it lays down so cumbrous, that extra-intelligence and zeal on the part of the district officers are required to prevent constant failures of justice and resulting irritation on the part of the native States bordering on British territories.”<sup>1</sup>

The British Government was conscious of the irregularities committed by its officers and, therefore, with a view to checking them the British authorities directed them to observe three rules while applying for surrender.<sup>2</sup> First, that they should submit their applications for surrender through the chief civilian functionary of their districts, who had been authorized to transmit it either to the Resident or the Government. Secondly, that leaving the exceptional cases, which were to be referred to the Government, they should apply for the surrender of only the British subjects guilty of crimes specified in the treaty, and, lastly, that their applications should be accompanied, if possible, by a description of the parties accused and information of their whereabouts and that they should be prepared to furnish full documentary evidence of the guilt to the Resident or to send the witnesses to the Nepalese courts.

Without realizing fully the insufficiency of the evidence tendered by the Nepalese authorities, Jang Bahadur wanted to secure the Nepalese criminals. The Resident refused to comply with his wishes. It led the former to deliberately refuse the surrender of the Indian criminals despite sufficient evidence of guilt. In 1863, Jang Bahadur refused to extradite Rama Nandee Pandit and Kunhye Ram Chaukidar who had been charged with committing murder in Tirhut district. The Prime Minister, after being satisfied with the documentary evidence, demanded the attendance of witnesses as the “Indian Magistrates always refused to receive documentary evidence

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1. Resident to Government, Nov. 9, 1863, *N.R.* Vol. XII.  
*F.P.A.*, May, 1863, 113.



and insisted upon personal attendance of witnesses in all cases.”<sup>1</sup> The Indian Government clarified that the Treaty of 1855 stipulated that an accused should be surrendered “upon such evidence of criminality as according to the laws of that country in which the person shall be found, which justified his apprehension and sustain the charge if the offence having been there committed”, and that before this treaty came into force according to Act VII of 1854, the personal attendance of the witnesses had become essential in the Indian courts, while in Nepal only documentary evidence was deemed enough to prove the guilt. As such, reciprocity, according to the treaty, implied a recognition<sup>2</sup> of the different criminal procedures followed in the two countries. Jang Bahadur, although in agreement with this interpretation of the treaty, continued to obstruct the surrender of Indian criminals with a view to insisting on his own contention.<sup>3</sup> The Nepalese Prime Minister also alleged that bands of murderers had been making frequent aggressions on the Nepalese villages contiguous to the Indian border and protested that the Indian officers had failed to afford redress even when such had been brought to their notice with sufficient proof.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Report Of J. D. Gordon**

In December, 1864, the Indian Government appointed J. D. Gordon as Special Magistrate to investigate Jang Bahadur's charges and from the Nepalese side Col. Delhi Singh and Jagat Shamsher were appointed to represent its side to him. Gordon's inquiry was thorough indeed.<sup>5</sup> The crimes were “almost of weekly occurrence” throughout the 200-mile frontier in Bihar.<sup>6</sup>

Gordon's report<sup>7</sup> revealed that the whole tract he had surveyed in the course of his investigations was highly rugged

1. *F.P.A.*, May, 1863, 113.

2. *F.P.A.*, July, 1863, 111.

3. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1863, 146 ; *F.P.A.*, July, 1864, 62.

4. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1864, 41.

5. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1865, 83.

6. Government of Bengal to Government of India, Dec. 17, 1864 ; *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1864, 268.

7. *F.P.A.*, June, 1865, 1—7, Aug., 1865, 83.

with easy means of escape ; it was extremely crime-ridden and cattle-lifting was most common there. This crime was generally committed in the Nepalese border towns but the criminals normally resided on the Indian side of the border.

The police arrangements on both the sides were so defective that the people could rarely recover their stolen cattle with the help of police. Therefore, they invariably either suffered their loss or paid the ransom to recover their cattle. Gordon remarked that the frontier had "no police arrangements on the one side (Nepalese) of it and bad police arrangements on the other". In Nepal there was no separate force for the police administration of the Terai. Only at local treasuries a few constables were posted whose main work was to raise the maximum amount of revenue, and, rarely, the police was called upon to suppress the penal offences. On the other hand, the Indian police arrangements along the frontier were feebler than anywhere else. Ordinarily, the police outposts existed at an interval of 20 miles, but in some instances even 30 miles apart. At each post four to eight constables were kept but the higher officers were seldom deputed. Along the entire frontier of lower Bengal, there was not a single officer above the rank of head constable. And this small guard did not have the exclusive work of watching the frontier, but had in addition to perform multifarious duties in a vast area.

The defective procedure of handling complaints and strained relations between the Indian and Nepalese officers often gave rise to delay and difficulties. The police posted on the frontier was not authorized to take cognizance of the offences committed in Nepal when brought to their notice except on receipt of orders from their officers. This was quite inevitable so long as the head constable was the highest officer at the frontier.

The Indian officers had adopted an attitude of avoiding official communication with the Nepalese authorities as far as possible. Gordon remarked that "not only that we now profess such a policy but practically we adopt it by maintaining a system on the border so obviously unsuited to its wants. I have heard officers in high and responsible positions, not unacquainted with the former circumstances of the Nepal

frontier, defend the policy of avoiding the official communication with the Nepalese authorities as much as possible. The ground on which this policy is defended seems to be an ill-defined dread of all sorts of difficulties and complications which are predicted as sure to arise from a free inter-official intercourse". Twenty years ago such a dread could have been justified but now after the restoration of the Oudh Terai the population on both sides of the frontier had increased, much of the waste land had been brought under cultivation and the judicial administration of the Terai had become more enlightened. A considerable number of Indians had also settled down in the Nepal Terai. In view of this situation the attitude of British officials was hardly defensible.

As regards the special complaints of Jang Bahadur, Gordon came to the conclusion that his charges were highly exaggerated. In the past two years only 731 head of cattle had been stolen while Jang Bahadur alleged that, only in one year, 1,500 to 2,000 cattle had been lifted. About the second complaint, Gordon revealed that the Indian Magistrates were always ready to punish the Nepalese criminals against whom sufficient proof could be supplied. With a view to improving the whole situation, Gordon recommended that theft and cattle-lifting should be included in the list of extraditable crimes. The Resident should be permitted to forward the requisition of the Durbar direct to the Commissioners, and the Commissioners of Patna and Bhagalpur should be vested with the authority to deal with such cases. Finally, he suggested "the organization, at once, of an efficient police force, the departure from the non-interference policy, a reconsideration of the Treaty of 1855 and a slightly simplified procedure".<sup>1</sup> He found the charges made by the Nepal Minister not proved by the evidence submitted in support of them.

The Indian Government accepted all the recommendations of J. D. Gordon.<sup>2</sup> Jang Bahadur agreed with the Gordon

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1. "The efficiency of the police arrangements and the present inapplicability of the non-interference system...formerly approved and handed down to our officers are the main obstacles to a successful operation against frontier crime, but they can be removed and must be removed. *Report of Gordon*, Apr. 11, 1865 ; *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1865, 83.
  2. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1865, 84.

Report,<sup>1</sup> but the negotiations of Resident Ramsay proved unsuccessful. The Prime Minister, though realizing the necessity of a strong police force, was highly averse to the idea of the Indian police crossing the frontier, nor was he ready to surrender the Nepalese subjects to Indian authorities.<sup>2</sup> However, Jang Bahadur agreed to establish five more outposts, consisting of a havildar and four sepoy, just opposite the Indian outposts. The Governor-General warned that the proposed police arrangements of Jang Bahadur were not enough.<sup>3</sup> The Resident tried to convince the Nepalese Prime Minister of the necessity of closer co-operation between the police of both sides, but the latter followed a policy of isolation. Ultimately the Resident and the Durbar agreed upon these points :

- (i) The police force in the Terai would be reorganized and strengthened by Nepal.
- (ii) It was decided that the chief officers of the Nepalese border districts would lose no time in communicating the occurrence of any case of murder, theft, dacoity and such heinous crimes to the Magistrates of the Indian districts and in their absence to the subordinate officers.
- (iii) It was agreed upon that theft and cattle-lifting would be added to the schedule of extraditable crimes of the Treaty of 1855.

With regard to the public or private embezzlement, the Governor-General added that only public embezzlement would be included in the list of crimes and its inclusion would have no retrospective effect.<sup>4</sup> With regard to theft, he specified that to make a criminal liable to be surrendered, the amount involved must be considerable or a personal violence must have occurred.<sup>5</sup>

A treaty was concluded on July 23, 1866, which was supplementary to the Treaty of February 10, 1855. According to it, crimes of theft, cattle-lifting and embezzlement by

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1. *F.P.A.*, July, 1865, 68.  
 2. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1865, 80.  
 3. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1865, 81.  
 4. *F.P.A.*, Feb., 1866, 90.  
 5. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1866, 100.

public officers had been added to the list of crimes as given in Article 4 of the Treaty of 1855. The Supplementary Extradition Treaty of 1866<sup>1</sup> marked an improvement over the past conditions. Nevertheless Jang Bahadur showed his helplessness and only hoped that the Indian police might prevent the criminals from crossing over the border.<sup>2</sup> And the problems of the climate of this tract, and the health of Central Government officials who were sent there were impediments which had to be tackled.

Also persons who assumed alternatively Indian and Nepalese nationality as and when it suited them made the arrest of criminals difficult. The Governor-General, therefore, suggested that such persons should be surrendered, irrespective of their nationality, to the country where the crime had been committed and a 10-mile belt be made neutral for the operation of the police of both sides to apprehend them effectively.<sup>3</sup> The Indian Government also wanted that culpable homicide be included in the list of extraditable crimes and authorized the Resident to negotiate for a second supplementary treaty. But Jang Bahadur was disinclined to accept either of the above proposals so the negotiations had to be dropped.<sup>4</sup> There was also the problem of reciprocity of surrender and of sufficient proof of crime. Nepal was justified in demanding surrender of her subjects on the basis of the evidence that was considered sufficient in Nepal. Special Magistrate J. D. Gordon and Lord Lawrence said that the Nepalese subjects must be surrendered except in very few cases.<sup>5</sup> Jang Bahadur's attitude to the border crimes and the extradition problem was viewed by the British Government as non-cooperative and irritating, if not unfriendly. This view was reinforced by Jang Bahadur's commercial policy.

### Trade Relations

Jang Bahadur's policy of absolutism was seen in the

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1. *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1866, 130; C. U. Aitchison: *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads* (Calcutta, 1927), IV 73.
  2. *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1866, 130.
  3. *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1866, 130.
  4. *F.P.A.*, Apr., 1867, 84.
  5. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1865, 83; *F.P.A.*, Apr., 1869, K.W. of 73—90.

commercial sphere too. The policy had two facets : first, the desire to monopolize the lucrative Indo-Nepalese trade and, secondly, the extreme opposition to a closer commercial intercourse with the British Government in India.<sup>1</sup> He established a ramified system of monopoly to the great distress of the common people and great detriment of free trade. All the senior and military officers of the realm were engaged in this monopolistic trade.<sup>2</sup> Resident Ramsay reported that the absence of all opposition to the despotic party now in power has enabled the Sirdars to establish these monopolies, one after the other, to the injury of trade and the serious inconvenience of the people.<sup>3</sup>

When the monopolists created artificial scarcity of goods, Jang Bahadur solicited the British Government's help for the supply of those goods from India at reasonable prices. The British Government usually refused to help on such occasions for such help meant playing into the hands of the monopolists.<sup>4</sup> This desire to keep the lucrative trade with India in his own hands led Jang Bahadur to impose increasing restrictions and disabilities on the Indian merchants at Kathmandu who, for generations, had plied a brisk trade between India and Nepal.<sup>5</sup> The Nepalese, too, suffered for the Indian merchants were, for generations past, the chief purveyors of Indian goods at reasonable rates.<sup>6</sup> Strongly condemning Jang Bahadur, Resident Ramsay urged the Government to exert political pressure on the Durbar for the abandonment of its ruinous economic policy. He held that the monopoly system was seriously and most visibly affecting the well-being of the people, and the real prosperity of the country ; and it sooner or later must act injuriously, if it has not already done so,

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1. S.C., Dec. 26, 1856, 47 ; P.C., Aug. 13, 1858, 98 ; Aug. 26, 1859, 211.

2. P.C., Aug. 25, 1858, 211.

3. Resident to Government, Feb. 18, 1856 ; P. C., Mar. 27, 1856, 86.

4. But at the time of scarcity in Nepal, as in 1873-74 British Government helped Jang Bahadur in purchasing grains from India at moderate rates. *Foreign, General, B.*, July, 1874, 133—41.

5. S.C., Dec. 26, 1856, 47.

6. S.C., Dec. 26, 1856, 47 ; P.C., Aug. 13, 1858, 98 ; Aug. 26, 1859, 211.

upon our commercial interests by restricting within even narrower bounds our present trade with Nepal.”<sup>1</sup>

Interference with the Indian merchants greatly reduced the volume of trade with India and enhanced the prices of goods at Kathmandu. The British Government pressed the Durbar in December, 1862, to reopen negotiations for a less restricted trade.<sup>2</sup> In 1863, Ramsay got an opportunity to press the issue of the engagement of 1839 but, in the absence of original documents, nothing could be done. Jang Bahadur demanded its copies from the Indian Government.<sup>3</sup> On a closer examination it was found that the engagement was quite imperfect. It only embraced the goods to and from Kathmandu.<sup>4</sup> The Resident felt convinced that all negotiations to conclude a new commercial treaty would be fruitless. Every attempt of the Resident for a less restricted trade was met by the Nepalese Prime Minister by referring to his isolated and helpless position and repeating his favourite “lion and cat story”, implying that though Nepal was at the mercy of the British, she would not change her policy unless compelled to do so. The Indian Government was also against a retaliatory policy.

Nepal had, however, her own fears and national prejudices. For a small and poor country like Nepal to throw herself open to an imperialistic power, which had conquered the whole of India within a century, was a matter of national concern. So Jang Bahadur did not change his policy. He carried it out through indirect means. He set up a number of marts on the Oudh border with a view to forcing the Indo-Nepalese trade through these channels alone. In consequence, the Indian marts which plied a flourishing trade with Nepal only a few years back were “now nearly ruined”.<sup>5</sup> Heavy duties were levied on both Indian as well as Nepalese merchants.<sup>6</sup> Re-

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1. *S.C.*, Dec. 26, 1856, 47 ; *P.C.*, Aug. 13, 1858 ; Aug. 26, 1859, 211.

2. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1862, 398, 402.

3. *F.P.A.*, Jan., 1863, 202, 203.

4. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1864, 51.

5. *Foreign Revenue*, A, May, 1864, 50—53 ; *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1864, 51.

6. *F.P.A.*, Apr., 1866, 61 ; *B.G.P.C.*, Dec., 1881, 37—40 ; July, 1881, 51—52.

fusing to alter the trade relations, Jang Bahadur explained to Col. Ramsay that "the two countries cannot be compared ; their Governments are quite different ; you have a thousand sources of wealth which we do not have ; you are wiser and can understand that by making apparent present sacrifices, you will be gainers in the end ; our people are ignorant and unenlightened ; and if I were to make any such change as you desire from time to time, I would lose my Prime Ministership".<sup>1</sup>

Ramsay noted on July 6, 1864 : "So weary he is, so suspicious that we are merely biding our time, waiting for an opportunity to insert the point of the wedge that we may gradually obtain a firm footing in the country, that I think he would rather counsel the cession to us of a considerable slice of it than consent to a system of free trade and persuade English merchants to have transactions in Nepal."<sup>2</sup> The demands of the Britishers showed the policy of imperialism. Hodgson, Lawrence and Ramsay felt irritated at the restrictions, but they could not have realized the feelings of a weak, poor and ignorant country which had a strong sense of independence and where political power rested in the feudal element. Apart from the above feeling of the Nepalese nowhere was it mentioned in the engagement of 1839 that the rate of duties could not be revised. That was why Jang Bahadur often declared that he had the right to alter the duties.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in 1859 the Political Secretary had written on behalf of Lord Canning that the Governor-General "assumes no right to interfere with or even advise upon the commercial policy of Nepal". In some cases the Nepalese charged import duties more than 2½%. But Resident Girdlestone remarked on June 9, 1874, that there was no complaint about the irregularity of duties and the prevailing prices convinced him that not more than the published duties were charged.<sup>4</sup> The reports of the Magistrates of the Indian border districts showed that some sort of authorized rates of duty were well known.<sup>5</sup> The truth was that the

1. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1864, 51.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Foreign Revenue, A*, Aug., 1875, 22.

4. *F.P.A.*, Feb., 1875, 30.

5. *Foreign Revenue, A*, Aug., 1877, 22.



system of tariff in Nepal was “complicated only from the European point of view, because it was made up of several items of demands on one and the same thing”.<sup>1</sup>

On the western frontier along the ceded Terai, the Nepalese Government imposed high export duties on its subjects trading in the Indian territories and tried to attract the Indian traders, by levying very light import duties, to inhabit and promote trade in the new region which was underdeveloped and sparsely populated. As regards the contention that Nepal should provide free passage to the goods bound for Tibet, in exchange of the free access given to them in India,<sup>2</sup> it may be remarked that the Nepalese had to purchase her European imports subject to Imperial duties. Girdlestone remarked that there was no evasion in the Nepalese courts for the obligations stipulated in the engagement of 1839.<sup>3</sup> Girdlestone recorded in September, 1876, that the complaints of the traders were amicably settled if reasonably referred to.

The commercial interests in England pressed the Government of India to abandon their policy of non-interference in Nepal. She offered good prospects for tea gardens, orchards, plantation, woollen mills, saw-mills and such other productive industries which could be profitably developed with European enterprise. But Resident Girdlestone disfavoured political pressure on Jang Bahadur to overcome the self-insulating and distrustful policy of the Nepal Government. Anyway the prospects of Indo-Tibetan trade through Nepal seemed to him rather bleak and unprofitable. But the Government strongly disapproved the Resident's views on this matter.<sup>4</sup> So further efforts were made to coax Jang Bahadur but to no avail. Eventually the Government had to abandon all hopes of Jang Bahadur's co-operation and they concentrated their attention on Darjeeling and Sikkim routes for trade with Tibet.<sup>5</sup>

1. *Foreign Revenue, A*, Aug., 1877, 22.

2. J. Anglis (*Maori*) : *Sport and Work on the Nepal Frontier* (London, 1878) 215—218 ; H. Ballentine : *On India's Frontier or Nepal : The Gorkhas' Mysterious Land* (London, 1896), pp. 2—4, 81—108.

3. *Foreign Revenue, A*, Aug. 1877, 22.

4. *F.P.A.*, Feb., 1876, 24—37 A (K.W.)

5. A. Lamb : *Britain and Chinese Central Asia* (London, 1966), pp. 111—142.

### **Jang Bahadur's Bid For De Jure Sovereignty Of State**

These commercial and political issues established how far Jang Bahadur could count on British support and how far the latter would extend it to him. More than anything else, they shaped Jang Bahadur's policy of restricted intercourse. In 1856, Jang Bahadur took a strange step. On July 31, 1856, he suddenly resigned from the Premiership.<sup>1</sup> Gen. Bam Bahadur, next eldest brother of Jang Bahadur, was appointed Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief. Jang Bahadur pretended to retire to private life. But this way only calculated to serve his one ulterior motive. A week later, the Resident was informed that Jang Bahadur had been made the absolute sovereign of Kaski and Lamjung and the title of Maharaja was conferred upon him. Both the title and the property were made hereditary in his family. He was also invested with powers and privileges of a hereditary sovereign ruler with the right of succession to the Ministership to Jang Bahadur's own brothers, one after another, and then to his own sons. He had designs on the kingship of Nepal for which he wanted the support of the British Government. But the British were determined to recognize the Maharajadhiraj as the only sovereign of Nepal. The two provinces given over to Jang Bahadur were recorded only as "life grants". On August 9, a strange document with the Red Seal<sup>2</sup> was given to the Resident in which Jang Bahadur was authorized "to coerce" not only the Prime Minister but the Maharajadhiraj too.<sup>3</sup> The British Government, however, refused to transact any official business with him.

Gen. Bam Bahadur died on May 25, 1857. Jang Bahadur shook off his lethargy and assumed the Prime Ministership. The King was stripped of all power. His position was still high but hollow. The masterful tutelage of the de facto ruler of Nepal had turned the King into a puppet. He was a mere name.<sup>4</sup> Political marriages with the Royal family not only

1. S.C., Aug. 29, 1856, 51.

2. Lal Mohar, i.e., Red Seal, is usually borne by the lawful sovereign of Nepal.

3. S.C., Aug. 28, 1856, 58.

4. "...The King is a mere puppet in Jang Bahadur's hands and that he has not even the shadow of power... with the politics and management

enhanced the social status of the Ranas but also cemented their political power.<sup>1</sup> Jang Bahadur also effected a change in the order of succession to the throne—that should the King's two sons die without any issue, his daughters, married to Jang Bahadur's own sons, should ascend the throne.<sup>2</sup> Thus Jang Bahadur became the virtual dictator of Nepal.<sup>3</sup>

### Isolation Of The Resident

Jang Bahadur's conflict with Ramsay, British Resident in Nepal, in 1858, led him to hold on to the policy of isolating the Resident. He was subjected to surveillance and espionage, social isolation and restricted movements. No communication was possible except with the sanction of Jang Bahadur, and the sanction was never granted. In 1858, Resident Ramsay complained: "Not only are strangers jealously excluded from all participation in Nepalese affairs, but neither the Resident nor the members of his suite can stir out without attendants who spy upon them and report all their movements to the Minister. They cannot speak to a Nepalese officer without his permission, except in the most casual manner, nor can they move farther than they did years ago..."<sup>4</sup>

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of the country he appears to have no concern, nor do I believe that he is even spoken to regarding it"—Resident to Government, May 27, 1857, *S.C.* Sept. 25, 1857, 471, same to same; Aug. 7, 1856; *N.R.* Vol I, *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1863, 73.

1. Jang Bahadur obtained from the King in 1848 a Lal Mohar, recognizing the Ranas as Rajputs. Surindra Vikram to Jang Bahadur, 1905, Vaisakh Sudi 13, Raj 2, Babu Ram Collections. Jang Bahadur got three of his daughters married to the heir-apparent; the second son of the King was married to another daughter and a niece of Jang Bahadur, Jang Bahadur's eldest son was married to the King's daughter; another son was married to another princess. Daniel Wright: *History of Nepal*, pp. 48, 68; Babu Ram Acharya: *Rana Shahi ra Sharayantra* (Nepali). Sharda Varsa 21, Anka 5 (Chaitra, 2013, V. S.) 1—8. Never before had the Royal house of Nepal entered into matrimonial relations with its subjects, *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1864, p 19.
2. Resident to Government, Jan. 5, 1866, *N. R.* Vol. XIII; H. Oldfield: *Sketches from Nepal* (London, 1880), Vol. I, 402.
3. Resident to Government, Aug. 6, 1856; *S.C.*, Aug. 29, 1856, 55; P. J. B. Rana: *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 195.
4. Ramsay to Edmonstone, July 24, 1858, *S.C.*, Feb. 25, 1859, 17.

This continued till 1864. However during the Residentship of Col. Lawrence (1867—72) Jang Bahadur agreed to allow the Resident to make periodical tours in the Terai and the border areas. In 1877, the road from Sagauli to Kathmandu was thrown open to him but the interior of Nepal was “kept sacred from our (British) devouring footsteps”. In 1877, “the British Resident was guarded like a prisoner or watched like a pick-pocket”.<sup>1</sup>

### **Second Visit To England**

In 1862, Jang Bahadur desired to pay a second visit to England. He wished to meet Queen Victoria as the Ambassador of the King of Nepal, and to keep his own sons (particularly the eldest whom he desired to enthrone) under his personal wardship to raise his prestige and position in Nepal. The relationship thus begun at personal level could subsequently be twisted to dynastic advantage. Jang Bahadur further hoped that he would approach the Queen personally for the G.C.S.I. He regarded the retrocession of the Terai as an inadequate recognition of his services in the “Mutiny”. There was another motive too : that so long as Nepal kept good faith with the Indian Government, “no Governor-General would be permitted to interfere with, to quarrel with or to harm it (Nepal Government) and that there shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the two Governments”.<sup>2</sup>

He was eager to raise the international status of Nepal and wished to meet the Pasha of Egypt, Emperors of France and Austria, and the Czar of Russia. He prided in being reckoned as a subject of the Queen of England.<sup>3</sup> He abhorred Nepal being just an appendage of British India.

But the Government of India was opposed to Jang Bahadur’s trip as his motive seemed objectionable, his proposals “indelicate” and “ill-judged”. It was certain that his political objects would never be entertained by the British Government, the result would be unpleasant to him and

1. *F.P.S.*, Dec., 1877, 104—133.

2. Resident to Government, Apr. 21, 1862, *F.P.A.*, May, 1862, 23,

3. Oliphant : *Journey to Kathmandu* (London, 1852), 143, Throughout his rule he observed Queen Victoria’s birthday as a State ceremony ; *P. J. B. Rana : Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana*, pp. 59, 165 ; H. Oldfield : *Sketches from Nepal*, pp. 54, 388.

embarrassing to the Indian Government. He was asked to give up the idea of educating his sons under the Queen's wardship. Above all, "his absence might prove so great a detriment to the welfare of the country that the Governor-General is of opinion that the departure of Jang Bahadur for Europe might prove a misfortune that should be deprecated in the interests of his own country".<sup>1</sup>

Having been discouraged, Jang Bahadur abandoned the project<sup>2</sup> for the time being. However, in October, 1865, he revived the idea without any political object.<sup>3</sup> This time the Government of India consented to the proposal but he had to cancel the trip for the second time owing to an unforeseen circumstance. In 1874, he, for the third time, expressed the same desire. Resident Girdlestone strongly recommended his proposal. Jang Bahadur went as far as Bombay, where an accidental injury compelled him to cancel the trip and to return to Kathmandu. Thus ended, unrealized, his desire of a second trip to England. During the winter of 1875-76 the Prince of Wales (later Emperor Edward VII) visited India and the Nepalese Prime Minister invited him to Nepal. The Prince accepted the invitation.<sup>4</sup> On February 19, 1876, he was received by the Nepalese Prime Minister in the Terai with full honours. For more than a fortnight, the Prince was richly entertained with all sorts of big game. On March 6, he returned to India.

### Plots Against Jang Bahadur

During the first two decades of Jang Bahadur's rule<sup>5</sup> there were frequent plots to overthrow him. These were lively political issues for the British Government. Jang Bahadur sometimes attempted to implicate some British officers in these

1. *F.P.A.*, June, 1862, 46.

2. Col. Richard Lawrence, Acting Resident, had a high opinion of Jang Bahadur as the best native ruler "who was neither cruel nor tyrannical", *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1865, 92. Oct., 1865, 79.

3. *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1874, 85-105, *F.P.A.* Jan., 284-287; *F.P.B.*, Mar., 1875, 137-164. He met Lord Northbrooke, the Viceroy, in Calcutta and assured him that the friends and enemies of the British were his too. *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1874, 118.

4. *F.P.B.*, Mar., 1877, 68.

5. Report of Cavenagh, *F.M.*, Vol. 360, 184; P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana*, pp. 59, 86-87, 91-95, 99, 155-161.

subversive projects of the Nepalese emigres in India to hint that if the British Government did not take sterner action against the conspirators, he (Jang Bahadur) would not be able to restrain the Nepalese from harming the Resident.<sup>1</sup> The general policy of the British Government in regard to these plots was that while they were positively opposed to such seditious activities of the Nepalese emigres in India, they were disinclined to be "the instrument of inflicting vengeance on such refugees when guilty of no offence".<sup>2</sup>

### **Policy Of Restricted Intercourse And Friendly Isolation**

The policy of Jang Bahadur towards the British Government in India was one of restricted intercourse and friendly isolation. It was based on two factors—his knowledge of the British diplomacy in India, and his experience of British activities in Nepal. The years 1846—54 were years of mutual understanding, cordiality and consolidation of his powers. This happy state of affairs suffered a strain in 1854—1856, when his ambitious political schemes were opposed by the British Government. The "Mutiny" offered a signal opportunity to dissolve this cloud of mistrust and bitterness and restored the earlier cordiality. But the circumstances, like the recall of Ramsay, the expedition against the rebel refugees in Nepal and the various economic issues convinced him of the limits and the extent to which he could depend upon the British and their co-operation. His attitude towards the British after the "Mutiny" changed into greater reserve. The effusive good-will of earlier years (1846—54) gave way to restrained friendliness. But there was no open estrangement, no breach of relations, for his interests obliged him to keep up a fair face with the British. The British were too powerful to be ignored. Great Britain to him was "a great friend whom one meets outside. Yet for various reasons never invites to one's house".<sup>3</sup>

The pro-British policy was risky. He was aware of the Resident's role in the decade preceding his assumption of power. He, naturally, feared that if the Resident was not

1. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1862, 168, 172, 182.

2. Government to Resident, July 30, 1864 ; *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1864, 27—28.

3. I. A. Shah : *Nepal, the Home of Gods* (London, 1938), p. 58.

restrained, he might be the focus of intrigues. He looked upon the Resident as the arm of British Imperialism in Nepal. He opposed the efforts of the British Government to undertake scientific surveys in Nepal.<sup>1</sup> His apprehension was not wholly unfounded.<sup>2</sup> Jang Bahadur generally thought thus :

“You say that we are independent, the British Government tells us that it has no desire to interfere with us or to meddle with our internal affairs ; and not even to advise us respecting them. We attribute that independence solely to our own peculiar policy (you may call it selfish, if you like, but we cannot alter it to please you). We know you are the stronger power, you are like a lion, we are like a cat. The cat will scratch, if it is driven into a corner ; but the lion would soon kill the cat ; you can force us to change our policy, you can take our country if it pleases you to do so ; but we will make no change in that policy by the strict observance of which we have preserved our independence as a nation to the present time, unless you compel us to do so.”<sup>3</sup>

Jang Bahadur found the Indian States being brought closer into the network of British political and economic domination in proportion as they were modernized and enlightened by their increasing contact with the British Government.<sup>4</sup> No amount of progress in these States could erase from his mind the impression that they were but vassals of the British, called “protected allies” by mere courtesy.

To him, the policy of restricted intercourse and friendly isolation was a purely defensive measure against the overwhelming impact of a mighty empire. Himself being the State

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1. In 1868 and 1874, the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India made repeated efforts in this direction but to no effect. Beadon, Officiating Foreign Secretary to Ramsay, Mar. 9, 1855 ; *N.H.*, Vol. IX ; *F.P.A.*, Jan. 1, 1855 (K.W.). Daniel Wright : *History of Nepal*, pp. 38, 48 ; Brief Memorandum of the political relations between Her Majesty's Indian Government and the State of Nepal continued from Apr. 30, 1854, to Oct. 31, 1861. *Narratives of the Political Relations of the Government of India with native States* (Calcutta, 1862), p. 213.

2. *F.P.A.*, Mar., 1868, 64 (K.W.).

3. Resident to Government, July 6, 1864 ; *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1864, p. 51-52.

4. Resident to Government, July 6, 1864, *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1864, 51. Jang Bahadur often cited the case of Sikkim to prove the evil effects of greater contacts with the British in India.

itself, he sought to cement the peaceful relations between Nepal and British India through his own efforts. Not haughty aloofness but due deference for a mighty power was his policy towards the British. Above all, his policy succeeded in impressing on the British that so long as he and his family ruled over Nepal, there was no danger of active hostility towards them. The British were convinced that Jang Bahadur's position obliged him to keep up a show of friendliness towards them. It was not merely a policy with him but a dire necessity for him and his successors.

### **British Policy Towards Nepal**

The British followed, throughout Jang Bahadur's rule, a policy of non-interference to the extent it was consistent with the maintenance of their own interests in Nepal. The British grudged Jang Bahadur's policy of exclusion. It was the chief impediment to intimate intercourse, as also to the gradual spread of British influence on Nepal's politics. Its moral effect on other States, the British sensed, was worse. It was likely, they felt, that those States would attribute the immunity of Nepal from the domineering influence of the British to her peculiar policy of isolation and exclusion. The British wanted Jang Bahadur to waive the restrictions on the Resident. They did not want him to open up Nepal to all and sundry.<sup>1</sup> It was good that such a power, so strategically placed, should be isolated from other powers in India, and remain hermetically sealed for all but the British Residents. But the opposition of Jang Bahadur to the free movement of the Resident was so vehement that the Government found it advisable to acquiesce in his policy rather than drive the matter to a crisis.

The British were also conscious that Jang Bahadur had a personal stake in being peaceful and friendly to them. They knew, too, that his policy of restricted intercourse and friendly isolation was another facet of his tactful diplomacy which appealed the pride of the Nepalese, and cemented his rule without jeopardizing the integrity of his State. He cleverly

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1. "I should very much doubt the expediency of thus opening Nepal, even if it were in our power, by diplomatic pressure to accomplish this," Note of Foreign Secretary, A Lyall, *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1879, 49-54, (K.W.).



kept the British at a safe distance and avoided the risk of greater attachment. "His relations with the British should be an artery of strength and not of enervation ; it should rather sustain him than dictate ; it should be a prop and not a peril ; this was his policy."<sup>1</sup>

Nepal was friendly if not intimate. Her policy was at times irritating, but not alarming.

Nepal under Jang Bahadur thus ceased to be a "bad neighbour" of British India. Peace and stability had, at any rate, been established in the relations after a long spell of unease and uncertainty. The British might disparage his policy of splendid isolation but his policy saved the independence of his country. Jang Bahadur was heights above Bir Shamsheer and Chandra Shamsheer, who practically reduced Nepal to the status of a subordinate State of the British. But, unfortunately, the career of "the modeller...and in a wide sense creator of whatever was achieved in Nepal in his age" ended in February, 1877, on his passing away. And the only fit character to challenge comparison with Jang Bahadur was Jang Bahadur himself—peerless, matchless and unique.

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1. K. Majumdar : *Indo-Nepalese Relations, 1837-77* (Indian School of International Studies), p. 405.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### HEGEMONY OF THE RANA FAMILY

Jang Bahadur was the most amazing man that picturesque Nepal has produced. The famous Sanad, which so materially altered the constitution of Nepal and gave to the Maharaja Jang Bahadur and his successors such a preponderating influence in the administration of the kingdom, was undoubtedly the work of Jang Bahadur himself. By this system, the succession passed on not to the son, but to the eldest surviving male in the generation. Thus, the Maharaja's brother or even his cousin might be in the direct line of succession, priority of birth being the principal consideration. The plan was devised by Jang Bahadur himself to ensure that at no time was the Government of Nepal left in the hands of an immature member of the family. But mere age of the eldest survivor was not a guarantee of a suitable selection, and it also caused jealousy and family intrigues.

#### **Ranudip Singh As The Prime Minister Of Nepal**

When Jang Bahadur realized that his end was near, he sent for his youngest brother, Ranudip Singh,<sup>1</sup> and delivered into his hands the control of the Nepalese affairs. Ranudip had accompanied Jang Bahadur to India during the "Mutiny" days. He was the Commander-in-Chief of the Nepalese Army. Ranudip's preferment, which he was quick to have ratified at the hands of the King, was a sore blow to the 10 sons of Jang Bahadur, who, imperfectly understanding the terms of the Sanad which had conferred on their father the high estate, had for long believed that the succession would be on lines similar to those which were followed by the Royal family.<sup>2</sup> The situation

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1. *F.P.A.*, May, 1877, 38.

2. I. A. Shah : *Nepal, the Home of Gods* (London, 1938), p. 112.

was a delicate one, for Ranudip was not the equal of his famous brothers in either strength or character or personality. The new Maharaja was a genial, easy-going man, but an excellent worker. Ranudip had to contend with the ill-will of the Thapas, the discontent of his nephews who rallied against him and the division of their father's estate, and with the intrigues of the Jitha Maharani, the eldest wife of Prince Troilokya Vikram, who was, perhaps, not unnaturally averse to seeing a continuance of a dictatorship and her own relegation to a position which held honour but little power. Ranudip acted swiftly, and secured from the King a formal ratification of his succession to the office of Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup> Immediately thereafter he summoned a strong military guard, and broke the news to the sons of Jang Bahadur. From the very beginning, the new Prime Minister depended largely upon his younger brother, Dhir Shamsher, Commander-in-Chief,<sup>2</sup> and was loyally helped by him against the intrigues.

The attitude of the British Government towards the affairs of Nepal was of non-interference in any dispute. F. Henvey, the officiating Resident in Nepal, informed the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, that

“Even if my advice were asked by the parties to a quarrel, I conceive that it would be my duty to reply that the British Government wishes to avoid interference in the internal affairs of Nepal, and that no such interference will be exercised so long as the existing relations of cordial friendship between the two Governments are maintained. In short, that provided interests are respected, disputants must settle their own affairs and not rely upon British mediation or counsel. This is the general line of conduct....”<sup>3</sup> Thus, the British remained a spectator of what was happening in Nepal.

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1. *F.P.A.*, May, 1877, 42. Yaddasht from His Highness the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal to the address of F. Henvey, Officiating Resident in Nepal, dated the 30th of Phagoon, Sambat 1933 (corresponding to Feb. 27, 1877).
  2. P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. I (1928), p. 57.
  3. *F.P.A.*, May, 1877, 42. From F. Henvey, Officiating Resident in Nepal, to T. H. Thornton, Officiating Secretary to Government of India, No. 4p., dated Mar. 1, 1877 (Confidential).

### Ranudip's Policy Towards The British And Vice Versa

“I shall always be a sincere friend of the British Government” was the gist of the policy of the newly appointed Prime Minister of Nepal.<sup>1</sup> The Maharaja said : “Nothing could be wanting on his part to increase the ‘cordiality’ of the relations subsisting between the two countries....The friendly relations between the two Governments are fortunately of so old a standing and established on so firm and solid a basis that it is not to be apprehended that those relations would be injuriously affected by a change of administration on one side or the other ; as successive Viceroys had been true friends to Nepal, so doubtless successive Ministers in Nepal would be friends of the British Government.”<sup>2</sup> He assured all possible assistance to the British Government in times of emergency.<sup>3</sup> The attitude of the British Government towards Nepal was also friendly. They did not want any friction with a neighbour not ill-disposed towards them.<sup>4</sup>

### Ranudip's Vist To India

In December, 1880, Ranudip imitated his brother Jang Bahadur by making a visit to India.<sup>5</sup> All the honours along with a salute of 19 guns which were accorded to his predecessor, late Sir Jang Bahadur, in 1874 were given to him.<sup>6</sup> The Maharaja of Nepal gave a Khareeta<sup>7</sup> that Maharaja Ranudip Singh Rana, K.C.S.I., Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, was his representative.

In 1883, Ranudip again desired to proceed to the plains of India for a change due to illness and also paid a visit to

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1. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1877, 104.
  2. *Foreign Political*, Dec., 1877.
  3. *F.P.A.*, Sept., 1880, 21.
  4. *Foreign Secret Proceedings*, May, 1880, 177.
  5. *F.P.A.*, E., May, 1881, K.W. No. 1.
  6. *F.P.B.*, April, 1879, 109—111, K.W. No. 2 ; Bengal Army Regulation, p. 28, para 56 ; *F.P.A.*, May, 1881, 91, office memo. No 901. I.P. dated Nov. 1, 1880 ; *F.P.A.*, May, 1881, 99 A, Telegram No. 35, I.P. dated Jan. 10, 1881 ; *F.P.A.*, June, 1875, 83, para 2, Slip X, Home Deptt. Resolution No. 23, 917.
  7. *F.P.A.*, Mar. 1881, 179, Abstract translation of a letter from His Highness the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal to the address of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, dated Nov. 22, 1880.

Benaras for religious purposes.<sup>1</sup> Ranudip Singh claimed the same honours as were usually accorded to late Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur and to himself when he visited India as an ambassador in 1881-82, namely a 19-gun salute. The Secretary to the Government of India informed him that the Ministers of Nepal State would, as a rule, and in default of any special reason for exceptional honour, be accorded a salute of not more than 15 guns<sup>2</sup>. He did not have Jang Bahadur's tact, and created some needless inconvenience by taking with him a retinue of almost 400 which caused consternation to the Government of India and resulted in some misunderstanding between the two Governments. The British Government declared that no one was allowed to carry arms into British territory without a licence from the Resident and that persons going about armed without licence were liable to be disarmed.<sup>3</sup>

In itself it was a minor event but it indicated an inability on the part of Ranudip to handle a minor situation that was reflected, later on, on the larger stage in his administration in Nepal.

### Death Of Maharajadhiraj

In 1878, Prince Troilokya Vikram Shah died and the rights of the Royal succession devolved upon his infant son, Prince Surindra. The Jitha Maharani worked on behalf of her son. Ranudip was a man who liked his comforts and was called to his high office at an age when he could not easily make any radical change in his habits.

In 1880, he paid a visit to India. Soon after his return to Kathmandu, King Surindra died. In the succession was, of course, the son of the late Prince Troilokya Vikram Shah. The child was six years old and the ex-King Rajindra Vikram Shah, father of King Surindra, who had been deposed

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1. *F.P.A.*, E., Oct. 1883, 412, Nepal Residency Records No. 239, File No. 2030. G of 1883.
  2. *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1883. 422.
  3. *F.P.A.*, Mar., 1884, 93 ; *F.P.A.*, Mar., 1867, 248-49 ; *F.P.B.*, May, 1873, 93-94 ; *F.P.B.*, July, 1873, 158-61 ; *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1873, 54-56 ; *F.P.A.*, Mar., 1874, 84-101 ; *F.P.B.*, July, 1875, 181-185 ; *F.P.B.*, Dec., 1877, 42-50 ; *F.P.B.*, Feb., 1878, 150-152 ; *F.P.B.*, Feb., 1878, 153-155.

by Maharaja Jang Bahadur because of his weakly compliances with the intrigues, laid his claim. Rajindra advanced his own claims to the throne maintaining that Jang Bahadur had acted unconstitutionally in deposing him and placing his son Surindra upon the throne. Ranudip remained silent. Fortunately, the quarrel ended by the sudden death of the now aged Rajindra. In December, 1881, seven-year-old Prithvi Vir Vikram Shah was formally invested as King.<sup>1</sup>

### **Position Of British Resident In Nepal**

The restrictions and espionage complained of by the Residents in the past were still enforced for the Durbar's seclusive policy with its desire that the Europeans should not know the real character of the country. The Resident's movements were confined to a limited area in the vicinity of the capital. Guards watched his footsteps; spies followed him wherever he went and no Nepalese, high or low, was permitted to enter the Residency without the special sanction of the Prime Minister.<sup>2</sup> The belief which it inculcated amongst its hill subjects was "that the Nepalese is a more powerful Government than the British, and that, by reason of being the greater power, it allows Europeans only into such portions of its territories as it chooses, and the British Government is too afraid of the Durbar to insist on the right of free entry".<sup>3</sup> The present Prime Minister, Sir Ranudip Singh, declared himself unable to relax in any particular case the restrictive policy of his predecessors.<sup>4</sup>

This in spite of the observation of the Resident, F. Henvey, that "the times are changed and in like manner the friendship between the two Governments should not stand still but advance. The Maharaja has it now in his power to gratify the British Government by a concession which, though apparently trifling, would be satisfactory as a mark of friendship."<sup>5</sup> But Ranudip Singh intimated his intention of carrying out the policy of his lamented brother Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur.

1. *F.P.S.*, Apr., 1882, 32—79.

2. *F.P.*, Dec., 1877, 104—133.

3. *F.P.*, Dec., 1877, 121.

4. *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1879, K.W. No. 2.

5. *Foreign Deptt.*, Dec., 1877, 115, Appendix I.

One feature of that policy was the restriction on the Resident's movements.<sup>1</sup> If he removed those restrictions, people will say that, at the very outset, he was deviating from his programme. He said that the guards posted close to the Residency were intended not to watch the Resident but to protect him. The Nepalese Government was most solicitous that nothing untoward should befall the Viceroy's representative or any cause for misunderstanding arise.

Resident F. Henvey so many times referred the matter to the Government of India.<sup>2</sup> But the Government adopted an attitude of indifference over such trifle matters. Sir Ranudip Singh remained, to all appearances, resolute not to yield to the Resident's demands<sup>3</sup>, and justified the restrictions by the following pleas<sup>4</sup> :

- (i) That the hillmen are wild and ferocious ;
- (ii) That a European would be much inconvenienced by the physical difficulties of travelling in these hills ;
- (iii) That the position of the Minister would be imperilled if he acquiesced in the innovation ;
- (iv) That in such a matter not only the Minister's consent but that of all the Sirdars, soldiery and populace must be obtained ; and
- (v) That it would be an innovation for a European to travel in these hills.

So the Government of India also dropped the matter<sup>5</sup>, as Nepal was far more serviceable to them as a frontier ally than she would be if he had to garrison and occupy her. Nevertheless, they wanted her to be as firm a friend in deed as she was in word.<sup>6</sup>

1. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1877, 106.

2. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1877, 104—133, From Secretary to Government of India to F. Henvey, Officiating Resident in Nepal.

3. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1870, 133, from Government of India to Secretary of State for India.

4. *F.S.C.*, Apr., 1882, 50 ; *F.P.B.*, Dec., 1877, 42—50.

5. *F.S.C.*, Apr., 1882, 69, from Secretary to Government of India to Resident in Nepal.

6. C.U. Aitchison : *Treaties and Engagements with the Government of Nepal*, Vol. II., pp. 179—181 (last edition).

### Extradition Between Nepal And British India

The problem of extradition of criminals had been very difficult since the time of late Sir Jang Bahadur. The process of extradition was regulated by the Treaty of 1855 and the supplementary memorandum of 1866.<sup>1</sup> One of the problems during this period was that applications were occasionally made by British officers for surrender by the Nepal Government of offenders whose extradition could not be demanded under the provisions of existing treaties. On this question the Secretary to the Government of India informed the Secretaries to the Governments of Bengal and North-Western Provinces and Oudh that "as the British Government desires to act towards the Nepal Government on a system of strict reciprocity in matters of extradition, it is important that the stipulations of existing treaties should be carefully observed and direct the attention of all district officers concerned to this point".<sup>2</sup>

The Nepalese Government duly delegated to certain high officials on the border authority to make requisitions for the surrender of criminals under the treaty.<sup>3</sup> The reference to the higher authorities involved delay which often resulted in the escape of a criminal. It was also brought to notice that the police along both sides of the frontier were very loath to help each other.

The Government of Bengal informed that no difficulty would arise if the Resident used his power under Section 11 of Act XI of 1872 and issued his warrant with promptitude.<sup>4</sup> It was also pointed out that magistrates on the border could have criminals arrested upon information from the Nepalese officers, but it was requested that they should be warned that if a warrant from the Resident was not received, or an application for extradition was not forwarded within a reasonable time, the accused could not be detained. With regard to offences committed by British subjects, it was remarked that

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1. *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1879, K.W. No. 1.

2. *Foreign Deptt. Judicial*, A, Aug., 1879, 1.

3. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1877, K.W. No. 2, from Resident in Nepal, No. 2 P. dated Feb., 1877, para 4.

4. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1877, K.W.



there was no difficulty, as the British magistrates could issue orders for their arrest and try them.

The Resident informed the Durbar that in cases in which the surrender of a Nepalese subject, charged with committing a crime in Nepal, was desired, it would be preferable that the local officials of the Durbar should give to the nearer magistrate in British territory such information of his place of refuge as would lead to his arrest, and such evidence as would justify his detention for a reasonable period, and that they should also send a copy of such evidence to the Prime Minister promptly for communication to the Resident. On this, the Resident would issue a warrant for the arrest of the accused or, if a reference to the Government was first necessary, take steps to ensure his detention.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Jang Bahadur had already accepted these proposals and issued instructions to his local officials accordingly. He had also asked that the British officers might be directed to act similarly in regard to criminals who escape into Nepalese territory.

### **Trade With Nepal**

Free trade and recruitment of the Gurkhas in the Indian Army were the two major objectives that the British had been trying to achieve with Nepal. Mr. Girdlestone, the then Resident, submitted his report regarding the existing condition of trade with Nepal. He did not recommend a formal treaty to give effect to these suggestions, but simply an arrangement between the Resident and the Prime Minister. The report was incomplete as Mr. Girdlestone was awaiting receipt from the Durbar of a list of duties actually levied at all important centres of trade.

The Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce Departments accepted the views of Mr. Girdlestone on the subject which alleged that upon the main point they had no ground for attacking the Durbar. Mr. Girdlestone had recorded that, if the taxation levied on the necessaries of life be proved to be excessive, friendly negotiations for a reduction might be opened, but that

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1. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1874, 56 ; *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1877, K.W. from Resident in Nepal, No. 24 P. dated Nov. 27, 1876 ; *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1873, 429-31.

the chance of success was lessened, because the British Government had said, "eighteen years ago, that it assumed no right to interfere with, or even to advise upon, the commercial policy of Nepal and also because the British Government is itself a receiver of excessively high duties upon salt and opium, and is hardly in a position to reproach the Durbar".<sup>1</sup>

The immediate question before the British Government was not how to improve their trade relations with Nepal, but how best to register the trade. It appeared that it was not possible by well-defined roads but by innumerable points along the boundary. The Governor-General-in-Council informed the Resident "that something might be done to facilitate and encourage trade between the two territories without entering into any such negotiations especially by inducing the Durbar to improve the communications on the Nepalese side of the border and remove as far as practicable any inconveniences arising from the Nepalese system of farming and revenues.<sup>2</sup> But he also instructed that in doing so they should carefully avoid anything which might lead the Durbar to suppose that the Government of India desired to interfere with the internal administration of the country.

To improve the trade relations between the two, the Government of India, on March 20, 1879<sup>3</sup>, entered into an agreement with the Nepal Government for the supply of timber from Nepal forests to the Bengal Ordnance Department. Meanwhile, Mr. Girdlestone submitted his memorandum the essential point of which was a proposal to allow the Nepalese Durbar the privilege of purchasing arms of precision in return for certain concessions. The British Government proposed the following points for consideration before the Nepalese Government<sup>5</sup> :

- (i) Increased facilities for obtaining Gurkha recruits for the Indian Army ;
- (ii) Liberalization of British trade ;

1. *F.P.A.*, Feb., 1879, K.W. No. 1 ; *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1878, 2-8, Diary No. 1358 and 1930.

2. *F.R.A.*, Feb., 1879, 2.

3. *F.G.B.*, May, 1879, 134 ; *F.G.B.*, Aug., 1879, 192-195.

4. *F.S.E.*, June, dated Dec. 31, 1883.

5. *F.S.E.*, June, 1884, Telegram of May 9, 1884, from Resident in Nepal.

(iii) Removal of the restrictions placed on the movements of the Resident ;

(iv) The giving up of the state of isolation under which the country was closed to Europeans.

In return for these concessions, the British Government granted one boon to which the Nepalese Durbar undoubtedly attached the utmost importance—facilities for obtaining a supply of modern arms and ammunition. By means of smuggling and manufacture, the Nepalese were gradually supplying themselves with fairly serviceable arms of precision. There was also a possibility that if circumstances compelled them to import arms through China, the importance and fear of the British power would disappear. Girdlestone's practical conclusion, therefore, was that they should allow Nepal to buy periodical consignments of rifles and ammunition sufficient for about 14,000 men. It was possible for all ordinary purposes that Nepal may become a loyal and trustworthy ally. It was hoped by the British Government that the possession of some thousand breech-loaders by Nepal could not materially increase the dangers for the British. For a defensive war, the possession of good weapons would, no doubt, increase Nepal's strength. Nevertheless Nepal was supplied, without any delay, 4,000 Sniders, or breach-loading rifles, and other munitions of war<sup>1</sup> and the British Government gave assurances for future supplies of a reasonable quantum.

However, the Government of Nepal did not remove the restrictions and continued the policy of isolation though her outward behaviour was quite friendly. Still the Britishers supplied arms and ammunitions from time to time, and the trade continued smoothly in spite of the restrictions and difficulties.

### **Hostilities Between Tibet And Nepal And British Attitude**

A dispute arose between the Nepalese and Tibetans and the former threatened to resort to hostilities unless their demand for reparations was satisfactorily met by the Tibetan Government. In 1883, Gen. Khadga Shamsher, a son of the

1. *F.S.F.*, Nov., 1884, 234.

Nepalese Commander-in-Chief, visited Calcutta and was admitted to an interview<sup>1</sup> with His Excellency the Viceroy to explain the difficulties which had arisen between the Government of Nepal and Tibet and to ask, in case of an outbreak of hostilities, for permission to purchase 4,000 breach-loading rifles and other munitions of war. His Excellency promised that the application of the Nepalese Durbar would be considered.

The British Government had not regarded it as their duty to interfere actively between Nepal and Tibet for the prevention of hostilities. The British Government therefore concluded that if the pending negotiations between Nepal and Tibet finally broke down they would be incurring an unnecessary and undesirable responsibility for authoritative interference to prevent the war. But if the outbreak of hostilities were likely to involve Nepal in an actual conflict with the Chinese, it might possibly be considered proper and desirable for the British to intervene.<sup>2</sup> Such interference would reduce the State to the level of an acknowledged feudatory and might be very unpalatable to her at the time when the British desired to bring her into closer and more friendly relations with the British Government. It would also entail much practical inconvenience, and it might result in complications with China, while they regarded the maintenance of thoroughly friendly relations with the Chinese Government as a matter of real importance. Her Majesty's Government without arousing resentment either in China or Nepal tried for a peaceful settlement of the quarrel by a reference to the authorities at Peking.<sup>3</sup> The British Government reminded the Chinese Government that Nepal had always been allowed to declare war and peace on her own account and that it was not their duty to interfere with her policy in this respect. The Durbar was informed of the steps which were taken by the British Government, leaving them entirely free to adopt such measures as they may think necessary for repelling Tibetan aggression, which was not likely to prove serious, or for an advance across the border. Meanwhile they

1. *F.S.E.*, June, 1884, 445.

2. *F.S.E.*, June, 1884, 438—462.

3. *F.S.E.*, June, 1884, 455, from Resident in Nepal, No. 191 of Apr. 29, 1884.

proposed to afford the Nepalese every facility for supplying themselves, by purchase in India<sup>1</sup>, with tents, transport animals, or other munitions of war. They found in this the best opportunity to favour Nepal.

### **Problem Of Recruiting For Gurkha Regiments**

The recruitment of the Gurkhas for the British service was the most pressing need of the British Government. But it was carried on under great difficulties. The Durbar had, of late, done its best to prevent men from crossing the border for the purpose of enlisting in the Gurkha Regiments and had endeavoured to keep back soldiers on leave from rejoining their regiments. It was even alleged by the Resident in Paragraph 2 of his memorandum of December 31, 1883,<sup>2</sup> that the Durbar had "decreed the sentence of death against any British Agents who are found engaged in recruiting on Nepalese soil".<sup>3</sup> The result of these measures was that the recruits were not obtainable as readily as they used to be. Desertion was on the increase and the number of men who took their discharge was greater than in previous years. There were only 7,000 Gurkhas in the army and it was felt that if there was no interference on the part of the Durbar there would be no difficulty in obtaining recruits. Although the population of Nepal was not large, the military spirit of the people was exceptionally strong. There was perhaps no class of native recruits upon whose courage and fidelity the British could so confidently rely, and it was difficult to overrate the advantage to the native army of an increase in the Gurkha element. The Gurkha soldier was free from many of the caste prejudices which impair the value of other fighting classes in India. He was brave, hardy and enduring and had little religious bigotry. The British Government tried that if the obstacles at present interposed to the free enlistment of the Gurkhas were removed, the Durbar would be provided concessions in the matter of arms and ammunition.<sup>4</sup> Even in times of peace difficulty was experienced in obtaining a sufficient number of the right type

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1. *F.S.E.*, June, 1884, 460.

2. *F.S.E.*, June, 1884, 438, Memorandum drawn up by Mr. Girdlestone, Resident in Nepal.

3. *F.S.E.*, June, 1884, 460.

4. *F.S.E.*, Nov., 1884, 234.

of the Gurkhas for the battalions, located at Dharamsala, Bakloh, Dehra Dun, Almora and Abbottabad.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the best efforts of the British, they failed to get the recruits. The Nepalese Government put obstacles in the way of such of its subjects as wished to enlist in the British service.<sup>2</sup> The Durbar issued an order that any person who was detected in an attempt to leave the country for the purpose would be imprisoned and that the goods, house and lands of any person so enlisting would be confiscated. Persons, who, on their return to Nepalese territory, were suspected of having served in a British regiment, would be severely dealt with.

The action of the Nepalese Government was a counter move to the action of the British Government in regard to the importation of arms and munitions of war into Nepal. The British Government set its face against the desire of the Durbar for help in improving its armaments, and by the provisions of the recent Arms Act made clandestine transport of rifles and ammunition through British territory a more difficult and hazardous undertaking. Thus checked, the Nepalese Government thwarted the efforts of the British Government to obtain the services of Nepalese subjects in its army. Were any negotiations opened by the British Government for a supply of recruits for its own Gurkha Regiments, the Durbar would raise the question of its own wants in regard to materials of war. The Government of India did not take any further steps and dropped the question.<sup>3</sup>

### **Border Disputes**

The Nepalese attitude towards the borders had, generally, been that of grabbing. The Indian Government had always been conscious of it and had adopted a policy of maintaining its rights and demarcating the border clearly even by giving minor concessions.

In October, 1877, it was proposed that the entire boundary line should be bounded on both sides by a strip of waste land

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1. *F.P.A.*, July, 1880, 141—158.

2. *F.P.A.*, July, 1880, 152, from Girdlestone, Resident in Nepal, to Government of India, letter no. 56 P. dated Dec. 7, 1879.

3. *F.P.A.*, July, 1880, 154, from Secretary to Government of India to Resident in Nepal.

only 10 yards in width instead of the 21 yards as formerly agreed upon for Bhagalpur and Purneah districts.<sup>1</sup> The border of Gorakhpur district was under the 10-yard scheme and the remainder under the 21-yard scheme, "hampered with the provision" in the latter case "that existing cultivation should not be interfered with". The system, therefore, was not uniform, and Mr. Henvey pointed out that uniformity was an advantage. Another advantage of the 10-yard scheme was its simplicity, in not being subject to the hampering proviso referred to above, which might at any time lead to a dispute, and it was broad enough for practical purposes.

The line of boundary between the British and Nepalese territory ran for about 90 miles along the border of Purneah district.<sup>2</sup> The pillars on the portion of the boundary were erected at irregular distances and they were connected by a ditch and a bund which ran from one pillar to another along the line. The boundary marks were examined and it was decided to abandon the ditch and the bund altogether and instead erect two large and 241 small masonry pillars and 10 wooden posts, with straight lines between them, to mark the boundary.<sup>3</sup>

In April, 1877, the Resident in Nepal was asked to obtain the views of the Durbar upon a proposal made by Capt. Samuëll of the Revenue Survey Department to substitute a straight line for that part of the Oudh-Nepal border which was carried along the deep stream of the Rapti from Pillar 13 to Pillar 21.<sup>4</sup> The Durbar replied that such a rectification of the frontier would involve a serious loss of territory to Nepal and suggested that compensation be given south of Pillar 21 or south of the line between Pillars 29 and 30 where half the village of Jamunala lay in Nepal and half in Oudh. This arrangement would give an equal amount of loss or gain to both sides.<sup>5</sup> There were objections to compensating the Nepalese Durbar for the rectification of the line between Pillar

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1. *F.P.A.*, Mar., 1878, 340.

2. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1871, 324—343.

3. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1871, 344.

4. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1878, Nov. 255—270, K.W. No. 2.

5. *F.P.A.*, Jan., 1878, 154.

13 and Pillar 21 by a transfer of land south of the boundary at some other point. The Lt.-Governor recommended, as an alternative arrangement, that a straight line be drawn from Pillar 13 to a point between Pillars 21 and 22 by which means the loss and gain of territory would be about equally balanced.<sup>1</sup> The Durbar agreed to the proposal with a slight modification that a straight line be drawn from Pillar 13 to a point between Pillars 21 and 22 of the boundary on the understanding that the loss and gain on either side be computed according to the income, quality and extent of land with the concurrence of representatives of both the Governments.<sup>2</sup> All the land and water lying to the north of that line would belong to Nepal and all lying south of it to British India.

Both the Governments agreed upon the preservation of a strip of uncultivated land 10 yards in width on both sides of the British-Nepalese border in the districts of Muzaffarpur, Champaran, Bhagalpur and Purneah, while in Darjeeling a river formed the boundary, and in Durbhanga it was a wide ditch.<sup>3</sup> The Government agreed to the 10-yard uncultivated strip for Benaras division (for Gorakhpur and Basti districts). In Kumaon division, there was no land boundary, the Sarada separating it from Nepal; in Rohilkhand division, the Sarada was again the boundary except at one point where the 10-yard waste could be easily arranged.<sup>4</sup> In Oudh the idea of straightening the Nepal-British boundary was dropped and a neutral strip of 10 yards on either side of the boundary, i.e., a belt of waste land 20 yards wide was accepted.<sup>5</sup> In Darjeeling and Kumaon no adjustments were needed. Purneah and Bhagalpur districts boundary was marked by a bank and a ditch with 21-yard neutral ground on each side. In Durbhanga it was marked by a trench from 10 to 20 yards wide where rivers do not form the natural boundary.<sup>6</sup> The Muzaffarpur boundary was marked by a neutral strip 10 yards

1. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1878, 266,

2. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1878, 267; *F.P.B.*, Nov., 1879, 521—538.

3. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1878, 284—296; *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1877, 174, *F.P.A.*, Oct., 1877, 357—358; *F.P.A.*, Feb., 1878, 177.

4. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1879, 443-44.

5. *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1878, 284—296.

6. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1879, 681—87.



wide on either side, and the Champaran boundary was not uniformly defined.

In 1879, again a dispute arose on the construction of an embankment on an offshoot of the Douri in Durbhanga on the Indo-Nepalese border. The Nepal Durbar objected to the construction of this bund, and claimed compensation and demanded the destruction of the embankments. However, an agreement was arrived at between the two Governments, that if any British subject in future constructed near the border, without sanction from the Nepalese Government, such an embankment was to be cut by a competent British officer, after due enquiry and proof of damage done. It would be open to the Durbar to sue (under Act VIII of 1859, Section 1-5) to restrain the British Government from committing the injury and to remove the embankment under Section 93 of the same Act. The British Government felt the need to obtain the sanction of the Nepal Durbar before constructing an embankment in British territory near the frontier, if there was a possibility of such embankment "causing damage to Nepalese territory".<sup>1</sup>

In 1880, Mr. Girdlestone proposed that the Dhans was a bad boundary "owing to its erosive and erratic tendencies".<sup>2</sup> He proposed that a scientific boundary should be substituted on the principles observed in the Rapti case. The proposal was accepted by both Governments.<sup>3</sup> On the question of compensation to be awarded to the dispossessed land-holders, it was informed that the persons affected on either side were willing in each case to surrender their lands and retain their sovereignty, receiving as compensation grants of land under similar conditions of holding, from the territory which their respective Governments were to obtain in exchange.

### **Plot Against Dhir Shamsheer And Ranudip Singh**

In 1881, Jagat Jang, Jang Bahadur's eldest son, and the Thapas hatched a conspiracy against Ranudip Singh, the Prime Minister, but the plot was disclosed by ex-Queen Lakshmi's

1. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1879, 681—687, K.W.

2. *F.P.A.*, Dec., 1880, 209, Nepal Residency Records No. 149, File No. 1281-G of 1879, Part I (B).

3. *F.P.A.*, May, 1884, 231.

dead lover, Gagan Singh's grandson. At the disclosure Jagat and others left for India and refused to return when asked to answer for their hand in the plot. The Resident, who had done all in his power to prevent bloodshed, in an application, suggested to the British Government to hold the suspects in detention as political prisoners. The Viceroy assented to this, and Narendra Bikram Shah and Bambir Bikram Shah were imprisoned first at Chunar and afterwards at Ootaramund. Padma Jang was removed to Nyakote as prisoner. Dhir executed some of the chief conspirators and handed 21 of the leading Councillors of State to public executions. The names of Jagat Jang, Padma Jang and Bambir Vikram were erased from the succession roll. But Padma Jang was replaced in the succession on the request of his sister, mother of the King. Jagat Jang wrote numerous letters to the Resident and to the British Government, imploring their intervention on his behalf. These letters were communicated to the Durbar and served only to incense Sir Ranudip Singh against Jagat Jang. An application was next made by the Durbar to the British Government to supervise the movements of Jagat Jang who had taken refuge in Mathura and prevent him from intriguing. The reply was that if it was desired to keep Jagat Jang from intriguing, an allowance for his maintenance should be made by the Durbar. Being pressed the Durbar offered Rs. 700 a month. Jagat Jang declined this offer as it was a smaller amount than he desired and later on Rs. 1,000 a month was given by the British Government for his maintenance, and he took refuge in Mathura. The fact of the allowance was never communicated to the Durbar, to avoid a conflict between the two parties.

Shortly afterwards Ranudip started the militia system to expand the fighting forces, of the British. To retain the friendship with the British Government in India, perhaps, Ranudip gave in 1885 a general permission to India to recruit freely for the establishment of four new Gurkha battalions being raised for the Indian Army.<sup>1</sup> Until then, the Nepalese Durbar had tended to regard all those who went to join British service as deserters. Ranudip sent a mission to Lord Dufferin in 1885

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1. Sir Francis Taker : *The Story of the Gurkhas of Nepal* (1957), p. 164 ; P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. I (1928), p. 64.

to offer the military services of Nepal to the Indian Government, if the Russians threatened to continue their advance through Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> Lord Dufferin warmly thanked him for the offer.<sup>2</sup>

### The Coup D'etat of 1885

On October 15, 1884, Dhir Shamsher, Commander-in-Chief and the pillar of the State, died after a short illness. It was a great loss to the country. And absence of the Commander-in-Chief's strong hand led to many conspiracies. Jagat Jang was recalled to Kathmandu in the early months of 1884, but his recall, instead of helping to consolidate his rank, created disunion. He was reported to be a favourite of the Maharaja and his wife. Being childless, they desired to retire from public life leaving the administration to the lawful heir who happened to be no other than Jagat Jang then expelled from the succession roll. To remove Ranudip and to gain power, he formed an alliance with the party of Badri Nar Singh, the would-be killer of his father, Jang Bahadur. The alliance was against the Shamsher brothers whose leader was now the eldest son, Bir Shamsher, in place of Dhir Shamsher. The parties became hostile to each other. Ranudip's own wife was hand-in-glove with Jagat Jang in his plotting against these brothers. The parties were (i) the sons of Jang Bahadur, who by right should succeed in the role of the Premiership, and (ii) the sons of Dhir Shamsher. Bir Shamsher kept the regiments assigned to him in a state of preparedness designed to overpower his opponents. Usually the regiments put under a person who was not the Premier were not provided with arms as long as they were within the confines of the Valley, but Bir Shamsher had obtained arms for his troops in contravention of that rule by the special permission of Ranudip whose confidence he had already won. Ranudip could not read the mind of his nephew. And Bir Shamsher was only waiting for the signal from the Queen Mother's apartments. As she was a party to the conspiracy, half of Bir's work was completed. The Chief Officer of the

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1. *F.P.A.* 1879, 243–256, Military Deptt., No. 582 K, dated Oct. 28, 1878.  
 2. *Ibid.* Nepal Residency Records No. 205, File No, 1650-G of 1881, Part II.

Premier's household affairs and the Liaison Officer attached to the British Legation were also being won over. At about 10 o'clock on November 21, 1885, Khadga Shamsher, a younger brother of Bir Shamsher, who was Director-General of the Foreign Department, sought an interview with the Premier with a forged letter from the British Residency. The interview was granted and, as prearranged, Khadga's three younger brothers had also reached there. The Maharaja had retired to his private room almost unguarded. No sooner did the Kazi tear open the sealed envelope than Khadga Shamsher fired his revolver and shot the Maharaja dead. Bir Shamsher, thereafter, went to the Palace and proclaimed himself the Prime-Minister of the land. Jang Bahadur's sons were either rounded up or they escaped to the Residency to avoid arrest.

On November 22, 1885, at 9 p.m. intelligence was brought to the Residency Surgeon that some disturbance was going on at Narian Hatti, residence of Sir Ranudip Singh. Generals Kedar Nar Singh, Dhojnar Singh (adopted son of Maharaja Ranudip Singh) with his son, Col. Dharner Singh, and many others arrived at Dr. Gimlette's house, saying that Ranudip Singh was dead<sup>1</sup> and that they had come to take shelter in the lines. The Maharaja was shot dead by the four sons of Dhir Shamsher. Generals Padam Jang, sons of Jang Bahadur, Jethi Maharani and father of the young Maharajadhiraj joined the other refugees. Mr. Digby criticizes the act of the Resident, Col. Birkeley, of treating the refugees from Kathmandu with great harshness, and that of refusing shelter to the King's uncle. Mr. Digby also criticizes the Indian Government's action in not intervening on behalf of Jang Bahadur's descendants.<sup>2</sup>

The rebellion was a successful attempt at overthrowing the Government. It was the first time when the British Residency was used as a place of refuge and the inviolability of the asylum afforded by the British was respected.<sup>3</sup> The British Governor-General and Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, commenting in his reply to His Highness the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal, stated :

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1. *Nepal Residency Records*, No. 800, File No. 2534 G.

2. P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. I (1928), p. 74.

3. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1886, 63.

“The British Government has always abstained and desires still to abstain, if possible, from interference in the internal affairs of Nepal...But I protest in the name of Her Majesty, the Queen against deeds such as those which have now brought discredit upon your State and I warn Your Highness that unless your Ministers...so conduct to regain the respect of the British Government, which they have forfeited, it will be impossible for me or those who come after me to regard the Nepalese Durbar with the feelings of friendship and good-will by which all succeeding Viceroys of India have hitherto been influenced.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in 1815, Bir Shamsher, nephew of Ranudip Singh, was in the saddle, and Ranudip became a victim of the Court, and the petticoat influence of the palace. The Royal Seal was handed over to Bir Shamsher by the Queen Mother. Bir Shamsher was, for some time, in suspense as to what action would be taken by the British Government in regard to the revolution. Jang Bahadur's sons claimed British interference to restore them to the former position and property of which they had been deprived. Their claims rested on the services rendered for the British by their father. The British Government replied that the services of Jang Bahadur were great and he was a loyal and valuable ally and his services were recognized in his life-time.<sup>2</sup> The Government recognized the new Prime Minister and in a Khareeta grave dissatisfaction was expressed against bloodshed and bad government for the future.<sup>3</sup> The immediate effect of the revolution on the relations of Nepal with the British Government was favourable. Never before had the Nepalese Durbar awaited with such anxiety and dread the verdict of the British Government on the question of internal policy. The outcome of the revolution was a distinct strengthening of British influence.

### **Maharaja Bir Shamsher**

With Bir Shamsher begins a new line of succession altogether. In 1885, the Shamshers had replaced the Jangs.<sup>4</sup> The

1. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1886, 85.

2. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1887, 405-406, Note of Col. Berkeley on the recent revolution in Nepal.

3. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1886, 85.

4. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1886, 63.

British Government had recognized the new regime<sup>1</sup>, but the price of British patronage granted to Bir was too high for Nepal to bear. The structure of theoretical independence seemed almost crashing under this new burden. Nepal's dependence on Delhi, so long lying covered under stealthy diplomatic practices, became too pronounced to escape notice. The British Government got a good opportunity to impose its arbitration on Nepal, sometimes by the seal of approval and, at others, by active intervention on grounds of justice for the aggrieved party. They clearly declared that "the Durbar must endeavour to shape its policy with some regard for our views and interests... The ruling family in Nepal know well that they are at our mercy".<sup>2</sup>

Since 1885, again began a practice by which a Rana Premier had to seek confirmation of his succession from the British Viceroy.<sup>3</sup> This practice continued till the last days of the British in India by which every Prime Minister knocked at the doors of the Viceroy as soon as he succeeded to the post. Bir Shamsher initiated this practice with his visit to Calcutta in 1888.

### **Bir Shamsher's Visits To India**

In February, 1888, Maharaja Bir Shamsher visited Calcutta to seek confirmation of his succession at the hands of the British Viceroy and was received with full honours by Lord Dufferin.<sup>4</sup> A salute of 19 guns was fixed for him.

In the winter of 1892-93, Bir Shamsher again paid a complimentary visit to Lord Lansdowne at Calcutta<sup>5</sup> as a guest of the Government of India. In the autumn of the same year, the title of K.C.S.I. was conferred upon Maharaja Bir Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal.<sup>6</sup> In 1895, a proposal was made for the visit of Bir Shamsher to Europe,<sup>7</sup> but was

1. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1886, 49—87.

2. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1886, 86, Reply by His Excellency the Governor-General of India to the letter from the nominal ruler of Nepal.

3. D. R. Regmi : *A Century of Family Autocracy in Nepal* (1950), p. 110

4. *F.S.E.*, June, 1888, 250—281.

5. *F.S.E.*, June, 1893, 56—69.

6. *Foreign Political*, June, 1892, 287—290.

7. *F.E.B.*, Oct., 1895, Enclosure to Pro. No. 61.

later abandoned because the same reception and honour were asked for the Minister as were enjoyed by Sir Jang Bahadur.<sup>1</sup>

In June, 1897, he was honoured with the Grand Commandership of the Star of India, and, in 1899, he paid another visit to Calcutta to meet Lord Curzon.<sup>2</sup> A Khareeta and presents were sent from and to the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal on Lord Curzon's appointment as Governor-General of India. A little difficulty was caused by the attitude of the Indian Government towards their guest. Nepal always insisted that the head of a Nepalese mission on such occasions should be recognized as an ambassador of the King of Nepal<sup>3</sup> while the Indian Government regarded the visit as a "complimentary mission to Lord Curzon".<sup>4</sup> Nepal regarded the matter in too serious a light and saw in the description of his journey "as a complimentary mission" a derogation of the position and dignity of the Prime Minister. The position was explained<sup>5</sup> to the Viceroy and Bir Shamsheer was given a 19-gun salute but the Nepalese representative was not termed as "Ambassador". They recognized his position as of special significance. These misunderstandings, however, were finally rectified and the relations of Nepal with India ran on smooth ground.

### **Prince Albert's Visit To Nepal**

In 1890, Prince Albert Victor, Queen Victoria's eldest grandson, visited the extreme western end of the Terai jungles on a shooting expedition.<sup>6</sup> All possible arrangements for the same were made by the Durbar and the tour ended well.

### **Recruitment Of Gurkhas For The British Service**

The new Government under Bir Shamsheer applied themselves to the task of collecting recruits with zeal and success

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1. *Foreign Political*, Aug., 1896, 120—125 ; *F.S.E.*, Jan., 1897, 130—133
  2. *F.E.A.*, May, 1899, 52—67.
  3. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1894, 393—394.
  4. *F.B.A.*, May, 1899, K.W. No. 2.
  5. *F.S.E.*, Mar., 1896, 1—10, K.W. No. 2.
  6. *F.E.B.*, Feb., 1890, 94—97 ; *F.E.B.*, Aug., 1890, 89 ; *F.E.B.*, Mar., 1890, 132—140 ; *F.E.B.*, Feb., 1890, 180—197, *Indian Daily News*, Dec. 17, 1889.

(in some cases even using improper pressure to obtain men)<sup>1</sup> and the result was that three Gurkha Battalions of nearly 3,000 men were raised during the recruiting season. No doubt, the new Prime Minister was anxious to please and conciliate the British Government because he knew that things could never again be as they were before the revolution.

From the times of Bir Shamsher, the Durbar had removed restrictions on recruitment of the Gurkhas.<sup>2</sup> In order to remove the doubts of those who may be willing to take service under the British Government, but did not do so out of fear of incurring the displeasure of the Durbar against them or their families, the Durbar issued Purwanahs throughout the country that whoever was willing to take service under the British Government was at full liberty to do so. If the recruiting party near the border was willing to get these Purwanahs, the Durbar will issue similar Purwanahs to them.<sup>3</sup> In exchange of these facilities the British Government had agreed to supply such equipment for the Nepalese troops as was required.<sup>4</sup>

In 1885, the Prime Minister requested that depots for reception should be set up along the frontier near Darjeeling and at other suitable points.<sup>5</sup> Under the recruiting scheme accepted in 1885,<sup>6</sup> the Durbar was practically to do the recruiting for the British within the Nepalese territory. But this arrangement was a tentative one. In the middle of 1886, the British military authorities were not altogether satisfied with the quality of the recruits supplied nor with the numbers coming in for recruitment.<sup>7</sup> The Prime Minister pointed out some difficulties in collecting men and adopted the following measures :

- (i) It being difficult to obtain willing men for enlistment as recruits, the consent of the candidates was obtained by offering them money ;
- (ii) When the above means failed, it was ordered that each village must supply a fixed number of men ;

1. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1887, 405-406.

2. *F.S.E.*, July, 1885, 38.

3. *F.S.E.*, July, 1885, 46 ; *F.S.E.*, Oct., 1885, 60—74.

4. *F.S.E.*, July, 1885, 52.

5. *F.S.E.*, July, 1886, 99.

6. *F.S.E.*, July, 1885, 51.

7. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1887, 151—162, K.W. No. 1.



(iii) The Durbar was to procure the services of an additional number of Government officers and sepoy.

In spite of all these efforts, the desired success was not achieved.

The Nepal Durbar therefore issued orders that persons willing to join the British service will be regarded as though they had accepted service under the Durbar.<sup>1</sup> Capt. E. Vansittart gave his report, on the Gurkha recruiting operations for 1888-89,<sup>2</sup> in which he said that it was an undoubted fact they were being supported by the Durbar. The recruiting agents were permitted to come and go as they chose. Proclamations were posted that the recruiting agents and recruits should not be interfered with.

The Nepal Government offered every possible help in the event of war.<sup>3</sup> In 1888, the Nepal Durbar preferred a claim for Rs. 76,606·0·8½ for expenses incurred on account of recruits enlisted for service in the Gurkha battalions in India.<sup>4</sup> The Government of India at this proposed that instead of employing the Nepal Durbar from obtaining Gurkha recruits, a bonus of Rs. 20 be allowed to the Durbar for every approved recruit obtained from Nepal through the British Agency.<sup>5</sup> Later on, the British Government expressed its desire to give a Snider rifle for every recruit produced in the year 1888 up to a limit of 5,000, and then the Government expressed its opinion that it would not receive any bills for allowance, as were presented before, and asked for the establishment of a recruiting department at Kathmandu.<sup>6</sup>

Thus Bir Shamsheer not only allowed free recruitment facilities to the British inside Nepal, but, at the same time, rendered his own army an appendage of the Indian Armed Forces. In 1892, the British Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army inspected, for the first time, the Kathmandu Regiments and this was followed by a similar inspection at the end of the

1. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1887, 162 ; *F.S.E.*, Sept., 1888, 6-7.

2. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1889, 35-44.

3. *F.S.F.*, May, 1885, 748-749, telegram dated Apr. 20, 1885, from Resident to Foreign Secretary.

4. *F.S.E.*, Mar., 1888, 227.

5. *F.S.E.*, Mar., 1888, 238.

6. *F.S.E.*, June, 1888, 41.

fifth year, which became the forerunner of a regular septennial inspection by one of the high-ranking British officers of the Indian Army. Nepal now parted with the last traces of its independent existence in the face of these gullible practices.

### **The Problem of Extradition**

The Durbar, in conformity with the arrangements arrived at earlier, showed an attitude of co-operation in suppressing crimes along the borders.<sup>1</sup> The Nepal Durbar inflicted punishment on the Nepalese subjects for the illegal detention of British subjects in Nepal.<sup>2</sup> Murder was one of the offences for which, under the Treaty of 1855 between the British Government and the Nepal Durbar, extradition could be demanded if the offender was a subject of the Government making the requisition.

On the question of execution in British India of sentences passed by Nepalese courts and the procedure to be observed in cases of British subjects escaping from Nepalese jails, according to Article (2) of the Treaty of 1855,<sup>3</sup> "neither Government was bound to surrender a person who was not a subject of the Government making the requisition". Consequently a Nepalese subject escaping into Nepal from a British jail or a British subject escaping into British India from a Nepalese jail would not be surrendered. There was no law by which a British subject escaping from a Nepalese jail into British India could be convicted and punished in India on the charge of escape from lawful custody or could be retried and reconvicted in India on the charge for which he was originally convicted in Nepal. The British Government was not bound by any treaty to surrender British subjects. Consequently, a British subject so escaping would, unless he were for special reasons extradited to the Durbar, get off unpunished. A Nepalese subject, on the other hand, escaping from a Nepalese jail into British India would, if the crime for which he was undergoing sentence was an extradition offence, be surrendered in due course to Nepal.<sup>4</sup>

1. *F.E.A.*, Jan., 1891, 108—110.

2. *F.E.A.*, Mar., 1888, 376—378.

3. C. U. Aitchison : *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Vol. II, p. 179.

4. *F.E.A.*, Aug., 1891, 217.

In order to obviate the punishment of a Nepalese subject in British India in respect of acts for which his extradition might be demanded, the British authorities were instructed in 1881 to detain such a person if arrested and, if upon a reference to the Durbar it was ascertained that the accused was a Nepalese subject and had apparently committed the offence complained of in Nepal territory, should, upon a suitable requisition, be surrendered at once to the Durbar for trial.<sup>1</sup>

In 1890, the Nepal Durbar raised the question that the Treaty of 1855 merely required evidence of criminality to be sent by the Durbar to the Resident in whose opinion criminality must presumably be established before he could order the surrender of an accused person, but did not specify that the Resident might cause the evidence to be verified by a British magistrate. It could certainly be anticipated that if the Government decided in favour of verification under the reciprocal arrangement existing with the Durbar, they would also claim to enquire into cases against British subjects arrested in Nepal whose surrender to the British authorities might be asked for.<sup>2</sup> At this the British Government commented that the treaty made no provision for such a verification and the Resident should, ordinarily, without further independent enquiry, comply with an application supported by evidence, *prima facie* sufficient to fulfil the requirements of Article V. The Resident's warrant, once issued, the magistrate to whom it was addressed under Section 129 of the Foreign Jurisdiction and Extradition Act (XXI of 1892) had no option as to its execution.<sup>3</sup>

In 1891 the Prime Minister of Nepal paid attention to the problem of cattle-lifting.<sup>4</sup> He suggested that when the British police knew that the cattle stolen from British territory were in Nepal or vice versa, they should at once furnish the Nepalese police with a description of them. For the establishment of cattle pounds, the Nepal frontier officials should make wooden fences

1. *F.E.A.*, Dec., 1890, 192—197.

2. *F.E.A.*, Sept., 1890, 16.

3. *F.E.A.*, Sept., 1890, 22.

4. *F.E.A.*, Apr., 1892, 124 ; *F.S.E.*, Dec., 1890, 109—112 ; *Foreign Political*, Oct., 1890, 378—384.

to keep unclaimed cattle which would be released when a claimant duly established his ownership and if any impounded cattle was not claimed by anyone within 35 days, it should be sold by auction. In 1900 the rules of cattel-lifting and cattle-breeding were revised with the provision<sup>1</sup> that expenses incurred these, up to the time of making over to the other State's police, on would not be claimed from that State.

### Boundary Disputes

During the rule of Bir Shamsher several border disputes arose. In May, 1885, the boundary between British India and Nepal from the west bank of the Kosi to the Gandak in Bhagalpur and Champaran districts was resurveyed and redemarcated. The entire boundary line in question ran along the frontier of the districts of Bhagalpur, Durbhanga, Muzaffarpur and Champaran. On the frontier of Bhagalpur district a change was made in a part of the boundary running along the bed of the Kosi and lying between masonry Pillar Nos. 11 and 12 of Col. Samuell's map. On the frontier of Champaran district the entire boundary was divided into the following well-defined sections :

- (i) The section which ran from the Baghmati west-wards as far as Bhikna Thoree at the foot of the Someshwar Range ; and
- (ii) The section which ran along the water-shed of the Someshwar hill westwards from Bhikna Thoree to the Tirbeni Ghat on the Gandak.

In February, 1884, the Collector of Champaran met the representative of Nepal who, on behalf of the Durbar, accepted the boundary line as demarcated by the survey officers from Bhikna Thoree westwards to Naorengia.<sup>2</sup>

On the boundary between Basti district and Nepal, the Durbar contended that, according to a regulation framed by Sir Jang Bahadur, the Nepalese Government should, in cases involving a territorial exchange, receive one-fourth more land than the amount of land which it alienated to the British

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1. *F.E.B.*, July, 1900, 167 (sub-encls. 1 and 2 to encl. (i) of Proceeding No. 167).

2. *F.E.A.*, July, 1885, p. 40.

Government. The British Government argued that if Sir Jang Bahadur had accepted any such view, he would have informed the Resident accordingly. But the Durbar uniformly contended for such a straight line, in accordance with the original international demarcation of 1817.<sup>1</sup> Compensation up to a limit of Rs. 2,500 in all may be paid to the owners of property on the British side of the line who had incurred a loss by the consequent transfer of territory. Ultimately the boundary was demarcated on the straight-line system and a neutral strip 30 ft. wide was cleared on both sides.<sup>2</sup> The boundary between Muzaffarpur and Nepal was demarcated by masonry Pillars, stone prisms, wooden posts, a ditch and also, in places, by a strip of uncultivated ground.<sup>3</sup> On the river, Balaun some slight error in cutting the line occurred. The British Government promised to rectify the error and thus the dispute ended.<sup>4</sup> In 1897, the best way of settling the boundary between Nepal and the British districts of Bahraich and Kheri was agreed upon. It was decided to reject the mid-stream from Pillar No. 98 on the Karnali to Pillar No. 171 and fixed a series of straight lines crossing and recrossing the river in such a manner that for any land transferred from Nepal to India, Nepal shall receive an equivalent strip from India.<sup>5</sup> On three previous occasions this plan had been adopted, in the case of rivers Dhans, Dhauri and Rapti, which proved very satisfactory.

The Nepal Durbar complained, from time to time, of the embankment built near the frontier line by Mr. Peppe in 1892 and urged for its destruction on the ground that it interfered with the free escape of the surplus rainfall, and thus caused the submersion of the neighbouring fields in the Nepalese territory to the injury of the cultivators.<sup>6</sup>

The principles on which the demarcation of the boundary between British India and Nepal was carried out were contained in a resolution recorded in June, 1882, by the North-

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1. *F.E.A.*, Mar., 1888, 307.

2. *F.E.A.*, July, 1889, 363-389.

3. *F.E.B.*, June, 1889, 234-301.

4. *F.E.A.*, Sept., 1889, 190-193; *F.E.A.*, Mar., 1889, 405-406.

5. *F.E.A.*, Apr., 1897, 103-109.

6. *F.E.A.*, Mar., 1898, 66-103.

Western Provinces Government. That resolution (Point B) directed that "except where natural obstacles intervene the line from pillar to pillar may be regarded as straight". Only Basti was an exception. The boundary in Basti district was marked by pillars, and, according to the Point (B) of the resolution quoted above, the boundary was held to coincide with a straight line drawn from pillar to pillar.<sup>1</sup> This shows there was an increased spirit of readiness to decide boundary disputes amicably by mutual arrangements between the local officials of the two countries.<sup>2</sup> A number of fresh frontier pillars were being erected by the Government of India Surveyor with the full approval of the Durbar to replace others which had been washed away by the waywardness of rivers.

### **Bir's Friendly Attitude Towards The British**

With the rise to power of Bir Shamsheer the position of Nepal underwent a further change. Like Bhimsen Thapa he believed that "England is a power that crushes thrones like potsherds". Hence his relations with the British always remained friendly. Probably, Bir appeared to the British the best guarantee against any possible reversal of the policy of absolute subservience enunciated by Jang Bahadur. He was indulgent to the needs of the British Government, and the hopes reposed in him by the British had been amply fulfilled. He contributed towards famine relief in India. In 1898, he planned a visit to Europe with several of his brothers but it was abandoned at the last moment, ostensibly on account of the strained relations between Nepal and Tibet.<sup>3</sup> The Resident noted the event with much regret.<sup>4</sup> Due to friendly relations trade flourished. The imports of salt were made from India owing to the trifling differences with Tibet. Arms and ammunitions were granted for the Nepalese Army. Bir Shamsheer was the best choice to support the interests of the British. Legally no alteration in the position of Nepal was

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1. *F.P.A., E.*, Jan., 1884, 246-249.

2. *F.S.E.*, June, 1893, 389, Report on the events of Nepal, 1892-93.

3. *Foreign Political*, June, 1898, 283.

4. *Foreign Political*, June, 1898, 283.

made, rather the formal independent status of Nepal was always recognized. But, in actual practice, Bir had no independent foreign policy of his own. He followed the British advice in everything affecting Nepal's external affairs. Opinions and suggestions of the British Government and Residents were accepted as friendly advice. The economy of Nepal was also largely dependent on the British Indian economy.

On March 5, 1901, Nepal sustained a severe loss owing to the sudden but natural death of its Prime Minister, Maharaja Bir Shamsher.<sup>1</sup> Gen. Dev Shamsher Jang, Commander-in-Chief of the Nepalese Army, quietly succeeded his brother, Bir Shamsher Jang, as the Prime Minister and Maharaja.<sup>2</sup> His own place of Commander-in-Chief was filled by the promotion of the senior Commanding General, Chandra Shamsher, his younger brother.

### **Maharaja Dev Shamsher**

In strict accordance with the roll of succession, Bir Shamsher was succeeded by his brother, Dev Shamsher. He was luxury-loving and lazy. He spent his time in sports and amusements and left the Government of Nepal without any directing head. Hastily and without foresight he attempted to introduce certain reforms.<sup>3</sup> He also wanted to introduce changes in the Constitution to enable the people to participate in the Government. With the consent of the British Resident, Dev Shamsher had invited some British experts to advise him on the subject. He also wanted constitutional advisers from France and Germany and made a request to the British Government to this effect which was refused. But the Government of India helped him in the construction of the Kathmandu waterworks by lending the services of Hon. L. M. Stalair.<sup>4</sup> The relations with the Government of India continued to be cordial. The task of recruiting personnel for the Gurkha

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1. *F.S.E.*, July, 1901, 79-80.

2. *F.E.A.*, Apr., 1901, Encl. 1 of Pro. No. 71, Khareeta from Sri (5) Maharajadhiraj Prithvi Bir Bikram Jang to His Excellency the Right Hon'ble Lord Curzon, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, dated Mar. 5, 1901.

3. *F.E.B.*, Nov., 1891, 164.

4. *Ibid.*

regiments proceeded satisfactorily. The surrender of absconding offenders and the settlement of boundary disputes did not interfere with the good understanding subsisting between the two Governments.<sup>1</sup>

But Dev Shamsher was not fitted for the high position he was called upon to occupy, and three months after he had assumed office, in June, 1901, his brothers compelled him to sign his abdication in the presence of the King without any bloodshed. The King immediately issued a Royal decree<sup>2</sup> in favour of the next eldest brother, Chandra Shamsher, the ablest of his brothers, and a man of very different character.

### **Maharaja Chandra Shamsher—Protector of Rana Political System And The Maker Of Modern Nepal**

Maharaja Chandra Shamsher, who enjoyed a highest authority of the State for 28 years, was the best fitted of all the Prime Ministers of Nepal to exercise the powers of that office. He not only assumed the full powers conferred on him by the famous Sanad,<sup>3</sup> but took the precaution of having them confirmed by the British Government. The Maharaja preferred to mould public opinion so that when an innovation was introduced it should appear to be the will of the people rather than something born of the fertile brain of the administrative head.<sup>4</sup>

In the sphere of foreign relations, Chandra proved himself in every way a worthy successor to the illustrious Jang Bahadur. All his life he bore the saying of Jang Bahadur in mind, "See here is the Queen of England and she has not got

1. *F.S.E.*, July, 1901, 79-80.

2. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1901, 234. In his *Khareeta*, Maharajadhiraj of Nepal informed Lord Curzon, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, dated June, 26, 1901, that "it is feared that if he (Maharaja Dev Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana, is allowed to retain the office any longer, it will cause a great rebellion in the country, and having suggested that if he be dismissed and the Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Chandra Shamsher, be appointed in his place, the State will be properly managed. I have bestowed upon the said Commander-in-Chief the appointment of Prime Minister and Marshal of Nepal and the title of Maharaja".

3. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1901, 234 ; *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1902, Encl. 1, Pro. No. 234 ; *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1901, 238.

4. I. A. Shah : *Nepal : the Home of Gods* (1938), p. 125.



a more loyal subject than I am." He maintained the independent sovereignty of Nepal, loyally assisted by the Viceroy and the Government of India. Thus, the cornerstone of Chandra Shamsher's policy was loyalty and friendship to Great Britain.

### **Tibet Negotiations**

The first test of his diplomatic skill came when he attempted to pour oil on the troubled waters of the dispute between Britain and Tibet by advising Britain on the Tibetan attitude and probable reactions, and exhorting Tibet to support the British point of view and to fall in with their reasonable demands.

In 1890, China had acknowledged British interests in Sikkim and had agreed upon the frontier separating Sikkim and her vassal, Tibet. Then, in 1893, the two powers signed a commercial agreement regulating trade between India and Tibet. In 1895, Tibetans, aspiring to throw off every title of Chinese suzerainty, refused to accept either of these agreements and demolished the pillars that the British surveyors were erecting to mark the boundary. In 1902, Tibetan aggressiveness led to raids upon the Sikkimese grazing grounds and the loss of Sikkimese life. The Viceroy, Lord Curzon's letter of protest was returned by the Dalai Lama unopened. Lord Curzon, therefore, addressed Peking to bring the Dalai Lama to his senses but that Government disclaimed any responsibility for the follies of Lhasa. Tibet was now set upon defeating both China and Britain, encouraged by a Lama called Dorjjeff.<sup>1</sup> The Kajis at Lhasa felt certain of Russia's support in any dispute with Bhutan.<sup>2</sup> A Chinese mission of mediation had set out to meet a British one on the Sikkim border but the Tibetan Government refused free passage to it, so the British mission also returned home. Russia then sent a protest to Britain against the despatch of any mission into Tibet, threatening action if the status quo in that country was upset. This made quite certain that Britain would press her claims.

Nepal's position was unenviable. She was bound by many agreements, pledges and also national sentiments to live in

1. Sir Francis Tuker : *Gorkha* (1957), p. 186.

2. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1903, 1—88 ; P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. II (1928), p. 111.

amity with Britain<sup>1</sup> ; on the other hand, there was the 1856 Treaty concluded with Tibet guaranteeing mutual defence in case of an attack.<sup>2</sup> Chandra Shamsher held the opinion that if Tibet, unfairly and unjustly, provoked Britain into armed action, Nepal could not stand by her.<sup>3</sup>

Chandra strove by every means to persuade Lhasa to come to terms with the British, reproaching the Government for its folly. He told the Viceroy that any mission sent to Lhasa would be opposed. All his efforts came to naught and he was notified by Lord Curzon that the British mission must go there under a strong escort. To Tibet, Chandra wrote : "It is well known that the sun never sets upon the British dominions, and that the sovereign of such a vast empire should entertain designs of unjustly and improperly taking the mountainous country of the Tibetans should never cross your minds." He made it clear that Lhasa could not expect any help from Kathmandu. Tibet moved her forces forward to the border of Sikkim and prepared to fight in the Red Idol Gorge near Tuna, in the Gyantse valley<sup>4</sup> and on the Kara Pass. From Gyantse Jong, her artillery bombarded the British post despite the existence at that time of an agreed armistice. In 1904, the British sent a mission to Tibet under Younghusband.<sup>5</sup> The mission had to contend with incredible hardships and hundreds of the supporting troops died long before they were confronted with the armed forces of Tibet. During the mission's long and tortuous advance, Maharaja Chandra Shamsher, by personal letters to the Dalai Lama and by earnest exhortations to Tibet's councillors, sought to bring the Lhasa administration to a full realization of the dangers involved in a conflict. On several occasions he clarified his own position regarding the relations with the British, emphasizing the fairness of his Government's attitude towards them. He pleaded with Tibetan authorities for an understanding of the British viewpoint and

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1. *F.S.E.*, July, 1903, 127—130 ; *F.S.E.* Oct., 1903, 129 ; *F.S.E.*, Aug. 1904, 160—61
  2. C. U. Aitchison : *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Vol. II, p. 161.
  3. *F.S.E.*, Nov., 1903, 118—158.
  4. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1904, 208—259.
  5. *F.E.A.*, Mar., 1905, 57—62, also the *Younghusband Expedition* by Dr. P. Ustab Mehra.

assured the Dalai Lama that this was all that the British required of him. The Dalai Lama remained obdurate to the last.

In this long diplomatic struggle Maharaja Chandra Shamsher displayed not only discretion but a fine sense of proportion. He acted as a friend to both Great Britain and Tibet and it was mainly because of his unceasing endeavours that this incident with Tibet remained as such and did not precipitate into a full-fledged war.<sup>1</sup> The British were of the opinion that "there is not the least fear so long as Chandra Shamsher is arbiter of the destinies of Nepal, that any ill-considered movement against the interests of Tibet will be undertaken". Thus, had his not been a dominating influence, the relations between Great Britain and Nepal, might easily have been estranged for all time. A treaty was signed between Britain and Tibet in 1904 after the failure of the Younghusband mission,<sup>2</sup> thus bringing the two into direct contact. This rendered Nepal superfluous as a buffer. But Nepal's services bound the three countries together in a bond of friendship. With China, Nepal remained on friendly terms and the Chinese Emperor conferred upon the Maharaja the same high honour as he had conferred upon Jang Bahadur.<sup>3</sup>

The British Government confirmed the absolute independence and sovereignty of Nepal and when, in 1910, there was friction on the Nepalese-Tibetan border, she warned Tibet that if Nepal was compelled to use force to end it, Britain would, in no way, restrain her.<sup>4</sup>

### **Chandra Shamsher's Visit To India To Attend The Imperial Durbar**

In 1903, Chandra Shamsher went to Delhi to attend Lord Curzon's Durbar<sup>5</sup> and also to pay his respects to the Viceroy as the Prime Minister and representative of His Highness the

1. I. A. Shah : *Nepal, the Home of Gods* (London, 1938), p. 136.

2. *F.E.B.*, Oct., 1904, 32-33.

3. *F.S.E.*, Jan., 1911, 124-207.

4. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1904, 160-161 ; *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1910, 93 ; *F.S.E.*, June, 1910, 276-550. Encl. to Proceeding No. 387

5. *F.S.E.*, Mar., 1904, 208-219 ; *F.I.A.*, July, 1902, 253 ; *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1904, 281.

Maharajadhiraj of Nepal. He received the high honour in the Durbar along with the representatives of independent kingdoms. During this visit he met Lord Kitchener, the then Commander-in-Chief, and a strong personal friendship developed between the two.

### **Plots Against Chandra Shamsheer**

When he was returning from Delhi, after attending the Imperial Durbar of 1903, his exiled brother, Dev Shamsheer, who was living in Benaras, hatched a conspiracy to murder him.<sup>1</sup> Two grandsons of Jang Bahadur living in exile in Allahabad also joined in the conspiracy and a thorough scheme to dislodge Chandra was prepared in Benaras at the residence of the old rebel, Suba Homnath, who was the main encouraging factor behind the ex-Premier. The conspiracy, however, did not materialize as Amar Jang, one of the confidants, apprised Chandra in advance of the plot being prepared to dislodge him at Benaras. With this knowledge, he hurried home to successfully cope with the situation. Dev and his accomplices were arrested in British India but were later released on the ground that they had every right to visit their King and this in itself did not constitute a criminal act.

Another attempt on his life was planned by Khadga Shamsheer, another brother living in exile at Palpa.<sup>2</sup> His ill-intention was known only when he began reorganizing the structure of the army left to his care as Commissioner of that region. Chandra very cleverly transferred the reorganized unit to Kathmandu where some of the officers made a confession. The attempt proved abortive and Khadga saved himself by escaping to British India in 1913. He died at Benaras but only after making another attempt on Chandra's life.

### **Lord Kitchener's Visit To Kathmandu**

Lord Kitchener, the then Commander-in-Chief of India, paid a visit to Kathmandu in the autumn of 1906.<sup>3</sup> At this

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1. *F.S.E.*, Sept., 1903, 384, 418 ; *F.S.E.*, Jan., 1904, appendix to notes ; *F.S.E.*, Dec., 1902, 119.
  2. *F.S.E.*, Jan., 1904, appendix to notes.
  3. *F.E.A.*, May, 1907, 54—72.

time Chandra was granted the rank of Major-General in the Indian Army and was made Hon'ble Colonel of the 4th Gurkha Rifles.<sup>1</sup> He was presented with a Major-General's Regulation Sword. A full parade of the Gurkha Army was held in honour of the Indian Commander-in-Chief.

### **Proposed Visit Of King George V To Nepal**

In the year 1905, Nepal suffered a keen disappointment. The Prince of Wales, later King George V, visited India. His Majesty was one of the best shots in Great Britain and he had a keen desire to take part in one of the great hunts in Nepal but this had to be postponed as cholera broke out in the region.

### **Visit Of The Prime Minister Of Nepal To England**

In 1908, the Maharaja followed the example of Maharaja Jang Bahadur and proceeded on a visit to England.<sup>2</sup> He wanted to get a first-hand knowledge of the reforms which had taken place in Europe. He was not only anxious to acquaint himself with all that was new in the West where a great industrial development had taken place, but to secure for Nepal industrial, agricultural and scientific machinery. He was really on a mission to confirm absolutely the sovereign status of Nepal and also to obtain free and unconditional import of arms and ammunition without reference to the Viceroy of India. With a salute of 19 guns,<sup>3</sup> he sailed from Bombay in the City of Vienna, a special steamer.<sup>4</sup> The vessel was modified to accord with the religious and social requirements of the Maharaja and the staff. On his way, the Maharaja visited Malta and reached London on May 8, 1908. The Maharaja was frequently entertained by King Edward VII, and at many of the functions arranged by His Majesty during that season, the Maharaja was the guest of honour. His Majesty conferred upon the Maharaja the high honour of the Grand Cross of the—

1. *F.E.A.*, May, 1907, 56-57 ; *F.E.B.*, July, 1907, 45 ; *F.E.E.*, Dec., 1907, 121-123 ; *F.E.A.*, May, 1907 ; Enclosure 2 to Proceeding No. 68:

2. *F.S.E.*, Mar., 1908, 115-158 ; *F.S.E.*, May, 1908, 1-36.

3. *F.S.E.*, Mar., 1907, 537-538.

4. *F.S.E.*, Jan., 1908, 74-78.

Order of the Bath.<sup>1</sup> He travelled widely over the British Isles, seeking the industrial and scientific knowledge that he desired. Throughout his journey Chandra did not forget the chief purposes of his visit. At his departure Chandra cordially thanked the King, the Queen and the people of Great Britain.<sup>2</sup>

### **Trouble In The Himalayan Border Land**

On his return from England, the Maharaja found that the relations with Tibet had taken a turn for the worse. At the time of the despatch of the Younghusband mission to Tibet, Maharaja Chandra had foreseen such a contingency and so he was not wholly unprepared to tackle the situation. The present uneasiness concerned the shadowy and practically non-existent claims of China to predominance in the Himalayan belt affecting Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet.<sup>3</sup> China demanded that she would enlist from Tibet through Nepal the Nepalese-Tibetan half-breeds. Chandra Shamsher flatly refused to permit such a thing. China then made overtures to Nepal for a regional alliance consisting of China, Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan. Chandra did not pay heed to it either and, at once, consulted the Government of India soliciting its support for giving a firm, if not provocative, answer to China. The Viceroy told him that he could count absolutely on India's support if he were ever threatened from the side of Tibetan territory.<sup>4</sup> The Maharaja, thereupon, rejected the Chinese advances and repudiated all claims of China to any vestige of suzerainty over Tibet. The Chinese again claimed the right to enlist the half-breeds, but the Government of India told them plainly that she would resist any attempt on the part of Peking to enforce this claim and would not only undertake the defence of Sikkim and Bhutan, but also render direct assistance to Nepal.<sup>5</sup> The Chinese continued their aggressive policy on

1. *F.S.E.*, Mar., 1908, 115—158 ; *F.S.E.*, Dec., 1910, 431—434 ; *F.G.B.*, Aug., 1908, 111—114.

2. P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. II, p. 125 ; Sir Francis Taker : *Gorkha* (1957), p. 189 ; *F.S.E.*, Mar., 1908, 157-158. *The Times*, July 21, 1908.

3. *F.S.E.*, Jan., 1910, 72—95.

4. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1910, 93.

5. *F.S.E.*, Oct., 1911, 273.

the Tibet-Nepalese border. India sent a substantial consignment of arms and ammunition to Kathmandu. Meanwhile, Lhasa had been imploring Nepal's aid to cast out the Chinese from their country.

In 1912, a revolution broke out in China and it put a stop to any further aggressive activities on the border.

So far as Nepal's own relations with China are concerned. Nepal never officially recognized herself as a vassal or a tributary of China. For hundreds of years, she had had intercourse with her great neighbour. As far back as 1384, China had sent a seal to Nepal as a present and Nepal had sent presents in return. In 1782, Nepal agreed to send a friendly mission every five years to Peking. The last mission went in 1908.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese always maintained that these friendly communications were a tribute paid by a vassal to its lord, but Nepal always refuted this<sup>2</sup> with vehemence.

### **Visit Of Chandra Shamsher To Delhi To Attend The Coronation Durbar Of 1911**

On May 6, 1910, King Edward VII, a close friend of Chandra Shamsher, died and King George V was enthroned. A Grand Durbar was held at Delhi on June 22, 1911, to celebrate the Coronation.<sup>3</sup> A Nepalese representative was also invited to attend the grand function.<sup>4</sup> His Excellency Maharaja Sir Chandra Shamsher and his brother, Bhim Shamsher, Commander-in-Chief, represented Nepal,<sup>5</sup> and presented valuable gifts to His Imperial Majesty the King Emperor.<sup>6</sup> On the occasion, His Excellency Chandra Shamsher was created a Grand Commander of the Royal Victorian Order and was granted a personal salute of 19 guns,<sup>7</sup> a Coronation Durbar Medal, 2,000 modern rifles and huge quantities of small arms and ammunition.<sup>8</sup> His brother and Commander-in-Chief,

1. *F.S.E.*, Oct., 1911, 270—272.

2. *F.S.E.*, Oct., 1911, 273 ; *F.S.E.*, June, 1910, 487 ; *F.S.E.*, July, 1911, 248—280.

3. *F.I.B.*, July, 1911, 235—237.

4. *F.S.I.*, Feb., 1912, 213—216.

5. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1912, 231—233.

6. *F.I.B.*, Mar., 1912, 273 ; *F.I.B.*, July, 1911, 235—237.

7. *F.S.I.*, Jan., 1912, 12—18.

8. *F.I.A.*, Feb., 1912, 72.

Bhim Shamsher Jang, was also created a Knight Commander of the same Order.<sup>1</sup> The accession to the throne of His Imperial Majesty King George V was celebrated by a parade of all the troops in the Nepal Valley and a 101-gun salute.<sup>2</sup> The Durbar's congratulations were communicated direct to His Majesty's Secretary of State by the Resident.<sup>3</sup>

### **His Imperial Majesty The King Emperor's Shooting Trip**

In 1911, the Nepal Durbar invited King George V to one of the famous "game-haunts" in the Terai. King George sent a cordial acceptance of Nepal's invitation.<sup>4</sup> But as King George V was being welcomed in Delhi, the King of Nepal, Prithvi Bir Bikram Shah, passed away. He was succeeded by his son, Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Jang Bahadur, a boy of six years of age.<sup>5</sup> But King George's visit was not postponed. All went as planned and the British Sovereign fully enjoyed the shooting trip.

### **Nepal And The First World War**

On August 6, 1914, Kathmandu heard of war having broken out between Britain and Germany. Without hesitation, Nepal stood steadfast as a staunch ally of the British Commonwealth. Three days before he heard of the outbreak of hostilities and a day before war was in fact declared, following the example of his predecessor, Jang Bahadur,<sup>6</sup> Chandra despatched a letter to the British Resident in Kathmandu on August 3, 1914.<sup>7</sup> It said: "I...request you to inform His Excellency the Viceroy and through him the King Emperor

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1. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1912, Enclosure to Proceeding No. 231 ; *F.S.I.*, Feb., 1909, 10-11.
  2. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1912, 231, *Report on the course of events in Nepal during the year 1911-12.*
  3. *F.I.B.*, July, 1911, 235-237.
  4. *F.I.A.*, Feb., 1912, 57.
  5. *F.S.I.*, Mar., 1912, 15-22 ; *F.I.A.*, Apr., 1913, 56-59.
  6. Jang Bahadur had helped the British in the 'Mutiny' of 1857 by sending Gurkha troops. He himself joined the British forces and helped in suppressing it.
  7. *Foreign Political Secret, Internal*, Sept., 1914, 15-16.



that the whole military resources of Nepal are at His Majesty's disposal. May I say I am speaking to you in double capacity : firstly, as Marshal of the Gurkhas and, secondly, as Major-General in His Majesty's Army.'<sup>1</sup> In the early phase, His Excellency the Viceroy decided not to invite the Prime Minister of Nepal to Delhi during the cold weather of 1914-15.<sup>2</sup> But the British Empire wanted fighters who could be procured by the goodwill of Maharaja Chandra of Nepal. A request was received in Kathmandu for the loan of 6,000 men for service within the borders of India. With his usual thoroughness, Maharaja Chandra at once ordered 7,500 men to take up duty on the north-west frontier and relieve the British troops stationed there immediately to be embarked for France. In September, 1914, the Prime Minister of Nepal made a generous contribution of Rs. 3,30,000 towards the expenses of the war in Europe.<sup>3</sup> Three more regiments were sent from Nepal and the supply of fighters was maintained till the armistice was signed. Nepal thus sent 16,500 men in support of her ally. These men fought not only upon the frontiers of India, but in France, Mesopotamia, Salonika, Egypt and elsewhere and every man most worthily maintained the high martial traditions of his race. Time and again they saved the situation and the British Empire owes Nepal a lasting debt. Besides the valuable assistance given by these contingents, the Maharaja further instituted measures in Nepal to maintain the strength of the Gurkha Regiments in the Indian Army and to provide additional battalions in spite of the fact that the Gurkhas suffered heavy casualties. Chandra made a further contribution in the shape of machine-guns, generous monetary donations, army blankets, railway sleepers and the produce of the country such as cardamoms and tea.<sup>4</sup>

In the Great War, the British emerged victorious and as a reward for her sacrifices, the British Government accorded Nepal an annual grant of Rs. 10,00,000 in perpetuity. The

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1. *Foreign Political Secret, Internal*, Sept., 1914, Appendix to notes. Also Pro. No. 16, *F.P.I., B.*, Oct., 1914, 141-150; *Foreign Internal, B.*, Oct., 1914, Encl. to Pro. No. 171.
  2. *Foreign Political, Internal, B.*, Secret, Dec., 1914, 54.
  3. *Foreign Internal, B.*, Oct., 1914, 163-174.
  4. *Ibid.*

British owed a debt to the land of the Gurkhas, and specially to Maharaja Chandra Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana. Chandra was promoted full General in the British Army and his investiture brought him the Grand Cross of St. Michael and St. George.<sup>1</sup> He was further honoured by being in future addressed as His Highness by the Government of India.<sup>2</sup>

### **Purchase Of Warlike Material From India By The Nepal Durbar**

In 1901, Maharaja Chandra demanded a certain quantity of ammunitions to face Tibet as Russia and China were preparing to build Tibet into an independent State.<sup>3</sup> He requested that a "well-armed and powerful Tibet and an ill-armed Nepal would be a very depressing sight and an unequal match". The Government of India sanctioned remission of the import duty upon the material imported by Nepal for the manufacture of 20,00,000 cartridges. They further assured to meet the demands for further arms.<sup>4</sup> The Indian Government had, however, the most serious objection in supplying Maxims for they may be copied in the Nepal arsenals and probably it was beyond the Nepalese to keep guns, such as the Maxim, in fighting order.<sup>5</sup> In 1904, 90 Martini-Henry and 25 Lee-Metford<sup>6</sup> rifles with slings, bayonets and scabbards were presented to the Nepal Durbar along with 200 rounds with each Lee-Metford, and 18,534 rounds of balls and 1,086 rounds of blank ammunition.<sup>7</sup>

In 1905 the Durbar requested to purchase : (i) a machine for the manufacture of cartridge caps, two sets of incorporating mills for the manufacture of black gun-powder and a hydraulic press, (ii) 1,30,000 rounds of Martini-Henry ammunition yearly in order to put 13,000 men in practice, and

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1. J. A. Shah : *Nepal, the Home of Gods* (London, 1938), p. 150.  
Sir Francis Taker : *Gorkha* (1957), p. 201.
  2. P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. II, p. 147.
  3. *F.S.E.*, Nov., 1902, 213, 223 ; *Saturday Review*, Sept. 28, 1901 ;  
*Pioneer*, Sept., 1901, 21.
  4. *F.S.E.*, Nov., 1902, 224.
  5. *F.S.E.*, Nov., 1894 ; *F.S.E.*, Nov., 1902, 212.
  6. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1904, 7 ; *F.S.E.*, Dec., 1904, 5
  7. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1904, Notes, p. 1.

(iii) 2,500 rounds of Lee-Metford ammunition for training the Minister's body-guard. The Government of India accepted the second and third requests, and the first issue was to be made in exchange of empty cases equivalent to the number of rounds supplied.<sup>1</sup> In February, 1807, 7,78,620 rounds of Martini-Henry ball ammunition were supplied to the Nepal Durbar on this basis<sup>2</sup>. In 1906, the British Government had also supplied 2,500 Martini-Henry rifles to the Nepal Durbar free of charge.<sup>3</sup> In 1908, 2,500 Martini-Henry rifles with sword bayonets were presented.<sup>4</sup> After the Prime Minister's return from England, another 7,500 Martini-Henry rifles with sword bayonets were awarded.<sup>5</sup> In his telegram of March 28, the Secretary of State suggested a "substantial present of Lee-Metford rifles to the Durbar,"<sup>6</sup> because Chinese troops at Tibet were employed with modern magazine rifles.<sup>7</sup> Two thousand new short-magazine Lee-Enfield Mark III rifles with appurtenances and 5,00,000 cartridges were presented to the Nepal Durbar on the occasion of His Majesty the King Emperor's visit to that State in 1911.<sup>8</sup> The Nepal Durbar heartily thanked for the helping spirit of the Indian Government. A licence was issued to the representative of the Government of Nepal at Calcutta to export certain arms for the personal use of Maj.-Gen. Chandra Shamsheer.<sup>9</sup> Nepal was, strictly speaking, not a "native State" but, under a treaty,<sup>10</sup> she was allowed to procure arms to a reasonable extent.<sup>11</sup> The Govern-

1. *F.S.E.*, Dec., 1905, 258.

2. *F.E.B.*, Feb., 1907, 327—330 ; *F.E.B.*, Dec., 1907, 148—149.

3. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1907, 575—587, Report published in an article marked 'A' from *Gurkha Patra* dated 20th Kartik Samvat, 1963 (Nov. 5, 1906). The Editors of this *Patra* congratulated the Maharaja for the confidence of the British Government in the Nepal Durbar, *F.S.F.*, Aug., 1908, 12-13.

4. *F.S.E.*, May, 1908, 198, 203.

5. *F.S.E.*, May, 1908, 205 ; *F.S.E.*, June, 1908, 636.

6. *F.S.E.*, July, 1911, 696.

7. *F.S.E.*, July, 1911, 693 ; *F.S.I.*, Feb., 1909, 2.

8. *F.S.E.*, July, 1911, 693—703 ; *F.S.I.*, Mar., 1912, 81—84 ; *F.I.A.*, Feb., 1912, 57—73.

9. *F.G.B.*, Dec., 1912, 33—36.

10. *F.S.I.*, Mar., 1912, Note, p. 3 (His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief's note dated June 8, 1911) ; *F.E.A.*, Oct., 1893, 72—79,

11. *F.S.I.*, July, 1912, 42 ; *F.S.I.*, Mar., 1912, Notes, p. 2—3.

ment of India considered that it was better that arms required by native States should be supplied by the British Government than by other sources to the Durbar.<sup>1</sup> The only question to be considered was whether this was a reasonable indent<sup>2</sup> within the meaning of Lord Lansdowne's Khareeta. It was stated that under special treatment for Nepal, the policy was clear and all arms would be passed free of all duties. Thus the British Government sanctioned the purchase and importation of 100 revolvers and 10,000 rounds of ammunition from England to improve the equipment of their higher-grade officers.<sup>3</sup> During the year 1914, the Nepal Durbar was supplied, on payment, from the Allahabad Arsenal, a number of component parts for Martini-Henry rifles to replace the damaged pieces. For the annual training for their troops in musketry also 7,50,000 rounds of Martini-Henry ball ammunition were supplied from India on payment for an equivalent number of empty cases returned to the Arsenal. Similarly, 1,755 rounds of Lee-Metford ammunition were supplied from the magazine of the Resident's escort in Nepal.<sup>4</sup> The Prime Minister pointed out the dangerous state of the machinery in use in the State powder factory for the manufacture of black powder required in Nepal and asked for permission to import a set of machinery to replace the same ; sanction had been accorded for the purchase of the machinery desired by the Nepal Durbar through the Director-General of Ordnance in India. Thus, Nepal's requests for arms were treated differently and no duties were charged.

### **Extradition Arrangements Between The Government Of India And The Nepal Durbar**

Sometimes Nepalese subjects were convicted and sentenced by the British courts for crimes committed in British India. Similarly, native Indian subjects were convicted by Nepalese courts and imprisoned in the State jails. But cases occurred when these convicts escaped from jail and took refuge in their

1. *F.I.B.*, Mar., 1908, 315-316, (Notes) ; *F.I.A.*, Sept., 1905, 104-105.

2. *F.E.A.*, Oct., 1893, 78-A.

3. *F.S.I.*, July, 1912, 42-45.

4. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1914, 384-386, *Report on the course of events in Nepal during the year 1913-14.*

own country and the two Governments were not bound to surrender such persons. The Prime Minister moved the Government of India for a reciprocal agreement in respect of the mutual surrender of convicts, even though they might not be the subjects of the Government making the demand. This arrangement, it was believed, would bring the original terms of sentence of the convicts to a completion.<sup>1</sup> The Indian Government asserted that the Resident was at his discretion in issuing a warrant under Section 7 of the Indian Extradition Act (XV of 1903) for the arrest of any person, not being a European British subject, who, having been convicted of an extradition offence in Nepal, had escaped into British India before his sentence had expired. The Resident was, according to them, at liberty to exercise his power. They insisted that the Durbar should be prepared to surrender any Nepalese subject who might have escaped into Nepal after conviction for an extradition offence in British India. Chandra also took action to prevent the spread of sedition against the British Government in Nepal and issued a general warning that none should read newspapers like "Bande-Matram," "Jugantar," "Sandhya" of Calcutta and "India" of Lahore. A notification to this effect was issued in the "Gurkha-Patra".<sup>2</sup> The Nepalese Prime Minister always showed his readiness in co-operating with the British authorities for the suppression of crime on the Bengal-Nepal border<sup>3</sup> and on other borders. Orders were also issued for the prevention of criminal refugees from India entering Nepal.<sup>4</sup>

Three definite extradition agreements were concluded with Nepal,<sup>5</sup> but great difficulties were experienced in bringing to justice those criminals who committed dacoities in British territories and escaped into Nepal. It was also found difficult to recover stolen property concealed in Nepalese houses ; and it was no more easy to exercise control over suspects taking

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1. *F.E.B.*, Sept., 1905, 55-56.

2. *F.E.B.*, Sept., 1907, 101-109.

3. *F.E.B.*, July, 1905, 13 ; *F.I.A.*, Mar., 1910, 53-62; *F.I.A.*, Aug., 1911, 61-66.

4. *F.S.E.*, Apr., 1914, 104.

5. C. U. Aitchison : *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Vol. II, pp. 157-160, Treaties No. LXI, LX and LXI.

refuge in Nepal against whom no actual evidence was available because the law of Nepal did not allow interference with any person who had not been previously convicted or declared to be of bad reputation. It was considered desirable to adopt a system of reciprocity, between the police of British India and that of Nepal, along the entire length of the border in dealing with the suppression of dacoits and other habitual offenders. The Government of India and Nepal agreed that as a rule<sup>1</sup> :

- (i) A list of bad characters and a descriptive roll of convicted persons should be maintained by the District Officials of the border districts which will be revised and interchanged after every six months ;
- (ii) Information of the movements of bad characters shall be given to the police of the district ;
- (iii) A descriptive roll of convicted persons within 10 miles of the border shall be maintained ;
- (iv) British Superintendents of Police may arrange to meet for mutual co-operation ;
- (v) A system of inter-thana patrols to visit each other's posts alternatively, not less than twice a week ;
- (vi) In case a criminal crosses the frontier, the local police may not follow him but should report to the Magistrate. But, as an exception, the police may arrest him in case of a serious offence or if the Magistrate had already obtained the permission of the authorities across the border for such action ;
- (vii) Whenever the co-operation of the Nepal Durbar was desired in serious cases, the Resident in Nepal will be informed through the District Magistrate ;
- (viii) After a dacoity, a roll-call should be held in those villages where suspected offenders reside ;
- (ix) The British police should give information to the Nepalese police about gangs of wandering criminal tribes before such gangs cross the border into Nepal. It was a tentative measure for the prevention of crime on the border of Nepal and British India.

Chandra Shamsher's rule marked the climax of his family's prestige, power and wealth. In his time, people were taught

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1. *F.I.A.*, Mar., 1910, 53—62 ; *F.I.A.*, Aug., 1911, 61—66.

to regard themselves as no more than slaves of the Rana family. Even the Ruler was a puppet in the hands of these Ranas. As a staunch ally of the British, he extended and deepened the friendship established by Jang Bahadur and transformed it into brotherhood. Chandra believed that only through the British could he attain the security and prosperity of his people. The British trusted the Maharaja as perhaps they trusted no other native Rajah. He tightened the control of the Ranas over the people and thus added to the burden of the latter. His rule was characterized by firmness, orderliness and peace. His greatest contribution can be said to lie in strengthening the relations with the British power in India. He also worked jealously to secure recognition for the independent status of Nepal. Thus, throughout a century, Nepal remained tied in the heavy chains of the Ranas.

## CHAPTER SIX

### STATUS OF THE RULER OF NEPAL—HIS RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

*“This throne of Nepal is a fort...  
A fort built by God himself”*<sup>1</sup>

#### **King As Vicar Of God Upon Earth—Pre-Rana Period**

Nepal has a long tradition of kingship. But the monarchs of Nepal did not possess absolute powers in ancient times. The Licchavi kings, the earliest of Nepal's rulers, were recognized by the chiefs as *primus inter pares*<sup>2</sup> only. Amsuvarman, the founder of the Thakuri Dynasty, who succeeded the Licchavis, was like a chief among the various chieftains as his title *Maha-Samant*<sup>3</sup> meant. He even looked to his subjects as a source of strength and support.<sup>4</sup>

In medieval times, the Nepalese monarchy ruled by divine right.<sup>5</sup> The powers of the monarch, though theoretically absolute, were in practice curtailed by the landed aristocracy who, in times of disorder, took the law into their own hands and made and unmade kings at will. A king was regarded as the symbol of God on earth and the spiritual power. The Nepalese monarch reigned by the favour of *Pasupati*, but after Jayasthite Malla, although *Pasupati* retained the first place, the King was expressly said to rule by the favour of *Manesvari*.

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1. It was in these dramatic terms that King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of modern Nepal, described the Kingdom centred in the Kathmandu Valley, quoted by B. L. Joshi and Leo. E. Rose in *Democratic Innovations in Nepal* (University of California Press, 1966), p. 3.
  2. Sylvan Levi : *Nepal*, 3 Vols, (Paris, 1905, 1905, 1908) (English translation from the original French in typescript in the Indian Council of World Affairs Library, New Delhi) Vol. I, p. 358.
  3. *Ibid.*
  4. D. R. Regmi : *Ancient Nepal* (Calcutta, 1960), p. 183.
  5. Luciano Petech : *Medieval History of Nepal* (Rome, 1958), p. 173–174.



In 1768, Prithvi Narayan Shah, the chief of the Gurkha State, conquered Nepal. This conquest upset the tradition because the new monarchs were not prepared to share their authority with anyone. They conquered and united the various principalities and made the Central Government stronger.<sup>1</sup> Prithvi Narayan Shah, for the first time, instituted the hereditary kingship of the type that prevailed in his home State of Gurkha. The King had the title of Maharajadhiraj, Great Sovereign, i. e., king over kings, and possessed absolute powers.<sup>2</sup> He was assisted in the exercise of his powers by Thar-ghars,<sup>3</sup> chiefs of some selected castes who held charge of the principal offices of the State. According to Sylvan Levi, Thar-ghars traditionally had "a right of remonstrance"<sup>4</sup> against the King. Though with the passage of time the importance of Thar-ghars as the chief assistants of the King waned, the institution of Thar-ghars seems to have existed at least up to 1850.<sup>5</sup> In course of time, changes brought some devolution of the powers of the King.

In the first quarter of the 19th century, the influence of the kings started waning because of their continuous minority and imbecility. Consequently the Ministers or the Mukhtiyars came to wield the real power. Strong Ministers like Damodar Pande and Bhimsen Thapa tended to overshadow the King and ruled almost independently. The Bharadars began to function as councillors, more of the Minister than of the King. At times, the Minister could afford to ignore even the Bharadars' advice.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the gradual decline of the King's authority ran parallel to the disappearance of the Bharadars as an effec-

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1. Sylvan Levi : *Le Nepal*, Vol. II, p. 364.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 365.

3. Thar-ghars, literally meaning families belonging to different castes (thar : caste, ghar : family), originally referred to those six chiefs of different castes who assisted Dravya Shah in the conquest of Gurkha (Data collected by Chittaranjan Nepali, Kathmandu) ; Yogi Narhari-nath and Babu Ram Acharya : *Prithvi Narayan Shah Dev ko Divya Updes* (Kathmandu, 2010 V. S.), p. 32.

4. S. Levi : *Le Nepal*, Vol. 2, p. 365, According to Levi, there were 36 chiefs of clans who were called Thar-ghars.

5. *Nyamati Darta Phant of Kamyandari Kitab Khana*—Kathmandu.

6. Chittaranjan Nepali : *Bhim Sen Thapa Ko Tatakalin Nepal* (Kathmandu 2013, V. S.), pp. 111—12 and 117 (Nepali).

tive policy-making body.<sup>1</sup> The authority of the King-in-Council, as traditionally understood, tended to be replaced by the authority of the individual Minister and his henchmen. This trend got crystallized into a definite pattern when the Ranas rose to power in 1846. A Rana Prime Minister ruled the country despotically as also over the King who was relegated to the background as a mere shadow of his former self, though, formally, he remained the supreme ruler of the State and the source of all law. In order to isolate the King from the people and politics of the State and to erase his image even as a temporal head, the Ranas advertised the King as a spiritual head only, a God Vishnu incarnate. This left the politics and administration of the country entirely in the hands of the Rana Prime Minister and his family. The King was allowed to participate in governmental affairs only as a ceremonial head, i.e., to receive foreign envoys or to sign official orders or legislative enactments. This plight of kingship has been described by a writer in the following words :

“To provide him (King) with a *raison d’être* and some facade of authority, Jang set the King at the head of the spiritual side of the State and saw to it that the venal Brahmins put it about that this feckless and degenerate monarch was the reincarnation of Vishnu. Before long, it became accepted that the King should not risk his holiness outside the capital, nor be absent from the palace for more than 12 hours. To say that the Prime Minister kept him prisoner in the palace may not be strictly true although doubtless they would not have allowed matters to be otherwise, having regard to the black records of so many of the ruthless chieftains who had been kings and princes of Nepal. Nevertheless, this very seclusion rendered the kingship the more awe-inspiring and the more revered to its subjects.”<sup>2</sup>

### **The Period Of Transition—From Autocracy To Constitutional Headship**

The Rana Prime Ministers aimed at acquiring the real power by making the King politically ineffective and usurping the

1. S. Levi : *Le Nepal*, Vol. II, p. 369.

2. Francis Toker : *Gorkha—The Story of the Gurkhas of Nepal* (London, 1957), p. 243.

throne for themselves. By a series of clever strokes of diplomacy, political manoeuvres and military pressure, Jang Bahadur, after the Kot Massacre,<sup>1</sup> ultimately succeeded in realizing his first objective, with the result that people regarded the King more as a religious than as a political head. To achieve the second goal, he made several futile attempts at capturing the throne but succeeded only in securing the title of Maharaja and the sovereignty of the two provinces of Kaski and Lamjung in 1856. Thus, a new pattern of relationship between the King and the Prime Minister got institutionalized during the rule of Jang Bahadur. In other words, the sovereignty of Nepal, which hitherto vested in the King only, was henceforth to be shared by the Prime Minister.<sup>2</sup> The new position of the King has been summed up by Sylvan Levi in the following words :

“In fact the King is only a sort of entity today, a nominal fiction, the only representative of the country recognized by the foreign powers. His Red Seal (Lal Mohar) is necessary to give an official value to diplomatic documents, but his action is void.”<sup>3</sup>

The emergence of Jang Bahadur from the Kot Massacre as a powerful man represented the defeat not only of King Rajindra Bikram and heir-apparent Surindra Bikram but also of the nobility. The King was utterly helpless, and, therefore, felt humiliated at the murder of many of his trusted chieftains. The Queen, legally vested with sovereign power, was the only royal personage who was optimistic about the consequences of the Kot Massacre. She expected that Jang Bahadur would pass the throne to her son in deprivation of the rights of heir-apparent Surindra Bikram, son of the late Senior Queen. After the acquisition of Prime Ministership, on the morrow of the Kot Massacre, Jang Bahadur's imme-

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1. Padma Jang Bahadur Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur of Nepal* (Abhayacharan Mukerjee, Allahabad, 1909), pp. 82, 83, 84, 88 and 89.
  2. Maj. Ramsay, Resident, to Edmonstone, Secretary, Government of India, Foreign, dated Aug. 6, 1856. *Foreign Secret Consultation*, Aug. 29, 1856, 55, paras 3 and 5 ; Ramsay to Edmonstone, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, 42, para 16.
  3. S. Levi, *Le Nepal*, Vol. II, p. 367.

diate concern was how to consolidate his new position and make it secure not only against any danger from other chiefs, but also against any possible encroachment by the Queen. In order to realize his objective, the very first step that he took was to get his brothers and other supporters appointed to important civil and military offices of the kingdom. By now he had already acquired a nearly complete hold over the military.<sup>1</sup>

The political power in Nepal at this time was precariously poised between the Queen and the Prime Minister,<sup>2</sup> the former holding it *de jure* and the latter *de facto*. This often resulted in uneasy situations in which the Queen and the Prime Minister tended to come into conflict with each other. Jang Bahadur, for quite some time, tried to avoid an open conflict with the Queen but could not do so on the issue of illegitimate enthronement of her son. The Queen desired Jang Bahadur to put the heir-apparent and his brother to death and place on the throne her own son. Jang refused to fulfil the Queen's desire and furnished the following reasons :

- (i) that it is "in contravention of all practices and is directly in opposition to all laws human and divine"; and
- (ii) that it would mean "the commission of a most heinous crime in defiance of conscience and religion".<sup>3</sup>

He wrote to the Queen that "over and above my duty to you as Regent, I owe another duty to the State, which in case of conflict must override any personal considerations. My duty to the State bids me to submit that should Your Majesty ever repeat this order, you shall be prosecuted for attempt at murder by the law of the land".<sup>4</sup> This challenged the Queen's authority. She made no delay in punishing this disobedience and called Bir Dhvaj Basnait to conspire against the life of Jang Bahadur, who came to know of the conspiracy before it could mature. He overpowered the conspirators and either

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1. Padma Jang Bahadur Rana ; *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur of Nepal* (Abhayacharan Mukerjee, Allahabad, 1909), p. 83.  
 2. *Ibid*, 82.  
 3. *Ibid*, 84.  
 4. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur of Nepal* (Abhayacharan Mukerjee, Allahabad, 1909), p. 83.

murdered or arrested them.<sup>1</sup> Jang Bahadur mobilized all the political and military forces at his command to get rid of the Queen and her de jure powers and called an extraordinary meeting of the Bharadars, (State Council). The Council, at the instance of Jang, passed against the Queen the strongest possible sentence "sanctioned by both the King and the heir-apparent". The Queen was told : "Whereas by your recent conduct you have exceeded the powers vested in you. By the Royal Proclamation of the 5th of January, 1883, the sovereign authority vested in you by the said Proclamation is hereby withdrawn."<sup>2</sup> The conduct that had provided justification for such a sentence was, first, that the Queen had attempted to get the Prime Minister murdered as a first step towards the murder of heir-apparent Surindra Bikram in order to put her own son on the throne, and, secondly, that she had caused the death of hundreds of people and brought misery and ruin upon her subjects whose misfortunes would not end so long as she was in the country. She was ordered to make immediate preparations for departure to Benaras, and suddenly the King also announced to accompany the Queen. He said :

"I am painfully conscious of the many murders that I have been the means of committing, of the widespread misery I have caused to my people....I propose, therefore, to take a pilgrimage to Benaras where by bathing in the Ganges and by performing other penance, I hope to expiate my sins."<sup>3</sup>

Apparently, the decision was the King's own, but actually it seems to have been taken at the instance of Jang Bahadur, for he "strictly warned him (the King) not to join any more in the Queen's intrigues".<sup>4</sup> In the absence of the Queen, who had left for Benaras, heir-apparent Surindra Bikram acted as Regent.

Within a few months of his arrival at Benaras, King Rajindra Bikram started conspiratorial activities against the

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1. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur of Nepal*, pp. 84—88; H. A. Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal* (London, 1880) I, pp. 369—71.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

3. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur of Nepal* (Abhayacharan Mukerjee, Allahabad, 1909), p. 89.

4. *Ibid.*

life of Jang Bahadur. But Jang Bahadur had already made a declaration effecting the dethronement of King Rajindra Bikram Shah and the enthronement of Surindra Bikram Shah as the rightful sovereign of Nepal on May 12, 1847.<sup>1</sup>

The position of the monarch was now clear. Stripped of all power and influence and being under complete control and constant dread of his Minister, the King suffered a position high but hollow. The masterful tutelage of the de facto ruler of Nepal had turned the King into his mute protege, a puppet, a mere name. "The King is a mere puppet in Jang Bahadur's time and that he has not even the shadow of power...with the politics and management of the country, he appears to have no concern, nor do I believe that he is even spoken to regarding it."<sup>2</sup> The throne was occupied by Surindra Bikram Shah who, though he had attained majority, was a mere puppet in the hands of Jang Bahadur. The monarch had lost his powers to such an extent that the State Council, which formerly advised the monarch, now advised the Prime Minister. The monarch, instead of commanding the Prime Minister, was now being commanded by the Prime Minister. About this situation the Governor-General conveyed the following views to the British Resident at Kathmandu :

"...The Prince (King Surindra Bikram Shah) is at this moment in the power of Minister Jang Bahadur ; that individual has obtained power by means most revolting to humanity ; in point of fact, it is the terror of his sanguinary proceedings which is the cause of the ex-Maharaja not daring to return to his own capital. Without doubt much is to be attributed to the Maharaja's own weakness of character."<sup>3</sup>

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1. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 94, also abstract translation of the representation made by 370 civil and military chiefs of Nepal to His Highness Maharaja Rajindra Bikram Shah dated May 12, 1847, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, June 26, 1847, p. 194 (National Archives of India) ; Substance of the reply given by the civil and military officers to the Lal Mohar of Maharaja Rajindra Bikram Shah dated June 17, 1847, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, July 31, 1847, 195.
  2. Resident to Government, May 27, 1857, *S.C.*, Sept. 25, 1857, 471, same to same, Aug. 7, 1856 ; *N.R.*, Vol. IX ; *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1863, 73.
  3. H. M. Elliot, Secretary, Government of India, to Resident, dated July 24, 1847, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, July 31, 1847, 204.

Jang Bahadur had no doubt managed to have on the throne a puppet king. But he did not consider his success complete unless the issue was settled with ex-King Rajindra Bikram Shah. In 1847, the ex-King returned to Nepal and relinquished his claim to the throne. The British Resident reported this event thus :

“He has publicly declared his acquiescence to the accession of his son, styling him the Maharaja and saying that when he has occasion to write agreeably to custom, he shall place his (Surindra’s) name above his own and use the Kesuree or yellow in lieu of the Lal<sup>1</sup> Mohar.”<sup>2</sup>

Jang Bahadur wanted to be publicly exonerated of the charges which, he thought, were being levelled against him by the ex-King during his exile in Benaras. So he exercised pressure on him and finally made him append the following statement to a letter to the Governor-General of India on August 15, 1847 :

“I (was) escorted here with comfort and respect...and I trust you will pay no attention to my former Khareetas as they are full of false statements. From the manner I was treated on the road to this I was so pleased that I presented the Minister (Jang Bahadur) with a Khillut.”<sup>3</sup>

The power and prestige of the Prime Minister increased to such an extent that the monarchy was paralysed. Every increase in the powers of the Prime Minister was in proportion to the diminution in the powers of the King. With a view to enhancing his prestige abroad, Prime Minister Jang Bahadur visited England<sup>4</sup> and other European countries during 1850-51. He visited these countries as an ambassador of the King of Nepal, but the pomp and glamour with which he went around

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1. Lal Mohar, i.e., Red Seal is usually borne by the lawful sovereign of Nepal and the ex-King used the Kesuree (yellow) Mohar if occasion arose.
  2. Maj. C. Thoresby, Resident, to H. M. Elliot, Secretary, Government of India, dated Aug. 9, 1847, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, Sept. 25, 1847, 170.
  3. Abstract translation of a Khareeta from the ex-Maharaja of Nepal to the retired Hon’ble the Governor-General, dated Aug. 15, 1847, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, Sept. 25, 1847, 173.
  4. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana* (Allahabad, 1909) pp. 113-152 ; Kamal Dixit : *Jang Bahadur ko Belait Yatra* (Kathmandu, 2014, V.S.), Nepali.

and the receptions which were accorded to him were in no way less than those befitting a royal dignitary. He returned to Kathmandu in February, 1851, and successfully dealt with a conspiracy against his life in which two of his own younger brothers were involved.<sup>1</sup> His position in the kingdom was further strengthened.

King Surindra was, throughout, a meek witness to the increasing hold of the Prime Minister on the body politic of Nepal. More galling to him was the strict control which the Prime Minister exercised on his personal life to ensure that he did not get involved in any conspiracy. In July, 1851, the King suddenly announced his intention to abdicate in favour of his four-years-old infant son without giving any reason except that he was overwhelmed with sorrow at the death of his eldest Queen. Obviously, this was a pretence. The real cause was that the King "had grown tired of playing the puppet and living under strict surveillance, like a habitual convict, with no liberty to go out except when attended by a strong guard".<sup>2</sup> These measures were imposed upon him by Jang Bahadur.

The weakness of the monarchy had become so obvious that Prime Minister Jang Bahadur had the boldness to make two attempts at capturing the throne.<sup>3</sup> Having failed in both, he began to think of other means to wield sovereign power over the whole or part of Nepal. And he surprised the whole kingdom by suddenly resigning on August 1, 1856, and recommended to the King that his first brother, Bam Bahadur, be appointed as Prime Minister for life. The King had no choice but to accept his resignation and act upon his recommendation. But the British Resident, Maj. Ramsay, reported Jang Bahadur's resignation to the Government of India thus :

"It may be possible that Jang Bahadur is indirectly aiming not at sovereign power, for that he has long had, but at the sovereign's position ; and that he hopes through the acts of

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1. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 155-167.
  2. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 162.
  3. Babu Ram Acharya : *Rana Shahi Ra Shadayantra*, Sharda (Kathmandu) 21, No. 5 (Chaitra, 2013 V.S.) I, (Nepali).



his brothers, and their numerous partisans to be elevated, at no distant period, to the Guddee.”<sup>1</sup>

Only five days after the resignation, on August 6, 1856, King Surindra Bikram had to confer on Jang Bahadur the title of Maharaja and the sovereignty of two provinces of Kaski and Lamjung which yielded a revenue of Rs. 10,000 per annum. This title and the property were made hereditary. According to the powers now vested in Jang Bahadur, he could exercise his sovereign authority<sup>2</sup> outside Kaski and Lamjung also, over the whole country between rivers Mahakali and Mechi and could “coerce the King should he mismanage the State affairs, internal or external”.<sup>3</sup>

Jang Bahadur resumed the Prime Ministership after the death of Bam Bahadur on May 25, 1857. Since then, the Maharajaship of Kaski and Lamjung continued to be vested in the same person who held the Prime Ministership.

The King had been forced to sign away his sovereign powers to Jang Bahadur who possessed the title of Maharaja and gave the impression of being more or less a parallel King. Apparently, Jang Bahadur said that the King had been pleased,<sup>4</sup> for various reasons, to confer these favours on him and that he accepted them with great reluctance under the King’s pressure. In reality, however, the King had no voice but to accept what was dictated to him by Jang Bahadur.

Resident Ramsay wrote : “...the occurrences of the past few days can hardly have taken place as they have been report-

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1. Maj. G. Ramsay to Edmonstone, Secretary, Government of India, Foreign, dated Aug. 1, 1856, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, Aug. 29, 1856, 51, para 3.
  2. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana* (Allahabad, 1909), p, 194. These sovereign powers included (i) the right of life and death, (ii) the power of appointing and dismissing all servants of Government, (iii) the power of declaring war, concluding peace and signing treaties with any foreign power including the British, the Tibetans and the Chinese, (iv) the power of inflicting punishment on offenders and (v) the power of making new laws and repealing old laws, civil, criminal and military.
  3. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 144-145.
  4. Maj. Ramsay, Resident, to Edmonstone, Secretary, Government of India, Foreign, dated Aug. 6, 1856, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, Aug. 29, 1856, 55, paras 3 and 5.

ed to me and I have detailed them ..but they have resulted from much previous consideration, consultation and arrangement ; the Maharaja, whose dread and whose dislike of Jang Bahadur and his party is about equally balanced, having acted throughout merely as he was bid.”<sup>1</sup>

In another demi-official letter to the Government of India giving an elaborate analysis of the relations between the King and Jang Bahadur, Resident Ramsay wrote :

“In my opinion, Jang Bahadur is too greedy, selfish, and ambitious to let matters rest as they now are. The King is a perfect nonentity, a mere tool in his hands, and being, moreover, almost an idiot would be incapable of conducting the Government of the country were he to attempt to do so. Jang Bahadur and his brothers, of whom he (King) is in great terror, and who often treat him with extreme rudeness, can persuade him to do anything they please, and can of course make it appear that all that is done emanates from himself—as in the case of the little kingdom and title to which Jang Bahadur has just helped himself whilst making the people believe that they have been forced upon him by the Maharaja, contrary to his own inclinations.”

“In the bazaars, the saying is that the King is ‘Bukree ka Maafik’ (like a goat, i.e., weak) and that Jang Bahadur gave him his choice, either to confer upon him the title of Maharaja and a small separate kingdom or to take up his tulwar (sword) and prevent his (Jang Bahadur’s) assuming the sovereignty of the whole country”.<sup>2</sup> Thus the King had transferred complete *de jure* sovereignty over a part of Nepal and partial *de jure* sovereignty over the whole of Nepal to the Prime Minister. Besides, the King himself came under the *de facto* control of the Prime Minister. In a country where the King was worshipped as God, the position had now totally changed. Jang Bahadur’s word was law and there was not a chief in the country who could challenge his authority. In fact his Government was a “perfect autocracy”.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ramsay to Edmonstone, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, N. 42, para. 16.
  2. A demi-official letter from Resident G. Ramsay to Edmonstone, Secretary, Government of India, Foreign, dated Aug. 7, 1856 ; *Foreign Secret Consultation*, Aug. 29, 1856, 55—57, 25—31.
  3. *Foreign Political*, A, Aug., 1864, 51.

The Prime Minister's control over the Royal family was also complete. The King did not have a shadow of actual power in his hands. He was kept under strict surveillance as a dignified prisoner, all his movements were watched and he was not even allowed to talk to his chiefs, except in the presence of the Prime Minister or his trusted followers.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Dalhousie predicted, as early as August 26, 1854, that Jang Bahadur "will infallibly try to subvert that dynasty (the Shah Dynasty) some day and it is the toss-up of a rupee whether he will be Raja or have his throat cut".<sup>2</sup> The prediction came true. In fact by securing an independent jagir, a high title and extensive powers, he brought the King under his de facto control.

### **King As Symbol Of Social And Political Life**

The legal basis of the curtailment of the King's powers having been secured on August 6, 1856, Prime Minister Jang Bahadur now proceeded with plans to reduce completely the King's social and political influence in the kingdom and to elevate, simultaneously, his own social position vis-a-vis the Royal family and the nobility.

The King's personal life was strictly controlled by the Rana Prime Minister. He placed the Royal household under the charge of his own selected agents who were asked to keep the Prime Minister informed of the King's daily routine and to organize his household in such a way that the King could do only what the Prime Minister wanted him to do. The movements of the King were restricted and regulated both inside and outside the Palace. He was always supervised, whether at a State ceremonial, or at sport, or on a mere stroll. Even members of the Royal family except the personal family of the King could not see him without the permission of the Prime Minister. The King thus became a "prisoner in the Palace".<sup>3</sup> All communications in the name of the King were censored by the Foreign Ministry of the Rana Government and only the absolutely harmless papers were permitted to reach the King.

1. *Foreign Political, A*, May, 1865, 181—182.

2. J. G. A. Baird : *Private Letters of the Marquis of Dalhousie* (Edinburgh and London, 1911) p. 316.

3. Erika Leuchtag : *With a King in the Clouds* (London, 1958), p. 116.

These restrictions owed their origin to the violent shake-up by which the Rana Prime Minister had acquired power. They were imposed for the first time on the ex-king Rajindra Bikram Shah after his return from exile in August, 1847, because he was suspected by Jang Bahadur of having conspired against his Government. Padma Jang Bahadur, the biographer and eldest son of Jang Bahadur, also refers to these restrictions in the following words :

“...he was at all hours attended by trustworthy officers whom Jang Bahadur had placed with him to watch his movements and send daily reports of his doings. He was further prevented from seeing his own sons for some time, though afterwards this restriction was withdrawn. In every other respect, however, he was treated in a way befitting his royal birth, care being taken that his liberty did not extend to creating any disturbance in the country.”<sup>1</sup>

The number and the severity of restrictions on the King's life increased to suit the exacting requirements of Rana despotism. References to these restrictions have been made by the British Resident, G. Ramsay, in 1863, while reporting on the King's and Jang Bahadur's protests against an article in the “Friend of India” in which Jang Bahadur was accused of having sought British assistance in usurping the throne of Nepal as a reward for his services in the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The Resident wrote :

“The King's position now is almost as constrained as it formerly was ; his message to myself must, therefore, be regarded as instigated by the Minister. His Highness, who is always attended by one of Maharaja Jang Bahadur's brothers, or by some other Sirdar in the latter's confidence, could not have been informed of the matter published in the ‘Friend of India’ without Jang Bahadur's permission. The only two copies of that paper received here for persons not belonging to the Residency are subscribed for by one of the Minister's own nephews, and by the Nepalese officer who is his official channel of communication with myself ; neither of these persons would dare to mention to the King any such circumstance ; in fact, they

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1. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 97, 98.

could not obtain access to his person, except in the presence of the Sirdar on Maharaja Jang Bahadur's part, who never leaves his side, except when he goes into the inner apartments of his palace to which none but the immediate members of his family have access."

"Not only are no newspapers received here for the King but all English letters to his address are delivered to Capt. Kurbeer Khuttree, and those addressed in the vernacular are given to the Durbar Munshi, in both cases for submission to the Minister ; and the Post Master informs me that they are always sent back again to the post office in the course of a day or two, unopened, to be returned to the senders. His Highness, in fact, can do nothing without Maharaja Jang Bahadur's consent, and the Maharanis are equally powerless as the King himself. A marked improvement has, however, taken place in Jang Bahadur's personal demeanour towards His Highness. My predecessor reported that the King is a coward in his Minister's presence, and I have seen Jang Bahadur very rude and overbearing with him ; but during the last few years, since their families became allied by marriage, Jang Bahadur has been outwardly most civil to him."<sup>1</sup>

The Ranas knew that imbecility of the Kings had been mainly responsible for the political turmoils in Nepal prior to their advent. Therefore, they perpetuated this imbecility by introducing the Crown Princes to a life of licentiousness and debauchery. They kept them absolutely ignorant of their duties as heads of State. The Royal Palace was provided with a Nach-ghar,<sup>2</sup> and the Kings were allowed to keep 500 maid-servants.<sup>3</sup> The King had, of course, the liberty to select the girls but their list remained with the Prime Minister. The foreigners who visited Nepal during the Rana Rule were given an impression that the King was

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1. Col. G. Ramsay to Col. H. M. Durand, Secretary, Government of India, Foreign, dated July 14, 1863, *Foreign Political*, A, Aug., 1863, 73. paras 10 and 11.
  2. The Nach-ghars were places of dancing for the enjoyment of the kings.
  3. Hassoldt Davies : *Nepal, Land of Mystery* (London, 1943), pp. 220—221.

an indulgent and useless person whose incompetence had compelled the Prime Minister to take up heavy responsibilities. A characteristic account of the King's life under the Ranas has been given by Hassoldt Davies. Though written near the end of the Rana rule, it was true of the whole Rana period. He wrote :

“The present puppet King lived in a palace hardly less sumptuous than his Prime Minister's. The fairest, the softest, the most artful girls of Nepal were chosen by the Ministerial Cabinet to keep him contented...the sweetest opium of Mongolia was brought to him in jars of jade and its use encouraged alike by the paramours and the family physician. He must be contented ; he must be a good little boy and keep his fingers out of the Nepalese jam-pot which should by right be his. To this, he had been enticed even before puberty with the dissipations which in his twenties left him vitiated of mind and body both.”<sup>1</sup>

A master stroke of craftsmanship with far-reaching political consequences was the scheme of Jang Bahadur to arrange marriages between the Rana family and the Royal family and Chautarias.<sup>2</sup> Personal life of the King and his family being controlled, the brides and bridegrooms for the Royal children could not but be the choice of the Prime Minister. These matrimonial alliances served the Rana interests in many ways :

- (i) They elevated the social status of the Ranas vis-a-vis the rest of the nobility and put them socially on a par with the ruling dynasty, the Shahs. The Ranas belonged to a rather low stock.
- (ii) They prevented the King from opposing the totalitarian designs of the Rana oligarchy and helped in patching up the old feud with the Chautarias.
- (iii) Rana daughters as Royal wives were the best source of intelligence for the Ranas.

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1. Hassoldt Davies : *Nepal, Land of Mystery* (London. 1943), pp. 220—221.

2. Jang Bahadur obtained from the King in 1848 a Lal Mohar, recognizing the Ranas as Rajputs, Surindra Vikram to Jang Bahadur, 1905, Vaish Sudi 13, Raj 2, *Baburam Collections*.

(iv) It put on the throne a lineal descendant of the Rana family.

On May 8, 1854, Jang Bahadur's eldest son, Jagat Jang, at the age of eight, was married to the eldest daughter of King Surindra Bikram Shah, a girl of six years. In the same summer Jang Bahadur himself married the youngest sister of Fateh Jang Chautaria. These two marriages are described by Padma Jang Bahadur as "strokes of policy higher than had yet been practised by Jang Bahadur...downright political treaties that achieved ends otherwise unattainable ; for no amount of political influence could have given that prestige to Jang Bahadur's position which was gained by this matrimonial alliance with the royalty itself. No amount of penitence and pardon could have terminated the family feud between the Rana and Chautaria parties so amicably as was done by means of this loveless marriage".<sup>1</sup>

The second daughter of King Surindra Bikram Shah was married to Jang Bahadur's second son, Jit Jang. But a marriage more important than the earlier ones from the political point of view was that of two daughters of Jang Bahadur to heir-apparent Troilokya Bir Bikram Shah on June 26, 1857.<sup>2</sup> The Lal Mohar issued to Jang Bahadur by King Surindra Bikram Shah authorizing this marriage stated :

"As a consequence of this marriage, my son will be permitted to eat in the company of your daughter" ; and that "the eldest son of your daughter will, according to the ancient traditions of the country, occupy the throne and rule over the country."<sup>3</sup> The first provision was intended to upgrade Jang Bahadur's caste to the level of the Royal caste so that the two could intermix socially. But the real purpose was to have on the throne a lineal descendant of the Rana family. In this

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1. P. J. B. Rana : *Life of Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana* (Allahabad, 1909) p. 171.
  2. Daniel Wright : *History of Nepal*, p. 68 ; Baburam Acharya : *Rana-shahi Ra Sharayantra* (Nepali), Sharda, Varsa 21, Anka 5. (Chaitra, 2013, V.S.) 1-8. Never before had the Royal House of Nepal entered into matrimonial relations with its subjects ; *F.P.A.*, Aug., 1864, 19.
  3. Translation of the Lal Mohar in Nepali from Guruji Hemraj's *Vamsavali* (Rashtriya Pustakalya, Kathmandu).

connection, the British Resident reported to his Government on the occasion of the illness of King Surindra Bikram :

“Of the Maharajadhiraj’s two sons, the elder (Troilokya Bikram) died in 1878, leaving a son (Prithvi Bir Bikram), born on August 8, 1875. The mother of this child was a daughter of Jang Bahadur. The child had, since his father’s death, been regarded as the heir-apparent and should he, in the event of his grandfather now dying, be placed on the throne, as there is every reason to believe that he would be, the wish so long cherished by the Rana family would be accomplished, of having on the throne a lineal descendant of their own. To this end Jang Bahadur intermarried his sons and daughters with the Royal family.”<sup>1</sup>

The wish of the Ranas was fulfilled when Prithvi Bir Bikram Shah, maternal grandson of Jang Bahadur, succeeded to the throne on May 19, 1881. The Rana Royal family ties continued to be strengthened even after when two of the four wives of King Prithvi Bir Bikram Shah happened to be the daughters of the Rana Prime Minister, Bir Shamsher (1885—1901). Jang Bahadur even effected a change in the order of succession to the throne by wringing from the King a decree that should the King’s two sons die without any issue, his daughters, who, significantly enough, were married to Jang Bahadur’s own sons, should ascend the throne. Disgusted, the King often thought of abdication and sometimes of committing suicide in preference to the “splendid misery of royalty and a prison”.<sup>2</sup>

The British Government was not unaware of Jang Bahadur’s ambitions and his schemes against the powerless King. The Resident was never allowed to meet the King except on two occasions, when either Jang Bahadur or his confidants were invariably present.<sup>3</sup> Yet the British did not intervene in the affairs of Nepal.

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1. C. E. R. Girdlestone, Resident to A. C. Lyall, Secretary, Government of India, Foreign, dated Apr. 30, 1881 ; *F.P.A.*, Feb., 1882, 285, para 1 ; *F.P.A.*, Feb., 1882, 290, paras 2 and 4.
  2. *F.P.A.*, Nov., 1864, 53 ; May, 1865, 181.
  3. The Court of Directors had instructed in 1850 that the Residents should, by direct intercourse with the Sovereigns of the States, establish personal influence over them. But the peculiar position of the Resident in Nepal made this instruction wholly impossible to be carried out, *P.C.*, Dec. 20, 1850, 230.



By these and other measures the Ranas sought completely to degrade the position of the King. The political impotence of the King, institutionalized during Jang Bahadur's rule, continued to be so throughout the Rana period. The King had accepted Ranudip, brother of Jang Bahadur, as the Prime Minister to succeed Jang Bahadur following the law of succession fixed by Jang Bahadur himself. After Bir Shamsheer and Dev Shamsheer, the rightful successors to the office of the Premier, was Chandra Shamsheer. As such the King's approval was duly secured but, in fact, the King had only to confirm the *fait accompli* and approve what was presented to him for approval by the winning party. In one particular instance, the King was a minor, as when Bir captured power in 1885 and the question of his willingness and conscious approval did not arise. But all these had tended to relegate the King to a position of a figurehead, also in fact, as was envisaged by the Sanad of 1846. Suba Devi Prasad, an eye-witness to the transaction Chandra made, says that he had some difficulty in securing the palm-prints of the King as the latter had raised an objection to the illegality involved. Suba says that the King's palm-prints were forcibly obtained.

In 1910, the then King Prithvi Bir Bikram Shah had awakened to a sense of duty which demanded that the almost unlimited powers of his Prime Minister be curtailed. A relation of his, Raja Dambar Bahadur Shah, had further encouraged him to pursue the issue of curtailing the prerogatives of the Rana family with a view to devolving the same to the people. The move was aimed to assume the magnitude and gravity of a Royal conspiracy and had a very bright prospect, but for the disclosure made by one Guru Durganath who out of sheer cowardice made a confession of guilt to Chandra Shamsheer. The parties involved were ruthlessly crushed, and the very last vestige of resistance removed when the following year the King met an accidental death.

In 1912, King Prithvi Bir Bikram Shah died leaving his infant son on the throne and this again removed another obstacle from his path. It so happened that immediately after the King's attaining maturity, they indulged in secret manoeuvres to effect restoration of their previous powerful position. Chandra had to guard himself against a repetition of the

move by his contemporary King. For this he had deliberately managed to divert the King's mind to channels which surely spoiled him and made him impervious to noble sentiments. Everyone knew to what a sorry plight the King's life was being reduced. From the very boyhood he was taught to inculcate debauchery, and lead a life of corruption and vice. He was engaged in vicious activities, and the companions provided were wine and women. Chandra Shamsheer was the man who thought up this device to sterilize the Royal puppet, and he was successful. With both the father and the son he had no occasion to be annoyed. Many are of the opinion that the King died at a very young age, as a result of excessive drinking and prostitution.<sup>1</sup>

Ambitious Rana Chandra, to secure the throne for his family, had his third son married to the eldest daughter of the King who had no legitimate issue and who with his gradually failing health had kept everybody agitated on the question of succession. Chandra knew that the Nepalese law of succession completely excluded the possibility of a daughter ascending the throne, and there was a distant cousin of the King who legally stood as the heir-apparent. But he wanted to exploit the void created by the absence of a son to the King in furtherance of his desire to get the kingship devolved upon his son through his Royal wife. He carried on protracted negotiations on the subject in order to convince the courtiers of the justifiability of the step to be taken. But just then the Queen gave birth to a son, a legal heir to the throne, and this put the matter to rest.

Thus the Rana Royal family had the reins of the Government. The King only reigned, he did not govern. The sovereign's personal name was a symbol of family remembrance as well as public need and as a promoter of unity in diversity. The officiating British Resident, reporting the death of Jang Bahadur and reflecting on the Royal family's prospects of a return to power, had already told his Government in his letter dated March 1, 1877 :

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1. The Ranas were indifferent to the health of the King (e.g., at the time of Surindra Bikram's death) so that their own descendants could occupy the throne as soon as possible, *F.P.A.*, Feb., 1882, 290, paras 2 and 4.

“All accounts agree in representing the Royal family as completely effaced in respect of ability or opportunity for seizing the reins of the Government.”<sup>1</sup>

### Formal Functions Of The King And His Status

Throughout the Rana period, the King, however, continued to perform some functions as the traditional head of State, the symbol of its unity and the centre of emotional loyalty of the people. These formal functions were as follows :

(i) He held Durbar on important occasions to consult civil and military officers or to make proclamations and announcements. For instance, a Durbar was held at the Royal Palace to confer the title of Maharaja and the sovereignty of Kaski and Lamjung on Jang Bahadur to be enjoyed by him and his direct descendants. Sometimes a mock Durbar<sup>2</sup> was also arranged. Its purpose was to enable the British Resident or his representative to see that the King was really the head of the Government.

(ii) He signed important State papers and legislative enactments, i.e., the ains, and issued legal instruments like Panjapatra<sup>3</sup>, Lal Mohar, etc.<sup>4</sup> So far as the importance of his seal is concerned, the papers without the seal of the Maharajadhiraj were regarded as documents of very little value by the British Government. Maharaja Bir Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana, Prime Minister of Nepal, passed an order that,

“The British Government wishes to have Nepalese recruits for British Regiments. The British Government is our friend. Therefore, we issue this notification that, if you wish to enlist in British Regiments, we give you full permission to go and

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1. F. Henvey, Officiating Resident, to T. H. Thornton, Officiating Secretary, Government of India, Foreign, dated Mar. 1, 1877, *F.P.A.*, May, 1877, 42, Para 8.
  2. Letter from Maj. G. Ramsay, Resident, to G. F. Edmonstone, Secretary, Government of India, Foreign, dated Aug. 6, 1856, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, Aug. 29, 1856, 55, Paras. 1—8.
  3. An order of communication issued under the palm-print of the King for the appointment orders of the Rana Prime Ministers.
  4. Quoted in a letter from C. Girdlestone, Resident, to A. C. Lvall, Foreign Secretary, Government of India, dated May 5, 1879, *F.P.A.*, Sept., 1879, 386—90. K.W. No. 1.

take British service. There is no prohibition whatever, we shall not be displeased with those who go to enlist."

"Except those who have enlisted in our regiments and companies, all the inhabitants and subjects of Nepal who wish to go and enlist in British Regiments have full permission to do so. There is no prohibition whatever."<sup>1</sup>

These documents were regarded as of little value without the seal of the Maharajadhiraj, and the British Government clearly declared that,

"The value of a State paper in Nepal was largely dependent upon the Red Seal of the Maharajadhiraj."

(iii) He, as head of State, received foreign envoys and, sometimes, directly corresponded with foreign Governments.<sup>2</sup> The British Government, on some occasions, insisted on dealing with him alone as the head of the State, particularly during the period of Maharajaship of Jang and the Prime Ministership of Bam Bahadur. From time to time the King of Nepal personally informed the Viceroy and Governor-General of India about the affairs of Nepal and wrote Khareetas directly in his own name. The British Resident has summed up the formal position of the King in the following words :

"...the King is a mere puppet in Jang Bahadur's hands, and that he has not even the shadow of power, the empty title of sovereign is still accorded to him, and he takes his place as such at the various ceremonies and festivals at which from long custom the King of the country is expected to be present. He is there treated with outward respect, but with the politics and management of the country he appears to have no concern, nor do I believe that he is ever spoken to regarding it."<sup>3</sup>

### **His Relations With The Government In India**

In theory, at least, throughout the Rana period the Shah ruler was the ultimate political authority in the country. The King had the final voice (Hukum) in all matters of the Govern-

1. F.S.E., Sept., 1888, 4-13.

2. Letter from the King to the Governor-General of India, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, Dec. 29, 1854, 32.

3. Maj. G. Ramsay, Resident, to G. F., Edmonstone, Secretary, Government of India, Foreign, dated June 30, 1857, *Foreign Secret Consultation*, Sept. 25, 1857, 471.

ment. He was the traditional head of State, the symbol of its unity and the centre of emotional loyalty of the people. He, as head of State, received foreign envoys and sometimes directly corresponded with the British Government. On the other hand, the British Government on some occasions insisted on dealing with him alone as the head of the State. From time to time, the King of Nepal personally informed the Viceroy and Governor-General of India about the affairs of Nepal and wrote Khareetas directly in his own name.

On March 3, 1877, His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India wrote to His Highness the Maharaja of Nepal<sup>1</sup> and expressed his sincere condolence on the loss by death of the distinguished Minister, Sir Jang Bahadur, G.C.B. He also conveyed the regret and sympathy of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen and Empress and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

The Maharaja of Nepal in reply wrote<sup>2</sup> that in recognition of the merits of the late Maharaja and for improving our friendly relations with the Government, he had granted a Sanad to the effect that the title of Maharaja and the Prime Ministership of Nepal should be continued in his family in the order of succession and has conferred on Gen. Ranudip Singh Bahadur Rana, K.C.S.I. the title of Maharaja and the high office of Prime Minister of Nepal. On January 4, 1879, the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal offered condolence on the untimely death of Her Royal Highness Princess Alice.<sup>3</sup>

In 1885, a great revolution occurred in Nepal. Sir Ranudip Singh was put to death and Sir Bir Shamsher was appointed Maharaja and Prime Minister of Nepal. The King of Nepal informed the Viceroy about all these fateful events by a letter on November 23, 1885.<sup>4</sup> In reply the Viceroy wrote that,

“Your Highness is very young, and cannot be held personally responsible for this crime. Moreover, the British Government has always abstained and desires still to abstain, if possible, from interference in the internal affairs of Nepal...I have

1. *F.P.A.*, May, 1877, 43 ; Khareeta dated Fort William, Mar. 3, 1877.

2. *F.P.A.*, May, 1877, 42. Yaddasht from His Highness the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal.

3. *F.P.E.*, Jan., 1879, 273.

4. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1886, 49—87.

after earnest consideration decided to answer Your Highness' letter and not to treat the Nepal Durbar as wholly unworthy of countenance. But I protest in the name of Her Majesty the Queen against a deed such as that which has now brought discredit upon your State, and I warn Your Highness that unless your Minister and those about him so conduct themselves hereafter as to regain the respect of the British Government, which they have forfeited, it will be impossible for me, or those who come after me, to regard the Nepalese Durbar with the feelings of friendship and good-will by which all succeeding Viceroys of India have hitherto been influenced. I earnestly trust that Your Highness and your advisers will lay my words to heart and that for the future the Government of your State may be conducted in accordance with the dictates of civilization and humanity. If, on the contrary, this warning is disregarded Your Highness must not hold me responsible for any consequences which may ensue."<sup>1</sup> In the Yaddasht of November 23, the Maharajadhiraj accepted the responsibility for what had occurred and stated that it was in consequence of an intention on the part of Sir Ranudip Singh and other Sirdars to restore Jagat Jang to power. The paper from the King to the Viceroy went on to announce that Bir Shamsheer, the eldest of the brothers, had been appointed Maharaja and Prime Minister, and concluded with a hope that the friendly relations of Nepal with the British Government would continue and be even increased.<sup>2</sup>

A Khareeta and presents were offered to Lord Curzon on his appointment as Viceroy and Governor-General of India in place of Lord Elgin by the Maharaja of Nepal.<sup>3</sup> Maharaja Bir Shamsheer, Minister of Nepal, was sent to Calcutta on a complimentary mission from His Highness the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal.<sup>4</sup>

As already mentioned, Maharaja Bir Shamsheer Jang, Prime Minister of Nepal, had died a natural death on March 5, 1901, and in his place Gen. Dev Shamsheer was appointed Prime Minister. All this information was conveyed by the King of

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1. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1886, 49—87.
  2. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1886, 63.
  3. *F.E.A.*, May, 1899, 52—67.
  4. *F.E.A.*, Apr., 1901, 71 Encl. 1.

Nepal to the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, by a Khareeta.<sup>1</sup> But Dev Shamsheer could not rule for long. He had to abdicate and Gen. Chandra Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana was appointed Prime Minister and Marshal with the title of Maharaja. A Khareeta was presented by the Maharaja of Nepal to the Viceroy, informing of the said change.<sup>2</sup>

Relations of the King were maintained with the British Government even on a personal basis. The marriage of the King's daughter was arranged with the son of Maharaja Chandra Shamsheer Jang Bahadur and the happy news was conveyed by the King to the Viceroy by a Khareeta.<sup>3</sup> Congratulations of the His Highness of Nepal were sent on the occasion of the Coronation of His Majesty the King Emperor George V which took place on June 22, 1911.<sup>4</sup>

On the occasion of Lord Curzon's Delhi Durbar of 1903, His Excellency the Viceroy invited the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal to Delhi as the guest of the Government of India, although it was known at the time that His Highness would not accept the invitation for himself. His Highness while regretting his inability to attend personally accepted the invitation for the Prime Minister whom he described as his other self.<sup>5</sup>

Thus in spite of the omnipotent character of the Rana Prime Minister, the King exercised his powers. There is a mention in the British records<sup>6</sup> that both the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal and the British Government wished to have personal relations but the Rana Prime Minister of Nepal could easily be regarded as the de facto sovereign while the King was only a de jure head.

Hassoldt Davies describes the position thus :

“You know, of course, that there is the King of Nepal as well as the Maharaja, and that the Maharaja is properly the Prime Minister. The King whose real title is Maharajadhiraj

1. *F.S.I.*, Aug., 1901, 238 (Encl. 1).

2. *F.E.B.*, June, 1904, 9 (Encl.).

3. *F.I.B.*, July, 1911, 235—237.

4. *F.S.I.*, Feb., 1912, 213—216.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Foreign Secret Consultation*, Dec., 29, 1854, 32.

is as much a puppet as the King of Italy, while the Prime Minister or Maharaja has almost autocratic powers.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the Rana family had the reins of the Government. The King only reigned but did not govern. The Sovereign's name was a symbol of family remembrance as well as public need and as a promoter of unity in diversity.

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1. Hassoldt Davies : *Nepal, Land of Mystery* (London, 1943), 201.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEFENCE AND FOREIGN POLICY OF NEPAL**

On British India's northern frontier Nepal had always been an important factor to reckon with. This was due, mainly, to her strategic location, her foreign policy and her armed strength.

The British policy in India's northern frontier regions had two main aspects—political and economic. Politically, this policy aimed at preservation of peace in this region by sustaining, along the southern slopes of the Himalayas, a chain of friendly “influenced States”, whose internal autonomy was, by and large, guaranteed but whose external relations were subordinated to the Imperial interests of the British. These States were the outworks of the British Indian Empire, needed not so much for its defence as for serving the purpose of an “outer or advanced strategical frontier”. Commercially, the British policy consisted in using the Himalayan States as channels of trade with the trans-Himalayan areas. Thus the British policy towards Nepal may be viewed as a vital part of their frontier policy in both these aspects.

The conquest of Nepal by the militant Gurkhas and the policy of jealous exclusion of foreigners from Nepal seriously affected the East India Company's political and economic interests in the Himalayan region. Politically, the incessant wars and conquests carried on by Nepal spread alarm and disquiet in the border region. For the British, a blazing frontier was politically perilous, and the dislocation of trade caused thereby proved economically ruinous. Security of the frontier and the safeguarding of the commercial interests in the Himalayan areas hence weighed heavily with

the Company and necessitated the establishing of definite political relations with the Gurkha rulers of Nepal.<sup>1</sup> Broadly speaking, the emergence of a powerful and aggressive Nepal unsettled the political balance in the area, posing a constant threat to the security of her weaker neighbours, making them restless and uneasy. The northern frontier became more alive and sensitive with the coming of Nepal under the Gurkhas. Hence Nepal became the focal point of the British interest. From the British point of view, restraint and isolation of Nepal were considered imperative for peace on the northern frontier and this was the kingpin of the British frontier policy. Nepal chafed under the yoke of this policy. The events strengthened the British conviction that restraint on Nepal was essential for the preservation of peace in the area around her. China was little inclined either to back up Nepal against the British or to be diplomatically pitted against them by the Nepalese. The British avoided being too high-handed with Nepal for fear of Chinese intervention on her behalf. China, too, avoided confrontation for fear of giving the British an excuse to intervene in Tibet on behalf of Nepal. As matters stood then, Tibet was regarded as an imperial outpost of the Chinese Empire and Nepal as that of the British Empire in India.<sup>2</sup> During the last quarter of the 19th century even the Chinese considered Nepal away from their sphere of influence and "subject to the British". Both China and British India were eager to avoid any direct contact of their respective empires, for in such a contact lay the possibility of a boisterous impact.<sup>3</sup> Nepal, as a buffer between British India and Tibet, would have suited British interests. The rugged nature of the country, its distances from British headquarters, lack of an easy route and an extre-

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1. S.C., June, 30, 1802, 11 ; Campbell's Report on Political Relations with Nepal, July 24, 1837 ; P.C., Sept. 18, 1837, 69—72.
  2. *India Office copies of Political Proceedings*, Vol. II. Aug. 3, 1835, 6 ; See *Hamilton*, n, 2, 249 ; Lamb : *Britain and Chinese Central Asia* (London, 1968), p. 22.
  3. The Chinese Emperor wrote to the Russians in 1874 that "Nepal is subject to the British Barbarians. Were we to propose that it should place its resources at our disposal for an attack upon India, it would be certain to decline giving offence to the English and the only result would be to open the door to the demands and reclamations ; *F.P.S.C.*, Sept., 1876, 129—33 K.W.

mely nationalistic and martial character of the Gurkhas would have rendered the management of Nepal for the Britishers an extremely difficult task. The British wanted peace on its borders which would surely have been disturbed by an unwarranted annexation. On the other side, "Friend by necessity we may choose to be, but the status of a slave we shall never own" was the watchword of the Nepalese statesmen and military leaders in the grave hours of national emergency and crisis. History shows that in the midst of a crisis or an emergency the Nepalese stood as a solid block in defence of their freedom and frontiers.

The political status of Nepal is somewhat difficult to define. It may be said to stand intermediate between the status of Afghanistan and that of the native States of India. The point of resemblance to Afghanistan is the complete freedom which Nepal enjoyed in the management of its internal affairs, while in both countries foreign relations were controlled by the Indian Government. The analogy to the native States is that "by treaty, Nepal is obliged to receive a British Resident at Kathmandu, and cannot take Europeans into service without the sanction of the Indian Government".<sup>1</sup> This official statement of the British Government not only overlooked the actual facts but also certain legal issues.

The British relations with Nepal were regulated by the Treaty of Sagauli, which Nepal had to sign after the war of 1814—16. The treaty was, however, a contract between two sovereign States. This is indicated by the manner the treaty was concluded. Several clauses of the original terms put forward by the British had to be modified because they were unacceptable to the Nepalese. The terms of the treaty also do not give an impression that Nepal had ceased to be an independent State after its conclusion. Neither in this treaty nor in any subsequent one did Nepal accept direct or indirect control of the British over her internal or external affairs.

Articles 7 and 8 of the treaty have, however, been generally misunderstood. Article 8 stipulated that, "In order to secure and improve the relations of amity and peace hereby established between the two States, it is agreed that an accredited

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1. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, Vol. XIX, p. 38.

Minister from each shall reside at the court of each other.” Historians are of the opinion that this article was much resented by the Nepalese Durbar. Since the times of Prithvi Narayan Shah, the Nepalese had refrained from closer connections with the British. They had a genuine apprehension that the Resident was an advance guard of a subsidiary force, ultimately leading to the annexation of their country.<sup>1</sup> This clause, relating to the Resident, was made the sine qua non of peace. By the express orders of Lord Hastings, Gen. Ochterlony told the Nepalese negotiator “that all other points of the treaty were more or less open to subsequent discussion but that they must take Resident or war”<sup>2</sup>. More than anything else, this entitled the treaty to be called a diktat. Obviously it was a mutual obligation and did not impair the independent status of Nepal. Use of the term “Minister” instead of “Ambassador” also did not imply a lower status of Nepal, because differences in the ranks of the envoys are related to the persons accredited and not to the States.<sup>3</sup> When Jang Bahadur went to England, he was received as a Minister. In 1893, the question was again raised in connection with a visit of Sir Bir Shamsher to Calcutta. It was suggested that the term “Envoy” would be more suitable. In 1896, when Bir Shamsher contemplated a visit to England, he was again known by this style. The question again came up in connection with the Delhi Durbar and the Prime Minister attended as Prime Minister and representative of His Highness the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal. But when, in 1823, the status of the British Resident was raised to that of an “Envoy Extraordinary”,<sup>4</sup> this was not shown due recognition. After all, in 1802, when there was not the least doubt about the sovereign status of Nepal, the first British representative at the court of Kathmandu, Capt. W. D. Knox, was also designated as Resident.

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1. Intercepted Letter of Gen. Amar Singh Thapa to his son ; T. H. Prinsep : *History of the Political and Military Transactions in India during the Administration of the Marquis of Hastings, 1813—1823.* (London, 1825), Ch. I, Vol. I, Ap. B, pp. 462—72.
  2. *Principal Transactions*, Para 52.
  3. L. Oppenheim : *International Law—A Treatise*, 1955, n. 3, Vol. I, pp. 777—778.
  4. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1894, 393—394.

The position and functions of the British Representative at Kathmandu were different from those of the Residents in the Indian States. In the latter case, the Residents were not merely advisers of the rulers, they also had a decisive influence in the affairs of the State. In Nepal, the functions of the Resident were those of an ambassador accredited to an independent State. B. H. Hodgson remarked that "Advice can readily amount to a command, to many Durbars of the plains, by the Resident. But this State (Nepal) exhibits no single link upon our power, and the records of the Residency afford an abundant testimony that it has always felt and arrested its independence with more than sufficient energy, in communication with the Resident, of that power".<sup>1</sup> Another British Resident of Nepal, J. C. Erskine, observed about the peculiar position of the British representative in Nepal, "who is never called upon to interfere in the slightest degree with the internal administration of the country..."<sup>2</sup> The political Secretary to the Government of India also expressed the same opinion in December, 1858 :

"The Resident in Nepal is in a very different position from that of Residents in other native States. He has none of the duties of control and supervision which, in one way or another, belong to the latter ; he is an agent between Governments which, however unequal in power, are equal in independence, even though one of them be...a semi-savage court."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the position and functions of the Resident were only to look after the British interests in Nepal and to act as a channel of communication between the two Governments.

Article 7 of the Treaty of Sagauli stipulated that, "the Raja of Nepal hereby engages never to take or retain in his service any British subject, nor the subject of any European and American State without the consent of the British Government." It was clearly a restriction on the external freedom of Nepal. Such conditions were generally imposed by the East India Company on the protected Indian States as a means of excluding the French and other imperial powers from the British sphere of

1. P.C., Jan. 23, 1835, 51.

2. P.C., Dec. 20, 1850, 230.

3. S.C., Feb. 25, 1859, 26.

influence. There is no doubt that the British always regarded Nepal within the framework of their Imperial interests and never relished the idea of a Nepal having diplomatic truck with other European States. In 1862, Jang Bahadur proposed to visit "the Pasha of Egypt and the Emperors of France and Austria, not under the auspices or through the introduction of the English Government, but as the Prime Minister and ambassador from a foreign independent State".<sup>1</sup> The Indian Government though unable to object to the proposal on legal grounds was highly averse to it. The Political Secretary informed the Resident that,

"Still less can the Governor-General approve of the Maharaja entering into relations with foreign courts as an ambassador of Nepal. Complications might arise from such novel relations which might endanger the good understanding which now exists between the two Governments, and could not, in the smallest degree, profit the latter."<sup>2</sup>

It is a most critical question whether Article 7 of the Treaty of Sagauli impaired Nepalese rights to conduct her foreign relations freely, and whether, having accepted this article, Nepal was reduced to the status of a protected State. The history of the Indo-Nepalese relations shows that Nepal was not a protectorate of the British. It is true that such conditions, as given in this article, were imposed on the protected Indian States, but they were actually under the British protection either because of some other express agreement or because they delegated their power to conduct foreign relations to the British. No such agreement was signed in 1816 or subsequently with Nepal. Even the paramountcy of the British as the successor of the Mughal Emperors did not extend to Nepal, because she was never under the Mughals. In 1839, Nepal had agreed not to have any contacts with Indian States under the British protection. Article 2 of the Treaty of 1839 states :

"The Nepal Government engages to have no further intercourse with the dependent allies of the Company beyond the Ganges, who are by treaty precluded from such intercourse, except with the Resident's sanction and under his passports."<sup>3</sup>

1. *F.P.A.*, May, 1862, 23.

2. *F.P.A.*, May, 1862, 24.

3. C. U. Aitchison : *Treaties, Engagements and Sarads*, n. 22, Ch. I, Art. 2.

The East India Company had, however, an absolute right to control the foreign relations of these States, and Nepal could legally have approached them only through the Indian Government.<sup>1</sup> J. Westlake has clearly stated that the foreign States can approach a protectorate only through the protecting power and "any contrary attempt at such a treaty or intercourse is regarded by the protecting State as a hostile act against it on the part of the outside State...".<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the British relations with Nepal were maintained through the Government of India, and not directly by London, did not make any difference in the political status of Nepal. A sovereign State is free to conduct its foreign relations in any manner and through any media it likes. Even in Nepal, the British could not have approached the Maharajadhiraj directly. The only means of communication was the Prime Minister or his agent. This practice was never relaxed despite express wishes of the British Government. As for the right of the Nepalese sovereign to correspond directly with the British monarch, it was never challenged. In May, 1853, the Maharaja wanted to acknowledge directly some presents from Queen Victoria. But the Resident objected that it was not customary for the Queen to correspond directly with Indian States. But he was informed by the Governor-General that "the Maharaja was at perfect liberty to write a complimentary letter to the Queen"<sup>3</sup>.

The Nepalese never allowed the British to interfere in their domestic affairs and the British Government itself regarded Nepal as an independent State.<sup>4</sup> The Assistant Resident, A. Campbell, observed in his report that,

"Her (Nepal's) armies have not been subsidized by us, nor have we borrowed her money, nor had counter claims upon her. To assist her against foreign aggression we are not bound, nor are we pledged to that misery, bringing of all the measures, the guaranteeing of a throne to a certain prince against the will or advantage of the mass of the people. Her chiefs are not dependent on us, nor is she bound to ask or give counsel and

1. J. Westlake : *International Law* (Cambridge, 1910), Part I, p. 22.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *P.C.*, May, 20, 1853, 39.

4. H.T. Prinsep : *Principal Transactions*, Para. 55.

advice on any subject whatever. In short, Nepal is a free, independent State, not according to the spirit of the treaties, which in India had only an existence in name, but she is virtually and morally independent of British Power.”<sup>1</sup>

In May, 1842, Lord Ellenborough rebuked the Resident, B. H. Hodgson, for having evinced “a want of personal consideration for a friendly and independent sovereign, the Maharaja of Nepal”.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Lord Dalhousie called Nepal “a foreign State, which is entirely independent of us, neither tributary to us nor subordinate in any way”.<sup>3</sup> The Political Secretary to the Government of India also remarked in December, 1859, that “Nepal is an independent country under no subordination to the British paramount power in India”.<sup>4</sup>

In the external affairs also, Nepal was not under British subordination and followed her independent foreign policy. She had independent relations with the courts of Peking, Lhasa and Lahore. Similarly, with Burma, Herat and Afghanistan, Nepal maintained its contacts without direct or indirect consent of the British Government. It fought a war with the Tibetans (1854—56) and concluded a treaty of peace without any approval of the Indian Government. Nepal did not have any diplomatic relations with European and American States because she never felt any such need. The Prime Minister was allowed to accept from China, without demur from the British, the honour of “Thong Lin Permna ko kang wang syan”. The principle of native States was not fully applicable to Nepal in respect of foreign relations, military matters, and the position of political officers. With the rise of Jang Bahadur, the Nepalese foreign policy had been so much centred on the winning over of British friendship that Nepal did not like to cultivate such relations, particularly when it knew that the English would never appreciate such a move. Sardar K. M. Panikkar also contended that,

“The (British) policy of assuming sovereign rights over the States and the conversion of their rulers from semi-independent

1. H. T. Prinsep : *Principal Transactions*, Para 55.

2. S.C., Aug. 3, 1842, 67.

3. Lord Dalhousie's Minute, dated Apr. 9, 1851, S.C., Apr., 25, 1851, 11.

4. S.C., Feb., 1859, 26.



allies to feudatories definitely failed in the case of Nepal and Afghanistan . ever since the 1816 Treaty of Sagauli. A Resident lived at Kathmandu, but the sagacious policy of the Prime Ministerial family steadily resisted the attempted inclusion of Nepal in the British Political System, so that now she has been recognized as a completely independent sovereign State and the Resident has been transformed into the British envoy at the court of His Majesty the King of Nepal.”<sup>1</sup> He also maintained that Nepal had the right to conduct her foreign relations.

“The mere delegation of authority would not, however, mark the disappearance of international sovereignty when the right was not expressly abandoned, as in the case of Nepal and Afghanistan. The right of Nepal was never questioned.”<sup>2</sup>

The above evidence clearly shows Nepal was not under British protection. The chief characteristic of a protectorate is that “it shall enter into no treaty or have any diplomatic intercourse with the outside States without the consent of the (protecting State), expressed or inferred”.<sup>3</sup> Such kind of a State emerges when a weak State “has placed itself under the protection of another power on definite conditions or has been so placed under an arrangement between powers interests of which are involved in the disposition of its territory”.<sup>4</sup> A protectorate, however, must not be confused with simple protection, which one State may bind itself to give to another without impairing the latter’s capacity for action in foreign affairs.<sup>5</sup> However, if a State “permanently hands over the control of its foreign relations or any material part thereof to another State, it will then cease to be fully sovereign”, and will be termed as a protectorate<sup>6</sup>.

The international status of Nepal after the Treaty of Sagauli was, therefore, peculiar and did not fit in in any of the generally recognized categories of the Western International

1. K. M. Panikkar, *Relations of the Indian States with the Government of India* (London, 1927), p. 40.

2. *Ibid.*

3. J. Westlake : *International Law* (Cambridge, 1910) n. 14, p. 22.

4. W. E. Hall : *A Treatise on International Law* (1924) n. 3, p. 29.

5. J. Westlake : *International Law* (Cambridge, 1910) Part I, n. 14, p. 23,

6. Pitt Cobbet : *Leading Cases on International Law* (1922), Vol. I, p. 60.

Law. She was not a fully sovereign State. Article 7 of the treaty was a clear restriction on her freedom of action. Even in practice, though Nepal had the right to conduct her foreign relations independently, she never had diplomatic relations with European and American States. At the same time, Nepal could also not be called a "protectorate" or a "vassal" in the recognized sense of the term. It was a peculiar situation which had been created by the [political] compulsions of that time. The case of Nepal was that of a "half-way" between "protectorate" and "absolute sovereignty".

During the rule of the later Ranas (from 1885 onwards) the position of Nepal underwent a further change. Legally, no alteration was made; rather the formal independent status of Nepal was always recognized. But, in actual practice, the Shamshers had no foreign policy of their own. They simply followed the line of foreign policy as suggested by the British Government of India. Opinions and suggestions of the British Government and its Residents were accepted as friendly advice. The economy of Nepal also depended, largely, on the British. After the First World War, she even received a subsidy—an unconditional present of Rs. 10,00,000 annually. The Gurkhas served in the Indian Army in constantly increasing numbers and received their pay and pension from the British. Rana Chandra Shamsher expressed his feelings in the following words in an interview with His Excellency the Viceroy Lord Curzon, at Delhi :

"He regarded the interests of Nepal as entirely bound up with the British Government in India, and that his Government would be prepared to endorse and actively support any action which the British Government might consider necessary for the protection of those joint interests."<sup>1</sup>

Such a state of affairs naturally led the nationalists in Nepal to think that the Ranas were mere stooges of the British Imperialists and Nepal was for all practical purposes within the outer framework of the British Empire in Asia.<sup>2</sup>

In a note the Political Secretary asserted : "Apart from wider considerations of Asian politics, Nepal is unfortunately

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1. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1903, 79.

2. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1903, 1—88.

outside those defences and that organization. With Russia in Tibet, it may become a second Afghanistan, whereas with British influence paramount at Lhasa, there is no need to interfere with the independence of Nepal as it exists at present."<sup>1</sup> The description of Nepal was as independent State.

As to the treaties it is true that the Treaty of 1815 prohibited the employment of foreigners in Nepal without the consent of the Government of India and provided that disputes between Nepal and Sikkim should be submitted to the arbitration of the Government of India. But the form of the treaty recognized the independence of Nepal. The treaty did not profess to affect the diplomatic relations of Nepal with the foreign countries like China and Tibet. It will be observed, moreover, that Article VIII provided that "accredited Ministers from each (of the States) shall reside at the court of the other". Any representative Nepal sends to India is thus on the same footing as the Resident at Kathmandu.

The Treaty of 1855 was a regular extradition treaty between the two Governments and concluded with the provision that the treaty "shall continue in force until either one or the other of the high contracting parties shall give notice to the other of its wish to terminate it". Here the two Governments were avowedly on a similar ground.

Turning from treaties to the de facto relations existing with Nepal, it cannot be claimed, said the Political Secretary, that these are such as to be inconsistent with the independence of Nepal. The fact remains that "we did not intervene when Nepal, without any reference whatsoever to us, went to war and concluded peace with Tibet, and were Nepal to insist on attacking Tibet, to claim suzerainty, we have no right to prevent her. No doubt it would be our duty to interfere, but our intervention would not be based on any treaty, right or engagement which Nepal was bound to respect but on the duty of the Government of India to protect itself against the consequences of a disturbance on the frontiers of the Empire. As regards our relations with Nepal in the matter of arms, our action is based on the obligations under which Nepal is placed by the assistance she is glad to seek from us. No doubt, the

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1. *F.S.E.*, Oct., 1903, 129.

dependence of Nepal upon us in this and other respects will end by her willingly accepting conditions which it will be only natural for us to impose as the price of our material aid and moral support".<sup>1</sup>

On May 15, 1894, the Viceroy, writing to the Maharajadhiraj, used the following language :

"I desire earnestly to impress upon Your Highness that my principal aim is to employ every means in my power which might suggest or foster the idea that my Government ever have entertained or will entertain the intention or design of interfering with Nepalese autonomy."<sup>2</sup> Again in 1896, Lord Salisbury was not prepared to take the view that the claims of Nepal to independence could be ignored.<sup>3</sup>

In his Despatch No. 5 (Secret) dated February 27, 1903, the Secretary of State, in discussing the attitude of Nepal as affecting complications between Great Britain and Tibet, spoke of that State as "an independent State, not in subordinate alliance with the British Government". In a despatch dated May 30, 1884,<sup>4</sup> the Government of India, in discussing this question, observed as follows :

"It is unnecessary to discuss at length the exact footing upon which we stand with regard to Nepal, or the relations between Nepal, Tibet and China. But we may point out that hitherto we have not regarded it as our duty or our interest to interfere actively between Nepal and Tibet for the prevention of hostilities. Nepal is not absolutely independent in the fullest sense of the word, but in most respects we have treated her as an independent State, having power to declare war and to make treaties. Nepal is nominally subject to China, but the Chinese Government evidently regards her as lying outside the limits of the Empire. The Durbar is in regular treaty relations with Tibet."<sup>5</sup> Again, in his despatch dated February 2, 1894,<sup>6</sup> Lord Kimberley pointed out that the facilities to Nepal of ob-

1. *F.S.E.*, Oct., 1903, 129.

2. Encl. to Government of India, Despatch No. 189, dated Oct. 17, 1894, *F.S.E.*, Oct., 1903, 129.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *F.S.E.*, June, 1834, 460.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *F.S.E.*, Nov., 1894, 143.

taining military stores would have to be watched with care, as, in case of Nepal attacking any nation at peace with the Indian Government, complaint might be made of the action taken by it in furnishing such material. In pursuance of this remark, the Viceroy addressed to the Maharajadhiraj a Khareeta, dated May 15, 1894,<sup>1</sup> in which he invited the Durbar's attention to the international complications in which the Government of India might be involved in connection with the supply of arms. In reply to these remarks which implied that the Government of India might, as the paramount power, be held responsible for the action of the Nepalese Government, the Maharajadhiraj observed that the welfare and prosperity of Nepal were not possible otherwise than by serving the British Government. The theory of British responsibility for the doings of the Nepalese was accepted by other Governments also.<sup>2</sup> Thus the position of Nepal "is anomalous and peculiar".<sup>3</sup>

The Government of India wanted to have a control over the Durbar's possession and manufacture of arms and ammunition. In 1893, Lord Landsdowne permitted that any import should be conducted by the Durbar in a perfectly open manner.

Referring to the political status of Nepal, the editor of the Imperial Gazetteer remarked that it was "somewhat difficult to define". It may be said to stand intermediate between Afghanistan and the native States of India. The point of resemblance to Afghanistan is the complete freedom which Nepal enjoys in the management of its internal affairs, while in both countries foreign relations are controlled by the Indian Government. The analogy to the Native States is that by a specific treaty Nepal is obliged to receive a British Resident at Kathmandu, and cannot take Europeans into service without the sanction of the Indian Government".<sup>4</sup>

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1. *F.S.E.*, Nov., 1894, 146.

2. *F.S.E.*, July, 1896, 100.

3. From Viceroy to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, *F.S.E.*, July, 1903, 21.

4. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, Vol. XIX, p. 38.

The Government of India made a substantial change in the new edition of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*<sup>1</sup> to the effect that "Nepal differs from the other native States dealt in this chapter. In it, it is independent in respect to its internal administration. Its foreign relations are, however, controlled by the Government of India ; it is bound to receive a British Resident ; and it cannot take Europeans into its service without the sanction of the Government of India". In a former edition of the *Gazetteer* Nepal was alluded to as a "purely foreign State"<sup>2</sup> and "an independent kingdom". So far as Nepal's administrative autonomy was concerned, it admitted definitely that the internal administration of Nepal was independent and thereby confirmed the pledge<sup>3</sup> given by Lord Elgin in 1894 to the effect that there was no intention or design of interfering with Nepalese autonomy. The administrative independence of Nepal was further assured by the whole tenure of existing treaties. The Secretary to the Government of India wrote to the Resident in Nepal, Lt.-Col. J. Manners-Smith :

"However, the Government of India are not prepared to agree to any material change of policy towards the Nepal Durbar ; they think it desirable to remove by a formal pronouncement the misapprehension that has arisen owing to the changes made in the *Imperial Gazetteer*.... The Government of India have no desire whatsoever to interfere with the independent position which the State of Nepal has hitherto enjoyed and that they share with His Excellency the earnest hope that the happy relations of friendship and mutual confidence which have existed for so many years will remain for ever undisturbed. You should repeat the assurances<sup>4</sup> (a) that the British Government will support and protect Nepal in the event of an unprovoked attack from any quarter, and (b) that so long as the Prime Minister consults the British Government

1. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. IV, New Edition, pp. 82, 83, 92.

2. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. X, Old Edition, p. 274.

3. *F.S.E.*, Nov., 1894, 146.

4. Foreign Department letter No. 3945 ; *F.C.*, dated Oct. 24, 1905, Pro. No. 250, in *Foreign Secret, E.*, Dec., 1905, 255—259 and telegram No. S-301 dated June 1, 1910, Pro. No. 93 in *Foreign Secret, E.* Aug., 1910, 58—246.

and follows their advice when given and presents his correct and friendly attitude, His Majesty's Government will not allow the interests and rights of Nepal to be affected or prejudiced by any administrative change in Tibet."<sup>1</sup>

Nepal also repudiated the claim of suzerainty of China over that country. To the Chinese, any foreign relationship implied a recognition of China's supremacy, and in that sense, since 1792, Nepal came to acquire the status of a tributary State.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese claimed "they are ours and not of the British". The relations between the two powers reveal that Nepal was not a vassal State under the Chinese suzerainty in the accepted sense of the term.<sup>3</sup> She was an independent State, and the presents<sup>4</sup> she sent to the Chinese Emperor did not imply her dependence. Never did China, directly or indirectly, interfere in the domestic affairs of Nepal, nor was there a permanent Chinese representative ever at Kathmandu to advise the Maharaja. The Nepalese foreign policy was never influenced by China. For instance, the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814—16 was fought and the subsequent peace treaty was concluded with the East India Company without the permission of the Chinese. Again in 1854—56, Jang Bahadur waged a war with Tibet against the wishes of the Chinese Emperor.

The practice of sending the five-yearly mission with presents to Peking had no positive content of Nepal's dependence on China. The missions were more for its commercial advantages than for anything else and the presents were certainly not of the nature of a tribute.<sup>5</sup> The mission was discontinued by the

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1. *F.S.E.*, July, 1911, 693—703.

2. A. Lamb : *Indo-Tibetan Border*. The Australian Journal of Politics and History, 6 (1), May, 28—40, Leo. E. Rose : *Sino-Indian Rivalry and the Himalayan Border States* ; *Orbis* : (5) (2), Oct.

3. A State under the suzerainty of another is "confessedly part of another State (and) has rights only which have been expressly granted to it, and the assumption of larger powers to it is an act of rebellion against the sovereign". W. E. Hall : *A Treatise on International Law* (1924), p. 32. Another authority on International Law defines suzerainty as a kind of "international guardianship since the vassal is either absolutely or mainly represented internationally by the Suzerain State". L. Oppenheim : *International Law—A Treatise* (1955), Vol. I, p. 189.

4. *F.P.A.*, June, 1866, 163.

5. *F.S.E.*, Sept., 1908, 457—459.

Government of Nepal after 1852 but resumed in 1867, and then stopped for ever after 1908, without any permission or understanding of the Chinese Government. There was, therefore, no vassal-lord relationship between the two powers. It was a convenient type of relationship. During the last quarter of the 19th century even the Chinese considered Nepal away from their sphere of influence and under the influence of the British Government.<sup>1</sup>

From the times of Jang Bahadur, the main plank of his foreign policy was the belief that a workable friendship could exist between Nepal and the British in India. He realized that the geographical position of Nepal had rendered the martial policy out of date and no amount of military preparedness could give his country security against the British. Nepal was surrounded by the Indian territories on three sides. But like Jang Bahadur every Gurkha Prime Minister was convinced that free movement of Britishers in their country would ultimately lead to subjugation of Nepal.

After the fall of Ranudip Singh (1885), during the rule of the later Ranas, the Nepalese foreign policy was modified. They allowed the Britishers to recruit the Gurkhas freely although it was a blow to their national pride. In exchange the Ranas received support from the British Government. The integrity and seemingly independent status of Nepal could also be preserved but in reality Nepal was within the broad framework of the British Imperial interests and always followed the line of foreign policy as suggested by the Indian Government. The Indian Government had an upper hand over the foreign policy of Nepal although they avoided its annexation because Nepal as a buffer, between British India<sup>2</sup> and Tibet, suited British interests more than an outright annexation. They only wanted a peaceful friendly country on the northern

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1. *F.P.S.C.*, Sept., 1876, 129—33, K. W.

2. Lord Curzon defined a buffer State as "a country possessing a national existence of its own, which is fortified by the territorial and political guarantee by either of the two powers between whose dominions it lies and by whom it would otherwise inevitably be crushed"; *Frontiers* (Oxford, 1903), p. 30. A. Lyall: *The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India* (London, 1920), p. 347.



frontier which they hoped Nepal would become on the basis of the relations established by the Treaty of Sagauli.

The history of Indo-Nepalese relations shows that Nepal was not, truly, a protectorate of the British but was in a special category. In conclusion, it can be said that Nepal ceased to be a fully sovereign and independent State since 1814—16 when she was defeated and was constrained to conclude an unequal treaty with the British Government in India. But the semblance of independence continued, or was allowed to continue, till the last, as it served better the interests of the British Government as well as of the Ranas. The British found it more convenient to maintain Nepal as a buffer State on the northern frontiers of India, a State that could not come into direct political contact with Tibet and China. The Rana oligarchy, on the other hand, was thereby able to appease the people and lull them into a sense of national pride by putting up a show of independence. The reality of the situation was that, for all practical purposes, Nepal had bartered away her independence for a Rana hegemony, aided and abetted by the clever diplomacy of the British in India. There is no denying the fact that the British did not actively interfere in the domestic affairs of Nepal but, then, there was hardly need for it as the Rana rulers were quite subservient to them and never opposed or thwarted their real interests. Thus the position of Nepal was "anomalous and peculiar to the extreme".<sup>1</sup>

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1. From Viceroy to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, *F.S.E.*, July, 1903, 21.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ROLE OF GURKHA TROOPS IN BRITISH EMPIRE

Hemmed in by India and Tibet and amid the snow-capped turrets of the Himalayas, Nepal is the home of the sturdy Gurkhas who have made themselves famous on a hundred battlefields of the world. Many a time the Gurkhas have proved their mettle and this gallant race “has stood like a pillar almost wherever there was a theatre of fighting”.<sup>1</sup> This has been another plank upon which Nepalese relations with British India rested for a long time.

“.. the more Gurkhas we have in our service, the safer we should be.”<sup>2</sup> This was the watchword of the British. “It was politically wise for the British to recruit the Gurkhas in large numbers”<sup>3</sup> in their forces because the “little Gurkhees”<sup>4</sup> “short, broad-chested, flat-faced, snub-nosed men, with their national weapon, Khukri,<sup>5</sup> on their waist-belt, were a conspicuous element in the British Indian Army”. Their dependable character, love of enterprise, endurance in privation, tenacity in adversity and contempt for caste prejudices<sup>6</sup> and rash temper made them one of the finest materials for war-like operations and justly earned them world-wide reputation. The physical

1. Prof. R. P. Manadhar : *Nepal and Her Ruler*, an article, in *The Modern Review*, Jan., 1942.
2. D. C. Boulgar : *England and Russia in Central Asia* (London, 1879), n. 32, p. 65.
3. G. Macmunn : *The Martial Races of India*, n. 66, p. 199.
4. The Gurkha is a generic name for all the Nepalese employed in the Indian Army, though strictly speaking the name should apply to those who came from regions around Gurkhas about fifty miles west of Kathmandu—E. Vansittart : *Notes on Gurkhas* (Calcutta, 1890), p. 10.
5. A short heavy knife with broad, curved blade.
6. *F.P.A.*, Mar., 1880, 95—110.

features of their country—the rugged mountain terrain, combined with their national characteristics and traditions—have bred in them these admirable qualities. The history of the development of the Gurkha ranks in the Indian Army is the story of the avowed recognition of their worth as soldiers, and also the fulfilment of the hopes which lay behind their enlistment.

### Formation Of The Early Gurkha Battalions

The rapid expansion of the Gurkha power before the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814—16) and their exploits in the Punjab hills attracted the attention of the British,<sup>1</sup> and ever since this war, the British sufficiently gauged the great martial qualities of the highlanders.<sup>2</sup> The victory in that war was almost a pyrrhic one. Numerical superiority and the “length of purse” wore the Nepalese out and compelled them to sue for peace.<sup>3</sup> This war drove home to the British that “we have met with an enemy who shows decidedly greater bravery and greater steadiness than our troops possess,<sup>4</sup> and the Company’s soldier could never be brought to resist the shock of these energetic mountaineers on their own ground”.<sup>5</sup>

1. *Papers on Nepaul War* ; Records of the Delhi Residency and Agency, Punjab Government Records 1, 249—72.
2. Military sketches of the Gurkha war in India in the years 1814, 1815, 1816 (London, 1822), 49 ; H. T. Prinsep : *History of the Political and Military Transactions in India 1813—23* (London, 1826), 1, pp. 81—206.
3. “Before we come to the contest, their powers of resistance are ridiculed. Their forts are said to be contemptible, and their arms are said to be useless, yet we find on trial that with these useless weapons they stand to their defences, notwithstanding the skill and bravery of our army.” Memo. of Metcalfe to Lord Moira quoted in E. Thompson’s *The Making of the Indian Princes* (Oxford, 1945), p. 191.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
5. Confidential letter of Gen. Ochterlony to Lord Moira, quoted in E. Vansittart, n. 1. 20. “It (the war) made us acquainted with the formidable power whose military strength was previously unknown and rigorously underrated. Then for the first time in India, recourse was made to superiority in numbers to overpower the bravery and discipline of our enemy, combined with the natural advances of his defensive positions.” Quoted in Kaye’s *Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe* (London, 1875), 186.

After the war all Gurkha prisoners, who surrendered during the capitulation of the Malaun Fort on the Kumaon frontier, were enlisted in the British Indian Army. Four rifle regiments were raised—the Malaun Battalion, the Sirmur Battalion, the Nussiri Battalion and the Kumaon Battalion, the last being a provincial corps for civilian duties in Kumaon.<sup>1</sup> The first and the fourth battalions were settled in the Simla Hills and the Sirmur Battalion was established at Dehra Dun. Most of these Gurkha soldiers came with their families ; and so grew up the Gurkha colonies in these places. From the very outset, the Gurkhas displayed, along with their martial qualities, a spirit of unswerving fidelity to their new masters whom they had fought so doggedly and who had humbled their pride as invincible soldiers. This served to underline their dependable nature, one of the chief reasons why the British valued them so highly ; the bond once forged between them never snapped. Yet, not till 1825-26, when the British were engaged in the siege of Bharatpur, were all the Gurkhas employed in active service as part of the British Indian troops.<sup>2</sup> In this campaign as in all succeeding ones, they amply justified their employment in the British ranks.<sup>3</sup> (Prior to 1886, there was no “centralized system” of recruitment of the Gurkhas.)<sup>4</sup> In 1817, the Third Maratha War had necessitated a large expansion of the Army establishment. That year an infantry levy was raised at Fatehgarh and in March, 1818, it consisted of 1,000 men. The 9th Gurkha Regiment had these men as its nucleus.

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With a force of less than 16,000 men, the Nepalese fought the British Army of 46,629 men of whom 4,557 were Europeans, Capt. Cavenagh : *Report on Nepal* (1852), *F.M.*, Vol. 360.

“in this war, dreadful to say, we have had numbers on our side and skill and bravery on the side of our enemy.” Quoted in Thompson: *The Making of the Indian Princes* (Oxford, 1945). n. 6, p. 192.

1. L. W. Shakespeare: *History of the 2nd. King Edwards Own Gurkha Rifles* (The Sirmoor Rifles) 1912, pp. 1, 1—5, 168—197 ; N. W. Woodyatt : *History of the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles* (London, 1929), pp. 321—327 ; L. H. Jenkins, Gen. Frederick Young, First Commandant of Sirmur Battalion (London, 1923), 40—52.
2. The Sirmur Battalion was employed in active service during the 3rd Marhatta War. Shakespeare, n. 9., p. 5.
3. Woodyatt : *History of 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles* (London, 1929), n. 9. Shakespeare, n. 9, p. 5.
4. C. J. Morris : *The Gurkhas* (Delhi, 1933). p. 128.

In 1825, Sir Edward Paget, the then Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, proposed the augmentation of the strength of the Gurkha battalions and formation of new ones by fresh recruitment of the Gurkhas from Nepal.<sup>1</sup> The Resident, Hon. Gardener, while agreeing on the great fighting qualities of the Gurkhas,<sup>2</sup> doubted if the plan of the Commander-in-Chief was at all feasible and politic. "...as a brave and hardy race, tractable and orderly, no description of Indian troops would, I conceive, be found superior to these."<sup>3</sup> But he believed that "even on entering our service, the Gurkhas would not separate themselves entirely from their native country, as they could not remove their families from Nepal and...that however faithfully they might conduct themselves on general occasions, in the event of any future rupture with Nepal, they possessed that feeling of patriotism which would induce the greater part of them to adhere decidedly to their natural allegiance".<sup>4</sup>

### **Reorganization Of Gurkha Battalions On Regimental Basis**

In 1850, the whole of the 66th Bengal Native Infantry at Fort Govindgarh was disbanded for its mutinous behaviour over the "service-batta".<sup>5</sup> The Nussiri Battalion was taken en masse into the lines, and was redesignated as the 66th Bengal Infantry. The Gurkha Battalions were reorganized on a permanent and regular regimental basis in 1861. The 66th Bengal Infantry now came to be known as the 1st Gurkha Regiment in 1850. And in 1861, it was rechristened as the 2nd Gurkha Regiment. Similarly, the Kumaon Battalion was redesignated as the 3rd Gurkha Regiment. The 4th Gurkhas was raised in 1857 and became a regular Gurkha Regiment in 1861, the 5th Gurkhas was raised in 1858. They were a part of the irregular force raised from the Gurkhas in the Sikh Army which was set up in 1859 at Abbotabad as a deliberate policy

1. Campbell's Report on Political Transactions with Nepal, S.C., Sept. 28, 1837, 69—72.

2. *Campbell's Report*, n. 13.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. The Terms and Conditions of Service for the Gurkhas in British Army.

of inducting this powerful Hindu element as a political wedge in this predominantly Mohammedan area.<sup>1</sup> This corps was recruited by Henry Ramsay, Commissioner of Kumaon. In 1879, there were these five Gurkha Regiments with 16 Gurkha officers and 825 sepoy in each, thus totalling 4,685 men in all.<sup>2</sup> They were encamped at Dharamshala, Bakloh, Dehra Dun, Almora and Abbotabad, respectively, their regimental headquarters being at Dharamshala, Dehra Dun and Abbotabad.<sup>3</sup> Besides, a large number of Nepalese served in the 42nd, 43rd, and 44th Infantry Regiments, originally the Assam Light Infantry and later comprising the 8th and 10th Gurkha Rifles.<sup>4</sup>

The recruits were obtained from western, central and eastern regions of Nepal. Those, from the border, were procured generally at the fairs in the winter months. Recruiting was so difficult that very often four or five months elapsed before just 34 recruits of the required class and standard could be obtained. From Kumaon, Bettiah, Gorakhpur and Darjeeling small recruiting parties were sent from time to time, composed mostly of veteran Gurkha non-commissioned officers, sometimes with the requisite authority of the Durbar but very often without it.<sup>5</sup> Recruits with families were mostly prized. They were encouraged to settle down in large numbers in the hills of Kumaon, Sikkim and the adjacent places so that they could provide ready supply of men for the Gurkha regiments.<sup>6</sup> The British offered them not only better amenities, but also far greater scope for active service.<sup>7</sup>

Gurkhas of various clans were recruited in the British Indian Army. The Magars, the Gurangs, the Chetris, the

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1. *Historical Records of the 5th Gurkha Regiment* (Lahore, 1886), 170.

2. *F.P.A.*, Mar., 1880, 95—110.

3. *F.P.A.*, July, 1880, 141—58.

4. *F.P.A.*, Mar., 1880, 152—4; R. Macdonald : *History of the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles* (Frontier Force) (1858—1928); M. Macaulay : *A History of the 4th Prince of Wales Own Gurkha Rifles, 1857—1937*; F. S. Poynder : *The 9th Gurkha Rifles, 1817—1936*.

5. The system of rewarding the recruiting agents was introduced. E. Vansittart : *Gurkhas* (Calcutta, 1915), p. 153.

6. L. Wadell : *Among the Himalayas* (Westminster, 1900), p. 302.

7. D. C. Boulgar : *England and Russia in Central Asia* (London, 1879), p. 62.

Thakurs and the Khas were obtained from the western districts of Nepal and the Limbus, the Rais, the Sunwars, the Tamangs and the Lamas from the eastern regions or from the Kosi basin.<sup>1</sup> After the 1857 "Mutiny" a strong prejudice against the Brahminical elements led the British Government to disfavour the enlistment of the Khas—this clan of all being most liable to Brahminical prejudices from which other clans were mostly immune.<sup>2</sup> In the 3rd Gurkhas, Garhwalis and Kumaonis were also enlisted but in the 1st and 2nd Gurkhas, the officers-commanding opposed such an admixture. The Government contented itself with enrolling just as many of them as were required for filling up the occasional scarcity in the existing Gurkha Corps and keeping them in their allotted strength and in a reasonable state of efficiency. It was suggested that Gurkha Battalions should be maintained, almost entirely, from the Magar and Gurung classes; and that the more pure a regiment is, in this respect, the more efficient it is likely to be for active service and in trustworthiness to the State.<sup>3</sup>

For the recruiting of the Gurkhas, C. E. R. Girdlestone, as Resident in Nepal, gave his own views on the subject<sup>4</sup>:

(i) That the sphere of choice both as to places and classes might be carefully extended. He did not see why natives of Garhwal, Kumaon, Sirmoor, Mandi and other hill States should not be enlisted as recruits and he thought that other castes besides the Magars and the Gurungs from whom the Gurkha Regiments were almost entirely recruited might be usefully admitted to the ranks. For instance, the Newars were good fighting men, free from religious prejudices and, owing to strong class antagonism between them and the Gurkhalis proper which prevents the Nepalese Government from employing them in their own army, we should probably be able to get plenty of them.

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1. For the Military Tribes in Nepal, Report of Hodgson, published in *Selections from Records of the Government of Bengal*, No. XXVII, *F.P.A.*, Mar., 1880, 95—110.
  2. Lt. F. C. Cardrew: *Our Recruiting Grounds for the Future*, *J.U.S.I.*, (Simla, 1891) XX, 86, 131—156.
  3. *F.P.A.*, July, 1880, 141—58, Paper on Gurkha Recruiting by Col. R. Sale Hill, Commanding the 1st Gurkhas (Light Infantry).
  4. *F.P.A.*, July, 1880, 152.

(ii) They should not be discharged too early or the superior training and skill imparted to the Nepalese in British service will lead to the grave political danger to the British Government.

(iii) The young families growing up in Gurkha cantonments are a source of supply for recruits which should not be overlooked. The Army Commission do not appear to have forgotten this point. The suggestions of the Army Commission were that,

- (a) either we should establish recruiting agents in Nepal, or
- (b) our recruiting parties should be allowed to cross the border at certain stated times. Mr. Girdlestone saw no objection in putting them forward for the Durbar's consideration. He deprecated pressure being put on the Durbar to induce them to agree to these proposals. Even if they do agree they could frustrate the efforts of the recruiting parties, unless the Resident was more free to move about in the country.

As an alternative scheme, Mr. Girdlestone suggested that the Durbar should be persuaded to give them all the recruits they wanted by paying them head money for every man supplied who fulfilled the requisite conditions.<sup>1</sup> But the Secretary to the Government of India did not affirm this scheme.<sup>2</sup>

Difficulties in the recruitment of Nepalese subjects for the native army in India were increasing day by day. "The difficulty is increasing" and "in the face of the statements that Gurkha sepoys in the British service cannot revisit their homes in Nepal without risk of their lives and confiscation of their property, it is reasonable to suppose that trouble and difficulty in the way of recruiting will rapidly increase and as the Gurkha is much the best Asiatic soldier we possess and cannot be obtained in any numbers except from the interior of Nepal, it is desirable to give careful and, if possible, favourable consideration to any proposed measure that will be likely to bring about a better state of affairs, and admit of free recruiting in the Gurkha territory; for it cannot be doubted that, if the opportunity was given, the Army authorities would gladly re-

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1. *F.P.E.*, Sept., 1883, 343—348.

2. *F.P.E.*, Sept., 1883, 348.



commend an increase in the present number of Gurkhas maintained in our native army, for their excellence as soldiers can be hardly overrated ; brave, loyal, hardy and active with great powers of endurance they have, under all circumstances, served so well, and an increased enlistment of them would be very valuable to the native army and would aid in removing the difficulty now experienced in recruiting consequent on the greatly improved condition of the labouring classes and would thus help to defer that increase in military wage which is ere long inevitable.”<sup>1</sup>

From the very beginning, the Nepalese Government's attitude to the enlistment of the Gurkhas was one of consistent opposition. The prohibition was more rigorous in regard to the recruits intending to take their families with them to India. The British Government always faced difficulty in getting from Nepal even the limited number of men required for the maintenance of the Gurkha Corps in their allotted strength. In the absence of a definite engagement in this regard till 1885 and in view of the known opposition of the Nepalese Government there was no other way than to carry on the recruiting operation *sub rosa*.<sup>2</sup>

The Durbar issued an order that any person who was detected in an attempt to leave the country for this purpose would be imprisoned, and that the goods, houses and lands of any person so enlisting would be confiscated. Heavy penalties were threatened against agents of British regiments or the Police Corps who were found engaged in recruiting. The situation became more difficult when Nepal passed under the absolute sway of a powerful despotic ruler, Jang Bahadur Rana. His attitude in this regard was not of friendliness and co-operation, but of covert discouragement if not open opposition. But consequently difficulties in recruiting Nepalese subjects for the native Army in India increased because of the ban imposed by the Nepal Government on their re-entry.<sup>3</sup>

In 1854, the British Government made a strong remonstrance against this restrictive policy. Consequently Jang Bahadur

1. *F.S.E.*, July, 1884, 21—34, K.W. No. 1, p. 2.

2. Resident to Government, Jan. 18, 1880, *F.P.A.*, July, 1880, 153.

3. *F.S.E.*, July, 1884, 21—34. K.W. No. 1, p. 2 ; Resident to Government, Jan. 18, 1880, *F.P.A.*, July, 1880, 141—158.

gave way partially. He consented to allow the Gurkhas in the Indian Army to return home provided they came in civilian dress and behaved as Nepalese subjects in Nepal. They were to avoid Kathmandu, the neighbouring military cantonments and the direct route from Sagauli to Kathmandu through the Sisagarh Fort.<sup>2</sup> Hereafter the Gurkhas returning home were not molested so long as they did not violate the above injunctions.<sup>3</sup> It was also arranged that the Gurkhas in India would make remittances to the Residency at Kathmandu, whence money would be disbursed to their families on prior application.<sup>4</sup> Thus political pressure alone earned the British a "not very graceful concession".<sup>5</sup> Unable to oppose openly the recruiting operations, Jang Bahadur sought to make them harder. Besides, three more courses were open to the Britishers<sup>1</sup> :

- (i) To induce the Nepal Durbar to offer greater facilities to their recruiting parties.
- (ii) To obtain recruits through the Nepal Durbar.
- (iii) To take more vigorous measures for obtaining recruits i.e., without reference to the Durbar.

But the Britishers were also sure that, whatever agreement they may make, and whatever promises they may receive from the Durbar, the Nepal Durbar was strongly opposed to their enlisting Nepalese subjects and that it would oppose and thwart their operations in every possible manner.

Regarding the course, that of obtaining recruits through the Nepal Durbar, it was tried during the late Afghan campaign, but had resulted in utter failure, for the Durbar confined its efforts to collecting "the halt, the lame, and the blind" for enlistment into service. So it was also given

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1. *F.S.E.*, July, 1884, 21—34, K.W. No. 2.
  2. Resident to Government, June, 1854, *P.C.*, Aug. 11, 1854, 11—12.
  3. For many years past no question has arisen as regards our Gurkha soldiers visiting their families in Nepal or with reference to recruiting parties from our Gurkha Regiments entering the country. The former practice though not formally recognized is tacitly permitted and the latter has been forbidden by our own Government, Resident to Government, July 16, 1869, *F.P.A.*, Sep., 1869, 92.
  4. Minute of Lord Dalhousie, May 10, 1852, *P.C.*, Jan. 14, 1853, 123—124.
  5. Note of Foreign Secretary, July 14, 1854, *P.C.*, Aug. 14, 1854, 11—12.

up. Regarding the third plan also they were not sure whether they would succeed or not.

But while considering what plans should be devised for obtaining a large supply of Nepalese recruits, it must be borne in mind that (i) the Durbar will do its best to impede recruiting ; (ii) Nepal is a primitive country in which news travels but slowly ; (iii) the distance from our border to the recruiting ground is considerable and has to be traversed on foot ; (iv) the unbridged rivers render travelling impossible during the rains ; (v) recruits will come down to the plains only during the cold season.

Under these circumstances no result could be expected. H. Ramsay, the then Resident in Nepal, therefore, proposed that numerous emissaries should be sent to Nepal with instructions to travel quietly from village to village, spreading the news that the British Government required recruits, and was willing to give a bounty of Rs. 20 to be divided between the recruit and the man bringing him up for enlistment. The messengers sent should be Nepalese. Arrangements should also be made for the reception of recruits at places on each of the roads leading from Nepal. The enlistment of additional sepoy necessitated the appointment of additional native officers and non-commissioned officers who would have to be selected from the existing "Gurkha Regiments".

In the spring of 1880, the Government of India desired Sir Henry Ramsay to try and procure 1,000 recruits from Nepal and to start a recruiting depot near Nainital.<sup>1</sup> In the cold weather of 1880-81, a large number of men came down from Nepal, but at that time the Afghan Campaign had just terminated, and no less than nine Gurkha recruiting parties appeared on the scene. In the spring of 1881 messengers were again sent into Nepal to spread the news that more recruits were wanted, but in September, 1881, the recruits at the Nainital depot were drafted into the different Gurkha Regiments, the depot was given up and the special enlistment of the Gurkhas discontinued. The Government did not seem to have any settled policy regarding the recruitment of the Gurkhas till 1885 when an engagement in this regard was entered into with

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1. *F.S.E.*, July, 1884, 21—34, K.W. No. 2.

Maharaja Bir Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana, Prime Minister of Nepal.

In 1886, Dr. G. H. D. Gimlette suggested the following to improve the Gurkha recruiting<sup>1</sup> :

- (i) The admission of British parties consisting of native officers and men belonging to our Gurkha Regiments to free movement in the interior ;
- (ii) The establishment of a regimental recruiting agent ;
- (iii) The visit of one European officer with a party of men, from each regiment, during each cold season to Kathmandu.

Capt. C. Chenevix-French, the 5th Gurkhas,<sup>2</sup> said in his report that the system of regimental recruiting with all its drawbacks was infinitely superior to that of recruiting through Durbar officials. In 1891, Capt. E. Vansittart, 2nd Battalion, 5th Gurkhas, was appointed Military Assistant to the Resident in Nepal.<sup>3</sup> In 1893, it was proposed that a general recruiting depot<sup>4</sup> should be established at Purneah for the enlistment of Gurkha recruits for the Military Police force as well as for the Army. In 1902 two Gurkha recruiting centres had been finally established in Indian territory at Gorakhpur and Ghoom. In 1905, during the Premiership of Chandra Shamsher, the 71st Coorg Regiment and the 65th Carnatic Light Infantry were replaced by two new battalions of the Gurkhas<sup>5</sup>—one of Khas Gurkhas and the other of the Gurungs and the Magars. The Prime Minister of Nepal provided the Government of India facilities for the recruitment of the Gurkhas. The Government of India decided to increase the number of Gurkha reservists for the Indian Army.<sup>6</sup> But there was always the fear that Maharaja Sir Chandra Shamsher Jang would not be willing to countenance an extension of the

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1. *F.S.K.*, Dec., 1886, 22—34, Demi-official letter from Dr. G. H. D. Gimlette to C. E. R. Girdlestone dated July 23, 1886.
  2. *F.S.E.*, Dec., 1886, 26, Report on Gurkha Recruiting by Capt. Chenevix-French, 5th Gurkhas, dated Abbotabad, July 8, 1886.
  3. *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1892, 319, Yaddasht from Resident in Nepal to the P.M. and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, No. 33/4-3042 dated Feb. 21, 1891, *F.E.B.*, Nov., 1891, 82—83.
  4. *F.E.B.*, May, 1893, 121.
  5. *F.E.A.*, Mar., 1905, 130—132, Pioneer of Nov. 6, 1904.
  6. *F.E.B.*, Apr., 1913, 300.

number of reservists. Not only were such men lost to the Nepalese Army but there was the danger which the system opened up, of interference in their internal arrangements. A number of 100 men was fixed for one battalion. By 1908, the Gurkha Brigade had reached its permanent establishment of 20 battalions organized into 10 rifle regiments numbered from one to ten. The increase had been in the main due to the bringing of the Assam Regiments who had recruited the Gurkhas ever since 1928 on to the cadre of the Gurkha Rifles, and to the raising of two regiments—four battalions—from the Kiranti county of eastern Nepal. In 1904, a Gurkha Rifle Regiment and a battalion of the old Assam Light Infantry sealed the almost impossible precipices. With Younghusband it marched into Lhasa.

The Gurkhas formed no inconsiderable part of the British Army—to be exact, there were 10 regiments of two battalions each.<sup>1</sup> The gallantry of these hill people so favourably impressed the British at the time of the Nepal war that, soon after friendly relations were restored, they took into their service such of the Gurkhas as were willing to enlist thereby creating a nucleus for the Gurkha battalions.

Up to the year 1914, the number of recruits required annually to maintain the 20 Gurkha battalions at full strength was about 1,500 and these were, with the sanction of the Nepal Government, recruited by the Durbar itself. But after the outbreak of the war the Government of India intimated that the demand for recruits was expected to be high, and the Maharaja took immediate steps to evolve an organization which would prove capable of being able to cope with the situation at once, abnormal and unprecedented as it was. Officers were specially appointed to various places in the country, and local officials in the hills, both in the eastern and western districts, were ordered to put forward their best effort. Available recruits were collected at different centres, which were increased from seven in the first to 10 in subsequent years, with a view to facilitating the collection of men at points nearer their homes.

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1. Maj. W. B. Northey and Capt. C. J. Morris : *The Gurkhas* (London, 1928), p. 264.

As the men were passed fit, they were sent to the newly opened depots and outposts which were situated at convenient places on the Nepal frontier. To avoid the chance of any likely locality being left untapped, special officers were instructed to move from place to place, while the Valley of Nepal and the adjoining districts, where recruiting was normally prohibited, were also thrown open for the supply they could yield. While the people were encouraged in every way to seek enlistment in the British Army, they were at the same time repeatedly given to understand that in serving the British Government they would be considered to have rendered equal service to their own.

In spite of the fact that a certain amount of time was taken in perfecting the arrangements made to obtain the extra recruits, the results obtained in the first season were eminently satisfactory, thousands of recruits having been obtained. Those of the second year were a record one, during which the country was thoroughly exploited from one end to the other. It was inevitable that after such a brisk and active recruiting in a restricted field and amongst a limited class of the population, a dearth of suitable men began, in course of time, to make itself felt. The task became more and more difficult. In the fourth year the work had to be carried on in a still more depleted field but still considerable numbers of recruits were obtained. Recruiting from amongst the non-fighting classes even was attempted though the results obtained did not quite come up to the expectations. The number of men taken out of the country had exceeded 2,00,000, and of these 55,000 were enlisted in the regular Gurkha Battalions of the Indian Army. In consequence of the strenuous efforts made by the Maharaja of Nepal, the British Government was not only able to make good the heavy losses in the regular Gurkha Regiments, but were also able to raise many new battalions and such non-combatant units as the Army Bearer Corps and many Labour Battalions. Nepal had suffered some 20,000 casualties and its men had fought in almost every theatre of war, cheerfully enduring the tropic heat and the cold of northern winters.

### **Attitude Of Nepalese Government**

From the very beginning, the Nepalese Government's attitude to the enlistment of the Gurkhas was one of consistent

opposition camouflaged under professions of co-operation. An injunction<sup>1</sup> against the Nepalese taking service under the British Government was always exacted though not enforced with equal efficacy at all times. The prohibition was more rigorous in regard to the recruits intending to take their families with them to India. The British Government always faced difficulty in getting from Nepal even the limited number of men required for the maintenance of the Gurkha Corps in their allotted strength. In the absence of a definite engagement in this regard, till 1885 and in view of the known opposition of the Nepalese Government, there was no other way than to carry on the recruiting operation *sub rosa*.<sup>2</sup>

The Durbar issued an order that any person who was detected in attempting to leave the country for this purpose would be imprisoned, and that the goods, house and lands of any person so enlisting would be confiscated. Heavy penalties were threatened against any agents of British regiments or the Police Corps who were found engaged in recruiting. To use the words of one of the informants,<sup>3</sup> "whereas formerly men caught in Nepal recruiting for us were to be bound and sent back to British territory, they are now to be cut in two". Experienced Gurkha Subedars went to their homes in Nepal, charged with the duty of inducing the young Nepalese to join the British Army. In spite of the strong disapproval of the Nepalese Government, the British carried on these clandestine operations. The Durbar enforced more strictly the injunction against such enlistment. The recruitment operations were, henceforth, carried on more surreptitiously and with greater caution.<sup>4</sup>

The situation was more difficult when Nepal passed under the absolute sway of a powerful despotic ruler, Jang Bahadur Rana. His attitude in this regard was not of friendliness and co-operation, but of covert discouragement, if not open opposition. He looked upon this matter as a devious design of the British to denude his country of its fighting population and

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1. Resident to Government, Jan., 18, 1880, *F.P.A.*, July, 1880, 141—58.
  2. C. J. Morris: *The Gurkhas*, (Delhi. 1933). p. 128.
  3. Resident to Government, Jan. 18, 1880, *F.P.A.*, July, 1880, 153.
  4. Resident to Government, Mar. 29, 1843, *S.C.*, Apr. 19, 1843, 52.

weaken it militarily. It was, therefore, not only dangerous, but, in effect, suicidal to encourage or co-operate with the British. He, therefore, issued orders prohibiting the Nepalese from leaving the country for India without a valid passport from the Durbar ; none could go beyond Nayakot and river Trisulganga without a passport.<sup>1</sup> Injunctions were always rigorously enforced against the Gurkhas in the Indian Army returning home to meet their families, except when they did so after taking discharge from service under the British Government. The prohibitions were, however, relaxed when any Gurkha Subedar went to Nepal strictly on duty "either to purchase weapons for his corps or on recruiting service" duly authorized by the British Government as his employers.<sup>2</sup> The Gurkhas in the British Army were seriously concerned over Jang Bahadur's stringent orders against their return home. They also found it extremely difficult to send money to their families in Nepal. Service under the British meant being permanently away from one's hearth and home. This served as an effective deterrent for many aspirants to British service, where there was better pay, pensions and other amenities. Jang Bahadur when pressed by the Resident to relax these prohibitive measures pleaded that as the British Government opposed his employing Europeans in the Nepalese Army, they should not grudge the steps he took in his national interest.<sup>3</sup> Resident Ramsay conveyed his impressions thus :

"My impressions are that we must expect fewer liberal measures from Gen. Jang Bahadur than from any of his predecessors despite the intentions he proclaims, while he is travelling in our provinces."<sup>4</sup> It was not that Jang Bahadur was powerless to override the national prejudices against such recruitment but that he was opposed to it, though not declaredly so.

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1. Resident to Government, June 29, 1854, *P.C.*, Aug. 11, 1854, 11—12.

2. *Ibid.*

3. After Jang Bahadur's return from England, the British entertained the fond hope that he would extend all co-operation in this matter. But ere long the Resident discerned many circumstances to show the change in the spirit of Gen. Jang Bahadur's communications with the Residency, *P.C.*, Aug. 11, 1854, 11—12.

4. *Ibid.*



In this context the British Government had already strongly reproached against the Durbar's such unhelpful policy. Consequently Jang Bahadur had relented and allowed many concessions like permission to the Gurkhas serving in the Indian Army to return home but in civilian dress and behave as subjects of Nepal. They were to keep away from the military cantonments and the direct route from Sagauli to Kathmandu through the Sisagarh Fort. They were assured safe conduct so long as they did not violate these injunctions. They would also be allowed to send money to their families though through the British Resident at Kathmandu.

Unable to oppose openly the recruiting operations, Jang Bahadur sought to make them harder, by requiring that all the intending recruits, particularly those belonging to western Nepal, should obtain passports before leaving Nepal and that all recruiting parties from India should have Parwanas from their authorities. This requirement was intended to check the smuggling of the Nepalese through the passes in western Nepal. The guards at these passes were authorized to shoot at sight any person trying to sneak in or out.<sup>1</sup> The Government then asked the Commanding Officers of the Gurkha Regiments not to send their agents to Nepal without passports.<sup>2</sup> Jang Bahadur was opposed to liberalize this order in favour of the Gurkhas going to western Nepal on leave, but to no purpose. Capt. Byers, the Acting Resident, indignantly wrote to the Government :

“The records of this office during the last few years show the unavailing efforts made to obtain recruits for the British service with the assistance of the Durbar, but they will not assist us, and although they say they throw no obstacles in the way of our obtaining recruits, the rule relating to those who do enter the service not being allowed to return to Nepal, no doubt, prevents great numbers from enlisting.”<sup>3</sup>

During the revolt of 1857, the news released a frenzy of excitement in Nepal. Jang Bahadur decided to participate in

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1. *P.C.*, Nov. 12, 1858, 74—75.

2. Government to Resident in charge (Capt. Byers), Sept. 22, 1858, *P.C.*, Nov. 12, 1858, 75.

3. Capt. Byers to Campbell, Oct. 21, 1858, *P.C.*, Dec. 31, 1858, 25—30.

the stirring event as an ally of the British. In June, 1857, the Durbar, at the instance of Jang Bahadur, offered the services of the Gurkha troops and found Maj. Ramsay, the Resident, too eager to accept the overture.<sup>1</sup>

In anticipation of the Government's approval Ramsay made prompt arrangements and 3,000 Nepalese troops were sent to Lucknow, Benaras and Patna and another 2,000 to Gorakhpur.<sup>2</sup> When Gen. Havelock, on whose forces from Allahabad all hopes hinged, was miles away, and the Resident having made fresh requisitions for troops, 6,000 Gurkhas were soon despatched to Sagauli for Lucknow via Gorakhpur and Faizabad.<sup>3</sup> Soon after, Gorakhpur having been abandoned, the Gurkhas were rushed to recover Azamgarh and Jaunpur from the rebels.<sup>4</sup> The situation in Bihar had in the meantime worsened. The troops at Dinapore and Segowlee had revolted. The districts of Saran, Champaran and, to some extent, Tirhut lay at the mercy of the rebels from Gorakhpur, Azamgarh and the adjacent areas. Two Gurkha Regiments were promptly sent to Segowlee and Motiharee to instil confidence among the people as also to check the spread of the disturbance from the west.<sup>5</sup> On August 14, these regiments left Kathmandu and were afterwards attached to Brig. Rowcrafts' Sarun Field Force with which they rendered good service. They finally joined Jang Bahadur's main army at Lucknow in March, 1857. Again in December, 1857, a batch of 290 Gurkha soldiers was placed at the disposal of Maj. Henry Ramsay, Commissioner of Kumaon, which assisted in the defence of that area.<sup>6</sup>

Since the acceptance of the first offer, Jang Bahadur had been persistently pressing the British to accept further Nepalese military aid. In July, 1857, he offered 6,000 troops under his own command and again, in November, he expressed a wish

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1. S.C., Sept. 25, 1857, 487, Ramsay to Edmonstone, Foreign Secretary, June. 20, 1857, *N.R.*, Vol. XII.
  2. S.C., Sept. 25, 1857, 489.
  3. Government to Resident, June 23, 1857, S.C., Sept. 25, 1857, 498 ; *Ibid*, 521-A. 542 ; Oct. 30, 1857, 687.
  4. Government to Wingfield, Commissioner of Bahraich, Aug. 22, 1857. *Ibid*. 580.
  5. S.C., Nov. 27, 1857, 429.
  6. S.C., Jan. 29, 1858, 498.

to send 12,000 to 15,000 troops and 27 guns.<sup>1</sup> Induced by the worth and fidelity of the Gurkhas the Governor-General accepted the services of 8,000 Gurkha troops on November 18, 1857. Jang Bahadur started from Kathmandu on December 10, 1857, with a force of 9,000 troops.<sup>2</sup> At Sagauli, Brig.-Gen. G. H. Macgregor joined it as Military Commissioner.

Jang Bahadur divided his force into three parts. The first consisted of the Rifle Body Guards and eight regiments under his personal command ; the second was headed by Gen. Kharag Bahadur ; and the third was under Gen. Bhakt Jang. The Nepalese Prime Minister entered the Indian territory on December 23, 1857, and after crossing the Gandak on December 30, he attacked Gorakhpur on January 6, 1858, and occupied it after little resistance.<sup>3</sup> It was an important victory which not only broke down the morale of the rebels but also blocked their way towards the north-east. Leaving two regiments for its defence, Jang Bahadur left Gorakhpur on February 14. He again crossed the Gandak and marched towards Amberpur where he sacked the Fort of Berozpur. On February 20, two more forts, guarding the approach to Faizabad, were captured by him. He reached Lucknow in March, 1858<sup>4</sup>, and joined the British forces organized under Sir Colin Campbell for the recovery of Lucknow.<sup>5</sup> By March 13, whole of Lucknow was cleared of the rebels. The success of the Gurkhas in Bihar, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Allahabad and Oudh justified the trust reposed in them by the British.<sup>6</sup>

1. S.C., Nov. 27, 1857, 423.

2. S.C., Jan. 29, 1858, 377. In the Memorandum of Political Relations, it has been remarked that Jang Bahadur's army later on "swelled to about 14,000", 1857, para 30.

3. Malleson : *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p. 226

4. S.C., Jan. 29, 1858, Reports of Brig. Macgregor, Political Officer, attached to Jang Bahadur, to Ramsay on the march of Gurkha Rifles to Lucknow, *N.R.*, Vol. VIII.

5. Government to Resident, Nov. 18, 1857, S.C., Nov. 27, 1857, 425 ; Khareeta from Maharaja of Nepal to Lord Canning, Dec. 13, 1857, and its reply by Lord Canning, *P.C.*, Oct. 1, 1858, 55-57.

6. The exploits of the Nepalese forces in the "Mutiny" are dealt with in a Memorandum sent by Brig. Macgregor to Government, Mar. 30, 1858, S.C., July 30, 1858, 119. Two bound registers dealing with the  
(Cont. on p. 218)

Jang Bahadur reached Kathmandu on May 4 via Benaras. The rest of the Nepalese forces also reached home soon afterwards. During the "Mutiny" the Nepalese soldiers had come in close contact with the British, with the result that a happy camaraderie and mutual appreciation followed. The liberal provisions for their maintenance in India, the general behaviour of British officers, the donation "batta" (terms and conditions) and compensation allowances for injuries and death<sup>1</sup> left a very favourable impression upon the Nepalese troops, and service in the British Army was considered as a coveted occupation. They were "loud in their praises of the liberality of the British Government". The Resident clearly discerned this and observed "that there cannot be the smallest doubt" "that a very different spirit now exists (among them) to what was formerly felt".<sup>2</sup> The British were also now convinced of the fidelity of Jang Bahadur and the Gurkhas and thus the foundation of the Anglo-Nepalese friendship, which was to last for nearly a century, was laid. In future, whenever an occasion arose, the Nepalese Government promptly came forward to offer its help to the British. During the First World War the Gurkha Army had rendered very useful service to the British. In turn they had also supported the Ranas and helped in preserving their rule in Nepal for a century.

In spite of all this, while keeping on good terms with the British, Jang Bahadur took every step to restrict free contacts between the two countries and strictly followed the good old Gurkha policy of keeping away the Europeans from Nepal as far as possible,<sup>3</sup> while Jang Bahadur allowed enlistment of the Gurkhas during the Indian Revolt. W. B. Northey had remarked that, "This time onwards Nepal not only recognized the existence of the Gurkha regiments in the British Army but actively assisted in their recruitment..."<sup>4</sup> But the fundamental

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same in detail are available at the Army Headquarters, Kathmandu, and in the Commandari Kitabkhana, Jangi Phant, Kathmandu.

1. Register in the Army Headquarters, Kathmandu ; also *Registers in the Commandari Kitabkhana, Jangi Phant*.
2. S.C., Nov. 25, 1858, 56—60.
3. P.C., June 24, 1859, 104—6.
4. W. B. Northey : *Land of Gurkhas* (Cambridge, 1937), p. 77.

attitude of the Nepalese remained as ever against their subjects entering into foreign service which they considered degrading. He avoided direct communication of the Gurkhas with the Residency. The Commanding Officers of the Gurkha Regiments in India continued to procure recruits sub rosa with the full knowledge, and sometimes overt encouragement, of the Government notwithstanding the existing orders against such activity.<sup>1</sup>

After the Revolt of 1857, recruiting operations were carried on more actively and on so wider a scale on the borders of Nepal that it was now impossible to get recruits from the hilly territories in the interior parts of Nepal. As a result there was appreciable augmentation in the quantity of the recruits, for most of them were fugitive criminals and outlaws, men of very low orders belonging to classes deemed unfit for military service in Nepal.<sup>2</sup> They passed themselves off as genuine Gurkhas. There were no means of verifying the descriptive rolls of these recruits for the Durbar's "covert opposition and jealousy".<sup>3</sup> There were cases when they absconded with public money to the Nepalese territory.<sup>4</sup> Their surrender could neither be demanded by the British nor proffered by Jang Bahadur, for, till 1866, these crimes lay outside the scope of the Extradition Treaty of 1855. Jang Bahadur complained that by enlisting such bad characters, the British were hindering the enforcement of law and order in the bordering Nepalese territory and indirectly encouraging

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1. "The Gurkha is a valuable and useful soldier, but the difficulty of recruiting Gurkhas has always been so great as to induce the Government to limit the number of Gurkha regiments in the service", Governor-General's observation, Sept. 17, 1864, *F.P.A.*, Sept., 1864, 89. It was decided that "when recruits are necessary, the Government must trust to the exertions of individual Gurkhas in order to obtain them". *Ibid.* But this principle was not rigidly adhered to. In 1881, Maj. Ramsay, Commissioner of Kumaon, raised a Corps of Gurkhas in western Nepal by sending agents sub rosa, *F.P.B.*, Apr., 1882. 69—71.
  2. *F.P.A.*, July, 1866, 64—66, the Magars, the Gurungs, the Thakurs and the Kirats generally composed the Nepal Army, officers were Khas or Thakurs: *Cavenagh's Report*, n. 8; *Hodgson's Memorandum on Nepal Army*, n. 12.
  3. *P.C.*, Oct. 29, 1852, 18—19.
  4. *F.P.A.*, Sept., 1864, 87—89.

the desperados. The British officials and agents behaved in an "imprudent, swaggering and contemptuous manner" with the high officials of the court.

Thus "the Nepal Durbar have always played a double part as regards the enlistment of Gurkhas in the British Army" and while no overt opposition was made to these attempts, various measures were resorted to to ensure their failure.<sup>1</sup> Whenever the Durbar extended its co-operation, the recruits procured by it were found to be of mixed or inferior description, unfit for service and not of martial classes too. However, so long as Jang Bahadur lived the problem of the Gurkha recruitment could not successfully be solved. He put every indirect obstacle in the way and after him his successor Ranudip Singh followed the same policy. Resident Girdlestone strongly urged the Government to raise the recruitment question as an important political issue with the Durbar, but the Government was reluctant.<sup>2</sup>

After Jang Bahadur's death, in 1877, the British Government made a strong effort to induce Ranudip Singh, his brother and successor, for a more liberal policy in this regard. The attempt ended in failure. Between 1879 and 1882 the military authorities in India suggested "coercive measures to bring the Durbar to reason". But the Durbar took more stringent measures. The aspirants for British service were threatened with capital punishment. Some were executed.<sup>3</sup> Generally speaking the Nepalese Government, as a matter of national policy, did not encourage the enlistment of the Gurkhas in the British Army nor of the aliens in their own army.

It was only in the times of Prime Minister Bir Shamsheer that the Nepalese Government freely allowed the enlistment of its subjects and Nepal came to be termed as the "recruiting ground for the British Army". After Jang Bahadur's death, during the days of turmoil in Nepal, the Gurkhas of the Indian Army were loyally serving their adopted mistress, the Queen

1. *F.P.A.*, Sept., 1869, 92-93.

2. *F.P.B.*, Apr., 1882, 69-71.

3. *F.P.A.*, Feb., 1879, 243-56; Mar., 1880, 95-110, *F.P.B.*, Apr., 1882, 69-71.

Empress. In 1863, they were at Ambeyla on the north-west frontier. In 1864, they fought in Bhutan to restore peace to that mountainous frontier ; thence in 1868, up into the Hazara and Black Mountain country to suppress Pathan incursions. In 1871, they were storming Lushai Stockadeo in the most inaccessible parts of the Assam mountains and forests. In the mid-eighties when the King of Burma was intriguing with the French Government the Gurkha soldiers marched with the army into Upper Burma and took Mandalay. In 1876, they went campaigning in Perak on the Malay Peninsula. In 1878—80 came a stern test when Lord Roberts led an army into Afghanistan. In the storming of the Piewar Kotal, in the Khyber Pass, in the defensive battle of Ahmad Khel near British Ghazni, a Gurkha square stood as a rock, held the British front in Robert's famous march from Kabul to Kandhara.

There followed the 1888 reconnaissance on the Tibetan border to Niti, 18,000 ft. up, with the campaign in Sikkim against the Tibetans which took the Gurkhas through the Jalap Pass ; the relief of Chitral ; the long four years of operations on the Indian north-west frontier from 1891 to 1895 when the forces penetrated to Wana, Kaniguram and Makin ; then in 1897 the arduous campaign into the Tirah where the stout-hearted Afridi tribesmen fought to stem the advance. Here the steep, craggy hill of Dargai was gallantly taken by the Gurkhas. In 1891, 50 Gurkhas of the Assam Light Infantry fought for 11 days without respite and defeated their assailants. As a result of the Afghan War, Lord Roberts decided to expand the Gurkha units of the Indian Army by raising second battalions for each of the five regiments. In 1885, rumours of Russian advances into Afghanistan led Maharaja Bir Shamsheer to offer his own army to assist the British in the Russian contingency.<sup>1</sup> The Nepalese Government at once agreed to provide the extra recruits. The same offer was already proposed by Sir Ranudip Singh in 1878 to earn the

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1. Sir Francis Tukes: *Gurkha—The Story of the Gurkhas of Nepal* (London, 1957), p. 172.

thanks of the British Government and to succeed to Jang Bahadur's G.C.B.<sup>1</sup>

In 1904, the three battalions of 1816 had swelled into 16 battalions and Nepal was habituated to seeing the annual winter immigration of recruiting parties to bring the pick of the Magars, the Gurungs, the Khas, the Kirantis, the Limbus and the Rais. The Maharaja had concluded that every Gurkha trained in India who retired to his mountains added to the military strength of Nepal.

As these regiments settled back into cantonments after the Tirah Campaign, the Maharaja Chandra Shamsher took his seat as Prime Minister of Nepal. In 1851, his famous uncle, Jang Bahadur Rana, had remarked to Lawrence Oliphant while looking at a portrait of Queen Victoria, "See, here is the Queen of England and she has not got a more loyal subject than I am." All his life Chandra Shamsher bore this in mind. The corner-stone of Chandra Shamsher's policy was loyalty and friendship to Great Britain. Three days before he heard of the outbreak of hostilities and in fact a day before the 1914 war was declared, the Maharaja had written to the Resident :

"I have come to request you to inform His Excellency the Viceroy and through him the King Emperor that the whole military resources of Nepal are at His Majesty's disposal. We shall be proud if we can be of any service, however little that may be. Though far from the scene of actual conflict, we yield to none in our devotion and friendship to His Majesty's person and Empire. We have spoken of our friendship on many occasions ; should time allow, we will speak in deeds. May I say I am speaking to you in double capacity : firstly, as Marshal of the Gurkhas and secondly as a Major-General in His Majesty's Army."<sup>2</sup> In such a dark hour for England, Nepal, as a small friendly State outside the borders of India, rose to the height of the occasion under Chandra Shamsher, and rendered every assistance and help that was possible, considering the limited resources she possessed. Her help

1. *F.P.A.*, Oct. 28, 1878, Military Department, No. 532 K.

2. *F.P.S.*, Internal, Sept., 1914, Appendix to Notes, also Proceeding No. 16.



adds more to her glory when we consider the spirit that moved her to action. That spirit has nowhere been more appropriately and admirably described than in the words of Mr. Asquith at the Guild Hall meeting held on May 19, 1915 :

“It was not founded on any obligation but upon goodwill and sympathy.”

The British Government at once accepted with gratitude Nepal's offer. The first step was a request for a loan of 6,000 troops from Nepal for general service within the borders of India. The Maharaja at once organized the drafts required. Seven thousand five hundred men left for India on March 3 and 4 in two detachments under the direction of Gen. Baber Shamsheer, the Maharaja's second son, who was appointed Inspector-General of the Nepalese contingent and was attached to the Army Headquarters in India. These four regiments, under the Command of Commanding-General Padma Shamsheer, the Maharaja's nephew, proceeded at once to the north-west frontier, while two other regiments—the crack battalions which constituted the personal bodyguard of the Maharaja—were attached to another force stationed in the United Provinces under Gen. Tej Shamsheer. This great loan of the finest troops in Nepal was increased by the offer to the Government of India of the whole stock of Lee-Enfield rifles which the State possessed at that time. At the end of December, three fresh regiments of 1,000 men each left Nepal under the command of the Maharaja's third son, Gen. Kaiser Shamsheer. Of these, two, under the command of Maj.-Gen. Shere Shamsheer, the Maharaja's half-brother, joined the troops under Gen. Padma in the north-west. A fourth battalion that followed six weeks later remained in the United Provinces. Nepal had been asked for 4,000 men but he sent 4,757. From time to time new drafts were despatched from Kathmandu. Six hundred and fifty-eight men were sent in December, 1916 ; 1,050 about a year later. A third draft of 779 left in February, 1918, and a fourth contingent of 1,800 men was on the point of marching south when the end of the war disappointed it. Thus, in all, a total of 16,545 soldiers of first-rate quality were freely loaned by Nepal at this crucial moment in the history of India. Nepalese units, keeping the peace on the touchy and important frontier, thus

relieved British and Indian battalions to join the struggle overseas. India was able to crush the widespread and dangerous Mahsud rising on the borders of Afghanistan with the help of these experienced Gurkhas. They fought in the winter trenches of France, dealt harshly with the Germans at Neuve Chapelle, attacked at Ypres, crunched among the rocks of Gallipoli, Palestine, Baluchistan, paraded the deserts of Suez, Egypt and Mesopotamia and pounded the weary miles away from Khaniqin to the shores of the Caspian Sea. Gen. Sir James Willcocks, Commanding the Indian Corps, wrote :

“...I have now come to the conclusion that the best of my troops in France were the Gurkhas.... Taciturn by nature, brave and loyal to a degree, the Gurkhas ended, as I knew they would, second to none.”

The words of Mr. Candler are a just and eloquent recognition of the sturdy gallantry of these hill-fighters : “The hill men of Nepal have stood the test as well as the best.”<sup>1</sup>

The renown of this small nation springs from the fighting capacity of the Gurkha infantrymen who fought from China to France and from the Black Sea to Indonesia.

“Free from any treaty, any obligation, any promise, the Gurkha people at once and ungrudgingly sent 2,00,000 of their men to help us in the first Great War of 1914—18. Almost wherever was a theatre of war, the Gurkhas were to be found everywhere.” They added to their great courage in France, Africa, Mesopotamia and in the North-West Frontier Province. And to those who know, when they see the map of the country of Nepal, to them must always recur the thought of what the people of that country have done for us.”<sup>2</sup> The Gurkhas laid their lives at the altar of friendship during the First World War under Prime Minister Chandra Shamsheer.

The Gurkhas were always regarded as the most dependable, the very cream, the *nulli secundus* of the Indian Army. The British Resident, Col. Kinnison, in 1917 summed up thus :

“As for the Gurkha troops in the Indian Army, whether enlisted before the war or specially sent by His Highness for the war, they fought all over the world, and, as ever, main=

1. E. Candler : *The Sepoy* (London, 1919), p. 18.

2. P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. II (London, 1928), p. 146.

tained the grand tradition of their race for valour and self-sacrifice.... His Highness in 1901 found existing a limited, conditional and somewhat lukewarm friendship ; he transformed it into a brotherhood, sealed by the comradeship of war in a religious cause which, please God, will last as long as the British Empire and the Kingdom of Nepal endure....”

For nearly a century, Nepal's relations with the British in India remained close and cordial and Gurkha soldiers in the British forces had had much to do for this cordiality. In short, Nepal's ready response to the demand for soldiers helped cement the Indo-Nepalese relations till the last days of the Rana Raj.

## CHAPTER NINE

### MODERNIZATION OF NEPAL

The history of Nepal is the history of the administration, reforms and policies of the Rana Rulers, more so since Rana Jang Bahadur's rise to power. Two great Maharajas of Nepal, Jang Bahadur and Chandra Shamsher, had been strict in their maintenance of the natural development of their fellow countrymen along lines that were familiar to them, Oriental in essence and uninfluenced by the theories and experiments of social life of other countries. There had, of course, been a steady and, on the whole, successful attempt to introduce in Nepal the material facilities and methods which a Western civilization had tested and found satisfactory.

Maharaja Chandra Shamsher, on succeeding to power, consolidated his position by a rapid and judicious action and began the difficult task of Modernization of Nepal.

Chandra Shamsher once said to Percival Landon : "Of course, it will take time, I am afraid, for the people of this country to look kindly upon innovations, but perseverance and tact are sure to carry the day in the long run." It was the fear that the use of the powers by such autocrats might bring about discontent and friction if they were exercised in a way foreign to the genius of those who were thus ruled. But neither Maharaja Chandra nor his great predecessor, Jang Bahadur, made any such mistake. The solid nature of Nepal's independence and progress had been due to a constant recognition on the part of her rulers of the need of making the people understand as well as obey. The well-intentioned reforms which were or were not conferring benefits upon India were regarded in Nepal with a mixture of astonishment and incredulity.

The Nepal Government adopted a policy which, in the circumstances, was natural. A small number of the sons of the aristocracy were sent to Japan for technical training with an accent on modern methods of engineering. It was thought that thus the advantages of modern science could be enjoyed by Nepal without the corresponding danger of the introduction of men imbued with Western principles of democracy. Even this slight departure from the traditions of the land met with some criticism, but the Maharaja had his way. But this and other experiments such as the establishment of a "Shresta Pathshala" were necessary in order to test by practical application the methods that were best suited for the development of a body of expert officials. In general, the aim of the Government had been to draw into the public service those classes of high social position which in the past were full of discontent.

### **Administrative Reforms**

The administration of Nepal had followed on lines which reflected its history. Prithvi Narayan found it advisable to act much as William the Conqueror did. He created a feudal system of a military type, assessed the revenues to be drawn from each part of the country in a rough but not in an unjust manner, and left it almost entirely to the feudal overlord to maintain order, collect and remit his dues to Kathmandu, and execute justice. Brian Hodgson summed up the natural result of this policy as allowing the lord and his soldiers to collect as much as they could from the people. Moreover, rough justice was secured by the rivalries and jealousies that existed between these feudal chieftains.

The earlier administrators of Nepal had hardly the time to develop any consistent reformation. It had been only in recent years that the internal order of the country had enabled the Government to attempt a steady amelioration of the law.

The first thing that was needed was a reformation of the Public Department of the State. Into these ancient channels a new spirit was breathed and honesty and competence in administration gradually filtered down from Kathmandu to the remotest village lost among the Himalayan snows. The spas-

modic and uncertain rights of appeal to the Government were confirmed and extended. Although the Maharaja had in his conduct of the State affairs something of an inaccessibility, it was, as a matter of fact, easier for an aggrieved labourer on the land to obtain a direct hearing from Chandra than it would be for a ryot in a similar position to attract the personal attention of even a Commissioner in India. This was a system which worked excellently well where a man of insight and experience formed the court of appeal, but the danger of any autocratic method of government often lay more in the uncertainty of the nature of his successor than in any real mistrust of the personal altruism or firmness of the man who had won his way to power. The Indian administration thus provided the one necessary check upon a beneficent autocracy. Against corruption in the Public Service, the Nepal Government had taken a vigorous and steady stand, and so far as possible the Maharaja had seen to it that the wheels of the Government continued to revolve long after his own steadying hand had been removed.

Nepal had long been accustomed to the annual renewing of all appointments. Bhimsen first realized the weight of the opposition he had to encounter in spite of a brilliant and unhampered administration of the affairs of the country for some 30 years. This ceremony continued in a much improved shape. It was the Prime Minister, the actual governor of the country, who thus reviewed year after year the work of those who served with him. Naturally the changes that were annually necessary became fewer and fewer as it was realized by public servants that industry and capacity alone would ensure the retention of their posts. In olden days when a new man was appointed head of a public office, he used his position for the wholesale rewarding of his supporters and the discomfiture of his opponents. His action was rarely questioned, and the amount of injustice done was exceeded only by the instability and want of continuity thus imported into the public service. But in these days the Government would take prompt action were there even a suspicion that anything had been done by the head of a department from a motive other than that of public service. The then Maharaja had time and again impressed upon the members of the various departments

of State that their service might be regarded as permanent until by their own misconduct or incapacity or idleness they compelled the Government to make use of its right of abrupt dismissal. It was to be regretted that civil Government posts in Nepal carried no pension.

A point of great importance was the resumption by the Government of a large amount of land which had at one time or another been granted in return for military service. Of course, compensation had been given in every case ; and the conversion of these interests had always been a matter for the consideration and approval of the man owning the jagir. The only matter that deserved record was the abolition of the bad old system by which, in a greater or lesser degree, any Government official was permitted to requisition both goods and services on a nominally State business. Even for the tours of inspection by the Prime Minister himself unpaid labour and unfairly cheapened goods were the things of the past. The peasant of Nepal was no longer compelled to furnish the beasts required for the annual sacrifices at the Durga Puja festival at low or even nominal rates. Nothing perhaps had brought so directly to the knowledge of the people the new spirit which actuated the Nepal Government than that relief.

The Terai, wherein, of course, most of the agriculture of Nepal was centred, had vast forest domains. These forests were carefully supervised by a regular State department. The experience of the Indian Forest Institute at Dehra Dun had been drawn upon for that purpose and increasing use was being made of the skill and organization that had made the Forest Department of the Indian Government famous throughout the world. Mr. J. V. Collier had been entrusted with the direction of that service and it had largely been due to his energies that the roadway, which was being constructed from Rexaul towards the capital, had been enabled to achieve its existing success. Mr. Collier was also to be credited with the reclamation of large tracts of the Terai, especially in the districts of Morung, Motihari, Sarlahi, Chitawan, Surkhet and Kailash-Kanchanpar.

The commercial treaty had settled the question of customs duties so far as the main revenue of Nepal was concerned. The duties upon these imports and exports provided a steady and

important revenue to the State and as such much had been done to unify the tolls, the anomalous nature of which had caused a good deal of difficulty and discontent in the olden days. Local duties levied on goods in transit among the hill districts, resembling the inter-provincial imposition known as "likin" in China, were abolished—a boon which was greatly appreciated by the workers of the remoter districts. A similar exaction in the Terai upon goods displayed for sale at the fairs in different localities had been discontinued since 1914. Dues somewhat of the nature of octroi that had long been imposed upon the transport of goods within the valley of Kathmandu also disappeared and other forms of taxation that were once customary along the Chitlong-Rexaul road had been done away with.

### **Social Laws And Customs**

Among the Indian people, religion had from the earliest days been regarded as a matter of direct support and defence of the Government. In Nepal, the tradition of life and thought was less changed from that of early India. The religious law remained to form the foundation of the existing system of administration. The Brahmin and the cow were regarded as sacred. Religion and religious prejudices attended a man throughout his life, from birth to death. But there was something which had obviously gone unnoticed in Nepal. The Brahmin had for so long been the senior caste that it had almost been forgotten that there was a moment when the Kshatriya took precedence over him. The sovereign had the right to change the rules in consultation with the highest spiritual authorities, openly and without concealment. Abolition of Sati was, of course, the obvious illustration of the inherent right. In Nepal, unlike India, there had hitherto been no compromise of any kind for an offence which trespassed the laws of caste. But in India, to this day, a man who loses his caste by infringing its cardinal regulations is sometimes permitted to remain unmolested within its fold by the connivance of the priests. In Nepal, however, there was no such possibility, and the absolute need of purification in such circumstances was recognized and was a familiar part of the occasional ritual of the Hindu faith. The privilege was



one which was based upon the highest and most ancient authority, and was jealously vindicated by prince and people alike. That a general indulgence was granted to all soldiers detailed for overseas military operations, provided they neither consciously broke the caste law nor stayed longer than their actual work required, was an illustration of the extent to which the progress of its development had been harmonized with the strictest religious observations. But there was another and even greater proof of that spirit of adjustment which had just been realized, and that was the abolition of slavery.

### **Abolition Of Slavery**

The efforts of the Maharaja to raise not merely the military strength and the political sovereignty of Nepal but its moral and humanitarian standards also had been crowned with success. The question of slavery was one that went deep into the heart of all human societies and so long as any State tolerated it within its boundaries, it had to render a reason to the civilized world why this blot upon its fair name had been permitted to continue.

The attitude of master and slave in Nepal strongly resembled that which existed in the better-class country residences of the Southern States of America before the war of liberation. The slave was in many respects treated as a member of the family, and much liberty was granted to him should he prove able to benefit both himself and his master by skill in any particular trade or craft. However successful the slave might become, he rarely took advantage of any opportunity of severing his connections with the family of his master. The slave, who had better use of his talents than his master, acted of his own free will as the bread-winner after the legal connection had been terminated. He was sometimes even appointed as guardian when the owner was a minor. The Nepalese did not, except in rare cases, ill-treat their slaves. It may be said that this was due merely to a wish not to injure their own property; but at least it introduced a pleasant incentive to kindly relations between the two which in general tended to make the life of the slave a more tolerable existence than that of many a hard-driven and desperate worker in a nominally free country;

Jang Bahadur was the first who attempted to reform the old system. He made a law forbidding any free person to sell himself into slavery and making it illegal for a parent to dispose of his children. He also ordered that no slave who had run away from his master and had settled down in the districts of Naya Muluk and Morung should be returned to his owner. Neither of these enactments was of much use. It was found impossible to prevent men from selling themselves and their children when in desperation, and it was perhaps a pleasant commentary upon the system of slavery in Nepal that scarcely any runaway was willing to exchange the comfortable slavery of the uplands for the unhealthy liberty of the Terai. Maharaja Dev Shamsher made the first attempt to abolish slavery on any large scale. He issued a proclamation that the female slaves of Kaski and Lamjung, the two large estates attached to the office of the Prime Minister, were free women. But he had reckoned without taking into consideration the inherent difficulties of interfering with any ancient tradition. The scheme pleased no one. The old regime offered an absolute and flat refusal from the very beginning. Those who, owing perhaps to their official position, were compelled to make some show of deference to the order retained their slaves under another name. Even among these owners there were only 100 nominal liberations in the whole of Kathmandu, where Jang Bahadur subsequently issued a similar proclamation.

Chandra Shamsher, however, had taken a characteristic line in the matter. His first action was to see that the nominal reforms of Jang Bahadur, prohibiting the inclusion in the ranks of slavery of any man or woman who was not born into it, were rigidly enforced. His next step was to make it impossible for any sale of slaves to take place without due intimation to their relatives of their right of pre-emption. Nor was the sum to be paid fixed by the arbitrary decision of the slave owners. For a payment varying from Rs. 25 to Rs. 120 any slave might claim the right to freedom should there be any attempt on the part of his master to sell him to another. The Maharaja also issued an order for the immediate freeing of all slaves that legally came into the possession of the Government. Thus where a man was punished by confiscation of his property, his slaves, coming into the possession of the Government, were at

once liberated. Two enactments were published inviting any slave to become a free settler in the district of Chitawan in the Terai. No man had the right to prevent any slave who accepted the offer of the Government from taking up this work. In olden days, those slaves who had run away into India had no chance of returning without the forfeiture of the ransom from their old masters, and probably the entire amount of their earnings in India during the period of their absence. The new law compelled a master to accept from any slave who had run away for the space of three years to any foreign country the same small redemption fee by which he could secure the freedom of any slave his master attempted to get rid of. If a slave remained a fugitive for a period of 10 years he would return to Nepal as a free man without payment of any ransom whatever. These orders did more than merely offer freedom on liberal terms to a large number of individuals. By accustoming the Nepalese to adopt a new and more civilized point of view they struck at the heart of the practice. P. Landon writes : "With a stroke of pen, we abolished slavery from all land under our administration in India, but we have never taken upon ourselves to criticize the retention of a certain form of human slavery in such a country as Nepal, where religion, tradition and even national prosperity were largely responsible for its toleration. But the Maharaja has long been aware that the continued existence of thralldom in any form was inconsistent with the standards that he had set for himself and for Nepal."<sup>1</sup> He appealed : "If such a custom is definitely prejudicial to the best interests of the people, the community and the country, it is incumbent on us to change or abolish it forthwith for the common good."

Dealing with the economic aspects of slavery, the Maharaja used a vivid illustration to show the difference in the quantity of work done by slaves and that of free men. "The incentive to forced labour was the last. Slaves, while they work, look behind to protect their backs, while a free man labours looking forward to his hire, which he knows will be proportional to his work and upon which rests his hope of provision for his family and himself." A slave could not be dismissed, his sustenance

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1. P. Landon : *Nepal*, Vol. II (1928), pp. 165-166,

was assured to him whether he was slow or quick with his job, whether he was skilful or untrained ; he could never have the incentive of the free man. Experience gained in other countries proved that a free labourer was three times more efficient than a slave. Freely admitting that the Nepalese did not ill-treat slaves, the Maharaja estimated that among them one hired man was equal to two slaves. Turning to another aspect of the question, he reminded his bearers that at some time or the other, generally always, all slave-owners had to maintain unproductive hands—the old, the ill, the infirm, the mother, and the young ; and there was always the risk of loss by death or desertion. Moreover, from the financial point of view, an employer did not have to pay a lump sum down for hired labour, as he had to do when purchasing slaves ; his capital was free. The Maharaja added the comment that the liberation of slaves in Nepal would in itself supply the Bani servants (contracted labour) that would be needed when this reform was carried through. His Highness did not depend upon mere oratory to press home his great intention. He dealt directly with what he regarded as the intolerable outrage of the sale of the children of slaves. He said : “This inhuman practice is beyond all condemnation, and is rightly looked upon as the worst feature of the institution.” The law in Nepal provided that the father of any child by a slave girl should have the right to emancipate the child by payment of the legal amount of Rs. 35 to the master of the girl. It had become clear to him that a system which permitted of this abominable tyranny must be put an end to. Then he turned to a curious side of the question—that the slaves were often white elephants to their owners and that the family honour compelled each successive generation, whether it could afford it or not, to maintain the number of slaves that had been handed down to it by its forefathers ; as a result the family estate had often to be mortgaged, or even handed over to the profit of the slaves themselves. Such families generally treated their slaves with unusual humanity.

The Maharaja also dealt with the general question of the possibility of an exodus of Nepalese freed men to India. He regarded it as improbable, and pointed out that it was the escaped slave who fell most easily into the hands of unscrupul-

ous labour agents across the border. A careful distinction was drawn by him between such servitude and the lot of Nepalese who took the opportunity to enlist in the Gurkha battalions of the Indian Army and thus enjoyed the steady guarantees of fair recompense and happiness offered by the Indian Government.

The institution of slavery prevailed in the hills only. In the Terai and in the larger towns on the southern foot-hills of the Himalayas, means could usually be devised for a slave to break away into British territory. There were 15,719 owners of slaves, and the number held in slavery was 51,419. The total population of the country was estimated at about 55,73,788 and, therefore, 55,06,650 or nearly 99 per cent of the population are neither slaves nor slave-owners. "Now if 99 per cent can carry on their every-day work as employees or employers without slaves, it is curious that the masters, who are a little over a quarter of the one per cent remaining, should feel the abolition as a hardship and be under the apprehension that their every-day work will come to a standstill."

With a wide knowledge of the experience of other countries at the time of a general liberation of slaves, the Maharaja pointed out that even in the comparatively inconspicuous matter of the necessity for the existence of slaves to perform certain rituals in marriages and other ceremonies, other slave countries had suffered no trouble. It was forgotten that if the liberated slaves must at once look for remunerative work by which to keep themselves and their families, they could not afford to refuse any work that was fairly paid. He noted also that from the religious point of view, India herself had seen many changes in the traditional allotment of occupations. "Consider all honest work as dignified, and you will not lose in self-esteem." Slavery was doomed by the spread of knowledge ; its abolition was merely a question of time.

He clinched a forcible appeal by a reference to the fact that large and increasing numbers of Nepalese living in Sikkim, Darjeeling and the adjacent hill tracts under identical conditions as prevail in Nepal were managing without slaves.

"We alone labour under the incubus when even countries known in the past as uncivilized have become free from it....

It is fervently hoped that the unanimous opinion of this assembly, representative of the best in the land, will be that this inhuman, barbarous, immoral and worthless custom shall be put to an end."

The Maharaja then proceeded to state the practical steps. There were three clauses of the new law :

(i) On and from a certain date, to be fixed as early as possible, in consonance with general opinion, the legal status of slavery shall cease and terminate throughout the Kingdom of Nepal.

(ii) Owners shall be given the statutory price for every slave held by them, according to the register, that is, over whom their claim has been fully established.

(iii) Slaves from a fixed date shall be apprenticed to their former owners for a period of seven years ; that is, the slaves shall be bound to labour for their masters, the latter in return providing them with food and clothing as at present.

During those seven years the money paid by the Government for each slave, if invested at 10 per cent compound interest which was a moderate rate of interest in Nepal would be practically doubled, while, at the usually prevailing rate of interest of 16 per cent, it would be nearly trebled. The Prime Minister of Nepal, Sir Chandra Shamsher Jang, had thus been able to redeem the pledge he made to the world and realized one of the dreams of his life.

Tracts of cultivable land had been thrown open to the emancipated slaves in the hills and reclamation and clearance work had been started in the Terai, suitable advances of cash being made to the freed men. Nepal had wiped out the last miserable symbol of an old regime and in this, the first of all human duties, could stand forward as in all respects the equal of her sister sovereign States. The abolition of slavery in Nepal was noted with respect by all the more prominent newspapers in the world.

### **Abolition Of Sati**

In Nepal, great difficulty was found in an attempt to obliterate this ancient and evil custom. Before Jang Bahadur's days, the burning alive of a widow upon her husband's funeral

pyre was commonly practised in Nepal. It had been abolished in India by Lord William Bentinck. Jang Bahadur also decided to abolish it and he issued instructions that in no case in which the widow was performing or was likely to perform valuable services to her children, her husband's family or the State was she to be allowed to commit this honourable form of suicide. Bir Shamsheer carried the movement a step further. He insisted that the consent of the Prime Minister himself or, in his absence, of the highest legal authority should be obtained before any widow was permitted to immolate herself. This did not have the intended effect. However, Chandra Shamsheer absolutely and completely abolished the practice of Sati in any form from one end of Nepal to the other. It is a tribute to his personal ascendancy that he should have been successful in this, "changing the squares of obsolete tradition into the circles of civilized enlightenment".<sup>1</sup> With orthodoxy, he had every sympathy ; with bigotry he had none.

### **Judicial System**

The Gurkha conquest of 1768 brought about the assimilation of local customs into the general law, but no attempt was made to codify the judicial customs of the country until the days of Jang Bahadur, when an endeavour was made that did not greatly clarify the administration of the tangled system. Another effort was made by Bir Shamsheer, but it was left for Chandra Shamsheer to revise the whole code on two occasions. The first aimed at the identification of the law in all parts of Nepal while the second, besides carrying on this work, mitigated the severity of the punishment to be inflicted. Jang Bahadur had abolished the punishment of mutilation but other undesirable features remained. For example, in the case of those of high social position the punishment incurred by the noble delinquent was frequently inflicted vicariously upon his agent or representative ; since there was no statute of limitations to a large extent, no distinction was made between criminal and civil offences. Moreover, a prosecutor was able to have his case called by any court, provincial or superior, that seemed advantageous to himself.

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1. Sir Francis Tuker : *Gurkha* (London, 1957), p. 180.

The improvements recently enforced by the Nepal Government had humanized the administration of justice without weakening its authority. The court had been thoroughly revised. The hardships had been remitted and the law's delays had largely been curtailed. But Chandra was not satisfied with the improvements he had already effected, and a third revision was made. He was himself the official court of appeal and exercised the prerogative of mercy in every case in which it seemed to him that equity demanded its employment.

No less important was the accessibility of the new code. Printed copies of it were to be consulted at all Magistrates' offices and could be bought for a small price, thus bringing it within the reach of the rich and the poor alike. Formerly only the courts and Government officials could consult it and the mass of people remained in ignorance of the law. They were largely at the mercy of unscrupulous men, and unevenly administered justice. In the new code a careful distinction had been attempted to be drawn between offences against the State or the person or property and those which were transgressions of the two religious ordinances of the people, but religious sentiments played no small part in the former. No missionary was permitted to enter the country. It was actually a penal offence to assist in the conversion of any man to a foreign religion.

Polygamy was practised, the matrimonial law was of an extremely special nature. Religion played a large part in it. A curious custom for which the Nepal system was best known was by which an outraged husband held the right to kill the adulterer at any moment, whenever and wherever he found him, subject to the curious right of the latter, to be given a few minutes' start in a life-and-death race, and cut down his injurer—who, of course, was unarmed—should he overtake him. The curious point about this custom was that either man could be freely impeded or tripped up by the friends of the other. It was rather an inequitable tradition. But the husband had nominally the right of insisting upon that curious test, though he was allowed to put it in practice only after the matter had been submitted to the Prime Minister and all attempts at compromise had failed. Where the offender was a Brahmin, no such right existed, of course, but he was, after conviction, permanently expelled from his caste.



In certain sections of the community, widow marriage was permitted and also the remarriage of such as had been divorced. Child marriage was common among Brahmins and the higher classes. Torture had long been abolished. Observance of the prohibitions of the Hindu religious law was supported by the State. The dining together of high and low castes, the eating of the forbidden foods, and other similar things were offences calling for a special reference in the Nepal code. In such cases, circumstances were usually pleaded and readily listened to. The religious law dictated the laws dealing with inheritance and succession. The complicated regulations of the code were further tangled by the admission of local customs, male relations within three degrees of consanguinity inherited in preference to daughters. Children of lawful wedlock took a larger share of the property than the others, children of different wives took per capita and not as representatives of their mothers. Unmarried daughters had a lien on the joint property to the extent of their dower. The partition of an ancestral estate in Nepal frequently gave rise to much discontent and irritation.

Central courts or Adalats, named Itacihapli, Koteling, Takasar and Dhansar, were established and were allotted particular jurisdictions without much regard to the similarities of their natures. Over them was the Adalat Goswara, a supreme court of appeal, and in all of these tribunals civil and criminal jurisdictions overlapped and the legal rights of Nepal depended so much upon the local custom that assessors were frequently called in to assist the judges. And if great difficulty was experienced in deciding a case, the court would sometimes order a trial by ordeal.

The first action of Maharaja Chandra was to abolish the Takasar and Dhansar courts and to make a distinction between civil and criminal jurisdictions. The Adalat Diwani Koteling dealt with civil cases and Fauzdari Adalat Itacihapli with the criminal. The principle was also established by separating the judicial work from the duty of carrying out the decisions of the court.

In 1906, a Bharadari court of five to 10 Bharadars, officials of the State—or men of high position—was created<sup>1</sup>; and in

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1. Foreign, Internal Proceedings, Part B, Nov., 1907, 409.

1908 the appellate jurisdiction was reformed. The tribunal became the court of appeal from the decisions of the two Sadar courts. These had previously acted as courts of appeal from the decisions of the Provincial Magistrates of the Gunda courts in the hills and the Goswara courts in the Terai. This appellate jurisdiction was taken away from them and given to appeal courts.

The clearance of the wells of justice brought about an increase in litigation. It was found that the judicial work multiplied to such an extent that the Diwani Adalat was ultimately divided into four courts, while the criminal court was divided into two. In Nepal, when fresh evidence was procurable, the court of appeal admitted it, and may ever consider issues not laid before the lower court. The overcrowding of the appeal courts of all kinds was due to the determination of litigation to have serious cases brought ultimately before the immediate consideration of the Prime Minister himself with whom the final judicial authority rested.

The changed judicial system in Nepal was that the four Diwani courts were transformed into a court of registration and did not deal with litigation. The remaining tribunals were known as first, second and third Diwani courts. There was no limit to their civil jurisdiction but an appeal lay against their decisions to the Bharadari court. The first and second Fauzdari courts decided criminal cases of all nature except those which the Sadar Jungi Kotwali or the Court Marshal or the Thana was empowered to deal with. Besides, there was the Amini Goswara court to deal with the reports of the Terai over which the Foreign Office had the control.

The Bharadari or the main appellate court had been reconstituted. It was presided over by a general officer who must be a near relation of the Maharaja. There were four departments under four Hakims, who had certain powers of their own but whose main duty was to prepare and present the case before one of the two benches—each of eight or more judges. The minor appeals dealing with sums up to Rs. 500 were considered by the Hakims. The Prime Minister may only be approached in criminal cases in which the fine amounted to more than Rs. 200 or imprisonment of over six months and in real estate cases concerned with land more

than five bighas in area. In the case of appellate jurisdiction of the Prime Minister, the Niksari judges were drawn from very high families, generals or commanding colonels, the chiefs of the subordinate principalities of Nepal, the family of the Raj Guru and a group of men of long experience in law and practice. The Niksari office had the power to decide cases concerned with sums up to Rs. 2,000 or sentences up to nine years' imprisonment or fines up to Rs. 400 or disputes about land up to 20 bighas in area. These limits on appeal must lie with the Prime Minister himself. The Niksari office had a department which dealt with petitions to the Prime Minister. Last but not the least it acted as the Prime Minister's almonry through which in any case of great hardship he was able to come to the help of those suffering from the oppression of the officials or the wealthy.

The provincial courts dealt with criminal as well as civil cases. Of these provincial courts there were 28 Adalat Courts in the hills and 22 Amini Courts in the plains or the Terai. Besides these there were in the hills 10 Gundas and eight Goswaras composed of responsible military officers. Their chief duty was to see that justice was neither denied nor delayed in the provincial courts. Four of them were courts of first appeal. Nine similar courts existed in the Terai where the chief officers were styled Bada Hakims. There was also a Goswara court in the Terai serving as a court of first appeal.

The Maharaja was well aware of the inconvenience of the system which, though, brought a fair trial within the reach of his people. It was believed that he was considering a revival of the Village Panchayat in order to prevent frivolous and vexatious litigation but it was regarded as doubtful whether the Panchayats would not at times allow local popularity or local prejudice to defeat the ends of justice. The local courts in the Terai accepted and issued civil processes in direct communication with the British Indian courts.<sup>1</sup>

### **Progress Of Education**

The progress of Nepal in social and educational work had been affected by the same religious rules and traditions that

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1. Foreign Department Notification No. 327, *E.C.*, dated Jan, 31, 1907 ; *F.S.E.*, Dec., 1907, 121-123.

had coloured its judicial system. Dr. Wright has summed up that the subject might be dismissed as briefly as that of snakes in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> For a long time the present Maharaja did not see his way to make any great improvement in education which had been painfully inaugurated by his predecessor Ranudip Singh and by Gen. Bir Shamsher. Dev Shamsher, in his irresponsible way, proclaimed a system of universal instruction<sup>2</sup> for which he made provision of money. One or two schools were indeed founded in Kathmandu. In fact, "the first beginnings of education were looked upon with something of a mistrust". The present Maharaja began a new regime by sending some of the sons of the aristocracy to Japan in 1902.<sup>3</sup> At the meeting of the Bharadars in 1906, the Maharaja tentatively put before the responsible officials of Nepal a proposal that students should be sent for studies to Europe or America. The council advised against this scheme and suggested that it would be better to invite the help of Indian experts. In general, this policy had been adopted and the youths of Nepal had been sent in large numbers to India to take advantage of the excellent facilities for higher education which were afforded there. In 1919, the Government established an English College in Kathmandu which later became the graveyard of the Rana Rule,<sup>4</sup> and which was attended by several hundred students who made a fair show in the Matriculation examination of the Sanskrit College at Benaras. In a report, it was significant that, in 1901, the number of new students admitted to the English Department numbered 17, whereas, 18 years later, they had increased to 142. Many of the men passed on to secondary schools in the universities in India.

There were many primary schools throughout the country but the results due to ill-organized instruction were not satisfactory and the Nepal Government again took up the matter into its consideration. There was not a more ardent advocate of education in Asia than the Prime Minister of Nepal.

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1. Daniel Wright ; *History of Nepal* (London, 1877), Encl. Indian Ed. (Calcutta, 1958), p. 18.
  2. *Foreign External Proceedings*, Nov., 1891, 16—21.
  3. P. Landon : *Nepal* (London, 1928), Vol. II, p. 179.
  4. K. P. Shrivastava : *Nepal ki Kahani* (Hindi) (Delhi, 1955), p. 108.

He saw that it was not merely an important but a vital aid to the progress of an individual as well as of the nation, and therefore he had especially interested himself in the technical side of education. He had already laid the foundation and determined that his successors, if not himself, should be enabled to build upon a well-thought-out structure of national education. The Nepal schools were affiliated to the University of Patna and for this Nepal was grateful to the Government of India.

### **Social Reforms**

In the wide field of social reforms the same reactionary tendencies were visible. The Prime Minister had set the fashion for a general education, curtailed unnecessary expenses of daily life, and through the Maharani had been successful in replacing the costly and cumbersome gowns worn lately by the ladies of the better classes by dresses of simpler materials and more sensible fashion. He also successfully dealt with the problem of drinking. The number of liquor shops was greatly reduced. No liquor might be sold at any of the fairs and festivals held at the different holy places in the Kingdom.

Opium was forbidden except under licence and it had practically been banished from the Terai. A more difficult vice to deal with was gambling. In general, gambling in public was forbidden but an explicit permission to be found in the Sastras had prevented the laws of Nepal from prohibiting public gambling on certain festivals (*viz.* Diwali and Dussehra). The Maharaja prohibited any credit to be extended to the loser. Cash must be paid on the spot.

The Maharaja had intervened sternly to put an end to the malversation of religious endowments. Money left or given for any religious purpose would be employed for that purpose and for nothing else.

After consultation with the spiritual head of Nepal an end had practically been put to the bad old custom that compelled any man who crossed the frontier into India for military service or any other purpose to go through the "Patia" or purification ceremony on his return. But it was obvious that a journey to a neighbouring country endowed with more holy shrines than even Nepal itself could not reasonably be regarded as a

defilement. The custom was therefore modified suitably. A small rite and the payment of a nominal fee were all that was required.

Maharaja Bir Shamsheer had established a central hospital in Kathmandu, but the remaining State was without any organized medical centre to deal with general illness and the occasional trouble caused by epidemics. One of the greatest difficulties that the reform of the science of medicine encountered in India was the obstinate and natural preference of the natives for their own Ayurvedic system of medicine that properly controlled and contributed its fair share of success to the healing art but had no knowledge of or sympathy with the advanced methods of treatment discovered by modern science. Chandra whose travels and perhaps whose personal indebtedness to modern medicine and surgery had convinced him of the necessity of incorporating the present-day knowledge in the Pharmacopeia of Nepal had treated both schools with generosity. He had established 20 district centres which were in charge of young men then completing their course of education in India. The Ayurvedic School in Kathmandu was reinforced by a new academy under the charge of four trained doctors. On the opening of the hospital at Bharatgaon, in 1904, the Maharaja noted the impossibility of a far-distant Nepal taking full advantage of the latest developments in the healing art, but added that it would be much regretted if the fullest use was not made of such new light as modern science had thrown and their limited resources were able to employ. In the Terai there existed several hospitals maintained by charity under the charge of physicians from Indian Universities,<sup>1</sup> and the mountainous regions of Nepal had not been neglected.

A bacteriological department had been established in Kathmandu and electrical treatment was provided in an annexe to the General Hospital.<sup>2</sup> Vaccination was not entirely compulsory, but it was free to those who chose to avail themselves of the protection against a disease that, though never

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1. *Foreign External Proceedings, Part B*, Nov., 1891, 162—166. also *Foreign Secret Consultation, External*, July, 1900, 284,
  2. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1904, 281—285.

attaining the gravity of an epidemic, was rarely absent from Nepal. A War Memorial Military Hospital was started. It was not only remarkable as a memorial to the thousands of Nepalese who had died in the Great War, but was completed in a manner that would be envied by the majority of military stations in India, and was one of the best equipped hospitals in Asia. Canals, roads, rail and ropeways, hospitals and other civil buildings, bridges, waterworks, electrical installations, tubewells and municipal undertakings were coming into existence here, there and everywhere. The Ayurvedic School of Medical Thought was not neglected.

### **Improvements In The Army**

There is perhaps no military establishment in the world which has been so rapidly and so efficiently reformed as the Army in Nepal. In 1885, the Maharaja succeeded to the office of Senior Commanding General which in effect gave him the responsibility for the upkeep, drill and discipline of the Army. In 1892, when acting on behalf of his brother, he obtained from Lord Lansdowne a gift of modern rifles which infused a new life into the military vigour of the home forces of the Gurkhas. As Lord Roberts testified, the troops under Prime Minister Chandra realized that the days of the old hit-or-miss tactics and mass attacks were over with the invention of the smokeless powder and he set himself to ensure the utmost military efficiency that could be got from one of the warrior nations of the East. He found at the outset an almost complete want of co-ordination in the training of the Army. There were no regular text-books, and manuscript notes, ill-arranged and insufficiently understood, formed the basis of the instruction given. His first work was to compile a set of drill books in the Parvattia language as were used in the British Army. The technical experience and efficiency of the officers was carefully considered. Examinations were held and according to their result officers were chosen and commissioned. The sons of the Prime Minister while infants received the title of general. Promotion in Nepal depended upon efficiency. The organization and administration of the departments dealing with military stores, equipment, ammunition, transport and other necessities were also reformed and the military law of the

country had been supplemented by the compilation of an active service code which proved of great use when the Nepal contingents were sent to India during the Great War. Before Chandra's time, military service in Nepal had, as a rule, been recompensed by an assignment for life of land in different parts of the country. This system produced so many evils that he gradually transformed this method of payment into cash payment. The service of porters, carriers, drivers, and other non-combatant corps had been reorganized and a fair wage given in all cases. The Government of Nepal had in times of emergency the right of conscripting labour.

The regular Army of Nepal numbered about 28,000 men. The reserves who had military training were liable for service at the call of the Prime Minister. The entire military strength of Nepal was much greater. There was compulsory service of three years with the right to remain in the Army after that period on the recommendation of the Commanding Officer. In the Nepalese capital, the men of the Army were not quartered in barracks though their construction was contemplated. The essential principle of the army organization was that it should be capable of indefinite extension in any emergency and the system adopted by Maharaja Chandra proved equal to the enormous strain imposed upon it by the 1914 war.

For many decades, the Nepalese Army depended for efficient fire-arms upon the gift or purchase of rifles from the Indian Government.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, Nepal fretted against this dependence on the generosity of her neighbour and, on the other, the Indian Government feared that by these gifts it might be implicated in the foreign ambitions and activities of Nepal. An arsenal was therefore fully equipped in Kathmandu<sup>2</sup> which was capable of turning out rifles and other necessary articles. The Maharaja obtained by the recently concluded treaty the unrestricted right of importation through India of arms and ammunition and of all necessary machinery. After the conclusion of the war of 1914—18, the Maharaja announced an increase in the pay of the rank and file. Improvements in the medical arm and immediate construction of a

1. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1904, 281—285.

2. *F.S.E.*, July, 1900. 284.



military hospital were then begun. His Highness Maharaja Chandra Shamsher gave them the lesson of patriotism which was the lodestar of every man in the country.

The Gurkhas were given a prominent place in the Indian Army. In November, 1814, a corps under Lt. Young was formed in Dehra Dun. Certain special privileges were granted to the first four regiments of the Gurkha Rifles. The first Gurkha Rifle was established at Dharamshala, the second at Dehra Dun, the third at Almora and the fourth at Bakloh. Dehra Dun was an Enclave of Nepal. They possessed the invaluable characteristics in the matter of discipline, however hard the life in war may be. Their fame widely spread.

### **Waterworks**

The three large towns of the Valley were supplied with pure drinking water from independent sources. The most recent was that which supplied Patan.<sup>1</sup> It was the first wife of the then Prime Minister, Bada Maharani Chandra Lok Bhakta Laxmi Devi, who interested herself in the lamentable hygienic conditions of Patan. The work was done by Col. Kuma who replaced the old structure which had been put up by Gen. Bhimsen Thapa nearly 100 years ago. Elsewhere in Nepal, pipe water had been provided. Gen. Babar Shamsher provided it in Pokhara in Western Nepal.

### **Roads**

The trade and prosperity of Nepal were greatly impaired by the absence of good roads. There were no railways in Nepal and the mountainous character of the country made it necessary that all the transport in the hills should be carried on human shoulders. It was commercially impossible to develop much of the mineral wealth of the country. The vast resources of coal and copper that Nepal was credibly reputed to possess could not be advantageously worked. This condition of things had been chiefly due to the cost difficulties presented by the mountainous character of the territory because Nepal lay along the Himalayas and a good road system had been a virtual impossibility. The crossing of the rivers caused intoler-

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1. *F.S.E.*, Aug., 1904, 281—285.

able delays. The streams were spanned by mere rope-bridges which needed proper maintenance and, in many cases, were at the mercy of floods. The use of the curious timber cantilever bridges was an improvement but they were also rendered useless by any unusual rise in their level. The recent policy of the Government of Nepal had been to replace fords, ferries, rope-bridges and cantilever bridges by suspension or lattice-girder bridges. During Maharaja Chandra's term a fine iron-girder bridge connecting Kathmandu with Patan and one over river Nakhu at Nakhu were built. Iron lattice-girder bridges had been built over rivers Karra, Samari, Bhainsi, Sirsiya, Kujabad, Dhobi Khola (in Kathmandu) and Dokaphade. Wire-rope suspension bridges had been built across the Baghmati, three over the Sunkosi, one each over the Indrani, the Buddhi-Gandak, the Kali-Gandak, the Trisuli and the Kosi, the Likhnu and the Tamor.

The roads of Nepal had been improved rather by bridges than by a reconstruction of their surfaces. But the road from India to Kathmandu was one conspicuous exception.<sup>1</sup> It ran from Birganj to Bhimphedi. The Government decided that, if possible, an aerial ropeway should be constructed so as to facilitate the transit of goods over these passes to and from Kathmandu without, in any way, opening up for passenger traffic the new avenue into the capital. The Maharaja took up the question in 1904.

### **Electric Supply**

The power needs of the capital were supplied by a fine installation near Phorping. This project was completed in 1911. The water supply to this was through a main pipe-line 2,538 ft. long and the pressure of water at the power house end was 288 lb. per square inch. The transmission line was seven miles long and twice crossed the Baghmati by spans of 900 ft. and 600 ft.<sup>2</sup>

The power rate had been kept at a figure which Londoners might envy—two annas per unit. The supply of electricity was a source of a large number of the reforms of the past 15 years.

1. *F.S.E.*, Dec., 1907, 121—123.

2. *F.S.E.*, Dec., 1910, 431—434.

### **Other Reforms**

Famine had always been one of the enemies of Nepal. The country was almost entirely dependent upon a good monsoon for its supply of food. The mountainous nature of the State made it difficult to find large areas of cultivation needing artificial irrigation in the Terai. The water had been carefully and consistently conserved by a system that found its best illustration in Saptarai district.<sup>1</sup> After a great difficulty and several failures, the present method was devised by Mr. Hamkell and Mr. S. Ataim. Large granaries circular in shape were built in many parts of the country for the storage of surplus grain in years of plenty. The spectre of famine had practically been exorcised by these measures.

Among other improvements was the reorganization and extension of the postal service. Nepal had not yet joined the Postal Union. The stamps, therefore, were valid only for the national service. Any letters addressed to India or beyond had to be franked by Indian stamps.

A telephone line had been laid between Birganj and Kathmandu and there was an extension from Birganj to Hajmania, the Maharaja's winter headquarters, about 30 miles away. The charges per word were three Nepalese pice.

The adoption of the Western calendar for all dates was all the more important. Before this, the official practice was to record the day of the month according to its position in the Dark, or the Bright Fortnight of the lunar month.

### **Tenure Of Land**

For purposes of tenure and assessment of land, Nepal was divided into two regions. One was the flat, warm and rich Terai ; the other contained the mountainous remainder of the State. The former was inhabited by a mixed population which had probably been obliterated and restocked many a time from the adjoining lands. The former was for the Tharus and the latter, by far the larger part of Nepal, provided a home for the Gurkhas, the Newars, the Rais, the Limbus, the Bhotias, the Sherpas and many others.

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1. *F.S.E.*, Dec. , 1910, 431—434.

Between the hills and the Terai was a narrow zone known as Bhitri Desh wherein the important districts of Makhwanpur, Chitawan and Dang-Deokheri Sonar were separately administered. The rest of the territory was annexed to the nearest Terai or hill station. The Terai was divided into 14 main zilas or counties. In the mountainous regions there were 25 counties with the metropolitan districts of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhatgaon. Their main sub-divisions were further divided into smaller areas on the basis of their inhabitants like the Thumbs, the Daras and the Gorkhals which again were parcelled into "Gaons" and "Mouzas".

A standard measure of land, Ropni, had been created to get rid of the inextricable confusion of many different measurements of area according to the quality of land. This Ropni formed the unit for revenue assessment. There was a kind of hereditary complication with which the Maharaja had to deal in standardizing the land revenue in Nepal as well as the difficulty caused by military jagirs. Maize lands were divided into three kinds, namely, Hal, Patay and Kodalay. A Hal area paid one Nepali rupee for the whole area. The Kodalay tenant paid half a rupee as rent for his land. It was different with the rich rice-growing lowlands of Nepal. In the lowlands in the Terai bigha was the standard unit of measurement. The custom of jagirs or lands given as reward for military service was discontinued in the Terai. The custom had lent itself to certain abuses which also had partially been put an end to by Jang Bahadur.

Maharaja Chandra Shamsher began to substitute cash payments for jagirs given for military service. The change had been carried out with great tact and under the direct guarantee of the Government. The rates were fixed and the reasonable scheme had the additional advantage of stabilizing the Government's annual revenue from the land.

All land in Nepal was ultimately the property of the State, but there were freehold estates owned by private individuals, as well as the endowments for religious and charitable purposes, secured, as in the case of private property, by a Birta.<sup>1</sup>

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1. *Land Reforms in Nepal*, Hindu, Weekly Review (Madras), 10, No. 20. May 15, 1961, 11.

The tenants of these lands had no security of possession or fixity of the rent. This guarantee was given by law, that relief from damage caused by drought, floods, hail and landslips entitled a tenant to a proportionate remission of his rent. The register of land ownership had been regularized, and the tenure of hill land in Nepal, from simplicity, justice and security points of view, compared not unfavourably with that controlled by the Government of India.

In the Terai, the land was divided into two classes : Dhanhar and Bhit. Three longitudinal areas were recognized in the Terai—Seir, the upper portion of the forest land ; Majha, the middle ; and Bhatha, the lowest strip. The depredations of wild animals for which Nepal was notorious were taken into consideration. The law dealing with the foreclosure of properties in areas with a high tax had been modified and rendered more equitable. Other abuses, too, were abolished.

Thus was Nepal brought a long way from its dim origins and exposed to the full tide of modern life. And if Prithvi Narayan created for the Gurkhas the Kingdom of Nepal, Jang Bahadur Rana made it a power in Southern Asia and was its great innovator. And Chandra Shamsheer was not only its consolidator and modernizer but put it on the world stage.

## CHAPTER TEN

### CONCLUSION

The history of Indo-Nepalese relations during 1858—1914 is the story of adjustment. It is an account of the cautious friendship between the two powers that realized that their mutual interests lay in composing their sharp differences. The two chose to live as amicable neighbours. It was evidently a desire for peaceful coexistence, if not one of absolute amity. The long spell of strain was now over, as Nepal turned into a safe neighbour of British India.

#### **The British Touch The Himalayas And Their Contact With Nepal**

The relations of the two countries were governed by three main factors—geographical contiguity of British India and Nepal, British policy in Nepal and Nepal's reaction to it. The process of consolidation of the British and Gurkha powers in India and Nepal respectively in the last quarter of the 18th century created a stir in the Central Himalayas and made that region alive. The East India Company was keenly interested in keeping the northern frontiers of India quiet and develop its trade with the trans-Himalayan States and China through the Himalayas. Later, in the early 19th century, the political aims of the British became more pronounced. They wanted to create a chain of buffer States in order to avoid clashes with the Chinese and the Russians. The British, therefore, tried to bring Nepal within the sphere of their political influence.

The Anglo-Nepalese War (1814—16) set a limit to Nepal's territorial ambitions. The Treaty of Sagauli of March, 1816,

served as the keystone of Indo-Nepalese relations. The British found a political opening in a country which dreaded a permanent intercourse with them. The experience of war was bitter for the Nepalese but its lessons were salutary. They realized the superiority of British arms. The Treaty of Sagauli in 1816 ushered in a phase of peace and tranquillity in the Indo-Nepalese relations.

### **Active Hostility And Non-Intercourse**

The problem of the British henceforth was to retain the much valued friendship with Nepal. The problem of Nepal was to keep herself at arm's length from the British. Non-intercourse with the British and total exclusion became Nepal's national urge. The British Resident was treated merely as the symbol of British Imperialism, as a "pariah" with no social connection and no freedom of movement. The Nepalese Prime Minister, Bhimsen Thapa (1804—1837), had the conviction that the Nepalese and the British could not coexist in amity. He was sceptical of the British power, but he realized that the era of conquest was over. And for him, the defence of Nepal lay only in constant military preparation and in sealing off the country hermetically to the Europeans. But in 1833, B. H. Hodgson changed the British policy. Non-interference having failed, the British tried to gain influence in the Durbar. But interference in the domestic affairs of Nepal was a dangerous game. It convinced the Nepalese that the Resident could be used as a political tool. The British also realized that foreign interference would not succeed in a country like Nepal and she could prove a troublesome neighbour in hard times. So long as Bhimsen Thapa ruled Nepal, he could neither be persuaded nor pressed to abandon the vicious policy of his Government. The fall of Bhimsen Thapa thus appeared to Hodgson as a pressing necessity, and the policy of active interference in the internal politics of Nepal a political expedient. The Resident ultimately played his part in the fall of Bhimsen Thapa.

### **Restricted Intercourse And Friendly Isolation**

With the rise of Jang Bahadur to power there set in a new era in the Indo-Nepalese relations. The new trend in the

relationship was reflected in an understanding and friendly adjustment between the two countries. The main plank of Jang Bahadur's foreign policy was the belief that a workable friendship could exist between Nepal and the British in India. He was the cementing factor in the relations of the Governments of Nepal and India. Thus, the year 1846 is a landmark in the history of British relations with Nepal. It saw the restoration of domestic order and stability after years of disturbance in Nepal. It was the end of an epoch in Indo-Nepalese relations and the beginning of another. The era of active enmity ended and that of good faith, understanding and co-operation began. The idea that the Nepalese and the British were irreconcilable enemies perished and the hope that these two peoples could coexist as amicable neighbours took birth. The policy of active hostility of Nepal was replaced by their restricted friendliness towards the British. The policy of non-interference with Nepalese affairs was still adhered to by the British but, with their feet firmly planted in friendship, it was no longer a matter of grave concern to them. Jang Bahadur could clearly see the hard fact that the British had not only become dominant in the subcontinent, but had humbled the Chinese power also. He realized that the geographical position of Nepal had rendered the martial policy out-of-date. Nepal was surrounded by the Indian territories on three sides. Jang Bahadur and his successors—Ranudip Singh, Bir Shamsher, Dev Shamsher and Chandra Shamsher—were fully convinced that only through friendship with the British could they make their respective positions tenable in Nepal and also be able to preserve the independence of their country.

### **“I Am Your Friend But Shall Keep You At Arm's Length”**

The military assistance of Nepal to the British during the Revolt of 1857 brought the Governments of Nepal and India nearer as never before. At the same time, Jang Bahadur took it almost as an article of faith that the policy of friendly isolation and restricted intercourse was the only and best course open to Nepal. He kept off from too close an intimacy with the British for fear that very intimate relations might lead to the British economic and political ascendancy in Nepal. And



the fear was not unnatural. The fate of the Indian States had convinced him that close relations with the British often gave them the pretext for interference. Every Gurkha Prime Minister believed that if the British were allowed to move freely in their country or if their merchants were permitted to carry on trade with freedom, it would ultimately lead to the subjugation of Nepal. The Ranas also clearly understood that to open their country to foreigners would mark the beginning of the decline of the feudal system and consequently the end of their rule. The policy of Nepal was a product of her close observation of the proceedings of the British in India. Thus the Nepalese policy of cautious friendliness was a measure of self-defence adopted by a weaker power against a stronger neighbour whom it distrusted and feared but did not dare openly to oppose.

The British in India had become an extremely powerful neighbour and amicable relations with them, therefore, was a pressing necessity. It was not possible to keep Nepal hermetically sealed as Bhimsen Thapa had wanted. Jang Bahadur's "pro-British policy", though regarded anti-national, was a product of his realization of an irresistible development in India. If his "pro-British policy" strengthened his rule, it also allayed the distrust of the British towards Nepal and paved the way for friendliness and goodwill between the two Governments. Doubtless, Jang Bahadur always kept the British at a distance unlike the later Ranas whose relations with the British were far more intimate than they ever were in his own life-time. But Nepal became a closed country to Indians. There was lack of intimate intercourse. This was not because of the natural factors like geographical barriers or the psychological insularity of the Nepalese people ; it was the outcome of a settled policy of the Governments of Nepal and India. Non-intercourse and isolation became a national tenet of the Nepalese in the course of Gurkha rule in Nepal and British rule in India. Not the Europeans alone but the Indians, as they were British subjects too, were regarded as aliens ; an Indian in Nepal felt as if he were in a foreign land.

The British Government, too, opposed the intercourse between Nepal and the protected Indian States. It was consider-

ed better that such an intriguing power as Nepal should be kept off from the Indian political life. Isolation and non-intercourse were as much measures of self-defence on the part of Nepal as a matter of policy on that of the British. "Friend by necessity we may choose to be but the status of a slave we shall never own." This was the watchword of the Nepalese statesmen and military leaders. While this policy was a boon for Nepal, and she was proud of having preserved her independence, she did not receive modern ideas and institutions through a greater contact with the British. Between independence and modernization through closer relations with the British, the Nepalese always prized the former because there was always the fear that modern ideas and institutions and the enlightenment of the people would sweep out the autocratic rule of the Ranas. The isolation thus served the family interests of the Ranas. British political ascendancy was as much prejudicial to the national interests of Nepal as to the personal interests of the Ranas. They, therefore, confined the connection with the British solely to themselves. They exploited it as a means of strengthening their hegemony as much as a defence against their enemies.

### **British Friend Becomes Overlord**

After the fall of Ranudip Singh (1885), during the rule of the later Ranas, the Nepalese foreign policy was modified. They maintained the traditions of keeping away foreigners, but allowed the British Government to recruit the Gurkhas freely. This was indeed a blow to their national pride. The very fact that the Gurkhas were serving in the British Army and getting their pay and pension from a foreign Government had an inevitable effect on the psychology of the people.

Under the Premiership of Bir Shamsheer the British Government thought that their interests were safe so they supported his cause. But the price of British patronage granted to Bir was too costly for Nepal to bear. Nepal's dependence on Delhi became too pronounced to escape casual notice or even hide its glaring manifestation. Since 1885 again the practice of confirmation of the succession of a Rana Premier by the British Viceroy became customary. This practice continued till the last day of the British in India and which every Prime

Minister knocking at the door of the Viceroy as soon as he succeeded to the post had followed. Bir Shamsheer started this practice with his visit to Calcutta in 1888. He not only allowed free recruitment to the British inside Nepal but at the same time rendered his own army an appendage of the Indian Armed Forces. In 1892, the British Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army inspected for the first time the Kathmandu regiments. Probably Bir appeared to the British the best guarantee against any possible reversal of the policy of absolute subservience enunciated by Jang Bahadur. He outbade even Jang Bahadur in this task and Nepal came too close to the British Empire.

### **Nepal An Appendage Of British Empire**

After Bir, his successor Dev Shamsheer continued the same friendly relations during his rule of just five months. The rightful successor to the office of the Premier after Dev Shamsheer was Chandra Shamsheer. The corner-stone of his foreign policy was loyalty and friendship to Great Britain. He proved himself in every way the most worthy of the successors of the illustrious Jang Bahadur. In 1914, the Great War started between England and Germany. The Gurkha troops comprised the most effective part of the British forces. Maharaja Chandra Shamsheer clearly declared that the whole military resources of Nepal were at His Majesty's disposal. "Free from any treaty, any obligation, any promise, the Gurkha people at once and ungrudgingly sent 2,00,000 of their men to us in the First Great War of 1914—18... almost wherever was a theatre of war, Gurkhas were to be found everywhere." No less than 1,00,000 Gurkhas laid their lives at the altar of friendship during the First World War under Prime Minister Chandra Shamsheer. Doubtless, the British realized that a strong friendly Government in Nepal served them well. Besides, the services of the Gurkhas in the British Army were highly valued.

Thus during the period 1858—1914, although Nepal did not form administratively a part of British India, yet for all practical purposes she was within the broad framework of British Imperial interests. She was politically subordinate to and economically dependent on the British Government.

Nepalese soldiers served in the British Army. The Ranas maintained close friendship with the Indian Government. The British Political Officers were treated with great respect in Nepal and their advice was accepted as a friendly suggestion. The British saw eye to eye with the Ranas in keeping Nepal in a state of absolute backwardness. The British had created the Ranas and it were they who helped them (the Ranas) to remain in undisputed authority in Nepal. And thus, during the course of a century, the active hostility of Bhimsen Thapa's times changed into restricted intercourse and friendly isolation of Jang Bahadur's period and when the Shamshers came into power, their own interests forced them to bring Nepal more under the outstretching and protecting arms of the Britishers and Nepal, as the 20th century dawned, became practically an appendage of the British Empire. It was a different thing that the people of Nepal had to groan under a heavy yoke, while the Ranas helped the British Government and the latter propped up their rule in Nepal.

### **Flag Followed The Trade**

Economic considerations had the weightiest bearing on the British policy in Nepal in its earliest phase. A gateway to Tibet and Chinese Central Asia, Nepal was an entrepot of much prized trade with the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan regions and a vital link in the chain of British commercial interests in these regions. Their commercial interests impelled the East India Company to forestall by arms the conquests of the Nepal Valley by the Gurkhas. Subsequently the same consideration led it to conciliate the Gurkha Rulers of Nepal and establish amicable relations with them by treaties and engagements. The British were soon convinced that the security of their territory close to Nepal—which was the richest and the most vulnerable part of the Company's dominion—was a compelling necessity for them to maintain friendly relations. Inter alia, the Government of India established trade relations with the Rana Rulers of Nepal.

In August, 1947, the Britishers left India. The wave of freedom in India also influenced the people of Nepal. And in 1950-51 the fire of discontent lit up and in its blaze was burnt the despotic rule. King Tribhuvan had to seek refuge

in India but due to the sagacity, patriotism and foresight of both the parties the Revolution in Nepal ended and the King went back. Though this revolution was a brief one, yet modern Nepal was born out of the ashes of a century-old oligarchy. Nepal is still the most vital and undefended frontier of India. With the rise of an expansionist China, the defence of India needs friendly relations with Nepal. Geographically, economically and culturally Nepal's interests are bound up with India's, and we must draw lessons from history that only with understanding and friendship with Nepal and similar border States can India protect herself from the clutches of the expansionist policy of China. Days of "forward strategy" being over, the defence of India needs a very careful and delicate handling of Nepal.

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For a history of the "Indo-Nepalese Relations" there is abundant material in India. The sources for it may be divided, for the sake of convenience, into two classes—primary and secondary. The primary sources can further be divided into two parts—unpublished and published records. In the first category may be included the Foreign Secret and Political Proceedings and Consultations of the Government of India, the letters to and from the Court of Directors and the Secretary of States, the various reports and records of the different Mantralayas of the Nepal Government. The private diaries and biographies of the British Residents and treaties between Nepal and the British Government in India published by C. U. Aitchison under the title "A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries" are included in the published primary records. In the secondary sources are included the published works in the form of books. The National Archives of India, New Delhi, possesses a plethora of material, but the researcher will have to delve deep for facts in this mine of information.

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