



MAHARAJA IN HIS EARLY YEARS

**The Life and Times of
Maharaja Juddha Shumsher Jung
Bahadur Rana of Nepal**

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PREFACE

Several years ago some of my Nepali friends and pupils suggested that an attempt might be made to persuade Maharaja Juddha Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, the then Prime Minister of Nepal to agree to the preparation of a volume dealing with his life and work and the administrative measures introduced by him during his reign. He readily agreed to this venture. The Maharaja was a remarkable man in more ways than one. A great soldier, statesman and administrator, he loved his people and did his best to promote their welfare. His heart bled for Nepal and he considered no sacrifice too great for its welfare. This was brought out at the time of the earthquake when the Maharaja provided succour and solace to the victims of the terrible disaster. Ever since he assumed the reins of office, he devoted himself to the study of the problems of the administration in its varied aspects and dedicated his whole self to the task of devising measures to advance his country's interests. He easily gave his permission to collect material for the book. The various departments of His Majesty's Government were requested to furnish the information and every effort has been made to collect authentic facts about the administrative achievements of the Maharaja and the measures taken by him to advance and promote the progress and the prosperity of Nepal. Every measure that he devised bore the impress of his genius in addition to his first hand knowledge and experience of the administration.

The Maharaja was not a highly educated person in the modern sense of the term, but he had the opportunity of working under his brothers, all very capable persons who were desirous of making Nepal a progressive and modern country.

The present volume contains an account of the life and career of Maharaja Juddha Shumsher and deals with the vari-

ous phases of his many-sided personality. It is based primarily on official information supplied by the departments concerned. I have shifted these facts and put them in proper order. I have no doubt about their authenticity. Many documents, reports, despatches, letters and diaries were examined in preparing this book and whenever the Maharaja's assistance was sought it was un-grudgingly given.

I had many opportunities of coming in contact with the Maharaja himself in Nepal and afterwards in Dehradun when he had retired from active life. He took a keen interest in the work and offered valuable suggestions which helped to make the narrative useful and interesting. In the shape in which it has emerged it is not merely a life of the Maharaja but also a history of Nepal during his tenure of office as prime Minister.

I had requested Lord Linlithgow a retired Viceroy and Governor-General of India to write a foreword to this book and he had very kindly agreed to do so, but before it would be finished he was carried to the land from whose bourne no traveller returns.

My thanks are due to General Sir Bahadur Shumsher, the eldest son of the Maharaja who was a Hajooria General of Nepal during his father's Prime Ministership and many other noble men and distinguished leaders who made themselves available for consultation. I am deeply indebted to my old friend and pupil Mr. Rudra Raj Pandey, Principal of the Trichandra College and afterwards the first Vice-Chancellor of the Tribhuvana University for the invaluable assistance rendered by him in the preparation of this book.

Allahabad
25-11-74

—ISHWARI PRASAD

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Historical Background

To be Ignorant of what happened before you were born is to be ever a child. For what is man's lifetime unless the memory of past events is woven with those of earlier times—

—Cicero

Nepal is a land of beauty, valour and romance. From time immemorial it has been the cradle land of heroes, warriors and generals who have fought on many a field of battle and achieved undying fame for themselves and the land of their birth. The country of Nepal is situated on the Southern slopes of the Himalayas and has an area of about 5,400 square miles with a population numbering about 60,000. It extends over 500 miles along the Himalayan range and is about 130 miles broad. Since the treaty of Sigowli its boundaries have remained unchanged and may be defined thus : in the North are the Himalayas with their great peaks impassable except for a few passes; in the South are the lowlying lands of the Tarai with the endless forests of Sal trees which yield a large revenue to Government and the varied and abundant flora and fauna so attractive to the naturalist and the sportsman; in the East are parts of the province of Bengal including the territories of Sikkim and the mountainous country of Bhutan; in the West are the North-Western portions of the United Provinces. In size it is equal to England and Scotland combined, but being a hilly country it is sparsely populated. It contains great mineral resources which still await scientific exploitation. The whole country can be divided into two regions—the Himalayan region and the sub-montane region.

The former includes all the land 5,000 feet above the sea-level and the latter comprises within its orbit the green and luxuriant fields of the Tarai where the stagnant pools make the climate dreadful, and every year malaria takes a heavy toll of human life. The highest mountain peak overlooking the valley is the Chandragiri in the South which is 9,720 feet above the sea-level and which has acted in the past as an impregnable rampart to ward off the intrusion of a foreign invader. The other peaks in the North, South and East vary from 6,000 to 7,500 and from them comes the salubrious breeze that cools the valley and refreshes the spirits of its inhabitants. The Principal rivers are the Bagmati and Vishnumati which flow through the valley and develop into formidable torrents during the rainy season. On the fertile land watered by these two mountain streams are to be found numerous villages, shady groves and sanctuaries in which the weary traveller can sooth his jaded nerves and revive his spirits by having a glimpse of the charming natural scenery in front of him. Beyond these fields are the wooden temples with their pyramids tapering to the sky, the palaces of the ruling family, furnished according to the latest European design, and the castles of the nobility in endless rows, proclaiming to the world the wealth and splendour of their owners. The name Nepal is now confined to the valley which was at onetime a huge lake. Inside the valley there are four cities of great historic importance—Kantipur (Kathmandu), Lalitpur (Patan), Bhaktapur (Bhatgaon) and Kirtipur. Kathmandu, the capital of the kingdom is situated in the centre of the valley at the junction of the Bagmati and the Vishnumati, and is said to have been founded by Raja Gunakama Deva in the Kaligat era 3824 (727 A.D.) Patan which is two miles away is older than Kathmandu and larger in size than any town in the valley, but now it is merely a shadow of its former self. The Durbar square, which Sylvain Levi describes as “*Une merveille qui defie la description*”, the palaces, the temples and the stupas still survive as a melancholy memorial of the past. The population consists largely of Buddhist Newars who are noted for their exquisite skill in arts and crafts. As we walk the streets and alleys of this town, we encounter numerous remains of its departed glory and in Sylvain Levi’s words we can still perceive decadence on the facades of its buildings. Six miles from

Kathmandu is Bhatgaon, the third largest town in Nepal, the ancient seat of Malla Kings. Kirtipur is situated about three miles north of Kathmandu. It was also conquered by the Gurkhas, and the story of its gruesome conquest is summed up in the word Naskatpur or the city of the cut noses. The ruins that still exist indicate that at one time it must have contained beautiful buildings, decorated in the best style of the Newar artists. In these cities the vanquished faith of Shakyamuni still flourishes side by side with its older and more powerful rival Hinduism, and the votaries of each practise their worship unmolested by the other. Pashupati Nath is the patron Deity of Nepal and the shrine, situated on the Bagmati, is visited by millions on special occasions and a dip in the sacred waters is supposed to wash away all impurities and sins. Not far from Kathmandu is the famous shrine of Swayambhunnath, held sacred by the Buddhists, where according to tradition the Enlightened One himself came and preached his religion. There are other shrines dedicated to gods and goddesses whose supremacy over the hearts of men still continues unchallenged. Even a casual visitor is struck by the catholicity of religious outlook which characterises the people of Nepal. This is in a large measure, due to the spirit of toleration shown by the Gurkha rulers who have exercised sway over the valley since the middle of the eighteenth century.

Nepal has made much progress in modern times. Trade and commerce have grown; education has developed and life on the whole has become gayer and brighter for her sons and daughters. As we look down upon the valley from the lofty summit of the Chandragiri mountain, green fields and meadows come into view and we descend on a town full of magnificent temples, dwelling-houses and bazars, humming with life and activity, which are all indicative of the rapid strides that modern civilisation has made in Nepal. Her claim to independence has been fully recognised and the prowess of her sons has been proved on the battle fields of the world. The greatest generals of our time have spoken highly of their warlike qualities and borne testimony to their services in some of the greatest crises in the world's history. All this has been made possible by the efforts of a series of able and Patriotic rulers, one of the most remarkable of whom was Maharaja

Joodha Shum Shere Jung Bahadur Rana, the story of whose life and achievements is the subject of this volume.

The history of Nepal goes back to remote antiquity. The country derives its name from a saint called Ne (or Nemuni) who lived at one time in Nepal. In the *Pashupati Purana* Sanat Kumar speaks out, "A saint named Ne had protected him at one time by his meritorious works: thus it is that the country in the heart of the Himalayas is called Nepal." The Nepal Mahatmya also mentions the saint Nemi, 'O Nemi', says Pashupati to him, "walk at the head of the saints of this sacred domain; it is you who must, O Treasure of austerities, protect this country on my word," and since then the country has been called Nepal. Dr. Wright supports the above view and observes that the great Rishi performed his devotions at the junction of the Bagmati and Keshavati and by the blessing of Swayambhu and Bajrajogi he instructed the people in the true path of religion and also ruled over the country. According to Sylvain Levi the epoch of Ne or Ne-muni marks the transition between the divine and the legendary periods; it falls 600 or 900 years before the commencement of the Kaliyuga (310. B C.). We hear stories of legendary kings of whom little can be said with certainty. The Vansavalis which are a valuable source of information for the early history of Nepal, mix up fact with fiction in such a manner as to make it difficult for the historian to separate what is true from mere legend. The earliest mention of Nepal is in the *Mahabharata* where a prince of Nepal is said to have fought and died on the side of the Pandavas on the battle field of Kurukshetra. That Nepal was fairly well known in Gautama Buddha's day is evident from a story related in the *Mulla sarvasti vadavinaya* that when the Master resided at Sravasti in the Jetavan, the park of Anatha pindika, some of his disciples saw a party of merchants going towards Nepal. The Bhikshus expressed a desire to follow the same route whereupon the merchants administered the warning : "O wise men, in Nepal the ground is all stony; it is as humpy as the back of a camel. Surely you are not going to enjoy your journey". Still the Bhikshus accompanied them and no sooner did they reach the valley than they felt sick and longed to get back to the plains. The same work refers to the visit to Nepal of Buddha's favourite disciple Anand who found the rigours of the climate unbear-

able. Later we find in Jain literature that in the time of Chandragupta Bhadrabahu, the Jain monk retired to Nepal and when a council met at Pataliputra to settle the Jain canon, Sthulbhadra was deputed to Nepal to wait upon Bhadrabahu and to obtain from him the fourteen Purvas. Later the Maurayan Emperor, Asoka is said to have visited the valley but beyond a persistent legend there is no reliable evidence to support this view. In the fourth century of the Christian era Nepal is mentioned as a tributary state of the Gupta Empire in the well-known inscription on Samudragupta's pillar which exists to this day in the Allahabad fort. Later the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang in his itinerary speaks of the kingdom of Nepal and its extent and power. The Chinese sources which were copiously consulted by Sylvain Levi point to the antiquity of Nepal and the existence of relations between her and the Chinese Empire. Thus the history of Nepal comes to us from very old times and the Vansavalis speak of a number of dynasties that exercised sway in the valley. These were the Kiratas; the Somvansis, the Suryavansis, the Licchavis, the Karnataki, the Ayodhya Dynasty and the Mallas whose power was fully shattered by the Gurkhas who established themselves in the valley as conquerors in the eighteenth century. The Kiratas were a pastoral tribe, who roamed at large with their cattle in the pasture groves of the Himalayas. The dynasty produced 26 or 29 princes whom Manu describes as Sudras because of their abandonment of religious rites and their dislike for Brahmans. Their names, cited by Sylvain Levi, resemble those of barbarians and point to their low origin. The Suryavansis (Nepal Licchavis) were a remarkable Kshatriya tribe. One of the most illustrious rulers of this dynasty was Mahadeva who ascended the throne as a child sometime about 496 A.D. He was devoted to his mother, Rajyavati, who acted as regent, and even when her son had come to man's estate, she continued to act as his supreme councillor and wielded considerable authority in the state. The inscription on the Changu Narayan temple pillar recalls to our mind the famous Bhitari pillar inscription of Skandgupta in which the warrior-king is said to have gone to his mother after winning laurels on the field of battle like Krishna to Devaki. Manadeva was a great warrior and sought her permission to go to battle in these words.

“No, my mother I cannot acquit myself towards my father by stainless mortifications; it is in the use of arms to which I am destined, that I shall be able to pay honour to his sacred memory.” The mother granted his wish, and he went forth to conquer the cities of the Mallas. The inscription records that he returned to his country by gradual stages and then with a happy heart he gave the Brahmans his inexhaustible riches and addressed Queen Rajyavati in a firm and clear voice.

“With a serene heart O’ mother, I give you also devoutly this as an offering.” A *KOTI-AHUTIYAJNA* was performed, and Manadeva consecrated his victories by bestowing liberal gifts upon Brahmans and priests. Decay set in after his death and his successors had neither the ability nor the statesmanship to keep together the large dominion he had built up by dint of his valour. The state of confusion did not last long. There emerged on the scene a capable king in Anshuvarman who was born about 595 A.D. and died sometime in 640 A.D. From Chinese and Tibetan sources it appears that during his reign Nepal was a feudatory of the Tibetan king Srong-tsan Sgam-bo who had without opposition seized his daughter and married her in 639. If legend is to be trusted. It was through this princess that Buddhism spread in Tibet and received support from its ruler.

Anshuvarman was a man of great sense and sagacity, a distinguished general and an erudite scholar, well-versed in the sacred Shastras over whose meaning he had pondered deeply, and by the aid of knowledge thus acquired ‘had ruined erroneous doctrines.’ He had himself composed a treatise on sounds (*Shabd Vidya Shastra*) and extended his patronage to men of learning and science. In Kirkpatrick’s day the Pandits of Bhatgaon still retained the tradition that the introduction of Sanskrit grammar into Nepali dated from the time of Anshuvarman. The Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang writes of him :

“Recently there was a king called Yuan-Chou-fa-mo (Anshuvarman) who was known far and wide for the steadiness of his judgment and his sagacity. He had composed himself a treatise on sacred rhythm. He encouraged learning, respected virtue, and his reputation was spread far and wide.” He was

as pious, munificent and generous as he was learned. He made large gifts to religious houses and temples of which Pashupati was the greatest beneficiary.

It cannot be said with certainty when Anshuvarman died, and how his successors administered the kingdom he bequeathed to them. The Vansavalis chronicle an endless series of royal names, but there is nothing to help us to form an idea of the political and social condition of Nepal. Nepal plunged into confusion again, but after sometime the Licchavis recovered their power and continued to exercise it. From the time of Narendra Deva (657 A.D.) to the time of Jayadeva as is evidenced by the latter's Kathmandu inscription dated 748 A.D. The account of Wang Hiuen-Tse's travels (665 A.D.) has been lost to us, and it is, therefore, impossible to reconstruct a history of these reigns. But it appears that Narendra Deva was a man of great pomp and prestige who maintained full oriental splendour. The Chinese ambassador writes about him: "He is richly dressed and his surroundings are lavishly ornamented; his throne is festooned with flowers, and is in an atmosphere of perfumes; he shows marked devotion to Buddha." He commends the king's policy of religious toleration and his desire to promote the prosperity of his subjects. He goes on to add: "Irrigation practically and scientifically applied makes the soil of great value; Buddhism and Brahmanism flourish in the principal temples, which are wealthy and well-supported. Numerous monasteries shelter the Buddhist priests. Commerce prospers and trade is well-governed- and directed." Another king Shivadeva II, the successor of Narendra Deva, distinguished himself by marrying the granddaughter of Aditya Sen, the Emperor of Magadh. In the confused annals of the period there is one noteworthy event recorded in the Vansavalis. It is the defeat of Jayapida, king of Kashmir, by the Nepalese monarch Aramude, who repulsed his army with heavy losses, and confined his exalted captive in a tower on the Black Gandak, from where he escaped through the bravery of one of his own ministers. To one of the kings of Nepal, Gunakamdeva during this period (723) is attributed the foundation of the city of Kathmandu, which must have originally been a small hamlet on the bank of the Vishnumati. An important epoch

in the history of Nepal is marked by the year 1097 A.D. when the valley was conquered by Nanyadeva, a redoubtable military adventurer from the Karnatik in the South. He established himself at Simraon, a small town in the Tarai, twenty miles from Raxaul and from there launched a series of campaigns to bring the neighbouring territories under his sway. The Vansavalis make no mention of this dynasty and we know nothing about Nanyadeva's successors. The native princes seem to have fallen into utter obscurity for in the Pattadakal inscription dated 1162 A.D. Nepal is mentioned as a feudatory of the Chalukya Emperor of the South. But this was a vague and shadowy claim to suzerainty which is a common occurrence in Eastern countries where kings assume Pompous titles and command court scribes to include in inscriptions and documents among their vassals the names of countries into which their arms have never penetrated. To end this sorry state of affairs the Mallas, a well known Kshatriya tribe, as high in rank as the Licchavis, who had already settled in Nepal, asserted themselves and established their supremacy in the valley.

But the Mallas were not destined to enjoy their newly acquired power for long. Towards the beginning of the fourteenth century in 1324 A.D., Hari Singh Deva of Tirhut who belonged to the Karnata dynasty was overpowered by the Muslim armies under Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughluq Shah of Delhi. He crossed into Nepal defeated the Malla Rajas and established himself in the country in 1326 A.D. The *Dhurtasamagamnataka* of which there is an MS in the Durbar Library, speaks of the victory of the Delhi forces over the Hindu chieftain. He encountered little resistance in Nepal, and his minister Chandeshwar writes that he vanquished all the kings of the country. He brought into the valley with him his patron goddess Tulja Bhavani who exerted such an influence on his destiny that the nobles and people of Bhatgaon peacefully surrendered to him their palaces and treasures. He appropriated to himself the wealth found in the cities of Nepal and gave to the valley his new Brahmanical organisation. The storm of Muslim invasion having blown over by this time, he returned to his own coun-

try, leaving Nepal to be administered by his representatives. After his departure rivalries sprang up among his descendants and taking advantage of their jealousies and dissensions the Mallas asserted their power again and under Jayasthitimalla (1380-95) who had married Rajalladevi princess of the Ayodhya line, the history of Nepal entered on a new epoch.

We are now on sure ground and the facts of history are no longer obscured in a haze of legend. Henceforward there is an unbroken line of kings who governed the three capitals of the kingdom. Jayasthitimalla was not merely a great soldier but also an administrator and under him the power of the Mallas reached its zenith. A true follower of Hari Singh Deva, he organised society on the Brahmanical model and classified the different castes according to their functions. He overhauled the entire machinery of the state and devised new rules and regulations for the better governance of the realm. He gave the country a uniform system of weights and measures, endowed many temples and sanctioned liberal grants for the spread of culture and enlightenment among the people. He was a devout worshipper of Rama and on the occasion of the birth of his first son he ordered the celebration of his adventures with great eclat and pomp. Jayasthitimalla had three sons by his wife Rajalladevi—Dharma Malla, Jyotir Malla and Kirti Malla who jointly governed the country from Bhatgaon. But about 1413 Jyotir Malla assumed supreme authority and became the sole monarch. Though a champion of Brahmanical superiority, he was tolerant towards other faiths and generously re-built the Shrine of Swayambhunath which had been seriously damaged by earthquake. Jyotir Malla died between 1424 and 1428 and was succeeded by Yaksha Malla, his eldest son, to whom he had entrusted the government of Bhatgaon during his lifetime. The new king embarked on a policy of conquest, annexed Morang at the foot of the mountain and the sphere of his influence extended as far as Tirhut in Behar. In the West he conquered Gurkha and in the North forcibly snatched away Sikharganj from the Tibetans. These must have been temporary gains for it does not appear that at the time of Yaksha Malla's death his kingdom included these possessions.

Finally he strengthened his position by crushing the rebellious kings of Patan and Kathmandu. Yaksha Malla, like his predecessors, was kind to the Brahmans and made rich offerings to them. He made over the management and worship of the shrine of Pashupatinath to the Bhattas who had come from South India. He constructed the temple of Dattatraya at Bhatgaon and encircled the town with a wall. After a glorious reign of about fifty years he died in 1740 but before his death, fearing a distracting uncertainty, arising from the disputed succession, he perpetrated the folly of dividing his kingdom like the Turkish timariots into four parts. To his eldest son Raya Malla he gave Bhatgaon; his second son Ran Malla received the principality of Banepa but this lasted for a short time; the third Ratna Malla was given Kathmandu, and Patan fell to the share of his daughter, though, after some time, it was united again to Kathmandu. This division of the kingdom into parts roused jealousies and rivalries which ultimately prepared the way for ruin of the Mallas. Already rumours were afloat that the king of Gurkha meditated the conquest of the valley.

The kings of Gurkha, as has been said before, were descended from the Sisodias of Mewar and they prided themselves on their pedigree like other ruling families in the mountains. They had fled from their ancestral home owing to the persecution of the Muslims and sought refuge in the inaccessible regions of the Himalayas. They had settled in the Gurkha country and carved out for themselves an independent principality. Their capital was merely a township with a population of 8 or 10 thousand, and their king was one of the 24 princes who formed a confederacy in the basin of the seven Gandakis presided over by the Raja of Jumla. At first the chiefs of Gurkha were insignificant but when Nar Bhupal Sah (1716-42) came to the *Gaddi*, he increased his prestige and dignity by marrying first a daughter of the Palpa family and second, a daughter of the sixth son of the chief of Malebum. He made an attempt to conquer Nepal and crossed the Trishul Gandak but his progress was barred by the Thakurs of Nayakot, the Vaisya Rajas and he had to withdraw to his country. After his death he was succeeded by his son Prithvi Narayan Sah, founder

of the reigning house of Nepal, who came to the throne in 1742. He was a man of great courage, intrepidity and vigour and was fired by an insatiable ambition. From his very early days he was fond of adventure and daring exploits, and when quite young, gave proof of his audacity by putting to death certain officers of the custom-house at Benares for an insult that was offered to him. As he grew older, the lust of dominion seized his soul and he began to look abroad for fresh fields and pastures new. The distensions and antagonisms of the Malla Rajas of the valley gave him the desired opportunity, and he decided to embark upon a career of ceaseless conquest and self-aggrandisement.

The three kingdoms of Nepal were torn by mutual jealousy and hatred, and each was seeking to compass the ruin of the other. Ranajit of Bhatgaon and Jayaprakash of Kathmandu quarrelled with each other and sometimes the causes of conflict were of a trivial nature. Ranajit threw into prison men from Kathmandu because they were too proud of their dress and released them on a protest being made by the court of Kathmandu. Jaya Prakash retaliated by imprisoning the inhabitants of Bhatgaon who had gone to Pashupati for worship and let them off after exacting a heavy ransom. Ranajit learnt that Jayaprakash had erected a monolithic pillar in his capital and he asked for the services of workmen to erect a similar column at Bhatgaon. Jaya Prakash lent his workmen but secretly instructed them to spoil the work in the course of construction. Human malice assumed such a diabolical form as to make Ranajit rejoice when his rival lost a son. At Patan affairs were in a still worse condition. The struggle between the royal power and the aristocracy had ended in anarchy. The chiefs of Patan elected a grandson of Vishnu Malla (1757-61) but he was charged with misconduct and was cut down at the door of Taleju. Then, they offered the crown to Prithivi Narayan Sah, not knowing what disaster they were bringing upon their heads, but he suggested the name of his brother Dal Mardan Sah and they agreed. Four years later, he was also deposed and a *roi faineant* was placed upon the throne. He held it for three years and with the coming in of the flood tide of Gurkha conquest, he fled to Bhatgaon.

The final conquest of Nepal by the Gurkha chief was accomplished by ruthless methods. The king of Bhatgaon sought the

help of Prithivi Narayan Sah against his rival Jaya Prakash. Prithivi Narayan moved forward and attacked Nayakot which commanded the Western pass leading into the valley. In the first encounter the Gurkha chief was repulsed but he soon reorganised his forces, and by superior skill in fighting succeeded in capturing the fortress. Then he threatened the outlying territories and laid siege to Kirtipur which commanded the routes both to Kaihmandu and Patan, and occupied a position of considerable strategic importance. Jaya Prakash was an unpopular ruler who did not enjoy the confidence of his officers and subjects and being a man of headstrong and irascible temper he failed to foresee the danger to his own power. But he was capable of energetic action in a crisis and drove back the first assault of the invader. In the skirmish that followed Prithivi Narayan's brother Sur Pratap Sah was badly wounded and was carried off the field by certain men of low caste. But Jaya Prakash did not follow up his victory, and greatly weakened his cause by disgracing the nobles of Kirtipur, whose leader was paraded through the town in female garb. Prithivi Narayan was an astute man; he clearly discerned the realities of the situation and took steps to undermine Jaya Prakash's influence in Kathmandu by rallying to his support the discontented elements in the capital. Further, he cut off the supplies and caused much suffering to the population. Deprived of public confidence and support, Jaya Prakash found himself in a desperate situation. Meanwhile the invader advanced with his host in 1767, and again laid seige to Kirtipur, which offered a stubborn resistance for six months. In the end the beleaguered garrison led by the chief who had been insulted by Jaya Prakash surrendered the town on assurance that no harm would be done to them. Even this did not open the eyes of Jaya Prakash to the danger that stared him in the face, and he did nothing to deal effectively with enemies who were knocking at his gate. He gave no help to the men of Kirtipur and passively looked on their discomfiture. While the kingdoms of the valley were quarrelling bitterly amongst themselves, Prithivi Narayan Sah was maturing his plans for their conquest. With a view to striking terror into the hearts of his opponents and to punishing the inhabitants of Kirtipur,

all the resistance they had offered to him and for the crime of killing one of his trusted chiefs, he sent an order from Nayakot, in disregard of his plighted faith, that the nose and the upper lip of all the male inhabitants, babies at the breast only excepted, should be cut off, and his order was ruthlessly carried out, and the cutnoses weighed about 17 *dharnis* (about 80 lbs). Father Giuseppe, who was an eye-witness of this horrible mutilation, records that he saw with his own eyes hundreds of disfigured faces with noses entirely removed, but his uncorroborated evidence is not wholly reliable. From Kirtipur the conqueror proceeded to Patan, but the timely arrival of a contingent from British India saved the city from the disaster which threatened it. Then he proceeded against the city of Kathmandu which had grown weaker not only on account of the dissensions of the court but also the disloyalty of civilians and soldier alike. On September 29, 1768 when Jaya Prakash was busy in celebrating the Indra Jatra, the invaders quietly entered the town and made a surprise attack. As the populace was already disgusted with the ineptitude of the government, they easily went over to the side of the enemy. Jaya Prakash sought refuge in flight at Patan but he was pursued by the conqueror and allowed no respite. Then he flew to Bhatgaon where Ranjit gave him an asylum, and both conferred between themselves about the future. The Gurkhas advanced against Patan, laid siege to it, and brought it under their sway without much difficulty. The neighbouring villages were scoured by them and Banepa, Deo Patan and Chabahil were conquered. Having reduced all these places, he turned towards Bhatgaon where he reached in July, 1769. Fully aware of the effect condition of the Malla monarchy, he rallied the discontented elements to his side and seduced the illegitimate sons of Ranjit Malla called the 'Satvahaes' (the residents of 7 Vihars) who it was believed, had helped the invaders even with arms and ammunition. Right or wrong, the story points to the depth of degradation which the Malla monarchy had reached at this time, and its effete character made it powerless against the assaults of the hard-headed warrior, who had set his heart upon its destruction. Jaya Prakash vainly attempted to repel the attack, and was wounded in the leg, and Ranjit Malla found

himself utterly helpless. Prithivi Narayan offered to reinstate Ranjit in his lost dignity, but the latter expressed a wish to be allowed to pass the remainder of his life in peace at Banares. As he looked down upon the valley from the Chandragiri mountain he pronounced a curse upon the seven traitors whose perfidy had brought about his doom. Retribution followed soon with the swiftness of Nemesis, and before the curse was uttered, Prithivi Narayan Sah had summoned the traitors into his presence and passed an order that their noses should be cut off and their property confiscated. The wounded Jaya Prakash was taken to Pashupati where he breathed his last shortly afterwards, while the king of Patan was mercilessly left to die in prison. Prithivi Narayan had thus become master of the three kingdoms of the valley. Before the laurels of victory had withered on his brow, he proceeded to pacify the country and to conciliate the inhabitants. He was an administrator of great abilities; he encouraged trade, patronised art and culture, built temples and took immediate steps to win the people to his side. He was distrustful of European influence; he was aware that the gospel was followed by commercial and political exploitation and, therefore, gave an order for the expulsion of the Capuchin missionaries, who were trying to establish their influence in the valley. He fully endorsed the Dalai Lama's policy and reminded him of the disastrous consequences of allowing British encroachment in any shape of form. Prithivi Narayan Sah died in 1771 and was succeeded by his son Pratap Singh Sah who is also known as Singh Pratap. After a brief reign the latter was followed on the *gaddi* by his son Ran Bahadur Sah, a tender stripling of seven years in 1775. As the king was a minor, a council of regency was set up, and the affairs of the state were administered by his uncle Bahadur Sah who acted as regent.

Bahadur Sah began well, and the success of his early years was largely due to the ability and foresight of Damador Pande, who was appointed *Kazi* or minister. Nepal's sway now extended from Gurkha to the country of Garhwal, and towards the East the Bhutiyas of Sikkim acknowledged her suzerainty. But serious trouble arose, when the Gurkhas invaded Tibet, fired by the lust of obtaining the rich treasures, which were deposited in the monastery in which Teshu Lama, the spritual preceptor

of the Chinese Emperor, lived. A large body of Gurkhalis about 18,000 in number marched into Tibetan territory, defying the obstacles which impeded their progress along a difficult and dangerous route and captured the Lama's palace without encountering any resistance. The ire of China was roused at this aggression, and when the Chinese envoy was treated with indignity by the Nepalese, the Sun of Heaven sent his general Fukangan who was defeated with heavy losses. At last a peace treaty was signed at Neyakot, and the Chinese general withdrew to his country, Nepal had to acknowledge, it is said, China's suzerainty and to send presents periodically to the celestial court. The Nepalese version of the treaty is that the Court of China, judging it more advisable to live on friendly terms with the Gurkhas, made peace with them. The Tibetan invasion failed, but in 1794 the Gurkhas seized Garhwal and Kumaon, and the Nepal frontier was extended as far as the Mechi river in the East. Further territorial acquisitions enhanced the prestige of the Gurkhas, and their dominion was considerably enlarged by the conquests and annexation of a number of states out of the *Baisi* (group of 22 principalities) and *Chaubisi* (group of 24 principalities) in 1775. So far the regent had achieved great success but in 1795 Ran Bahadur, the boy king, attained majority and assumed the reins of government in his own hands. Ill-educated and perverse, the youthful prince was allowed to indulge in every vice that can debase human character. He adopted a course of action which led to disastrous consequences. First, he attacked the Jumla chief whom all the mountain princes acknowledged as their superior, and then perpetrated a most profane act in taking as his wife a Brahman's daughter by force. Such a *mesalliance* was an outrage upon priestly sanctity, and the Brahmans forthwith pronounced a curse on the misguided king. The king made desperate efforts to get the curse lifted and gave away large sums in charity but to no purpose. The ill fated queen was attacked by small-pox and died shortly afterwards. Ran Bahadur behaved like a mad man and vented forth his wrath upon Brahmans and shrines alike and offered to withdraw to Banares and to take to the life of an ascetic under the name of Swami Nirgunanand. With the advice of his nobles he nominated his illegitimate son Girvan Juddha Vikram Sah as his successor and left for Benares with his legally wedded queen Tripura Sundri. The affairs of Nepal were administered by Damodar Pande, who is

the founder of that power, which the Prime-Ministers of Nepal have enjoyed in later years.

Ran Bahadur was merely feigning asecticism; he continued his vicious course, and throwing off his disguise, he again returned to Nepal, egged on by his ambitious wife whose resolute will set at naught all opposition. A bitter feud ensued between the Pandes and the Thapas, the two leading families of Nepal aristocracy. It is at this time that Bhim Sen Thapa came to the front. He realised fully well that unless the Pandes were destroyed, it would be impossible for him to establish the supremacy of the Thapas. Damodar was a man, endowed with great physical strength and patriotic qualities; he had around him a solid phalanx of men who would have stood by him and supported him through thick and thin, if he had decided to measure swords with his great rival. But his desire to avoid unnecessary bloodshed led him to sacrifice his own life for the peace of the country. He was murdered along with his sons through Bhim Sen's intrigues, and having removed from his path his most formidable adversary, the Thapa leader anxious to consolidate his position by Fresh *coups*, turned towards Prithivi Pal, the chief of Palpa, who was invited to Kathmandu on the pretext of marrying the king's sister. The ostensible object was to cement the friendly relations between the two states, and the unwary Palpa chief was caught in the Silken meshes of Bhim Sen's diplomacy. He agreed to Bhim Sen's proposal. But when the illfated day arrived, like the Huguenots of France, who had come to take part in the marriage of Henry of Navarre with Margaret of Valois, Prithivi Pal and his party were butchered in cold blood. The effects of this Nepali Bartholomew were immediately felt. Deprived of its masterful ruler by Bhim Sen's treachery, Palpa could offer no resistance, and was easily conquered by Amar Singh Thapa, who marched into the country and brought it under his control. Meanwhile Ran Bahadur's unbridled violence caused much uneasiness and discontent. He deprived temples of their endowments and laid his hands freely upon Brahmans and confiscated their lands. He insulted the nobles in the open court, and his brutality produced a feeling of consternation among his subjects of all classes. The country was at last rid of this tyranny by Sher Bahadur, an illegitimate brother of the king, but the latter was instantaneously put to death by Bal Narsingh, father of Jang Bahadur, the hero of

modern Nepal. Bhim Sen who had become Prime-Minister in 1804 advised the slave queen to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of her husband, and queen Tripura Sundari assumed charge of the regency which she had held for 28 years.

The internal quarrels of Nepal court were hushed for the time being by the imminent prospect of war with the British Government. Bhim Sen Thapa was an able and astute minister, who had watched with uneasiness the expansion of the British Dominion in India by Wellesley's system of subsidiary alliances. He had seen one Indian state after another passing under the British yoke, and immediately took steps not merely to safeguard the interests of his country but to extend the frontier towards the Tarai in the South. A man of great intelligence and perspicacity of vision, who had a distrust of the British, he was not a little influenced by the difficulties of the East India Company. After Wellesley's retirement, anarchy had spread through out northern India. Those whom he had compelled to enter into his system of alliances were deeply dissatisfied; they chafed against the restraints imposed upon them by the 'Paramount' power, the Marathas sullenly waited for an opportunity to strike a blow for their independence; Scindhia and Holkar, still smarting under a sense of humiliation, were harrying the lands of Rajputana and levying black mail upon her Princes. In Central India and the Deccan the roving bands of Pindari horsemen burnt villages and looted property, spreading misery and desolation throughout the land. In the North Ranjit Singh had become a formidable power and was not afraid of trying conclusions with the British. The kingdom of Oudh was weak and disorganised; frequent British interference had sapped the power of her princes and limited the sphere of their influence. The court was a centre of intrigue, and there were many who were not unwilling to profit by the difficulties of the company's government.

The Gurkhas had watched all this with great interest. They had carried their depredations into the Tarai for seven years and during this period annexed about 200 villages. The protests of the British Government produced no effect on the Nepal Government and in 1813 it transpired that the aid of China had been invoked and that military preparations had been set on foot to have a trial of strength, if necessary, with the British. Bhim Sen himself became the protagonist

of that Jingoism which urged a plunge into danger despite the wise counsels of Amar Singh Thapa to the contrary.

The brave General wrote :—

“The advocate of war, he who proposes to fight and conquer the English (Bhim Sen), has been bred up at court, and is a stranger to the toil and hardships of a military life. Even now that he proposes war, his place is about your person. By the influence of the auspicious fortune of this Raj success would crown our efforts in the event of a rupture, but our life has been passed in traversing forests, with hatchets in our hands, to collect woods and leaves and still pursue the same occupation. War, we know to be an arduous undertaking; it is so for veteran troops and for raw recruits must be much more so. There is an old saying, that they transact their master’s business who exercise the greatest prudence and circumspection.” The Governor-General demanded the evacuation of the villages seized by the Nepali troops; they complied with the demand in April, 1814 but no sooner were the company’s troops withdrawn than the Gurkhas recommenced their aggressions and massacred the police stationed in the Gorakhpore Tarai districts. Lord Moira was thus obliged to issue an ultimatum, and it was arranged that four columns under four Generals : Ochterlony, Gillespie, Wood and Marley should march into Nepal territory. The advance of the armies was impeded by the dense forest and the malarious climate of the country, and no manoeuvres could be effectively planned. Gillespie found himself confronted by the fort of Kalanga near Dehra Dun which was gallantly defended by the Gurkhas. The British general was killed and about 20 officers and 250 men lost their lives. Then the command was entrusted to Major Martindell who also proved a failure. General Ochterlony’s division fared better although it was opposed by the bravest Nepali soldier, Amar Singh Thapa. Both sides saw the futility of fighting and on 15th May, 1814 negotiations for peace began. Amar Singh Thapa, who had entered into communications with the Sikh ruler of the Punjab and was fully acquainted with the military situation was adverse to the termination of hostilities and wrote to the Nepal Government protesting against the untimely overtures of peace. But his letter was intercepted by the British, and the Nepal Govern-

ment, not knowing what was happening in the different theatres of the war, expressed their willingness to sign a truce. The following extract from Amar Singh's letter will give the reader an idea of the heroic spirit of the Gurkhas :

“Fear nothing even though the Sikhs should not join us. Should you succeed now in bringing our differences to an amicable termination by the cession of territory, the enemy in the course of a few years, would be in possession of Nepal, as he took possession of the country of Tippoo. The present, therefore, is not the time for treaty and conciliation. These expedients should have been tried before the murder of the revenue officer (in Gorakhpore) or must be postponed till victory shall crown our efforts. If they will then accede to the terms which I shall propose, it is well; if not, with the favour of God, and your fortune and bounty, it shall be my business to preserve the integrity of my country from Khumka to the Sutlej. Let me entreat you, therefore, never to make peace.”¹

“Our proffers of peace and conciliation will be interpreted as the results of fear; and it would be absurd to expect that the enemy will respect a treaty concluded under such circumstances. Therefore, let us confine our fortunes to our swords; and by boldly opposing the enemy, compel him to remain within his own territory or, if he should continue to advance, stung with shame at the idea of retreating, after his immense preparations, we can then give up the lands in dispute, and adjust our differences.”² It was proposed that the Gurkhas should evacuate the country from the Sutlej to the Kali river which covered roughly the area now comprised in the Garhwal, Kumaon and Simla districts.

These terms were not ratified by the Nepal Government because they were considered too harsh and unreasonable. General Ochterlony again advanced from Saran towards the close of January, 1816 and his instructions were to storm the capital. He encountered the Gurkhas at Churia pass which was strongly garrisoned. Fearing the risk of an open battle, he made a detour to the west to the pass and the Gurkhas withdrew to the fortress of Sisagarhi. The arrival of reinforcements under

(1) Prinsep's Transactions in India Vol : I. Appendix A, pp. 460-61.

(2) *Ibid* p. 466-70.

Colonel Nicol strengthened the British forces, and they captured the outpost of Hariharpur which commanded the entrance to the fort of Makwanpur. The Gurkhas were unnerved, and they offered terms which were accepted. In March 1816, a treaty was made at Sigowli by which the Tarai was ceded to the British, the Western part was given to Oudh and the Eastern was retained by the Gurkhas. Lord Moira was anxious to establish friendly relations with Nepal, and soon after the peace he restored *a large part of the Tarai*, which was in British hands. The friendly relations established by this Treaty have remained to this day, and the Government of Nepal has always been one of the greatest and staunchest allies of Great Britain. The Treaty provided that a British resident was to reside in Nepal but he was merely to report events in the country so far as they affected Indian interests. The position of the British representative has been clearly summed up by Mr. Perceval Landon:

“In Nepal neither the Indian Government nor any other Government has any right of interference or intervention or even of offering advice. Nepal is an independent state, and the functions of the Envoy are simply those of a friendly observer whose duties are confined to reporting the chief events and tendencies in Nepal so far as they affect Indian interests, to acting as the official intermediary between the two Governments, and to supervising the issue of passports from time to time he represents to Nepal any case of hardships about which a complaint has been made to him by an Indian subject, and on all ceremonial occasions he represents the king-emperor in the capital.”

The king died on the 20th November, 1816 of small-pox while still a minor, and was succeeded by his infant son Rajendra Vikrama Sah for whom Queen Tripura Sundari continued to act as regent. Bhim Sen was the Prime Minister, and all authority was centred in his hands. He was a masterful figure and did not want to play the second fiddle to the British Resident in Nepal. The relations became somewhat strained and the military preparations of Bhim Sen aroused serious apprehensions in British India. He created trouble for himself by laying hands upon the religious endowments enjoyed by Brahmans. The old feud between the Thapas and the Pandes broke out with redoubled fury

for the two queens of Rajendra were supporters of the rival clans. Bhim Sen's unlimited authority alarmed the king as well as his opponents. His principal enemies since the queen Regent's death in 1832 had been his own kinsmen. His brother Ranbir had ingratiated himself with the boy king and intrigued to oust Bhim Sen from the Prime-Minister-ship. When the annual Pajni took place, the Prime-Minister's appointment was not renewed. The king was obliged to call him back but it was clear that he was galled by his tutelage and longed to get rid of it. The Pande faction headed by Ranjang, in high favour at court, at this time, and instigated by the senior queen trumped up all kinds of charges against their mortal enemy. Bhim Sen was disgraced and thrown into prison, and his rival Ran Jang assumed control of the affairs of the Government. After some-time Bhim Sen was released and he retired into private life. But Ran Jang who was athirst for his blood knew no respite. The old charges were revived again although there was not a shred of evidence to prove them. The old minister defended himself vigorously and described the papers which were produced in evidence as forgeries. He was treated with unsurpassed brutality and subjected to all kinds of threats, and attempts were made to drive him to suicide by telling him that his wife was paraded naked through the streets of Kathmandu. The agony at last became unbearable and with a *Khukri* which he was allowed to carry on his person he cut his throat from the effects of which he died after nine days. The last rites were denied to the fallen minister; his dead body was exposed in the streets, and it was sometime after that the mangled remains were thrown away on the river side, where none but 'the dog and the vulture dared further heed them.'

Hodgson, the Resident, wrote to the Governor-General on July 30th, 1839 about the event in these words:

"Thus has perished the great and able statesman, who for more than thirty years had ruled this kingdom with more than regal sway. Just two years after his sudden fall from power in 1837 prior to which event the uniform success of nearly all his measures had been no less remarkable than the energy and sagacity which so much promoted that success. He was, indeed, a man born to exercise dominion over his

fellows alike by the means of command and persuasion. Nor am I aware of any native statesman of recent time, except Ranjit Singh, who is all things considered, worthy to be compared with the late General Bhim Sen of Nepal.”¹

After Bhim Sen's death the queen and Ran Jang revenged themselves on the Thapa family, and the half-insane king issued a proclamation, excluding the scions of the Thapa clan from public employment. The palace intrigues went on ceaselessly, and the rival queens formed their parties to accomplish their ends and made a cat's paw of their imbecile husband. The senior queen and Ran Jang tried to procure the dismissal of the Resident but the latter's good sense saved him from a dangerous and critical situation. Foiled in this they planned a mutiny of the troops but this too was frustrated by Hodgson's personal popularity. The Queen's death in 1841, however, ended an unhappy state of things, and the relations between Nepal and the British Government were improved. The junior Queen who now attained the rank of chief wife tried to secure her own son's succession to the throne on the ground that the crown Prince was mentally deranged. The court was the scene of scandalous altercations between the king and the heir-apparent; they quarrelled openly and the king's honour and dignity were seriously compromised. The Prince's atrocities caused much discontent among the subjects whose protest assumed the form of a serious insurrection. The phantom Maharaja's orders were superseded by those of the crown prince, and the latter frequently punished and tortured people for obeying his father's commands. While the affairs were in this condition, the queen appointed Mathabar Singh, nephew of Bhim Sen, as Prime-Minister.

The Queen had hoped to find in Mathabar a willing tool of her machinations but he turned out a man of stern fibre. He refused to support her plans to make her son heir to the throne, and in bitter disappointment she hatched a plot to murder the Prime-Minister. It was decided by the Queen and her paramour Gagan Singh that king Rajendra should be informed that Mathabar intended to compel him to abdicate in favour of Prince Surendra. The disobedient

*Sir William Hunter, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson*, p. 176.

crown Prince for whom the king cherished a profound dislike. They played upon his fears by telling him that Mathabar himself aimed at royalty. The imbecile monarch, before whose eyes they conjured up the grim spectre of a forcible abdication, was prevailed upon to give his assent to the sinister plan that was laid before him, and Mathabar's nephew Jang Bahadur was chosen to perpetrate the deed. On March 17, 1845 the Minister was shot dead by Jang Bahadur near the door of the Queen's apartment and his body was thrown out of a window. The royal clemency manifested itself in the permission to cremate the dead body of the most distinguished functionary of the state on the ghat below the shrine of Pashupatinath. The situation was full of grave risks and Jang Bahadur, as a shrewd observer of events, saw clearly that his own life would be in danger, if he did not identify himself with the party in power. If he had resisted or refused to carry out the command of the king and the queen, his ruin would have been complete.

The murder of Mathabar Singh brought about by the king and his consort raised Jang Bahadur to a position of importance in the state, but he was not yet Prime-Minister nor did he find the path to that high office strewn with roses. There were several parties all boiling with fury and burning with revenge and they changed their positions with a kaleidoscopic rapidity. There was the king, an imbecile figure-head who wanted to assert his authority. His consort, the junior Maharani, was a partisan of the Thapas, and after Bhim Sen's death had come to the front in the politics of the court. The Thapas and Pandes seethed with revenge and were eager to destroy each other. The Chautarias, members of the king's family, asserted their rights and political insignificance during Bhim Sen's regime had only lent a keen edge to their ambition. Such was the situation which opened before Jang Bahadur. A man of clear ruthless and logical intellect, of extraordinary daring and strength of will, and a shrewd judge of political opportunity, he appeared on the horizon unexpectedly as a beacon of hope. Of his ancestry a few words may be said here. He was the second son of Balnar Singh, son of Ranjit Kunwar, by his second wife, who was the daughter of Nain Singh, brother of Bhim Sen Thapa. He was born on June 18, 1817 and from his early

boyhood, though illiterate, had a large fund of natural wit, which stood him in good stead throughout his life. He was brave to the point of recklessness, trusted no one and was always carefully guarded. He was a first class shot and a mighty hunter with whom the pursuit of game was a passion. He was skilled in archery and horsemanship and had developed his body in vigorous exercise. His youthful adventures tried the patience of his family, and his father found himself powerless to keep him in check. He left his military duties and fled to India and went to the Lahore court but received no encouragement from the Sikh ruler. On his return to Nepal suddenly by a miraculous twist of fortune he found himself in a situation in which he was destined to play an important part. After Mathabar Singh's murder Jang Bahadur had attained a position of prominence, but the desire of the Queen was ultimately to appoint her lover Gagan Singh as Prime-Minister. The king disliked Gagan Singh for obvious reasons and wished to make Fateh Jang Prime Minister. There were four candidates in the field—Gagan Singh, Fateh Singh, Jang Bahadur and Abhiman Singh, all of whom were made Generals. Jang Bahadur seemingly identified himself with the cause of the Queen and her paramour and made no secret of his sympathy for the lawful heir to the throne.

Not content with the murder of Mathabar the Queen wanted to make away with her opponents. A cause of trouble soon arose. In September, 1846 king Rajendra, tired of the Queen, who behaved like a magalomaniac, spoke to his son Surendra and Upendra about the improper intimacy which existed between their mother and Gagan Singh and asked them to save the family honour by putting the latter to death. Prince Upendra went to Fateh Jang and communicated his father's intentions to him. The Prime-Minister took counsel with Abhiman Singh, Dalbhanjan and Kazi Bir Kishore and decided that the king's wish should be carried out. Gagan Singh was murdered in his own house while he was still at his devotions by one Lal Jha, a hired assassin, who was paid 3000 gold *Mohars*. The Queen was stunned by the news; her rage knew no bounds, and she walked to the house of her lover in the darkness of the night with a drawn sword in her hand, accompanied by

four servants and asked the three wives of the deceased not to burn themselves on their husband's funeral pyre. Then she summoned the chief officers of the state in the *Kot*.¹ Jang Bahadur was the first to arrive, accompanied by his three regiments and his brothers and relatives all armed to the teeth.

The Queen was surprised at this, and on being asked why he had come with troops, Jang Bahadur replied that he had taken precautions against a possible danger to her life. The other chiefs also came with their retainers, and when they had all assembled, the Queen frantically asked them to find out the murderer of Gagan Singh. She ordered Abhiman to strike off the head of Bir Kishore, the leading survivor of the Pande faction, whom she suspected to be the author of the deed. Abhiman wanted a royal decree with the *Lal mohar* (red seal) but the king refused to sanction such a step without ascertaining the guilt of the culprit. The latter was completely unnerved by these unforeseen developments; he fled to the Residency but the Resident refused to see him saying that Europeans did not receive visitors at that late hour. Again, the Queen demanded the name of the murderer, and she was informed by Fateh Jang, the Prime-Minister, who had in the meantime arrived that investigation would be necessary to trace the culprit. Infuriated at this answer, she descended into the courtyard and proceeded to strike off herself the head of Birkishore but Fateh Jang and Jang Bahadur persuaded her to desist from such a course, and then she withdrew to her apartments upstairs. Just at this time the news came that three hundred soldiers of Abhiman had arrived and that Fateh Jang and Abhiman were holding consultations between themselves. Jang Bahadur informed the queen that her supporters were in imminent danger of being destroyed and that steps must be taken betimes to avert the catastrophe. The arrest of Abhiman was at once ordered, and as he advanced towards the gate to meet his troops, he was stopped by the sentinel at which his anger blazed forth and when he tried to push his way through towards the gate the Queen was exasperated by

¹ The *Kot* is a place near Hanumandhoka where regimental colours are stored and worship is offered to them. During the Dushera festival all the Civil and Military officers of the state come to offer worship here and hundreds of buffaloes and goats are sacrificed.

his disobedience. An order was given that he should be shot dead, and a soldier thrust his bayonet into his breast and stabbed him. This was a signal for a general massacre. As Abhiman fell down mortally wounded, he shouted that Jang Bahadur was the murderer of Gagan Singh whereupon Khadga Bikrama, the eldest son of Fateh Jang, corroborated the heinous charge, and exhorted the Chautarias to rise up to avenge the crime. An altercation followed in which Khadga attacked Krishna, a brother of Jang but he was cut into two by another brother Dhir Shum Shere Jang Bahadur, who preferred to play for higher stakes, offered his condolence to Fateh Jang and asked to forgive. The bereaved Minister with two others ran up to the Queen's apartments but he was shot dead by a man of Jang's party. A general scuffle ensued in which each man's hand was drawn against his rival and opponent. At this moment Jang's troops entered the Kot quadrangle by force and the Chautarias bolted away. Streams of blood flowed into the gutters, and it is said that about 55 nobles of high rank were killed, and of the lesser men who were done to death there was no reckoning.

The Queen bestowed the office of Prime Minister on Jang Bahadur in this crisis and asked him to strike terror into the heart of prince Surendra by showing him the horrid spectacle. The Prince was brought to the scene, but Jang Bahadur quietly whispered into his ear that his enemies had been given a short shrift, and that he was absolutely safe.

The Kot massacre was a tragedy deeply stained with blood. It showed clearly to what extent the political life of a country can be corrupted by party passion. Jang Bahadur who was the victorious head of a vindictive faction, now aimed at being the healer of civic wounds. The first thing he did was to provide for the safety of the two princes Surendra and Upendra whom he wanted to use for his own advantage. He waited upon the king at the Hanumandhoka, made obeisance as Prime-Minister of the realm, and told him on being asked that the massacre had been planned by the Queen. Disgusted at these ghastly tragedies, the imbecile monarch left the palace and prepared to go on pilgrimage to Banares. Jang Bahadur took immediate steps to consolidate his position and terminated the services of those whom he considered disloyal or dangerous. The two Princes were kept under surveillance, and

Jang Bahadur took a personal interest in their safety and protection. The Queen continued to act as regent and insisted upon the death of the two princes to make room for her son Ranendra. Jang Bahadur at first put her off with dilatory pleas but at last her importunities compelled him to take a decisive step. He informed the Queen that the course suggested by her amounted to a most heinous crime in defiance of conscience and religion, and that if she persisted in it, she would render herself liable to prosecution according to the law of the land. This reply came to the Queen as a bolt from the blue, and she perceived clearly that Jang intended to ruin all her schemes of self-aggrandisement. She at once formed a plot to murder him. He was invited to the Bhandarkhal palace and a Brahman Pandit Bijai Raj who held the post of Dharmadhikari in the state and who knew that the Queen was taking an improper step, was employed to bring Jang Bahadur to the appointed place. The Brahman divulged the whole plot to him and Jang Bahadur immediately rode to the palace with his brothers and an armed force. The conspirators were taken unawares and by a *Coup de Main* Jang frustrated the sinister design. About 23 were killed besides their leader Bir Dhuj to whom the office of Prime-Minister had been promised and the rest were thrown into prison. A meeting of the state council was called and the sovereign authority delegated to the Queen was withdrawn from her, and she was asked to quit the country immediately and prepare herself to go to Banares. The king also expressed a desire to go and the royal family left Kathmandu on the 23rd November 1846. Prince Surendra was invested with the regency during the absence of his father and the administration of the country was carried on by Jang Bahadur.

The royal residence at Banares soon became a hot bed of intrigues, and malcontents of all description from Nepal found a ready welcome there. An invasion of the country was attempted and the ex-king reached the Tarai, but Jang Bahadur's force scattered his retinue and captured him. He was brought to Kathmandu and kept as a prisoner in the palace where his movements were watched by Jang Bahadur's men. Thus king Rajendra who had reaped the fruit of his actions was made to acquiesce in his own deposition, and Prince Surendra was placed on the throne. In November 1847 a son was born to

to the new king, and his position was further strengthened. He was given the name of Trailokya Vikrama Sah.

Jang Bahadur now assumed the supreme authority in the state. Several plots were formed to assassinate him but every one of them was nipped in the bud by his vigilance and timely action. All power was concentrated in his hands, and his position was analogous to that of the Maratha Peshwa who became the dominant figure in Poona politics in the 18th century. All elements of opposition were crushed, and he took steps to establish order in the country. Life and property became secure, and the people began to look upon him as their saviour.

Thus the Prime-Minister became the *de facto* ruler of the state, and the Sovereign was reduced to the position of a titular figure head. Jang Bahadur was a man of supple intelligence, firm will, the very epitome of his country's tumultuous moods, passionate lusts, and the spirit of fiery revenge. He did not hesitate to employ the most cruel methods to further his ends. His forceful genius marked him out from his contemporaries and if he dealt drastically with his antagonists, he had ample warrant of circumstances to support his plans and policies. Politics have a morality of their own, and sometimes in self-defence statesmen have to do things which are hard to justify. Yet he was a kind-hearted and generous man, and many an anecdote is related of his fellow-feeling and magnanimity. In 1849 when the Queen of Ranjit Singh reached Kathmandu after the fall of the Sikh power, she was accorded a treatment worthy of her high rank. She was granted an allowance of Rs. 2500 per mensem and a some of Rs. 30,000 for building a palatial house for herself. Jang Bahadur established friendly relations with the British Government and in time of need offered voluntary help.

Firmly established in the office of Prime-Minister and rid of all his rivals, Jang Bahadur expressed a desire to visit Europe and to study at first hand the political and social institutions of England. His curiosity was enhanced by the military achievements of the British in India. The ostensible object of the visit was to convey the king of Nepal's respects assurances of friendship to the Queen of England. The Government was entrusted to the care of his brother Bam Bahadur as Prime-Minister, and with him were associated

Badri Nar Singh as Commander-in-Chief and Krishna Bahadur as the head of the civil department. The party consisting of the Prime-Minister himself and several officers of the Government, among whom was included General Dhir Shum Shere Rana, father of Maharaja along with domestics, left Kathmandu on January 1st, 1850. On reaching Calcutta, they were warmly received by the Indian Government and a grand durbar was held at Government House to accord a reception to the Nepali Minister. A ship was chartered for £5,000 and on the 7th April the party set sail for Europe. We have no means of knowing how the mountain chief gazed on the blue eternal waters but there is no doubt that he must have been deeply impressed by the majesty and grandeur of Nature. All arrangements on board ship were made according to orthodox ideas, and the European passengers were amused to see the Prime-Minister observing with punctiliousness the rules of his religion and caste. At last the ship reached Southampton on May 25, 1850 and on its arrival in London the party was lodged in the richmond Terrace. A magnificent reception was accorded to the distinguished guest and Queen Victoria was pleased to receive him in audience. He was deeply touched by her kindness, and in after life cherished a pleasing recollection of his visit to the royal palace. He came in contact with many distinguished officers of the state and statesmen of different parties and talked to them. He paid a visit to France also and met Napoleon III who held a review of French troops in his honour. It was in Paris that a charming young girl took his pistol from him and fired a shot which struck by chance General Dhir Shum Shere who happened to stand by. The injury was not serious; the bullet was extracted by Jang Bahadur himself, and the wound healed up in a short time.

The Maharaja reached Banares on January 4, 1851 and the first thing he did was to settle the dispute between the two Princes, sons of the ex-Maharani. He visited several temples and educational institutions and made handsome contributions towards their funds. When he reached Nepal, he was welcomed with joy, but after a few days the repose of Thapathali was disturbed by the news of a conspiracy to take his life, and among the authors of these nefarious intrigues were some of his own relatives. Timely action saved his life, and the cons-

pirators received condign punishment. Several other plots were formed by his enemies to have him assassinated but they were all smashed by his constant vigilance and swift and drastic action.

In matters of foreign policy Jang Bahadur was no less prompt and energetic. In May, 1854 the relations between Nepal and Tibet became strained owing to the ill-treatment meted out to the Nepalese who resided in Lhasa and the persistent refusal of the Tibetan Government to grant redress. The immediate cause of hostilities was the molestation offered to the Nepalese mission passing through the Tibetan territory to China. Romanstrances made by the Nepal Government produced no effect. At last Jang Bahadur's patience was exhausted, and he declared war against Tibet. Day and night he busied himself in making preparations for the coming encounter and organised an army of 14,000 foot and 12,000 horse, well-equipped with arms and ammunition. Generals Dhir Shum Shere, Bam Bahadur and Jagat Shum Shere, who commanded the forces, fought well and captured several places of strategic importance. Jhunga was captured by Jagat Shum Shere after a bloody battle which lasted nine days. Unable to withstand the attack of the Nepalese the Tibetans offered to sheathe the sword and peace was signed at Thapathali on March 24, 1856. The Tibetans agreed to pay rupees ten thousand annually to the Government of Nepal, and the latter bound itself to defend it against foreign attack. Trade between the two countries was completely secured, and an agreement was made about the levy of taxes and duties on merchants and their goods and the extradition of culprits charged with homicide.

A few months later for reasons of health Jang Bahadur resigned his office, and his brother Bam Bahadur became Prime Minister, but all real power centred in the hands of the elder brother. An influential deputation headed by the Raj Guru (the royal high priest) waited upon the retiring Premier and offered him the crown of Nepal but he refused to set aside the ruler whom he had himself placed upon the throne. Then they invested him with the sovereignty of Kaski and Lam Jang and the title of Maharaja on August 6, 1856 and declared that in future the title and the possession of the aforesaid domain should be made hereditary in his family. Further, he was given

the power of awarding capital punishment, of appointing and dismissing all servants, of declaring war, of making treaties with any foreign power and of making new, and of repealing old laws, civil, criminal and military. Thus Jang Bahadur was made the virtual dictator of Nepal. An important constitutional change effected by the charter was that the Prime-Ministership was made hereditary in Jang Bahadur's family and, was to devolve on the eldest agnate. The succession to the office of Prime-Minister is still regulated by the principle laid down by Jang Bahadur and Mr. Landon has clearly stated it.

“It means that after the brothers and cousins of one generation have in their term enjoyed the Prime-Ministership—according to the date of their birth, be it noted, not according to the seniority of their fathers—the office then descends to the eldest down to the next generation, which then enjoys their Prime-Ministership in the same fashion, and afterwards hands it down to the third, fourth and all succeeding generations in the same way.”¹

Jang Bahadur was armed with plenary authority. The king's power was reduced to a nullity; he could be called to account by the Prime-Minister if he meddled in the affairs of the state. Nothing was done by Bam Bahadur without consulting his brother, and when he died in 1857 Jang Bahadur again assumed the reins of office. His enemies attempted to thwart his authority but he succeeded in overcoming their opposition and soon consolidated his position.

A little before this the War of 1857 had broken out in India and Jang Bahadur offered help in men and money to the British Government. At first there was no response, but Lord Canning soon changed his mind, and allowed Gurkha contingents to march to the relief of the Residency at Lucknow. The Maharaja himself went to India, captured Gorakhpore in January, 1858 and thus broke the back of the resistance that had become ubiquitous in the districts of Oudh. The Gurkha troops helped in establishing order in Northern India, and to signify its appreciation of the services, rendered in such a crisis, the British Government decided to transfer his former possessions in the Tarai to the ruler of Nepal. A year later the Maharaja was honoured by the Queen of England and made a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath.

¹ Nepal-Vol : pp. 147-48.

The remaining years of Jang Bahadur's life were spent in performing the day to day duties of the administration. He was honoured by the Emperor of China and was received cordially in a Durbar by the Viceroy of India. In 1874 he again suddenly expressed his intention to visit Europe but he fell from his horse in Bombay and sustained serious injuries. With the advice of his councillors the project of the European tour was abandoned, and the Maharaja returned to Nepal, passing through places of pilgrimage and making abundant gifts to holy shrines and Brahmans. In the cold weather of 1875-76 the Prince of Wales (afterwards Edward VII) paid a visit to the Tarai and the Maharaja organised a magnificent hunt which delighted the royal visitor.

Death had been for sometime busy in the Maharaja's household and his own health began to show signs of decline. He had a premonition of the approaching end and made a distribution of his property among his sons and wives. He was taken seriously ill on February 25, 1877 and breathed his last at midnight, leaving an imperishable name behind. Three of his Maharanis were burnt along with him.

Thus died Maharaja Jang Bahadur, the maker of modern Nepal. He is rightly regarded as the saviour of his country to whom the Rana family owes the position, authority and dignity which it enjoyed in the world. He was an intrepid soldier, a magnificent hunter, a far-sighted statesman and a generous ruler. In his younger days he was keenly interested in exercise and was passionately fond of hunting and many an anecdote is related of his physical courage and endurance. He subscribed to the tenets of his faith. With great devoutness he practised charities on a large scale. He had a high sense of justice, and though unscrupulous in securing his ends, his heart shrank from inflicting barbarous punishment upon his own kith and kin even when they conspired against him. He respected the position of the fair sex and made a law to protect wives against the brutality of their husbands. His proud and self-respecting nature could brook no insult, and when during a visit to Allahabad, Sir John Strachey, the Lieutenant Governor; informed him that he could not go to the Tribeni with his armed retainers, he felt very much hurt and refused to have a bath at the confluence even when the restriction was withdrawn through Viceregal intercession. He

was pitiless in dealing with serious crime but never oppressed the weak and the poor. He respected the rights of others and deprived no man of his property. He was thoroughly devoted to his country's interests, and but for the foundations laid by him, Nepal would not have attained to that degree of power, influence and prosperity which she commands today among the nations of the east.

Jang Bahadur, according to the law of succession, laid down by him, was succeeded by his brother Ranoddipa who was a weak, ease-loving man without any initiative or intellectual resource. The eldest surviving brother was Badri Narsingh but he and his son had been removed from the role of succession. Ranoddipa did not find the Prime-Minister's *gaddi* a bed of roses, Jang Bahadur had, at the time of his death, left 10 sons who enjoyed royal dignity during their father's life time. In spite of the law made by their father they thought that the Prime-Ministership should devolve on the eldest son like the kingship of Nepal. Ranoddipa lacked energy and vigour ; he depended far too much upon his brothers *Jagat Shum Shere* and *Dhir Shum Shere* and when the former died in 1879 the latter became as it were the *alter ego* of the Prime-Minister and managed the affairs of the state, General *Dhir* possessed the qualities, of a soldier and a statesman and was fully acquainted with the condition of Nepal. The sons of Jang Bahadur felt that they were unjustly excluded from their rightful inheritance and took exception not only to the devolution of Prime-Ministership but also of the estates which were specially reserved by their father for the occupant of that office. The death of king Surendra and the succession to royal dignity of Prithivi Vir Vikrama Sah, who was a mere stripling, further opened a new field for intrigue in court circles.

Ranoddipa's supine inaction hastened the conspiracy to have the Maharaja and his brother *Dhir Shum Shere* put to death. There was another faction consisting of the members of *Mathabar Singh's* family, who were eager for revenge and who wanted to destroy both branches of the Rana family. *Jagat Jung* made all arrangements for the execution of his plot but not being a man of strong nerves he himself left for India to escape the dreaded consequences of failure detection. Luckily a grandson of *Gagan Singh* divulged the whole plot to general

Dhir, who ordered the conspirator to be arrested, and frustrated the nefarious intrigue in the very beginning. Jagat Jang, Padma Jang and Bombir Vikram were held guilty, and their names were removed from the role of succession though Padma Jang's name was afterwards restored through the intercession of his sister, the Dowager Maharani.

Thus freed from anxiety, Ranoddip devoted himself to the business of Government. He organised the militia system which remains in force to this day, and formed new rules and regulations for the proper organisation of the Kumari Chawk. He followed Jang Bahadur in refusing to allow entry to Europeans in Nepal and shared his fears. In 1885 he sent a mission to Lord Dufferin offering military help against the threatened invasion of Russia but it was thankfully declined. When the Indian Government wanted to recruit soldiers for the Gurkha regiments in the British army, permission was granted although the matter was debated for a considerable period.

Ranoddip was not destined to live long in peace. In 1884 General Dhir Shum Shere died and with his death departed the happy days of the Nepal Government. A serious crisis arose and the conspiracy planned by Jagat Jang and Jit Jang led to dreadful results. Jit Jang wrote a letter to Ranoddip in which he asked him to restore the order of succession and warned him that his refusal might lead to bloodshed. Ranoddip entertained the request but gave no definite answer. His natural indolence, combined with petticoat influence to which he was susceptible induced procrastination, and he did nothing to avert the impending disaster. Those who were threatened by this dangerous move were the sons of Dhir Shum Shere, Bir Khadga, Rana, Deva, Chandra Bhim, Fateh, Lalit, Jit and Joodha, Bir, the eldest was educated at Deveton College in Calcutta and at an early age had given proof of his capacity as soldier and administrator. The feud between the two parties was irreconcilable, and the situation which confronted the Shum Shere brothers has been clearly summed up by Mr. Landon. "Either they must at any cost make themselves masters of the Government of Nepal, or their lives should be at the scant mercy of those whose hatred had been accentuated not merely by a sense of exclusion from authority in their

lives but by the smarting recollections of a long exile in India.”

The brothers decided to take time by the forelock and on the night of November 22, 1885 they went to the palace of Maharaja Udip and put him to death. Jagat Jang and his son Jooddha Pratap Jung who were arch-leaders of the conspiracy were also murdered.

Bir Shum Shere was at this time in the king's palace; he was supported by the Queen-mother, a daughter of Maharaja Jang Bahadur. Having secured recognition from the king, he hurried to Tudikhel where he was welcomed by the army and proclaimed Prime-Minister. By this *coup d'etat* the Shum Shere brothers established their power, and a new era began in the history of Nepal. The records that have come to light prove clearly that the conspiracy was a real one and that the brothers acted in self-defence. Kedar Narsingh's correspondence which was carefully examined by Mr. Landon left no room for doubt that Jagat Jung and his partisans were keenly desirous of seizing the reins of power and removing from the role of succession General Bir and his brothers.

Maharaja Bir who now assumed the office of Prime-Minister was a man of ability and strong commonsense and he at once set himself to the task of reorganising the administration. In a state despotically governed, the first need of the ruler is to make his position quite safe, and with this end in view the Maharaja revised the role of succession and exiled the supporters of Jagat Jang, whose presence in Nepal would have caused much anxiety and trouble. But the danger came from an unexpected quarter. The Maharaja's brother Khadga Shum Shere who was Commander-in-Chief and heir to the Prime Ministership conspired with his maternal uncles and several others to bring about his brother's overthrow. But his attempt was foiled, and he was interned in Palpa, and his name was erased from the role of succession. He was restored to favour after some time and appointed governor of the same district. The Maharaja laid his hands heavily on all malcontents and put down sedition with a strong band. Ran Bir Jang, son of Jang Bahadur, and his nephew, son of Jit Jang created trouble but it was suppressed by timely action. The Associates of Jit Jung's nephew were arrested and five of them were put to death.

The Maharaja now devoted his time to the internal progress of the country. He supplied water to the valley, improved education, sanitation and medical relief, established the Bir Library, constructed the suspension bridge at Kulikhani and the clock tower at Tudikhel. He was strict in enforcing the law of the land, and the efficiency of the administration was always his primary concern. His relations with foreign powers were friendly. The Chinese Emperor reciprocated his good will and the British Government honoured him. He died in 1901.

Bir was an enlightened ruler who deserved well of his country and his people. He was interested in education and had a special taste in music. He encouraged cottage industries and patronised native merchants. The following estimate of his character given by one who knew him will be read with interest.

“He was endowed with a sound common sense which he brought to bear upon every question before him and thus helped him to solution which, though it might not have been brilliant, was in most instances on the right side.”

Maharaja Bir was succeeded by his brother Deva who, though educated, lacked judgment, sagacity and foresight. He was fond of pomp and show and wasted a good deal of money on gorgeous Durbars and triumphal processions. He attempted sweeping reforms for which the country was not yet ripe. Opposition grew apace, and signs of discontent became manifest all sides. His brothers then had to perform the unpleasant duty of asking him to abdicate which he did under irresistible pressure. He was asked leave for India where he passed the remainder of his life at Mussoorie. He made several attempts to return to Nepal but in vain. He died on February 20, 1914. Maharaja Chandra allowed his sons afterwards to return to Nepal and appointed them to high posts in the administration.

The next brother who succeeded in the office of the Prime-Minister was Maharaja Chandra Shum Shere, a man who was endowed with great natural talents and powers of statesmanship. During his long tenure of office, he accomplished far-reaching reforms, built roads, highways and bridges, spread education among the people and made arrangements for proper sanitation and medical relief. He paid a visit to England in

1908 and was received in audience by king Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. He was the chief guest at the garden party given at Windsor Castle by the king, and in his company he watched the international show at Olympia. Wherever the Maharaja went, the people were deeply impressed by his personality and were amazed at the gorgeous splendour of his jewelled headgear which was "one glittering mass of precious stones." He visited the Oxford University, and the present writer was told by Maharaja Joodha Shum Shere Jang Bahadur Rana who accompanied him, how at a special convocation Lord Curzon, the Chancellor, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Civil Laws *honoris causa* in the presence of the most distinguished scholars of the University. Later at a special investiture held at the Buckingham Palace the Maharaja was invested by king Edward with the grand Cross of the Order of the Bath. He spent plenty of money on charities and his gifts to Public Institutions were appreciated by all classes of people. The personal relations between the Royal House of Great Britain and the Maharaja were always friendly. In 1911 when George V came to India for the Durbar, Maharaja Chandra invited him to a shooting expedition in Nepal which was a grand success. The king and his suite were deeply impressed by the Maharaja's hospitality and much appreciated the gifts of which they were the recipients. The Maharaja was invested with the Grand Commandership of the Royal Victorian order and was awarded a gold Coronation Durbar medal. A gift more appreciated by the warrior race of Gurkhas and their ruler was that of two thousand Lee-Metford rifles and five million rounds of ammunition. When the last Great War broke out in 1914, Maharaja Chandra offered help to the British Government both in men and money, acting in the maxim that a friend in need is a friend indeed. Nepali regiments were sent to India for the defence of her frontiers, and the Maharaja afforded all kinds of facilities for obtaining recruits for the British army. The Gurkhas were sent across the seas; they fought against the enemy on the battlefields of Flanders and Gallipoli and won undying fame for themselves. It is estimated that two lakhs of soldiers took part in the wars, and by their valour and sacrifice cemented the relations between their country and the British Government. After the war the latter signified its appreciation of Nepal's services granting an

annual subsidy of ten lakhs of rupees which is continued to this day. The treaty of 1923 reaffirmed the old ties of friendship between the two countries, and fully recognised the independent status of Nepal.

The long spell of power which Maharaja Chandra enjoyed enabled him to introduce great reforms in the administration. He improved the means of communication and provided the amenities of modern life. He put up a telephone line between Birganj and Kathmandu, supplied good drinking water to the people in the valley as well as in other places and introduced electricity which has helped the introduction of many useful reforms. The electric ropeway which is 14 miles long is used for carrying merchandise to the valley at the rate of 8 tons per hour. It has improved trade and added much to the comfort of the population. Education was encouraged by the Maharaja. The Tri-Chandra College and the Nepali Bhasha Pracharini Samiti were established by him. Social reform was undertaken in a bold spirit. Slavery was abolished, and a huge sum was given to slave-owners by way of compensation. The practice of Sti which had existed in Nepal from time immemorial was abolished in 1920 from one end of the country to other. The army was well organised and made more efficient and disciplined.

These reforms of Maharaja Chandra turned Nepal into a modern country. He was an able ruler who was ever ready to reward service but relentless in punishing sedition or treason. He showed no quarter to those who thwarted his will or attempted to undermine his authority. In his social and religious views he was a liberal conservative and aimed at eradicating the evil customs which acted as drag on national progress. He died in 1929 full of years and honours. The Chinese Government also conferred distinctions upon him, and towards the close of his life he received first class honours from the Republic of France. He was succeeded by his younger brother Bhim Shum Shere whose brief reign was marked by certain noteworthy events.

Maharaja Bhim was a man of keen political sagacity, ripe experience, and mature judgment. For twenty-nine years he had served his country as Commander-in-Chief and shown the reatest regard for his brother Maharaja Chandra. When the latter returned from his European tour, he was so pleased with his loyalty towards himself and devotion to the country's inte-

rests that he described him as a veritable Bharata. He placed his services ungrudgingly at Maharaja Chandra's disposal, and rendered the fullest assistance in the execution of all his plans and policies. When he became Prime-Minister after his death, he introduced many useful reforms. He tackled the land problem in Bataul district to the satisfaction of the ryots, abolished excise duty on cotton and salt, freed the grazing land in the Tarai from the payment of revenue. He abolished capital punishment except for an attempt on the king's life and other acts high treason. He established a technical school and took steps to encourage education. Works of public utility received his attention; provision for water supply to the suburbs and the town proper was made, and the facilities created by his predecessors were further extended. Lands were thrown open to Gurkha immigrants from Assam and every encouragement was given to the settlers. The Maharaja maintained friendly relations with the British Government and was accorded a right royal reception at Calcutta by the Viceroy in 1931. After a brief illness he died in 1932 and was succeeded by Maharaja Jooddha Shum Shere, the last of the brothers.

Birth and Early Career

Do, as your great progenitors have done. And, by their virtues, prove yourself their son.

Dryden.

It was during the last quarter of the 17th century that the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb launched his crusade against the Hindus and gave a free rein to his fanaticism. In 1669 he issued an order for the demolition of temples and the closing down of Pathshalas and forbade the study of religious books. Even the most renowned shrines of the land like Somnath (Kathiawad), Vishwanath (Banares) and Keshava Rai (Mathura) did not escape his iconoclastic fury. The Goswamis of Govardhana fled to Rajasthan with their god and Maharana Raj Singh afforded them shelter and allowed them to build a temple at Nathdwara which is an acknowledged place of pilgrimage for the followers of the Vallabhacharya sect. In 1679 the *Jeziyah* was revived and a universal protest was made throughout the country to which the Puritan Aurangzeb paid no heed. Maharana Raj Singh of Mewar wrote a letter of protest in which he pointed out the unwisdom of making a departure from the traditional policy of the Indian Timuride. A little later Aurangzeb declared war upon Marwar and the Rathors and Sisodias combined to withstand his tyranny. Hasan Ali Khan, the Mughal general, marched into Mewar territory laid it waste, and destroyed 173 temples in the vicinity of Udaipur, an act of bravery for which he was given the title of Bahadur Alamgir Shahi. Chittor had already been revaged by the Mughal troops and 63 temples had been destroyed by the Emperor's orders. The country was devastated and the rulers

of Mewar knew that they would have to fight a *outrance* for the defence of their religion and honour. The Nepali charonicles tell us that in these critical days some of the representatives of the Sisodia clan fled from their country to seek refuge in the inaccessible regions of the Himalayas and carved out small principalities for themselves. Among them are said to have been the ancestors of the present Rana family of Nepal, the most remarkable of whom was one Ram Singh, a Sisodia nobleman of pure descent. He was so filled with grief at the plight of his native land that he fled towards the hills and reached *Bhirkot* in the interior of Nepal, and for 13 years devoted himself to training the army of Karsang in horsemanship. After his death his son Ratanjit was appointed Commander of the forces of Bhirkot. He waged war against the princes of Satankot and Parbat and for his meritorious services was awarded the title of Khadga Kunwar. His son Ahi Ram left Bhirkot and joined the service of a chief of Kaski who enrolled him among his Sardars and appointed him Commander of his forces. But differences having arisen between the Sardar and his chief over his daughter Tara, he resigned and went to Gurkha to seek service with Nar Bhupal Sah. Struck by his noble men and dignity, the Gurkha Prince admitted him in his service and made him an officer in the army. This gave him an opportunity of showing his warlike energy and he successfully fought several battles against the mountain chiefs and vanquished them. He soon acquired celebrity as a general and warrior and when he died at Gurkha at the age of 50 his mantle devolved on his son Ram Krishna Kunwar, a brave and high-spirited leader, endowed with much constructive talent. He rendered valuable service to Prithivi Narayan Sah whom he helped in attempting the conquest of Chaubisi principalities and in consolidating his dominions. The chiefs of Parbat were defeated by him in several engagements and these victories won him the title of 'Jethaboodha' and 'Sri Kaji'—distinctions which whetted his appetite for military fame and adventure. When Prithivi Narayan launched his attack upon Kantipur, Kaji Ram Krishna rendered him yeoman's service and helped him a great deal with his knowledge of war and strategy. It was as the result of these successful military operations that the boundaries of the kingdom of Nepal were fixed at Jumla and Mechi, and such was Ram Krishna's self-abnegation that

when he was asked what reward he would like to have for his services he replied that the greatest recompense for his labours and valorous deeds would be the construction of a paved road from Pashupati to Guhyakali. The king at once granted his wish and the road asked for exists to this day as a befitting reminder of the Kaji's spirit of renunciation and piety. It was at Peuthan where he was deputed to set an arsenal in order that he breathed his last at the age of 59, and his memory was perpetuated by the erection of a temple dedicated to Ram Mukteshwar which stands to this day at Sekuwan as a monument of his benevolence. His son Ranjit turned out a redoubtable captain of war who displayed unusual bravery in the Chinese Digarcha and effectively suppressed the violent revolt at Jumla and won victories over the chief of Kangra. Each victory augmented his prestige and he was entrusted with the command of expeditions which required initiative and resource. He was first sent to fight against the Kamaonese and then against the chief of Thapa with whom a number of well-contested engagements were fought in one of which the gallant warrior lost his life. His son Bal Nar Singh was an *aid de came* at this time but he was so virtuous and pious that he was held in esteem by all who knew him. When he was only 22 years of age he had avenged the death of the King of Nepal by killing Sher Bahadur and his services were duly recognised by making Kaziship hereditary in his family. His eldest son was Jang Bahadur, the maker of modern Nepal, who rose by sheer dint of his energy and valour to the most conspicuous position on the state, and by his genius saved the kingdom from ruin. Jang Bahadur's youngest brother was Dhir Shum Shere, who was always by his side, faithfully carrying out his brother's plans and helping him to succeed in the enterprises to which he set his hand. A sagacious and farsighted military leader, Dhir was a man of extraordinary commonsense and political insight and enjoyed fully the confidence of his intrepid and statesman like brother. There was no matter of administrative detail with which he was not acquainted and his intimate knowledge of the affairs of Nepal and his power of quick and correct decision entitled him to be regarded as a pillar of the state by his contemporaries.

General Dhir enjoyed Jang Bahadur's confidence in a special measure. During the Kot massacre, he was by his brother's

side and showed a remarkable presence of mind. When Krishna, one of the brothers, was attacked by Khadga Vikrama, it was he who cut him into two and thus averted what might have been a fatal blow. In 1849 Jang Bahadur expressed a desire to visit England and General Dhir was a member of his suite. When the party reached Bankipore, Jang Bahadur and Dhir Shum Shere performed a strange feat of valour in ascending by a narrow spiral path the top of a ruined granary which was about 90 feet high and had walls 12 feet thick to the utter amazement of their suite. In Calcutta General Dhir inspected arsenals and foundries and studied the various methods of manufacturing the munitions of war. His stay in England taught him new experience, and amidst the numerous social entertainments so generously provided by the English hosts of the Maharaja, he was able to snatch a brief interval to display his feats of physical strength. Wrestling matches were organised, and in one of these Dhir Shum Shere won a great victory over an English champion. The European tour was marked by a variety of new and exhilarating experiences; it enlarged his outlook and liberalised his sympathies by bringing him fresh knowledge, mingled with intimate glimpses of current movements, and he was the first to start an English school in Kathmandu. This has now grown into a large institution having on its rolls more than a thousand scholars, He founded Pathshalas and provided at Tindhara a boarding house with free meals for students. As a warrior he took an important part in the Tibetan war which broke out in 1855. At the head of a considerable force he advanced towards Kuti and in the battle that was fought near the village of Chusan the Tibetans were repulsed, and the fortress which commanded the pass was seized by the Nepalis. There was no loss of life and Jang Bahadur was delighted at the admirable strategy of his brother whom he congratulated in these words.

“Your occupation of Kuti has been a magnificent feat of valour. When a commander wins a battle with heavy casualties among his men, the credit is not so great. But when a battle is won without any loss of life, it is undoubtedly a fact to be commended. I am very much pleased at the manner in which you have captured Kuti without any harm to the men under your command.”

Another action was fought at Suna Gompa in which the

Tibetans suffered another defeat, and the fort for the possessions of which they contested every inch of ground, fell into Nepali hands. General Dhir was about to follow up his victory when the news came that an armistice had been signed. Jang Bahadur was much pleased and congratulated his brother on his success. After Jang Bahadur's death Ranoddip became Prime Minister and when Jagat Shum Shere died in 1879 Dhir Shum Shere was raised to the position of Commander-in Chief. Since the new Maharaja was a man of easy-going and indolent temper, incapable of much exertion in the business of the state, the Commander-in-Chief acquired considerable influence and became in Landon's words 'the Chief Executive of Nepal'. No important decision was taken without his advice, and he came to be looked upon as one of the most important men in the state. When his nephew Jagat Jang, who insisted on the right of primogeniture, formed a conspiracy to take the life of the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief, it was the latter's alertness and timely action which frustrated the plot and saved the life of the Maharaja. In 1884 the General died at the age of 57 after a brief illness and as happened in the case of the Maratha confederacy after the passing away of Rana Fadnavis there was a recrudescence of party strife and bitterness which has been described in the previous chapter. Nepal honoured General Dhir, one of the great warrior-statesman, by raising an equestrian statue on the *maidan* of Tudikhel alongside of her Maharajas. He was by no means in affluent circumstances at the time of his death but he was loved and respected by all sections of the population. He was the most attractive figure in his family who gave him the nickname of '*Sannani*'. Laurence Oliphant who knew him well writes :

“Colonel Dhir was the most jovial, light-hearted, and unselfish being imaginable, brave as a lion—as recent events in Nepal have proved—always anxious to please and full of amusing conversation—. I know of no one I would rather have by my side in a row than the young Colonel, and his brother Jang evidently thought so too when he chose him to assist in the capture of the conspirators in the attempt on his life.”

In a country like Nepal where politics in the past were strongly tinged with finesse and intrigue, General Dhir was recognised as a man of principle, who was loth to countenance

any deviation from the path of morality or rectitude. He was a hero who had few equals in his time and his understanding and insight were developed by long experience so that in administrative matters his judgment was rarely at fault. He left behind him ten sons of whom the present Maharaja Jooddha was the youngest. He was the last of the brothers to occupy the position which was created for himself by Jang Bahadur in circumstances which admit of ample justification.

Maharaja Jooddha Shum Shere Jang Bahadur Rana was born on Saturday April 19, 1875 at 12-48 P.M. in the Narainhiti palace of Commander-in-Chief Dhir. His mother Juhar Kumari Devi was the youngest wife of the latter and belonged to a noble Rajput family of Kangra in Punjab. General Dhir had lost his favourite Ranis and he felt lonely and miserable owing to his bereavements. His household too was out of gear and, therefore, he judged it proper to take another wife. He deputed lieutenant Moti Lal and two of his Dwarayas to search for a suitable match in the Punjab. They succeeded in their efforts and on seeing the young girl who was afterwards to give birth to Maharaja Jooddha, were much struck by her personal appearance and her qualities of head and heart. She was brought to Nepal and married to the General in 1873 according to Vedic rites. In her new position she developed further her noble qualities and became known as a pious and noble-minded lady who followed in her life the ideals of Hindu womanhood. The Maharaja always spoke with great warmth and pride of the tenderness and devotion with which she nursed his father during his illness as a result of which he blessed her from his heart and predicted a lofty destiny for her progeny. When the news was brought to General Dhir that a son was born to him, he was delighted. The Gurus and Pandits who were present began to chant the vedic *mantras* and placed blades of *Dubo* (grass) on his head according to Nepali custom with invocations to the Deity to bless the child with long life and prosperity. The officers present showered their felicitations upon the father, and when the news reached Thapathali, Maharaja Jang Bahadur came post haste to General Dhir's residence to express his delight. The Jat Karma ceremony was performed with great joy and gifts in money and cloth were distributed among the poor and the needy. The child was given the name of Jooddha Shum

Shere literally the 'sword of war' a name fully justified by the Maharaja's subsequent career. Jang Bahadur attended the Anna Prasan ceremony of the child and he was much pleased at his beautiful and dignified appearance and seems to have uttered something like '*Le petit bon homme est Vraiment charmant*'. He created him a colonel of the Nepal army on the very day, a rank which he enjoyed till the age of 16. From his very childhood Jooddha was of a weak and sickly constitution and suffered from ill-health which was a serious handicap in his career. Like many a great man of history he met with several accidents which very nearly cost him his life, but every time a miraculous escape was effected and he was saved. At the age of six he had almost died of suffocation caused by the falling of a sand-dune heaped up for the construction of a building, through which the two brothers were making holes and passing through them as a childish pastime. Jooddha slipped down and he was buried beneath the sand and was on the point of being suffocated to death when the elder boy Durga came to his rescue and pulled him out. Next year he was almost drowned while swimming in a tank and it was the same Durga Shum Shere again who dragged him out of water, administered first aid and saved his life. At the age of nine while going to school he was thrown down from his horse and dashed violently against a wall which made him fall into a swoon lasting for eight hours. He received certain minor injuries but it was not until after a month that he was completely restored to health.

Misfortunes never come single and the Maharaja was barely nine years of age when he lost his father. To be deprived of paternal kindness, care and affection at such a tender age was nothing short of a disaster to young Jooddha who along with his brothers was soon confronted with a difficult situation. But fortune smiled upon them and the revolution of 1885 resulted in raising Bir Shum Shere, the eldest brother, to the dignity of Prime Minister. We do not know how the dreadful events of those days impressed his young mind but we may guess that like others of his family he must have been delighted at the acquisition of the highest authority in Nepal by his brothers. Jooddha was at once made a General and an allowance of Rs. 21,000 was settled on him. He was sent to school when he was 12 years

of age and received the rudiments of instruction but ill-health and the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed did not allow him to continue his studies. At this time he lived with his brother Bhim Shum Shere who treated him with great kindness and affection and performed his Vratibandha (sacred thread) ceremony in a manner befitting his high rank and station. Public opinion in Nepal did not object to early marriage and the young General was married to Shri Padma Kumari Devi, who came of the stock of Shah Kshatriyas of Gulmi in the interior of Nepal, and who held the rank of the senior Queen (Bada Maharani) during her husband's tenure of office as Prime-Minister of Nepal. Soon after, he was withdrawn from school, while he was yet in the fourth class and henceforward, though he had no opportunity of receiving formal instruction in a public institution, he was placed under the guidance of tutors who taught him all that was necessary for the due discharge of his political and administrative duties. The Maharaja always cherished a kindly recollection of his tutors and it does not appear that like many of their prototypes they hovered with due solemnity over his boyhood to the frequent disturbance of his equanimity. Like many great men of history who have attained dazzling height in politics, the Maharaja did not receive much of formal education but he read the Hindu epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and laid to his heart the great truths enshrined in them. The stories of the great heroes and saints related to him by his mother made an indelible impression upon his ductile mind and enabled him to acquire an amazing capacity for grasping great political issues and forming a correct judgment about them. He did not study books much; but he studied man's faces and this practical knowledge was added to that intuitive power with which he was so richly dowered by nature. In the early stages he was given work in the military department and his commanding voice was heard at Tudikhel, inspiring and cheering the soldiers to rise to higher levels of action. The ability he displayed in the performance of his duties and the zeal with which he carried out his brother's behests won him the confidence of Mahara Bir, who gave him the command of the Patan brigade after two years' service in the town. When he was fifteen, the palace of Thapathali was assigned to him but he did not like it because it lacked a

compound and then by the command of the Maharaja he was given the palace of Jawalakhel which has been his private residence since that time. Maharaja Jooddha's youth was not a time of unmixed happiness. His ill-health was a great disability from which he suffered for many years but he struggled through life with amazing perseverance and faced the ups and downs of fortune with a serenity which has never left him. At first he was subject to frequent fainting first of which he was cured by Ayurvedic treatment. From the nineteenth to the twenty-sixth year he suffered from dysentery and got rid of it by the use of *Rasparpati* an indigenous drug which was administered to him by Maharaja Bir. But this did not end his troubles. He had an attack of gout which confined him to bed for nine months and though he was treated by doctors and physicians of great skill they could give him but little relief, and he could only walk with a limp. Though he was never in full possession of bodily vigour, Maharaja Jooddha was not the man to run away from danger or shirk duty. He had several hair-breadth escapes from death but each trial strengthened his nerves and steeled his limbs. On one occasion while he was out-hunting in the Tarai in the company of Maharaja Bir, a pet elephant ran amock and charged the one on which Maharaja Jooddha was seated. With a remarkable presence of mind he turned about his elephant and the infuriated beast kept chasing him for more than a mile but he pushed on and escaped unscathed. Several other accidents followed which endangered the Maharaja's life but Providence always came to his rescue and he was saved.

Again during a wild-bear hunt his elephant got affrighted at the sound of shot and scampered through wild thorns and thickets for about three miles. At last he stopped and the Maharaja sustained some injuries in the abdomen which brought on dysentery from which he suffered for about a fortnight. Again in the year 1896-97 during a tiger-hunt in the company of Maharaja Bir, he had a narrow escape when his tusker rushed towards a tiger enclosed in the ring. The animal stumbled four times but the Maharaja received no injury. But at Hitaura the beast unfortunately chanced to set one of his feet on a hedgehog pit and the Maharaja was injured and had to pass fifteen days in a palanquin as the

result of a stump hitting his arm-pit. For the sixth time he had a miraculous escape from being shot dead when his mounted rifle failed to go off. The Maharaja had fallen on the ground and was in imminent danger of death but he was saved by the grace of God. On another occasion in the jungle of Gokarna he narrowly escaped death when a double barrelled gun carried by one of his retainers went off too near him and might have killed him. These are not the only accidents which had befallen Maharaja Juddha. During his strenuous life there had been others equally serious and sudden incidents but he recovered from them with perfect courage and equanimity and each mishap resulted in making his faith in Divine Beneficence more and more invincible.

In spite of the misfortunes that might have seriously retarded another man's advancement in life, the Maharaja continued to serve his brothers with steadfast devotion. In March 1901 he became the Northern Commanding General at the age of 25 during the Prime Ministership of Maharaja Deva Shum Shere and when the latter resigned after a brief reign, extending over a period of four months, he was appointed the Southern Commanding General. His agreeable manner, his tact and his readiness to serve gained for him at once the confidence of his brother Chandra who had been installed in the *gaddi* of the Prime Minister. Though suffering from rheumatism, he was appointed Chief of the General Staff by Maharaja Chandra during his visit to Calcutta. Fortunately he was cured of his obstinate malady by a certain Austrian doctor who gave him electric treatment for three successive days. The cure proved effective and the Maharaja enjoyed good health for nearly eight years. In 1907-8 after the death of his elder brother Fateh Shum Shere he was raised to the position of the Senior Commanding General of the Eastern Command and soon after (1908) when Maharaja Chandra proceeded to England to renew his friendship with the Royal House of Great Britain, he was appointed Chief of the Staff to look after the arrangements of the tour. He travelled in England, France, Italy and Switzerland, visited many centres of vanished greatness and with his alert and critical mind and a penetrating insight into different phases of life, he observed the customs and manners of the people and came in contact with men who played leading parts in the current political

affairs. The present writer has heard from His Highness's lips how foreign travel enriched his experience and acquainted him with the methods of improving the material conditions under which the people of Nepal lived.

On his return from the European tour he was entrusted with the command of the army in recognition of his devoted service owing to the resignation of General Jit Shum Shere due to ill-health, and after his death on July 27, 1913 he assumed the full responsibilities of that high office which is extremely important in a country where the ultimate sanction of government lies in the efficiency of its troops. Maharaja Juddha now found scope for the exercise of his natural aptitudes. The news of the last Great European conflagration reached Kathmandu early in 1914 and naturally Nepal felt interested in the security of British interests. On the one hand, the formidable German armies were menacing the allies in the various theatre of war; on the other hand, the Mahsuds were harrying the Indian frontier. There was no time for doubt or delay; Maharaja Chandra at once realised the gravity of the situation and with the advice of nobles and Bhardars decided to help Britain in her hour of distress. He entrusted to General Juddha the task of recognising and training the Nepal army. Thousands of recruits were enlisted and the Gurkha warriors fought with a courage which astonished the whole world. All this was due to the untiring energy and enthusiasm of General Juddha, who worked day and night to increase the number and to improve the quality of fighting men. A force was sent to Waziristan, which gained a complete victory over the Mahsuds. In the meantime the great European war ended, and the Treaty of Versailles was signed. The British Government offered an annual payment of Rs. 10,000,00 in appreciation of the gallant services rendered by the Nepali soldiers in guarding the North West-frontier of India. General Juddha was given the title of K.C.I.E. by the King of England and of Supradipta Man-yabar Nepal Tara together with a reward of Rs. 15,000 in cash by the Prime-Minister of Nepal.

At the age of forty in 1915 while riding on the parade ground he had a fall resulting in the fracture of his left wrist from which, however, he recovered soon. Thereafter, again he began to suffer from rheumatism and native doctors and phy-

sicians failed to give relief. This was followed by colic which continued off and on for eight years. In spite of indifferent health General Juddha continued to serve his brother and faithfully discharged the duties assigned to him. When the Prince of Wales came to Nepal on a shooting expedition in the Tarai in 1921, General Juddha was the Chief of the Maharaja's staff. The arrangements for the *Shikar* were made under his supervision, and the whole thing was so admirably managed that the Maharaja and his Imperial guest both were delighted and appreciated the splendid services rendered by General Jooddha. Few men in Nepal had acted more conscientiously in the discharge of their duties and fewer still had shown such loyalty and devotion to the country's interests. As acting Prime Minister in the absence of the Maharaja and the Commander-in-Chief on tour in the Tarai and as the senior Commanding General, he introduced useful reforms in the military department with the full approval of the Maharaja. The antiquated methods of organisation were done away with, and an attempt was made to establish co-ordination in the training of the various units. The want of suitable text books was a serious drawback. Only manuscript notes, ill-arranged and insufficiently understood, formed the basis of the instruction given. He removed these defects, provided better equipment and devised measures for making the army an up-to-date fighting machine.

General Juddha's career was a chapter of accidents. In the year 1924 while he was on tour with Maharaja Chandra in the Tarai, he was almost blinded by the poisonous spit of his elephant making its way into his eyes. He proceeded to Calcutta at once and was successfully treated by Dr. J.N. Mitra. Once again, while he was hunting in the Tarai, his spirited Arab Charger 'Feros' galloped off with all his might, and just as he reached the side of the elephant-ring, the hemmed-in tiger also ferociously alighted there by jumping over the ring. It was a critical moment for the Maharaja, and his life might have come to an end instantaneously but the man-eater took fright at the galloping horse and sought shelter in another part of the forest, but he was at last brought into the

ring again and bagged. The Maharaja was confined to bed for months partly owing to illness and partly owing to the strain and exhaustion caused by *Shikar* but luckily none of his limbs was injured. He continued to suffer from ill-health and new ailments took the place of old ones. In 1925-26 he had a severe toothache and while a bad tooth was being extracted the dentist gave an injection which contained some poison, which would have proved fatal, had not a merciful providence come to his rescue. This was followed again by colic which continued off and on for several years. He went to Calcutta for treatment and consulted the best doctors who advised him to stay for sometime at Hazmanya and Hazaribagh for change during the summer. But even this brought no relief and on one occasion the disease took a serious turn, and he was brought to Bhimphedi where he had an attack of fever combined with the enlargement of liver and pleurisy. He was hastily taken to Kathmandu, where the Legation Surgeon and another doctor who happened to be present there, treated him but to no purpose. His life was despaired of and preparations were made according to the Nepali custom to take him to the Aryaghat where one is expected to die at the feet of Pashupati-nath in the sacred waters of the Baghmati. It was at this time that a local Kaviraj Shiva Nath by name was consulted and his treatment gradually restored him to complete health.

In the year 1928-29 the Tibetans committed atrocities which very nearly led to war between their country and Nepal. General Juddha was entrusted with the task of organising the troops, providing them with the necessary equipment and giving them up-to-date training. Tireless drill, strict discipline, up-to-date arms, well-trained officers and above all their leader's ability and enthusiasm made the army ready for action. In 1929 General Juddha became Commander-in-Chief after the death of Maharaja Chandra and entered on his new duties with a loftiness of purpose which has always characterised his actions.

Such was Maharaja Juddha Shum Shere's career before he became the Prime Minister. His father's early death and his own delicate health handicapped him in the race of life and prevented him from utilising fully the opportunities which birth and station placed within his reach. But adversity is a true school of

greatness and the Maharaja learnt a great deal of wisdom from the trials and difficulties of his early life and emerged from them braver and stronger. He acquired much experience of state business and his close association with Maharaja Bir, Chandra, and Bhim enlarged his outlook, ripened his judgment and made him familiar with the intricacies of political life. As an officer he was always quick to perform his duties and attended to the smallest business with a thoroughness, dexterity and conscientiousness which were the envy of his contemporaries. Himself a great soldier, he was always alive to the needs of the army, and tried to raise it to a high pitch of efficiency. With the work of other departments he was equally well conversant and as Commander-in, Chief he dealt with the problems of the civil administration with his characteristic zeal and vigour. He worked day and night, attended to every little detail, and passed orders with care and promptness. The readiness with which he listened to those who sought his help or intervention made him popular with all classes of the population and they came to look upon him as a trusted friend and guide. Nothing kindled in his bosom greater anger than an act of injustice or tyranny which he was always ready to put down with a strong hand. It was these qualities that won him the respect and affection of his brothers who regarded him as their right handman and felt confident that whoever failed or faltered Juddha Shum Shere would always be with them and give them his whole-hearted co-operation and support. Such a training would have been an asset to any statesman called upon to administer a great trust.

On The Heights

*For therein stands the office of a King,
His Honour, Virtue, merit, and chief praise,
That for the public all this weight he bears.*

Milton

Maharaja Bhim Shum Shere died on September 1, 1932 after a brief reign of two years and nine months. He had come to the throne at a fairly advanced age but he was in the full enjoyment of mental and bodily vigour and spent several hours every day in attending to the business of the State. No one had the slightest suspicion that his end was so near. The specialists who were called from Calcutta by the present Maharaja for his treatment could reach the capital only a day after his death. According to the law of succession which prevails in Nepal he was succeeded by the next brother, who is also the last of the Shum Shere brothers. Maharaja Juddha Shum Shere Jung Bahadur Rana who was at that time the Commander-in-Chief of Nepal. When the news of Maharaja Bhim's death became known in the town, the officials as well as the people ran to the royal palace to pay homage to his successor. The new Maharaja expressed profound grief at the demise of his brother, dwelt upon his services to the country and spoke of his charitable and pious gifts. Contrary to all expectations he asked them to join the funeral procession and pointed out the manner in which the mourning was to be observed. A departure was made from the traditional practice of the Nepal Durbar when by the command of the Maharaja celebrations in connection with his accession were postponed

until after the expiry of the mourning period prescribed by him. It was a wise move, for it was against the tenets of the Hindu religion to hold festivities relating to the coronation while the obsequies of the late Maharaja still remained to be performed. Thus the salute of allegiance by the round of bugles was also postponed and with the exception of the troops who attended the *ghat* the army was granted a general leave of mourning for five days. All government offices, courts and educational institutions were closed in honour of the memory of the deceased.

After the expiry of the period of mourning, the Maharaja assumed the reins of office and his advent was welcomed by all classes of people in Nepal. Abroad also, there was a feeling of joy at his accession to the throne, and the public press expatiated with fervour upon his great qualities and offered him the sincerest felicitations.

The London Times wrote :—

“As Commander-in-Chief in the last three years, he had a large share in the civil administration, including the hearing of judicial appeals. Inured to hard work from boyhood, methodical, active and with a mind enriched by travel, he enters upon the highest administrative post in the country, well-equipped for the discharge of its duties.”

The *Times of India* described the Maharaja as an experienced soldier and a keen sportsman and welcomed his accession to the *gaddi* in these words :—

“The new Prime-Minister and supreme Commander-in-Chief has an intimate and first hand knowledge of administration and affairs in Nepal and his peaceful succession to this high office was acclaimed by the people. It is felt that, as a soldier and administrator, he will prove as great as, if not greater than his predecessors. There is a general feeling that His Highness being the right man in the right place, the people are confident that under his rule peace and contentment will prevail in Nepal.” The Statesman spoke of the Maharaja as an able and experienced soldier and administrator who was immensely popular throughout the country. It added—

“The new Maharaja who has the honour of being personally acquainted with His Majesty the King, has always been a staunch friend of Great Britain, and his policy now as in the past, will be to cement still further the extremely cordial

relations existing between the Government of Nepal and the British Government.”

The *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, the leading nationalist organ, and other Indian papers published long articles welcoming the accession of Maharaja Juddha to the position of Prime Minister of Nepal and dwelt at length upon his great popularity, administrative ability and wide and varied experience.

The very first speech which the Maharaja delivered after the expiry of the mourning period breathed a new spirit—a spirit of reform and progress. It held out new hopes of regeneration and advancement and showed clearly how desirous he was of promoting the economic and industrial interests of the country. He wanted to stimulate national enterprise and to afford facilities for the development of trade and commerce by opening fresh avenues of expansion and growth. It appears his thoughts had been occupied with the country’s progress along these lines for a long time, and he gave expression to them when an opportunity of translating them into action presented itself. In his address to the mercantile section of the Nepali community, he deprecated the lack of initiative and enterprise among them and promised to give every encouragement that was needed for improving the economic condition of the country. He went on to say :—

“Listen, the happiness of the people is linked with the prosperity of the mercantile community. The people of Great Britain, Germany and America enjoy a large measure of happiness owing chiefly to the fact that the merchants of those countries possess abundant capital and insist on industrial pursuits and trade on a large scale and have opened avenues of employment to all their countrymen.

“It follows, therefore, that trade and industry are the essential conditions of national welfare or happiness. We must import machines and other accessories of manufacture, start indigenous industries and derive ample benefit from the export of our raw produce. There should be steady increase in the amount of exports and a proportionate reduction in the imports of finished products. As for raw materials the imports should increase and exports go on declining.

“I feel that it is your firm conviction that trade and industry cannot flourish by individual enterprise alone without the strong financial backing of the State. But I want to make it

clear that the initiative in such matters should originate from the public. Financial support from the state will follow in case of necessity. The state will not lag behind in patronising measures calculated to promote national well-being. I solemnly assure you that should you make earnest and vigorous endeavours to advance commercial interests, the state will be ready to help you in all possible ways. The opening of a Board of Industries, adequate financial support to indigenous enterprise, protective tariff on imports, state loans at a low rate of interest remission of rope-way and railway charges and exemption from duties on machinery for such period as will be deemed necessary — these are some of the measures contemplated for the promotion of the happiness and economic uplift of the people. It is my earnest hope that you will understand my policy and cooperate with me in realising the ideals I have in view."

This speech was a clarion call to the merchants of Nepal and roused them into activity for the economic regeneration of the country. The conditions were depressing in the extreme; trade was in the hands of outsiders; industries were in a most backward state; unemployment was on the increase and many people were wasting their time in idleness; agriculture too was still practised according to primitive methods. The Maharaja grappled with these problems with characteristic energy and enthusiasm, and devised ways and means for the economic uplift of the country which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. After the period of mourning it was decided that the Maharaja's accession to the throne should be celebrated with due solemnity. Accordingly in consultation with astrologers the 14th of October was fixed for the purpose. In the meantime the Maharaja's attention was drawn to the deplorable poverty of some of the representatives of the Rana family. He invited them all to meet him and made an enquiry into their circumstances, and when he was satisfied that they were in need, he granted allowances, annuities and stipends to those who deserved them. He graciously ordered an increase in the salaries of those who found it hard to make both ends meet owing to the rise in the standard of living. The recipients of the Maharaja's bounty were greatly pleased and his sympathy was much appreciated.

As the appointed date drew near, elaborate preparations began to be made and a feeling of joy lit up the faces of the

people. They talked about the Maharaja's kind and generous disposition and lovingly dwelt upon his popularity. Poets composed odes in his honour and bards and singers showered encomiums upon him. Holy men chanted the sacred *mantras* and pronounced benedictions on his name. Literary works that had been consigned to oblivion by their authors for want of patronage were brought out again and revised for submission to the Maharaja. Claims to property and rights of possession hitherto ignored were revived and the Maharaja promised to give them his just and careful consideration.

When all preparations had been completed, the *Sindur Jatra* was celebrated. It is a procession organised in Nepal according to Shastric rites and traditional custom to bring the new ruler in contact with the people and to secure him their goodwill, respect and homage. The Maharaja goes round the city and his peregrination is accompanied by the sprinkling of vermillion all along the route. Instructions were issued to the officers that all materials required for the celebration should be collected and the minutest detail should be attended to with punctilious care. The old records, containing descriptions of such *Jatras* in the past, were consulted and every item of the programme was scrutinised with meticulous care. The town wore a brilliant appearance ; the houses were whitewashed and newly painted and decorated with festoons and flags and paper flowers. Men, women and children came from the countryside and the remote districts in the hills to witness the festival. All was joy and excitement at the Jawalakhel palace, the private residence of the Maharaja, where all the members of the ruling family, the civil and military officers, the Gurus and Purohits, Pandits merchants, landlords and tenants were invited to be present. The officers were in their uniforms while the members of the public were attired in garments of variegated hues. The entire route from Jawalakhel to Hanumandoka was lined on both sides with spectators, old and young men, women, in thousands with vermillion, fried paddy and flowers in their hands. At various places arch-ways were constructed and artistically decorated with verses composed in several languages by his subjects and admirers and flags and buntings were used to lend splendour to the scene. When the Maharaja drove in a State carriage drawn by sixhorses along with the Bada Maharani to Narainhiti Durbar, the king's palace, the eager and expectant

crowds cheered him vociferously with deafening shouts of 'Maharaja Ki Jai' and rained fried paddy and flowers on him. It was a clear, cloudless sky beneath which the huge procession moved on and the splendour of the scene was greatly heightened by the bright rays of sun.

At Narayanhiti the king put the mark on the Maharaja's forehead and a salute of 19 guns was fired. After the ceremony, the Maharaja went straight to Hanumandoka *via* Asantole, a commercial centre of the capital, and here another ceremony was performed according to Shastric injunctions. The Durbar square looked like a sea of human heads and every inch of available space was crowded with spectators who had come from far off villages to have a glimpse of their new ruler. Here a procession was organised for *Nagar Pradakshina* (going round the city) ; the Maharaja sat in a golden howdah on a richly caparasoned elephant, followed by the chief officers of the State according to their rank and dignity. There were seventeen different concerts playing on various instruments most of which are peculiar to Nepal. They were in a state of high tempo displaying their talent as best as they could. Nepal still preserves her ancient music and the gods and goddesses in various parts of the country have their own concerts and dances. The dancers show exquisite skill on festive occasions like the Indra Jatra and marriages in aristocratic families and are patronised by the State. On this occasion they displayed wonderful dexterity and their artistic poses, gestures, and twists and turns of the body, together with the agility of their movements, filled the spectators with delight. The bands played the western tunes and tried to drown the local music with their loud-sounding bagpipes. The Maharaja's elephant was followed by nine others on which were seated the members of the ruling family and the Raj *gurus* of Nepal in their special uniforms and headgear, other officers and dignitaries of the State, all gorgeously attired, and wearing bejewelled headgears. Behind them marched a number of regiments in rows of four, and torch-bearers and mounted soldiers, followed by liveried valets and petty clerks, carrying emblems of royalty in their hands. Traders and businessmen demonstrated their loyalty to the Maharaja and joined the procession in large numbers with trays full of red vermillion, fried paddy, flowers and incense. From every corner came the cries of 'Jai' and the Maharaja's *howdah* was dyed red with vermillion that was

sprinkled on it. The mercantile community of Nepal presented an address to the Maharaja which gave expression to their sentiments in a somewhat grandiloquent style :—

When the sun rises, darkness disappears and the whole universe is illumined and looks pleasant and beautiful. Similarly the accession of your Highness to the exalted office of Prime Minister will be a source of peace, happiness and prosperity to the country. All people feel that it is their good fortune to have a ruler like yourself and they shout 'Jai Jai' from the depths of their hearts.

“The current of happiness is flowing in the hearts of us all. It defies description. All of us, your subjects and people have full confidence that your Highness's regime will be the harbinger of a golden age in the history of Nepal, and your glories will be such as will be recorded in letters of gold for all time to come. May the Almighty bless you with long life ! We pray that during Your Highness's regime we may enjoy internal happiness and tranquillity. On this auspicious occasion of Your Sindur Jatra, we, the Nepali merchants of the country, have assembled to present this address to Your Highness as an expression of our joy and happiness at your accession to power.”

The Maharaja thanked them for their loyal address and assured them that nothing was dearer to his heart than the happiness and prosperity of his subjects. The picturesqueness the whole scene was greatly augmented by the commanding presence of the Maharaja himself. Dressed in a long Rajputana robe of dazzling white hue, the skirts whereof were in the amplest folds or pleatings with a handsomely sheathed sword in his hand, some diamond rings on his fingers, a deep necklace of large pearls on his breast, and wearing his priceless head-gear—an object of awe and wonder for many people—and a crown of incalculable value bedecked with diamonds and studded with pearls, rubies and emeralds, he made a profound impression upon all present. The procession now wended its way towards Tudikhel and all along the route the same scenes of enthusiasm were witnessed. Not an inch of ground in that open space was left unoccupied where men and women had assembled in hundreds and thousands and were waiting for a view of the Maharaja with folded hands. Shouts of 'Jai' were heard from

all sides and the people showed the greatest delight at the approach of the Maharaja who smilingly acknowledged their homage. The huge procession terminated here and the Maharaja drove in a state carriage drawn by six horses with postillions to the Jawalakhel palace whither the Bada Rani (senior queen) had already returned after the Tika ceremony at the king's palace. Every thing passed off smoothly, and although huge crowds had collected in the streets and the open spaces, there was no accident, no hubub or disturbance of any kind. Few countries could present such an orderly spectacle on a grand occasion like this and fewer still could show such reverence for their ruler. Verily the people accorded to their Prime Minister the honours that kings might envy.

The *Statesman* in its issue dated the 23rd October, 1932 gave a vivid description of the whole ceremony. It wrote—

“The Sindur Jatra and the subsequent Durbars at which the new policy was outlined were imposing and picturesque ceremonies attended by hundreds and thousands of His Highness's subjects, many of whom travelled by the capital from distant parts of the state. The Maharaja received a tremendous ovation on each occasion, a striking testimony to those qualities which had already endeared him to his subjects.”

“The *Amrit Bazar Patrika* described the function in glowing terms and called it a grand success. The Hindu Press as a whole expressed sincere delight at the succession of the Maharaja to the exalted office of Prime Minister and the people of Nepal rejoiced that the Government of their country had passed into the hands of one who was a veteran soldier and seasoned statesman and who, having passed through great vicissitudes of life, was likely to show greater sympathy towards the poor and the helpless.

The Maharaja introduced a new change in the functions pertaining to the Sindur Jatra. When the dignitaries of the State reached Jawalakhel Durbar, they were all presented with a packet of dry fruits and cigarettes by the Maharaja's staff. A three days' holiday was announced for all officers, high and low, and all of them were asked to attend the Jawalakhel Durbar a day after. It may be mentioned here that in his triumphal processions round the town he had not forgotten the poor people. At various places new coins of silver were thrown among the crowd and were picked up by the poor and

the indigent. The joy at the Maharaja's accession was universal. All classes of people including Muslims vied with one another in presenting odes, panegyrics and addresses which recounted his numerous qualities of head and heart and offered him hearty felicitations on his assumption of the Premier's office.

Three days after the Sindur Jatra, a grand Durbar was held at Jawalakhel at which were present the members of the ruling family, all civil and military officers, feudatory chiefs, Raj gurus and Purohits, merchants, professors and representatives of the landed classes. It was a unique gathering representing different interests in Nepal. The Maharaja received them cordially with his usual smile and sweet words and outlined his policy in a speech which produced a great effect on his audience. It revealed his deep study of the great Hindu epic, the Mahabharata, a store-house of learning and wisdom, and his faith in God whom the Maharaja constantly regards as his safest guide in all undertakings. He said :

“God fulfils Himself in many ways. The Guardian Divinities of Nepal have been pleased to place her destinies now in my hands. When the responsible duties of the post of Prime Minister first devolved upon me, my earnest prayers spontaneously went forth to the Almighty to illumine my path and send me the love and help of my people and co-workers so that I can carry out His divine purpose. I discern in the warm welcome that you extended to me the other day, less my own worth and more a piece of his favour. I am deeply touched by the enthusiastic reception you have accorded to me and beg to thank you all heartily for it. It is indeed a happy augury for the future. Most of all, I am encouraged by it in thinking that I can fully rely on you for that whole-hearted co-operation which is indispensable to success in any form of administration. You all know that honey can never be made with one bee in the hive.

“The pride of our country consists in the army. My long connection with it has suggested to me certain ideas likely to secure its well-being. As I told the army the other day, I have in contemplation a scheme calculated to insure continuity of service by prescribing age limit and by arranging for a provi-

dent fund for the benefit of officers and men alike. This is proposed to take effect from 1934. Further, for the convenience of the men in the army I have in mind the construction of barracks wherever they are needed. I need hardly say that my love for the army and my desire foits well for its being will continue as keen as ever.

“Solicitous as I am to promote the happiness of the people and the prosperity of the country, it will ever be my constant endeavour to accomplish these by all possible means. As the flow of blood gives life to every part of the human body, so does the proper dispensation of justice give life to every part of the administration in the State. It must flow undefiled and it must reach the lowest. Great efforts have been made in that direction. Cost of justice has been reduced, courts have multiplied, the right of appeal has been extended and yet the law’s delays remain and litigation goes on increasing. It may be due to the greater complexity of civilisation and an increasing consciousness on the part of the people of their rights.

“As justice gives stability to Society, education contributes to its power of distinguishing between right and wrong. But it must not be divorced from religion and morality. Efforts will be made to keep these together but it should not be forgotten that the best school for moral and religious training is the home. At the same time the expansion of primary, secondary and higher education along with vocational training will receive our earnest consideration.

“The biggest problem that faces every Government is the securing of the prosperity of the people. The bulk of our people are agriculturists. Dearth of roads and means of communication, a difficulty inherent in a hilly country, greatly hampers them. For want of knowledge of improved methods they fail to reap the full benefit of their hard toil. Their indebtedness stands in the way of progress. Co-operative institutions, experimental farms, exhibitions and such other methods to improve their lot are already in contemplation. As an urgent preliminary step necessary for the convenience of travellers in the hills not only will the repairs and reconstruc-

tion of rest houses along the main roads, running East to West be taken up at once but fresh ones will also be erected at the end of stages where they are required to complete the chain.

“Trade and commerce have their own difficulties and are no less the concern of my Government. Measures to remove some of them are under consideration. For the sake of convenience, the telephone line henceforward will carry telegrams for despatch outside the country and for quick inter-country communication it will, at a great cost, be extended towards the eastern districts for some two hundred miles, the work on which will be taken up shortly. Gradually the western districts will also be brought in telephonic connection with this place, thus linking up important stations by extending the lines to several hundred miles East and West. Inter-country money orders will also be introduced. Certain octroi duties known as Jagat and Charti Namti are levied from small traders from the hills in various parts of the country. These are vexatious ; they cause hardship to the traders and interfere with the free marketing of agricultural produce and other commodities and will now be abolished altogether.

“There is a healthy attempt to encourage small industrial concerns in the capital and the current provided by the electric installation is now practically used up with many would-be-consumers still left over. Another hydro-electric scheme developing more than double the horse power of the present installation, even though the cost be very high, appears to be now absolutely necessary and will be taken in hand very soon. For the expansion of such small cottage industries machinery will be permitted to be imported into the valley free of custom duties and all reasonable requests for facilities will receive our sympathetic consideration.

“However, well-intentioned a scheme, law or idea might be, its success will depend upon the administrative machinery *i.e.*, the offices through which it is to be carried out. These offices are to our regret clogged with accumulated arrears of many decades mostly consisting of unreliable assets. The only way to deal with such paper assets is to wipe them out and this I propose to do by gradual stages to give the offices a clean slate and a fair chance of doing satisfactory work in future.

‘Both as strong holds of Hinduism and seats of Buddhism the ancient shrines and sites in the country are many and command the veneration of religious men and archaeologists alike from far and near. These demand our attention to preserve the traditional culture. The sanctity of Ridi, a place as holy as Banaras, you know, has of late been attracting many old people there to pass their last days and obtain salvation for their soul. Fifty Barkhasnas or old age annuities have been provided for the convenience and support of such men; while similar annuities granted to 125 persons at Banaras have been increased to double the amount paid to those in the higher grade and a little more than double to those who were in the lower grade.

“This cursory survey will have shown you the immensity of the problem of improving the material well-being of the people. It will take time even to formulate a proper scheme and necessarily a longer time to put that into practice but I hope patiently to persevere till the object is achieved.

“I would now reinforce what I have already said from the Shastras which you all hold in such high reverence. You know that amongst the four classes Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra which emanated from the Almighty, the Kshatriyas, representing strength, were entrusted with the protection of society.

“Of all the Dharmas that of the Kshatriya is superior for without it the others cannot exist. The Kshatra Dharma consists in protecting cows, Brahmans, the poor and the suffering and in delivering from misery those who are in difficulties and so forth. Hence the chief duty of a Kshatriya is to keep himself ever engaged in the work of production.

“In the Mahabharata Bhishma told Yudhishtir that the Kshatriya who engages himself in the unworthy pursuit of carrying tales, speaking ill of others behind their back or who through malice or anger injures others, paves his way to hell. So we who are Kshatriyas must beware of injuring others wantonly.

“Being born Kshatriyas, we must carry out our duties in the manner laid down in our holy books. Living in *Grahasth-ashram* the best thing for us would be to carry out the duties of that Ashram namely to serve reverentially our parents, preceptors, elder brothers and those to whom respect and

obedience are due. The respect shown to elder brothers has been well illustrated in the Mahabharata Bhima, Arjuna and others by obeying their eldest brother Yudhishtir earned undying fame and uninterruptedly ruled their kingdom for many years. Therefore, brothers should live in amity and concord making up their differences and should make peace and harmony the rule of their life.

“One who without attending to the advice of those who are wise and venerated, associates with proud and wicked people and acts in an irresponsible manner will come to grief and will have to repent afterwards. Disregarding the advice of Krishna, Vyas and Vidur to treat the Pandavas like his own sons and not to quarrel with them, Dhritrashtra associated with Shakuni and Dushashan, and it is well known how dearly he had to pay for his partiality, injustice and indifference to just counsel.

“The influence of Kaliyuga is seen in the decadence of religion, truth, mercy, sanctity, forgiveness, charity, and other virtues. Wealth alone commands respect in modern society. All virtues are supposed to reside in riches and men of wealth are more honoured than those who are good and righteous. Passion unites men and women irrespective of birth or descent. Deceit makes trade prosper and the piety of religious sects consists only in wearing red-colour garments. The duties of the various *Ashrams* are lost sight of. The gift of the tongue makes a man learned. Poverty is the badge of folly and is looked upon as disgraceful. Though intrinsically worthless, mere outward show can make a man a gentleman. This is the substance of what was said by Shukadeva to Parikshit. In this Kali age irreligion predominates over religion and we must fight this tendency so as to keep ourselves on the right path.

“Efforts made for the good of the people by a ruler alone can not succeed. The people, out of regard for their ruler, should draw his attention to whatever defects they find in his administration for the benefit of both.

“The people should look up to their ruler with the same reverence which they show towards their parents because he too like the latter takes care of them. They should work

for the best interests of the state and should not try to trick their ruler by various methods which would bring them trouble here and send them to Hell hereafter.

“Bhishma said to Yudhishtir that a ruler should punish evil-doers who, under the influence of passion, anger or greed, work mischief in the realm and he should try to bring about peace and contentment.

“A Kshatriya must be true to his plighted word. You know Karna did not listen to the pleadings of his mother and fought against his brothers because he had given his word to Duryodhan.

“In telling you all this my object is that if you with deliberation tread the path of religion, differences will gradually cease and the country will march onward to progress.

“You and I and everyone else require time for thinking out such problems and I would seriously ask you all to form a correct estimate of the value of time. You know how it is wasted here and with it much energy is frittered away, which, if properly utilised, is sure to yield valuable results.

“In closing this address I would request you always to regard me as one of you, to remember that I have always liked, do like still and will continue to like straight-forwardness in speech and conduct. A hole and corner method is my abomination. Let us be frank in our dealings and discussions so that even if I do not agree with you I may still have respect for your honesty of purpose.”

It was a singularly straight-forward utterance and was received with great applause by the nobles and the commoners alike. The Commander-in-Chief Rudra Shum Shere and the senior Commanding General Padma Shum Shere both paid rich tributes to His Highness and referred to the efficiency and tact with which he had discharged his duties during the last great War and the complete confidence and trust which the late Maharaja Chandra reposed in him. General Padma Shum Shere spoke of his affection and regard for the army, the excellent work done by him, and the way he kept every one, officers as well as men, contented and happy.

The first year of the new regime witnessed a number of functions one after another. The Sindur Jatra was followed

by a grand march past of the troops at Tudikhel in November, 1933. All the military forces of the State mastered strong in their full uniform and made a grand display which lasted for two hours and a half. Himself an experienced soldier, the Maharaja was pleased to be in the midst of military men and at once received their spontaneous homage and good-will. Then he mounted the rostrum and made a speech which was distinctly heard by everyone present and when he finished, there were loud shouts of 'Jai' which indicated that his policy was in accord with the wishes of the people. He explained to the soldiers that theirs was a noble calling and that they should be dutiful and honest for the prosperity or downfall of the state depended largely upon their character and fighting capacity. A soldier must be brave in action, and should cheerfully face the rough and the smooth weather alike. The Gurkhas have made their country widely known all over the world by their matchless valour and unequalled heroism. It was their duty to keep that tradition bright and active by performing heroic deeds. He advised the officers to supervise carefully the work of the rank and file and asked the latter to realise their responsibility and conform to discipline which was the secret of all military success. "You are my arms", said he, "and nothing can be achieved without arms and weapons." He cited passages from the *Mahabharata* to illustrate his point and referred to the part played by Bhimsen and Shikhandi in the Great Bharata War. Both officers and men were deeply impressed by the sincerity and wisdom of his advice and on their behalf the Commander-in-Chief offered thanks and assured him of their loyalty and support in all his undertakings.

The coronation of the Maharaja as the sovereign ruler of Kashki and Lamjung was celebrated in January, 1933. In accordance with the procedure laid down in the Vedas, Smritis, Sutras, Puranas and the Tantra Shastras. Whatever was considered necessary for the celebration was collected from far and wide. Holy water from the ocean and the big sacred rivers like the Ganges, the Jumna, the Narbada, the Godavari, and the Kaveri etc. was brought for the occasion. A few days before the appointed date the palace of Jawalakhel

was well decorated with flags and festoons of different colours and *mandaps* were erected. A general order was issued requiring the attendance of the grandness and officers of the realm and in obedience to it, members of the aristocracy, Raj-gurus and Purohits, civil and military officers all assembled in the big halls and Shamianas where they paid their homage to the Maharaja. Thereafter in an auspicious hour the Gurus, Purohits and Pandits, chanting the vedic mantras, sprinkled holy water upon the head of the Maharaja. All this was done to the accompaniment of music and dance along with the chanting of the Vedic hymns so that the whole place resounded with the voices of those who took part in the proceedings. A sacrificial altar was made on which *havana* was performed and gifts were distributed among the Brahmans and the poor and the distressed. When the ceremony was over, the Maharaja drove to the Kot, followed by his staff, and paid homage to the regimental colours. He passed through the town where the populace received him with shouts of 'Jai' which he acknowledged with befitting courtesy. From there he drove to the king's palace where he presented coins and offered worship. He returned to the Jawalakhel palace in the evening and thus ended another great function with which the Maharajas of Nepal celebrate their accession to power.

In accordance with the time-honoured practice of Hindu rulers, a big March Past was organised in March, 1935. That such reviews were held in the past in India is proved by the testimony of Manu, the great law-giver of the Hindus who writes :-

*Alankratashoha Sampashyedayehiyam punarjanma.
Vahanani cha Sarvani Shastranyabharanani cha
Praharshayedvalam Vyuohya tashcha Samyak parikshayet
Cheshtashohaiva vijaniyadarinyodhayatumapi*

(Being well decorated he should examine the armed soldiers and all means of transport and arms and accoutrements. Having arranged the army in proper order, he should address words of encouragement and make a thorough inspection. He should also find out the (actual) conduct of the soldiers engaged in fighting the enemies).

This review was unique in several respects. All the units of the militia from the Eastern and Western hilly divisions were summoned and altogether the troops numbered 30,000. Three artillery and three infantry divisions assembled for muster and there were many machine-gunners, louis-gunners, and stretcherbearers who demonstrated their efficiency and skill.

It was a grand spectacle and the people from far and near, from the interior of the hills and other parts of the kingdom and also a few Europeans from India came to see it. A large Shamiana was erected on the *maidan* of Tudikhel beneath which were seated the British Minister, Europeans and civil officers of the State, and by 1-30 P. M. all the troops were in their places ready for demonstration. Punctually at 2 P. M. the Maharaja came to the parade ground, and when he approached the Flag staff, there was a salute of guns, and bands played the national anthem. He then went round inspecting the troops and held a review from a tree which was planted by his father for such occasions. There was a *feu de joy* and then began the March Past which produced a thrill of excitement. The officers and men, in their uniforms, with glittering arms on their person, moved forward and made a profound impression upon the spectators, who were much struck by their smartness, efficiency and discipline. The Maharaja congratulated the troops on their fine spirit and excellent display in the March Past and exhorted them to be mindful of their duty and regular and punctual in their attendance. 'Loyalty is the first duty of a soldier,' said he, 'and then comes discipline to which he must conform in all emergencies. The profession of arms is grim and glorious, and he who enters on it must be prepared to suffer hardship and discomfort.' He expressed satisfaction at their sense of discipline and pointed out its importance in the organisation and management of the army. Then, to signify his appreciation of the review he granted a number of concessions. In all the three cities of Bhaktipur, Lalitpur and Kantipur, all members of the military force from the Jamadar down to the troops had to pay Rs 12/- every year on account of their uniform. Henceforward only Rs 6/- were to be deducted at the rate of fifty

pice per month. The number of days allowed to perform the obsequies of their parents was increased and additional leave of two days was sanctioned for certain other rites. Two days' leave was announced for joining the marriage of sister, sister's son and grand-daughter, and for mourning the death of son and daughter a total leave of five days was allowed to all irrespective of rank or position. Certain other concessions were made and the leave rules were revised. The Dewali holidays were increased and the Purnima day (full moon) of Chaitra and the day on which the solar eclipse occurred were declared holidays. It is difficult for people outside Nepal to appreciate the value of these small concessions but they meant much to those who obtained them, for they removed the grievances for the redress of which they had pressed the authorities for a long time.

The first year of the Maharaja's Prime Ministership was marked by the introduction of various new reforms which will be described at length in the chapter on administration. Vigorous efforts were made to push forward his schemes, and when the first anniversary of the Maharaja's accession came a new feature introduced by him in the administration of Nepal was celebrated on September 1, 1933. The Commander-in-Chief, summed up His Highness's achievements in a lengthy speech and expressed the hope that Nepal would soon be able to attain equal status with the progressive countries of the world under the Maharaja's enlightened guidance.

The Great Earthquake

*How little do we know that which we are ! How less
what we may be ! The eternal surge of time and tide
rolls on and bears a far our bubbles. Byron.*

The earthquake of 1934 ranks with the greatest shocks where of the world holds record. It caused frightful suffering, misery and ruin. The 15th January was a fateful day on which the great calamity befell the people of Nepal. It deprived them of their hearths and homes and rendered them completely desolate. There were no warnings or foreshocks although people with a superstitious bent of mind were feeling vague apprehensions of some impending disaster. The astrologers had predicted that at 4 P.M. on January 15, some unforeseen calamity was to befall the people of Nepal as on that day the Seven Grahas (The Sun, The Moon, The Mars, Mercury, Saturn, Rahu and Venus) were to meet together in the division of Capricorn in the Zodiac Circle—a circumstance which Shastras declare to be most inauspicious, prognosticating grave natural calamities. Such a conjunction of stars is reported to have occurred on the eve of the great battle of the Mahabharat. In spite of these indications the astrologers could not pronounce the nature of the calamity they had foreseen. None had anticipated that such a devastation would sweep over the land and destroy in the twinkling of an eye the precious work of centuries, hurling the country down into the abysmal depths of woe and desolation. The people were

walking about as usual in their happy and jovial mood, going about their business without the slightest presentment of the doom that awaited them. Those who prognosticated disaster were regarded as birds of evil presage and their warning was unheeded. Most of the people were sceptical and ridiculed the idea of an impending calamity. The number of those whose minds were greatly exercised over astrological forebodings was comparatively small. At Kathmandu things were in their normal condition. The people were busy with the day's work. Government offices, Courts, and workshops were functioning as usual. Military men were having their parade at Tudikhel, a circumstance which proved exceedingly lucky when the disaster came. Civilians were engaged in their daily round of routine work in their various departments. The merchants, seated in the cosy corners of their shops, were plying their trade, and the market was thronged with crowds of buyers and sellers. Outside the town, away in the fields, farmers were busy doing their utmost by careful attention to enrich their crops. Those who were free from the rough toil of earning their livelihood were enjoying the genial warmth of the mellow sunshine in the terraces, courtyards and open grounds. There was no stir, no disquiet; the dismal prophecies did nothing to disturb the equanimity of the great majority of men and women of all classes and ranks. Indeed there was a perfect lull before the storm.

At last the ill-fated hour arrived. All of a sudden the people heard a rumbling sound which was quickly succeeded by a series of slight tremour. Waves of undulation perceptible proceeded from the east to the west. Every one felt the ground shaking beneath his feet, but taking it to be an ordinary shock, none felt panic stricken, and consequently there was no attempt at flight. But a great consternation seized the hearts of the people, when following a fierce upward shock, the ground began to oscillate like waters in a whirlpool. This was followed by a crash—a downward shock and the people felt the waves passing from the South to north. The shocks were so violent that the earth rocked like a tempest-tossed sea. Huge trees that had defied rain and storm for years bent down till their

top nearly touched the ground. Electric bulbs were thrown out of their sockets. Rivers left their courses and flooded the ground. The surfaces of tanks vibrated vertically upwards and overflowed their edges. The sides of buildings burst open and closed like windows in a storm. The land slides extended over vast spaces and did great damage to agriculture. Buildings in cities collapsed like houses of cards. Domes and minarets were shattered; pinnacles toppled down, and massive structures of masonry in the royal palace and elsewhere, as solid as iron, quivered like leaves and came down with a crash. The atmosphere was thick with clouds of dust, and the eye could scarcely penetrate beyond a distance of five year. Verily it seemed as if the deluge had arrived to sweep the world out of existence

When the shock subsided, the unhappy people began to search for their missing relatives. Some ran frantically to and fro, calling out the names of their beloved children and kinsmen, while others wrung their hands in despair, mute and dumbfounded, not knowing what to do in this awful crisis. Those who were absent from home left their work to see what had happened to their dear and nears ones. There was a stampede of the population from the inhabited area towards the open ground, and men and women were seen crying wildly carrying with them whatever they could of their belongings. The town presented the spectacle of a beleaguered city. Many were buried under the *debris* of the fallen houses and were crying piteously for help but those who were outside looked on helplessly, unable to render any help to these unfortunate sufferers. Some were extricated with difficulty and those who were found dead were horribly mangled. The air was rent with cries of help on all sides but as every one was engaged in searching for his own relatives and dependants, the entreaties of those who were dying fell on deaf ears. It was distressing to see one's own relatives crushed beneath the *debris* and himself absolutely powerless to give any help. The hospital wards were soon filled with the injured people, and tents had to be fixed outside the compound to accommodate the wounded who flocked in increasing numbers. Great was the distress of those

who had suffered bereavements. Funeral rites were simplified. For want of fuel men burnt the dead bodies of their relatives with the timbers of ruined buildings and even these were not found adequate for the purpose. For lack of a new piece of cloth the mourners performed the last rites in used cloth. Many found it impossible to cremate the dead according to their religious rites and left them on the river bank without burning them.

Cracks and fissures appeared everywhere and the surface of the earth opened its giant mouth to devour mankind. In certain places the ground was fissured to a depth of fifteen feet. Along the Bagmati river fissures ran parallel to the ground. The underground water system was disturbed. For a while the water of the river looked black and at certain places so great was the pressure from below that it rose to a height of fifteen feet. The fields were inundated with water and all the familiar landmarks of hillocks and hedgerows were wiped out of existence. At Balaju and Sankhamal the ground subsided to a depth of several feet.

Amidst the scenes of universal woe, which to quote Burke's words, no eye had seen, no heart conceived and no tongue could adequately describe men roamed about helpless and bewildered. It seemed as if the world was approaching its dissolution. Many of them tottered and fell down on the ground which afforded them no shelter. Some went bitterly, some cried frantically for help, some muttered prayers to the Most High to save them from destruction. As the houses crumbled down, the people rushed out posthaste holding decrepit old folk and helpless babies round their arms. The plight of women was terrible. Those, who had made good their escape, lost their lives in their attempt to save their children whom they had left behind in the moment of excitement. The dwellings which once sheltered them had become deadly traps and they found themselves enmeshed in the clutches of death. Hundreds, who attempted flight were killed at staircases, in the courtyards and at the threshold of their own houses and no one could rescue them. Those who escaped out of the houses were crushed down by the buildings in the streets.

Thousands were killed and a great many were horribly mangled or severely injured. An estimate of the colossal loss caused by the earthquake can be made after a study of facts and figures given in the appendix.

The geologists who reported later on expressed the view that the shock was the greatest ever received by the world. The epicentre was traced at a spot between Sitamarhi and Madhubani at a distance of about 104 miles from the capital of Nepal. The time when the first shock was felt was 2.24' 22" p.m. according to the Indian Seismographic records, though many are inclined to hold that it occurred at 2-15 p.m. Opinion is divided about the duration of the shock. In the eastern districts of Nepal tremors continued for some ten minutes but in the capital the earth was perceived to shake for 2 minutes and three seconds only. The velocity of the earthquake waves was 8 feet per second at Kathmandu and it was 10 feet per second at Bhaktapore, Lubhu, Sanogaon, Bungmati and Khokna. Shocks were felt over an area of three million square miles but the loss of human lives and the damage to property was the greatest in North Bihar, Nepal and a part of Assam. Nepal's losses were particularly heavy. Bihar with a population of fifteen millions lost only 7,188 while the losses of Nepal with only six millions and a half inhabitants amounted to 8,519. Besides those who were actually killed, about 15,000 were badly injured, while the number of damaged buildings reached a huge total of 2,07,740. The principal Government buildings were either cracked, damaged or brought to the ground; the King's palace was much damaged, causing the death of two princesses. Numerous temples, towers and public monuments crumbled down to the earth in a moment, to the utter grief of those who saw them reduced to this condition before their eyes. The houses in the cities which had been recently built in modern style at enormous cost were levelled to the ground. Bridges, roads, railway lines and pathways were wiped off. Telegraph and telephone lines were completely breached and postal communications were cut off everywhere. The precious labour of centuries was thus undone in a few minutes by the greatest calamity that had ever overtaken the people of Nepal.

The even tenor of Nepali life was disturbed beyond measure by this quake. Within a few minutes large parts of the country were devastated and cities, once beautifully adorned with some of the finest specimens of architecture and sculpture, were turned into heaps of *debris*. Much valuable property was lost and thousands were rendered homeless and penniless. They wandered here and there, crying piteously for help, and had it not been for the prompt relief afforded by Government, the loss of human life would have been dreadfully colossal.

There had been earthquakes in Nepal before but this was the severest of its kind. It surpassed all others in intensity and magnitude. The dreadful toll of human life taken by it and the damage done to numerous public and private buildings sent a shudder down the spine and made us realise vividly the grim forces of nature over which man can have but little control. The earliest known earthquake occurred in the year 1254 A.D. in the reign of Raja Abhayamalla, causing much loss of human life and considerable damage to property. The second shock was received in 1259 A.D. in the reign of Raja Jayadeva. It was accompanied by a terrible famine, causing great loss of life and misery to the public. In 1407 A.D. during the reign of Raja Shyam Singh occurred another earthquake which caused much damage to the temple of Machindranath and a number of other temples and buildings. In 1680 A.D. when Nivasmalla was the ruler of the Valley, a comet was seen in the sky for several days and after five months an earthquake shock was felt. In 1809 A.D. Nepal received twenty-three shocks in the course of a single day, causing little loss of life as the people had become alert in time, but thousands of buildings were brought to the ground. Another disaster followed in 1823 but there was no considerable damage. Again in 1834 during the reign of Maharajadhiraja Ran Bahadur Shah, Nepal received a terrible shock which caused irreparable damage to its temples, buildings and monuments. The temple of Jagannath, a hundred feet in height, fell down to the earth and of Bhimsen Thapa's towers one was razed to the ground and the other was severely damaged.

There is no record of organised relief operations by the Nepal Government in the past. Consequently there was nothing to guide the Maharaja in devising measures to deal with the widespread misery caused by this unparalleled disaster. He had to fall back on his own resources and it was his own intelligence, public spirit and initiative that helped him to tide over successfully an unprecedented crisis in his country's history. But for his generosity, organising capacity and high sense of duty, the whole country would have been a land of *debris* and ruins

The Maharaja was out on a hunting and inspection tour in the *tarai* when this catastrophe overtook Nepal by surprise. He was encamped at Dhakmabagh on the banks of the Kalni river near the western border of the kingdom. A slight tremor was felt in the camp but the Maharaja and his staff who were on elephant back did not perceive the shock. In ordinary times the news could have been transmitted within two hours but as the telephone and railway lines had been cut off as a result of the shocks, the message of the disaster had to be despatched by means of couriers. The ominous news reached the royal camp in the evening on Friday January 18.

On the following day the Maharaja broke the news of the tragic disaster to those who were in his camp and comforted them with words of consolation. He did not lose his presence of mind and noted with remarkable coolness and courage. He judged it impolitic to hurry to the capital and leave his entourage behind. Immediately he sent a message to General Padma Shum Shere Jung Bahadur Rana in which he expressed great sorrow for the sad happenings and enjoined upon all his relatives and officers of the state the duty of doing their utmost to relieve human suffering and misery and of giving comfort to the calamity-stricken populace. Advance guards were deputed to clear the lines of communication and to negotiate with railway managers for the opening of special trains to effect the Maharaja's speedy return to the capital.

The absence of the Maharaja did not in any way hamper the progress of relief operations. General Padma Shum Shere

(afterwards Maharaja) a man of extraordinary sympathies, with whom the welfare of the people is a part of his religion, undertook relief work with great alacrity and enthusiasm and sent word to the Maharaja regarding the extent of the loss suffered by the Government and the various sections of the public. Fortunately the Gurkha army at Kathmandu was on parade when the earthquake occurred. General Padma Shum Shere rushed to Tudikhel and summoned the soldiers round the historic platform. They were naturally anxious to run to their homes to find out whether their families and relatives were safe, but he drew their attention to the call of duty and assigned to them two important tasks—(1) the speedy extrication of persons buried under the *debris*, (2) the protection of public property and the maintenance of law and order. The soldiers behaved extraordinarily well and with great promptitude and zeal undertook to perform their respective duties. For the protection of public property a curfew order was promulgated prohibiting traffic between 8 p.m. and the morning gunfire. Martial law was declared empowering pickets to shoot down thieves and suspicious characters. The task of relieving distress was by no means easy. Nothing could apply the soothing balm to the lacerated hearts of those who had lost their wives and children and all their property. Misery and ruin stared them in the face and despondency made them utterly helpless. The town looked so desolated that on the next day only a few men ventured to enter their houses. Most of them walked about in search of food and tried to get something to satisfy their hunger. The search for missing relatives continued, and many persons were dug out of the ruins. The soldiers inspired by the noble example of General Padma, displayed remarkable alacrity in rendering help to these destitutes and brought thousands of wounded persons to hospitals. When the wards were crowded with the injured, they were kept under tents, and philanthropically-minded citizens volunteered to furnish first aid. Next to the army the medical department did much useful work by saving many valuable lives. General Brahma who was at this time in charge of the Education and Medical Departments rendered valuable assistance to the Commander-in-Chief in

organising relief. At considerable personal risk he went to the panic-stricken areas and made necessary arrangements for the safety and comfort of the sufferers.

While the work of providing shelter to the people and digging the *debris* progressed rapidly through the night, on the following day a conference of high officials was held at the Tudikhel. The Army and the Police force were called to receive orders. General Padma Shum Shere delivered an inspiring address.

“Brothers ! Many people are lying beneath the *debris*. Some of them must have already died. A few may still be living and are probably on the verge of collapse. They must be dug out. This is a highly meritorious deed. If men are dug out alive, hasten to take them to the hospital. Those who have got relatives should be entrusted to their care. You must see that no man seizes another’s property”.

General Padma also emphasised the importance of keeping pickets to watch against burglary. In accordance with the Maharaja’s message from the Camp, the members of his family voluntarily accepted the charge of the principal departments of relief organisation—water reservoirs, municipality, hospitals, telephone and public safety. Other officials undertook the preparation of the census, collection of reports, clearing of forests, etc. Besides these measures of relief the problem of affording shelter to those who had been rendered homeless was the most important. All the tents in possession of Government were placed at the disposal of the people, but they were found insufficient and, therefore, emergency tents were made of ordinary cloth, gunny bags and coarse matting. There were difficulties caused by inadequate food supply, but enormous quantities of grain and rice were soon imported from the Tarai, thereby lowering the price of rice, to one Mohar per *pathi* or eight seers per rupee. The speedy measures taken by General Padma of opening a huge market at Tudikhel where all necessaries were available at control price, won the admiration of the people who got rid of their demoralisation and began to rely on themselves. They rose equal to the occasion and began a vigorous search of their

lost property with the help of the police and the army. They now moved near the *debris* in the neighbourhood of their dwellings and began to construct thatched shelters for themselves. Many of them began to reside on the ground floor of their dilapidated houses. The Government removed the existing restrictions on the use of the forests so that the people might make good use of the timber for house-building purposes, while shattered doors, windows and beams dug out of the ruins provided material for fuel.

For about a week the distant regions of the Nepal territory were quite cut off from Kathmandu, but as soon as communications were re-established the extent of the loss sustained by the outlying areas became evident. In the western hilly tracts, shocks of moderate intensity were felt, and the Tarai regions too suffered from slight tremors. But the Eastern districts bore the burnt of the 'quake. In districts Bhojpur and Udaipur, landslips were more numerous than elsewhere. The course of rivers had also been blocked by the landslips causing scarcity of water. In these regions land slides continued to occur for several months after the earthquake. The Eastern section of the Tarai was also heavily affected. Jaleswar and Hanumannagar, being very near the epicentre, were most severely affected. All the *pucca* buildings were thrown down. The ground cracked at several places, resulting in the loss of much property. Water came out oozing from the cracks and flooded the roads for a number of days. At some places these fissures were very deep and wide. Fields were covered with sand thrown up from the bowels of the earth. Besides Jaleswar and Hanumannagar, all the towns of the Eastern Tarai suffered heavy losses. The Amlekhganj-Raxaul Light Railway was damaged at several places. Comparatively the number of buildings damaged was far greater than the lives lost. As has been said before, the Maharaja received the dreadful news of the tragic disaster in Naya Muluk after four days owing to the breach of communications. Without losing a moment he drew up plans of relief and communicated them to General Padma and himself proceeded posthaste to Kathmandu. The condition of the Maharaja in this distant place, cut off from his family and his people,

whom he loves dearly, in such an awful crisis, can better be imagined than described. But he faced the situation with imperturbable composure. He started from Nepalganj *via* Bhiknathori for Simra and encountered great difficulties in the way. The communications were entirely cut off, the railway line was breached in several places, and cracks and fissures on the road made it impassable at several places. But he continued his journey despite the heavy odds against him. Sometimes he had to travel by rail, sometimes by boat, and where he found the road clear by automobile. At last he reached Simra and took the first steps towards relief operations. He transported to the interior huge quantities of Khar and bamboos for the rapid reconstruction of thatched dwellings. He made considerable purchases in cloth and grain for free distribution among the distressed. Thus equipped with an enormous relief train, crossing deep ravines and streams on his way, the Maharaja scaled the heights of the Chandragiri mountain on Sunday, February 4, 1934 and saw houses demolished and a mass of ruins in place of the beautiful buildings which had once adorned the city of Kathmandu. It was an unprecedented scene of horror and desolation which the bewildered imagination of the Maharaja found it difficult to comprehend and realise. As he proceeded, he learnt how the Angel of Death had caused havoc and misery among his people and how men, women and children had passed through unheard of agonies and borne patiently the strokes of a cruel fate. His heart melted with pity and his grief knew no bounds. The thought of his own family and relatives filled him with anxiety but he forgot this for the moment and drove straight to Tudikhel to meet his people who had thronged round the historic platform to greet him. With tears in his eyes and trembling with emotion, the Maharaja delivered an inspiring speech in which he exhorted the people to rise equal to the occasion and to face the heaven-sent trial in a spirit of courage and resignation. He cited the example of Japan where the people had stood the strain of many trials of that nature and had emerged from them stronger and braver. The Nepalis, said the Maharaja, should

emulate the Japanese and adopt their ways and methods to meet the adverse situation. He asked them to regard their calamity as a blessing in disguise inasmuch as it afforded them a glorious opportunity of displaying the qualities of courage, endurance and self-reliance. He commended the public spirit shown by his kinsmen and officials and heartily thanked them for the magnificent response they had made to the call of the hour. Traders, shopmen and merchants were forbidden to increase the prices of bread and the other commodities, for it was bound to cause hardship to the suffering multitude. Above all, he emphasised the importance of co-operative effort by which alone even difficulties, apparently insuperable, could be overcome. Deaths by accident are considered inauspicious according to the Hindu Shastras, added the Maharaja, and so for the spiritual welfare of the souls of those who had perished in the disaster, he dedicated to them the merit of the gift of a thousand cows which he had recently made on the holy banks of the Mahakali. Being deeply religious by nature, the Maharaja was moved to pity at the sufferings of the people and assured them of his sympathy and support. With a pathos that pierced the hearts of his hearers the Maharaja said :

“I had hoped to construct barracks for the comfort of the soldiers and to make the people happy and prosperous by developing trade and industries and by creating facilities for the increasing use of machinery in factories and workshops. Such were my hopes but behold what has happened. It seems that God has ordained that my desires should not be fulfilled for henceforward I shall have to concentrate with all my heart, soul and energy on redeeming the city from the havoc caused by the earthquake. I am already engaged in this work. If each one of you does what he can, I have no doubt, our ruined condition will soon improve.”

The people's hearts were thrilled by the utterance of their ruler and they promised him their fullest co-operation and support.

The Maharaja's palace at Jawalakhel was badly damaged. He could have gone to reside in the Singh Darbar which had

been vacated by its former occupants but he decided of his own free will to share the plight of his people by living in tents outside the compound of his palace. On the following day he made a meticulous inspection of the *debris*, landslides and geysers, flooded areas and found hundreds of towns and villages of the valley in a state of utter desolation. His heart was filled with grief as he saw with his own eyes the woeful picture of misery and ruin on all sides. At Lalitpore, Bhakt-pore and other places some of the most exquisite works of Nepali architecture were badly damaged, and he was appalled at the magnitude of the loss caused not only to Government but also to the people, whose houses built by the toil and labour of several generations, were reduced in a moment to a heap of rubbish. The picturesque landscapes once rich with Himalayan verdure had now become completely disfigured by the rude shocks, and the shady avenues of trees with luxuriant foliage were reduced to a melancholy waste. Agriculture had suffered considerably by floods, by scarcity of water but mostly by the cracks and fissures which had occurred in the earth. Innumerable trees had been completely uprooted, while the livestock had perished both for want of food and shelter. As the province of Bihar had borne the burnt of the 'quake communications between Nepal and British India were completely cut off, and the problem of importing food or materials was extremely difficult at the moment. The Maharaja was profoundly moved by the grim spectacle of nature undoing the work of man and immediately made lavish endowments for the relief of the destitute and the homeless. Meanwhile, the large quantities of Khar, Dandabhatta and bamboos, which had been cut down at the Maharaja's instance, began to pour in by ropes and motor lorries. These were distributed free of charge among the people who began to construct small cottages and sheds. The Maharaja's affectionate care and solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, sorely tried by sufferings that beggared description, revived their drooping spirits, and the curse of homelessness was lifted from a large number of unfortunate men and women. The free distribution of food and clothes had

lyegun from the moment the Maharaja reached Kathmandu and the progress of relief operation was pushed forward with great intensity.

The following measures were adopted by the Maharaja to relieve the distress of the 'quake-stricken population in the valley :-

- (i) Free distribution of food and clothing to the needy.
- (ii) Free distribution of "Khar and Dandabhatta."
- (iii) Permission issued to cut timber from government protected forests.
- (iv) Arrangements for the supply of timber from government godowns at very cheap rates.
- (v) Laying of brick-kilns and lime-kilns for supplying bricks and lime-dust at concessional rates.
- (vi) Foreign-builders, masons and carpenters sent for to facilitate building operations.
- (vii) Import of 2½ lakhs of corrugated sheets, their sale and the remission of ropeway charges and custom.
- (viii) Sanction of Rs. 1,50,000 for the removal of *debris*.
- (ix) Despatch of doctors and compounders to different centres for medical aid to the injured people.
- (x) Four months' pay advanced to all office holders of the valley and of the hilly regions between west district No. 1 and the Eastern Frontier. A sum of Rs. 10,00,000 was distributed among the police force and soldiers that had guarded public property in good faith during the few weeks following the earthquake.

The hilly regions received equal attention from the Maharaja although the losses had been comparatively less heavy. The measures adopted for the relief of the people were :-

- (i) Military aid for the extrication of property lying under the *debris*.
- (ii) Arrangements for the obsequies of the poor.
- (iii) Provision for the cheap sale of foodstuffs.
- (iv) Distribution of alms at the rate of 1 *mana per capital* to all who were rendered completely destitute. This

provision remained in force till the coming of the maize harvest.

- (v) Suspension of fines and government dues.
- (vi) Permission issued to cut timber from neighbouring woods for building operations.
- (vii) Grant of Rs. 12,000 for the immediate relief of the distressed.
- (viii) A second grant of Rs. 25,000 for gifts to the needy to rebuild their houses and for the distribution of seed.

The reconstruction of buildings in the hilly tracts and the Tarai did not entail a heavy cost and was begun soon after the earthquake. But inspite of the availability of building materials, the inhabitants of the towns and the villages seemed to take no initiative in rebuilding their houses. The difficulty was mainly financial. and the Maharaja came to the rescue of the people. He at once set apart a sum of 50 lakhs for advancing relief loans to the inhabitants of the valley and the town of Banepa, and created for this purpose an office called *Bhukampa Koshalaya*, which was housed in the building enclosing the temple of Mahakal at Tudikhel. Rajguru, Han Raj, who was a man of great learning and experience, was placed in charge of this office and with his characteristic, enthusiasm and thoroughness, he worked day and night to administer properly the giving of loans to those who were really in need of them. He scrutinised the applications for help with care and fixed the amount after considering the circumstances of each case. Members of the ruling family were also associated with him and they rendered valuable service. The maximum limit to which money could be advanced as loan was fixed at Rs. 1500 *per capita*. These facilities gave a great impetus to the work of reconstruction. The process of repairs and rebuilding went on apace. Government buildings, palaces, temples, rest houses, bridges and roads were all repaired with great rapidity entirely at the cost of the state. Within a year and a half with the full co-operation of officials as well as non-officials, every trace of the earthquake was wiped off and the cities were beautified with many

new buildings and spacious roads, which will remind future generations of the philanthropic endeavours of Maharaja Juddha Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana. The rapid resuscitation of Nepal was a surprise to foreigners, who had never thought that the country would recover so soon from the effects of a disaster, which was unparelled in extent and magnitude. All this was due to the interest, energy and public spirit of the Maharaja who left no stone unturned for the good of his people. The various attempts made by him to ameliorate their condition have been catalogued in his second speech in which he announced the gift of Rs 50 lakhs for the formation of the Bhukampa Pidita Sahayakrina (Earthquake-stricken Relief-Loan Fund).

In his second speech delivered to encourage the people the Maharaja said :-

“Let none take this calamity as one concerning him alone. A national calamity has befallen us. This is not the time to be whiled away in idle gossip but one in which all, high and low should put their shoulders together and do their level best to save our motherland from the dire effects of the dreadful catastrophe. Let every body come forward and I have every reason to hope and believe that he will be deeply imbued with feelings of mutual sympathy and brotherhood to help one another. Remember it is not only we who have suffered from the earthquake, the Province of Bihar in India is as badly hit as we are, and not very long ago we heard of heavy loss of life in China and America also from similar natural causes.”

The Maharaja went on to describe the procedures of administering relief-

“At present we have divided the areas in the valley in ten sections and placed each section under the care of a separate establishment for needful assistance and arrangements in the area under its jurisdiction. In the hills the eastern districts are placed under the care of the district authorities for the purpose, and officers have also been deputed from here to help them.

“Our countrymen are known to be laborious and industri-

ous in their every day life; they are seen to help themselves as best as they could in meeting their own wants. In fact the hill men and so many others in the valley too often make stone or brick walls for their houses, prepare the needful timber for themselves and the members of their family, and act as labourers to help in the construction of their modest structures. Further, some ordinary labourers are seen here working with the masons, supplementing to some extent the work of the latter. Should all these be offering help to one another by the assiduous application of the knowledge and experience gained by them in any particular line, the construction of the houses will be very much expedited and more economically done. A particular kind of work is not, as a rule, confined to a particular class of people with us here. According to a tribe saying of the Gorkhalis a body of men containing 12,000 men in all is described as one consisting of 12,000 oil men, 12,000 washer men and 12,000 barbers. This does not certainly signify the different castes or classes of men to which they belong, but men, each and every one of whom is conversant with the work of an oilman, a washerman and a barber. Why not add 12,000 masons too to that saying if it could be managed ?

“Again our men are known to work as amateur bricklayers too and get separate brick-kilns made for themselves when they require bricks for constructing their buildings. Let them vigorously work in this line as well and help themselves as much as they can. Let supplies of timber direct their attention towards bringing in large quantities of timber from forests, and let traders and shop-keepers see that their godowns and shops have a plentiful supply of the building materials and make them available to the public at cheap rates, following the motto that quick returns with small profits pay much more than a slow return with a large profit.”

In the same speech the Maharaja announced the establishment of the loan fund alluded to above in these words :

“I would also like to announce here that I have provided a sum of fifty lakhs of rupees to establish a fund called *Bhu-kampa Pidita Sahaya Krina i.e.*, a fund for advancing money to those sufferers from the earthquake who for want of ready

money in hand require loans for the repairs and reconstruction of their houses in the capital town and the sister towns of Patan and Bhatgaon. Applicants, desirous of help, will be granted loans of reasonable amounts without interest for four years on the security of their respective houses. The loan will be repayable either in instalments or in one lumpsum within the prescribed period of four years, according to the convenience of the payers."

Past history was recalled to cheer up the people in their distress, and they were exhorted to gird up their loins like their forbears to mend what nature's pitiless hand had undone. The lesson of self reliance was inculcated on them, and they were enjoined to proceed with their work with heart within and God overhead. The Maharaja wound up with passionate words of ringing eloquence which came from the innermost depth of his heart.

"Earnestly bent on moving forward, we should all proceed steadily and energetically. Let every body, high and low alike, put forth all his might and bring his respective worth into play; let each become a sympathiser and helper of the other, each considering the others as bed-fellows in weal and woe; and let love and mercy be the order of the day. Laying aside all hypocrisy and despising all outward show and ostentation, should each collaborate and co-operate whole-heartedly in this way with the other, you will find it well work wonders as much in finding suitable dwellings for ourselves as in making out towns and villages assume their normal appearance before long. I have every hope that one and all of our countrymen will rise to the full height of the occasion and do their best in trying to convert this disaster into a blessing and lead our dear motherland through this terrible ordeal triumphantly on to glory."

The Maharaja recommended the building of low-roofed earth quake-proof houses like those of Japan and asked the people to wait till the next monsoon was over for building double storeyed and large houses. He deprecated the mutual jealousies and rivalries among the people during this critical period.

“It was with no small surprise that I heard of some instances of differences among the citizens in the assertion of their respective claims over possessions of grounds under and adjoining the collapsed houses and over the materials of damaged buildings found under the *debris*. Such a mentality is much to be regretted. I have, however, appointed officers who will summarily settle all such disputes.”

The speech had a salutary effect on the people. Besides material aid, his wise guidance and encouragement proved of great help to the sufferers from the 'quake, and following the lines chalked out by His Highness the high and low, the rich and poor, all combined to put forth their best efforts and Nepal was rebuilt in a short time.

Besides his own sound advice the Maharaja also published the advice of the geologist and drew the attention of the people to the report published by the Geological survey of India. The report stressed the fact that the border of the Gangetic Alluvium and of the Himalayas is a seismic region, and that earthquakes are to be expected along this belt in future. The Maharaja advised the people that in accordance with this report, heavy buildings should not be constructed till six months after the earthquake. Buildings should be given adequate foundations and proper bracing. They should be of sound materials, one storeyed and as light as possible. In the belt of maximum intensity, the use of steel or timber-framed structures was recommended. Arched masonry bridges and culverts were to be avoided and screw pile bridges adopted wherever possible. This report was adopted in toto by the Government of Nepal and its recommendations were given effect to as far as practicable.

The Maharaja did much to minister to the physical comforts of his 'quake-stricken subjects. But this was not all. For the spiritual welfare of those who had perished in the earthquake he ordered a great *Yajna* (*sacrifice*) to be performed towards the end of February, 1935. It was solemnly inaugurated by the Commander-in-Chief who commended to the assembled citizens the great merit of hearing Srimad Bhagvata for a week. In his speech which reads like a religious sermon

befitting the occasion he emphasised the importance of Bhakti or devotion to God and prayed for the welfare of the victims of the great disaster. His Highness sanctioned a large amount for this spiritual undertaking which was carried out in complete accordance with the dictates of religion. The *Yajna* was completed in seven days and on the last day the Commander-in-Chief and other leading men were present to take part in the ceremonies. The Acharya Kulchandra Gautama who had officiated as the high priest was taken in a procession to his residence and the sacrificial water was sprinkled in the three cities. Amidst great rejoicings with prayers for the long life and continued prosperity of the Maharaja the solemn function came to an end.

Thus the Maharaja did everything humanly possible for the good of his people. While Nepal was in distress, numerous offers of help came from many philanthropic associations in India and foreign countries. Messages were received from distinguished personages all over the world, expressing the deepest sympathy with the Maharaja in his great trial.

From Chetwode Field Marshall, dated 24-1-34:—

Deeply sympathise with your Highness in sad loss of life stop hope all members your Highness family are safe and well.

From Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, President, All India Seva Samiti to His Highness, dated 25-1-1934:—

We are distressed to hear of the destruction of life and property caused by earthquake in Nepal. Beg respectfully offer his Majesty King of Nepal, Your Highness, and the people of Nepal our profound sympathy in this heart-rending national disaster. Here the people of Bihar also have suffered most terribly. Government and public organising relief. News from Nepal meagre. We are all anxious. May I request your Highness to help us with information regarding the state of things in Nepal and also whether we may send any relief for sufferers.

From Peel and Lytton to His Highness, dated 23-1-1934:—

Please accept most sincere sympathy of Mount Everest Flight in earthquake disaster we feel deeply for you and your gallant country and recall with profound gratitude your gener-

ous cooperation and earnestly hope damage is not great letter follows—

Copy of a letter dated the 26th January, from Bharata-mitra, Calcutta, to His Highness.

The sudden news that Nepal also has suffered heavily due to earthquake filled out heart with horrors. The detailed news received till now confirm that your Highness's Capital and palaces have been ruined and that heavy loss of life and property has occurred in Nepal. The Nepalese in Calcutta were greatly moved when they read the news of Nepal disasters in the Bharata Mitra which has always been keeping in close touch with the affairs of Nepal. We were greatly pained when we were informed that two princesses along with about half a dozen of maid servants, were buried under the debris of the Royal Palaces. Today's telegram further adds that heavy loss of life and property has happened in Nepal. I and on behalf of the Bharata Mitra sympathise with your Highness and are ever ready at Your Highness' services.

Should Your Highness please command, Volunteers from Calcutta will immediately be sent to Nepal for carrying necessary relief work.

The Bharata Mitra will feel obliged to be favoured with detailed news about Nepal for thousands of its Readers particularly Nepalese.

Soliciting early favour, Meanwhile.

Copy of a letter dated 25th January, 1934 from the Italian Cunsul General, Bombay to His Highness.

I am extremely shocked to learn the appalling calamity caused by earthquake in your state, and still more that the two Princesses have also been victims to the same.

Being unable to convey to Your Highness my deepest sympathies by telegram, as the Telegraph office is not functioning I hasten to do so by this letter.

Renewing my heart-felt expression of sorrow on the great loss sustained by Your Highness I avail of this occasion to offer to Your Highness my respectful homage.

The Maharaja replied individually to these messages expres-

sing his gratefulness for the kind interest taken in the welfare of the people of Nepal by so many countries, societies and individuals. He thankfully declined all offers of help, whether in cash or kind, and thus gave evidence of his stoic fortitude and faith in his own capacity to rehabilitate the position of his country. Within a couple of years, the foreign Press was full of lavish praise for the heroic enterprise of the Maharaja, who had tided over an unprecedented crisis with incredible rapidity. His paternal solicitude for the good of the people, his eloquent and inspiring speeches, breathing sympathy and goodwill and filling with hope even the most despondent hearts, his gifts of money, remissions of revenue, loans and rewards for meritorious services, provision for medical/attendance in every kind of emergency, and many other acts of pious benevolence won the profound admiration of all classes of the population. But his most generous act was yet to come. People who had taken advances of money from the Government had agreed to pay off the arrears within four years. As the loans had been advanced mostly to poor inhabitants, it was natural that they should find it difficult to liquidate them within the prescribed period. As the date of payment came nearer and nearer, their anxiety increased. According to the terms of the agreement they had either to pay back the loan which they had contracted or surrender their homesteads. They were thus confronted once again with the dismal prospect of being turned out into the streets as homeless destitutes. Reports of the people's distress reached the Maharaja, and he felt that it would be a grave injustice, if people were driven out of their homes for failure to pay back the loan which had been used for the repair of their buildings. Meanwhile the earthquake officers employed great harshness and vigour in demanding the repayment of the loans. Some of the debtors cleared off the dues by selling their estates and moveables and those who were wholly devoid of resources resolved in despair to await the worst. As the sowing season was drawing nigh, the council of Bharadars met several times with a view to extending the time limit or to taking some other suitable steps. Opinion was sharply divided on the question. The Maharaja, whose heart

was deeply moved at the sight of human suffering, had already made up his mind to write off the debts. But he kept the generous intention hermetically sealed in his own bosom.

On Friday, September 2, 1938 all the officials, merchants and other classes of people were summoned to Tudikhel and were made to occupy the seats allotted to them. They were in a great uncertainty about the Maharaja's real intentions. None had been able to fathom the depths of his heart. Some thought the debts would be partially remitted while others thought that stricter measures would be adopted to recover the arrears and that defaulters would be seriously dealt with. Punctually at 3-30 P.M. accompanied by his staff, the Maharaja arrived at Tudikhel and ascending the historic platform made a speech which will long be remembered in Nepali history for its piety, philanthropy and political wisdom. Deeply religious, the Maharaja is a statesman and a political thinker and his words perhaps, not quite intelligible to western readers, are full of meaning to those who are acquainted with the ideals of Hindu kingship. His speech is not merely a matter-of-fact official statement about relief measures compiled by mechanical hands in his Secretariat, but it is a discourse on political philosophy and will serve as a manual of wisdom for the benefit of the future rulers of Nepal and indeed of all other lands, irrespective of racial, religious, or geographical limits. As the Maharaja unfolded the sheet containing the contemplated speech, the announcement that His Highness had out of his abundant mercy cancelled the debts which had caused so much worry and anxiety to the people caused universal satisfaction. It was a welcome surprise to all and signs of gratefulness were evident on all sides. The Maharaja said:—

“Now, bearing all these facts in mind, it gives me much pleasure to be able to announce here that, with a view to freeing the debtors of the Samstha from anxiety and trouble, to bringing peace of mind to them and to securing unalloyed happiness to our beloved compatriots, the whole amount lent to them by it, namely Nepali Rs. 29,82,316/62 less Rs. 5,60,956 which represents the last balance amount transferred from the Relief Fund, is hereby unreservedly remitted and will be written off.

“Those who have repaid the loan whether it be from their earnings or with money borrowed from others will have the amounts paid by them duly refunded to them. I earnestly hope that you will preserve in your memory all that I have already told you and, freed from the incubus of debt, apply yourselves heart and soul to your own pursuits and take to new enterprises to achieve your own good and bring prosperity to the country.

“Among the debtors of the Samstha there are some civil and military officers, feudatories and purohits who have taken loans from it, executing bonds like all other debtors. Of these, some have effected repayment by a deduction from their jagir or salary while some have managed to obtain money from the sale of their property. Though many of these jagirdars are still in Government service, I can well realise to what difficulties they must have been put in making both ends meet with their reduced income.

“We have a proverb which says that the hearths in all house-holds whether of high or low, are built of mud. The disaster has pressed on all with equal force. The high have a greater burden to bear and the low proportionately less. Happiness or misery affects all equally. Though the amounts lent to them have been realised in the course of four years for which period the loan was advanced out of deduction from their jagirs, it is only fair that they should receive the same consideration as others. Consequently the amounts repaid by them will be refunded. Let them live in peace and happiness in common with others, and freed from all anxiety, let them with a firm faith in God, in religion and in their Government continue to remain engaged in high pursuits and thus ennoble their lives.”

While granting this remission to his people he was not unmindful of the value of self-reliance. He asked them to ponder over these words:—

“You know it well that at a time like this when the circumstances have changed, curtailing all expenditure on luxuries and wearing coarse home-spun and eating simple and nutritious food and living frugal lives, if our farmers were to increase the produce of food-grains by growing two or three crops in place of one, if our weavers were to increase their output and expand their market, if our dairymen were to

improve their breed ; if our merchants were to extend their trade and our architects and craftsmen to make efforts to better their handiwork, in short, if every one, whatever the vocation he follows, were to exert himself, he will not only earn a subsistence for himself but will also help savings to be made, will foster national enterprise and benefit himself and his country in many ways.

“It is high time that those who have not hitherto given thought to this matter should now study it in right earnest. In order to draw the special attention of you all to ways of thrift and self dependence, measures have been taken to stop the import of what appeared to be luxuries, to increase duty on things not quite necessary, to reduce duty on imported basic products like yarn and cotton, to establish a Development Board to inaugurate an exhibition of country products and to resort to such other steps as were believed to be conducive to that purpose.”

Not satisfied merely with recounting the measures of relief the Maharaja rose to a higher level of thought and spoke the following words which those, whose lot it is to engage in public work and administer vast and conflicting interests, will do well to read, understand, and inwardly digest. He said :—

“Just as the head plays the most important part in the community of limbs so too does the Government in the community of the people. Together they all go to build up one body and one soul. It is quite natural for the people to sympathise and cooperate with the Government in time of need, and for the Government to do likewise for the welfare of the people. In any emergency like the great disaster that overtook the country, it was the bounden duty of the Government to assist as best it could and protect the people, who, like dutiful sons, with sincere devotion and display of goodwill towards it, should always think of doing good to the country through their exertions.” It was a memorable utterance. It thrilled the hearts of the people and evoked sentiments of the sincerest gratitude. Comments were freely made on the Maharaja’s generosity which was fully commensurate with the magnitude of the disaster that had overtaken Nepal. The Maharaja concluded by offering his thanks publicly to the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Commanding General, his other nephews and sons, the Naib Bada Guruji, the Bharadars, officers, volunteers and employees of the

Samastha office for the efficient manner in which they had carried out his instructions. He was not forgetful of the services rendered by the army and the police. He granted a reward of a lakh of rupees for the special services rendered, and as a mark of appreciation, letters of recognition, certificates and medals were distributed to all others who had helped in relief operations.

The gratefulness of the people for the generous acts of the Maharaja was expressed in various addresses of honour presented to him at the time of the unveiling of the earthquake memorials at Kathmandu and Lalitpur and several other places. The citizens of Kathmandu, officials and non-officials, were so profoundly impressed by the Maharaja's benevolence that they spontaneously subscribed funds for the erection of a suitable earthquake memorial. A scrutiny of the subscription list shows how the rich and the poor combined in the expression of loyal and loving homage to their ruler, and vied with one another in contributing their mite for the purpose. An address was presented to the Maharaja on Sunday, February 23, 1941 and the promoters of the scheme gave expression to their feelings of gratitude in the following words :

“Gradually the height of misery passed away and the day of happiness dawned. Many felt relieved but the hearts of those who had taken loans from the Government and which they were unable to pay sank within themselves as the time for repayment drew near. The little they had, was all spent; the clearing of the debts became impossible, and extra loans would have only aggravated their plight. Your Highness was at once moved on hearing their agony. Loans amounting to lakhs of rupees were cancelled, and the anxiety which was gnawing their hearts was set at rest. We filled the air at the time with our deafening cries of joy, but not satisfied with that, we have erected this small memorial as a token of our unbounded loyalty and devotion, to your person and the Commander-in-Chief himself has unveiled it with due veneration to Yourself and sympathy for the people. We have no doubt whatever that Lord Pashupatinath will keep this memorial as fresh as ever for generations to come.”

The unveiling ceremony was performed by the Commander-in-Chief General Padma Shumshere who in his speech feelingly described the horrors of the earthquake and eulogised the noble

services which the Maharaja had rendered to his country and his people. Other cities followed the example of Kathmandu and at Lalitpur a memorial was erected to perpetuate the deep affection and the great magnanimity shown by His Highness towards the citizens. The unveiling ceremony was performed by General Hiranya Shumshere, the youngest son of the Maharaja and in their address the *elite* of the town expressed gratitude for the help which they received from Government. They dwelt upon the promptness with which houses and temples had been repaired and reconstructed and specially praised His Highness's crowning act of mercy, namely, the remission of the loans which they were unable to redeem.

The General replied in suitable terms thanking the people for appreciating the services of his august father.

It will be clear from what has been said above that the central figure in these stupendous relief operations undertaken by the Nepal Government was Maharaja Juddha Shumshere whose advice and help was of the greatest advantage to the people. The promptness with which he responded to the call of duty and the generosity which he showed in giving help to the 'quake-stricken people won for him their gratitude and affection in an abundant measure. He did what man could do to mitigate misery, want and destitution. He gave financial aid, supplied building materials, clothes and food and thereby saved thousands of human lives. He relaxed the forest laws to make timber available for every body's use, advanced loans and requisitioned masons and carpenters from abroad to assist the work of reconstruction. Large sums of money were spent by him in removing the *debris*, which glutted the streets of the towns, and took steps for preventing epidemics by ordering doctors, physicians and compounders for the treatment of the sick and the wounded. The governors of districts were supplied with cash and seed for distribution among the rural folk who were hit hard by the destruction of their crops. Gifts amounting from Rs 20/- to Rs 25/- per head were offered to those inhabitants of the hilly tracts where fields were devastated by land slides. The civil and military officers within the four walls of the city and outside from West No : 1 to Ilam in the East were granted four months' pay in advance. A reward of one lakh of rupees was given to the police for rendering good service during the earthquake. It was not merely the present

suffering which the Maharaja tried to relieve by sundry measures; he tried also to secure quietus for the souls of those who had been killed by accident. For their absolution he unhesitatingly offered the fruit of his gift of one thousand cows in the sacred *Mahakali* according to the injunctions of the *Shastras*. In the midst of the greatest danger the Maharaja never lost his nerves and recognised the identity of interests between himself and his people. He meted out equal treatment to all. His generosity knew no limitations and his sympathy admitted of no exclusions. Day and night he toiled like a common man, braving the greatest risks for the fulfilment of his *Dharma*. The tale of his heroic achievements will find a place in the Nepalese Saga, and his noble deeds will be a source of inspiration to generations yet unborn. An appendix to this volume will enable the reader to realise what he did for his people in the hour of their greatest trial, and how he laboured ceaselessly to improve their condition. His charity deserves to be recorded in letters of gold, and it is no mere flattery to say that his name will be remembered as long as the Nepalese race exists in the world and retains in its heart a spark of its patriotic fire. He has been like Wordsworth's Happy Warrior.

“Who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed;
Come when it will, is equal to the need.”

In bringing to a close the story of the earthquake a word must be said about the tact and skill with which the Maharaja's nephew then General Padma Shumshere handled a delicate and extremely difficult situation to the entire satisfaction of the Government and the public. He was not unnerved by the Maharaja's absence from the capital and with characteristic presence of mind and strength of will took immediate and prompt measures to afford succour to the people in their hour of distress. These were highly appreciated by the Maharaja when he returned home. General Padma Shumshere, who

was devoutly religious, saw the mercy of God in the darkest surroundings and looked forward with hope and faith to the future. He removed the gloom and despondency of the people by speaking words of encouragement and sympathy which, the Nepalese say are still ringing in their ears. He welcomed non-official help and allowed full freedom of work to non-official organisations. Volunteer bodies such as the Maharaja Servants Society and Bhukampa Sevaka Dal worked under his inspiration and guidance. Everybody was lost in admiration of the fearlessness and intrepidity with which he exposed himself to danger in the service of his countrymen. He paid little heed to the safety of his own family and busied himself day and night in rescuing the victims of the, quake from the jaws of death. It is no exaggeration to aver that he was in those critical days the saviour of the people and is, therefore, enshrined in their grateful hearts

Foreign Relations

*Of all the gifts the Gods afford,
 (If we may take old Tully's word)
 The greatest is a friend, whose love
 Knows how to praise and when reprove—Prior.*

Nepal is an independent sovereign State with complete control over its domestic and foreign policy. Her sovereignty is an acknowledged international fact. She has always enjoyed this status and has taken steps in recent times to consolidate her independence. Yet there is much misconception about the relations that subsist between Nepal and India. Some European writers, without having a minute and accurate knowledge of facts, have loosely stated or created by their writings the impression that the British Government has some sort of right either of giving advice to the Government of Nepal or of influencing its policy through diplomatic channels. Nothing is farther from the truth. Great Britain has no control over the affairs of Nepal; she never had it in the past; their relationship is that of equal allies and all interference in the affairs of Nepal by suggestion or action is precluded by solemn treaty engagements. These treaties have defined the relations between the two countries and their terms admit of no ambiguity or equivocation. Still the misapprehension exists in certain minds and it is, therefore, necessary to state clearly Nepal's position in relation to India. Mr. Landon who was in touch with the officials of the Government of India emphatically expressed the view that 'the English have not this right and have never had this right.' After the first

Gurkha War during the Governor-Generalship of the Earl of Moira the treaty of Sigowli was concluded in 1816 by which peace and friendship were established between the two powers. The Gurkhas had fought with wonderful tenacity and courage to which testimony was borne by British Generals who conducted the campaign. There was no victor or vanquished, and the treaty was an alliance between two independent and equal powers for their mutual benefit. There was not the slightest indication by any British officer or by the Governor-General of inferiority or subordination and though the Gurkhas accepted a Resident, they adopted and followed an exclusive policy after the war and Bhimsen Thapa, the all-powerful minister at the Nepal Court, exerted his influence in favour of peace with the British, a power 'that crushed thrones like potsherds'. Nothing was dearer to his heart than the independence of his country and he believed that the best guarantee of independence was the maintenance of peace. With a singular foresight and diplomatic skill he prevented the British from having any pecuniary or direct or indirect control over the international affairs of Nepal. Later this friendship was cemented by mutual help and the uninterrupted peace after Sigowli convinced the British of the good faith and sincerity of the ruler of Nepal.

The other two countries with whom Nepal had relations were China and Tibet. It is sometimes presumed on the basis of exchange of gifts between the two countries that Nepal was a vassal of the celestial Empire. Such was the inordinate vanity of the Chinese court that these gifts were officially designated as 'tribute' and so were the gifts sent by other independent countries. But even the so-called tribute was not regularly paid and Mr. Landon's enquiries at the Chinese foreign office revealed that the last tribute from Nepal was received in April, 1908. In the early days of the Manchu dynasty the tribute was sent every five years but later on account of the difficulties of travel it was decided that it should be sent every twelve years. This certainly did not amount to vassalage; it was merely a complimentary exchange of presents. Maharaja Chandra Shumshere summed up the position with admirable clarity in these words :—

“The missions that proceeded from this country to China were of the nature of embassies from one court to another and

have invariably been treated with the honour and consideration due to foreign guests and their expenses were entirely borne by the Chinese Government. The presents they carried for the Emperor can never be regarded as tribute, as they are mere *Sougats* bringing forth counter-*Sougats* from the court of China. They are merely channels by which we tried to keep our friendly intercourse with distant China, to express our regard and respect for the celestial Emperor and to cultivate the goodwill and friendly feeling of the Chinese Government, especially on account of our heavy stakes in Tibet."

Tibet is another neighbouring country bordering on Nepal. The relations between the two countries, though disturbed in the earlier days, have remained friendly since 1901. The Nepalese envoy resides at the court of the Dalai Lama and watches the interests of his countrymen settled in Lhasa. The cultural contact with the Tibetans fostered through drama and art is fully maintained. There was a slight tension in Nepalese-Tibetan relations towards the end of Maharaja Chandra's regime, but the situation was tactfully handled and the two countries have remained friendly to each other ever since.

Maharaja Chandra had a great faith in the British people and they also reciprocated his regard for them in an abundant measure. He attended the Imperial Durbar in 1903 at Delhi as the accredited representative of the Government of Nepal and during the last Great War gave valuable help in men and money to his great ally. Nearly 2,00,000 Nepalese took part in that titanic struggle and displayed true heroism and fighting capacity. But even Maharaja Chandra was very careful about his country's interests. When Lord Curzon who was keenly interested in archaeological and antiquarian research once expressed a desire to visit Nepal, the Maharaja told him that he would extend to him after his retirement from the Viceroyalty as warm a welcome as he would do while he held his high office. He did not want to create a precedent which might lead to trouble in future. To cement the friendship which existed between Nepal and India a treaty was concluded on December 21, 1923 which was signed by Colonel W.F.T. O'Connor on behalf of the British Government and by Maharaja Chandra Shumshere on behalf of the Nepal Government. By this treaty the High Contracting Parties

(that is the phrase used in the treaty) agreed and mutually to acknowledge and respect each other's independence, both internal and external, and confirmed all previous treaties and engagements except in so far as they were altered by the present treaty. Each of the high contracting parties was to use all such measures as might be deemed practicable to protect its interests from being used for purposes dangerous to the security of the other. The treaty further provided that Nepal shall be free to import from or through British India arms and ammunition necessary for her welfare and that this arrangement shall last as long as the British Government is satisfied that the interests of Nepal Government once friendly and that there is no immediate danger to India from such importations. Further, that there shall be no export of arms etc., from Nepal to British India or across the frontier of Nepal either by Government or by private individuals.

The British envoy eulogised the services of Nepal and in announcing the terms of the treaty characterised it as a Treaty of friendship and observed that it symbolised a situation so honourable to Nepal and so gratifying to both the parties concerned. He added that by helping the cause of civilisation Nepal had confirmed her own sturdy independence and had enhanced her reputation among the nations of the world.

Maharaja Chandra was equally satisfied with the result of the negotiations which had borne fruit mainly through the patient diplomacy and skill of Colonel O'Connor and in his speech dwelt upon the glorious record of friendship that had subsisted between Nepal and the British Government. He went on to say :—

“The structure of our friendly relations with the British Government built as it is upon the solid foundation of mutual good and esteem as much as sympathy and trust may now be said to have received by this treaty a magnificent dome crowning the whole.”

Such is the history of Nepal's foreign relations down to the end of Maharaja Chandra's rule. Under his successor nothing of importance happened and the *status quo* was maintained. The two Governments acted in co-operation and harmony and we may recall Mr. Landon's words written nearly two decades ago.

“The two Governments have faced each other as man to man and have spoken the same language. Brothers are they, and the bond between them now is so great that it cannot be broken.”

According to political convention independent States keep their representatives at courts with which they have diplomatic relations. These representatives serve as channels of correspondence and negotiations between one Government and another. The British Government is represented at the Nepalese court by an envoy who formerly bore the title of Resident. The term Resident was odious to the Government and the people of Nepal who resented it as derogatory to their national pride and dignity. It implied an inferior status and lent colour to the view that the British Government exercised some sort of control over the affairs of Nepal. In British India Residents are stationed in the states by the Paramount power and it is a matter of common knowledge that they exercise a very real and effective control over their affairs. Through them the Government of India controls their policy and asserts its right, granted by treaties, to interfere in case of maladministration or abuse of authority or non-observance of treaty stipulations. Maharaja Juddha Shumshere was anxious since his assumption of the office of Prime Minister to advance the status of Nepal as an independent State and to secure recognition thereof by other independent sovereign powers. With this object in view Nepal asserted its right to keep a Minister at the court of St. James, corresponding to the British Minister at Kathmandu. The Government of Great Britain, after duly considering the just claims of Nepal, was pleased to accede to the request. It was decided that the representative of both Governments should bear the designation of ministers and have plenipotential powers. Accordingly, in April 1934 a mission was despatched to London headed by Commanding General Bahadur Shumshere, the eldest son of the Maharaja and a diplomatist of great ability, winsome manners and considerable personal magnetism to invest the king Emperor with the insignia of Ojaswi Rajanya, the highest among the decorations of Nepal designed to honour kings, Emperors, leaders of republics and men holding high positions in the international world. He was received well and in presenting the insignia to His Majesty the General said :—

“Nepal takes no small pride in her traditional friendship

with Great Britain, and I am directed by my revered father His Highness Maharaja Judha Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana to also bring this particularly to Your Majesty's notice with his respectful greetings and expressions of deep affection and regard. It is a friendship which His Highness lays great store by, and which it is his constant care and earnest endeavour to foster. He looks back with much pleasure to those happy days when he had the pleasure of paying his respects to Your Majesty in 1908 and then again in 1911 and derives no small gratification at the idea that his own son is having in his stead the repetition of that honour this time."

At this time the question of establishing a legation was being discussed in London and the claims of Nepal were put forward with such force and cogency of reasoning that the Government of Great Britain agreed to the request. It was a fitting recognition of Nepal's independence and naturally among the Nepalese there was much elation at this exaltation of the national dignity and the political status of their country. The first man to hold the honourable post of Minister in London was General Bahadur, Commanding General of the Northern forces of Nepal. A striking figure, straightforward and suave, bearing himself with a loftiness that became his high rank, a man whom long administrative experience had taught to tread warily amid pitfalls which beset every statesman's career, the General made a great impression upon those who came in contact with him and discharged the difficult duties of his office with credit to himself and satisfaction to his Government. During his short tenure of office he succeeded in securing acceptance of certain provisions to facilitate the task of his successor. There is no art more difficult than diplomacy and mastery over it implies a clear understanding of the moods and the tempers of men. General Bahadur showed great ability in handling delicate issues and spared no pains to strengthen the bonds of traditional friendship between the two countries. In grateful recognition of his sincere labours in the cause of amity and concord the British Government conferred upon him the title of G.B.E. while Nepal rewarded his services by admitting him to the exalted order of the *Suprashiddha Prabala Gurkha Dakshina Bahu*.

Similarly the Nepalese envoy at New Delhi was raised to the status of a consul-general and a Nepal house was built for

his residence. Through his good offices the Nepalese officials, especially those belonging to the Rana family, began to receive from the Government of India a respect to which they were on a visit to India. The Maharaja made arrangements with the Government of India which the Nepalese postage stamps, hitherto valid only within the boundaries of the kingdom of Nepal, became henceforward current throughout India.

Thus was one of the most cherished ambitions of the Maharaja fulfilled. He had broken the old isolation of Nepal and won for her an honourable position in the comity of Nations. He was always sure of British friendship but the steps he had taken gave a legal sanction to the considerations that had hitherto governed the policy of the two countries and placed them on a footing of equality so that each might help to attain that end for which the nations of Europe were striving before the war. In recognition of the gigantic work of reconstruction planned by His Highness during the earthquake and the adoption of many desirable improvements in the administration the British Government conferred upon him the title of G.S.S.I.

Mr. Belle, the first British Minister, who presented the Maharaja with the insignia of this exalted order on August 9, 1935 referred to the establishment of the legation in these words :—

“The other important event to which I wish to refer is the appointment of a Nepalese Minister to the court of St. James. This very important event in the history of the relationship in which your Highness has played so great a part cannot but assist in strengthening the ties of actual friendship so happily subsisting between Great Britain and Nepal. We have many proofs that it is your Highness’s policy to maintain these ancient ties which are so dear to the heart of both nations.”

The Maharaja reciprocated these sentiments and assured the Minister that he regarded the successful termination of the negotiations as a Divine blessing and emphasised the serious nature of the responsibility that had devolved on him as the result of the improved status of his country. He reaffirmed his policy of traditional friendship :—

“Traditional friendship which has undergone many a test binds Britain and Nepal together. Anything that goes to add a

link to it cannot be very welcome and what is more, the additional link has to me an additional interest as coming from the great Sovereign to whom I have had the honour and privilege of being personally known. Indeed time and distance have not bedimmed in the least the pleasure I felt in coming in touch with the striking personality of His Majesty. The establishment of our Legation in London has now introduced a contact closer and more direct than heretofore and the friendly feelings have, therefore, become, if possible, friendlier still."

The Commander-in-Chief heartily endorsed the Maharaja's observations and congratulated him on his achievements.

"By sheer force of your own ability and meritorious work you have not only won an abiding place in our hearts but also won within the whole period of your incumbency in your present high office the hearty good wishes and sincere regards from many a country far and wide. We are glad and proud of the honours which you have achieved and value very much the one the Insignia of which has been delivered to you just now, carrying as it does the true esteem and genuine goodwill of His Britannic Majesty with whom our country is bound by the closest ties of friendship. May you live long to continue to give the benefit of your able and wise administration to the country !"

To cement these friendly relations further another mission headed by Lieutenant General Krishna Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana who was appointed Minister proceeded to London to present the insignia of *Ojaswi Rajanya* to King Emperor George VI who had just succeeded his brother.

On the occasion of the Nepali New Year's Day (1st Baisakh) a dinner is held every year at the Legation in London to which are invited cabinet ministers, diplomatists, ambassadors and other distinguished officers. These social gatherings enable the Nepalese representative to keep himself in touch with other countries and help to promote friendliness, goodwill and mutual esteem.

By taking these steps the Maharaja has earned the thanks of all those who are interested in the welfare of Nepal. Such a policy is dictated by the peculiar position of his country. In-

deed an unswerving friendship with the British Government has been the sheet anchor upon which the policy of the rulers of Nepal has always rested, and the present Maharaja has done his utmost to improve the relations, but he has been careful to maintain the independent position of his country. The legation in London gives the lie to those who indulged in the conjectural supposition that Nepal was under some kind of political influence of the British. It should be made perfectly clear that whatever influence the British have at the court of Nepal is more like the deep regard for a good and peaceful neighbour rather than the result of any political subordination or inferiority in status.

The British Government has conferred several titles upon the Maharaja in recognition of his high rank and position. He was awarded a K.C.I.E. when he was the Senior Commanding General in the time of his brother Maharaja Sir Chandra Shumshere in 1918 for the excellent training imparted to the Gurkha Soldiers who fought with great success in the last war and on his succession to the Prime Minister's *gaddi*; he received a number of other decorations. He was made a G.C.I.E. in 1934, an Honorary Lt. General in the British army, an Honorary Colonel of all the Gurkha Rifle Regiments in the Indian army, a G.C.S.I. in 1935 and a G.C.B. in 1939.

The Maharaja has been very generous towards British officers and some of the most distinguished of them have paid him a tribute for the great services he has rendered to his country and his people. Sir Frederick O'Connor who was for many years the British envoy in Nepal was hospitably treated by the Maharaja who recognised his services to his country by offering him the insignia of *Pradipta Manyabar* in the most Refulgent order of the Star of Nepal as a signal mark of affection and regard. Sir Frederick expressed his gratitude in these words :—

“And I should like to take this opportunity of quoting the words of that renowned soldier Field Marshal Lord Roberts who in his book “*Fortyone years in India*” describes the meeting between Your Highness's great predecessor Jung Bahadur with Sir Colin Campbell before the final capture of Lucknow

in March 1858. Lord Roberts says "I looked at Jung Bahadur with no small interest for his deeds had made him conspicuous amongst probably the bravest race of men in the world." A great tribute from a great soldier, himself a winner of the Victoria Cross.

"Your Highness has referred in your remarks to my continued interest in Nepal and Nepalese affairs even after my retirement to England. I have been fortunate during the last few years to find opportunities of informing large audiences in England regarding Nepal's position as an absolutely independent Kingdom and also regarding her services to the Allied Nations during the Great War. But little is known to the general public at home regarding these matters, and my remarks have always been received with great interest and enthusiasm."

In the historic Durbar where these titles are received and conferred and compliments exchanged in the presence of the grandees and nobles of the kingdom, surrounded by all the pomp and pageantry of power, the mind inevitably turns to Maharaja Juddha, a man of large and liberal ideas, endowed with the highest constructive statesmanship, who has laboured hard to accelerate the pace of progress in Nepal. Sir F. O'Connor who was thoroughly acquainted with the country noted the signs of progress on all sides and offered his hearty felicitations to the Maharaja for the great task that had been accomplished.

Desirous of establishing friendly relations with foreign countries the Maharaja started negotiations with them. The first of the continental powers to enter into such relations with Nepal was Italy. On March 21, 1933 a cable was received from Prof. Tucci that the Italian Government had decided to honour the Maharaja and a month after on the 17th April an official communication was received from the Italian Consul-General, Calcutta, to the same effect. Consequently on May 4th, 1933 arrived at Kathmandu the Italian embassy consisting of the Consul-General Dr. Gino Scarpa and his assistant Dr. Domenicone with a Bengali clerk, a photographer and two servants to invest the Maharaja with the insignia of the order

of S.S. Maurizio and Lazzaro (ordine deil Santi Maurizio e Lazzaro) of which the king of Italy is the Grand Master in recognition of the help given to the royal Italian Academy and to Prof. Tucci in his researches and as a token of appreciation of the great statesman who was leading Nepal to higher destiny.

The Jawalakhel Durbar, the residence of the Maharaja, about two miles from the Singh Durbar, was *enfete* on the occasion of the formal presentation of the insignia by the Consul-General. The roads leading to the palace were gaily decorated with flags and buntings of varieagated hues and the spectators inspite of the heavy rain assembled in large numbers to see the distinguished guests. The Consul-General of Italy Dr. Gino Scarpa had come down from Calcutta specially for this purpose. He drove in State to the palace and was received at the Durbar Hall by the Maharaja and the leading civil and military officers. He took his seat on the dais along with the Maharaja and then presented the insignia. In doing so he said :—“The present art and the modern thought have their starting point in the renaissance in Italy. Mazzini called back Europe from the path of individualism and materialism where it had fallen after the French and Industrial Revolutions. Musolini is continuing the mission of Mazzini.

“Nepal is the depository of the two most glorious and vital traditions of India—the tradition of the great Hindu kingdoms, and the traditions of the three *darashanas* which form the very soul of the Indian culture and are amongst the highest spiritual productions of humanity—I mean, the Vedic, the Tantric and the Budhist.

“Tradition, when not creative, may become a burden and handicap, but it is, at the same time, the very foundation where a nation can renew itself, it is the vital seed which, when the old tree decays or dies, produces the new tree.

“Vedic and Tantric knowledge is, therefore, today not only of scientific and historic importance, but is the source wherefrom India will derive again her inspiration and guidance. Not only Shastras and Sadhanas, are of value which, by giving an aim to education and culture, will make people able to face

boldly the reality of life and the hard problems of modern existence.

“To make of the tradition a living foundation,—to adapt it to the new needs and make it creative—is certainly the most glorious task, but at the same time, one of the most difficult.

“When Italy after centuries of division became again united she remained, for a period of three-fourths of a century, uncertain without self-confidence, till a man of destiny showed to her the path which was hers, and led her with a firm hand to accomplish the mission she has in the world.

“In no other period of our history, perhaps, so vivid has been the vision of the past and at the same time so prominent the consideration of the modern needs ; so dominant the prestige of the tradition and so radical and dynamic the policy of the Government, aiming at the elimination of all forms and institutions which had become dead or had remained unassimilated and were killing the spirit.

“It is very fortunate for your country to have, as a ruler, a man who is, in the same way, conscious of the tradition and the modern necessities, who feels the glorious ambition to prepare his country for a historic mission, and who, in spite of the short period of his rule, has already carried out important reforms, preliminary to broader and more audacious ones in the near future.”

The Maharaja thanked the mission for their kind sentiments. He recalled to his mind the glories of the Eternal city, the lone mother of dead empires, and the antiquities of Nepal and expressed his readiness to assist learned men in their researches in the domain of Hindu and Buddhist culture.

“I recall with much pleasure my visit to Italy in 1908 with my late brother, Maharaja Chandra Shumshere of blessed memory. The impressions left by the Eternal City, the ancient remains and lovely bay of Naples, are still vivid in my memory. Ever since that time I have followed the progress of events in that country with the greatest interest. It has been very gratifying to watch the great strides she has been taking under the able guidance of that dynamic personality Signor Mussolini. Besides making doubly memorable the reign of his sovereign,

victor Emmanuel III he has given Italy promise of a future befitting her glorious past.

“You have referred to the help we have had the pleasure of giving to Prof. Tucci in his researches on behalf of the Royal Academy of Italy. I look upon it as a privilege to assist in the search for world-wide knowledge. If it can be said that Nepal has been of help, however, little, to such a noble cause we shall consider ourselves amply rewarded.”

The national anthem of Nepal was then played and a salute of 19 guns was fired in honour of the Prime Minister. After this the Italian National Anthem was played and a salute of 21 guns was fired in honour of the king to Italy which brought the function to a close.

Next day, His Majesty, the king of Nepal, gave a public audience to the Consul-General by holding an official Durbar at the famous Hanumandhoka palace, the ancient seat of the royal house of Nepal. The Consul-General was presented to His Majesty by the Prime Minister. He was much pleased to meet him and expressed his appreciation of the honour done to the Maharaja by the Italian Government. After the usual distribution of *Pan* and *attar* the Maharajadhiraj left the Durbar. The distinguished assembly proceeded with its business and Dr. Scarpa addressed the Maharaja in these words :—

“With your glorious country, we, Italians, have a happy tie of comradeship established during the last War. We learnt how to admire the bravery of the Gurkha soldiers in France where we fought together with our British Ally for the defence of that front. Nepal is the depository of the two most glorious and vital traditions of India—the traditions of the great Hindu kingdom, and the traditions of three darshanas which form the very soul of Indian culture and are amongst the highest spiritual productions of humanity; I mean the Vedic, the Tantric and the Buddhist. The high decoration which I have the pleasure and honour to present to Your Highness is not only a token of appreciation of His Majesty the King and of the Government of Italy, for the cultured co-operation started with your assistance to the Royal Italian Academy and to Professor

Tucci, but also of the highest appreciation for the statesman who leads Nepal to her higher destiny.”

The Maharaja complimented the Consul-General on the new chapter which had opened in Nepal's relations towards his country and described the visit as a historic event which was bound to draw closer the bond that had existed between the two countries ever since the dark days of the Great War. He mentioned the widespread reforms and measures which he had inaugurated for the welfare of his people during the nine months that had elapsed since his accession to the Prime Ministership.

Another Durbar was held at the official residence of the Maharaja where the Italian envoys came at 4-30 P.M. and the civil and military officers in their uniforms were there to receive them. They were received by Sir Mohan Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, Commanding General, and were taken into the hall by him in a procession. The Maharaja offered them a warm welcome and shook hands with them.

Then the Maharaja invested Dr. Scarpa with the insignia of Nepal Tara of which most refulgent order he was appointed an Honorary Pradipta Manyabar. The Maharaja said :—

“As a mark of our national appreciation of the friendly gesture from Italy, Nepal has decided to confer on you a high distinction. Your amiable disposition combined with the excellent qualities of head and heart, innate in the great nation to which you belong, has won our heart. I trust this consideration shown to the head of her mission will be taken in Italy as a token that she has in the far-off Himalayas, a friendly kingdom which values her goodwill and appreciates her good wishes.

The Consul-General highly appreciated the honour and hoped that the bond of friendship between Nepal and Italy would grow stronger and the future of Nepal would be still greater and more glorious. The decoration of, which he was the recipient, he said, made him feel as a member of the Maharaja's family. He was deeply touched by His Highness's kindness.

“I shall be happy to convey to my Government the expression of friendship Your Highness manifested to-day and on the previous occasion. Amidst you, I spent unforgettable

days. The visit to your impressive old temple and palaces has reminded me every moment of our town of Tuscany. I have highly admired the martial and artistic and the hardworking qualities of your people, the discipline and the solid political organisation."

"Present day required in Asia notices more than in Europe stern qualities and taxes on the men and the Governments : but your people guided with a firm hand and supported by a ruling class, conscious of the national task that befalls it, has a sure, shining future in front and will be at the level of what is expected of its *dharma* and of its glorious Hindu Tradition."

A dinner was given by the Maharaja in honour of the Italian Consul-General and his party at the guest House. General Bahadur Shumshere who proposed the toast of the king of Italy, though lavish in his hospitality, did not partake of the dinner and courteously added :—

It is a matter of deep regret to us that our religious principles which, as the only independent Hindu Kingdom on the face of the Earth, we must make it a point to respect, forbid us to eat and drink together with you. But, ladies and gentlemen, I now beg leave to propose the toast of His Majesty king Victor Emmanuel III of Italy.

Presents were sent by Maharaja for the king of Italy and Signor Mussolini. The gifts for the Duce, it is interesting to note, contained a *Khukri* in a leather scabbard mounted with gold filigree work and a sword in gold-mounted velvet scabbard. The members of the mission were also the recipients of the Maharaja's tokens of good will.

A few months after the great earthquake of 1934 arrived on May 23, a French diplomatic mission headed by Mon. Danjou who was accompanied by Mons. Vissiere to invest the Maharaja with the insignia of the *Grand Croix de la Legion d' Honneur* (The Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour) which was founded by Napoleon the Great to gratify the love of distinction which is inherent in all gifted peoples. Nepal had offered valuable assistance to Professor Sylvain Levi, the world-famed Orientalist, in his researches in ancient learning and this was much appreciated by his Government. It will be a unique experience for scholars and Governments in Eastern countries to know

what importance European countries attach to the work of learned men and how greatly they value their services to the cause of civilisation.

The investiture Durbar was held at Tudikhel beneath a spacious Shamiana and the entire ground was gaily decorated with flags and buntings. Distinguished civil and military officers of the state came to attend the function in their uniforms. The Consul-General drove in carriage and four to the *maidan* escorted by Lieutenant General Ananda Shumshere and Subba Ambeber Singh, and as the party left the guest house, a salute of 21 guns was fired. When the envoy reached Tudikhel, he was received by the Maharaja and conducted to the dais under the Shamiana. A guard of honour was presented to the Maharaja and a salute of 21 guns was fired.

In presenting the Maharaja with the Grand Cross Mons. Danjou dwelt upon Nepal's great services to the allied cause during the last Great War, the valour shown by the Gurkha soldiers and he spoke of the friendly feelings of France towards Nepal and the personal esteem in which the Maharaja was held by the president of the French Republic. He went on to add :—

“Your Highness will allow me to add that the mission with which I have been entrusted is the more pleasant for me as I have had already the pleasure of visiting Nepal last year when the welcome extended to me by your Highness was such as to remain in my memory as one of the most beautiful experiences of my official career. I am thus enabled to see once more your country, so rich in all kinds of monuments of the past, inhabited by that valiant, hard-working, hospitable people, respectful of its ancient traditions. Since my last visit one of the most terrible earthquakes ever recorded history has accumulated in this pleasant valley heaps of ruins, some of which may be irreparable. I beg Your Highness to accept the expression of my great sympathy in that connection together with my wishes of prosperity to Nepal which I am offering you today.

Notwithstanding the grave problems which occupy her attention in Europe, France interests herself, today as always

in the scientific and literary work accomplished in other countries.”

General Kaiser Shumshere's services to the cause of learning and antiquation research were much appreciated in France. Mons. Danjou invested him with the insignia a *Grand Officer de la la Legion d' Honneur* and warmly commended his scholarly achievements :—

“The Government of the Republic knows the interest presented by the learned research work presided over by His Excellency Commanding-General Kaisar Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana. The excavation entrusted by Your Highness to His Excellency's direction at Kapilavastu, the cradle of Lord Buddha, have already brought to light some previous discoveries. It is due to his endeavours that old inscriptions and ancient manuscripts have been brought to the knowledge of scholars. Last but not the least, His Excellency is the author of a translation into the Gurkha language of a dramatic masterpiece by Kalidasa.”

The Maharaja greatly appreciated this token of friendship and reminded his audience of the appalling ruin and misery which had been inflicted on France during the last Great War. It was a matter of satisfaction, said he, that Nepal had done her best to help the allies in the cause of justice and humanity throughout those anxious years. He felt happy at the renewal of confidence and good will :—

“Allow me to assure you that I am deeply sensible of the great honour done to me by the bestowal of the highest decoration of your glorious country. I value it very highly not only as a testimony of the personal esteem of His Excellency the President but also as a fresh token of the good will and friendly feeling that have obtained between France and Nepal for two decades since that memorable time when the sons of the two countries along with those of their friend and ally, Great Britain, fought shoulder to shoulder in many a hard fought battle and in death lay side by side on the field of glory. Since then so many of the prominent figures, who took conspicuous part in their respective spheres to achieve victory, have passed away. The renowned French Marshal Foch is no more, and so

are other British and Italian Commanders, while lately Belgium had to mourn the loss of her great King Albert whose courage was an inspiration to the Allies throughout the dark years of the Great War. Though they are now no more, their memory lives and will live for ever.

“It gives us no small pleasure to think that brotherhood in arms is the only tie that binds France and Nepal together. We have on occasions had the privilege of helping that distinguished *savant*, M. Sylvain Levi, in his great researches in the ancient lore and history of this country. The eloquent way in which you have referred to the services of my nephew Commanding-General Kaiser Shumshere to the cause of learning and research work is indeed very gratifying, while the manner in which the Government of the French Republic have been pleased to show their appreciation of them stands as a tangible proof of the fact that the connection between our two countries is not military alone but cultural as well. We are so very glad of that too.”

The Commander-in-Chief followed with an eloquent speech in which he thanked the President of the French Republic for the honour he had done to Nepal through her ruler and for his appreciation of the help which General Kaiser had rendered in the furtherance of learned researches. He paid a glowing tribute to the Maharaja and dwelt on his labours in the field of administration. He said :

“All along you were noted for the singleness of purpose with which you used to serve the Government, and it is that particular trait of yours which is shining in all its brilliance in your everyday life as the supreme head of the Government. An earnest desire to do justice between man and man, a firm determination to attend to the well-being of the people under your charge in every possible way and an earnest effort to leave our dear motherland to prosperity by developing its natural resources are prominent features of your wise administration and the guiding motive in the discharge of your public duties. Indeed, we cannot sufficiently thank Your Highness for your foresight in dealing with matters foreign and internal and praise your wide statesman-like grasp of administrative questions, as well as the deep sympathy you show to the people

and the care you show in promoting their happiness and prosperity.”

After the ceremony was over a guard of honour was presented to the Maharaja and a salute of 19 guns was fired. The French National Anthem was played and a salute of 21 guns was fired in honour of the President of the French republic.

Next day the Maharaja, in a Durbar held under a Shamiya at Tudikhel invested Mons. Danjou with the insignia of Nepal Tara of which most Refulgent order he was appointed an Honourary Pradipta Manyabar. The Maharaja spoke these words :

“It is pleasing to note that the high mission on which you have come has added a fresh link in the bonds of friendship between France and Nepal and I feel that in receiving you here again today to announce that Nepal has decided to confer on you a high honour I am going to forge that link still more closely. Your admirable disposition combined with your other personal qualities has made a deep impression on us. This honour expresses that feeling in a more tangible form, and I trust that the consideration shown to the head of her mission will be taken in France as a token that she has in Nepal a friendly kingdom which values her good-will and appreciates her good wishes.”

Mons. Vissiere, Vice-Consul, was also honoured by admission into the most Puissant order of Prabala Gurkha Dakshina Bahu.

After this the French Consul was presented to His Majesty the King by the Maharaja.

On May 25th a dinner was held in honour of the French mission and the toast of the health of the President of the French Republic was proposed by General Singh Shumshere on behalf of the Maharaja.

“Time passes but memory lives. The recollection of this happy function which has brought us together will, I am sure, remain deeply impressed on the mind of everyone present here. The din of war saw the sons of Britain, France and Nepal as comrades in arms, standing shoulder to shoulder on the battlefields of France and Flanders. So too the concord of peace is seeing us tonight together in the peaceful atmosphere of this hall. His Highness rejoices at this and hopes that you will

permit him the pleasure of gracing this occasion by proposing the health of His Excellency the President of the French Republic whose expression of good will we so much appreciate."

The French Consul replied to the toast in suitable terms and with this manifestation of goodwill and friendly feelings the function came to an end.

The relations between China and Nepal go back to remote antiquity. The Chinese pilgrim Hiouen-tsang makes mention of Nepal although he never visited it. The embassies sent to India by the emperor of China came through Nepal and when Hiouen-tsang was returning to his country by way of Pamir, a Chinese embassy was travelling towards India under the leadership of Li-I-Pias with Hiouen-t-Se as the second in Command with 22 other men to serve as escort. The embassy was bringing back to India a Brahman who had been sent as an official guest of the Empire. King Narendra of Nepal who was a Lichhavi Prince, welcomed the mission towards 644 A.D. and in 651 he himself sent an embassy to carry to the son of Heaven his respectful gifts. A second mission was sent to Magadh under Wang Hiuen-t'se assisted by Tsang Cheu-Jenn and an escort of 30 cavalry men. Harsha Shiladitya had died before the mission reached India and his minister had usurped power. The latter mistrusted the Chinese and the envoy was attacked but he escaped in the darkness of the night. Thereupon the Chinese sought the help of the King of Nepal who supplied 7000 horsemen. The Indians were defeated and the victorious Chinese returned to their country. A third mission under Wang Hiuen-t'se came through Nepal in 657 A.D. and when the envoy returned to his native land he published in 665 A.D. a book in which he described the wonders of Nepal. The relations between the two countries continued to be friendly though the presents which used to be exchanged as a mark of goodwill between the two countries were not regularly sent—a fact which was definitely ascertained by Mr. P. Landon. Maharaja Juddha was happy to renew the relations with the national Republic of China and welcomed their desire to send a mission to his court. Consequently a Chinese mission visited Kathmandu in June, 1934.

On June 6th an investiture Durbar was held at Tudikhel in the midst of scenes of great festivity and rejoicing to welcome the Chinese mission under the leadership of Mr. C.P. Liang,

the Consul-General, who was accompanied by a vice-Consul-General, Daniel Lee. To witness this ceremony were invited by the Government of Nepal civil and military officers, Professors, Doctors, teachers and Pandits who chanted the sacred *Mantras*, Marwaris and Mahajans of 32 *kothi*, all of whom took their seats under the spacious Shamiana that was erected for the purpose. His Highness the Maharaja proceeded from the Jawalakhel Palace to the Singh Durbar and after dressing himself in the robes of the Grand Master of the order of Nepal Tara reached Tudikhel. The Consul-General, accompanied by two officers of the Nepal Government, drove in a carriage and four to the maidan and on reaching there was received by the Maharaja. A salute of 21 guns was fired and a guard of honour was presented by the Rifle regiment. The Consul-General in presenting to His Highness the first class Pao Dingh Hsuan Chang and military rank of Luh Chuan Shang Chian of the Chinese army on behalf of the President of the National Government of the Chinese Republic said:—

“Although this is my first visit to this wonderful country, I do not feel in the least that I am here as a stranger in a strange land. I have come here merely to renew our very old friendship because for centuries the kingdom of Nepal and China have had friendly intercourse and have been most intimate neighbours. I am unable to express in words how proud I feel to head this important mission to this independent kingdom with which we are on such cordial terms. The two countries being so closely related geographically, we have much in common as regards our culture Art, Literature, Religion, and many other things in general. Therefore, we are neighbours and not strangers.

“I hope today’s ceremony will mark another step towards strengthening the ties of goodwill and friendship which already exist between our two countries.

On behalf of the President of the National Government of the Republic of China and my fellow countrymen, I respectfully convey to Your Highness the sincerest wish that the prosperity of the kingdom of Nepal and the welfare of its people will continue under the wise guidance of Your Highness. I also wish Your Highness long life and every happiness.”

The Maharaj greatly appreciated the honour and pointed out that the desire to foster mutual goodwill and esteem had

always inspired the foreign policy of the kingdom of Nepal and that it was a pleasure to him to be assured of the friendship of the Republic of China with which country they had cultural relations for centuries. He referred to the first Chinese mission who visited Nepal in 643 A.D.

The Consul-General was then invested with the insignia of the order of Nepal Tara of which he was appointed an Honorary Pradipta Manyabar. The Vice-Consul was given the rank of Honorary Prabala Gurkha Dakshina Bahu. Both of them gratefully accepted the proffered honour and said that it was a distinction not bestowed upon them as individuals but as representatives of their country and their nation.

The usual ceremonies followed and the function came to an end in the midst of great rejoicing.

Similar embassies came from Belgium and the Dutch countries and received by His Highness the Maharaja with great hospitality in 1935. The Belgian Consul-General H. Marcel Ulser invested the Maharaja with the Grand Gordon de l' order de Leopold, the greatest honour which is in the power of the king of Belgium to bestow upon any person" as a token of friendship and particular esteem." He added that his king and country appreciated the glorious assistance which the valiant Nepalese army had rendered to the allies in the last Great War. He paid a generous tribute to His Highness as a statesman and a soldier of great distinction and hoped that the function in which they had all taken part would establish friendly relations between Nepal and Belgium. The Maharaja acknowledged the honour and heartily endorsed the wish expressed by the Consul-General. He paid a glowing tribute to the Belgians who had suffered much during the last war in the defence of freedom.

"The heroic stand made by the Belgians for the sanctity of treaties is remembered all the world over as the first clarion call to summon the Allies to the righteous cause. How under the magnificent leadership of their hero King Albert I they have fought and what number of Gurkhas joining in camaraderie with them in the fight lie dead on the *Flanders'* fields of Flanders are now matter of history."

The Consul-General received from the Maharaja the insignia of Nepal Tara and his Colleague Mons. Robert Beruck was given the rank of Honorary Prabala Gurkha Dakshina

Bahu for which they expressed their grateful thanks.

The Dutch delegation which consisted of Mons. Allard Menes Consul-General and Mohns. Lonkeer Petrus Lohames Eckhont visited Nepal in 1940 as Vice-Consul.

The Consul-General paid a great tribute to Nepal and her ruler and from his speech couched in the language of truth and sincerity it will be clear how great is the esteem in which the Maharaja and his country are held in Europe.

“The fact that Her Majesty the Queen has wished to confer upon your Highness the highest honour which she can bestow may be taken as proof that there exists in my country a first appreciation of the place which Nepal occupies in the world. Her Majesty Queen Whilhelmia has wished to confer upon your Highness the highest rank in the highest order of Knighthood of my country, and honour which your Highness very rightly shares with the mightiest sovereigns and Heads of States in Europe and other parts of the world.

“I request your Highness to regard the high distinction which my Sovereign has conferred upon your Highness as a token of friendly feelings from one ruler to another, of admiration for the wonderful achievements of your Highness’s reign and as a recognition also of the far-sighted administration which your Highness has given to Nepal.

“By this gesture of my sovereign Her Majesty has wishes to honour Your Highness and, through your Highness, the whole of the heroic Nepalese Nation.

“It is probably known to your Highness that the people of the Netherlands, now three hundred years ago, carried on a great fight for 80 years, to gain their indomitable fighting spirit which secured them their independence. This love of Liberty has remained a characteristic of the Dutch to this day and to be a good soldier has become a tradition amongst my countrymen.

“Your Highness will, therefore, not be astonished that a nation with such sentiments has the greatest admiration for a people like the Nepalese whose passionate love for Liberty is their greatest tradition and whose soldiers are known all over the world as the greatest fighters and as men who have in them all the qualities that go to make an ideal soldier.

“But these are not the only things for which the people of my country admire Nepal. We also have a deep respect

for the age-old civilisation of the country of your Highness. And that civilisation has the quality of being old and of being young at the same time. For it has not remained unnoticed in the Netherlands that under the untiring attention of your Highness the administration of this country has reached such a high standard as to add still more to the well-being of the people.

“In the field of the economic life Nepal new possibilities are being explored under the guidance of your Highness, in order to increase and to safeguard the national income. With a people who are industrially inclined as the Nepalese are, I have no doubt that your Highness will be successful in this field also and that the people of Nepal, who have already many many reasons to be happy, will greatly benefit thereby”.

In accepting the honour the Maharaja thanked Her Majesty, Queen Wilhelmina of Netherlands for her kind message of goodwill and friendship and invested the Consul-General and his colleague with the insignia of Prasiddha Prabala Gurkha Dakshina Bahu.

There was much excitement in Kathmandu on the arrival of the German embassy in 1937. The city assumed a festive appearance when an investiture Durbar was held to receive the marks of distinction sent by the German Government. Count Von Pode-wils-Durnitz, the German Consul-General was specially deputed to perform the presentation ceremony and he arrived in Nepal three days before the appointed date. The Durbar was held in the recently remodelled Gallery Hall; the fine art museum of Nepal, popularly known as the ‘Light House’ for its novel lighting effects. It was attended by distinguished nobles and officials, both civil and military, of the State. A number of guests also attended the function by special invitation. The German Consul-General drove in State from the Guest House to the ‘Gallery Hall’ accompanied by Dr. Richter, the Vice-Consul and the Nepalese officials, in a State carriage drawn by four richly Caparasoned horses, attended [by postilions in vivid scarlet livery and escorted by a detachment of cavalry. The road from the Guest House to the palace was lined by numerous spectators. The entry of the delegation into the Durbar compound was signalled by the Parswavarti Dal (His Highness’s personal

body-guard) presenting arms and the band striking up the German National Anthem.

At the entrance of the hall the Consul-General was received by the Maharaja and conducted to a seat on his right. He announced on behalf of his Government the conferment of the order of the Star of the German Red Cross with Sash on the Maharaja and the presentation of the Star of the order of the German Red Cross to the Commander-in-Chief General Sir Padma Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana in recognition of his splended work during the earthquake of 1934. It is interesting to recall to our minds the rich tribute paid by the Consul-General to the Maharaja and his brave warriors :—

“Our people though geographically, distant have very much common in character and it might be known to Your Highness that Germany has always taken a great interest in the philosophy of the East. The manly qualities of the warrior have always been held in high esteem in both our countries and have helped us to build powerful nations. The bravery of the Gurkhas is known all over the world.

“The German nation looks with respect and sympathy on the recent development of Nepal, which under the wise guidance and statesmanship of Your Highness, equally as Germany, is devoted to peaceful progress.

“The wonderful work of reconstruction which Your Highness has carried out without any outside help whatsoever after the terrible earthquake about four years ago has met with the highest admiration in my country. By a strange coincidence also in Germany a plan of reconstruction, extending over a similar period, has been carried through by the energy of the great Leader of our nation.

“These are the considerations which have prompted the Leader of the German Reich to confer the most distinguished decoration of the Star of The German Red Cross with Sash upon Your Highness as the Ruler of this gallant nation.

“Germany has no political interest in this part of the world. However, there are possibilities enough for peaceful co-operation of the two countries in the sphere of trade and spiritual understanding. We assure Your Highness that we shall always endeavour to promote the good relationship and friendship between Germany and Nepal.”

The Maharaja accepted the honour and told the mission that he regarded peaceful co-operation as the best means of promoting the progress and happiness of the world. He mentioned the part played in the task of reconstruction by the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Maharanee Saheb and his nephews, the sons of his late lamented brother Maharaja Sir Chandra Shumshere, without whose ungrudging help his labours would not have borne much fruit. It is a grim irony of history that the Maharaja, knowing nothing of the future, paid a rich tribute to Adolf Hitler.

“We yield to none in our admiration of the wonderful qualities of head and heart displayed by your great Leader, Adolf Hitler and of his inspiring re-creation of the German nation. Great as he is, he has, after achieving rehabilitation with honour, pledged himself to peace, a consummation devoutly to be wished for, by our traditional friends, the British, and to the safe-guarding of the civilisation of which the world owes so much.”

There were many others in Europe who thought like the Maharaja but the future hangs on the knees of the gods and it is not for us mortals to foresee the workings of Providence. What Germany has done is known to the whole world and the valiant Gurkhas have had to fight against the Germans in the various theatres of the War, winning honour and renown for themselves and their country. At the conclusion of the Maharaja's speech the band played the German National Anthem and the soldiers presented arms in honour of the German Government. The Consul-General was presented with the insignia of Honorary Prashiddha Prabala Gurkha Dakshina Bahu and his deputy was enrolled in the order of Prabala Gurkha Dakshina Bahu, Count Von Podewils-Durnitz highly appreciated the honour and thanked the Maharaja on behalf of himself and Dr. Richter. He said :—

“These noble distinctions receive an especially high value by these worlds, as well as by the fact that they come from Your Highness who maintains the glorious traditions of a noble house and to whom his people look up with love and reverence.”

At the close of the investiture the band played the Nepalese National Anthem and the ceremony of the evening terminated with the usual distribution of *Pan* and *Attar*.

After investiture the Maharaja offered presents to the consuls of the various countries and these included the rarities of Nepal.

In November, 1937 an investiture was held in the Durbar Hall in the Singh Durbar palace to invest the Bada Maharani with the order of Finland. The Maharanee Saheb attended the Durbar with her daughters and two ladies in waiting. All the leading officers, civil and military, the Generals and the priests were present. When the time of investiture came, the holy *mantras* were chanted and the band played an auspicious tune. The Maharaja himself decorated the Bada Maharani with the medal and all those who were present congratulated her for the distinction that had been conferred upon her by a foreign State.

The object of these missions was to establish friendly relations with foreign countries and to enhance the Status of Nepal. This was fulfilled. Nepal became known to distant lands in Europe and its wonders were revealed to their statesmen and *savants*. The Maharaja's prestige rose high and his administrative achievements brought him the esteem and goodwill of powerful and ancient States. No ruler of Nepal had been so a much in the European eye as the present Maharaja and it is matter of supreme satisfaction that envoys after envoys recounted his great qualities and eulogised his services in the cause of peace, humanity and culture. His conservatism was no obstacle to broader relationship and it was entirely due to his efforts that such recognition was secured for his country. The outlook of both the ruling class and the common people was widened and they developed a better sense of international brotherhood and sympathy. Men who had never heard of Belgium, France, Finland and the Netherlands came in direct contact with them through their representatives and won their respect and confidence. The declaration of friendship with them marked a distinct political advance, and if the War had not intervened, the Maharaja would have further developed his policy and extended his operations over a wider field. Still, the increase of national prestige gave an impetus to the patriotism of the Nepalese who began to dream great dreams about the future of their country and rallied round the Maharaja whose breadth of vision, largeness of aim and constancy of endeavour they thoroughly admired. It was not merely personal distinction

which the Maharaja had achieved. He had so completely identified with the interests of Nepal that a precise differentiation between his personal gain and the country's advancement was impossible. There is an odour of mischief about diplomacy and since Bismarck's day it has involved a cynical disregard of truth. But this can not be said about the Maharaja's plans and purposes. His aims were crystal clear and his policy was quite straightforward. He employed diplomacy for the higher ends of civilised Government—the promotion of culture and fellowship among the nations of the world—a fact to which all plenipotentiaries of foreign States bore testimony. He tried to bring the east and west together. But alas, this mission was seriously impeded by a fearful Armageddon, the angry vision of a dreadful war, and the cataclysm of fire and sword that has afflicted the race of man. It is not for us to command the future. After all, statesmen, warriors, diplomatists and empire-builders are puny figures that fret and strut for a brief hour on the vast stage of the human drama and are tossed hither and thither amidst the ruins of their plans by the Divine Will which works inexorably, and the processes of which they are powerless to scan or stop. But the Maharaja refused to give way to pessimism. In the full sun-light of wordly triumphs, sure of the homage of a warrior nation, he never lost sight of the eternal verities of life and whether in the midst of peace or war, he lived and worked for high spiritual ends with unwearied patience and perseverance.

Historic Visits to India.

*As natural life the body warms,
And, scholars teach, the soul informs,
So honour animates the whole,
And is the spirit of the soul,
Those numerous virtues which the tribe
Of tedious moralists describe,
And by such various titles call,
True honour comprehends them all.*

—Swift

As has been said in a previous chapter the relations between Nepal and British India have been friendly for more than a century and it is not, therefore, unusual to seek to strengthen them by visits and exchanges of goodwill. The rulers of Nepal since Maharaja Jung Bahadur's day have been cordially received and honoured in the capital of the Indian Empire and treated as independent allies. In 1903 Maharaja Chandra Shumshere attended the Delhi Durbar as the accredited representative of the Nepal Government and was treated just like the envoys of other independent States. He was perhaps more interested in the assertion of his own independence than in the pageant that was organised by the Government of India. Lord Curzon took advantage of Maharaja Chandra's friendly gesture and wanted him to pay a visit to the Indian capital. The Maharaja responded to the invitation and visited Calcutta on 25th January, 1904 and a splendid reception was accorded to him. His brother Bhim Shumshere followed his example and was grandly entertained by the Government of

India. But the conditions have now changed. The independent status of Nepal has been fully recognised and a consulate has been established at Delhi, and a Nepalese minister resides at the court of St. James to watch his country's interests. The altered conditions have modified the British attitude towards Nepal and even the State ceremonial has undergone a change which betokened a better and fuller recognition of independence and of equality of status. Maharaja Juddha Shumshere's visit to Delhi in 1935 is a landmark in the history of Anglo-Nepalese relations. It marks also a definite stage in the development of that respect which non-official Indians of progressive schools of thought have begun to feel towards the ruler of Nepal. Equally important was the Maharaja's visit to Calcutta in 1939 during Lord Linlithgow's Viceroyalty. Both had far-reaching results. The Maharaja was welcomed by officials and non-officials alike and was the recipient of unprecedented honours at their hands. These visits considerably strengthened his constitutional position and raised the prestige of Nepal in the eyes of the world. It is, therefore, necessary to describe them at some length. The Maharaja had no intention of visiting Delhi at this time. He had long been desirous of undertaking a pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Dwarka in Gujarat but he felt that it was impossible to pass through Delhi without seeing the Viceroy and to call on him without an invitation would lower his own dignity and impair the prestige of his country. The Viceroy came to know of the Maharaja's intention to visit Dwarka and on May 3rd, 1934 he extended an invitation to him to visit Delhi. He wrote :—

My esteemed friend,

Ever since Your Highness' accession to the high office of Prime-Minister and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, I have been entertaining the hope that I might before long have an opportunity of making Your Highness' personal acquaintance. I am glad to find that a suitable occasion for the realisation of this desire has now presented itself and it gives me much pleasure to invite Your Highness to New Delhi, the Capital of British India, as a guest of my Government in January next.

I greatly hope that Your Highness' engagements will permit of your paying me this visit, for I need hardly say

how much I am looking forward to meeting Your Highness.

I remain, with much consideration,

Your Highness's sincere friend,

Sd. Willingdon,

Simla,

Viceroy and Governor-General of India

The 3rd May, 1934.

The Viceroy in address to the Legislative Assembly also referred to the Maharaja's visit. "I also look forward within the next few days to a visit from His Highness the Maharaja of Nepal as the guest of the Government of India. You will, I am sure, join me in extending a hearty welcome to our distinguished guest."

It had been the practice of the rulers of Nepal since Jung Bahadur's day to visit the new Viceroy, and the Maharaja was glad to have an opportunity of strengthening his friendship with the British Government and of meeting many distinguished persons. He accepted the invitation of the Viceroy.

My esteemed and valued friend,

I beg to acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of Your Excellency's friendly letter dated the 3rd May, 1934 in which Your Excellency has been pleased to invite me to New Delhi.

Greatly as I appreciate the cordial feelings which have dictated it and which in view of the most happy relations subsisting between our two Governments I value all the more and fully as I reciprocate the desire for personal acquaintance so very kindly expressed by Your Excellency. I gladly and gratefully accept the kind invitation.

Whatever other engagements I may have I shall make it a point to adopt Your Excellency's suggestion to fix January next to come over to New Delhi and desire to assure Your Excellency that the high esteem in which I hold you makes me look forward with great keenness to the day when I may have the pleasure of paying a visit to Your Excellency.

With cordial expressions of every good wish and of much consideration which I entertain for Your Excellency.

I remain,

Your Excellency's sincere friend,

Sd. Juddha Shumshere.

Maharaja.

Prime-Minister and Supreme Commander-in-Chief,
Nepal.

Preparations for the journey began to be made and consultation with the astrologers. An auspicious hour was chosen. The Maharaja left the Jawalakhel palace at 12.15 on the 16th January, 1935 and next day reached Amlekhganj in the afternoon. On January 21st he started from Amlekhganj by the N.G.R. and reached Raxaul, the boundary between India and Nepal territory at 3.45 and after staying there for three quarters of an hour boarded at 4.30 the B.N.W. special train. Excluding the ladies, the Maharaja's party consisted of 143 persons together with 110 attendants. Among the leading officials and noblemen in the Maharaja's suite were the senior commanding General Sir Mohan Shumshere, General Kaiser Shumshere, Singh Shumshere, Surya Shumshere, Narayan Shumshere, Bada Kaji Marichi Man, Kaji Ratna Man, Rajguru Pandit Hem Raj and several others. At Raxaul the Maharaja was received by the Deputy Commissioner of Champaran district, the Superintendent of Police, the Assistant Traffic Manager, B.N.W. Railway and every precaution was taken by the Government for the Maharaja's safety and protection. Telegraphic messages were received from the Viceroy through the Deputy Commissioner of the Champaran district welcoming the Maharaja's entry into the Indian territory. The party proceeded to Jaunpur where suitable arrangements were made for their reception. The station was well decorated and the Highest officers of the district were present on the platform to receive them. The Maharaja stayed in the Dak Bungalow for about 12 hours and the party did a little sight seeing. They visited the monuments of the Sharqi Kings like the Atala Masjid, the bridge on the Gumti and the royal palace. The citizens of Jaunpur rejoiced heartily to see the Maharaja in their midst and presented him with an address of welcome. The special train, with the national flag flying on the engine, left Jaunpur and reached Agra Cantt on January 23rd. There also, the usual arrangements were made. The station was well decorated with buntings and festoons. The collector of the district came with certain other officers to welcome the Maharaja and a large number of European ladies and gentlemen were present to have a glimpse of him. Some of the members of the party went to see the Taj while the Maharaja stayed in the Dak Bungalow, taking his rest. Leaving Agra at 1 P.M. the special train reached

Ballabgarh, a wayside station 22 miles from Delhi, where he was to witness the Eastern Command manoeuvres as the guest of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. A big white saloon and red carpets at a small station naturally attracted the attention of the villagers and a large number of them collected outside to have a look at the distinguished guests. Punctually at 3.30 P.M. the pilot engine reached Ballabgarh and soon afterwards the Commander-in-Chief accompanied by Major Stable and Captain Maxwell reached the platform and joined the Consul-General of Nepal, who was also present there. In a short time the Maharaja's special, consisting of six carriages and a saloon, steamed in punctually at 4 P.M. The first to get off the train were the Maharaja's bodyguard, 25 strong men, armed with rifles and bayonets who lined upon the platform. The Maharaja was in full military uniform and as soon as he alighted, the Commander-in-Chief greeted him and took him to his car. He was driven to the camp specially arranged for him and lined by units of Gurkha regiment stationed at Ballabgarh for the manoeuvres. Outside the reception tent the 16th Punjabi presented the Guard of Honour.

On January 24th at 10 A.M. the Commander-in-Chief and his A.D.C. and the military secretary came in *khaki* to take the Maharaja to see the manoeuvres of the Eastern Command. A Guard of Honour was presented by the Rifle Regiment.

In the midst of persistent rain the manoeuvres of the Eastern Command began and by nightfall the invading troops has made sufficient progress to offer a serious threat to Gurgaon, the key point of the operations. The essential facts of the situation are these. Naupalgarh's army based on Nuh, Palwal and Ballabgarh was trying to capture Westland's arsenal at Gurgaon from a force that was small but very active. The troops of both countries were trying to engage each other and Westland came to know of the violation of his frontier when Naupalgarh's army aircraft landed in Gurgaon. The advance on Gurgaon was made and a concentrated attack, followed. Naupalgarh was satisfied with the progress of her movements which now seriously threatened the fall of Gurgaon from the East and South to the great joy of the inhabitants who were happy at the prospect of being reunited with their kinsmen. This fight raged bitterly and the troops

on both sides displayed a mastery over military tactics and strategy. The Maharaja attended these manoeuvres as the guest of the Commander-in-Chief and was much impressed by the bravery of the troops.

The rain had ceased and it was a bright, warm and sunny day when the Maharaja left the Eastern Command Manoeuvres at Ballabharh by special train for New Delhi, where he was to receive further honours as an old ally of the British Empire. The station was well decorated with flags and ensigns and no pains were spared by the railway staff to make the scene picturesque and beautiful. High officers, civil and military of the Government of India, among whom were Colonel A.H.H. Muir, the Military Secretary to the Viceroy, Mr. H.A.F. Metcalfe, Foreign Secretary, Sir Clendon Daukes, the British Minister in Nepal, Lieutenant General Sir Walter Leslie, the Adjutant General, the Nepalese Consul-General, the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi and several others, all in uniform or morning dress waited on the red carpeted platform to receive the Maharaja and behind them was a crowd of camera men and spectators, both Indian and European. A Guard of Honour mounted by the first battalion the king's Shropshire Light Infantry bore the king's colour and headed by the battalion band marched swiftly and took a position to the right of the place where the Maharaja was going to alight from the train. As the special train, decorated with Nepalese flags, carrying the officers of the Nepalese army in smart green Uniforms, surmounted by yellow plumes steamed into the station at 11.15 A.M., the spectators were delighted. The Maharaja got down from the train and was preceded by an officer of his household. A salute of 19 guns was fired and the band played the National Anthem of Nepal, a stately but simple air, which made a profound impression on all. The Maharaja, in the military uniform of the Nepalese army with a peaked cap, was then introduced to the officers present and he greeted them all with a smile on his face which betokened his gentle and benignant nature. He then inspected the Guard, spoke a few words to the officer commanding and acknowledged warmly the greetings of his Nepal subjects. Thereafter he drove into a Viceregal carriage drawn by four horses with scarlet-clad postilions, to the Nizam's palace escorted by N.C.O's and sowars of the eight Light Cavalry

and followed by officers on the platform and the personal staff. As the procession wended its way through Connaught Place, Queensway and Kingsway and the War Memorial Arch, a huge number of spectators gathered to have a glimpse of the ruler of Nepal and shouted 'Nepal Maharaja Ki Jai'. At the gate of the Nizam's palace a little incident occurred which, though not a part of the official programme, is illustrative of the esteem in which the Maharaja is held by his subjects. A party of the Nepalese, many of whom were soldiers in mufti, from a Gurkha regiment, vociferously greeted the Maharaja and showered rose petals on him. He was delighted to receive such a joyous welcome from his countrymen and was much impressed by their overwhelming loyalty and devotion.

When the carriage reached the canopy in the courtyard of the Nizam's palace, the 16th Punjabi Regiment provided the Guard of Honour and the band of 8th Punjab Regiment played the Nepalese National Anthem. This was followed by more presentation of arms by Nepalese troops in the scarlet jackets, blue trousers and picturesque helmets, decorated with silver cord circles. His Highness was accompanied in the carriage by the Foreign Secretary and the British Minister.

At the gate of the Nizam's palace thousands of Hindus had gathered to accord the Maharaja an enthusiastic welcome. A deputation of the Hindu Mahasabha led by the venerable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya waited upon the Maharaja. The members of the deputation, about thirty in number, came in a procession of cars and were seated in the Reception Hall. Among them were noticed Pandit Din Dayal, Bhai Parmanand, Mr. S.M. Aney, M.L.A., Raja Sir Basu Deva of Kollengode, M.L.A., Lala Faquir Chand, M.L.A., Pandit Dharmavir Vidyalkar, Seth Mathura Das Vasanji, M.L.A., Lala Sri Ram Bar-at-Law and several prominent workers of the Hindu Mahasabha. After introduction they garlanded the Maharaja who received them most cordially and shook hands with each one of them. Pandit Malaviyaji then read the Sabha's address which eulogised the administration of Nepal which was carried on in accordance with the ancient Hindu Code. He referred to the establishment of Nepal's independent Legation in London, dwelt on the peace and contentment that prevailed in the kingdom and commended in eloquent terms

the Maharaja's keen interest in the industrial and commercial development of his country. The address went on to say :—

“The chief object of the Hindu Mahasabha is to bind the Hindus of the whole world in the thread of fraternal regard and sympathy. It is, therefore, its duty to welcome Your Highness most heartily and affectionately on behalf of Hindu India. We, Indians, are proud of the religious and philosophical greatness of our ancestors. In spirituality India has always been the acknowledged teacher of the world. We are proud of the fact that in your Highness's dominions, Government is carried on according to the principles of Hindu religion and politics. The inhabitants and officials of your country are industrious, proud of their religion and possess the qualities of bravery which are befitting in Kshatriyas. Among Your Highness's Hindu subjects are seen those great virtues which are a source of pride and honour to the descendants of Aryan race. The whole world has acclaimed the bravery and the knowledge of the technique of war which they have shown on the field of battle. It is your independent and progressive State which makes the Hindus raise their head high with pride even today. You are a protector of Hindu religion and Aryan culture. If there is any place in the world where our ancient culture still survives intact, it is your religiously minded country. It is natural, therefore, that the Hindus should entertain feelings of affection and kinship towards Your Highness's Government and the brave Gurkha nation.”

The Maharaja thanked the deputationists and expressed his gratification at their love for his motherland and remarked that their duty was to remain firm in their religion.

After the departure of the Hindu Mahasabha deputation, the Maharaja took a little rest and then putting on his Khaki uniform started in his car with his staff to see the manoeuvres at 3.30 P.M. By chance, he met Lord and Lady Willingdon and the following conversation ensued :—

Viceroy : Maharaja, I hope you are quite well. Were you quite comfortable during the journey ?

Maharaja : I have been quite comfortable through your kindness. I have come here to see the manoeuvres. My object in coming to Delhi was to meet you and I am glad

that by chance we have met. I am really very happy to see you.

Viceroy : I am equally happy. I have come to see the manoeuvres. But today there is no chance of battle. This is what the General said and so I am returning.

Lady Willingdon : Maharaja, when you come to meet the Viceroy tomorrow, they will not allow me to be present, but I will see through a hole in the screen.

Maharaja : I shall not be able to meet you tomorrow but luckily we have met today. It is very kind of you to say that you will see through the curtain.

At Delhi the Maharaja had a busy time. His programme was crowded with engagements which followed one another in rapid succession. On the 26th January he drove from the Nizam's palace in State up Kingsway and past the imperial secretariat amidst scenes of brilliance and splendour that would have roused the fancy of a painter. The rich, sun-lit green of the open spaces near Kingsway and the delicate tints of the secretariat building together with the nicely arranged trees with foliage carefully trimmed, brightened the splendour of the scene and made it one that would linger long in man's memory. In front of the procession rode on their horses two brawny policemen and behind them came two troopers of the 19th K.G.O. Lancers followed by four who held out their lances as if to clear the way. In the carriage were seated along with the Maharaja, His Majesty's Minister at the court of Nepal, the Military Secretary to the Viceroy, the Under-Secretary of the Political Department and one of the Viceroy's A.D.C.'s who had proceeded to the Nizam's palace to escort His Highness. Behind the carriage were the members of the Maharaja's house-hold wearing resplendent uniforms, surmounted by plumed head-dresses which attracted much attention. The entire route was lined with spectators who assembled in large numbers to see the procession while thousands of heads rose high up from the spaces near the Secretariat buildings to have a glimpse of the Maharaja. Deafening cries of Jai rent the air as the Maharaja passed, acknowledging with becoming courtesy the goodwill shown by the

populace. Great preparations had been made at the Viceroy's house to receive the distinguished guest. A Guard of Honour was presented by the 16th Punjab Regiment and a band played the Nepalese Anthem as the Maharaja alighted from his carriage. He was received by the Foreign Secretary on behalf of the Viceroy and then a procession was formed headed by the Maharaja and consisting of the Foreign Secretary and other British officials and members of the Nepalese deputation.

When they reached the door of the Reception Room, the Viceroy rose up and advanced five or seven steps to receive the Maharaja and offered him a seat on his right. The Maharaja looked splendid in his headdress of gold, studded with emeralds, wearing a scarlet jacket covered with the insignia of orders and precious diamonds. All the officers of the Maharaja's suite who were present were introduced to the Viceroy and a conversation ensued. The Maharaja paid a tribute to the Countess of Willingdon and said :—

“She is very active in all good things. This is known beyond the frontiers of India. Every body is astonished at her sharp wit, hard work and amiable disposition.” The Viceroy who was visibly pleased added, “I have got in her a wonderful wife. She helps me in all things.”

After the interview *attar* and *pan* were offered by the Viceroy to the Maharaja and all the time a band played outside. A Guard of Honour with band and colour was drawn up in front of the Viceregal lodge and was inspected by the Maharaja. A salute of 19 guns was fired from the Delhi Fort in honour of the visit. Every body's impression was that the Maharaja was received with befitting marks of distinction.

The same day at 12 P.M. His Excellency the Viceroy paid a return visit to the Maharaja at the Nizam's palace. He drove in a carriage drawn by six horses and was escorted by three of the principal members of the Maharaja's suite. Along with the Viceroy were the Foreign Secretary, Private Military Secretary to the Viceroy, the Under Secretary in the Foreign and Political Department and His Excellency's personal staff. On alighting from his carriage, the Viceroy was received by the Maharaja and His Majesty's envoy extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the court of Nepal and was conducted to the Reception room, where a seat to the right of the Maharaja

was provided for him. A Guard of Honour, with band and Colour, was drawn up at the Maharaja's residence and saluted the Viceroy on his arrival and departure. A salute of 31 guns was fired in honour of the visit. The ceremony was picturesque to a degree and like the *naqibs* of Muslim courts in the middle ages at the time of the Viceroy's taking his seat, two Chobdars shouted in a loud and united voice in their own tongue.

“The image of auspiciousness the Viceroy and the Governor-General of India, may you live long. May auspiciousness always attend the meeting of two great personages who are like the sun and the moon ! May their hearts be cheerful ! May peace and happiness dwell (in their hearts) ! May the current of happiness ceaselessly flow ! May friendship and affection (between them) subsist for ever ! Hail victory ! Hail victory ! Victory to the Viceroy ! Victory to the Maharaja, the very image of piety !”

This is called *Naqib Boli* in the language of the Nepal court. The Viceroy must have been bewildered to hear these words and he is reported to have asked the Maharaja their meaning. General Kaiser Shumshere explained to him the meaning of this ejaculation in English. After a short conversation which turned mainly on mutual welfare and the architecture of the Nizam's palace, and the customary distribution of *attar* and *pan* the Viceroy left for his residence. The *naqibs* again shouted in a loud voice.

“May the departure (of His Excellency) be successful by the grace of God and the auspicious Ganesa ! Hail Victory to the Viceroy and the Governor-General ! Hail victory to the Maharaja, the image of piety !”

After this quaint ceremonial the interview came to an end. The sons of Deva Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana came to pay their respects to the Maharaja and Babu Sahib Modjung read a poem in his praise.

In the evening the Maharaja of Bikaner gave a dinner at 10.30 P.M. at his Delhi palace in honour of their Excellency, the Viceroy and the Countess of Willingdon. Maharaja Juddha Shumshere was also invited to be present. On arriving at the palace, the Maharaja was received by the host who after shaking hands with him and embracing him, conducted him to the Reception Hall where a number of distinguished guests had assembled. The Countess of Willingdon who happened to be

present near the Maharaja' entered into a conversation with Countess of Willingdon...Maharaja, we should like to fly to Nepal by air and meet you and then after having our tea in the Legation we shall return. You should give us this permission.

The Maharaja's wit came to his rescue. His Rajput chivalry forbade discourtesy and, therefore, he evaded the request by showing great solicitude for the countess's physical safety. The Maharaja replied:—

“It can not be said that flying by plane is quite harmless. You will have to traverse mountains and forests. The lives of the King and Queen of England are very valuable. Your life is also valuable. While coming to Nepal if any mishap happens I should not like to bear the burden of regret. I had also wished to fly to Delhi, but my sons and Bhardars (councillors) said, “if it ends happily, it is nothing ; if it ends otherwise, it will finish (*Shubhain kinchit ashubhain Samaptam*) and did not allow me to have this experience. The same saying holds good in your Excellency's case.”

The Countess kept quiet and did not press her request. At the end of the party when the European guests had departed, the Maharaja of Bikaner introduced to the Maharaja of Nepal the ruling princes who were present. Some of them, inclined to be too talkative, monopolised the Maharaja and the distinguished host had courteously to curb their loquacity, so that the other princes may also have an opportunity of speaking a few words to him. There was an exchange of comments upon the glorious deeds of the Sisodias of Mewar and the Rathors of Bikaner. The Maharaja of Bikaner explained his coat of arms to the Maharaja of Nepal and presented to him a copy of his *Vansavali*. The Maharaja returned to the Nizam's palace at 11.30 P.M.

Next day the Maharaja's time was occupied with interviews and deputations. Among those who called on His Highness were the Maharaja of Banaras, the Raja of Mandi, the Maharaja of Bikaner, Sir J.P. Srivastava, Mr. Metcalfe, the Foreign Secretary, Sir P. Daukes, the British Envoy at Nepal court, the Consul-General of Italy, Persia and Afghanistan.

As a devout champion of the Hindu religion the Maharaja received a deputation of the All India Sanatan Dharma Mahasabha, the Punjab Sanatan Dharma Pratinidhi Sabha and

New Delhi Sanatan Dharma Sabha headed by the venerable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the great Sanatanist leader. The members of the deputation besides Pandit Malaviya were Pandit Din Dayal, Mahamahopadhyaya Har Narain Shastri, Goswami Ganesh Dutta, Raja Sir Basu Dev, Lala Sri Ram, Rai Sahib L. Ram Saran Das and several other gentlemen of light and leading. The function began with the recitation of "*Manglacharan*" by Mahamahopadhyaya Har Narain Shastri, Pandit Din Dayal, Vyakhyan Vachaspati garlanded the Maharaja and was followed by other members of the deputation who did the same. The address was read by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji and gave expression to these sentiments.

"The Sanatanists have felt happy at Your Highness's arrival in their country because Nepal, being an independent kingdom, is the noblest centre in the whole world for the protection of eternal Aryan culture. We regard it as a great favour of the Almighty that Nepal is a completely independent State and enjoys the status of equality among the great nations of the world,... We feel happy at the thought that the Aryan culture has always received protection at the hands of the Nepal Government and that the administration is carried on in accordance with the principles of our ancient religion. We feel deeply gratified that the progress of the State which was effected under your predecessor Maharaja Sir Chandra Shumshere is still continuing under Your Highness's sagacious guidance.

"Our law books and the Puranas enjoin upon kings that Dharma is the greatest thing in the world and kings should protect their subjects according to its dictates.

"King Yudhishtira always thought of Dharma and of what would promote the welfare of the subjects. Kind to his people the greatest among the knowers of Dharma, he promoted the well-being of all. It was for this reason that his subjects looked upon him like a father... We, the followers of Sanatan Dharma, are happy to think that in these dreadful days you are exerting yourself to the utmost to follow the ideals of the ancient Raja Dharma. The protection of cows and Brahmans is an important part of our ancient religion and we are pleased that in Nepal the cow is honoured and the Brahman still enjoys exemption from capital punishment. We are pleased to hear that capital punishment has now been

totally abolished. During Your Highness's regime cows are well protected and the result is that every year thousands of cows are sent to Nepal territory from the districts of Bihar for grazing and find shelter there."

The address dwelt upon the great services which the Maharaja had rendered to his people during the earthquake and expressed grateful thanks for the benevolent measures which had been introduced for their benefit.

The Maharaja thanked the deputationists for the warm welcome they had given him. He was gratified to hear that the administrative measures which he had adopted had met with their full approval. He said it was their duty to stand steadfastly by their faith for on that alone depended their happiness.

A deputation of the Gurkha Upakarni Mitra Mandal, and association of the domiciled Gurkhas in Simla and Delhi, led by Mr. S.S.S. Rewat, Vice-President of the Mandal, waited upon His Highness. The address referred to the establishment of the Nepalese Legation in London and the sundry measures which have been devised by the Maharaja for the good of his country.

Another address was presented by the Directors, shareholders and sympathisers of the National Mining and Trading Ltd., Bombay, the first to be granted a long lease of mining in Nepal. It referred in glowing terms to the beneficent measures of the Maharaja's administration and expressed its desire to be of some assistance to His Highness in developing the trade, commerce and industry of Nepal. They presented to His Highness a horse, which they claimed, was of the same breed as the historical 'Chaitak' of Rana Pratap of Mewar.

Signal honour was done by the army of India to His Highness the Maharaja. The principal event of January 28th was the special March past of a large force drawn from all arms of the Army in India. In the morning the Maharaja received the salute of General Sir Norman Macmullan and 7000 other officers and men of the Eastern command. A special parade on such large scale had not been seen in India since the visit of Amir Abdur Rehman of Afghanistan.

The weather was as bad as it could be on account of the rain and the attendance of spectators was meagre. The saluting base was $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Delhi on the Gurgaon Road. Just

before the march began an icy wind brought a heavy down-pour of rain, and though the sky cleared in a short time, the scene remained as sombre as the uniforms of the whole assembly. The Maharaja arrived by car, accompanied by Sir Philip Chetwode, the Commander-in-Chief of India, and was received at a little distance from the Flagstaff by a Guard of Honour from the first Norfolk Regiment. A salute of 19 guns was fired and the band played the Nepalese National Anthem. The Maharaja inspected the Guard of Honour provided by the British Regiment and then he, his staff, and the Commander-in-Chief mounted their chargers to move to the saluting base with an escort of the 8th K.G.O. Light Cavalry. The entire party was in *Khaki* and the Maharaja was wearing a uniform almost identical in every way with that of Sir Philip Chetwode. The March Past lasted just about two hours and during this short period it showed the efficiency and discipline of the army. Troops, numbering in all about 15000, marched past and gave the salute to His Highness. The Maharaja was immensely pleased and after the conclusion of the March past offered his thanks to the Commander-in-Chief for the excellent reception and hospitality shown by the Government of India in a short, little, neat speech.

“The gallant troops that have just marched past have shown on parade and at manoeuvres the discipline and efficiency that I expected to see in those under our command. There are certain things, however, which I have seen for the first time, I mean the modern equipment of the land and air forces of the Government. The army is up-to-date in every sense of the word. I congratulate Your Excellency with all my heart and take pride in the fact that it stands for the British Government with whom Nepal is united in bonds of indissoluble friendship and amity.”

Addressing Sir Norman Macmullan the Maharaja said he was much impressed by the splendid show presented by the troops who took part in the parade. He requested Sir Philip Chetwode to convey to all the officers and the rank and file his hearty thanks. Turning towards Sir Norman the Maharaja said that he was thankful to him for giving him the best entertainment that a soldier could get.

In the afternoon the Maharaja granted interviews to the Raja Sahib of Suket, Maharaja Kumar of Vizianagram, Sir

Frederick O' Conor, the Maharaja and the Maharani of Nahan and Princess Bhuban.

The King-Emperor had recently bestowed upon the Maharaja the rank of Honorary Lieutenant-General in the British army, a great distinction for a soldier. In the evening Field Marshal Sir Philip Chetwode held a reception at his residence to present him with a General's sword. In a short speech the Commander-in-Chief congratulated his distinguished guest for the honour which had been conferred upon him and presented him with a General's sword and that he felt a great pleasure in requesting him to accept to it. The Maharaja buckled on the sword and assured the Commander-in-Chief that he greatly appreciated the honour that had been done and he was particularly happy to receive the sword from such a distinguished officer of the British army who was also a General in the Army of Nepal.

An interesting incident relating to the Maharaja's head-gear, which is a beautiful thing studded with emeralds and diamonds and surmounted by a bird of paradise, deserves to be mentioned in this connection. In the glare of electric light in the ball room of the Commander-in-Chief, the jewels and gems of the headdress round which centres a good deal of history, attracted the attention of the guests, particularly the European ladies, by their dazzling splendour. They began to whisper among themselves and some of them, prompted by an irrepressible curiosity, came near the Maharaja and expressed a desire to see it. Always ready to accommodate those who approach him with a request, the Maharaja granted their wish, and made over his headdress to them so that they might see it to their hearts' content. One of the Maharaja's A.D.C's explained to the inquisitive guests the history of the precious diamonds. The ladies were filled with astonishment at its grandeur and exclaimed with wonder—How beautiful. How valuable! How brilliant! and they seized it with eagerness and snatched it from one another's hands to satisfy their curiosity and to derive pleasure from looking at it. 'The like of it we shall never behold any where in the world', said one. Another wanted to know its value and thus they talked and queried and their curiosity was perhaps whetted by a desire common to their sex of possessing such a precious thing. While this was going on, a lady, wife of some high official,

more sharp-witted than the rest and desirous of enjoying a little fun, came forward and with smiles on her face, said to the Maharaja : “No one in the whole world has worn such a valuable thing, bedecked with gems and diamonds. If Your Highness gives it to me, I shall also be a store-house of precious jewels. Will Your Highness be pleased to do so. The Maharaja’s reply was superb:

“Alright, if you desire to have it, you can take it, I will get another.”

They were astonished at the generosity of their distinguished guest and wondered how readily he offered to give away a thing worth crores. They were delighted and said, “We have said this simply to entertain Your Highness. Such a precious thing is entirely beyond our status and position. Please forgive if there is any impropriety.”

“At this stage when the headgear was still being eagerly seized and examined in another room, the Commander-in-Chief came in and on seeing the Maharaja, wearing another headdress, he was much put out and said in a tone of admonition: “I invited the Maharaja to do him honour. You have honoured him by depriving him of his headdress. You ought not to have done such a thing. What sort of people are you ?” He was much annoyed but still the party, without taking any notice of the Commander-in-Chief’s gentle reproof, continued to snatch the wonderful object from one another’s hands and examined it with the greatest delight for nearly half an hour.

At 11.30 P.M. the party broke up and the European ladies and gentlemen stood on both sides of the staircase to have a look at the headgear as the Maharaja passed but to their great disappointment they found that the precious object of their delight had been closed in a box. The brilliant gathering dispersed ; the Commander-in-Chief bade good-bye to the Maharaja who returned to the Nizam’s palace at 11.45 P.M.

Next day the Maharaja went to the Legislative Assembly to watch the debates and was seated in the Viceroy’s box. He remained there for one hour but on emerging from the Chamber made no comments either on the speeches or on the subject matter of debate. It appears from the agenda that the item under discussion was not very important nor were the most distinguished speakers of the house present at the time. After this the Maharaja went to see the Fort ; he was

received by the Assistant-Director-General of Archaeology who showed him round and explained to him every thing. To signify his appreciation of the service rendered by him, the Maharaja gave him, as a token of his good will, a pin of thick gold. In response to the desire of the members of the Managing Committee of the Gaurishanker temple the Maharaja paid a visit and offered at the shrine a gold mohur and forty rupees. Thousands of Sanatani Hindus gathered on the spot to welcome the Maharaja and they expressed their joy by shouting (Maharaj ki Jai). As an orthodox Hindu the Maharaja does not favour the entry of Harijans into temples of all-India fame at Rameshworam, Puri, Dwarka and Kashi. He discussed this question with the Raja of Killengode and told him clearly that he was in favour of preserving the sanctity of these all-India holy shrines and that he would never visit those places if worship was not conducted according to ancient customs and traditions.

An important function attended by the Maharaja in the evening on the January 29th was his reception at the Viceroy's House. He was received by the military secretary and as he reached the door of the Reception Room, the Viceroy walked a few paces to receive the distinguished guest. The party was attended by about three hundred persons and the guests included the ex-king of Greece and a large number of ruling princes and high officials. The Viceroy and the countess of Willingdon were lavish in their hospitality; they showed the Maharaja every room in their house. So considerate was the Viceroy that he offered to the Maharaja a cigar and lighted a match with his own hand to help him and when the Maharaja went down the stairs he supported him by holding his arm. They talked about the visit and the Maharaja told them that he was extremely pleased with the arrangements that had been made for his reception and that he would carry with him a very happy recollection of them.

A picturesque scene was witnessed at the Nizam's palace in the afternoon on January 30th when a deputation of the Ten Gurkha Regiments in the Indian Army waited upon the Maharaja. It consisted of Lieutenant Colonel J.D. Ogilvy, Lieutenant Colonel G.A.P. Scoones, Lieutenant-Colonel G.O.De, Major C.E. Gray, Lieutenant Colonel N.F. Graeme, Lieutenant-Colonel H.R.C. Lane and several other military

officers. The Reception Hall reproduced a scene of the Arabian Nights. All round were hung up Mughal paintings which recalled to the mind a hundred glories of war and peace and in the middle of the hall were spread costly and beautiful Persian carpets. At the far end was a raised dais covered with red velvet cloth on which exquisite flowers and designs were worked with gold thread. Major General W.L.O Twiss in presenting the deputation said :—

“.....Your Highness’s prompt and energetic measures for the relief of the people of Nepal after the recent earthquake showed the sympathy and understanding which are essential in a leader and for which you have many grateful admirers today. Proud as we all are to have Your Highness as the Honorary Colonel of our regiments, I feel convinced that Your Highness, as an eminent soldier, is proud, indeed, wonderfully proud, to be the Colonel of regiments with such great tradition and magnificent fighting record that they have all earned during the last 120 years in many parts of this world of ours.

“We welcome Your Highness as a brother officer not only as the Maharaja of Nepal, the home of our Gurkhas, of whom we British officers are so proud, but also as a great soldier and as such you are doubly—more than doubly—welcome as our Colonel.”

The Maharaja made an eloquent speech in which he dwelt upon the great qualities of the Gurkhas and the friendly relations that existed between Nepal and the British Government.

“The friendship subsisting between Great Britain and Nepal is of very long duration. More than a century ago the two countries found themselves pitted against each other. Both sides fought with commendable valour and chivalry. And this produced such a deep impression on the respective armies that the foundations of mutual respect and good-will were, if I may say so, laid on the very field of battle and cemented by the blood that flowed from many a brave and noble heart. Since that far-off day the friendly relations between the two Governments have been established on a much firmer basis with every year that has passed. I fervently hope that the ties will be still more closely knit together with the passage of time.

“The affection and admiration of the British Officers for

the little Gurkhas is proverbial. And no less remarkable is the love devotion with which they in turn inspire the Gurkhas. These men prove excellent material for training at the hands of their officers and at their bidding are ever ready to do and in the faithful discharge of their duties. The tie of mutual affection between the officers and men is surely no less indissoluble than the one that binds their respective countries together. The sterling qualities of head and heart innate in both account for that.

“My dear Gurkhali brothers. I am one of you, whether you look upon me as a brother, father or Honorary colonel of your Regiment. Believe me, there is not the least differences in my feelings towards you whether you serve in our own Army in the fatherland or enlist in the Army of greatest Friend and Ally, the British Government in India. You have established a reputation for gallantry second to none. On many a field of battle you have proved true to your salt and fought as cheerfully and fearlessly as if you were fighting for your own hearths and homes. You have, indeed, set up a very high standard of bravery and devotion to duty, which, I firmly hope, will be not only maintained, but raised to a much higher level in the future.

“The part which the Gurkhas play in the maintenance of law and order in times of peace is also well-known. To uphold the cause of peace is perhaps even more honourable than gallantry in battle. Because, without a sense of peace and security no progress is possible. We are now enjoying the blessings of peace. But there is no knowing what the future has in store for us. Sinister clouds do at times flit across the horizon. And should they at any time materialize into the dark clouds of war, I am fully confident that, wherever it may be, you will display the same old grit and add further glory to the name of the Gurkhas and the land that gave you birth, while we at home if approached by the British Government for help in emergency will not be slow in coming forward for the defence of India as we have done in the past.”

Then His Highness proceeded to invest colonel H.R.C. Duncan of the fifth Royal Gurkha Rifles with the insignia of the order of the Star of Nepal for rendering valuable services to the country when he was deputed by the British Govern-

ment as Liaison Officer with the mission from Nepal to London. The members of the deputation were then introduced to the Maharaja who gave each one of them an autographed photograph of himself and to the British officers he gave a photograph and a *Khukri* with the handle mounted in silver. Further, each of the ten regiments received, besides individual gifts, a shield and an oil painting of the Maharaja which they appreciated very much.

There was yet another great honour that was in store for the Maharaja of Nepal. One of the biggest reviews witnessed for years was held in the Delhi Cantonment and it was magnificent alike in preparation and execution. Some 15,000 troops assembled in Camp and marched past the Commander-in-Chief who took their salute in place of the Viceroy who was unable to be present owing to indisposition. The telephony was employed for the purpose. The result was quite satisfactory and one visitor remarked that he had experienced only one hold up from the beginning of his journey to the end of it, when he parked his car at the place pointed out to him by the officer on duty. Accommodation was provided only for 6,000 spectators but huge numbers crowded the embankment behind them and thousands gathered on their flanks. There was a great excitement and as the regiments moved forward with their flashing lances, glittering arms and ensigns of variegated hues, the enthusiasm of the crowds rose to its highest pitch. Lady Willingdon came to the function accompanied by the ex-King of Greece and took her seat on a gold throne in a raised stand behind the Flag Staff, with the king of Greece on her right and the Maharaja of Nepal on the left. The Maharaja was in his military uniform and as a soldier he was thrilled by the spectacle. The Commander-in-Chief officiated for the Viceroy and inspected the troops as they marched past, regiment after regiment, corps after corps, in a state of high efficiency and perfect discipline. The fly past of the Royal Air Force created much interest and thousands of heads were raised towards the sky to watch its progress. The 2nd Light Tank Corps, with its men and tanks was seen for the first time in a ceremonial parade and roused much interest. More than anything else it gave the spectators an idea of the mechanised army of today than any part of the procession which undoubtedly represented a great deal of military

strength, order, efficiency and discipline. The Review lasted two hours.

The last function in connection with the Eastern Command manoeuvres was a massed band display in aid of military charities which was held on the 1st February at the Irwin Amphitheatre. The huge auditorium was full of spectators and among the distinguished personages were seen the Viceroy, Lady Willingdon, the Prime Minister of Nepal, the Commander-in-Chief, a number of ruling princes and all civil and military officers of the station.

In the evening the Maharaja attended an important non-official function. It was a garden party organised by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and his friends at the Talkatora Gardens, New Delhi. It was attended by several prominent congressmen also among whom were Babu Rajendra Prasad, an Ex-President of the Congress, Dr. Ansari and Dr. Bulabhai Desai, Sumptuous refreshments were provided and the arrangements left nothing to be desired. Sweets and fruits of the highest quality were supplied in abundance. The Maharaja was garlanded and photographed and the air resounded with the cries of "Maharaja Nepal Ki Jai."

It has seldom fallen to the lot of a ruling prince to receive such honour at the hands of men who are prominent political workers in British India. Maharaja Juddha Shumshere made a departure from the policy of his predecessors who had avoided politicians because they were in opposition to the British Government. He received Pandit Malaviyaji cordially and manifested much affection and fraternal regard for those who greeted him and came in contact with him. The Maharaja's stupendous relief operations during the earthquake, his benevolent measures of social and administrative reform and his efforts to advance the status of Nepal as an independent State made a profound impression on the Indian people. Besides, they were much pleased at his generosity, frankness and sincerity, and were moved to admiration when they heard the stories of his kindness, bravery and devotion to Kshatriya Dharma. They felt convinced of the fact that as a Hindu prince the Maharaja regarded them as his brothers and cherished a genuine affection for them. It was for this reason that they extended to him a most cordial welcome wherever he went and gathered in thousands to pay him homage. Some of

the most prominent men in India's public life met together to do honour to the Maharaja and this in itself is a great tribute to his qualities as a man and a ruler.

The Maharaja's programme in Delhi was now practically over. He went to pay a visit to the Commander-in-Chief who was leaving for Bikaner the next day. Among the visitors who called on His Highness on February 1st were Colonel Sir Clendon Daukes, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, General Twiss and some other distinguished persons. As the time of His Highness's departure from Delhi was drawing near, he arranged presents for the Viceroy, Lady Willingdon, the officers of the Government of India and other distinguished non-officials who had met and honoured him. The presents to the Viceroy included : (a) Photograph of the Maharaja in a silver frame, a dagger, a khukri with a jewelled hilt, and (b) those of the Countess of Willingdon consisted of a photograph in a silver frame, an ivory temple of Buddha, a Chinese table cloth, a jewellery box which served also as a musical instrument, a flower vase made of the leg of Rhinoceros, a pair of lions of brass, a necklace of musk bedecked with diamonds, and a carved tusk.

The Commander-in-Chief and lady Chetwode also received presents from the Maharaja.

On February 2nd which was announced as the day of his departure the Maharaja went to the Viceroy's house to pay a private visit and in compliance with Lady Willingdon's wishes took along with him two of his younger sons. He received a warm welcome from the Viceroy and Lady Willingdon and complimented the latter as an ideal lady whom it was impossible to forget. At 2.25 P.M. the Maharaja left the Nizam's palace for the Queen's Road Railway station, accompanied by the Nepalese Minister, the Adjutant General in India, the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, the military Secretary to the Viceroy, the Under Secretary to the Government of India in the foreign and political department, the A.M.S. to the Commander-in-Chief and the A.D.C. to His Excellency the Viceroy. The Deputy Superintendent of Police made the necessary arrangements along the route and at the railway station. The Deputy Commissioner and the Senior Superintendent of Police were present at the station to bid farewell to

His Highness on behalf of the Chief Commissioner of Delhi, Lieutenant Colonel Daman Shumshere and some other Nepalese officers were also present with him. A Guard of Honour was provided by the military authorities; it played the whole of the Maharaja's salute. His Highness was introduced to the captain of the Guard of Honour by the Adjutant-General in India and the Maharaja then inspected the Guard of Honour preceded and followed by four of his staff officers. Thereafter the Maharaja proceeded for a moment to acknowledge the courtesy of the Nepalese and Indians who had come to the station to bid him farewell. Among these was Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to whom the Maharaja presented as token of his regard (a) a tiger skin, (b) two pods of musk, (c) a photograph in a Rhino skin frame. There were many leading non-officials including some prominent congressmen, bankers, merchants and land-lords on the platform to say good-bye to the Maharaja. He was profusely garlanded and the manifestation of public esteem was so great that the Maharaja was deeply moved, and it was a few minutes after the scheduled time that he proceeded towards his saloon and entrained for Dwarka. There was a crowd of pressmen, cameramen and cinema agents on the platform who were busy in taking notes snaps and soon after the Maharaja's departure blazoned forth to the world the last scenes of his historic visit to the capital of the Indian Empire.

On his return to Nepal an address was presented to the Maharaja by the Commander-in-Chief which contained the following words of appreciation :—

“Your Highness's visit to Delhi is a landmark in Nepalese history. The British people with their innate sense of courtesy have shown a nice appreciation of Your Highness's great abilities. With a keen eye to merit they have duly recognised your statesmanship by according to you a most magnificent reception and loaded you with full military honours. What is more significant is the unanimous welcome which your Highness received from all political parties and sections of the Indian Community and associations like the Hindu Maha Sabha, and the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, etc ; All this adds infinitely to the credit of our dear motherland, and we justly take pride in the fact that your Highness, by dint of your genius and statesmanship, has exalted the glory and honour of the entire nation. From the

comments that have appeared in the Indian Press, it is manifest that Your Highness's magnanimity, piety and nobility have impressed besides the government, every section of the Indian population and won the respect and admiration of all. We consider ourselves singularly fortunate to have the honour to convey to Your Highness our sincerest thanks for the enhancement of the glory and prestige of the country in the domain of external politics in an astonishingly brief space of time."

Equally grand was the reception accorded to the Maharaja when he visited Calcutta in December 1939. When Lord Linlithgow returned after his shooting expedition in the Terai, he expressed a desire that the Maharaja should pay him a return visit and give him an opportunity of receiving him in Calcutta during the Christmas week next year. On October 23rd, 1939 the Viceroy sent a formal invitation to His Highness:

My esteemed friend,

Ever since my return from the Nepalese Terai in December last, I have been entertaining the hope that I might before long have an opportunity of renewing Your Highness's personal acquaintance. I am glad to find that a suitable occasion for the realisation of this desire has now presented itself, and it gives me much pleasure to invite Your Highness to Calcutta, as a guest of my Government on my coming visit there next Christmas. Subject to the exigencies of the situation, I myself expect to arrive in Calcutta about the middle of December and to leave Calcutta at the beginning of January. If December 24th to January 1st would otherwise be convenient dates for Your Highness, they would perhaps be suitable for Your Highness's visit.

I remain,
With Much consideration,
Your Highness's sincere friend,
Sd/-Linlithgow

New Delhi,
The 23rd October, 1939.

The Maharaja thankfully accepted the invitation and wrote :—

".....Colonel G.L. Bentham, His Brittanic Majesty

Minister at this court has also conveyed to me Your Excellency's message and wish. Believe me, I eagerly look forward to the day when I may have an opportunity of renewing Your Excellency's personal acquaintance which began under such happy circumstances. I am advancing in age and it may be that the exigencies of the situation may not present a like favourable opportunity again before Your Excellency leaves India."

Accordingly the Maharaja left Kathmandu on December 21st and on reaching Raxaul when he crossed the border, he received a message from the Viceroy.

"I tender to Your Highness a very hearty welcome to India, and trust that on your return to Nepal, you will carry back the happiest recollections of your visit. I am looking forward with keen pleasure to renewing Your Highness's acquaintance." The Commander-in-Chief and the Foreign Secretary also sent messages of welcome which were duly acknowledged by the Maharaja.

On Friday the 22nd December the Maharaja's special train reached Howrah at 3.24 P.M. It was a pleasant journey and *enroute* the Maharaja received an ovation wherever he got down from the officials as well as the public. At the station he was received by the Foreign Secretary, the Military Secretary, the aid-de-camps and a number of prominent citizens including Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee who represented the Hindu Mahasabha. The Maharaja was pleased to meet Dr. Mukerjee and in the course of conversation remarked, "I am very pleased with the welcome extended to me. I am your neighbour. I am one of you." The Nepalese residents of Calcutta also came to the station to welcome His Highness. A Guard of Honour with band and Colour was drawn up at the railway station and saluted His Highness on arrival, the band playing the Maharaja's salute. After inspecting the Guard of Honour, the Maharaja proceeded to the state carriage that was waiting for him. Along with him were seated the Foreign Secretary, the Military Secretary, to H.E. the Viceroy and one member of his own staff. His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the court of Nepal, the General Officer Commanding, Presidency and Assam district, the Under Secretary in the External Affairs Department, the Aid-de-camps to His Excellency the Viceroy and His Excel-

lency the Governor of Bengal and seven members of His Highness's staff followed in three cars which formed part of the procession. A salute of 19 guns was fired from Fort William and a Guard of Honour was drawn up at the Maharaja's residence in the Park Street and saluted him on alighting from his carriage.

The first important function which the Maharaja attended was the investiture Durbar held by the Viceroy at the Government House to invest His Highness with the order of G.C.B. (The Grand Cross of the most honourable order of the Bath) in the name of His Majesty the King of England. The Maharaja in accepting the honour thanked His Excellency the Viceroy and said :—

“The bestowal of the military distinction of this exclusive order makes a special appeal to a soldier's heart. Indeed I feel that in honouring me, His Most Gracious Majesty is honouring my whole country. It will, I know, be greatly appreciated and welcomed in Nepal as one more link in the chain of mutual friendship and esteem which binds our two countries together.”

It was a grand function and the Maharaja received a most cordial welcome from His Excellency the Viceroy. He expressed his thanks for the title that had been conferred upon him and fully reciprocated the Viceroy's kindness. A party was given by the latter in honour of the Maharaja's visit, which was largely attended and a film was shown depicting the scenes of the Viceregal shooting in the Tarai.

There were several functions which the Maharaja attended during his stay in Calcutta. He inspected an R.A.F. unit and witnessed a formation flight, a converging dive-bombing attack and a high speed fly past. Several distinguished military officers were introduced to His Highness and he shook hands with them and talked about military affairs. He watched also with keen interest a demonstration of bomb-loading and climbed on to the wing of a machine to see the cockpit and gun turret. A machine gun was also inspected. The bombers made dummy attack and the Maharaja was much pleased with the smartness and efficiency of the unit. After this the Maharaja paid a visit to a Government Ordnance Factory, accompanied by Commanding General Bahadur Shumshere, Lieutenant-

Colonel Betham, the British Minister in Nepal, Captain A.C. Manse and several other officials.

The visit of the Maharaja to Calcutta was marked not only by official honours but also by the cordiality and spontaneous good-will with which the Indian people welcomed him as representing the only independent Hindu kingdom in the world. The very thought stirred their hearts and made them feel proud of Nepal which was subject to none and took order from no external authority. All citizens, irrespective of caste, creed, age or sex or political considerations, raised their hands to salute the Maharaja whose magnificent personality made profound impression upon those who beheld him. His presence made a powerful appeal to national self-respect and his high prestige was regarded as a living triumph of Hinduism. The members of Hindu Mahasabha presented him with an address of welcome.

“Descended as Your Highness is from the famous Maharanas of Chitor of hallowed memory, enshrined in the annals of our country as the strongest champion of Hinduism, we look up to Your Highness—the only Independent Hindu Ruler in the World—as the Defender of our Faith in these critical times. We respectfully bow our heads to Your Highness”.

“As an enlightened ruler, Your Highness has by your able administration changed the very outlook of your beloved country—Nepal, which has undoubtedly made an all round progress in the tenure of Your Highness’ Prime-Ministership and has added lustre to Your Highness’ country; as a noble Kshatriya General Your Highness has, by espousing the cause of justice enriched Rajput chivalry; and as a true Hindu you stand before us as the most accredited cultural representative of our ancient Dharma.

“It is naturally our heartfelt wish, that Your Highness will introduce the most modern plans of organisation and mechanisation in the industrial and military systems of your great country, so that the Hindus may feel proud to claim Nepal as a Modern State yielding its resources and strategic power, to no other State in the world”.

“Hindustan and Nepal had a glorious religious and cultural fellowship in the past and we fervently hope that Your

Highness will not only preserve and maintain this bond but find opportunities to foster it for the good of Hinduism and the world”.

“Your Highness, the Hindus of India have always striven to bring about harmony amongst its various peoples. Whilst strictly adhering to the highest ideals of Pan-Indian Nationalism this Mahasabha is seeking to bring about Hindu solidarity and Hindu well-being; and in our endeavours to preserve Hindu culture, we hope to receive Your Highness’s approbation and sympathy.

The Maharaja replied briefly in Hindi and said that it was his desire to see Bharatversha well-united and strong, without conflict among its various castes and creeds.

The Municipal Corporation of Calcutta headed by its Mayor also did honour to the Maharaja. The alderman and councillors said in their address;

“We are conscious of Your Highness’ illustrious ancestry in Your Highness’s veins courses in rich pulsation, the rarest Rajput blood. The exploits of Rajput arms and the epics of Rajput chivalry have seldom been equalled and surpassed.

“We recall that within the kingdom of Nepal amongst the eternal snows lie the sources of might rivers whose precious streams have been through the ages for our native land the stream of life.

“Thus while we welcome Your Highness to our great city, our thoughts travel to the far-off hills and valleys which constitute the dominion which has for ages been to the outside world a land of dreams. Free Nepal is the home of hospitality and our countrymen who visit its soil return home with vivid tales of the lavishness of her entertainment. We Aldermen and councillors, placed as we are, cannot offer our guest the pomp and grandeur of independent Nepal but we are certain that Your Highness knows us too well to assess by mere externals the sincere regard which we feel towards Your Highness and Your people.”

A number of prominent Indians called on the Maharaja and among them was the world-renowned poet Rabindra Nath Tagore, rightly called the Poet-Laureate of Asia. His interview with the Maharaja is one of the most interesting episodes in his Calcutta visit. It illustrates his appreciation of genius, his munificence and his readiness to help the cause of education and learning. It also reveals his deep humanity and his gene-

rous recognition of services rendered. The poet was cordially received by the Maharaja. With folded hands he said:-

“Maharaja, My grand daughter’s marriage is going shortly to take place at Bolpur. I wished to pay respects to Your Highness during your stay here. I have availed myself of the opportunity any how.

Maharaja—Yes, I have received your invitation. I hope you will excuse my inability to attend the function. I have sent Rs. 1,000/- Please purchase suitable presents for your grand-daughter.

The Poet—It is Your Highness’s great kindness.

Maharaja—When two little sons of mine were sent to Bolpur for education, you treated them as your own children. I have not forgotten this kindness. They could not stand the hard life and the inclement weather of that place. I should like to give a donation to your Viswa Bharati.

With these words the Maharaja handed over to the poet a bundle of currency notes which perhaps amounted to 20 or 25 thousand rupees. The poet thankfully accepted the gift and departed. He had not asked for a donation but the Maharaja knows how to make use of an opportunity. This is only one of the many instances of his rare and spontaneous generosity.

The Maharaja paid an informal visit to Delhi in September 1943. His purpose was to meet the Earl of Linlithgow before his retirement from the viceroyalty. The viceroy acknowledged the great help which Nepal had rendered to the allied cause and spoke of the Maharaja’s unpiling optimism in regard to the outcome of the war. The Maharaja explained to the viceroy what his country expected of the British Government after the victory had been won and the Fascist and Nazi tyranny had been ended in Europe. He told him that he desired no titles or honours for himself but he would like to see his country’s position improved after the war. The people of Nepal whose kinsmen had shed their blood for the allied cause and fought shoulder to shoulder with the bravest soldiers of the world rejoice if their country were given something more tangible. What that would be the Maharaja left to the British Government to decide but the hint was plain enough and it may be hoped that some more generous way of rewarding Nepal’s help during the war would be found by British statesman.

These visits of the Maharaja mark an epoch in the

history of Anglo-Nepalese relations. They cemented the age-long friendship between the two powers and brought great honour and prestige to the Maharaja. Few monarchs have received such honours at the hands of the Government of India. A perusal of what has been said before will show how loyally and devotedly the officials of all ranks and nationalities joined in paying respect to His Highness. They observed with punctilious care the regulations regarding his visit and spared no pains to make his sojourn in India comfortable. Contact with high British officials enriched the Maharaja's political experience and the reviews, manoeuvres and parades which he witnessed convinced him of the need for modern equipment and added much to his knowledge of military affairs. The official receptions and parties held in his honour enabled him to establish personal touch with those on whose actions depends to a large extent the harmony between his Government and Britain. He was able to study their minds and to fathom the depths where originate the motives and purposes which govern the policy of states and which are beyond the ken of the uninitiated. The official world accorded to him a right royal welcome and wherever he went, he received unprecedented honours. The Nepalese national Anthem and the Nepalese National Flag were honoured at every function attended by the Maharaja and dull indeed would he be of soul, whose heart did not rise in admiration for the Maharaja who had secured for himself and his country, by his lofty patriotism and administrative achievements such distinction at the hands of men alien in race and religion. Maharaja Juddha Shumshere, although a great soldier and administrator; was deeply human. He felt for his people and his religion as few men do and recognized the latter as enduring bond to keep together human society for high moral purposes. In India he endeared himself to her people, and some of the most enlightened and patriotic men, high in the country's public life, who do not fawn on princes or flatter persons in authority, came forward, of their own free will, to do him honour. They extolled his ideals and bore eloquent testimony to his great services in the cause of religion and humanity. The Hindus of India rejoiced to see him honoured by the Government of their country as a prince of equal status and felt proud of the position to which he had attained among the nations of the world. A sense of social

and religious homogeneity, of cultural affinity and of common spiritual outlook drew crowds of Hindus around the Maharaja and strengthened their faith in the great power of their religion. They felt a glow of pride pass over their faces as they beheld a Hindu ruler who exercised untrammelled authority in his country and acted upon the principles which the seers of their race laid down when the rest of humanity was immersed in barbarism. To the reflecting Hindus the Maharaja was a symbol of that independence to which India's most patriotic men aspire to-day. They regarded him as a *Dharmatma* king who made them feel that Hinduism is a vitalising force and not an opiate which tends to benumb the spirits of its followers.

The Maharaja fully reciprocated these sentiments and treated his co-religionists as if they were his bretheren, bone of the same bone, and flesh of the same flesh. He met all kinds of people and setting aside all reserve and pride of position accepted their invitations and extended to them his good will in return. Temples and shrines also claimed a share of his attention and received financial assistance from him. No Maharaja of Nepal had before him condescended to mix with the people. Maharaja Juddha came in direct contact with the wider world which is pulsating with a new life. He could study for himself the currents and cross-currents of public opinion which no statesman can ignore. During his stay in Delhi and Calcutta he not only strengthened his friendship with the British but also forged fresh links which have drawn India and Nepal in to a closer union for purposes of mutual welfare and happiness.

Reforms in the Civil Administration

*Who makes by force his merit known,
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne.*

— *Tennyson*

Nepal is the only country in the world where we can obtain a glimpse of the ancient ideals of Hindu polity still at work. The organisation of government is typically Hindu and in actual practice the administration is carried on according to the principles laid down by our ancient law-givers. The ruler and the people are alike proud of the heritage of their race, and still try not only to maintain but also to enhance the glory of their faith. There is more of orthodox Hinduism here than anywhere else, and the Brahman and the cow are universally respected. Even the laws of the country assign to them a position of sanctity and afford them special protection against molestation or persecution. Though a small kingdom in the lap of the Himalayas, Nepal has successfully maintained her independence throughout the ages, and her people have vindicated their position as one of the most active and warlike races of the world. If one wishes to know how a Hindu monarch rules over his people, identifying himself with their interests, sharing with them their joys and sorrows, he must go to Nepal and see with his own eyes the beneficent activities of the administration. Verily as an administrator

Maharaja Juddha Shumshere has surpassed many of his contemporaries, and indeed, in certain respects, he is unique among the rulers of Asia.

The form of Government which obtained in Nepal at that time was a benevolent autocracy. The king popularly known as the Maharajadhiraj was the dignified head of the State. He was looked upon as a semi--divine being and commanded the respectful devotion and homage of his subjects. He presided over state functions on ceremonial occasions and performed the duties pertaining to his exalted office with great pomp and magnificence. His red seal (*Lal Mohar*) was fixed on all public documents, and he was consulted on all important matters of the State. He confirmed the appointment of the Prime-Minister and enjoyed a salute of 31 guns at the time of public functions. Next to the king was the Maharaja who was the Prime-Minister of Nepal and the *de facto* ruler of the kingdom. According to the law of succession which was prevalent in Nepal, the eldest member of the Rana family was appointed Prime-Minister who governed the country on behalf of the king. This mode of succession prevented all possibility of a minor succeeding to an office of supreme importance and guarded against the dangers of regency rule. The Prime-Minister was generally a tried veteran who had climbed to the topmost rung of the official ladder by gradual stages, and had acquired a considerable experience of public affairs. He exercised supreme executive, judicial and legislative authority and was the virtual head of the administration. Though absolute in theory, he shared his power with other members of the ruling family whom he entrusted with the responsibility of administering the various departments of the State. He was also the supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Nepal army and nothing could be done in military matters without his direction and guidance.

Next to the Maharaja in the Roll of succession, which determined the evolution of the authority of Prime-Minister in the Rana family, was the Commander-in-Chief who was better known by the title of Mukhtiyar or Chief Saheb. He was entrusted with the sole responsibility of superintending all public affairs and directing them properly. It was through him that the Maharaja was approached for sanction and necessary orders in all important matters. Then came the

senior Commanding General who was also called Jangi Lat or Lat Saheb. He had to attend military parades and review and to look after the organisation of the army which it was his duty to make strong and efficient. He was also in-charge of the administration of the Western districts of the Tarai and of the charity department which is known as Tin Sarkar Guthi. The fourth in the roll of succession was always the Eastern Commanding General. Not only was he in charge of the Eastern districts of the Tarai but he was also the chief officer of the medical department. The fifth in rank was the Southern Commanding General to whom was entrusted the task of administering the forest and agricultural departments. Next in succession was the Northern Commanding General who was not only the officer in charge of the Maharaja's household but also the supreme channel of communication between His Highness and the people. He was also the Lord Chief Justice of the realm and held the portfolio of Minister of foreign affairs. Besides these high functionaries of the kingdom, there were others who were entrusted with the charge of the various departments and were known as Directors-General. It may be noted here that in pursuance of his policy of decentralisation Maharaja Juddha had distributed the portfolios in the manner mentioned above. Whenever any necessity of reshuffling for the sake of efficiency arose it was done immediately in public interest.

The Maharaja gave not only greater power and wider authority to the various heads of departments but also took steps to enhance their prestige in the public eye. Matters of detail which in the olden days required to be referred to the Maharaja were decided by departmental heads themselves on their own responsibility. Formerly every item of expenditure had to be referred to the Maharaja, but the old practice was discontinued and the Maharaja gave them the power to spend public money upto a certain limit by their own authority. Generally no appointments were made and promotions or increments granted without their recommendation. In the olden days Government servants used to be very nervous on the eve of the *Pajani* for fear of dismissal. During the last regime dismissal except for serious misconduct or dereliction of duty was very rare, and the fullest encouragement was offered to those who distinguished themselves by loyalty and good work.

Devotion to duty was rewarded with honours and titles, and the sundry measures which were devised by the Maharaja's Government removed uncertainty from the minds of public servants and led to the efficiency of the services. The institution of Pensions and Provident Fund for the military department which will be discussed in detail elsewhere improved the conditions of service to a considerable extent, the age limit in military service which was enforced for officials of all grades obviated the necessity of holding annual *Pajani's* for the officers and soldiers of the army. The tone of the administration improved and an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence was created in which honest and efficient work was made possible. In the civil administration too the same results made themselves manifest. The inconvenience caused to public servants owing to the *Pajani* taking place in the months of *Shrawan* or *Bhadra* (August or September) was put an end to. Formerly progress reports were generally submitted before the end of the year in the month of April and in the absence of any *Pajani* taking place for a protracted period of four or five months, there was a tendency towards slackness practically resulting in a suspension of work in offices until the incumbents were re-appointed to their various posts. The Maharaja's attention was drawn to this unsatisfactory state of things, and since 1935 things were done with greater regularity and despatch. Further changes were introduced in the judicial department and courts were required to submit reports of their work in March every year.

Before the assumption of office by Maharaja Juddha there was much slackness and wilful negligence in the various departments of the administration. Land revenue was allowed to fall into arrears and the fines inflicted upon wrong-doers by Government were not properly realised. Laws were rendered practically in-operative through the failure of the officers concerned to execute them. The occupiers of lands who had lost them either by reason of non-payment of rent or by forfeiture through judicial decisions and Government decrees were allowed to hold them indefinitely. The practice was condemned, and a royal decree laid down that instructions should at once be issued to the revenue office for registration and assessment within the prescribed time-limit. His Highness further warned the officials that failure to execute judicial decisions promptly

encouraged the offenders and resulted in the oppression of innocent and straightforward persons. Equally strongly did he condemn the law courts for delay in the disposal of suits which dragged on for a long time beyond the prescribed limit owing to the slackness of officials and emphasised the importance of expeditious justice. The Maharaja regarded justice delayed as justice denied and insisted upon timely replies to reports and references made by the lower courts.

The Maharaja was in no way less sparing in his condemnation of the Audit and Accounts department. A sound financial system is the *Sine qua non* of administrative stability without which no great scheme of development can be undertaken. Soon after his accession, the Maharaja found heavy arrears of unaudited accounts which created a welter of confusion. He pointed out the glaring defects of the system and exhorted the officials to be more mindful of their duty and to regard public funds as a sacred trust which was to be honestly administered. In an official pronouncement he made the following observations :—

“Heads of offices and their assistants are hereby directed to submit reports of obstacles and impediments that hinder the smooth working of the administration. If they feel the necessity of increasing the number of members in their staff, they should submit a report to that effect. They are further directed to submit within 30 days a report of the arrears of work and suggestions for reform. Do not omit to make reports about arrears for fear of punishment or dismissal. Let your reports and suggestions for reforms be characterised by candour. Schemes of improvement will receive our due attention and so far as possible will be given effect to at an early date.”

The Maharaja boldly tackled the situation, tried to eradicate the abuses which were rampant in the administration with all his courage and strength of mind. No department of the state escaped his attention, and no irregularity passed unnoticed. His Argus-eyed vigilance compelled attention to the minutest details on the part of his officials and ultimately ensured a large measure of success in stamping out corruption and inefficiency.

An important achievement of the Maharaja was the reform of the administration of justice. In a well governed country

it is necessary that the various parts of the machinery of the state should function harmoniously to serve public interest. As an experienced administrator, he had seen how much of the time of his predecessors was spent in deciding cases which were submitted to them for decision and which sometimes involved highly complicated issues. Being the highest Court of Appeal in Nepal, he had to do the same thing himself and devote much of his time to judicial work. He came to the conclusion that he had better devote his time and energy to planning new schemes of development and dealing with higher questions of policy or reform. The growing demands upon his time owing to the intricate nature of the business to which every ruler of a State must attend in these days made it physically impossible for him to perform judicial duties satisfactorily. In a lesser degree the Commander-in-Chief, the Badahakims or Heads of districts experienced the same difficulty and felt that the cases which came up for trial did not receive adequate attention owing to the pressure of executive work.

The Maharaja decided to separate the executive from the judicial functions. Opinion was sharply divided on the question. The supporters of the *Status Quo* maintained that the district officer will lose his prestige and dignity if he were divested of his judicial functions. On the other hand the protagonists of reform regarded the exercise of judicial authority by executive heads as highly detrimental to public interest. The Maharaja felt convinced of the necessity of separation if the administration of the State was to be made more efficient, and the district authorities were to devote more time and greater attention to executive work. What he really wanted was that the executive officers should be left free to think out schemes of development and carry them out in the districts entrusted to their charge for the benefit of the people. Under this system, he argued, the judges will also be able to devote their exclusive attention to judicial work, and the administration will command public confidence and support. Besides, the judges will be able to discharge their duties with greater conscientiousness and care. Having decided to effect this much needed reform, the Maharaja adopted an extraordinary procedure in making the appointment of the Chief Justice. He invited his subjects of all classes and creeds to nominate the person whom they considered best fitted to hold the highest

judicial office in Nepal. Ballot boxes were placed at various places, and when they were scrutinised it was found that the Northern Commanding General had received an overwhelming majority of votes. In a country where justice was administered according to ancient Hindu ideas, a plebiscite of this kind was no surprise, and the Maharaja gladly accepted it. A High Court (Pradhan Nyayalaya) was set up in new building constructed at Rani Pokhari, and below it were organised a number of graded tribunals presided over by a hierarchy of judges. The judges of the High Court were able and experienced men acquainted with the laws and customs of the country. They heard appeals from the lower courts and received petitions from the people against the injustices and oppressions of subordinate courts, instituted enquiries and adopted measures to grant redress to the aggrieved party. The High Court acted also as a court of first instance in cases concerning the big nobles of the land. Appellate courts were established in each of the eight big districts (*i. e.* Saptari, Katarban, Butaul, Nayamuluk, Dhan-kuta, Doti, Palpa and Morang) to hear appeals against the decisions of the lower courts. Besides these courts of appeal, there were established courts of first instance in each city or *Ilaka* of the kingdom, and they exercised both civil and criminal jurisdiction. At the capital itself there were civil and criminal courts from the decisions of which appeal was preferred to the Appeal Adda. Formerly the courts of the capital were the only courts of first instance for the whole valley, and the litigants were put to much inconvenience for they had to travel long distances in order to obtain justice. This difficulty was obviated by the establishment of two more courts at Lalitpur and Bhaktapur with civil and criminal jurisdiction, appeals from which were lodged in the Appeal Adda. The creation of these courts did not only ensure efficient judicial administration but also removed the inconvenience of the people living in the distant corners of the valley. The scheme cost the Government Rs. 10,849 per annum. In between the Pradhan Nyayalaya and the courts of appeal of the valley there were three other courts known as Bharadari Adda which were invested with appellate jurisdiction. They heard appeals from the courts of appeal both in the cities and the districts.

PRADHAN NYAYALAYA

Bharadari I Appeal Adda I	Bharadari II Appeal Adda II	Bharadari III Appeal Adda III to VII
Dewani I Faujdar Lalitpur (Valley and the cities)	Dewani II Bhaktapur (Hills and neighbour- ing districts)	Tarai and Amunis

The High Court or the Pradhan Nyayalaya acted as the Supreme Court of Appeal whose decision was final and irrevocable. Extraordinary cases involving questions of law, fact and state policy were sometimes referred to the Maharaja who gave his decision after a full and free consultation with the judges of High Court. Like other monarchs the Maharaja exercised the prerogative of mercy in serious criminal cases. If it was found that the law was not clear or its application created doubt in any particular case, it was referred to the Maharaja who placed it for consideration before the Bharadari council which consisted of members representing various classes and interests. The council was merely an advisory body. It was summoned only when the necessity arise of ascertaining the views of the people not only in regard to judicial pronouncements but also in considering the great problems which affected the country's interests.

The establishment of the Pradhan Nyayalaya in the valley for the whole kingdom, the courts at Lalitpur and Bhaktapur and courts of appeal in the provinces was the special contribution of the late Maharaja to the development of the judiciary in the country and is evidence of his enlightenment and liberal spirit.

The Maharaja tried to encourage the principle of local responsibility and permitted decentralisation of authority as far as possible in the peculiar circumstances of the country. By his order in 1940-41 Mahajani Kutcheries were set up in Dang and Kailali to try petty cases as an experimental measure. Their work was found to be quite satisfactory, and it was decided to extend local jurisdiction further to avoid inconvenience to the public. Panchayats were established throughout the kingdom

and were empowered to try petty cases. This proved a great boon to the poor people especially the peasantry who had sometimes to travel long distances to file suits even for trivial amounts in the courts of the State. They welcomed the relief thus granted and found it more convenient to have their disputes settled by the elders of the community, who possessed an intimate knowledge of local conditions, and were able to get at the truth without resorting to a cumbrous procedure.

The other reforms introduced by the Maharaja in the re-organisation of the administration of justice were the reshuffling of jurisdictions and the revision of court fees, fines and penalties. Formerly the areas over which the various courts exercised authority were not properly distributed and a scientific and rational arrangement was urgently called for. The people had to walk many miles in order to file a suit or to pay Government revenue. A complaint was actually made by the residents of the Hatitappa area that they were put to great trouble by the illogical distribution of jurisdiction and prayed for a reasonable system, involving less inconvenience to the litigant public. Their request was granted, and they were placed under the Majkhandia Mal and Bethari Amini to both of which easy access was possible throughout the year. Similar inconvenience of the inhabitants of the district of Chisapani was removed once for all when they were placed under the jurisdiction of Kirtipur Mal instead of Makwanpur Mal in 1917-18. Nepal is a country where litigation is neither a passion nor a pastime, and the Maharaja's Government devised measures to discourage it as far as possible. By the Court Fees Act of 1942 the system of fines and penalties underwent a considerable modification, and elaborate rules were laid down to regulate their imposition in civil cases. The scale of fines was revised and a reduction of more than 50% was made—a concession which resulted in the release of hundreds of prisoners who would have otherwise remained in prison for years. Terms of imprisonment were also reduced and hundreds of persons were set free.

It has already been pointed out that enormous arrears of fines had accumulated in course of years, and many people were in hiding for fear of detection and punishment. In many cases the actual culprits had long since died and their descendants passed restless days and sleepless nights fearing lest

they should be arrested and punished for the misdemeanours of their relatives. His Highness saw the futility of continuing this state of affairs which was advantageous neither to the Government nor to the people, and at once ordered the remission of all fines, the recovery of which had been rendered impossible by the impecuniousness or persistent default of the offenders. The total loss of the State by this clemency amounted to Rs. 1506930-13-3 but the country appreciated the Maharaja's generosity and the families and relations of the culprits expressed their gratitude to him.

During Maharaja Juddha's regime the police department was overhauled; new and up-to-date methods were followed in reorganising it. Nepal has now a well-trained, well-disciplined and well-equipped police force. The Kotwali which was poorly staffed and was neither very prompt nor efficient in the performance of its duty was thoroughly reorganised. A number of new posts were created, and young men possessing good physique and intelligence were appointed as inspectors. A new building called *Jangi Kotwali* was constructed and a whole regiment known as "Ram Dal" was requisitioned for police work when necessary. Villages in the valley were grouped into circles and police Chowkies were established to guard the life and property of the people. In the Tarai, the entire police system was re-organised. The police force was divided into two sections—one of these looked after the Eastern district and the other was in-charge of the Western district. Each of them was placed under a Superintendent of Police who supervised the work of the police in the districts. Thefts and burglarries, though their number was few and far between were quickly detected, and wrong-doers were properly dealt with. Inside the capital and the other towns traffic was well-regulated, and police men were posted at the junction of thoroughfares to see that no accident occurred, and no human being was injured. Strict supervision and recruitment of better type of young men in the police force considerably improved its *morale*,[†] and the result was adequate protection of life and property and decrease in crime throughout the kingdom. The vigilance of the police rendered a great assistance to government in war time in controlling the prices in the market. Attempts at cheating and sharp dealings were strictly dealt with, and the public were able to buy commodities of every

day use at scheduled prices. Special care was taken to maintain the efficiency of the police force, and facilities were given to impart to its members military training with a view to making them more disciplined and smart.

The humanitarian ideals which were the guiding principles of His Highness's policy exercised a deep influence on every sphere of state activity. Even the prisons, meant primarily for moral and social delinquents received a fair measure of his attention. In the old days in many states of the east, imprisonment was looked upon as a costly device to punish criminals, and to feed them at public expense was regarded as the highest form of extravagance. But modern states think otherwise, and civilised jurisprudence has rejected mutilation altogether as a form of chastisement. Bearing in mind the fact that Government exists to "hinder the hindrances to good life", the necessity of maintaining prisons needs no emphasis. The number of prisons was not materially increased in Nepal but the Maharaja tried to infuse a new life and vigour into their administration.

Punishment of crime is an important function of the State. The object is not so much to cause pain to the culprit as to reform him, and to see that the penalty prescribed by law is proportionate to the offence committed. The Maharaja always followed the principle that punishment must be partly deterrent, partly retributive, and partly reformatory in character. His government always attached greater importance to the reformatory aspect of punishment and aimed at correction rather than revenge. Juvenile offenders were segregated from hardened criminals and given an opportunity of improving their conduct. Those who showed good behaviour and conformed to jail discipline were granted early release. To give only one instance, in February, 1944 when His Highness was on tour at Birgunj, quite a large number of prisoners were set free.

Jail industries were well looked after and Jail factories made a considerable improvement. There was an increase in Jail rations and equipment, and full facilities for amending their lives were afforded to the prisoners.

The Earthquake of 1934 had destroyed many jail buildings throughout the Kingdom. Repairs were carried out, and at several places at the instance of His Highness, jails according to up-to-date models were constructed.

The number of holidays for courts and offices was very small in the past, and the civil servants of the State enjoyed only a few off-days by virtue of Mulki Sawal which was in force at the time. The hours of work too in offices were inconvenient. Sometimes officers and their subordinates had to remain in their offices till late in the evening for finishing the day's work, a system leading to inefficiency and discomfort, and the Maharaja at once paid attention to it. He simplified matters by appointing new officers and increasing the personnel of courts and the number of holidays. Now on the occasion of almost all the Hindu festivals, the offices remain closed, and by a royal decree issued in 1934 the hours of work have been fixed from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. instead of 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. This measure was undertaken for two reasons. First, in the cold weather, it became quite dark at 5 P.M. and the officials felt much inconvenience in reaching their homes, second, it was hoped that the new measure would induce the habit of rising early and thus improve the general standard of health. Besides granting more holidays, the Maharaja made the rules governing casual leave more liberal. The heads of departments were empowered to grant leave without pay by their own authority. But all applications for leave with pay had to be submitted to the Maharaja. If a Government servant wanted to have all the leave due to him during three years, he was allowed to do so. This gave much satisfaction to those who lived far away in the country and had few opportunities of visiting their families.

A custom peculiar to Nepal was the institution of "Salam" according to which every government servant, civil and military had to go to His Highness's palace early in the morning to pay his respects. This was a great hardship in a conservative and religious country like Nepal, and those who were employed in the Government offices had to hurry through their daily worship. Besides many of them reached their offices late, and this caused much slackness in work. The Maharaja who loved order and efficiency openly condemned the practice as a waste of time and abolished it in 1935. Great satisfaction was felt all over the kingdom and hence-forward the Government servants devoted themselves whole-heartedly to the business of

the state and performed their duties with greater punctuality and efficiency.

Another important administrative act for which the Maharaja deserves credit is the reform of the '*Kumari Chowk*'. It is the audit and accounts office of the Nepal Government to which all officers are responsible for the moneys entrusted to their care. The accounts of the various departments of the state are examined and checked here, and it is the business of this office to realise from persons concerned the amounts which cannot be satisfactorily explained. All revenue courts called "Mals" and all forest offices known as 'Kath Mahals' which deal with large sums of money have to render accounts to *Kumari Chowk*. To facilitate the despatch of business it was divided into several sections, which were manned by a competent staff, possessing expert knowledge of financial matters. The Maharaja also took steps to remove the abuses and anomalies that had existed in the system of accounts for a long time. At the renewal of appointments annually sometimes it happened that the accounts of the officers were audited long after they had ceased to hold office in the State. They did not know exactly what their position was at the termination of service. Large claims were afterwards discovered against them which they were quite unable to redeem. Sometimes officers were transferred from their original places and it was long afterwards that their accounts were checked and certified. If they were found unsatisfactory, they had to pay heavy sums in lieu of which their property was attached and sold by auction, and in case the outstandings still remained, they were thrown into prison. If a defaulter died in the meantime or left the country, his children were made to suffer for his sins and had to make good the loss of the State. The proceedings of the *Kumari Chowk* were inquisitorial and high-handed and led to much persecution. Little wonder, if it came to be looked upon as an engine of oppression by the people.

Soon after coming into office, the Maharaja determined to clean the Augean stable. He announced the creation of a separate office to examine old records and find out the sums to be realised from those who had failed to render accounts or whose records were unsatisfactory. After a thorough enquiry, a list of such persons was made, and it was found that many of them were in hiding or had gone into voluntary exile for

fear of being arrested or otherwise strictly dealt with by the Kumari Chowk.

As there was no possibility of realising the arrears, His Highness graciously announced the remission and earned the gratitude of a class of sufferers who were not wholly to blame for their guilt. Then, he turned his attention to the reform of the whole system and introduced yearly inspection of the accounts'. Every office was required to submit its balance sheet and a detailed statement of income and expenditure to the Kumari Chowk within a specified period and to obtain receipts therefor, showing that the accounts were correct and properly maintained. All Government servants, particularly the Subbas of the Mofussil, rejoiced at this happy release from a dangerous state of things and blessed the Maharaja for regularising and reforming the entire system of accounts. In certain departments the Maharaja introduced the British system of inspecting accounts. Their heads were required to certify the accounts, and the details of expenditure sanctioned by them were not submitted to the Kumari Chowk. This simplified matters a great deal and helped the smooth working of the administrative machinery by putting an end to uncertainty, suspense, and confusion, which were the inevitable result of belated and careless audit. Besides the Kumari Chowk, other offices like the Mulki Adda and the Madhesh Report Niksari received the Maharaja's attention. The importance of the former has considerably increased in these days. It was to this Adda that the offices in the districts had to submit their monthly reports about the progress of their work. One of its sections was concerned with the initiation of laws and the framing of regulations for the guidance of officers. Whenever a new office was created, the rules and regulations for its guidance were framed there. The Report Niksari office was divided into two sections..... one of these functioned under the Senior Commanding General and received reports from the Western districts of the Tarai, and the other was controlled by the Eastern Commanding General who superintended the work of the eastern districts. The Generals in charge took a keen interest in their work, and through their vigilant supervision officers in the mufassil carried out their duty efficiently.

A separate office called the Pahad Bandobast (administration of the hill districts) was organised for the management of

the hill tracts. It was to this office that the reports from the mufassil were submitted for orders and references were made whenever the elucidation of any doubtful point or clarification or revision of any order was sought.

The growing complexity of life necessitated the creation of many new offices and departments during the late regime. Little was done in the past for agriculture, commerce and industry. Maharaja Juddha organised a full-fledged department under a Director-General and its function was to tackle the problem of the country's industrial development. A separate department of cottage industries was also created which is still doing good work.

Much was done to improve the administration of the mufassil areas. Formerly district officers (Bada Hakims) were burdened with heavy responsibilities and had not merely to perform the day-to-day duties of the administration but also to preside over the courts of Justice. They had to submit records and accounts for audit and inspection to Kumari Chowk, and this was a serious responsibility with which they were entrusted. Like the Justices of peace in Tudor England they groaned under a "stack of statutes" and could hardly find time to think out plans for advancing the welfare of the people. It was idle to expect any scheme of reconstruction or development from them or to seek their active co-operation in carrying into effect any schemes of reform launched by the central government. Their horizon was narrow; their sympathies were cramped, and their outlook was entirely clerical. Measures were adopted by the Maharaja to put an end to this state of things. The separation of the executive and judicial functions and the appointment of a separate officer to prepare general records and accounts for submission to the Kumari Chowk relieved them of a heavy burden, and enabled them to devote their full and undivided attention to their administrative duties.

In a country like Nepal it is necessary to arm the executive with sufficient authority, and acting on this principle, the Maharaja granted greater powers to district officers or Bada Hakims. Formerly they had no hand even in the appointment of the lowest paid Government servants in their district; they could appoint only a few Chowkidars in the watch and ward department of the Goswara. They were entrusted with the

responsibility of general supervision over all officials and courts in the district but had no means of enforcing their authority over them. In other words they were officers who had responsibility without power. Very often they found it difficult to control the activities of their subordinates. The Maharaja came to know of this state of affairs during his tours in the Tarai and promulgated a decree in 1936, investing the Bada Hakims with more authority than they had possessed before. When a new Bada Hakim was appointed, he was given the power to appoint a 'tahril' (record and account keeper) in the Goswara and a clerk in every office in the district.

The mainstay of the Government in Nepal as in British India is the land revenue, and, therefore, its organisation and management is a matter of vital importance. The Maharaja always took a keen interest in the survey of land and the assessment of revenue. Irregularities were checked and corruption at the time of survey or assessment was strictly dealt with. When there was a complaint from the people of Ilam-gonda that their lands were not properly surveyed and assessed to revenue, the Maharaja deputed the highest officers of the state to look into the matter, and the culprits were brought to book. Similar action was taken at Gurkha. At Biratnagar the officials practised high-handedness in the distribution of forest lands for cultivation. When the matter was brought to His Highness's notice, he forthwith ordered an enquiry and cashiered the wrong-doers. The system of issuing proper receipts by the Patwaris was also enforced. Officers were warned that arrears should not be allowed to accumulate.

Several proclamations were issued by the Maharaja from time to time about the issue of receipts to peasants, the damage caused by snow and land-slides, pasture lands and other matters which touched rural life. In 1940-41 the Maharaja expressed publicly his disapproval of the practice of giving receipts to the peasantry on a *purji* (a slip of paper) instead of on the prescribed form No. 2. It adversely affected the interests of the cultivators when a particular piece of land was transferred to another person by sale or auction and the new Zamindar did not accept the receipt issued by his predecessor. A strict order was issued that all receipts must be given on form No. 2 after entering the payment in the records of the Patwari. Failure to do so made the Patwari, the record-keeper

and the Zamindar liable to punishment. By another notification false complaints by Zamindars that damage was caused to their crops by natural calamity were prevented, though in genuine cases concessions were allowed after proper investigation. Pasture land is meant for public benefit, and a decree of the Maharaja issued in 1939-40 laid down that if any body cultivated such land he would render himself liable to severe punishment, and the land encroached upon by him would be declared pasture land again. Definite rules were made for the payment of revenue also. Dates were fixed separately for each pargana, but in special cases extension could be granted by the Maharaja. Like the permanently settled areas in British India, if revenue was not paid on the fixed date by the Zamindar, his land was sold by auction. The same rule applied to cultivators who were deprived of their holdings if rents were not paid on the due date. A number of decrees were also issued in connection with the mutation proceedings.

Though unwilling to deprive the people of their property, the Maharaja enforced a sort of *Quo Warranto* which required all owners or occupiers of rent-free lands to produce in support of their claim regular title-deeds. He prescribed a time-limit for submitting these documents, and in the case of those who were unable to do so, he ordered the issue of fresh grants. Many persons, whose lands had been resumed, recovered them with fresh title-deeds. Lands dedicated to temples and shrines were restored to their original claimants even after the expiry of decades on producing documentary evidence in support of their claims.

Nepal is mainly an agricultural country and the prosperity of the people depends to a large extent upon timely rains. To alleviate distress in times of drought, the Maharaja adopted prompt measures to afford relief to his famine-stricken subjects. In 1933 when there was scanty rainfall in the Sheoraj area and the people were reduced to starvation, he ordered free kitchens to be established at the expense of the Government, which provided food to the famished population. A commission was appointed to enquire into the agricultural condition of these districts and collect figures of production. It was found that the lands under cultivation yielded only one fourth of the

average produce. When this report was submitted to the Maharaja, he was moved to pity and sanctioned remissions of land revenue on a generous scale. The tenants whose lands failed to yield a satisfactory harvest were exempted from the payment of rent to the extent of twelve annas in the rupee. The rural population felt deeply grateful to the Maharaja for this kindness and on every body's lips were heard the words, "when we were starving, the Maharaja gave us food, and when we were passing anxious days at the time of paying the dues of the State, he granted us liberal remissions."

From the time of his accession, the Maharaja had been anxious to reform the Guthi Adda or the Charity department which controls the religious endowments of the State. Formerly every person, be he a priest, a chowkidar or a sweeper employed in a temple, drew his allowance either by virtue of a title-deed with the royal red seal (Lal Mohar) affixed on the document or without it. Those who had no title-deed to rely upon, were often put to great inconvenience, and were sometimes troubled by mischievous persons, who contested their claim to draw the allowance of which they were in receipt. As early as 1933 the Maharaja ordered all such employees to report themselves to the Guthi Adda within three months of the issue of the proclamation in which were embodied the regulations governing such cases. After necessary investigation into the genuineness of their claims, their names were entered in a record book, and fresh title-deeds were issued to them to avoid all inconvenience or molestation in future. This secured the position of those who had no regular title-deeds, and had at the same time facilitated the work of the Guthi Adda.

To expedite the execution of schemes of reconstruction which were launched by Government, a new office was established under a responsible officer. It was felt that sometimes owing to redtapism and the slackness of officials, new schemes were not put into operation for a long time and the Maharaja's intentions were not fulfilled. It was the duty of this office to see that the plans which were formed for public good were carried into effect without unnecessary delay.

The war hit Nepal like other countries and since its outbreak, the prices showed a tendency to rise higher and higher. The necessaries of life became very dear, and persons with fixed incomes and thousands of others who were not agriculturists

found it difficult to make both ends meet. The abnormal rise in the prices of cloth during the war added much to the hardship of the people. The Maharaja passed orders for the control of the cloth market, and a separate office was created for this purpose and cloth worth a lakh of rupees was imported from India and sold at mill rates. The prices of kerosene and mustard oil, sugar, petrol and salt were controlled and they were sold at reasonable rates. Though the commodities necessary for daily use were obtainable in abundance in the country, it was deemed desirable to introduce control with a view to checking an unduly heavy rise in prices. This was a great boon to the public at large and the poor people with small incomes were greatly benefited.

Another important reform introduced during Maharaja Juddha's regime is the reorganisation of the Niksari Adda. Formerly the Maharaja was the Supreme Court of Appeal in all cases but owing to heavy pressure of work he delegated most of his judicial powers to the Pradhan Nyalaya or the High Court. The Niksari Adda was divided into two sections—One of these was attached to the High Court which received petitions from the public both about civil and criminal matters and these were disposed of by the Chief Justice ; the other section dealt with petitions to the Maharaja. For the proper and quick dispatch of business, additional staff was provided, and aggrieved persons could submit their grievances for the consideration of the Maharaja. It is in this way that he exercised his equitable jurisdiction, and in matters that were not covered by the common law of the land he functioned as a court of equity. These two sections the Maharaja added another which was known as the Chithi Niksari Adda. As it was difficult for people living in the remoter parts of the kingdom to lay their grievances before the Maharaja, the latter graciously permitted them to do so by means of letters. These letters were submitted to this Adda and were afterwards laid before His Highness for consideration. Allegations contained in them were thoroughly investigated, and if the complaints were genuine, steps were taken to grant redress. Appeals for pecuniary help, complaints about official corruption, representations drawing the attention of the Government to evils in the administration and suggestions for improvement took the shape of letters to the Maharaja who was enabled thereby to keep in

touch with his subjects. Even the most trivial matters received his prompt attention. To give only one instance, a priest from Anand Bhairav at Banaras drew his Highness's attention to the delapidated condition of a temple which was built by Nepal. A decent sum was immediately granted for its reconstruction. Poor and distressed men, women and children from all quarters sent appeals to the Maharaja for help, and their cases were sympathetically examined by him. A few other instances will give the reader an idea of his benevolence. A woman Ditya Lohani by name, resident of Mouza Richoktar, West No. 1 submitted the following petition to the Maharaja at Navakot :—

“Maharaja Merciful Lord. I am a poor Brahaman woman. I became a widow in my childhood and have none to protect me. I live by manual labour. I had a house which has fallen down and I am now obliged to pass the night in the corner of a Dharamshala. During the earthquake Your Highness had granted monetary aid to many of your subjects to rebuild their houses. Poor and forlorn as I am, I am utterly unable to raise even a small hut for myself. For want of a dwelling place I am in great distress. I, therefore, beg Your Highness to grant me a small sum of money for the reconstruction of my ruined house. I shall regard it as Your Highness's Dharamshala and live in it, remembering Your blessed name as long as I live.”

The Maharaja passed the following order :—

“It is hereby ordered by the Maharaja that the district officer should personally inspect the house of this woman and reconstruct it out of the funds of the State. Whatever timber is required for rebuilding the house may be provided from the Government forest.”

A boy Jagannath Upadhyaya by name aged ten, resident of Belkot in Elaka Navakot, petitioned the Maharaja for help.

“Your Highness, I am an orphan ; my parents died when I was a little child. I have none to take care of me. Whatever land was in the possession of my parents has been taken by the creditors. I am destitute and homeless and, therefore, humbly request Your Highness to grant me subsistence for which I shall ever remain grateful.”

His Highness was moved to pity and immediately ordered that the boy should be admitted and kept in the orphanage of the district until he attained majority.

Such was the Maharaja's solicitude for the welfare of his subjects. He did not depend wholly upon his subordinates and personally attended to the cases that came up before him. Wherever he went, he was welcomed as a benefactor, and no man in distress or misery appealed to him in vain. Thus did he follow both in theory and practice the Rajdharma which is laid down in our Scriptures.

The Maharaja made a number of other improvements in the administration which may be briefly summarised. Means of communication throughout the valley were improved, and this enabled the officials of various departments to consult each other with frequency and ease. Formerly when the departmental heads had to consult each other, they did so either by correspondence or by personal interview. Much time was wasted ; delay and inconvenience thereby seriously hampered public business. To obviate this difficulty an automatic telephone office was established at Rani Pokhari and at the residences of the Commander-in-Chief and the Commanding Generals. Telephonic connection was provided to facilitate consultation and reference. This facility was extended also to the foreign office, the Kotwal and the electric office.

Difficulties due to exchange were remedied by establishing a separate office for this purpose. Formerly the people all over the kingdom had to send their letters either through the British Legation at Kathmandu or the Indian Post Offices across the border. Letters bearing Nepal stamps were not accepted anywhere outside the kingdom, and those with Indian stamps were not allowed to have access to the interior. Naturally communication with friends and relatives in foreign lands was difficult, and in times of emergency the people were put to much inconvenience. An arrangement was made with the Indian Government according to which letters with Nepali stamps, affixed on them, were accepted by Indian Post Offices. Exchange offices were established at various important centres to afford facilities for correspondence.

The passport regulations were also revised. Formerly the people were subjected to a lot of vexation and harassment when they had to visit India along with their females. Only near relatives were allowed to escort them across the frontier. The passport had to be attested by an officer of high rank and the permission of the Maharaja had to be obtained for the

purpose. This regulation applied to women below 45 years of age. The object was to stop illegal traffic in women which some mischievous persons carried on at Banaras and in the Punjab. Under the revised rules the Maharaja's permission was not required. A woman below 45 years of age who wished to visit India and who had no near relatives to accompany her was required to fill in three forms in which the destination, the purpose of the visit, and the date of return were mentioned, and these particulars had to be verified by an officer. One of these forms was sent to Gadhi and the other to Birgunj where the officers were instructed to see that the intending visitors returned in time.

As the Rana family played an important part in the Government of Nepal, the Maharaja always took a great interest in the welfare of its members. Some of them in the Tarai and in the hills were reduced to utter poverty and found it difficult to maintain themselves. On special occasions, when there was a marriage or a death in the family, they were put to great inconvenience. They had to contract debts, and sometimes even this was impossible. When the Maharaja was informed of their sad plight, he sanctioned a grant of Rs. 100/- per individual for funeral expenses. This enabled many indigent Ranas to die in peace and lessened the anxieties and hardships of their families.

Besides, the Maharaja redeemed the debts of the Ranas, found employment for them and in emergencies gave them liberal financial assistance. He set apart four thousand bighas of land at Tilachowar in Naya Muluk for cultivation by the descendants of Ranas, Ram Bahadur, Badri Narsingh, Bhakta Bir, Balaram and Rewant Kumar...all of whom belonged to the family of Kazi Ram Krishna, the founder of the power of Ranas. They were granted a rent free lease for ten years. After the expiry of this period they were to continue to enjoy the land in perpetuity on the payment of a nominal rent. Thus did His Highness's generosity towards the Rana family manifest itself in various forms, and there were few among the needy and the impecunious who were not benefited by it. In an address presented to the Maharaja the members of the Rana family praised his work in these words :—

“It was Maharaja Jung Bahadur who laid the foundations of the power of the Rana Dynasty, and it is Your Highness

who has strengthened it, and done your best to promote our welfare...Ever since Your Highness assumed the reins of office, you have exerted yourself to the utmost to promote the prosperity of the people. Scholars and students have received encouragement from Your Highness and their work has been appreciated. Your Highness has greatly contributed to the development of arts and manufacturers, trade and industry and taken steps to improve military training. Thus, Your Highness has guided the country along right lines. Your genuine services have received their due reward, and the country is moving towards the pinnacle of progress."

A measure of far-reaching importance undertaken by the Maharaja was the revision of the roll of succession. As has been said before, succession to the Prime Minister's gaddi in Nepal is regulated by a special law that was enacted by Maharaja Jung Bahadur who was the first to assume full responsibility for the administration of the country.

In the time of his successors there was deviation from the established law, and equal status was given to sons of wives who were not legally married. Soon after his accession the Maharaja found that the inclusion of illegitimate sons in the roll of succession was not a desirable thing and caused dissatisfaction in aristocratic circles. Besides, like Napoleon the Great, he felt that it was wrong to place the two classes of heirs on a footing of equality. It was a serious matter and was likely to create difficulties, if the Maharaja had not handled the situation in a bold and statesmanlike manner. He ordered a revision of the roll of succession and confined it rigorously to scions of the Rana family who were born in lawful wedlock. It must be said to the credit of the disinherited members, some of whom occupied distinguished offices in the State and were likely to succeed to the Prime-Ministership in the near future, that they submitted to this decree without offering any resistance, and the change was effected by means of a bloodless coup. The Maharaja was careful enough to confirm them in their dignities and allowed them to continue to hold high administrative posts. They obeyed his command without demur and loyally accepted his decision. As was expected, the reversion to the original legal position led to great satisfaction among the members of the ancient aristocracy who praised the Maharaja for his foresight and wisdom

in taking such a step. It cannot be doubted that the measure has imparted strength and stability to the constitution and is bound to have a wholesome effect on its working in future. The generations of heirs and successors that will follow will bless the Maharaja for defining clearly their position in regard to the succession to the most exalted and responsible office in the country.

One of the most important acts of the Maharaja's administration was to improve the civic life of the town and to introduce the elements of municipal government. In the past there was practically no municipal administration worth the name in Nepal and the people paid no attention to sanitation. It was difficult to walk in the streets and lanes owing to filth and foul smell. There was no proper arrangement for drainage. The rubbish used to get accumulated for days together emitting unbearable stench. It was not only obnoxious to the pedestrians but also injurious to the health of the people who inhabited the locality. Ever since his accession to the Prime Ministership, the Maharaja was alive to the need of improving the sanitary condition of the town and sanctioned large sums for this purpose. A municipality was established at Kathmandu under a Director-General who had a large staff of officers working under him. It had a separate office and its function was to look after the sanitary arrangements of the cities in the valley. Conditions have much improved and the amenities of civic life which have been provided have added considerably to the comfort and happiness of the people. The roads are neat and clean, there are no cesspools in front of houses, and the system of drainage, though not yet quite satisfactory is much better than before. No municipal tolls or taxes are levied in any town, and the entire responsibility for providing light and drinking water and looking after sanitation rests upon the Government. It is a serious handicap but it is in consonance with the lofty ideal of Hindu kingship.

The result of this have been remarkable. Cholera and typhoid epidemics which used to occur frequently in the olden days, no longer afflicted the people. The seizures from these diseases are rare. A network of drains was spread all over the town. Dirty water was no longer allowed to accumulate either in pools or on the roadside. Arrangements were made for the removal of rubbish, and lorries plied every

morning to carry off the contents of dust bins. A sanitary staff was employed to look after the health of the town. It is the duty of these officers not only to inspect the public urinals and latrines but also to superwise the butcher's stalls and vegetable shops. A vegetable market has already been constructed in the heart of the city and a slaughter house was under construction. The sweetmeat shops were completely reorganised and made up-to-date. Roads were now more decent and dust-free. They were broad and spacious and the lighting arrangements were entirely satisfactory. The health of the poor and the destitute was the special concern of the Government, and officers were instructed to remove poor patients to hospitals and to provide food and medicine to those who required them.

Administrations of States in modern times fall into two groups—those responsible to Parliaments or Legislatures and those that are not. The administration of Nepal belonged to the latter category but it was benevolent, and numerous measures which the Maharaja devised for the public good showed his zeal for reform and improvement in all directions. When he became Prime-Minister, he started with two objects in view, the happiness of the people and the advancement of the status of Nepal and to these he has adhered with a consistency which is remarkable. He conducted the administration with the help of an organised bureacuracy, the members of which were mostly drawn from the Rana family, but whose work was liable at any moment to be brought under his direct supervision. It will not be fair to judge the administration of Nepal in the light of abstract principles. It is necessary to keep in mind the peculiar situation of the country, the political antecedents of the people, the martial character of the races that constitute the dominant sections of her population, and the force of custom and tradition in a community which is steeped deep in conservatism. The system has developed a very close and jealously guarded doctrine of vested rights, but the chances of abuse were minimised by the vigilance of the Maharaja who was ever ready to punish slackness or inefficiency in the administration. It is true, the personal factor was important in the state of Nepal, but during Maharaja Juddha's regime it did not in any way hamper the smooth working of the machinery of Government. The Maharaja was

not like those ministers who produce decorative schemes for the purpose of histrionic display, designed ingeniously to catch the votes of their supporters. He cared for the substance and not for the shadow, and for this reason he took pains over his plans and never put them into operation unless he was fully convinced of their utility. He did not believe in miracles and therefore, as a seasoned statesman he favoured quiet, solid and sustained work. He was always quick in disposing of business, knew the dangers of law's delays and as far as possible tried to avoid irregularity or injustice. The working of offices considerably improved during his regime, and in making appointments merit was not disregarded. Punctuality was enforced, and in the day-to-day work of the various departments, modern methods were introduced. Some departments in the State were directly under the Maharaja. His personal office was the Khadga Nishana where his seal was affixed on documents in his own hand-writing. It went with him wherever he went, and by means of it he exercised general supervision over the entire administration. When he went out on tour, he was welcomed by the people. Forced labour was absolutely forbidden and he paid for every little service that was rendered by the people when he was in camp. Wherever he might be, he listened to those who desired to acquaint him with their difficulties, and after proper investigation and report, action was taken by him. He constantly acted on the maxim laid down by a soldier-statesman of great experience: "There is but one way to govern men and it is eternal truth. Get into their skins. Try to realise their feelings. That is the true secret of Government."

The Maharaja knew this secret as few other men do.

Military Reforms

*Still, though death's wave without distinction roll,
O'er all alike, the nameless and the great,
For Warriors yet, that reach the eternal goal,
Approved of heaven, conspicuous honours wait.*

— *Pindar*

Nepal is essentially a military country and even a casual visit to the valley is struck by the predominance of the military element in the state. Almost all her officers, high and low, hold a rank in the army and are liable to render military service when they are called upon to do so. The country people are also under the dominance of the army but no where are the soldiers objects of terror to the civil population. They are friendly with the latter; they never molest them or do them harm and that is probably the reason why the profession of arms is held in such esteem throughout the country. The army is mainly recruited from the fighting classes—the Thakurs, Gurkhas; Magars, Rais, Limbus and Sunwars but it consists largely of the members of the second class (Gurkha Kshatriyas) who have established a great reputation for their soldierly qualities. The army including the irregulars or militia totals a little over 44,000 in times of peace and in emergencies is capable of being considerably enlarged. The militia was recruited in the districts and its members were enrolled for a limited period. Formerly the army was paid by grants of land but the practice has been gradually abandoned and monthly cash payments have been substituted for them. Much care and attention has been bestowed upon the army so as to weld it in-

to a first class fighting machine. Recruitment is altogether voluntary; the love of fighting is so common among the Gurkhas that no compulsion or coaxing is needed to induce them to join military service. The profession of arms is regarded as noble by them and many a daring youth in the countryside willingly exchanges his bucolic surroundings for the hard life of the camp and the parade ground. It is the valour of the Gurkha who belongs to the Kshatriya class that has made Nepal famous all over the world. History is replete with instances of his bravery and many a tale is told in the Nepalese saga of his devotion to duty and his heroic sacrifices in defence of the country's interests. A Gurkha is a valient fighter and his warlike qualities have received well-merited praise from eminent military experts of different nationalities. He craves for nothing except military distinction which he pursues with unquenchable ardour; he disregards danger and difficulty and rushes into the thick of the fight to snatch victory from the very jaws of death. From many a battlefield in the various parts of the world he has come back trailing clouds of glory with him and has achieved immortality by his gallant deeds. Moral grit, perseverance, tenacity of purpose, defiance of death and destruction and obedience to the word of command are the distinguishing traits of his character. The Gurkha never thinks of death. He can easily lay down his life for his master whose salt he has eaten. His loyalty has the romantic touch of feudal chivalry and his fidelity has been recognised by all whom he has served. Dr. Oldfield observes in his book that there is not a single instance of a Nepali chief taking bribes from or selling himself for money to the British army or any other state. The proverb current among the Gurkha is '*Kafar hunnu bhanda marnu ramro*' i. e., rather death than an act of cowardice and a man who flees from battle is looked upon as an outcaste or a pariah and his contact is deemed an abomination. Europeans who have known the Gurkhas have borne testimony to their valour and fighting capacity. Vansittart in his book 'Notes on Nepal' writes : "As compared with other orientals, Gurkhas are bold, enduring faithful, frank, very independent and self-reliant; in their own country they are jealous of foreigners and self-asserting."

The Gurkha is fond of his dog and his gun. The *Khukri* is his national weapon which he wields with great dexterity and

strength. He is not satisfied unless he can cut by a single stroke a buffalo into two. With his *Khukri* he protects himself in the mountains from the furious attacks of man-eating leopards or bears. Instances of a hand to hand fight between a Gurkha woman, to say nothing of man, and a leopard are not rare. Thrilling stories of such adventures were frequently reported in the *Gurkha patra* and are current in the countryside. The very amusements of Gurkhas are warlike. He takes delight in all manly sports, shooting, fishing, etc. and possesses a great skill with his gun and rod. He takes a great interest in dance and music, and stories of his gallantry are sometimes related in verse which serve as a great inducement to heroic or courageous action.

Colonel Shakespeare pays a tribute to the gallant Gurkha soldier in these terms :—

“Unlike other Asiatic enemies the Nepalese showed a remarkable spirit of courtesy towards us, worthy of a more enlightened people. The cases of poisoned wells or arrows, or cruelty to wounded, is only recorded in one or two cases, no rhinoceros spirit of revenge appeared to animate them, they fought in their conflict like men and abstained from insulting the bodies of dead or wounded but in no case was any interference with the dismal duty of collecting the casualties at the close of an action.”

It will not be out of place here to mention a few instances of Gurkha bravery and courage. When Nepal declared war against the East India Company—the only war fought between her and the British people—The Gurkhas fought with undaunted vigour and earned a name for themselves. Their warlike qualities and devotion to the cause were recognised even by their enemies. When General Gillespi lost his life in the battle of Kaulunga near Nolapani, the British forces become furious and vindictive...Balhadra Singh had taken refuge in the fortress of Kalunga with a band of his chosen followers three hundred in number. The fortress was blockaded, the supplies were cut off and the garrison had to face an incessant shower of shot and shell from outside. Hunger and thirst began to thin the ranks of the besieged and the cries of women and children for water began to rend the skies. Still the defenders stood their ground and though their number fell from 300 to 70 they refused to surrender. Of this brave defence the following account

was written by Sisir Kumar Ghosh which has been reproduced in Major Basu's *Rise of Christian Power in the East*.

“On the last day of the month when the batteries of the British troops were hurrying on their work, and volleys after volley from the Gurkha musketry responded to them, there was a pause of a few minutes in the ranks of the besieged. Suddenly the iron gates were flung open and outcame the immortal. Seventy with drawn swords in their hands, guns in their arms, the Khukri or bhujali hanging on their belts, and the chakra or wheel resplendent on their headdress, led by their chief Balbhadra—brave, erect, cheerful and in his measured military gait and before the astounded British force had time to reflect, they had cut right through the time, drank to their hearts content from the springs of Nalapani, and in no time disappeared without any one of them being hurt.¹

The well-known daily of Calcutta the *Patrika* wrote about the heroism of Balbhadra.

“We have read of Leonidas in Greek history. He has been immortalised by Greek historians. But he belongs to ancient history. Besides, his exploits have been recorded by his own countrymen. But Balbhadra belongs to modern history, and it was his enemies who recorded his exploits, Leonidas opposed an-all-armed barbarian horde, but Balbhadra opposed a far-better-armed and better disciplined enemy. When he refused to surrender General Gillespie was amazed at his audacity.”²

These are deeds recorded in history. Since then the Gurkhas have achieved brilliant victories on various battle fields and almost every commander of repute who has come in contact with them has spoken very highly of their prowess and tenacity. It was Lord Roberts who tested their capacity in the Afghan War and eulogised their services. In the last world war a number of Gurkha soldiers distinguished themselves by feats of marvellous heroism and obtained honours and medals for meritorious service. Kulbir Thapa's name was on every body's lips in those days. Similar heroism has been shown by the Gurkhas during the second world war and the fame of Lala Bahadur Thapa and Gaje Ghale achieved during this conflict is enshrined in the heart of every true Nepali. The greatest allied generals held the Gurkhas in the highest esteem and were fully confident of their operations in the gigantic plans they were making to defeat the Axis Powers.

¹ *Rise of Christian Power in the East* IV. P. 134.

² *Ibid*, p. 135.

It is an army consisting of these Gurkhas of which Maharaja Juddha Shumshere was the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. No department of the Government of Nepal received so much attention from him as the army. As Senior Commanding General in the time of his brother Maharaja Chandra Shumshere he was in close contact with the army and made a close study of its needs and requirements. He was entrusted with the task of reorganisation which he accomplished with great success. It was under his guidance that a set of drill books was compiled and many defects in the military machine were removed. Naturally when he became Prime Minister he introduced a number of reforms for the improvement of the army. The old practices that made for inefficiency and indiscipline were removed and new regulations were devised. Strict honesty was enforced in the enrolment of soldiers. Officeholders, serving under false names, caste and address, were directed on pain of dismissal to submit accurate descriptions of the required particulars. Recruits were henceforward required to produce sureties to certify the correctness of the particulars submitted.

Provision was made for granting relief loans to recruits of Kali Bahadur and Rifle Regiments at the rate of Rs. 12/- and Rs. 11/- per month respectively until the date of their actual enrolment. The Board of Trustees of the military hospital was dissolved. The functions of the President, Vice-President and other members were assigned to the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Commanding General and the Commanding General of the Eastern forces respectively. The list of the holidays for the army was revised and even the body-guards who had special duties to perform were allowed to be off duty. During the weeks of parade for performing such ceremonies as marriage, the investiture with the sacred thread, Saptaha, etc. Only the officers down to the Subedars were granted four days' extra leave in addition to the home leave (Ghar Bida) already allowed. At Bhaktapur the old system of observing general holidays on Sunday, change of sentries and gun-bearing on Saturday and the afternoon parade on Mondays was replaced by a new arrangement which provided greater facilities and convenience to soldiers. The afternoon parade began to be held twice a week *i.e.* on Sundays and Thursdays. Formerly those whose parents died while they

were on leave (*Chhoti Bida*) were granted no remission of fines imposed on them for absence during the period of mourning. A regulation was issued which allowed remission in such cases. Officers were granted the special privilege of leave for celebrating their birthday and for performing *Shraddhas*. Eleven days' leave was sanctioned for performing *Nabah*.

Besides this several other useful measures were adopted for the convenience of soldiers. Formerly, on the occasion of the Maharaja's tours to the Tarai, pickets of soldiers were stationed as far as Garhi and officers had to attend on horseback at Thankot. This practice was abolished and the Maharaja ordered that officers should attend the Singh Durbar and the rest should assemble at Tudikhel. Another old custom according to which during the Indra Jatra Officers and Subedars of Rajdal and Shri Nath regiment were required to attend the Hanuman Dhoka by turns was abolished and a new arrangement was made which restricted the obligations to the officers and Subedars of one brigade per day.

There can be no efficient army without adequate military equipment and the Maharaja took steps to improve weapons and the manufacture of ammunition. New types of weapons were provided to various regiments; machine guns were imported from Europe and stored at Kotkhana and a magazine was established for manufacturing guns and for this purpose machinery costing Rs. 14616 was imported from abroad and a grant of Rs. 96,328/- was sanctioned for the construction of a building. A new plant for manufacturing smokeless gunpowder was set up at the foot of Swayambhu in an arsenal built by Maharaja Chandra. The machinery cost £ 13,000 and the construction of buildings Rs. 6,87,733. Mechanics and artisans were sent to India at the expense of the state to receive training in the technique of gun-manufacture. When they returned to the country after completing their training, a great improvement was effected in gun-making and this contributed much to the efficiency of the army. The uniform of the soldiers was old-fashioned and worn out; it was replaced by a new one which consisted of a red tunic (except for the Jangi regiment which received black ones), dark blue trousers and a cap of national design with a peak for the Parsvavarti Dal. The practice of giving military uniforms on hire to top regiments on the occasion of State functions was

introduced. It was one of the main concerns of the Maharaja to see that the officers and soldiers looked smart and brilliant and therefore, he introduced hats of national design fitted with gold chain, staffs and plume, plumed helmets of blue colour, up-to-date badges and head-dresses studded with emeralds. There were different kinds of badges for different ranks and all of them were cross-marks.

Governments paid full attention to the training of the army. Arms and ammunitions are not enough. What is needed is skill and knowledge of strategy and tactics of war which are absolutely essential on the battlefield. Attempts were made to keep the officers and soldiers in touch with the latest developments of the military science, old military drill tactics were replaced by new ones and steps were taken to afford encouragement to those who topped the list of successful candidates in military examinations and showed the greatest skill in target shooting and mark practice. New buildings were constructed at enormous cost to serve as centres for training in military science and every facility was given to soldiers to equip themselves properly for their duties. The methods of training introduced by the Maharaja were now different from what they were in the past; they were modern, expeditious and efficient.

Arrangements were made for imparting military training at Kathmandu and schools were established at Lalitpur and Bhaktapur for this purpose. A staff of instructors consisting of one officer, one Subedar, two Jamadars, five Huddas and six Sepoys was allotted to each centre. Adequate provision was made for musketry practice both in and out of the valley and facilities of target shooting were given to the artillery force. Passing of test was made compulsory for all officers down to Huddas.

The housing of soldiers is a matter of vital importance to the State and the Maharaja was much struck by the need for constructing barracks in the various parts of his dominions. There were barracks at Birganj, Nepalganj, Bhaktapur and Bijeshwari already but they were not enough and during his tours in the cold weather the Maharaja surveyed the strategic places and felt convinced of the necessity of constructing more barracks on up-to-date lines. A visitor to Nepal, on alighting from his car at Bhimphedi, will see rising before his

vision a row of beautiful barracks at Suping on the hill. These are *pucca* buildings constructed according to the latest designs with a view to provide the fullest comfort to their occupants. New barracks were built at Mahottari and also at Routahat and it was hoped that the barracks at Baneshwar for the Parshwavarti Dal would be as commodious and comfortable. The Maharaja deputed an Engineer who visited several barracks in India and submitted a plan for the construction of up-to-date barracks at Mahotari.

An important reform introduced by the Maharaja in the military department was the institution of the Provident fund both for officers and men. The Nepali soldiers were usually happy-go-lucky about their money and lived to the utmost extent of their income utterly indifferent to the future. The result was that when the time of retirement came, they returned home with empty pockets. Many of them were so poor that they were unable to pay even the roadfare. Thus instead of passing their days in comfort and ease in the evening of their lives, they had to endure want and misery and found it difficult to discharge their duty towards their family. In his long course of contact with the army the Maharaja had become aware of their difficulties, and with a foresight and courage which characterise all his actions he resolved to put an end to them. Shortly after his accession to the Prime Ministership he established a Provident Fund towards which every military man had to contribute a portion of his salary. The money thus deposited was invested in business and the total amount together with interest was returned to the subscriber on his retirement or his relatives nominated by him, if he died on active service. It was announced that the amount thus accumulated would be exempt from confiscation. Thus through the Maharaja's generosity a lump sum was made available to retiring officers and soldiers and was of great help to them in enabling them to pass the remaining days of their lives without feeling the pinch of want and poverty in old age. As was natural the scheme received the hearty approbation of all and proved immensely beneficial to the officers and the rank and file. Before Maharaja Juddha there was no fixed term of service or age limit for men serving in the army. Some officers were dismissed while they were still in the prime of life and were fit for active service, while

others who were allowed to continue even when superannuated and were incapacitated by the infirmities of age for the efficient performance of their duty. This anomaly was removed by the introduction of age-limit. The age limit of military officers was fixed according to the following scale :—

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Age</i>
Commanding Colonels to Lieutenant Colonels	... 55
Major Captains	... 53
Captains	... 51
Lieutenants	... 50
Ensigns and Subedars	... 45
Sergants and Jamadars	... 43
Havaldars and flag bearers	... 41
Soldiers	... 40

The age limit was fixed after a careful scrutiny of age limits prevalent in other countries particularly British India. There was an excess of 5 years over the ages fixed for retirement in the British army because the people of a mountainous country like Nepal are comparatively more hardy and vigorous than those of the plains. The system of age-limits was bound to create dis-satisfaction in the beginning but when its implications were understood it was welcomed by the army. There is no limit to human wants and there are very few men who would retire voluntarily. Everybody likes to drive on to the grave and wants to earn as much as he can. But there are very few who are fit for hard work after a certain age specially in the military department. Hence compulsory retirement is a sound principle; it not only prolongs life but affords to younger men opportunities of promotion and thus leads to greater efficiency.

Not satisfied with this the Maharaja went a step further. He provided the soldiers not only with the Provident Fund but also with pensions. The institution of pension proved a great boon to the people. Besides ensuring protection in old age it serves as an incentive to loyal and devoted service and fosters efficiency. It was on the occasion of his birthday anniversary that His Highness announced the new reform in terms that betokened hope, sympathy and encouragement. He eulogised the glorious services of the army on many a contested field of battle and dwelt upon the rewards granted by government. He went on to add :—

“———But when the term of service lasted only so long as the men in the army were not thrown out on the ground of infirmities of age or were not dismissed for any reason whatsoever. When they were turned out, they were thrown adrift and had to go away empty handed without any means of livelihood. In such circumstances, unable as they generally were, to earn a living by physical or intellectual labour, most of them were plunged into a sorrowful plight and found it impossible to procure even their morning and evening meals, to say nothing of living in a manner, befitting their social position. From my long association with you I had full knowledge of these hardships and the desire to improve this state of affairs has ever been present in my mind. By the Grace of God when I became Prime-Minister I introduced the rule of age-limit in service and established the Provident Fund by which officers and men of the army were provided with a lump sum of money on the termination of their service. This was some sort of relief to them but I do not consider it sufficient. They were still left without the means of a regular income wherewith they could live comfortably in their old age. Consequently, although, generally speaking, Provident Fund and Pension do not go together, I have decided to maintain the Provident Fund and added to it the grant of pension for faithful service with effect from now according to rank.”

Then the Maharaja announced the following rules drawn up with a view to giving effect to his intentions.

1. Sepoys up to Subedars and Ensigns who have put in 20 years' service and officers from Lieutenants upwards who have put in 25 years' continuous service will be entitled to pension.

2. Officers and men who have put in continuous service as mentioned above will get pension for life at the rate of one fifth of the scheduled pay fixed for their respective ranks.

3. In the event of Sepoys up to Subedars and Ensigns who have put in continuous service for the period which qualifies them for pension, being promoted to higher rank should they, through infirmities of age or any other cause be compelled to retire from service before they have put in their quota of service will get pension of the same rank for which they were qualified before promotion.

4. Those who are dismissed for misconduct or convicted

of a cognisable offence like theft, dacoity, bribery etc. will forfeit their pension.

5. Holders of long service medal will get either allowance fixed for holders of such decoration or pension whatever is higher.

6. The age-limit fixed before will continue to hold good for all ranks who are in service now while the new age limit which is five years less than the previous one will apply to those who enter service or get promotion hereafter. This rule is applicable also to officers and men of our contingent at present serving in India.

The Maharaja went on to say :—

“From the practice in vogue in other countries it appears pensions are granted at different rates. The British Government appears to have fixed it at 1/3rd or 1/4th of the pay. Our resources are not the same as those of the Imperial British Government. The Indian states grant generally 1/6th of the pay and we have after very careful and just consideration have fixed it at 1/5th.”

Himself a great soldier, the Maharaja felt a boundless love for the army and never let an opportunity pass without recounting its brave deeds. He paid a glowing tribute to the soldiers on active service.

“Our army forms one of the principal ornaments of our country. It is the officers and men of the army who keep that ornament bright or make it look dim. The army exists to face the enemy when occasion arises and engages them in battle with a view to achieving success. Should there be any in the army incapable of discharging their duties, not only will good work be impossible in the case of such unfits, but what is more serious is that besides losing the battle it will cost a slur on the good name which the Gurkhas have won all over the world and will seriously impair the prestige of the Nepalese troops.

As the Maharaja concluded his speech the whole maidan resounded with deafening cries of ‘*Jai Maharaja Ki*’ and the soldiers and officers were profoundly delighted. No one had expected that such a departure would be made from the traditional policy of the rulers of Nepal and every body expressed admiration for the Maharaja’s generosity and statesmanship. The results of these measures were of a far-reaching character.

All doubt and uncertainty disappeared from the minds of men and they felt a great pride in serving their country. Security of tenure, a fixed sum of money at the time of retirement, and a provision for old age steeled the loyalty of the army and infused a new spirit into the rank and file. Efficiency and discipline improved considerably and the army was rendered capable of displaying greater valour and heroism.

The Maharaja had already abolished the old methods of annual appointment called the 'Pajani', an institution peculiar to Nepal. The rank and file of the army were required to have their appointments confirmed and renewed at Tudikhel after a grand review in the first month of the year. It was undoubtedly a bad system and led to inefficiency in the services. But in the army it produced mischievous results. It lowered the *morals* of the officers and men by creating doubt and uncertainty in their minds and made them listless in the performance of their duties. The Maharaja discontinued the practice and earned the grateful thanks of all concerned. Another old practice prevalent in Nepal was that officers were required to go to Commander-in Chief, the commanding generals and other Generals in order to pay their respects after the renewal of their appointments. The Maharaja stopped the practice in the case of military officers and by doing so, awakened self-respect among them. Everytime during '*Thamauti* and *Tika*' the number of places which they were required to visit was limited and thus the officers were saved from much trouble and botheration. To remove these age long practices in a conservative country like Nepal required great courage and firmness of will and the Maharaja never relaxed his vigour in giving effect to his plans. Subsequent events have entirely vindicated the Maharaja's action. Another measure of importance adopted by him was the formation of a *Picked force*, three hundred strong as his bodyguards. In an autocratic government such a guard is an absolute necessity. Students of history are familiar with the Praetorian Guards of the Roman Emperors, the Janissaries of Turkey, the Swiss Guards of the Bourbon Kings of France, and the Body Guard of Napoleon. In a famous speech the Maharaja reviewed the history of the past in order to show how necessary it was to form such a corps of men bound to their ruler by the strongest ties of loyalty and

devotion. During Maharaja Jung Bahadur's time the body guards belonged to the Rifle regiment. After him Maharaja Rannodip increased the number of his body guards, the Kali Bahadurs, who had served him for thirteen years when he was Commander-in Chief. Maharaja Bir made no change but Maharaja Deva added to this force the Purano Gorokh regiment. Maharaja Chandra replaced it by the Kali Prasad regiment and his successor re-established the Gorkha regiment. Past experiences showed in an unmistakable manner that a small unit of well-disciplined and efficient troops was far superior to unwieldy, illtrained men. For promptness, unity and co-ordination of action the former had an incalculable advantage over the latter. On the other hand the presence of a large force, instead of becoming a source of strength was often a cause of weakness and faction. The conviction seared upon the Maharaja's mind by the dismal happenings of the past was that he must have by his side a picked body of soldiers ready at hand who will not hesitate to sacrifice their lives in his defence if such a necessity ever arose. Consequently three hundred soldiers were selected from the Rifle Regiment and formed into a new body guard called the 'Parsvavati Dal'. Each man was to get a monthly pay of Rs. 25/- and was to reside in a barrack specially constructed for the Dal at Baneshwar at a cost of Rs. 30,000. The terms were liberal; each man could save Rs. 15/- after defraying the expenses incurred by the Government on messing, clothing and other requirements. The members of force were acquainted with the rules of the barrack, breach of which was to be severely punished. Provision was made for granting them home leave (Ghar Bida) to which an extension of three days was permitted if they discharged their duties faithfully and conscientiously. As a ruler who exercised personal authority in his country and who was fully aware of the Intrigues, conspiracy, murders and massacres of the past, he outlined in clear and several emphatic tones the duty of the bodyguard in these words :—

“If at any time, a usurper makes an attempt on our life and limb, and you fail to deal effectively with the traitorous assailant, you will be deemed untrue to the salt you eat, and will be guilty of gross disloyalty. But in case you lay him low,

you and your children will receive our due appreciation and as well as from our successors. If after hacking our assailant to pieces you report your valient deed to our second in roll (the Commander-in-Chief) and carry out his behests, you will lose both. It is the hope of these in the roll of succession below us and of ourselves that you will ever be ready to carry out every order issued by us according to the principles of honesty, loyalty and religion." The Maharaja quoted from history to show how valuable the body guard was in a monarchical state where all authority was centred in the ruler and he went on to add, "When Napoleon was hard pressed by his foes, he bade his three hundred guards consult their own safety but in defiance of his order, they stuck to their posts and budged not an inch. Such is true loyalty unflinching and death-defying. The Tsar of Russia was alright so long as he had his body-guard with him but his mistake in sending them to battle cost him his life. You have doubtless heard of the splendid victory achieved in the great war called the *Mahabharat* by Maharaja Yudhishtira over the numerous and formidable Kaurava host with a small army in whose heart burnt the flame of loyalty and devotion, pure and bright, we have not a shadow of doubt that you will regard it your sacred duty to protect your ruler's person. Be straight and true to your salt and you will find that the path of duty is the way to glory." Himself a seasoned soldier, the Maharaja fully understood the value of discipline and obedience in the army and his exhortation to the soldiers made a profound impression on them.

"Quickness in action should be the watchword and ever-readiness for service the distinctive merit of the rank and file. We may go even so far as to say that the whole duty of a soldier is to accept his officers' word of command with a cheerful heart, to act bravely in the hour of danger, to have no yearning for ease and comfort, to be content to live in the barrack away from the glamour of the town. Every soldier must know what the word soldier signifies, what his duty is and why government maintains him. Again, as he may be called upon make use of his physical vigour at any moment, it is necessary for him to keep himself in a state of sound health. Love of luxury among soldiers and officers will give rise to sloth, cowardice and impatience. On the contrary, simple

ife lived in the barracks in accordance with military rules and regulations is bound to result in producing hardy and vigorous soldiers." The Maharaja did not ignore the officers of the army and enjoined upon them the duty of maintaining the highest discipline. As the head of a military nation he always held that the soldiers and officers were the pillars on which the structure of the State rested. Military efficiency depended less on expenditure than on perfected organisation and thorough training. He never favoured spasmodic efforts and urged adherence to a consistent and continuous policy. The advice which he gave to his officers reveals his wisdom and statesman-like insight.

"The first duty of an officer is to observe strict discipline himself and to instruct the soldiers under him to do the same. Let the soldiers be to their officers like children to their fathers and taken care of by them. In short, soldiers and officers should be irresistibly drawn towards each other by feelings of mutual love and friendship; but one thing they must never forget—the observance of discipline at all costs. Once they have girded their loins for the service of their king and country soldiers, officers and generals must resolutely set their faces against comforts and luxuries and should be prepared to bear up against all kinds of trials and tribulations. He is not a true soldier nor a true officer who fails to do so. Moreover officers and generals should share alike in the sorrows and sufferings that fall to the lot of their soldiers. To bear extra pains oneself and try thus to remove despair and despondency from their minds, surely, nothing is more calculated to bring credit to an officer than this. A general or officer lacking in this most essential respect will be quite powerless to control his soldiers in time of need, to say nothing of winning their willing esteem and obedience. What can we expect of an officer who follows the safest course himself, utterly regardless of the hardships of those under him."

The Maharaja was a great admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte. He was fully conversant with the events of his meteoric career and owed much to his inspiring example. More than anything else he appreciated Napoleon's great solicitude for the comfort and well-being of his soldiers and his readiness to share their privations. He exhorted his officers to follow Napoleon's

example with a view to winning the confidence and esteem of their men.

“The Great Napoleon during his Egyptian campaign had nothing to be desired in the matter of luxuries and comforts. He had tents, handy beds, meat, biscuits and what not. But to instil fresh life and vigour into the hearts of weary soldiers suffering from insufficiency of good stuffs and tents, he slept with them on the sands, he boiled bean with them and accepted himself only such things as were available to the soldiers also without any thought of self. Little wonder, then if he succeeded in easily conquering Egypt. The worth and work of an officer are shown not so much by his words as by his deeds. It is the latter that will help him more than anything else to win the love and admiration of his men and to give a stimulus to their ambition and chivalrous spirit.”

The reforms outlined above greatly added to the strength and efficiency of the army and there is scarcely any person connected with the military administration of Nepal who does not recognise the signal service that were rendered to his country by the Maharaja. It was impossible for him to work miracles. He did not find a *tabula rasa* on entering office; he had inherited certain traditions, usages and practices which could not be set aside in the twinkling of an eye. Still he did much to remove abuses and to improve the conditions in which the soldiers lived and worked. In doing all this the intimate knowledge of military affairs which the Maharaja possessed stood him in good stead. Indeed he towered above all his contemporaries in the talent for practical organisation and there were few in Nepal who were so keenly alive to the necessity of having modern arms and of introducing new tactics for winning battles. He had a rare insight into the needs of the army and during his term of office large sums of money were spent on equipment and the Nepali soldier of his day was better clothed and housed than his forbears in the past. The Maharaja, like Lord Kitchner believed that if the soldier was to fight well, he must be fed well and if he was to be efficient, he must be made comfortable; if he was to respect himself in his profession, he must be adequately remunerated and if he was expected to do his best for his country, the latter must also suitably reward him for his loyalty and devotion. With this idea in view he improved the prospects of his offi-

cers and men and those who lived formerly in a state of destitution in their retirement went to their villages with money clinking in their pockets. Regular pay, care and protection in time of sickness and suffering, liberal leave rules, enabling soldiers to visit their homes at stated intervals strengthened their self-respect and dignity. Whatever lethargy and indolence existed in the army disappeared with better prospects and all ranks could in time of emergency, now assume the correct military swagger and utilise every opportunity that came to them to display their valour and heroism. The Maharaja himself was an inspiring leader of men; he possessed like Napoleon in an uncommon degree the gift of raising the enthusiasm of his soldiers to the highest pitch; he appealed to their patriotism; his words touched the tenderest chords of their hearts and led them, despite difficulties and dangers, to climb the rugged heights of warrior's fame. It was not merely the Maharaja's readiness for providing the highest equipment that made the Nepalese army a powerful fighting machine but also his insistence on *morale* and discipline. To the soldiers dispatched for the defence of India after the outbreak of the second world war the Maharaja gave advice which could be incorporated in the military code of every nation. He said:—

“Friends, You are now bound for a foreign land where you will come across men of diverse religions, creeds and manners, with whom you will have to remain in close contact. Forbear from casting an eye of contempt on their customs or creeds. Even in trivial matters you must not act in a way that will hurt their sentiments or create the slightest conflict. Learn to be content with whatever pay or allowance you draw and always cut your coat according to your cloth. Should you run into debt by living beyond your income in a foreign land, you will bring disgrace upon yourself and your country. Never get into such vicious habits. You must likewise refrain from riots and vices like gambling and the use of intoxicating drugs. Let your behaviour be always characterised by gentleness and amity. You have before you a splendid opportunity of learning modern military tactics and the use of new arms. You must grasp this opportunity and acquire thorough training by ceaseless endeavours.”

He went on to point out the value of discipline and exhort-

ed the soldiers to place no credence on rumour or gossip.

“Nothing is more essential for troops than discipline for on it depends their efficiency and dignity. Always bear in mind the value of discipline whether in the midst of war, conducting military operations or taking your ease in the cantonment, you must loyally execute the commands of your officers. Attach no importance to baseless falsehoods, wild rumours, clamours against an already settled plan of action, mass protests, riots, tumults. Report them to your officers and try to ascertain the real authors of the mischief. Officers should keep a vigilant watch on soldiers of notorious character and commanders should likewise keep themselves informed of the atrocities of officers. Wild rumours are subversive of discipline; such things tend to lower men in the estimation of foreigners and bring discredit on the country. Guard against such dangers.”

The greatness and glory of Nepal are due in a large measure to her soldiers. Since 1932 the army has grown from strength to strength and has produced heroes who can rank as high as their prototypes in other countries. Much of this progress is due to the wise guidance and comprehensive reforms of Maharaja Juddha and other rulers who attended to the smallest details of military administration and loved their soldiers like their children. He commanded the confidence and the loyal co-operation of his generals who were directly entrusted with the management of the army. It was not merely the earthly welfare of the troops that he desired to promote but also their moral and spiritual well-being. He appointed a religious preacher who explained to the soldiers the tenets of their faith and pointed out to them the meaning of *Kshatra Dharma* (the duties of a warrior).

Education, Public Health and Social Reform

*Delightful task, to rear the tender thought,
To reach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction O'er the mind.*

—*Thomson.*

Education is now recognised as one of the most important duties of the State all over the world. All progress, political, social and economic of a country depends upon education. Without a wide-spread and carefully devised system of education even the most benevolent ameliorative reforms are likely to fail of their purpose. What is necessary for success is the response of the people which is impossible to obtain in an adequate measure so long as they are enveloped in that two-fold ignorance which includes the darkness of the intelligence and the decadence of the moral self. In a well-governed State, therefore, education must receive a most thoughtful attention from the rulers. Through education alone we are able to understand ourselves and others. It tones up our moral fibre and enables us to enjoy our material comforts in common with our fellowmen. It leads to mutual understanding, which in its turn begets the qualities of sympathy and fellow-feeling and where there is sympathy, co-operation and co-ordination become not only possible but at once easy and fruitful. Besides, education fits us to perform our duties as citizens and

enables us to wage war against poverty, disease, superstition and a thousand other ills to which flesh is heir to. Above all it broadens the mind, liberalises the outlook and enlarges the sympathies. It teaches us to be patriotic and fills us with the determination to preserve our cultural heritage and to lay down our lives, if necessary, in protecting it from sinister influences.

The educational progress of Nepal has by no means kept pace with the modern world largely on account of the apathy and the deep rooted conservatism of the people whose mind refuses to travel outside the traditional grooves. Seventy years ago when in 1877 Dr. Wright compiled his book on Nepal, he summed up the question of popular education with the remark that the subject might be dismissed as briefly as that of snakes in Ireland. Since then laudable efforts have been made to give a fillip to the cause of education in Nepal. Important steps were taken by Maharaja Chandra Shumshere in this direction but they were retarded by the "traditional obscurantism or at least the jealous exclusiveness of a religion which had its roots deep not only in the minds but in the hearts of his countrymen." The odds against which the Maharaja had to fight were so heavy that he was fully conscious of the wide field which still remained uncovered and he hoped merely to lay the foundations upon which his successors should be enabled "to build up a well-thought out structure of national education." Maharaja Juddha Shumshere fully knew the value of education and understood the difficulties of pushing it forward at a rapid pace. This, however, did not relax his efforts in the slightest degree and ever since his succession to the office of Prime minister he ceaselessly laboured to advance the moral and intellectual well-being of his subjects. Soon after assuming the reins of power, he presided over the prize-giving of the Darbar High School founded by his revered father, and in his speech he foreshadowed his educational ideal in these words.

"What I mean by education is not the mere obtaining of a degree as a means to securing some employment in the service of the Government. I mean by it some sort of training that will enable you to stand on your own legs and solve the problem of bread and butter by your own efforts. The training that you need today is the one that will fit you to develop

your capacity for taking part in the commercial and industrial life of your country.”

Referring to the importance of youth in the life of a nation the Maharaja said :—

“In every country the youth has been in the vanguard of progress for the spirit of youth is the spirit of progress. A nation is sure to grow effete and dull unless that spirit is kept aglow in its heart, unless it is able to combine with the maturer wisdom and experience of age the ardour and vigour of youth. Whatever measures older men may devise for the country’s uplift, it is on the younger people that the responsibility lies of making those measures a success ; whatever dreams we may dream of our country’s good, it is for you, young men, to make those dreams a reality.”

No truer picture of the importance of youth in the life of a nation could have been given by a statesman dealing with large and conflicting interests. The Maharaja’s conception of education is not narrowed within the limits of a University degree or the mere acquisition of formal instruction through lectures or text books. It is a comprehensive view permeated with practical idealism and enlightened patriotism. The one great difficulty which an educationist has to face in these days is the relative importance which is to be attached to the so-called ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ education. Knowledge is universal and cannot and ought not to be classified under geographical boundaries. But the classification has some justification because there are certain special moral and spiritual values which lie at the root of eastern education and which we do not find in its western counterpart. The two are in certain respects distinct but they are not irreconcilable. The attempt to bring about this reconciliation is often marred by the superimposition of one over the other. The Maharaja had been conscious of this difficulty from the outset. He welcomed western knowledge and its application to life and the advice which he gave to his students clearly defined his attitude.

“It will not be for you to ignore the facts of modern life, to remain content with mere degrees of academic distinction. You must try to keep abreast of the times, and adapt your educational ideals to the changed conditions of life in the modern world. You must carry away from school and college something real and tangible either in the shape of useful know-

ledge or inspiration that will ensure a wider and more enlightened outlook that will enable you to deal with your country's problems."

But then he did not forget the claims of his own culture and sounded a note of caution. In words of ringing eloquence like other great men of history who have swayed the destinies of millions he spoke the following words of wisdom :

"While advising you to study the western arts and sciences I would warn you against the danger of being led away by the glitter and tinsel of the west. Remember ours is a mighty heritage from the past and if we want to live and prosper as a nation, we must cultivate reverence for what is best and noblest in our culture and traditions. As a great English poet has said :

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell."

Guided by these convictions and ideals, the Maharaja assiduously applied himself to the arduous task of looking after the future citizens of the State. He always held that character is far more important than intellect and manners are the fruit of loyal nature and noble mind and no young man is worth his salt who does not cultivate these with care and perseverance. Studies must be pursued with a definite aim to which all effort should be directed. This is the inspiring message of the Maharaja to young men.

"Educate yourself, be industrious, but do not apply yourself to study without an aim... Read with diligence... The important point is that the education that you receive should make you lovers of your country. It should make you men of sterling character. It should teach you the true manners, endow you with the true qualities, goad you on to pursue learning for its own sake, make you respect your religion and customs as well as your seniors and superiors and teach you to practise plain living and high thinking."

No ancient or modern educationist could have given a better advice to students in such simple words pregnant with deep and far-reaching implications. The speeches of a statesman are a true index to his mind ; they reflect the ideals of his public career and indicate the policies to which he gives mature thought and deliberation. The Darbar High School speech, delivered many years ago, is not merely an academic utterance

like our convocation addresses, ranging from platitude, to beatitude but a comprehensive outline of the Maharaja's educational policy which he has followed all these years. It clearly reveals his lively power of concrete issues, his rare foresight, his statesmanlike grasp of the problem and his keen sense of political realism, and therefore, no apology need be offered for making lengthy excerpts from it.

The Maharaja was not content merely with giving advice. He at once proceeded to implement his observations by substantial measures of educational reform. He made provision for awarding gold and silver medals annually to those school students who submitted the best essays in an open competition test. One of these was set apart from an essay in Nepali and another for an essay in English. A similar arrangement was made for the benefit of College students. To afford encouragement to brilliant students both in School and College he awarded a gold *mohar* to every student who topped the list of successful candidates in his class examinations. He instituted liberal scholarships both for School and College students to stimulate industry and talent. His recognition of merit was not confined only to students. Like the great kings of old, he extended his patronage also to learned men, and a number of workers in the field of learning and education were invested with the decoration of the Gurkha Dakshina Bahu order.

While giving every encouragement to the brilliant, the Maharaja was not unmindful of the needy student. He treated him like a considerate father whose generosity flows towards all his progeny in an equal measure. No student was required to pay fee in any educational institution in Nepal and those who were poor were given books and food also free of cost.

The attention of the Maharaja was drawn early to the expansion and improvement of the educational system of Nepal. He opened a number of primary schools in the remote parts of his kingdom and set aside the absurd legal hindrances which hampered private enterprise and prevented people from starting Schools to impart western education. He went a step further and encouraged the opening of such institutions by a liberal system of grant-in-aid. The only conditions, which required to be fulfilled by an institution applying for grant-in-aid, were these :—(1) Inspection by the education authority of the Government; (2) Changes in the personnel of the Managing

Committee to be reported to Government ; (3) Correct replies to departmental queries ; (4) Preparing students for the S.L.C. Examination ; (5) Complete abstention from any activity hostile to Government on the part of the staff and the members of the governing body. No obstacles were placed in the way of recognition and an educational institution which complied with certain conditions, necessary for efficiency and discipline, was easily recognised. To keep alive, the enthusiasm of those who started schools, an undertaking was taken from them that the school would be continued for at least five years. The result of this encouragement was that a number of schools were established, the most important of which were the Juddhodaya Public School at Kathmandu, Gour Bazar School at Gour Bazar and the Naya Bazar School at Birganj. In certain cases as in the Biratnagar School the entire expenditure incurred on the up-keep of the institution was borne by Government. To ensure efficient work in Schools, Inspectors were appointed who went out on tour in the country districts to supervise the work of teachers.

The Maharaja bestowed equal attention upon College education. He took steps to provide greater facilities in the shape of scholarship and stipends to encourage students in the pursuit of their studies. Nepali students were permitted to study at Indian Universities by means of stipends. A liberal grant was made to the Library, and the Science Laboratory was extended and the construction of a spacious hall to be named after the Maharaja one of the most urgent needs of the College for examinations, lectures and debates was sanctioned. No fees of any kind were levied in the College and the poor students were supplied even with books free of cost. Several new subjects began to be taught in the College and provision was made for teaching French both in the Darbar High School and the College. The extension of the Science section was sanctioned, and the teaching staff was strengthened by the creation of two new posts. The number of seats trebled. But the Maharaja was not in favour of multiplying graduates who were unable to earn even a bare subsistence. He wanted young men to acquire technical knowledge and develop the resources of their country. A scheme of launching a vigorous campaign for vocational education was kept in abeyance on account of the war and was to be taken up

as soon as conditions permitted. To encourage *esprit de corps* among students great stress was laid upon sports and the Juddha Shield was founded to stimulate interest in outdoor games. The result of these measures was that the people of Nepal, though prone to indifference and unwilling to shed their traditional prejudices, began to realise the value of education, and the substantial increase in the number of both School and College students testified to the progress which was largely due to the measures taken by Maharaja Juddha's Government to further education in the country. The numbers in the Darbar High School rose by more than 300 per cent in a few years and the demand for education became so insistent that a new building was constructed for it at Lalitpur. What Nepal needed most was more and more educational drive and the Maharaja was always ready to assist any enterprise that aimed at removing ignorance and backwardness of the people. But like a statesman who is conscious of his limitations he never forgot that in a country like his the reformer must follow the policy of *festina lente*.

The mere increase in numbers is not the sole criterion of a sound educational system. The subjects to be taught and the emphasis laid on the method of teaching are of vital importance. The Government of Nepal was a popular autocracy, if the expression be permitted, and the Maharaja like Napoleon, the great, took a keen interest in the curriculum which he examined himself with a meticulous care. He was always ready to widen the scope of studies. He made provision for the teaching of economics in the College upto the Intermediate standard also and appointed a lecturer to teach French to School and College students. So far only the History of England and India was taught to students preparing for the S.L.C. examination. The Maharaja saw this anomaly and emphasised the importance of the history of one's own country as a factor in the building of character and the growth of patriotism. He ordered the compilation of a History of Nepal which was used in place of other histories. Sanskrit was made a compulsory subject for the S.L.C. Examination and the medium of instruction upto this stage was the language of the country. This was a great step forward, and it was hoped that when Nepal had her own University, it would not be difficult to impart higher education through the medium of the mother tongue.

Mena Sana Corpore Sano is a wise saying and the Maharaja as a soldier and statesman had always been a believer in it. He looked not only after the minds of the students but also took care to develop their physique. A regular system of medical inspection was instituted in all the schools and the Colleges in Nepal. The *Mandal* system was also expected to engender a spirit of healthy, intellectual competition among the students and thus promote the cause of good education. The poor students who suffered from malnutrition were provided with a free diet containing nutritive elements. They were given free tiffin in the Durbar school and a separate grant was made for the purpose. Commenting on the periodical inspection of the general health of students the Maharaja remarked on one occasion :—

“How can the boys be expected to go through hard study unless they are sound in health? Necessary provision for the supply of books to boys, promoted to the next higher classes, but too poor to buy new books, and also a grant for midday tiffin to boys who may be hampered by ill-health due to insufficiency of nourishing food at home will be made and the amount set apart for this purpose will be spent at the discretion of the Director General of Public Instruction.”

How many Governments will make such a provision for poor and ill-fed boys? The critic will reply that the Maharaja had to deal with a very small number for whom it was possible to provide such facilities. But that is not the whole truth. The Maharaja was animated by different ideals and as a Dharmatma king he sought their fulfilment in actual life. Himself deeply religious, he realised fully the importance of religion in education. Religion like a man's *La Patrie* is the centre of cherished recollections and is the surest remedy against social destempers. As Napoleon said it is the vaccine of life and the most effective antidote against the grosser forms of charlatanism. In all that he did the Maharaja was influenced by his religious ideals and he wanted the spirit of religion to permeate all his plans and policies. He saw how in his time man's moral sense was blunted by materialism and his utter inability to appreciate the true values. He was fully conscious of the evils of a godless education and held with Carlyle that conduct waxed unsound where belief became uncertain. With this idea in his mind, he made provision for religious instruction in educational institu-

tions and devised practical measures to inculcate on the ductile minds of the youth the lessons of our ancient Dharma. He ordered the translation of religious works and by doing so enriched the Nepali Literature and made the heritage of our culture the common property of every Hindu living in Nepal. Under his patronage some of our greatest books like the Bhagvat Gita, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in which are enshrined the wisdom, the culture and the philosophy of our ancient sages, were translated into Nepali. Moreover, to ensure the elevation of the moral standards of the country he ordered the free distribution of *Brahman Sarvasva* among educated and deserving Brahmans in the hope that the great ideals inculcated therein will filter down to the masses through them and improve their lives.

As the moving spirit of the sole surviving Hindu sovereign state, it was natural for the Maharaja to make efforts to promote the study of Sanskrit in his dominions and to open the vast treasures of ancient learning to his people. With increased facilities the number of scholars increased in the Pathshalas and the demand for making adequate provision for the study of the various branches of Sanskrit learning became more and more insistent. The Maharaja generously responded to this demand and increased the number of teachers to facilitate the teaching of various subjects. It became possible for students to have a thorough training in the courses of the Madhyama, Shastri and Acharya examinations. Large numbers took up Vedanta, Nyaya and Mimansa and contributed much to the development of Sanskrit learning. To encourage learning for learning's sake the Maharaja introduced medals and prizes to be awarded to those who achieved distinction in their studies. A good Sanskrit library was added to the Ranipokhari Pathshala.

The students of the Pathshala were treated like their forbears in ancient India. They got *dakshina* (fee) regularly and the Maharaja's daily 'Godan', His Majesty's 'Til-patra-dan' (giving away of a vessel filled with mustard seed with gold in it) were all distributed among Sanskrit scholars. New seats were added in the *Pakashala* (free kitchen) where a large number of poor students were provided with meals every day free of charge. Besides meals these students were provided with bedsteads and were given a blanket each every alternate year. After the

great earthquake of 1934, a great portion of the Pathshala building that was seriously damaged, was repaired and a new wing was constructed to accommodate the increased number of students.

One of the most important reforms with which the Maharaja's name will ever be associated is the development of the Nepali language and literature. The real intellectual progress of a country depends upon the cultivation of the mother tongue and it is monstrous that national energy should be wasted on an alien language mastery over which is not possessed even by those who are entrusted with teaching work. "Tell me who makes the songs of a people and I care not who makes their laws" said a great man who felt convinced that first class literature could be developed only through the mother tongue. In a system of education through a foreign language the child lives in two worlds— one is the unreal world of his books and the other is the living world of his daily experiences and observations. Torn between these conflicting loyalties, the poor thing receives what is nothing but a travesty of education. The Maharaja held the same view and in his speech on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the Darbar High School he made the following observations :--

"Mother tongue has undoubtedly the highest place in any country's advancement. It has given me very great pleasure to find that the interest of the general public in the cultivation of the mother tongue is growing. The grant of Rs. 3,000/- made the year before last for the award of prizes to authors and writers in the mother tongue has well served its purpose. A further sum of ten thousand is being granted today to the Nepali Bhasha Prakashini Samiti to be spent under the direction of the Director General of Public Instruction. The lump sum of the ten thousand rupees given on a previous occasion and an annual subsidy of Rs. 500/- for the purpose of more English books for the library have been considered enough for the present."

To give an impetus to the development of the mother tongue the Maharaja made praiseworthy attempts. He created a translation bureau whose chief duty was to translate suitable books in various subjects into Nepali. An English-Nepali Dictionary was compiled and talented authors received liberal encouragement from the Maharaja. The Nepali Bhashanubad

Prakashini Samiti (Nepali Book Publishing Committee) was founded on the lines of the Hindustani Academy of the United Provinces in British India for publishing standard books in Nepali by securing the services of reputed authors. The Maharaja sanctioned a grant of Rs. 60,000/- for translation work. Men gifted with literary talent were honoured by the State and one of the leading poets and dramatists of Nepal Major Captain Bal Krishna Shumshere was invested with the order of P.G.D.B. Many books were published in the Nepali language but the success achieved so far was by no means considerable. Much still remained to be done and it was hoped that when the scheme had reached completion, the treasurers of Nepali literature would have grown in richness and variety. At one time Nepali was recognised as a subject of study by the U.P. Board of High School and Intermediate Education and a Committee was set up to frame courses of study.

Attempts were made to popularise Nepali literature by means of special shows and theatrical performances. On festive occasions when a number of variety shows and entertainments took place, the organisers were asked to employ the Nepali language and were rewarded by the Maharaja.

These measures which were mostly due to the Maharaja created a new cultural impulse among the people. The indigenous literature of the country took a great step forward. The beauty of the native songs and the sweet melody of native poetry were appreciated by those who were competent to judge of their merits. Art made progress and Nepal marched ahead towards cultural and educational advancement. The credit for all this belonged to the Maharaja who showed great ability, judgment and foresight in dealing with educational problems. He was averse to the imitation of foreign models nor did he consider the revival of the Vedic age within the region of possibility. Like a wise man, he followed the golden mean. "Energy too much strained tends to excessive zeal and energy too much relaxed tends to apathy", said Lord Buddha to the lute player in the parable. The Maharaja acted upon this advice and his moderate and well-balanced mind avoided extremes, and though emphatic in the enunciation of ideals he was never censorious in judgment. An inward urge led him from one step to another with hope and confidence. He steadily kept before himself the ideal of national education

which could not be better expressed than in his own words.

“What you call learning is not only for your personal advantage. Remember that is also for the onward advancement of your country. Neither proficiency in a foreign language nor the thoughtless in the aping of foreign manners will do you any good, if you belittle the superior claims your country has upon you and the reverence that is due to your ancient religion and institutions. Let the lesson that the truly learned man is he who lives up to the traditions, manners and customs of his country, be firmly implanted in your mind.”

A printing press is an important factor of progress in modern times and it is, therefore, necessary to say a word about the Government Press in Nepal. Much was done during the Maharaja Juddha's regime to improve its condition and organisation. The office was shifted from a suburb of the city to a central place on the Juddha Road and housed in a new building. New machines were introduced and a type foundry installed, and arrangements were made for half-tone and block-making in the Press itself. Postage stamps which were formerly printed in England were now printed in the Government Press by means of dies cast locally. The *Gorakhapatra*, the Weekly organ of the Government was now occasionally an illustrated publication and by the order of the Maharaja much improvement was effected in its get-up and the selection of the matter published in it. The Weekly organ could not satisfy the hunger of the people for news on account of stirring events that were taking place every day in the world. It was decided to publish it twice a week and give up-to-date information about current events. The editorials improved considerably ; they were characterised by careful thought and became a regular feature of the paper.

Nepal is a hilly country where the majority of the people earn their livelihood by agriculture. Difficulties of transport have prevented her from developing industry to any marked extent. The pressure on land has increased with the increase in population, and her cottage industries have almost completely succumbed to the machine made products imported from foreign countries. To afford relief to the agriculturists it was felt necessary to revive the cottage industries. The need for some sort of technical education seemed imperative and the Maharaja explained his attitude in these words.

“My knowledge of living nations of to-day and the experiences I have gathered during my travels in foreign countries have convinced me that no nation can ever prosper without the development of commerce and industries and it is here that we are backward. The greatest need of our country today is not education in its general sense, but technical and industrial education which will increase the material wealth of our country by enabling us to start factories and workshops of our own and thereby opening up new avenues of employment for many of our poorer brethren. In pursuance of this policy a technical school was opened in 1939 as an experimental measure to impart training in carding, spinning, weaving and dyeing. A fairly large number of students attended the classes and the results achieved were satisfactory. This preliminary venture emphasised the need for better training and equipment especially because the cottage industries of Nepal were in a primitive condition. The methods followed were out of date, the appliances used were obsolete and the finishing system was entirely defective. A regular technical school was opened at Kathmandu in 1940 and a three months' course was prescribed. Care was taken to recruit students from different villages and stipends were awarded to the deserving amongst them. The subjects taught in the beginning were (1) Cotton and Woollen hand spinning and Weaving; (2) new design and technique in weaving; (3) Weaving Dacca cloth; (4) Dyeing yarn cloth. It was the Maharaja's desire to train each and every farmer but it was impossible to cope with the demand and, therefore, schools were started in many parts of Nepal to impart regular instruction in weaving and spinning on a more scientific basis. The villages were provided with better spinning wheels and other materials on easy instalment system. The undisposed surplus output was purchased by Government. Besides technical schools a Sub-overseer School was also established to provide scientific, vocational training. A number of students were annually sent to India for specialised studies in arts commerce, science, technology medicine, engineering, metallurgy, veterinary and various crafts and industries. It was the Maharaja's desire to send a number of students to Japan for higher technical studies but his hopes were frustrated by the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War and the project had to be abandoned.

The Maharaja had always taken a keen interest in the development of Mines and Industries in Nepal. He had early realised that Mining, Industry, Trade and Commerce, and the ennobling and elevating pursuits of civilized life, were correlated and interconnected. The long-cherished schemes of His Highness were put into practice the moment God willed that the destiny of the whole of Nepal should be placed in his hands. He immediately called in technical experts of international repute to have the country thoroughly explored, and to assist him in every possible way they could for the national uplift. Consequently, a number of enterprises in every sphere of national life were undertaken at much cost unprecedented, in the annals of such constructive undertakings in the country. Painfully slow as these scientific investigations were, a considerable insight into the possibilities of the land was obtained in a short time.

The different Departments that were entrusted by the Maharaja with the systematic execution of these benevolent schemes had naturally to fall back upon Science for their support. There had already existed through the munificence of the Government some laboratories in Kathmandu doing their individual work. They were small, undeveloped and unknown, because of their doing only analytical and test works, limited both in magnitude and quality, and because they were kept back from co-operation with one another and were not given a proper impetus. A centralization, based on co-ordination, of all the laboratories, of which the Assay Laboratory and the one maintained by the Department of Mines being noteworthy was, therefore, to be forthwith aimed at; and the result was the institution of the Juddha Research Laboratories in 1941 (*cf.* Sanad of the 31st Aswin, 1998=16th October 1941). At that time, the J.R. Laboratories were provided with facilities for chemical and mineralogical works including Research. They carried out assays for the Mint and analyses and assays for all the Departments of the Government in general and the Department of Mines in particular. They were also authorized to assist scientific work started by private individuals on receipt of nominal fees. The Maharaja sanctioned Rs. 2,500/- for the purchase of some special chemicals and literature and a sum of Rs. 80,000/- for the construction of a suitable building to house the Laboratories and also for equip-

ing them. The staff expenditure and the annual grant amounted to Rs. 3,356/- a year.

The Laboratories made a remarkable progress. There was sufficient work forthcoming. In fact, some important investigations were conducted by the middle of the year 1942. The Maharaja who had always been the foremost personage in the country to recognise the vital role that research plays in modern industries was pleased to found a Chair of Chemistry at the Laboratories with a view to giving full help to the laudable cause to Science. By doing so, he hoped to enable Nepal to make it possible for her through her own endeavours to make a contribution, however, modest, to the stock of the world's scientific knowledge. It was decided to appoint a competent chemist to hold the responsible post of a research worker to whom every assistance was to be given by State. The Maharaja was also pleased to approve of a further expansion of the laboratories : the staff was reinforced and a collection of Rocks and Minerals was to be made ; to keep the latter in good order a sum of Rs. 1,000/- and timbers for making cabinets, etc. were granted. The staff expenditure and annual grant were increased to Rs. 4,796/- a year.

The site for putting up the buildings for the Juddha Research Laboratories was decided. A portion of Dair Tundikhel, enclosed at present with wire-netting, was the land allotted for the purpose. The same day, the Maharaja was pleased also to sanction the establishment of a workshop in connection with the Laboratories.

These steps are worthy of mention for they undoubtedly ushered in an epoch in the history of the development of scientific knowledge and culture in Nepal. In the first place, by these acts the Maharaja gave a great impetus to local efforts for the advancement of knowledge, and at the same time established on a solid basis the nucleus of the future national Institute or Academy of Sciences, the value of which for the development of National Industries is too obvious to be mentioned. Further more attempt was made for the first time in Nepal by him to give a special character to national culture through the internationally linked cult of Science; and his distinguished name will pass on to grateful posterity in loving remembrance. The Laboratories while he established constituted the foundation for a system of scientific research in the country.

Efforts were made to construct a scientific library and money was sanctioned for the purchase of leading journals of science and the proceedings of learned societies.

There was no organised department of public health in Nepal as we find in the modern States but Maharaja Juddha Shumshere realised fully the importance of the relation between the progress of the country and the health of the community. Ever since his assumption of the reins of office he had tried to make sanitation popular and to afford medical aid to the sick and the suffering. It is due to the interest that he took in the welfare of the people that a good part of Kathmandu which is now completely transformed today wears an attractive look and resembles a modern city. Professor Sylvain Levi was so unfavourably impressed by the sanitary condition of the town that he wrote in his book that but for the winds of the glaciers Kathmandu would have been a cemetery long ago. Much was done by Maharaja Juddha's administration to remove squalor and filth from the town and to foster among the people the habits of cleanliness. Civic sense is a slow growth particularly in eastern countries and habits that have been formed through centuries cannot be radically changed in a day or so. The municipal administration in Nepal slowly developed and every year more and more money was granted by Government to provide greater facilities of proper living to the people. There is no water rate or house-tax in Nepal and the entire burden of the municipal expenditure is borne by the State.

The common diseases throughout the kingdom are gout, dyspepsia, enlarged tonsils and constipation. During the summer men living in the hillside and tarai suffer from malaria, while in the rainy season dysentery is widely prevalent both in the capital and the suburbs. A well organised medical department is maintained by Government and Maharaja Juddha did much to improve its working on the practical side. Soon after his accession to the office of prime-minister he translated into reality Maharaja Chandra's Scheme of establishing a sanatorium for the treatment of patients suffering from tuberculosis. It was established on the Tokha Hill with an X-ray apparatus costing about Rs. 20,000/- and thirty beds were provided for indoor patients. The initial expenditure incurred by Govern-

ment amounted to Rs. 34,700 (British) and Rs. 99,000 (Nepali) and a recurring grant of Rs. 13,755 (British) and Rs. 26,556 (Nepali) was sanctioned for the maintenance of the hospital in a state of perfect efficiency. At one time tuberculosis was looked upon as an incurable disease and the death rate from it was very high but it is now much reduced and human suffering is considerably alleviated. The hospital is a fine building equipped with all modern appliances, and is situated on the hill top in the midst of pine trees which charge the air with a sweet fragrance which purifies the lungs and refreshes the spirit.

With the popularity of the allopathic treatment it was found that the Bir hospital could not cope with the increased demand and the Maharaja, therefore, readily sanctioned the construction of an extension Block, provided 40 more beds and appointed a new Resident Medical Officer to assist the resident superintendent to look after the patients. Along with the increase in the number of beds, which are now one hundred, the old appliances and furniture were replaced by better ones of the latest design to raise the standard of the hospital. The old operation table was not so adjustable that it could be raised to any height or inclined to any angle or turned to any direction at will according to the need arising in the various stages of operation. This was replaced by a new table at an enormous cost. Formerly the surgeon had to work with ordinary electric light which threw shadow and baffled the search for structures in the wound but through the Maharaja's generosity shadowless and adjustable light has been provided which is considered one of the latest additions to the operation theatre. Steps were taken to make the surroundings neat and clean and the floor of the operation room was paved with the best marble from the Godavari marble works and was made sterilisable to the highest pitch of efficiency. With the improved condition of the hospital its popularity increased and many people who formerly considered it beneath their dignity to seek admission into the hospital, however, serious their disease, freely availed themselves of the advantages offered by the Maharaja's philanthropy. The outdoor dispensary was similarly improved; the Eye and Ear-Nose and Throat departments were added to it and the most modern appliances and instruments were provided. The outdoor dispensary was named after his father the late Com-

mander-in-Chief Dhir Shumshere for whom the Maharaja always cherished a profound veneration. A liberal grant was made for constructing an extension Block to the Bir Female Hospital with 30 more beds, a well equipped operation theatre and an outdoor dispensary, so that women might also get up-to-date treatment.

The Maharaja was anxious not merely to relieve human misery but also to adopt the most scientific and efficient methods of doing it. As the western system of treatment became more and more acceptable to the people, the scarcity of drugs began to be felt and in cases of emergency people had to go long distances to buy medicine for which sometimes they were required to pay very high prices. To obviate this difficulty the Maharaja opened sale dispensaries at Bhaktapur and Lalitpur which supplied drugs to the people at the cheapest possible rates. The difficulty in getting X-ray photographs was removed by providing a new electric installation. Adequate arrangements were made for the training of compounders by starting a medical school, for that it has now become possible to obtain a requisite supply of well-trained dressers, nurses and compounders and the hospital staff was made thoroughly efficient. Outside the valley also dispensaries were established which did good service in mitigating human suffering. Cholera was a disease which formerly took a dreadful toll of human life in the valley but a separate hospital established by the Maharaja for the treatment of cholera cases greatly reduced the chances of death and it came to be regarded as an ordinary disease like diarrhoea. For the treatment of rabbies also provision was made. It was no longer necessary to go to Kasauli or Patna for treatment which was both expensive and inconvenient. Arrangements were made in Nepal for a scientific treatment by imparting anti-rabid serum which is administered by medical officers qualified in this branch. A similar provision was made for the treatment of persons suffering from lunacy or mental derangement of any kind.

Equal encouragement was offered to the indigeneous system and a handsome grant was sanctioned for an Ayurvedic hospital at Kathmandu. This was increased from year to year and a large number of dispensaries, staffed with qualified Vaidyas, were established at several places throughout the kingdom. Eminent Vaidyas were honoured by means of titles and grants

of land to signify appreciation of their humanitarian services. Although an orthodox Hindu, the Maharaja was an impartial benefactor of all his subjects irrespective of caste and creed. For the convenience of Muslims he established a Unani Aushadhalaya where medicines were distributed free of cost by competent physicians. This act of liberality was much appreciated by the Muslims who are as contented and loyal as their Hindu fellow citizens. Homeopathy too was not neglected and the Maharaja was generous enough to sanction the maintenance of the Batukkrishna Homeopathy dispensary.

The large number of hospitals and dispensaries which were established in such a short span of time and the medical facilities that were provided for a scientific diagnosis and treatment of diseases amply illustrate the Maharaja's desire to promote the people's health. There was no cause dearer to his heart than the happiness of his subjects. A great king of the middle ages once remarked that it behoves a ruler to be always active. The Maharaja lived up to this ideal; his mind was always occupied with thoughts about the well-being of the people; early and late he strove to do good to them and spent money freely for their benefit. Wherever he went, he constructed works of public utility. These will ever remain not merely as monuments of his generosity but like the pillars of Asoka they will serve to inspire his successors in future with a high sense of public duty and create in them a desire to follow his noble example.

Maharaja Juddha Shumshere was a pioneer in the field of social reform. Born in a conservative society, he had a first hand knowledge of the force of custom and the dominion which it exercise on men's minds. He had rare opportunities of coming in contact with various classes of people, holding widely differing opinions. As the head of one of the biggest aristocratic families in Nepal, he was fully aware of the evils that had crept into the social system and knew how men were forced to submit, against their reason and better judgment, to wasteful and unreasonable rites and ceremonies which implied a heavy drain on their financial resources. He knew how the people pursued the mirage of false 'Izzat' and ruined themselves by falling into the abyss of debt and despondency. Love of pomp and splendour is one of the inherent weaknesses of

human nature and when it is indulged in by large social groups, it leads to unhealthy rivalries which in their turn react adversely on the welfare of individuals composing them. False notions of dignity and prestige prevent attempts at reform and men become powerless against the onslaughts of sharptongued critics. In this state of helplessness they stake their all to win social respectability and esteem and go into the bankruptcy court. In an orthodox country like Nepal, the danger is greater because the people have to perform a number of rites enjoined by the Shastras. Every Hindu has to pass through ten Sanskars in his life which are known as 'Dashakarma'. On every occasion say, 'Namkarna'; 'Anna Prasana'; 'Chuda', 'Upanayana' marriage and funerals, etc. he has to observe certain customs which have been handed down to him from generation to generation. He incurs a lot of expenditure and does not even for a moment realise that he is sacrificing the substance for the shadow. He feels the iron grip of custom, resents its tyranny but with a passivity which evokes pity rather than indignation allows himself to be swept away by the current of prevailing social opinion. Appeal to the priestly hierarchy makes the position worse and the different interpretations of Shastric injunctions aggravate his difficulties. There are many who condemn the wasteful practices but none has the courage to declare that the community is pursuing a suicidal course.

In a society where intellectual convictions are smothered by the fear of social odium, a bold man of genius is needed to give the lead. Knowing fully well that example is better than precept, Maharaja Juddha himself curtailed all unnecessary expenses, simplified the celebrations and exhorted others to do likewise. He discouraged extravagant feasts on the occasion of marriages and regarded ritual as of greater importance than the entertainment of guests. He suggested a separate day after the nuptials for inviting guests and set the example himself. He proceeded cautiously like a statesman and invited suggestions from leaders of castes and communities about the simplification of rites and ceremonies without affecting in any wise their due performance according to the Shastras. After a prolonged discussions certain regulations were devised, covering all aspects of social activities in the life of a family.

Minimum requirements were laid down and all extraneous and unnecessary formalities were dispensed with. To take one example, in marriage processions even ordinary people had to carry a big umbrella with a gold pinnacle and a silver handle which could only be borrowed from rich persons. Besides, they had to provide themselves with a lot of other paraphernalia for which they had to go about from door to door. The bride's father had to entertain a large number of guests who formed the *Barat* or the bridegroom's party and had to provide ornaments and costly fabric which reduced to utter poverty men having a number of daughters. These extravagances were prohibited; the number of guests was fixed according to the status of the parties and the articles which could be given to the bridegroom were also specified. The marriage party was henceforward to consist of priests, preceptors, brothers, cousins, nephews, a few neighbours and such relations as deserved to be invited and the number was not to exceed one hundred in any case. The practice of the bride's father or guardian presenting a gold 'Mohar' and costly ornaments to the bridegroom when the procession reached his house was discontinued, and nobody was allowed to offer more than a rupee on this occasion. Those who defied or disobeyed these decrees were liable to severe punishment. The diehards among the members of various communities resented this interference with their cherished social customs but the bulk of the people felt much relieved and appreciated the need for such legislation.

The Maharaja issued several decrees for simplifying certain rites that prevailed among the Vajracharyas who from the priestly class among the Buddhists of Nepal. They had to observe a number of fasts and celebrate festivals which involved heavy expenditure. Many of them who could scarcely take out a subsistence were ruined by this unnecessary extravagance. The royal decree attended to minute details and prescribed the course of conduct. An instance may be cited to illustrate the Maharaja's desire to regulate even ordinary rites. The decree laid down that 'curds and fruits' must not be sent to those who observe the 'Vrata' or fast of Yogasan for a month. Another decree relating to the *Chudakarma* ceremony (shaving of hair) restricted invitations only to priests, preceptors, brothers, sisters, daughters, uncles, aunts, nephews and niece, members of the father-in-law's family and other near relatives

and prescribed the limit of expenditure according to the means of the person concerned.

Steps were taken to simplify certain other customs which prevailed among the Newars. Formerly when their daughters received the 'Diksha Mantra' from their Gurus, the parents had to send gold and silver along with the materials for worship (Puja). Now it was clearly laid down that only necessary articles for the *Puja* and a goat should be supplied and no gold and silver should be sent. Another peculiar custom of the Newars was the 'Janko' according to which an old man, who exceeded the Biblical span of three score and ten, had to perform certain rites with great pomp and splendour. He was taken in a Chariot, in which a seat covered with gold brocades was provided for him round the town with great pomp and magnificence, entailing sometimes huge expenditure. It was drawn by his grand children in the midst of a procession, accompanied by various kinds of instrumental music to signify the unusual joy of his life. Unhealthy competition grew up and men tried to outshine one another in pomp and extravagance in celebrating the culmination of senile decay. The practice was not altogether abolished but by a royal decree the expenditure was curtailed and the number of musical instruments, accompanying the procession, was strictly limited.

Another evil custom which attracted the attention of the Maharaja was the practice of mourning. It had assumed unreasonable proportionate among all classes. After performing the funeral rites from the day of death to the thirteenth day according to the Shastras, people had to put on mourning dress for a whole year. The rules governing conduct during the period of mourning were violated and only the form was maintained. The hypocrisy of this outward conformity to an ancient custom, which had lost its significance, was patent, and the Maharaja issued a decree forbidding the wearing of the mourning dress after the thirteenth day. It was welcomed by all sensible men who thanked him from the bottom of their hearts for abolishing a practice which was not only unnecessary but wholly irrational.

Anxious for the health and vigour of his race, the Maharaja abolished child marriage. The age of marriage in case of girls was raised to 14 years and in case of boys to 18 years. The only exception was that of Brahman girls who could be married

at the age of 12 years. Early marriage told seriously on the health of the younger generation and led to increase in the number of child widows. The reform has proved a blessing to the people and even among Brahmans it is not impossible now for grown up young men to find suitable brides.

Smoking was a universal practice in Nepal. Even children cultivated this bad habit and it was felt necessary to nip the evil in the bud for on the health of the children depended the well-being of the entire community. The mischief did not end with tobacco; a child who took to smoking gradually became addicted to hemp, opium, charas and the like and thus ruined both his body and mind. To stop this practice the Maharaja promulgated a decree which prohibited smoking among children in their teens. Both the buyers and sellers of cigarettes, tobacco and other intoxicating drugs to children were declared liable to punishment. The police was specially instructed to keep an eye on such delinquents.

Another great vice to which many people in Nepal were addicted was gambling. From old times gambling had been permitted on the occasion of *Panchak* (Dewali), *Kojagrat* (the 15th after Dashera) and the Chaitra Purnima (the last day of Chaitra) but the evil assumed such proportions that action by Government became necessary. Prodigals staked their all and were utterly improverished. The Maharaja issued a decree in 1942 by which he forbade the use of currency notes and gold coins and other valuable articles for use in gambling. Only silver coins could be permitted and this was a great relief to the families of those reckless spend-thrifts who found it difficult to get away from the pernicious habit.

Among the Tamang Bhotiyas of Nepal, who are not regarded as untouchables, there was the obnoxious custom of eating the carcasses of cows and bulls. The susceptibilities of the Hindus were greatly hurt and the Maharaja contemplated taking action to stop this abominable practice. But good sense prevailed among the members of the community. They themselves approached the Government with a request that twelve groups of Tamangs should be allowed to bear the congnomen of Tamang and the eating of carcasses should be made punishable by law. This was agreed to and the hateful custom was stopped for ever.

There was another evil custom in the district of Doti which

drew the Maharaja's attention. Among the Nayaks girls were not married. They were in their early childhood dedicated to gods and there was an ineradicable belief in the community that marriage would lead to dire consequences for the family. These girls were maintained at the cost of the Government. Maharajas Bir Shumshere and Chandra Shumshere strongly disapproved of this custom and stopped the grant of food stuffs to the girls and ordered them to marry. But their community took no notice of these decrees and the evil practice continued. The old ones among them who were no longer fit for marriage continued to receive grant from the Government but the young girls were asked to change their mode of life. The girls themselves were helpless against their parents and guardians. There were many among the latter who were unwilling to tolerate even the slightest deviation from what they regarded as an 'ancient religious custom.' During one of his winter tours a few girls waited upon the Maharaja placed their grievances before him. His Highness's indignation was roused and he at once ordered an enquiry to find out why the practice had continued inspite of the royal ban and what percentage of girls was still unmarried. An order was issued that interference in their marriage from any quarter will not be tolerated and any person trying to create trouble or preventing the enforcement of the order of the Government will be awarded exemplary punishment. Strong action proved more effective and the evil practice is now dying out.

In the district of Homila a nefarious custom prevailed by which girls of marriageable age were forcibly abducted and brought to a Temple where they were declared as the wives of their seducers. The parents protested against the conduct of the miscreants but in vain. At last the Maharaja's attention was drawn to this evil and he passed a decree by which such marriages were declared illegal and those who committed such offences were liable to severe punishment.

Those who have experience of social reform will realise that the task of the Maharaja was extremely difficult. He never allowed his zeal to outrun his discretion and in every case he trusted to the good sense of the communities among whom he introduced reform. He never tried to ride roughshod contemptuously over ancient customs and usages and tempered his strictness with leniency in compelling people to revise their notions of

social respectability and renown. He courageously fought against prejudice and tried to obtain supporters among those who were the victims of the evil customs which he wanted to abolish. If he succeeded in an unusual degree, it is because his reform was not radical but gradual and he tried to carry the sensible elements in the community along with him. The time spirit is helping the forces of progress and as enlightenment spreads and the operation of economic forces convinces men of the futility of retaining obsolete and wasteful customs, the so-called sanction of religion will become weaker and reform will grow from within. But posterity will gratefully recognise the Maharaja's sincere endeavours in the cause of social uplift, and his name will rank among the greatest nation-builders of modern times. His progressive outlook, his statesmanlike consciousness of limits, and his desire to avoid injustice and harshness are revealed in every measure to which he pledged his assent. The best justification of his policy is to be found in the wide acceptance of his ideas—at one time far in advance of the age—among the enlightened Nepalese of today. Time is the greatest corrector of our judgments and as years pass and men's happiness increases as the result of these far-sighted and necessary measures even the most obstinate diehards among the conservatives in Nepal will see things in their proper perspective and recognise the Maharaja as a great benefactor of their race.

Public Works

*A noble Craft, that of a mason,
A good building will last longer than
Most books—longer than one book in
a million.....*

—*Carlyle.*

Nepal is a country where the people have always shown a most benevolent spirit in raising works of public utility. Acting on the precepts of religion, her kings, nobles as well as the common people have built temples, monasteries, inns and wells for public benefit and have ungrudgingly spent money to make them picturesque and beautiful. Throughout the valley are found ancient monuments which testify to the religious zeal and devotion of their builders. From times immemorial Hindus and Buddhists have sought immortality in brick, stone and mortar. That is how Art has thriven in the valley and some of the grandest buildings have been constructed. Time comes when the majestic pomp and splendour of courts and the resounding thunder of dazzling victories on the field of battle fade from human memory, but the monuments left by public spirited and philanthropic persons are cherished by posterity and serve as reminders of our highest duty. A well-built road through a rugged and impenetrable region, a bridge over a gushing torrent of a mountain stream, a railway line through the commercial marts, humming with busy life, add greatly to the convenience of weary travellers and faith-inspired pilgrims on their way to distant shrines, and enterprising merchants, delighted at a prospect of a lucrative trade. In a moun-

tainous country like Nepal, the necessity for such amenities is imperative. With the best intentions in the world, the rulers of Nepal have found it difficult to provide a satisfactory system of public roads. Any one acquainted with the geographical features of the country can easily see how impossible it is for ponies and mules, laden with goods of any kind, to ascend the heights of Sisagarhi or the Chandragiri mountain. At places the path is so steep and narrow that the slightest carelessness in walking will throw a pedestrian down the huge blocks of stone and reduce his body to fragments. Throughout the country the roads are mere tracks running along the water courses which the ingenuity of man had cleared for facilitating communication between one place and another. For ages, therefore, in the hilly regions man has been the only means of transport, and on his back and shoulders have been carried millions of passengers, going here and there for pleasure or business, and tons of goods and articles of all kinds. In the rainy season even these tracks are disturbed and have to be repaired by the labour of myriads of men and women. It is on account of this difficulty that the vast mineral resources of Nepal can not be thoroughly exploited, and much of the traffic is still carried on human shoulders. As late as the year 1928, Mr. Percival Landon struck a pessimistic note in his well-known book when he wrote :

“Any thing like a good road system has been in the past and will probably long remain in the future a practical impossibility”. But fortunately for the inhabitants of Nepal this fear has been proved to be groundless by the disinterested passion for practical improvement which Maharaja Juddha had displayed. Within the short space of twelve years he has shown by his indefatigable energy and untiring perseverance, in spite of heavy odds, that nothing is impossible for a ruler bent upon ameliorating the condition of his people.

Soon after his accession to power he applied his attention to this problem, and the great earthquake of 1934 proved a blessing in disguise. The misery of the people and the dislocation of the administration led the Maharaja to re-organise the entire Public Works Department and to effect improvements which have materially added to the well-being of the people.

Electric Supply : By far the most important contribution to

the comfort of the people of Nepal is the development and completion of the Sundarijal Hydro-Electric Scheme. The first electric installation was opened in 1911 at Pharping. By degrees the demand for electricity grew more and more, and the people began to feel the pinch of a short supply. It went on increasing to such an extent that except during the three or four months following the rains, the water supply from the reservoir was found to be inadequate even for the daily needs of the mint, the power factory, and other Government works. The aerial ropeway had to rely on a fitful supply, causing no small amount of trouble and inconvenience to the local traders and the public in general in getting their goods up from the plains; while the most hard-hit were those who had established rice-hullers in supersession of the old-fashioned "*Dhiki*" or started other industries requiring electric power.

To meet this demand the Sundarijal Scheme was drawn up. It had its origin in the detailed report submitted to the Nepal Government by Mr. E.N. Webb in 1926. But the matter could not advance beyond the preliminary stage. It was in 1930 that the need for a new generating station became imperative. The considerations of economy favoured the old scheme. As Mr. Kilburne pointed out in his report, the anxiety of the promoters of the project was to meet without a heavy expenditure the demand of the moment with a reasonable margin to cover probable development during the next 20 years or so.

For two years the report was under the consideration of the Government. But the new Maharaja within a month after his accession to the Prime-Ministership asked for a further report. The scheme was sanctioned the same day it was submitted to him.

The rivers Bagmati and Nagmati supply the source of power. The water from the two rivers is collected in a reservoir whose storage capacity amounts to 2,200,000 gallons. The dam is of the arched gravity type, possessing the advantage of strength sufficient flexibility to render expansion joints unnecessary. Great difficulty was felt in clearing the foundations and in getting rid of water during construction and the work was much hampered by bad weather and floods. It was further necessary to provide against the sudden and violent floods to

which the River Bagmati is subject in the monsoon season. These floods carry with them vast quantities of silt which if not controlled would have been a serious menace to the success of the whole undertaking. The difficulty was dealt with by the installation of an automatic tilting gate counterbalanced by a 40 ton reinforced concrete block constructed in position.

This reservoir is connected with the power-house by a pipe line which consists of a low pressure section and a high pressure section. The power-house generates electricity at 3,300 volts, 60 cycles, 3 phase and is stepped up to 11,000 volts for transmission to the city.

The project was completed entirely by the permanent employees of the Nepal Government and the work was directed by Lieut. General Krishna Shumshere who never spared himself in the discharge of his duties. It cost the Government about Rs. 6,22,310 in all.

The Sundarijal scheme was the first important work carried out by His Highness. The project has made electricity available to rural consumers in an entirely new district. It has been used both for lighting and power purposes. It has placed of the country under a deep debt of gratitude to the peasants the Maharaja without whose help and encouragement the success of the scheme would have been impossible.

Nepal has three principal townsLalitpur, Kantipur and Bhaktapur. The first two towns were provided with electricity while Bhaktapur was without it. The Maharaja was pleased to fulfill the eager desire of the people of Bhaktapur for a power house in their town. This, he hoped, would promote the comfort and convenience of its inhabitants and further have an educative influence on them, encourage enterprise and instill energy into their minds to apply themselves to the best of their ability to works of public utility which, while improving their material resources, would make also for the general well-being of the country. The project was carried out by Mr. Kuliburne, the Chief Engineer of Nepal, under the guidance of Lieut. General Krishna Shumshere, whose advice and assistance were of great value in conducting the actual operations. In spite of great personal inconvenience he remained in close touch with the work at site since its commencement, having camped there on more than one occasion during the

monsoon in order to pay daily attention to matters of importance. Mr. Kaliburne too did not spare himself in the least and turned his hand to the pettiest and the roughest job with the utmost readiness. His indefatigable labours, his intelligent and practical method of doing business, and his amiable disposition won the hearts of all who worked with him. The completion of the scheme was in a large measure due to his skilled workmanship and cheerful devotion to duty.

In Nepal, the big rivers falling down from the hills provide a great scope for harnessing nature for commercial purposes. A limited company was started sometime ago at Morang with a capital of three lakhs of Rupees. Mr. Padma Sundar who had received his training in America and visited Japan was appointed as the Chief Engineer. This company was given a license by the Government of Nepal for 30 years and paid only Rs. 500/- as bounty. Timber and wood for the construction of offices and quarters were given free from the forest and facilities were also provided for acquiring land and for fixing electric posts at various places for transmission of light and power. No duty was levied on machinery and materials imported from outside Nepal.

Biratnagar is a prosperous and thriving town. It has a number of mills in the neighbourhood. With the encouragement of the state new industries were started every year. It was these Hydro-Electric Works which supplied electric energy and kept most of them going. The Maharaja's interest in industrial development was very keen, and he was always prepared to afford encouragement and assistance to any enterprise that was set on foot by men who meant business and who had the ability to carry their schemes into execution.

Water———The first thing needed in a modern and civilised country is an abundant supply of pure drinking water. Like air, it is a most essential thing for human existence, and on its quality depends the health of the inhabitants. In the east from the earliest times public-spirited men have built temples, Dharamshalas, rest-houses along pilgrim routes even in the far-off mountainous regions, where only the infinite labour of man can make such structures possible. They have constructed wells, conduits and tanks also for supplying pure and fresh water to pilgrims and travellers. These acts of piety are highly commended in Hindu and Buddhist religious literature and

are still regarded by pious men and women as the means of attaining heaven. Wells are particularly useful in areas which have no tanks, reservoirs or rivers. Though with the introduction of the pipe system, the use of well-water has steadily declined, wells are still important, nay, extremely necessary for the outlying districts. In Nepal provision for good water was made by her rulers in the capital and the suburban towns, but in many places away from the capital people were compelled to drink impure and infected water which generally led to the outbreak of cholera and contagious fevers, resulting in much suffering to the poorer section of the population. The growth of towns and the complexity of modern life considerably increased men's need for water and the existing supplies were found inadequate. In order to relieve the distress of the people a scheme was started in 1933 for the construction of wells, tanks, tube-wells, Dharas and several places were benefited by it. The extension of water taps was a great blessing to the people specially in the Tarai and the mountainous regions, and the hardships of life to which they were subject were removed by the generosity of the Maharaja. Even in the forest tracts which had been cleared for cultivation, the lack of drinking water was remedied by the construction of tube wells which greatly added to the comforts of the colonists who settled in the reclaimed areas. During Maharaja Juddha's regime the connection between the wives of the Prime-Minister of Nepal and the provision of water supply of which Mr. Landon speaks in his book was not only maintained but extended, and water taps and Dharas were associated also with the names of the other members of the royal family. The Dhir Dharas at Birganj are associated with the Maharaja's father's name and those at Kirtipur have been constructed to commemorate the name of his mother to whom he owes a deep debt of gratitude. The water taps at Tokha the hill on which the sanatorium is situated are called after the name of Bada Maharani, while those on heights of the Chandragiri mountain, 7,000 feet above sea level and at Khokna and Bungmati are associated with the names of Kancha Maharani and the Maharaja's deceased daughter-in-law respectively.

Through the Maharaja's kindness pipe water was provided at many places in the valley, in the hills and the Tarai where the people suffered a great hardship for want of good drinking

water. At Sunakhothi, Karya-Vinayak, Sallaghari, Bhaktapur, Chobhar, Matatirtha, Dhulikhel and several other places adequate provision was made for supplying pure water to the inhabitants. In the hilly districts also steps were taken inspite of great difficulties to remove the hardship of the people. At the shrine of Manokamna Bhagvati in Gurkha, water used to be brought from a distance of nearly a mile after many climbs and descents. The pilgrims and wayfarers were put to much inconvenience and had to go to distant nooks and corners to find water. In 1936 a reservoir was constructed which proved a boon to the visitors as well as the people inhabiting the area round about the shrine. Similar difficulty was felt in Newakot district where the wayfarers, crossing the hill, had to ascend a steepy peak without water on the way. At Thulapawna in Western Nuwakot the people drank dirty water from a running drain but through the Maharaja's kindness new taps were installed which made pure water available to them. At Bhimphed near the foot of the hills the scarcity of water was removed by the construction of a reservoir which placed an abundant supply of water at the disposal of the residents as well as the wayfarers who passed through that place.

Great difficulty was, however, felt in procuring good water for people living in the various parts of the Tarai. It was a vast area, full of forests, wild grass and pools of dirty water which befouled the air and seriously affected the health of the inhabitants. One of the most pleasant and flourishing districts of the Nepal Tarai is Birgunj so named after Maharaja Bir who laid the foundations of its bazar. It is a centre through which passed a large volume of the export and import trade between the kingdom of Nepal and British India. There are many Government buildings, private houses shops, factories, and the bazars are always crowded with natives as well as foreigners, many of whom ply a highly lucrative trade. Even such an important place was without a supply of pure drinking water. Wells existed near almost every house but the water was neither tasteful nor good for health. Tube wells were sunk in 1936; water was drawn out from a considerable depth and was stored in a huge tank which was named Dhir water works after the Maharaja's father General Dhir Shumshere. The Dhir Dhara gives an abundant supply of pure water and has been a blessing to the inhabitants of the place as

well as the numerous Railway passengers who pass through it.

Janakpur in the east which possesses a shrine of Janki, consort of Shri Ramchandra, the hero of the Ramayana, is a centre of pilgrimage where on festival days thousands of people assemble to offer worship and to have a glimpse of the idol. There were only ordinary wells for water supply, and consequently the outbreaks of epidemics were frequent, and the people were put to great hardship. Many persons who came from distant places fell ill and some were carried off by a virulent attack of cholera or fever. By orders of the Maharaja tube wells were sunk and taps installed with the result that there was a plentiful supply of good water, and princes and peasants, rich and poor, all blessed the Maharaja for removing a long-felt want. There are many other places in this section which have been benefited by the Maharaja's philanthropy. There are Juddhanagar-Dhara, Hanuman Nagar Saptari, Sirrah, Kangunj-Morung, Ilam Gaunda, Khasauli, etc. which suffered in the past from the lack of pure water but now have taps installed which have cost the Government huge sums of money and which have made good drinking water available to thousands of human beings.

It was more difficult to find water at Morang which is the most malarial district of the Nepal Tarai. The climate was so bad that the people who went there seldom returned in their original state of health but nobody was able to discover the real cause of this deterioration. Some held it to be the result of impure water, while others attributed it to the wild character of the country. It was eventually proved that water was the real cause of unhealthiness in the district. Yet owing to the difficulty of procuring a supply of pure water, no remedial measures could be carried out until 1936 when water was pumped up with the help of an oil engine from a depth of 200 feet and stored in a tank 30 feet high with a capacity of 30 thousand gallons. It is now distributed by pipes to various parts of the locality. Fifty four Dharas named after the Maharaja have been set up for the convenience of the people and all fear of malaria has been set at rest.

Nepalgunj is another important town in the Tarai in the western section. During an inspection tour of His Highness the people of the locality represented to him that they were put to great inconvenience owing to want of good drinking

water. This request was granted, and a large sum was sanctioned by Government for the construction of tube wells.

This somewhat lengthy account of taps, tanks, reservoirs and tube-wells clearly proves the Maharaja's solicitude for the welfare of his people. From the busy and populous towns which are the hives of commerce to the smallest and most unpretentious hamlets, situated on the edge of a precipice in the hilly country far away from the headquarters, his bounty has been made to minister to the comforts of the inhabitants.

Roads——— ———No one doubts that a network of good road is an essential requisite for the cultural and economic development of a country. Indeed the number of highways may safely be said to determine the height of civilisation that a country has attained. No country of importance can now afford to neglect the condition of its roads without serious consequences to itself. Trade and industry cannot flourish in the absence of means of transport; and without industrial development, a country must perforce remain contented with limited amenities of life. Fully conscious of these facts, the Maharaja, eager for raising the people's standard of life, paid greater attention to the development of roads. Narrow tracts were broadened and the surface reconstructed to allow lorries with heavy loads to pass and in the city of Kathmandu the roads were pitched. Though the 'quake and the war stood as great obstacles in the way, much was done to improve the condition of roads. The motor has scaled up the precipice at Sibpuri Range and has penetrated not only into the interior of the Tarai but also into the mountain sides. The whole country is pulsating with a new life. There is now stir and activity among a people, used to age-long slumber. The Government Tuberculosis Sanatorium established at Sibpuri range was connected with Kathmandu by a narrow track. This difficulty of the road created serious inconvenience to those who had to go there. The Maharaja ordered the construction of a motorable road, which while entailing a huge expenditure put a serious strain upon the skill and perseverance of engineers in carrying their operations over such a precipitous mount.

Kathmandu like so many ancient towns has grown in a haphazard manner. It was formerly full of small streets and

narrow lanes the danger of which was clearly proved by the earthquake of 1934. Also the growing volume of traffic and consideration of the health of the residents led the Maharaja to construct broad thoroughfares in the capital city. Liberal compensations were granted when Government had to demolish houses in order to acquire land for this purpose. A spacious road called Juddha Sadak, nearly 40 feet in width with footpaths on both sides for the safety of pedestrians was constructed, and it is the finest road in the capital. It is equipped with neon lights and is lined with stately houses and shops in which the most fashionable merchandise is displayed. The park, the townhall, the municipal office, the Government Press, the Fire Brigade Station and the Nepal Bank Limited, etc. add considerably to its beauty and importance.

With the opening of the Juddha Sadak the new locality rapidly gained in commercial importance but it was not linked by any direct route with such commercial centres as the Indra-chowk. A new road was, therefore, built between the two centres. It runs to the north from the statue of Maharaja Juddha and joins Indra chowk at the old Dabali. Like the Juddha Sadak it has grand and imposing houses on both sides built according to the same design and bearing a symmetrical appearance. Footpaths on both sides are well paved and provided with reinforced concrete edges. The metallic lamp posts are given a coating of reinforced concrete and on the top are housed electrical bulbs of superlight and power. The whole arrangement is so complete that it is impossible not to admire its beauty.

The main gate of the Singh Durbar, having been destroyed by the 'quake, a new one was constructed and a road was built through the tunnel for public use. Two gates were constructed just behind the temple of Bhadrakali, and a separate footpath was provided between Bhadrakali and the main gate. Two other gates were constructed, one facing the north and the other facing the south, and a railing was provided on either side of the two roads joining these gates. The road was pitched and now it has been extended from the outergate of the Singh Durbar to the British Legation, the Juddha Road and Tripureshwar. By the order of the Maharaja the Chair-

man of the municipality vigorously pushed forward the scheme of providing the whole town with pitched roads.

An important addition to the thoroughfares of the capital is the road between Tukacha and the Singh Durbar which has taken the place of the old narrow track through the fields. It has footpaths on both sides and big houses built by those who were removed from the Juddha Sadak area. They were given sites free of cost and were allowed to remove the materials of the demolished buildings.

Surya Vinayak and Changunarayan are important places of pilgrimage, frequented by thousands of devotees but the roads leading to them were far from satisfactory. The roads between them and Bhaktapur were equally bad. These roads were broadened and metalled and the hardship of the pilgrimage was considerably lessened. The road between Bhaktapur and Dhulikhel, hitherto inaccessible to vehicles of any kind owing to the regular steep climbs and descents was thoroughly overhauled. Three old bridges were repaired, nine new ones were constructed and Dhulikhel was opened to motor traffic.

Another road in the valley which deserves mention is that which runs from Patan Tudikhel to Godavari. It was entirely unserviceable and during the rains it was full of ditches and water. Godavari was the occasional summer resort of the Maharaja and also the centre of marble works. Once in twelve years a large fair is held there which attracts a huge number of holiday-makers of all classes and tastes. The road was metadvised in 1937-38 and the result of this has been that it can be used all the year round.

The facilities of communication in the Tarai districts were very meagre and a great hardship was experienced by the people in exporting and importing their goods from one place to another for want of good roads. Trade suffered and the markets too were not in a flourishing condition. When the Maharaja, who is always anxious for commercial expansion and the proper marketing of produce, came to know this, he instituted a fund out of income from Octroi and ordered the construction of roads connecting the centres of trade with the Butwal border. This has facilitated inter-communication between the various districts of the Tarai and has given a great impetus to trade and commerce.

Among the roads that were built a few may be mentioned. The unmetalled road from Murli Durbar to the hospital at Birgunj was in a highly unsatisfactory condition and caused much inconvenience to the public. In the dry season the clouds of dust raised by every passing gust of wind were a great nuisance to the travellers and during the rains the road became impassable on account of ditches and pits and the water that accumulated in them. The owners of the Durbar expressed their inability to repair the damage done to their buildings by the earthquake of 1934 and prayed for its purchase by His Highness. The latter graciously complied with their wish and ordered the road to be metalled. Dharan is another important commercial centre in the Tarai almost an emporium for the people of Tapligunj. Dhunkata, Balautrian and East No. 5, 4 and 56 but it was not connected by a good road with Biratnagar of Joghani in the south. Moreover, except in winter, the traffic was much hampered by streams, rivulets which were sometimes in spate. All exports and imports had to be financed in winter and this naturally caused a great hardship to both traders and consumers of commodities. To remove these difficulties a road was constructed and hundreds of culverts were made over the numerous rivulets and a steel girder bridge was thrown over the Sohati river. The road between Joghani and Biratnagar was thoroughly metalled while that between Biratnagar and Juddhanagar in Dharan was made spacious enough to enable the lorries to pass. Traffic can now easily flow through these towns and merchandise as well as the produce of the fields can be taken from one place to another without any difficulty.

For the convenience of pilgrims the narrow track connecting Chatra and Barah Chattra, which for a considerable distance ran through precipitous rocks was in a dangerous condition. One accidental slip and the wayfarer could be hurled into the waters of Kaushiki below and drowned. The river traffic was equally exposed to danger both from the wind and the current. But as it was an important all-India place of pilgrimage, the road was repaired and improved. The track was considerably widened and the people could go on horseback or in a sedan chair without any difficulty.

Towards the eastern boundary Naxalbari is a place through which pass the exports and imports of Nepal but the want of a good metalled road in this locality hindered trade and caused much hardship to the public. The difficulty was removed by the construction of a new road and by the mecadamisation of the road between Pashupatinagar and the border. The kaccha road between Pashupatinagar and Tok Laha and Aitabare pithia was broadened and made good enough for the passage of vehicular traffic in 1936-37.

A similar difficulty was felt at Nepalgunj which is another important centre of trade in western Nepal. People from Doti, Baitadi, Jumla, Rumla, Dailekh and other places bring their goods such as cloth, spices, etc., here for sale but as there was no good road connecting this place with any railway station near the Butwal frontier, much difficulty was felt in disposing of them. To facilitate the rapid flow of commerce the old track which joined Nepalgunj with the railway station of that name was broadened, the average width being 8 feet beyond the city and 12 feet inside it. Several culvert bridges were constructed and the road was mecadamised in 1938-39.

Besides these roads mentioned above many old roads were repaired and almost rebuilt at considerable expense. Their number is too large to be mentioned here.

The problem of roads is an extremely difficult one owing to the mountainous nature of the country. In the hills the roads are mere tracks which are sometimes destroyed by water and consist of little else than "a perpetual climb and a perpetual descent, and a perpetual river crossing." Much has been done *to improve* even these inspite of great difficulties. A survey of the construction of roads in the valley and the Tarai and the attempt to keep them in order is bound to fill one with feelings of admiration for the public spirit of the Maharaja of Nepal who has not only set apart the road cess for building new roads but also sanctioned large sums of money every year for their expansion and improvement. The road from Amlekhgunj to Bhimphedi constructed by the late Maharaja Chandara receives proper attention and is being annually repaired and maintained in a good condition. A large sum has been sanctioned for linking Birgunj with Raxaul by an up-to-date metalled road.

The introduction of footpaths in the road system of Nepal has proved highly useful to the inhabitants. In the olden days traffic was not so heavy and the vehicles did not move so fast and it was not necessary to be very anxious about the safety of the pedestrians. But with the growing use of motor cars and motor cycles, the need was felt for providing footpaths. This need was rendered more imperative by the fact that visitors to the capital from the countryside whose number is very large now lack a traffic sense and are in the habit of standing in the middle of the road and gazing at whatever might catch their fancy. The police exercises more control over pedestrians in Nepal than in India and it must be added that their docility is in strange contrast with the unruliness of some people in our great cities who regard the approach of a motor vehicle with perfect non-chalance.

Railways—The high altitude and the mountainous character of the country have proved a great barrier in the construction of a good system of railways in Nepal. The first railway in Nepal was started during the reign of Maharaja Chandra Shumshere which runs from Raxaul to Amlekhganj a distance of about 29 miles. Its construction and management was entrusted to Messrs Martin Co. of Calcutta but the Maharaja thought it useless to entrust the working of a railway to a foreign firm, and therefore, took over the management from the Company and entrusted it to his own officers.

Moreover, the line ran through the Birganj Bazar which caused considerable inconvenience to the people. The earthquake had caused a great damage to the lives and buildings. The Maharaja not only issued orders for redirecting the lines but also sanctioned repairs of buildings and added a number of offices, work-shops and rest-houses. Apart from this, he has sanctioned a new railway line which connects Janakpur, a famous place of pilgrimage with an O.T.R. station in British India. This has been a great boon to thousands of pilgrims who visit every year the birthplace of Janki. The line has commercial advantages also since it lies on the way to British India from the eastern regions of the hills and the Tarai districts of Mahottari and Sarlahi.

In the absence of the trolley motor railways all goods

imported into Nepal were brought by Ropeway to Matathirtha where the importers had to go to bring them to the customs office. After inspection they could be taken to their godowns. It was a round-about way and was expensive and caused much hardship. The community felt the pinch very much and felt that the transport system badly needed to be improved. The Maharaja sanctioned a huge sum for running this trolley motor railway which now brings all goods to custom office for assessment of duties. This office has been newly built with a number of godowns to lodge the goods. The merchants now go directly to the customs house and take delivery of their goods. The new organisation has avoided trouble, delay and unnecessary expense and given a fillip to commercial prosperity.

Telephone—A telephone line from Kathmandu to Birgunj was established during the administration of Maharaja Chandra. It served as an invaluable means of communication between the valley and British India. But until the accession of the present Maharaja there was no provision for the inter-communication of news within the country. A great need was felt for opening up means of communication with the east and the west. Accordingly the Maharaja decided to link up the isolated districts of the country by creating a network of telephone lines. The first outcome of His Highness's intention was the opening of a new telephone line, 219 miles in length. It was completed at a cost of Rs. 1,62,999 (British) and 2,500/—(Nepalese) and was inaugurated with a modest function on Wednesday October 7, 1937. It runs from Kathmandu to the Siraha Goswara office. By subsequent extensions telephonic lines have spread, right up to the Eastern frontier of the realm. Likewise the districts of Western Tarai will be linked up with the capital.

The opening of telephone lines has been a great boon to traders and the general public. It has provided great facilities for trade ; merchants are no longer placed at a disadvantage on account of the difficulty of communications and the consequent delay in the despatch of news.

The line from Birgunj to Kathmandu was further extended to Raxual, the terminus of N.G.R. during the regime of Maharaja Juddha and further facilities were provided. Tele-

grams are now accepted at Kathmandu telephone office for transmission to any part of the world, and messages from anywhere are now received at the capital. This has led to the growth of commercial intercourse between Nepal and other countries and has greatly added to the comfort and prosperity of the people.

The Maharaja also sanctioned the setting up of automatic telephones in the town which enabled all important officers and heads of departments to keep in direct touch with him. They had free access to him through the telephone, and this resulted in the efficiency of departmental work. The automatic telephone office was installed at Jamal near Ranipokhari.

Bridges — — — — In Nepal, roads and railway lines could not have been built without good and strong bridges. Rushing torrents through deep gorges make communication difficult and a round about track has got to be followed in case of necessity. During the rainy season these mountain streams, running as usual with a powerful current, are in spate and but for the bridges, each village would have been almost isolated from the rest. They are in fact the only channel through which one can maintain economic and cultural contact with one's neighbours. In view of these difficulties the construction of bridges has always attracted the attention of the Prime Ministers of Nepal. Maharaja Juddha was not unmindful of their importance and followed in the footsteps of his predecessors. The old-fashioned bridges had mostly gone out of use and were replaced by suspension or lattice girder bridges. Besides repairing the numerous bridges, damaged by the great 'quake of 1934, the Maharaja constructed many new ones. A wooden bridge over the Sohati river between Biratnagar and Juddhanagar was constructed, and besides this major work, hundreds of culvert bridges were made along the roads. A suspension bridge was ordered to be constructed in 1936-37 over Saprung river in West No. 1 to facilitate traffic to and from Tibet. A timber bridge over the river Banganga in Butwal was constructed in 1933-34, thus insuring the people against accidents and proving a good highway of commerce. Another fine iron girder bridge was constructed in place of the decaying wooden bridge over the Indravati Chatti river. The bridges over Jokraha, Thulighat Rato, Galsia, Setiganga and Ghattekholra were seriously damaged by the great earthquake

of 1934. They were all ordered to be newly constructed by the Maharaja. Steel suspension bridges were erected over the river Marsyangdi between Ranagunj and Tanahu in West No. 3 over Mohingkhola in East No. 2. To facilitate the trade and traffic of the locality, a strong bridge was constructed over the Balephikhola in East No. 1, in 1937-38. Besides this many culvert bridges were constructed which have enabled the people to carry their goods and cattle across streams and torrents without any inconvenience.

A typical example of the Maharaja's solicitude for the welfare of the people was his order for the construction of a suspension bridge over the river Bagmati which was opened in March 1939. This step was taken when he became aware of the difficulty of his people especially the poor peasants, gardeners and vegetable sellers in crossing the river to sell their produce. The bridge was imported from Paris. Another bridge was opened at Jawalakhel where a vast concourse of people assembled on the occasion of Bhotojatra of Lord Machindra. Besides, a large number of bridges were repaired and kept in perfect order for the convenience of the public.

Embankments-Canals—Nor was the Maharaja unmindful of the need for good embankments and canals for promoting the agricultural prosperity of the country. In the year 1937-38 he built a canal from the Tadi Stream in West No. 1 to irrigate the fields in the neighbourhood. In the Sarlahi district in the Tarai there was a vast tract of waste land which could be turned into arable land if irrigation facilities were provided. When the matter was brought to the notice of the Maharaja, he deputed engineers to survey the land and make recommendations for the improvement of cultivation. A scheme for digging a canal from the Manusmara river was planned and submitted to the Maharaja. In pursuance of this report he sanctioned a big dam and the work was started. To provide against the destruction of crops from the overflow of rivers, he ordered the construction of several dams. Prominent among these were the large dams built in the district Pokhara-Kaski (West No. 3) at a cost of Rs. 38,625/98. The Bir e nbankment, built by the ruler of Birat of ancient memory, extending from Morung-Yachara-Asthan to Saptari on the western bank of the Saptakosik was breached at several places

by the flood in the river, and a serious damage was caused to agriculture. In 1937-40 adequate provisions for the repairs of the embankment was made at an estimated cost of Rs. 52,000/-.

Public Buildings and Statues—Like a true lover of art and beauty the Maharaja did not neglect the construction of fine public buildings, gardens, statues, public halls and such other things for the education and recreation of his people.

One of the most attractive buildings in Nepal is the Gallery Baithak or the Durbar Hall which is situated in the compound of the Singh Durbar. It was built by one of his predecessors, but it was seriously damaged during the earthquake of 1934 and was entirely reconstructed by Maharaja Juddha. It is 81 feet in length and 75 feet in breadth. It reflects the Maharaja's love of art as no other building raised by him does. It represents an amalgam of Hindu and Buddhist traditions of Nepali art, influenced by modern ideals. On both sides of the entrance there are four *Kalases* of wood, beautifully carved, and on the pillars, supporting the central beam are the images of Ganesa and Kumar. In the middle is the figure of a dragon, carved in wood, with two snakes in his mouth. Here are two lamps of brass (light stands), four cubits in height, beautifully worked with flowers and birds on them and on the top are the images of Vishnu, Saraswati, and Lakshmi made of brass indicative of the exquisite workmanship of the Nepali artisans. As we enter the Verandah, we come across patterns of extremely rich and finely worked wood-carving and on the walls are to be seen numerous gods and goddesses and all kinds of birds and flowers. On the cornice are represented the events of the life of Sinhasarthvah, a merchant whose story is related in the Buddhist work *Gunkaranvyuh*. The verandah leads into the central hall on both sides of which athwart its length, running from one end to the other, are two galleries, formed by sixteen pillars on either side, which are exquisitely coloured and painted. On the top of the pillars are the figures of Garuda made of clay with folded hands. The ceiling is made of corrugated iron sheets but it is coloured and richly painted, having the Buddhist symbols of Vajra Vishwavajra. The gallery Baithak is a sort of museum which contains many things—graphic representa-

tions of Puranic and Buddhist legends, portraits of kings and Prime-Ministers and numerous other specimens of Nepali art. The painter's art is seen here at its best. In the upper galleries which ran through the entire length of the hall supported on the Sarabhas are painted on the walls the incidents of the Maharaja's Shikar. These paintings are real and lifelike and represent the courage, strength and presence of mind of the Maharaja in a most impressive manner. Every nook and corner of the gallery is rich in art and contains numerous designs of Nepali workmanship in brass, wood and colour.

Right at the end of the hall facing towards the main entrance are two high golden thrones which are occupied by the Maharaja and the British Minister when Durbars are held. Above the thrones upstairs is another gallery with a latticed wooden wall through which the royal ladies can see the Durbar down below without themselves being seen by those seated in the hall. The lighting arrangements are perfect. There are invisible lights, and when the switches are on, the entire hall is illuminated, and the colours shine and emit golden rays making the walls, the pillars and the ceiling all abaze with dazzling splendour. The gallery Baithak, besides illustrating the Maharaja's love of art, represents that fusion of cultures which is one of the dominant features of Gurkha rule in Nepal.

The psychological importance of public statues of departed heroes and great personages cannot be exaggerated. In fact, a people who cannot venerate the memory of their great men is lacking in one of the essentials of patriotism. Hero-worship, inspite of all the gibes against this noble sentiment, inspires us with great ideals and encourages us to do great deeds. With this end in view the Maharaja ordered the erection of a number of statues of prominent personalities whose contribution to the development of Nepal had faded from public memory. The unveiling functions were magnificently organised, and the Maharaja himself presided over them and expatiated with great eloquence and fervour upon the services rendered by them to the country, Rani Juhar Kumari Devi, mother of the Maharaja, Maharaja Deb, Maharaja Bhim and Maharani Loka Bhakta Lakshmi Devi, the senior consort of Maharaja Chandra,

were all honoured. It was for the first time in the history of Nepal that the memory of great ladies of the ruling family was perpetuated in this manner. The people were not slow to follow the example of their ruler. Out of gratefulness for the paternal interest which he took in their welfare during the dark days of the 'quake and admiration for his labours in the field of administration and reform they erected a statue of the Maharaja which stands in a prominent place in the capital.

Education was developing in the country and the number of examinees was increasing every year. The need for a big examination Hall was felt for a long time. The matter was brought to the notice of the Maharaja and he at once sanctioned a grant for a large Hall of reinforced concrete and up-to-date design. The Hall has considerably added to the beauty of the surroundings.

The Ranipokhari situated between the Darbar High School and the Tri-Chandra College, is one of the most beautiful and spacious tanks of the Nepal valley. It was constructed by the Queen of the great Newar King Pratap Malla as an expiation for the sin of killing a Brahman. By reason of the filth accumulating in it and the facility its deep water afforded to those who wanted to commit suicide, it needed a railing round it higher than a man's height. The Maharaja supplied this long-felt want in 1933-34 at a cost of Rs. 125,93 (Nepali).

The Engineering School and the Public Works Department office to the North of Rani Pokhari, the Pradhan Nyayalaya to the south of the same tank. the Dhir Dispensary, the Technical School, the Foreign office, the Military School, the Artillery School, the Female Dispensary, the Kotwali and many other buildings will serve as reminders of the Maharaja's generous bounty and love of architecture to future generations.

In these days of public assemblies and functions of various sorts the need for a spacious townhall was keenly felt. Indeed in a thickly inhabited urban area much accommodation is necessary for holding assemblies, special functions and religious gatherings, dramatic societies, theatres and cinemas, realising this need a magnificent and spacious Hall was constructed in 1939-40 on the Juddha Road to the north of the Maharaja's statue at a site within the Bhandarkhal garden. This picturesque hall has greatly added to the beauty of the town.

Nepal is the cradle of heroes, and their relics, if treasured in a national museum will serve as a source of inspiration to the younger generation. Besides, it is a home of Art and the exquisite creations of Nepali artists and workmen in wood, metal and ivory still excite the admiration of those who are competent to judge the value of such things. It was with a view to conserving the remains of art that Maharaja Chandra who was deeply interested in antiquarian research and education established a museum at Chhayni. The present Maharaja went a step further. Realising fully that a museum is a store-house of national glories and a means of stimulating interest in the history of the country he completely reorganised it and extended its building and added much to its treasures. The exhibits are well classified, and a careful examination of them will convince any visitor of their supreme educational value. Nepal has had a great past ; its history goes back to hoary antiquity ; its religious cults and diversified culture have a fascination for the antiquarian and the researcher. The student of Hindu and Buddhist religions and social history will find here in the exhibits of the Museum a great deal to enable him interpret accurately the life and thought of Nepal. The museum has also a picture gallery which must be a source of inspiration to all lovers of painting. It has a wholtime curator and its management is in the hands of a Director-General who takes a keen interest in its growth and development.

A zoological garden in front of the Maharaja's Jawalakhel Palace has supplied a long-felt want. It abounds in all sorts of birds and beasts. Everybody can visit this zoo on payment of a nominal fee. The majestic lion, the cunning fox, the fair-eyed antelope, the multi-coloured birds, the restless monkeys, the bright and golden fish, besides many rare specimens of animals and birds present here to us the world of nature in miniature.

There is closed inter-communication between Nepal and Darjeeling a hilly district on the eastern frontier. For some time past there had been a large influx of Nepalese population to the place. Most of the emigrants who settled there went in search of employment and formed a sort of Nepali colony. Away from their native land, cut off from their religious surroundings, many of them lost their faith and began to

cherish heterodox views. The Maharaja was deeply pained at the growth of these unhealthy tendencies and to remove the evil he ordered the construction of a temple of Siva corresponding to the shrine of Pashupati Nath in Nepal and a rest house for the convenience of pilgrims. The temple is called Dhirdham to perpetuate the memory of his illustrious father, Commander-in-Chief Bhir Shumshere, and is a proof of his filial gratitude and veneration. A substantial sum of money has been set apart for the purpose of conducting religious rites in the temple and a learned Pandit has been employed to perform them. A Board of Trustees, consisting of religiously-minded persons, has been constituted by the residents of Darjeeling, Kursing, Sikkim and other places to look after its management. The opening ceremony of the Dham was performed by General Bahadur Shumshere who made an inspiring speech in which he exhorted the Nepalese present there not to forget their religion and country whatever the surroundings in which they lived. He recalled to their minds the glory, might and beneficence of Lord Pashupati, the guardian Deity of Nepal, to whom they must all look up with feelings of reverence and devotion. The General concluded by expressing the hope :

“ I trust that this Dhir Dham will continue to be in future a centre of increased devotion and will grow more and more attractive by the chanting of holy hymns and songs by devotees who will assemble on festive occasions like Shivaratri so that this monument, reared by the piety of my illustrious father, may keep ever-green in our minds the notion of Sanatan Dharma.”

The temple has now become a centre of piety and is frequented by a large number of pilgrims, Nepalese as well as foreigners, all of whom bless the name of its pious founder.

The Juddha Fire Brigade (*Varuna Yantra*)—“An English man’s home is his castle” goes the saying, and from this we can realise how important a man’s home is to him. An important part of the home is the building, however, modest in which we live. It is there that associations grow up which we treasure all our lives. To say nothing of human beings even birds and beasts cannot exist without some sort of dwelling-place birds build nests, beasts remain in dense or caves and smaller insects burrow holes in the crevices of the earth or

meadows where they seek shelter against the heat and the rain. The destruction of these dwelling-places causes frightful misery to the occupant. In 1935-36 the Maharaja introduced the Fire Brigade in Nepal at a cost of Rs. 62,081/64 and the establishment cost the Government Rs. 10,420 per annum. The fire engine was placed first under an Englishman who trained Nepalese workers. An iron stand of considerable height was erected, so that by ascending to its top the fireman could locate the places where fire was working havoc and they hastened to afford succour. Since the introduction of the fire engine damage by fire has been considerably reduced. It has proved a great boon to the people. Further grants were made by the Maharaja for establishing fire engines at Bhaktapur and Lalitpur also. To make the service of the fire engine effective an order was issued by the Maharaja that when the bell was sounded, all vehicular traffic on the roads must be stopped, and pedestrians must keep aside, and if any accident occurred, the fire brigade would not be responsible.

The Hindu Kings of old always tried to protect their people and spent lavishly to minister to their comforts. The inscriptions of Asoka and other monarchs show clearly that in their time it was regarded as an act of great religious merit to build wells, tanks, embankments, rest-houses and to plant groves to afford shelter to weary travellers. The monuments which they have left behind speak of their glory and greatness. The Maharaja followed according to his lights the old tradition and sought immortality in brick and stone. The works of public utility that were raised by him during the last twelve or thirteen years have contributed much to human welfare and have made life brighter and happier. All his subjects without distinction of caste and creed have shared his bounty. Indeed the universality of his benevolence is a striking feature of his public activities. Still, it must be said that the organisation and success of the Public Works Department are not yet what we might expect in a modern and civilised state. Much remains to be done.

Besides, adorning the capital with beautiful buildings and roads—which have added much to public comfort he made arrangements for water and light and adopted measures to improve the sanitation of the towns. In Nepal, municipal administration is conducted by the central government. It has

some obvious advantages—quick despatch of business, absence of party rancour, a disinterested desire to do good to the public, irrespective of locality, but the success of such a system can be ensured only by wise and paternal guidance. The supreme drawback is that the entire burden of providing civic amenities falls on the state which has naturally to adjust its budget by effecting economies elsewhere. It has to be borne in mind that there are no municipal taxes in Nepal and the financing of schemes of the improvement of the country is entirely the business of Government. Much has to be done in order to bring Nepal into line with the enlightened and progressive states of the world. Progress in this direction is bound to be slow. Public ignorance and apathy are great obstacles to the development of a scientific and efficient system of municipal administration. Even in British India a satisfactory system of local self Government, conducive to public well-being is still a far-off adorable dream, but time works great changes in human habits and customs, and it may be hoped that in the years to come greater efforts will be made not only to raise public building but to improve the condition of the cities and villages in order to create surroundings in which men will live happy, healthy and vigorous lives.

Economic Development

*And wealth, more bright with virtue joined,
Brings golden opportunity,
The sparkling star, the sun beam of mankind.*

—Pindar

Maharaja Juddha Shumshere's accession to the Prime Ministership of Nepal marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the economic development of the country. Before his time there were no large scale industries, no big commercial enterprise, partly owing to the apathy of capitalists and partly owing to lack of encouragement. Even the Cottage Industries which form a strong support of the agricultural population were in a state of decline. Foreign competition had adversely affected them and in the absence of tariffs there was little hope of their advancement. The idea of state interference with the economic life of the people was repugnant to the rulers and the ruled alike. Peace and order were fully maintained but no steps were taken to give an impetus to industry and commerce. Perhaps, considering the peculiar circumstances of the country it was not possible to do so. The result was that the people depended entirely upon imports for their very existence. Slowly the idea began to dawn upon thinking minds that a country cannot make headway in the modern world unless it is economically self-sufficient. The Maharaja saw the need for a national drive with a clearness which none could surpass. Soon after assuming the reins of office, he laid

great stress upon industrial development and observed that in twentieth century politics were largely determined by economic factors and no country could hold its own against foreign nations unless it gave careful thought to national planning. He fully recognised the immense possibilities that had been created by the new inventions and discoveries of science and felt convinced that it was necessary to rouse the consciousness of the people and to bring home to them the necessity of devoting themselves to industrial pursuits. This was the only way in which the people could make themselves rich and prosperous in a competitive age when nations were fiercely trying to serve their own selfish interests. In his very first speech the Maharaja thus outlined his industrial policy :

“The happiness of the people is bound up with the prosperity of the mercantile community. The people of great Britain, Germany and France enjoy a large measure of happiness. Owing chiefly to the fact that the merchants of those countries own huge capital, and carry on industrial pursuits and trade on gigantic scales and have opened avenues of employment to all their countrymen. It follows, therefore, that trade and industry are essential for national welfare and happiness. We must import machines and other accessories of manufacture, start indigenous industries and derive ample profit from the export of our produce. There should be a steady increase in the volume of exports and a corresponding reduction in the imports of finished products. This policy will, in course of time, enable us to achieve economic freedom and a measure of self-sufficiency and thus pave the way for the greatness and glory of the country.”

Nepal is a poor country although it abounds in raw materials and great natural resources. It has all the essentials of a successful policy of industrial development. Rich in mineral resources, it is reputed to contain some of the finest deposits in the world. The foaming mountain torrents, falling from great heights, provide immense possibilities of the development of hydro-electricity. Labour is cheap and there is no doubt that if the necessary education and training are provided, it can very successfully meet all national requirements. In intelligence and resourcefulness the Nepali is inferior to none and in industry thrift, honesty, perseverance and endurance he will beat hollow the rest of mankind. The scientific cultivation

and preservation of the dense and varied forests which abound in multitudinous flora and fauna and supply valuable timber, provide a rich field for exploration. The lands of the Tarai are noted for their rich harvests; their fertility is well-known and if they are properly cultivated according to modern and up-to-date methods, they can grow food enough to satisfy the needs of the inhabitants of the entire kingdom. In short Nepal is endowed by nature with abundant resources and what is needed is initiative and enterprise among the people to make use of them.

Soon after his accession, the Maharaja took steps to organise a department to promote the economic welfare of his subjects and placed it under the direction of General Bahadur Shumshere who had observed with his own eyes the economic methods and the progress of European countries. Experts from outside were invited to advise the Government which was not slow to utilise their knowledge and experience. The aim of the General was to make Nepal economically self-sufficient and prosperous and he brought to bear on his task the striking ability, the clear vision and the deep insight of a statesman. In all his endeavours he received the fullest encouragement from the Maharaja who was himself eager to implement his industrial and commercial policy. On Sunday, the 24th November, 1935 the Development Board (*Udyog Parishad*) was founded with a view to improving the economic condition of the country. During the seven or eight years of its existence many industrial concerns were started through the effort of the (*Udyog Parishad*). It gave a great stimulus to private enterprise and capitalists, great and small, came forward to help the industrialisation of the country. In order to encourage indigenous enterprise and capital the Maharaja passed the Nepal Companies Act in 1936-37. The immediate effect was that the people began to invest their savings in industrial concerns rather than hoard them in the shape of jewellery, landed property or shares in foreign companies. The success of the Biratnagar Jute Mills Ltd., and the Juddha Match Factory Ltd., convinced them of the soundness of such investments. The result has been that a number of factories and concerns have sprung into existence in Nepal and are endeavouring to utilise the natural resources of the country. They have afforded scope to capitalists and

employed labour both skilled and unskilled, to develop trade and commerce. More and more men have taken to industries as their occupation with a confidence which had never been seen before. A brief survey of some of the leading joint stock companies will give the reader an idea of the success that has been achieved.

The Biratnagar Jute Mills Ltd., was the first company that started business in Nepal with a capital of sixteen lakhs. It manufactured various kinds of jute goods out of lakhs of maunds of raw jute produced in the country. The Pashupatinath Trading Company Ltd., was an allied concern with a capital of Rs. 50,000/-; it took up the managing agency of the Biratnagar Jute Mills and dealt in jute and other goods. The Juddha Match Factory Ltd, started with an authorised capital of one lakh of rupees, proved a successful check on the export of a vast amount of natural wealth to Norway, Sweden and Japan in the shape of the price of imported matches. The Nepal Oil Mills Ltd., Pashupatinagar, which began business with a capital of Rs. 50,000/- was a venture to manufacture mustard and rape oil and by-products from the huge quantity of raw materials available in eastern Nepal. The Nepal Chemical Industries limited at Biratnagar was registered with an authorised capital of one lakh of rupees and aimed at utilising the drugs, berbs and other raw materials in which the country abounds and at manufacturing at least the indispensable chemicals for industrial and medicinal purposes. To supply electricity to the factories at Morang, a hydro-electric company was started at Biratnagar with an authorised capital of ten lakhs for the utilisation of the rivers of Morang and the supply of electric energy to the industrial concern of the Morang district and to the Biratnagar. Another important concern worthy of attention in this district which is the home of Nepal's industries was Shree Guhyeshwari Rice Mills Ltd. floated by the people of Morang with a capital of Rs. 50,000/- with the object of starting rice mills on an up-to-date scale and doing business in all the agricultural products of the district. Another concern for the manufacture of plywood with a capital of several lakhs also started work in this area. Besides these, two cotton Mills were also established at Birganj and Morang with an authorised capital of Rupees seven and

nine lakhs respectively. The first aimed at utilising the cotton yarns and goods required for the various textile factories and the weavers of the country and the second at manufacturing cotton yarns, canvas and hosiery goods. Owing to war most of these companies are not flourishing concerns and have amply rewarded the labours of the promoter by declaring annually a substantial dividend.

The capital city of the country showed signs of much improvement since the accession of the Maharaja. Trade grew and more and more interest was taken by the people in industrial pursuits as is shown by the large number of men and women who visited the exhibitions that were held under the auspices of the Government. The important factories were the Sabun Karyalaya the Frame Furniture Factory, Shree Nepal Dhanwantari Niketan, the Nepal Kagat Karyalaya and the Nepal ceramica-Glass Karayalaya. The last was the first company of its kind started after a protracted ceramic survey organised by the Udyoga Parishad with the double object of utilising the immense raw materials such as kaolin, felspar, quartz, sandstone in the manufacture of various kinds of ceramic as well glass articles of daily use. It was registered with a capital of one lakh of rupees and its head office was located at Kathmandu.

Industrial Exhibitions were organised by the Udyoga Parishad for giving an impetus to indigenous arts and crafts and for enabling the people to have an idea of the progress which their country had made. A display of home made goods on an extensive scale led the people to think that foreign goods were after all not so necessary. An important purpose which the exhibitions served was that they engendered a healthy spirit of competition and induced artisans and workmen to show their skill at its highest level. Consequently every succeeding exhibition displayed better and more exquisite goods and served as an incentive to the better production of articles, indispensable for the people at large. The first exhibition was held in 1934-35, the second in 1939-40 and the third in 1944. Exhibitions are highly popular in Nepal. The present writer has witnessed one of these with his own eyes. The brilliant goods exhibited, the demonstrations given in arts and crafts, the variety of local products and the business-like manner in

which the whole thing was managed bear eloquent testimony to the untiring zeal and patriotic labours of Maharaja Juddha Shumshere. The exhibitions were visited by thousands of men and women of all classes.

There was a great purpose that lay behind these exhibitions. They were a part and parcel of the big drive which the Maharaja had launched to develop the industries of the country. His motto had always been economic self-sufficiency and he never disguised his preference for home-made goods to foreign products. Himself an ardent and uncompromising Swadeshi, he always used countrymade cloth and his example was followed by his officers and the general public. Both by precept and example, he impressed upon his countrymen the necessity of eschewing as far as possible the use of foreign articles and his advice was loyally responded to. It was not by official decrees but by stirring, patriotic appeals that the Maharaja tried to rouse the love of Swadeshi amongs his people in performing the opening ceremony of the second exhibition he put forward a passionate plea for the use of countrymade goods :

“A country’s all round progress cannot be effected solely by the unaided efforts of Government. You shou’d all bear in mind that it will be feasible only with the mutual goodwill and co-operation of all ..It is not a matter of pride for us to earn money by selling foreign goods in our markets, however, bright and attractive they may be. The import of foreign goods means the export of national wealth. The day you will be able to put a dead stop to the hateful practice of enriching foreign countries at the cost of our own country’s wealth will be a day for real pride and satisfaction. Supply the wants of the country by manufacturing required goods in the country itself or even try to export them to the foreign markets.”

This patriotic appeal of the Maharaja did not fall flat on his people. They responded cheerfully to the call of duty and exerted themselves to the utmost to carry out his wishes. In the first exhibition goods worth Rs. 75,000/- were sold in less than three weeks. All thoughtful men were convinced that the superstructure of national greatness could only be built on the

foundations of true Swadeshi. In this connection the subject of cottage industries deserves a passing mention. Nepal is an agricultural country and as such rural industries are her backbone. The agriculturists even in times of regular monsoons remain idle for a few months in the year, when the crops are in the process of ripening and thus a good deal of national energy runs to waste. Sometimes the state of *ennuni* leads to moral deterioration and as the saying goes an idle man's mind becomes the devil's workshop. It is necessary, therefore, for the state as much in its own interest as that of the people to provide occupation to these men. The best thing to do so is to engage them in small-scale industries which do not require much capital and which can be easily managed in the rural areas. Besides increasing the purchasing power of the agriculturists, the encouragement of such industries augments the production of the essential commodities in the country.

History records that there was a time when agriculture and cottage industries were in a flourishing condition in Nepal. With the rapid growth of population and quick penetration of foreign goods into the interior of the country a new problem confronted her. As time passed, the menace to cottage industries became serious and the cheap machine-made goods crushed the crude products of the hand by their glamour and superficial beauty. The people cared nothing for durability or the economic interests of the country and the markets were flooded with such goods. Besides the foreign competition there were other causes which seriously hampered the progress of cottage industries. These were mainly four. In comparison with the industries of other countries Nepal's industries were primitive ; the methods followed were out of date ; the appliances were crude and obsolete and the finishing system was highly defective. The Maharaja boldly tackled the problem. He realised that without a simultaneous attack on all these fronts it was impossible to rescue the struggling peasantry of Nepal from the wretched economic position in which they found themselves, and the creation of a separate department for this purpose became an imperative necessity.

This department was created in 1939-40 and the Maharaja's contribution to its growth and development was unique. He took a keen interest in its activities and appointed capable

officers to carry out his ideas. The department was entrusted with the entire work relating to cottage industries in Nepal. It chalked out a comprehensive plan of organising village industries in the country and took steps to safeguard and promote the economic interests of the rural folk by adopting sundry measures. It guided village industries old and new, organised surveys, promoted education and undertook the responsibility of financing industries on a smaller scale. The whole scheme of the economic advancement of the people was bound up with the success or failure of this department.

The first important need in a matter like this was to change the mind and educate the hand. The department made suitable arrangements for providing proper training to village folk in the various handicrafts. A temporary experimental school was started on June 17, 1939 under the supervision of a local *khadi* expert to impart training in carding, spinning, weaving and dyeing. A regular technical school was also established with the object of training the largest number of village boys during a short period. In order to give equal opportunity to boys belonging to different villages two boys were selected from each village and they were trained in a three months' course in spinning, weaving and dyeing of various types. As the demand for technical schools increased and requests came from various parts of Nepal for making arrangements for the teaching of spinning and weaving on scientific lines, the Maharaja was pleased to sanction the establishment of an itinerant School at Okhaldhonga which sent its teachers into the country to impart the requisite training. As the work proceeded in this direction, Government felt that with the abundant raw materials in the country cottage industries as efficient as those of Japan could be started to the great advantage of the people. The only handicap was lack of technical knowledge. Steps were taken forthwith to remove this drawback and students were sent to different centres in India to specialise in handicrafts at Government expense. Another profitable industry which engaged the attention of the department was bee-keeping. The old method which led to the extraction of impure honey was abandoned and modern scientific methods were employed. The quality as well as the quantity of honey was improved and

when the Maharaja came to know of the remunerative character of the business he ordered the department to start an apiary at Kathmandu where a dozen boys could obtain three months' theoretical and practical training in bee-keeping. The industry has prospered and Nepal can now boast of a number of up-to-date hives.

This technical training was not confined merely to state controlled institutions. Public spirited individuals came forward with a desire to start similar schools in different parts of Nepal. The Bastrakala Karyalaya at Palpa and the Gram Udyog Mandir at Baglung were such institutions and they received liberal financial assistance from Government. That became a centre of woollen industry and there too facilities were provided for practical training.

Besides these artisans who could undergo regular training at recognised centres there was a large number of people who were either too old or too poor to take advantage of such facilities. For their benefit the department undertook the publication of books pertaining to cottage industries in the language of the country. A book on "Spinning and Weaving" was published by Government to educate the public in the value and importance of cottage industries and to convince them of the necessity of fostering them.

Desirous as the Maharaja was of developing the industries of his country and the prosperity of his people, he spared no pains in making his schemes successful. The big cloth emporium known by the name of Adarsha Bhandar was opened to give an impetus to cottage industry. Here cottage workers came either to dispose of their goods or to leave them for disposal at a fixed price. It gave ample opportunity to cottage industrialists of exhibiting their products and selling them as quickly as possible. In order to popularise it home made cloth was sold at 25% below the cost price on the occasion of the accession and birthday anniversaries of the Maharaja and subsidies were also granted by Government to the Bhandar to carry on its work with efficiency and despatch.

A production centre was opened to create avenues of employment for workless people. Its main function was to supply cotton yarn to those who wanted to spin and weave.

The workless had to return the finished product but they were paid their wages. To give further impetus to this industry, agents were appointed in various parts of Nepal who distributed raw materials viz., cotton yarns etc. to the people and collected the finished goods from them, thus providing continuous remunerative employment to numerous villagers who would otherwise have lived a hard and pinched life. Up-to-date fly shuttle looms which were distinctly superior to indigenous looms were given to people on the instalment system. The rate of interest was so nominal that the workers after meeting their family budget, could regularly pay the instalments. Similarly bee-keeping appliances and knitting machines were supplied to workers on easy terms. But the distribution of improved appliances alone was not found sufficient to better the lot of the villagers and therefore, raw materials were supplied on easy instalment payment system. The example of the Baroda State of giving to the worker a sum of Rs. 100/- in addition to the improved appliances was followed with certain modifications, and it produced very satisfactory results. To advertise the products of Nepal and to give the outside world an idea of the development of cottage industries, the department has circulated a good deal of literature relating to the subject and encouraged participation in the various industrial exhibitions held in British India. The department was represented at the Jawalakhel, Lainchaur and Allahabad exhibitions.

The Nepal Vastrakala Prachar Samstha was set up for supplying cotton yarns to weavers at cost price. With the establishment of the Krishi Parishad (Board of Agriculture) the problem of cotton cultivation was transferred to the latter. Special encouragement was given to the textile factories by sanctioning the sale of their cloth-goods by means of special lotteries. Japanese automatic power looms were also imported for demonstrating to the people the advantage of automatic and power-weaving.

The credit for these brilliant results was due very largely to the Maharaja whose far-reaching statesmanship made Nepal's industrial rise possible. Every enterprise that promised to increase the country's wealth and prosperity found

encouragement at his hands. Realising that the first desideratum of industrial expansion was a full knowledge of the possibilities of development he considered the question of undertaking an extensive survey of the country and with this object in view various preliminary measures were adopted.

A survey office was established which issued a questionnaire with a view to obtaining information from various sources. A plan for the creation of industrial co-operative associations which would provide raw materials, improved designs and appliances and marketing facilities was also sanctioned. Steps were taken to collect the statistics of trade and their importance was fully realised. Without accurate statistical figures the proper regulation of the commercial policy of a state often leads to haphazard assumptions and disastrous results. Thus by special Sanad or charter it was made compulsory for all hill and mufassil bazar addas or market offices to report monthly and annually the export and import figures of both the indigenous and imported commodities. A special staff was attached to the Udyoga Parishad to collect statistical information and to make it as modern and scientific as possible.

In the present mode of production the importance of capital can scarcely be exaggerated. The ease and cheapness with which capital can be obtained in a country determines the pace of its industrial progress. The Maharaja realised this from the very beginning and enthusiastically supported the scheme of founding a Bank in Nepal.

The Bank known as the Nepal Bank Limited was established under the authority and patronage of the Government in accordance with a special Act of 1937-38. Its creation represented the fulfilment of long cherished dream of the Maharaja who since his accession to the Prime Ministership had been fully convinced of the necessity of having such an organisation for the development of commerce and industries in the kingdom. The initial difficulties, peculiar to a country like Nepal, where every reform or innovation is looked upon with suspicion were courageously surmounted and the project was launched with hope and confidence. The Bank housed in a fine, commodious building, situated on the New Road in Kathmandu

The authorised share capital of the Bank has been fixed at Rs. 10,000,000/- (Nepali Rupees) and the issued capital is Rs. 2,500,000/- divided into 25000 shares of Rs. 100/- each. As the Government of Nepal have subscribed to the value of ten lakhs out of this issued capital, the unsold portion of the issued shares to the value of fifteen lakhs is offered for subscription. For the present the shares are open only to Nepalese subjects either born or naturalised in Nepal.

The objects with which the Bank was started were thus detailed in the prospectus :—(1) To carry out banking transactions such as the opening of current, savings, or fixed deposit accounts with money's reward from deposits ; (2) to receive and discharge bills of exchange, hundis, etc. from other banks for its constituents and shareholders ; (3) to finance schemes for the development of education, trade, arts, industries, agriculture and for the improvement of sanitation in cities and the clearance of slums ; (4) to invest part of the Bank's capital in Government bonds and securities according to the advice of the Board of Directors ; (5) to issue insurance policies to shareholders ; (6) to perform all the functions of an agency ; (7) to purchase sites and build houses necessary for the Bank ; (8) to serve as bankers to the Government of Nepal and to carry out financial transactions on behalf of Government ; (9) to advance the economic welfare of the country by developing commerce and industries consistently with its own interest.

The Bank marked a definite step forward in the economic and industrial development of Nepal. It created great facilities for those who were engaged in trade and commerce and obviated the difficulty of investment. More and more capital came out of hidden sources and the people began to realise the immense usefulness of such institutions. The investors, large and small, went to the Bank with confidence, and businessmen found it very convenient to seek its aid. The Maharaja was anxious for the stability and progress of the Bank and in words of eloquence and wisdom he enjoined upon his countrymen the duty of safeguarding its interests and working for its continued progress.

“Just as an infant requires careful nursing till it gathers strength and vigour of youth to be able to overcome difficulties likely to follow in its wake, in the same manner national undertaking, big or small need encouragement and support from the State. This bank too, as you can well understand, is not an exception to the general rule, and so it should be the duty of every patriotic person in the country to do his best to see it grow up well. The Government have already lent their support to it and I feel, I may say with confidence, that this banking institution, intended to be beneficial to the rich and poor alike, and started for the betterment of the country, will continue to grow without let or hindrance and march forward steadily towards its destined goal.”

The Maharaja's appeal produced its effect. There is every hope that in the ripeness of time the Bank will be able by helping Nepal's industrial life, to bring her into line with the advanced countries of the world.

Closely connected with the banking system is the question of currency. Indeed, of all the monetary problems which confront a government those concerning the mint, coinage and currency are the most complicated. Formerly coins were struck at Sundarijal and Nakkhu with the help of water mills. This process was found unsatisfactory. The whole problem demanded careful attention and Maharaja Chandra Shumshere who was convinced of the need for reform, ordered the establishment of an electrically operated mint near Dharara. But he died shortly afterwards and the mint was not properly equipped for efficient work. His successor Maharaja Bhim Shumshere effected certain arrangements, and coins of a new design began to be struck after his death. The real task of providing the mint with up-to-date equipment was left to Maharaja Juddha who sanctioned a capital grant of Rs. 12,555/- for the replenishment of many materials and a recurring annual grant of Rs. 22,232/- to meet the wages of the additional men employed. He ordered the Sundarijal and Nakkhu mints to be closed down. The mints of Palpa and Dhanakuta were allowed to continue their minting operations, but silver coins could be struck only by the Dharara mint. Here they were minted more rapidly and were better in design and finish.

The world-war led to an abnormal rise in the price of the precious metals. Thinking it to be an excellent opportunity for cashing their gold, the people began to sell their ornaments. But this resulted in the export of gold and silver to foreign countries. The Maharaja by an edict prohibited the sale of gold outside the territories of Nepal. Those who were compelled by domestic necessity or other cause to sell their ornaments were permitted to sell them to the royal treasury. Another reform was the introduction of a five-pice nickel coin owing to the dire necessity of exchange.

As has been said before, Nepal is essentially an agricultural country and ninety per cent of her population depends upon agriculture for subsistence. But the methods followed are still primitive and antiquated.

It was, therefore, found advisable to reorganise the Department of Agriculture under a competent Director-General with a Board of Members (Krishi Parishad) assist him in his work. It requisitioned the services of experts in various branches and surveyed most parts of the Tarai Region and submitted detailed reports suggesting the means of improvement.

It is only recently that the importance of exhaustive surveys has been recognised. Indeed, they are the very basis of all plans of economic development. With a full consciousness of their importance the department sanctioned on 30th May, 1938, a sum of Rs. 10,000/- for deputing certain officers to Khajahani Shewraj in order to study the financial, agricultural and irrigational position of the district. They submitted an exhaustive report. A similar investigation was carried on in the Western and Eastern districts of the hills. A survey of the Morung district was also carried out and a sum of Rs. 1,000/- was sanctioned for it.

A good system of irrigation is an absolute necessity in a country like Nepal to save the ryot from the vagaries of the monsoon. Hence orders were passed for the repair of *Kulos* in Sundarijal locality. A number of cast iron pipes of 5" diameter were granted for the construction of *Kulos* and thus the fertility of the soil was considerably increased. Six cast iron pipes were sanctioned for setting up a water mill at Banepa and a sum of Rs. 768/- was spent in repairing the

Dakukhola Kulo at Lalitpur, Officers were deputed to examine the improvements in the existing Bund pyre in the Khajahani district and a report was submitted. Similar action was taken in regard to the Sardar I Chadol and Bhaktapur Banshbari *Kulos*. The proper supervision of the *Kulos* by competent and energetic officers ensured an unfailing supply of water for irrigational purposes. Another Bund pyre was ordered to be constructed at Massu-smoru river in the Ranthal district. The establishment of this Bund pyre was expected to fertilise a vast area of barren land all around and thus make it fit for human habitation. Permission was granted to repair the damaged pipe line of Ghatta Kulo at Bhaktapur Chikandole and thus the regular flow of water to the fields was ensured. A loan of Rs. 10,000/- was granted to captain Padma Narsingh Rana free of interest repayable in four years for the purpose of sinking tube wells in his *mauza*. It was expected greatly to increase the fertility of the soil and improve cultivation in that area.

A typical instance of the Maharaja's solicitude for the welfare of the peasantry and the improvement of agricultural prosperity is to be found in the Sanad dated 11th December, 1938 which exempted from customs duties all commodities imported for agricultural purposes. This has greatly encouraged the people in employing improved methods of cultivation.

Efforts were made to raise the production many times more by resorting to modern methods of cultivation although the ryot found it difficult, partly on account of ignorance and partly on account of prejudice to give up the traditional methods in favour of those that were new and untried. The other serious handicap was his poverty. Thus the problem could be tackled only in three ways. Firstly, the benefits of the modern methods of agriculture were to be brought home to the ryot by means of demonstrations, model farms and educational facilities for their sons. Secondly, a liberal provision was made for supplying them with better seeds and fertilising manures at low prices. Thirdly, measures were devised for the proper marketing of their produce. The administration of Nepal tried to solve this problem with energy and vigour under the inspiring guidance of the Maharaja.

In order to effect rapid improvement different branches of the Agricultural Department were opened specially in the West No. 4 for holding demonstrations in Government farms with a view to guide the people in their agricultural operations. Stipends and allowances were granted to students for receiving training in agriculture and other allied subjects in Indian schools and Colleges. A propaganda officer was appointed at Saptari and Mahotari for spreading agricultural knowledge in the country districts. The result of these measures was a quickened interest in agriculture and a ubiquitous desire to effect improvements there in.

Besides, Government was not slow to encourage model farming by private individuals. Subsidies and loans free of interest were granted to people to enable them to cultivate new varieties of crops. The cultivation of cotton improved much—a fact which was borne out by the goods shown in the exhibition. Cotton seeds of various descriptions were ordered from different parts of India and distributed free of cost among the people both in the valley and the Tarai districts.

A seed store called Beaj Bhandar was set up where the vegetable seeds and seeds of rice and wheat of good quality produced by the farms were kept in store for sale among the people. In times of drought Government distributed good seed among the people free of cost from its stores as was done in 1943. The free distribution of different varieties of paddy ordered from distant places also helped to widen the basis of agricultural development. In addition to these facilities the officers of Government were always ready to offer free advice conducive to agricultural efficiency and the protection of crops from insects and pests.

The cultivation of Kut (costus) was found very useful. It is a valuable product required for medicinal and export purposes. After much investigation, suitable areas of the Baglung district were, therefore, selected and a department known as Baglung Kut Kheti Adda was organised for *Kut* cultivation in the said district. Nepal abounds in fruits and to encourage their cultivation the Maharaja established a horticultural department. First, a Horticulturist was appointed and later an Assistant Horticulturist was added to the staff. In 1939, an

orchard was opened at Kappan Dhobidhunga, with local *oranges* as the main crop and mango, apple, clove, grape, vine, pine apples as a side-line. The old existing gardens were renovated at Balaju and Godavari. At Balaju the foundation of root-stocks was laid in 1939 and budding and grafting operations were started in full vigour.

Training in fruit preservation was to be started as soon as the equipment was received. Advisory works served a very useful purpose by helping local horticulturists to adopt common sense methods in place of the old, traditional and conventional ones. The period of renaissance had already begun and this key food industry of the country captured the imagination of the people. It was hoped that fruit cultivators on an extensive scale according to approved methods will not only satisfy the needs of Nepal but enable her to export her produced in future and make large profits. Nepal would not only be self-sufficient regarding its fruits supply but would be in a position to export fruits in future.

The Sadar Experimental farm situated on the bank of the Vishnumati river in Kathmandu is a noteworthy institution. It has done much to help agricultural improvement in the valley. It was formerly known as Chhauni farm and was attached to the technical school—During the regime of Maharaja Juddha the farm was brought under the agricultural department though students of the school in the agricultural section were permitted to utilise it for receiving practical training in agriculture and gardening.

Besides improving the quality of local crops the farm experimented on new varieties of crops from outside. Among the varieties tried were some of the Pusa and Punjab wheats, Bengal Paddy, Punjab oilseeds and Central Provinces cottons etc. some of these have been fully studied, acclimatised and issued out to the farmers who have shown a great willingness to profit by the new methods.

More than anything else the progressive improvement of animal health has given a greater fillip to the agricultural prosperity of the country. The position of the cow in an agricultural society is unique.

As a devout Hindu the Maharaja who looked upon the

protection of the cow as a part of his Dharma, made provision for holding annual cow shows and awarded liberal prizes to those who tended their cows best and fed them with care. It is not merely the cows that received protection at the hands of the Maharaja but the cattle in general. His Government took steps to look after their breed and a veterinary hospital was established for the treatment of sick animals and birds. This brought relief not merely to diseased cattle but also raised the general level of the agricultural industry. A Goshala (cow-house) was also established which accommodated a large number of deformed and decrepit cows.

The Tarai Regions of Nepal abound in forests which are an important source of revenue to the Government. For some years the administration of these extensive and valuable forests was continued on the same lines as previously. But during his tours the Maharaja noticed that it was in several respects defective and the forests were deteriorating and required a systematic plan of conservation.

Accordingly he first decided to obtain the services of an experienced and trained forest officer to act as adviser and after a thorough investigation to make recommendations to the Government on all aspects of forest administration and management. After some correspondence with the Government of the United Provinces Mr. E.A. Smythies, Chief conservator of forests, was appointed from October 1st, 1940 for three years in the first instance. On his advice the Maharaja introduced a number of reforms in the forest administration. The task is not yet over and more reforms are under consideration.

All forest work was centralised under the Director-General instead of being split up between several departments. The *Banjanch* staff which formerly under the control of Goshwara was placed under the Director-General. Three new posts of circle officers were created and trained forest officers were appointed to them. The department prohibited the over-felling of *khair* which had been ruthlessly exploited in the past. The sale of Sal timber was centralised and advance orders were taken from the Indian Railway Department for the supply of sleepers which resulted in an immediate and large

increase of royalty per sleeper to Government. Fresh markets were discovered for the sale of Semal, Aena, Karma and other hardwood timbers for which no market had been found previously and the possibilities of organising a local plywood industry were considered as large quantities of suitable miscellaneous timbers were available. Regular working schemes were adopted to ensure a sustained yet perpetual yield of sal, khair and other hardwood timbers. To ensure the improvement of the forests and the development of the sal regeneration the processes of climber-cutting, girdling and silvicultural operations after all fellings in sal forests were adopted. Important blocks of forest were permanently demarcated; lastly the Government decided to send a few selected candidates every year to the Dehradun Ranger Class for training.

The forests in Nepal abound in catechu. Government made arrangements for contracts and export in the Tarai area which not only provided work to hundreds of people but added enormously to the revenue of the country. No attention was formerly paid to this industry in the hills. Trees were allowed to rot and waste. When the method was brought to the notice of the Maharaja, he at once decided to put an end to this deplorable condition. In the meantime demands were also made by the public to develop this industry and Government made a ready response. Every year catchu valued at thousands of rupees is exported outside Nepal.

The Botany department was also re-organised and the Maharaja took a keen interest in its work. Until 1935 its only business was to collect horticultural plants and send them to the Royal Horticultural Society of London. In that year a scheme for the utilisation and sale of medicinal herbs which are found in abundance in the Himalayan regions was discussed. The keen-eyed Maharaja who foresaw the possibilities of development approved of it and made the necessary finances available for it. The staff of the department was enlarged in 1936-37 and its work was carried on with redoubled vigour. To encourage the people to cultivate various kinds of drugs a nursery was established at Sheopuri and with the

same end in view Botanical specimens were collected for the Museum. Next year an earnest attempt was made to explore and discover the Botanical specimens in the Alpine regions of the Himalayas. A few Alpine plants were presented to His Britanic Majesty which were accepted with great pleasure. In 1939 special attention of the Department was drawn to the development and improvement of Kut cultivation at Baglung. Crude drugs were extracted and sold with a profit. The forests of West No. 1 district were placed under the department and a laboratory was sanctioned for carrying on research work.

In a short time the department built up a good export business. To demonstrate to the people that the cultivation of drugs could be a commercial success, new branches of the department were opened at Butwal, Inerva Dhorsing, Nepalgunj, Rajpur and Brahmandeomandi and several other places. Needless to say, the new activities of the department had a highly beneficial effect on the national economy in many ways. It lent its weight in correcting the recurring adverse balance of trade.

Again, it opened up new avenues of lucrative employment to local labour and capital. Furthermore, what is to be noted with special care and attention is the fact that the new scheme of utilising the herb products of the forest achieved such unexpected results. Given time and attention, it was bound to prove immensely profitable to the country. Not the man to rest on his oars, the Maharaja provided other facilities and to encourage the drugs trade he rendered financial assistance wherever necessary.

Another department in which the Maharaja was profoundly interested is the department of Geology and Mining. Nepal is reputed to be rich in mineral wealth but its resources were almost entirely unexplored.

During the last ten years, a number of scientific expeditions were organised, and a fairly large area of Nepal was explored geologically, geo-magnetically, geo-physically and geo-chemically. Many outcrops that appeared promising on scientific evidence were thoroughly prospected to ascertain the ins and

outs of them all. The studies were confined in no way to any particular aspect, nor was an object signed out to be fulfilled. On the contrary, they were always both cultural and economic, directed broadly and generally. All these enterprises cost much to the Government, and a good deal of labour was expended on them.

In the early years of this fruitful period, the Canal and Geology Departments conducted expeditions and made a study of rocks and minerals. But the Maharaja who took a keen interest in the development of Mines and Industries, thought it proper that such an important Department should be forthwith given a status suitable for it among the existing Departments of the Government, and that it should be run independently and methodically so as to give it a fuller scope than hitherto possible. Thus, His Highness was pleased to institute the Nepal Bureau of Mines which came into being in 1942.

The Bureau consisted of three Sections, *viz.*, (a) Section of Geology; (b) Section of Chemistry and Metallurgy; and (c) Section of Mining Engineering. In addition to these, a separate Mechanical Store was established for the purpose of making supplies. The experimental works belonging to the Section of Chemistry and Metallurgy were worked out at Juddha Research Laboratories, and the records were kept at the Bureau. In this respect, the Nepal Bureau of Mines became closely associated with the Juddha Research Laboratories, the latter being the scientific centre of the country. The Sections of Geology and Mining Engineering functioned jointly. Their workings were, however, individually guided and recorded.

The Bureau looked after the mining interests of the Government; to develop generally the mines of the country; to foster Chemistry, Geology, Mining Engineering and the allied Sciences; and to aim at the economic and industrial emancipation of the nation. It is to correlate the workings with those of the Juddha Research Laboratories, as also with those of such other Departments as are already tackling the Mining and mineral problems of the country.

It has been provided with an adequate number of technical men, and provision has also been made for the employment of experts and visiting advisers wherever needed.

Since the reorganisation of the Department of Mines, work has continued along well-defined lines, and progress has been made in the elucidation and systematization of problems. Some workable deposits of minerals have been discovered, properly studied, and now they await exploitation.

Numerous specimens of Rocks and Minerals were collected from all over Nepal. Some of them have been identified while others still await investigation and verification. They are included in the Rocks and Minerals collections of the Juddha Research Laboratory.

With the help of the State a Limited Company was started with a capital of five lakhs to work out zinc sulphate (sphalrite) and copper ores. It was proposed to raise the capital further in future as the work proceeded. Efforts were also made to get the country surveyed for petroleum and coal.

Such was the economic development of Nepal during Maharaja Juddha Shumshere's Prime Ministership. No one acquainted with facts, will deny that it was due very largely to his untiring energy, inspiring guidance and passion for progress. He was assisted in his endeavours by a band of devoted and able workers who grudged no toil and minded no discomfort in his service. But these labours would have borne no fruit had it not been for the response made by the people whose national consciousness was awakened by the spread of modern knowledge and whose faith in the efficacy and soundness of the methods employed was strengthened by the results achieved. The difficulty of finance was met by the Maharaja in a bold and statesmanlike manner and he spent large sums of money for public benefit with the liberality of a modern legislature. That his resources were limited did not in any way damp his spirits and he moved forward with hope and courage, cheering up those to whom he had assigned the irksome but noble task of national regeneration. He had a keen desire to turn Nepal into a modern country and did the utmost that a man in his circumstances and with his resources could do. The departments of the State were organised afresh and much energy and vigour was infused into them. Experiments of all kinds were made; the natural resources of the country were utilised for the people's uplift and many new industries were started to augment the rational wealth.

The world politics also reinforced the efforts of the Maharaja. From far-off countries in the East and West crowded in the influences that moulded and shaped men's ideas and determined their attitude towards the great problems of social and economic reconstruction. In this age of progress it is difficult for any country to live in a state of isolation and, therefore, it is necessary to adopt what is useful in modernism. The Maharaja had seen with his own eyes the conditions which prevailed in European countries. He had seen the wealth and prosperity of the people and the degree of comfort which even common men enjoy there. This experience stood him in good stead, and he consistently tried to raise Nepal to a higher level of prosperity in spite of the limitations that beset his path. As one saunters along the edge of the vast, grassy *maidan* of Tudikhel, in the dim twilight of the evening philosophically viewing from a distance the beautifully illuminated and spacious Juddha road, the lofty houses and buildings on both sides, built in the modern style, and the merchants' stalls on which all kinds of fashionable wares are displayed, one wonders how, as if by a magician's wand, the Maharaja had brought all those things into existence in such a short space of time and created vast possibilities of economic development. Though the earthquake had drained his resources to the uttermost, he never grudged to spend money on industrial expansion and invited foreign experts to help him in exploring the resources of the country so that she might increase her wealth and be able to hold her own among the nations of the world.

Much progress has been made under Maharaja's Juddha's successors and Nepal is completely transformed into a modern country. The city of Kathmandu wears a charming appearance and one who saw it in 1973 is surprised at the wonderful change.

The Tarai and its Progress

*Of old things all are overold,
Of good things none are good enough;
We 'ill show them we can help to frame
A world of other stuff.*

—*Wordsworth*

The Tarai is an important part of Nepal territory. Its value was not realised in the past but as a result of Maharaja Juddha's policy it revealed great possibilities of economic development. It is a fertile, well-watered, alluvial plain about 250 to 600 feet above the sea level and abounds in natural resources. Originally it was covered with forests and its malarious climate made it impossible for man to do his best either for agriculture or for commerce. But much has been done in recent years to clear the forest and make plenty of land available for agricultural purposes. There are now broad, open, well-cultivated fields in the Tarai; yielding rich crops which have greatly increased the comfort and the prosperity of the inhabitants. Formerly people used to avoid the Tarai; they were indifferent to it but now its lands are much coveted and even well-to-do persons are anxious to have a foothold in that region. Life in the Tarai has become bright and gay; agriculture has made rapid strides; and the crops have become more plentiful than before. Towns have grown considerably in size, population and importance, and some of them have become busy hives of commerce. Mills and factories have

been started, and capital which was so shy in Nepal is taking advantage of the new avenues of investment. Education has made progress ; the number of schools, Pathshalas, Dispensaries and other works of public utility have multiplied. The development of the Tarai in various directions was one of the principal planks of the Maharaja's policy. He cared not merely for administrative efficiency but the supreme object of his desire was the economic development of the country and for its realisation he was ever ready to encourage private initiative and enterprise.

To an Englishman the Tarai is interesting because it is one of the finest shooting grounds in the world where we meet with many a thrilling adventure as we track down our quarry—the rhino, the leopard and the tiger, the king of the tropical forests. He values the Tarai only because its woods offer excellent scope to satisfy his hunting instincts. No where can be found such abundant game and such extraordinary facilities for shooting as are provided by the generosity of the Nepal Government. Those who have been to the Tarai have recorded their pleasant experiences and have offered grateful thanks to the Maharaja for his hospitality and kindness. The Indian point of view is different from that of the Englishman. In the eyes of an average Indian the Tarai is a dreadful forest zone, the home of malaria and valuable only for its yield of excellent timbers. To the Nepali, however, the Tarai is the backbone of his country. Without it Nepal's economic existence will be impossible ; without its vast supply of food grains the people will have to face starvation. The Tarai is not a Nepali colony in the sense that Australia is an English colony. It is not a branch separated from the parent tree. It is a part and parcel of the country much the same as Cornwall is a part of England. With its growth and prosperity is bound up the progress of Nepal, it is to her what the heart is to the human body ; it supplies the resources that sustain life ; without the enormous yield of her fields there will be much misery and hardship throughout the country.

The Tarai is a word of Persian extraction which means land at the foot of the hills, always full of swamps and malarial tracts. Except for a small area of 750 miles in Garhwa

and Kamayun the whole of the Tarai lies in Nepal. The Nepalese Tarai is made up of a narrow strip of flat land, extending all along the southern boundary of the outer Himalayas. It extends in a continuous line with only one gap in the south of Dang-Denkhuri. It is the only area in Nepal which lies at a low level though, of course, the average height above sea level is considerably higher than that of North Bihar or United Provinces.

The Tarai extends over an area of about 10,000 square miles. In other words it covers about one fifth of the land surface of Nepal. It has been divided into fifteen districts :— (1) Parsa, (2) Bahra, (3) Rautahat, (4) Sarlahi, (5) Mahottari, (6) Saptari, (7) Mörang in the east and (8) Palhi (9) Majkahnd, (10) Butwal, (11) Seoraj, (12) Banke, (13) Bardia, (14) Kailali, and (15) Kanchanpur. The last four districts are collectively known as the Nayamuluk which, though they were originally Nepalese territories, were occupied by the British at the treaty of Sigowli in 1816, but were subsequently restored by Lord Canning in appreciation of Nepal's substantial help rendered in the suppression of the disturbances of 1857. These districts do not always remain the same. For administrative purposes they are grouped differently at different times according to the discretion of the Central Government.

The outstanding feature of the Tarai is the predominance of forests. In some districts lands have been almost cleared and partake of the character of the Indian plains but this is an exception rather than the rule. In most places settlements are located in the neighbourhood of forests which exercise a malignant influence on the climate of the place. In Kailali there are settlements which seem like oases in the midst of deserts, each of them being encircled by forests. Consequently there is always the danger of the colonies being choked up by the adjacent woods.

A century ago the Tarai was one vast unhealthy forest zone, not very different from the wild regions of tropical Africa where the elephant and the rhino roam at large over most grounds where the sun could hardly penetrate. It is only by the Herculean labour and unremitting toil of the Nepalis, coupled with the generous help of the Government, that a large part of the Tarai has been turned into arable land

by means of extensive clearings. The peasants' hearths, the green fields laden with luxuriant crops now fill the land which a century ago was the home of wild creatures.

The physical features of the Tarai deserve a passing notice. There are no uplands. Everywhere the land slopes from the north to the south so that the streams run downwards to the south. Most of these rivers serve as boundaries between British India and the districts of Nepal. The Mechi marks the eastern and the Manakali the Western boundary of the country. The Kosi divides Morang from Saptari and likewise Kamla separates Saptari from Mahottari. The Bagmati flows between Rautahat and Sarlahi and the Narayani constitutes the eastern boundary of Butwal. The real importance of these rivers lies in the fact that they supply water for irrigating the fields. The land is everywhere fertile and amply repays the labour of tillage wherever the natural or artificial supply of water is sufficient.

The forest zone consists of four different types of forests: (1) forests of Sal; (2) riverain forests of Shisham and Khair, (3) mixed deciduous forests in which the most important trees are the Asna, Semal, Toorn, (4) and the most Savannah forests, the favourite haunt of the rhino and the tiger. The timber of these forests yields a large income to the Government. The decayed leaves and timber of the forest, swept away by the river, supply valuable manure to the fields on their banks. On the skirts of the forests there are numerous dairy farms. Without forests in the immediate neighbourhood it would have been difficult for the Tarai people to maintain their cattle which play a vital part in the domestic economy of an agricultural society.

Among the crops grown in the Tarai the most important is the rice which is the staple food of the people of Nepal along with maize and millet. The sale of rice yields an enormous income to the country and surpasses all other sources of income in the Tarai. Among other crops there are jute, opium, linseed, gram, peas, tobacco, and tori and wheat is grown in very a small quantity. The Tarai has made no progress in horticulture and excepting licchi, mango, jackfruits, plantains very few fruits are grown on a commercial scale.

The Tarai can be called a land of villages and forests. The number of towns is very small and the bulk of the population is centred in the villages. In recent years towns like Birgunj and Dharan have grown in wealth and population and it is expected that, as time passes and industrial conditions improve, more towns will grow up and the wealth of the country will increase. In fact the Tarai has immense possibilities and offers ample scope for development in many new directions. What is needed is initiative and organising capacity and these with State encouragement will be able to achieve a great deal.

It will be unfair to compare the Tarai with the adjoining British territories. The lands of the Tarai are of recent growth and their civilised life does not in most cases go back beyond a century. Although there are places of historical importance where the remains of our glorious past are still to be found such as Biratnagar, Simraongarh, Rummendi and Janakpur, the whole of the Tarai was one vast expanse of forest when it came under the rule of the Gurkhalis. Even a casual observer can see that the development of the Tarai is recent and that the process is still incomplete. The policy of the Government is to extend cultivation and this has been done at considerable expense because the clearance of forests is a most difficult task. It could never been done without the help of the enlightened rulers of Nepal.

The commencement of the reign of Maharaja Juddha marked an important epoch in the history of the Tarai. His reforms covered a wide range and might be summarised under the following heads:— (1) agricultural reform ; (2) regulations about land revenue ; (3) abolition of vexatious imposts ; (4) industrial development ; (5) works of public utility ; (6) education and public health ; (7) reorganisation of public offices, prisons and courts etc.

Owing to the enervating climate of the Tarai which is unfavourable to vigorous agricultural pursuit and the sparse population, intense cultivation, such as is seen in the valley, is found nowhere in the Tarai. Though the lands of the Tarai are in most cases exceedingly fertile; the produce is far below what it should have been, owing to the scantiness of rainfall and the absence of irrigation facilities. The uncertainty of

the monsoon makes existence precarious. Scantiness of water is seen particularly in the western part of the Eastern Tarai (Parsa, Bara and Rautahat). As one travels from east to west one sees a progressive decline in productivity, particularly after crossing the Sarlahi. Indeed owing to scarcity of rainfall there is hardly an Aghani rice crop in Parsa, Bahra and Rautahat. There is no adequate system of canals. The Trijugi canal was seriously damaged during the earthquake of 1934 and scarcely sufficed to meet the requirements of only one district. The Maharaja bestowed anxious thought upon the problem of rural economy. Indeed it was a matter in which he was deeply interested. Soon after his assumption of the office of Prime Minister, he organised a Board of Agriculture whose aims were defined as follows:—

(1) application of science to agriculture; (2) importation of improved seeds and their distribution among the peasants; (3) creation of demonstration farms in the Tarai and other places; (4) opening of research stations for the introduction of new crops; (5) reclamation of waste lands; (6) extension of irrigation facilities; (7) laying out of gardens and making fruit-growing a national industry; (8) financial help to diligent and progressive farmers; (9) carrying on of propaganda for popularising the improved methods of cultivation. In pursuance of this policy officers were appointed to discharge these functions and demonstration farms were established to give an impetus to the agricultural industry at Jaleswar, Birgunj and Biratnagar. At the last centre a plot of 30 bighas was selected for the purpose and a sum of Rs. 13,900 (British money) was sanctioned. Proper measures were adopted for popularising new crops and new methods by an effective organisation of propaganda.

The progress of agriculture is indissolubly bound up with the security of land tenure. In the Tarai the lands are farmed out to Zamindars but they have no authority over the tenants. They are simply collectors of revenue and can impose no duty or cess on the people or exact forced labour from them under any pretext whatever. Although the State is the ultimate owner of the lands, the rights of Zamindars and tenants are clearly laid down. The tenants are protected by Tenancy Acts which have been passed from time to time. The tenants cannot be ejected except for failure to pay their

dues. The assessment is light and remains unaltered unless the lands are freshly surveyed. The Zamindars also enjoy fixity of tenure as long as they pay their stipulated dues. Maharaja Juddha issued many new regulations to guide the conduct of Patwaris and Zamindars about the payment of rents and the assessment thereof. Strict warning was given to the Patwaris and the revenue officers about *dakhil kharij* and penalties were laid down for slackness in carrying out the decrees of the Government. A proclamation was issued (1939) which forbade the people to cultivate any plot of land without the permission of the Government. The practice of cultivating lands and obtaining *ex post facto* sanction by means of a petition was abandoned. By another proclamation the patwaris and Zamindars were warned to see that the receipt issued to the tenant was in form No.2. A mere chit certifying payment was not allowed for that led to endless disputes when property changed hands. The peasants were also asked to take the proper receipts when they pay their rents. The patwaris and Zamindars rendered themselves liable to punishment if they disregarded the regulations of the State (section 3, 1997). The date for the sale of lands to be auctioned for non-payment of the stipulated revenue was extended and notified to the public along with the particulars of the property in question. Canals, dams and wells were constructed and the irrigation cess was reduced in several places. The Maharaja refused to make a fresh assessment even in the case of lands which had been resurveyed lest the peasantry should have to pay more. Formerly when lands were auctioned for failure of non-payment of rent, Government cared only for its own dues and returned the residue of the sale proceeds to the previous owner. This practice was highly detrimental to the interests of creditors. Now, by a fresh regulation a provision was made for paying out of the residue of sale proceeds, the dues of the creditors who had advanced loans to the defaulters on the security of their lands.

Forests were also cleared on an extensive scale particularly in Morung where the new colonies had substantially increased the revenue of the district. In clearing forests Government mainly sought the benefit of landless settlers who had to depend entirely on labour and also the repatriation of exiles. Pasture lands were created at several places for the

benefit of cattle owners. Almost all the settlers kept cattle and these measures proved highly beneficial to them. To prevent the spread of disease among the cattle grants were made to district headquarters for the free distribution of medicines to cattle owners.

In areas where rainfall was irregular or deficient irrigation projects were started, according to a new arrangement 2% of the annual revenue of the district was set apart every year to constitute a reserve fund which was intended to meet the expenditure of irrigational works. The Maharaja felt strongly about this scheme and hoped that it would lead to the extension of irrigation facilities and a time would come when the whole of the Tarai would be watered by a net work of canals. This was a move in the right direction and was intended materially to improve the condition of the Tarai. A beginning was made in this direction in Manuswora river where a canal was constructed which irrigates the greater part of Sarlahi district.

Before the accession of the Maharaja there was a bewildering variety of taxes in the Tarai. Indeed one is inclined to think that there was a 'delirium of fiscality' in the various parts of that region. The Maharaja ordered the abolition of those imposts which weight heavily on the poor and were a great impediment to progress. It will be tedious to mention all these tolls and taxes but a few examples will suffice to show how difficult it must have been for him to simplify the fiscal system. In one district the following were abolished; (1) water rates on Kamis (Cock smiths), Damais (Untouchable tailors), Bharikars (Saghers), barbers; (2) the mowing tax; (3) the tolls levied on the sale of buffaloes, goats and sheep; (4) Kamraja, Kamla, Barda and Thera dues; (5) ferry tax; (6) Gol Jhara (Charcoal tax); (7) tax on blacksmith, workshop; and (8) market tolls at various places. To these were added many others like the tax on the horns of wild animals, the tax on fowlers, the tax of landless settlers the Dahabai thaki rakam, ghod dalali (tax on brokers of horses), goljhari rakam (Charcoal tax), etc. At Birgunj the following taxes were abolished :—Bhriniraj rakam, hareva rakam, Lalmunia, malayagiri rakam, shyama rakam, vidur, mahesari rakam and several others. In other districts also similar measures were adopted and all vexations tolls and taxes were abolished to the great relief of the poor people. It does not appear how these taxes arose but there

can be no manner of doubt that they must have sucked the poor population dry and aggravated its miseries. A study of the Maharaja's proclamations and decrees will convince the reader how great was his zeal for reform and how anxious he was to safeguard and promote the interests of the poor people living in this part of his dominions. These imposts had existed almost in every district from old days but the Maharaja cared nothing for the loss of revenue and with characteristic boldness he made a clean sweep of them.

Before the Maharaja's accession there was no industrial concern in the Tarai. There was hardly any industry worth mentioning; there were no mills or factories and consequently there were few towns. Even these deserved the name only by courtesy. They were merely trade centres and most of them woke into life only at particular seasons. During the Maharaja's regime much progress was made and a full account of this development has been given in a previous chapter. The greatest obstacles to the growth of towns and the economic prosperity of the people were for want of supply of pure drinking water resulting in ill health, lack of education and means of communication. The fair weather roads which were tolerably good in the dry seasons became almost impassable during the rains and this prevented the exchange of commodities even between neighbouring districts. These difficulties were removed by the Maharaja. He supplied pure drinking water to many districts by the construction of pipe line and tube wells and as the result of the steps he took, the general state of public health improved to a surprising degree. Birgunj and Morung so far claimed the lion's share of the Maharaja's attention but it was hoped that in other places too when better days came he would adopt similar measures to promote public health and encourage industrial enterprise.

The means of communication were considerably improved. The number of post offices was increased and new telephonic lines were constructed to facilitate despatch of messages from one place to another. The entire eastern Tarai from Parsa right down to the eastern frontier was linked together by telephone lines. A similar arrangement in the western Tarai was under contemplation and was expected to remove a long-felt want. The Maharaja paid special attention to roads; indeed wherever he went, his methodising genius found scope

for itself in the construction of roads, bridges and other works of public utility. One of the longest roads constructed during his regime was the big metalled road which runs from Juddhanagar to Jagbani on the British frontier. Among other roads constructed during his regime were those which run from Hanumannagar to Rajbaraj, from Nepalgunj to Rupeideha, from Bagmati to Thori, and from Taulipawa to Khutwa. Bridges and culverts were thrown over numerous streams along these roads and at other places too. It is impossible to make a detailed mention here of the numerous works of public utility which were constructed by the Maharaja. There were few rulers among his contemporaries who had with equal resources, spent so much money for public benefit.

Rest houses, pucca wells, ghats, houses for storing medicinal herbs, Dharamsalas and asylums for decrepit old folks were constructed in many places for the benefit of the public. In the Rummendei locality which is the birthplace of Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, for the convenience of pious pilgrims, research scholars and antiquarians who come from distant parts of the world, the Maharaja built a one storeyed house with a pucca roof, a Dharamshala, a pucca well, a brick-work stair case leading to Buddha's shrine. The Maharaja was a man of piety and always took a keen interest in the renovation of old shrines. Temples ruined or damaged by the earthquake were rebuilt and among these may be mentioned the temple of Sri Varaha in Varaha Chhetra Panchagri in Chaitra, the temple inside Pindeswar Asthan at Dharan. The temple of Sri Ramachandra at Janakpur alone cost a sum of Rs. 40,000/-. A pilgrim road was constructed from Janakpur to Ganga Sagar, a holy tank in Mahottari and another for the benefit of ascetics coming for the *Antargrtha Parkrima*, a circuit of about ten miles round the shrine of Janakpur. Arrangements were made for the funerals of men of seclusion dying without any heirs at Janakpur. Inns were built for the convenience of pilgrims at Varahachetra which was connected by a good road.

Dharan which had suffered from the ravages of a great fire was rebuilt by the Maharaja's orders. A new market was constructed and building materials were freely supplied to merchants for the erection of three dwelling houses. To promote the health of the locality, adequate provision was made for

supplying good drinking water to the people. A reservoir was constructed and nine taps were set up in the market place. A hospital was opened and furnished with fifteen wards. Another notable improvement was the construction of a road 24 feet in width. As a result of these measures, the town became very prosperous and out of gratitude to the Maharaja whose generosity had breathed a new life into it, the people gave it the name of Juddhanagar. It commands a position which makes it the centre of the export and import trade of Dhankuta and other provinces of the East, and its development has been a source of great benefit to all concerned.

The intellectual condition of the people of the Tarai was deplorable up to the beginning of the Maharaja Juddha's regime. No attention was paid to education and there was hardly any public school worth the name. Boys who wanted to receive education had to go to British India and were put to much inconvenience. The Maharaja not only established schools himself but he was also pleased to grant permission to start schools which were partially financed by Government under certain conditions. There are High Schools now at Biratnagar, Birgunj and Morung and a number of English middle schools such as those at Gaur, Janakpur and other places. Vernacular education was the Maharaja's special care and steps were taken by him to give it encouragement. Public health, long neglected in Nepal was regarded by the Maharaja as a matter of State concern. It was not *merely* the city of Kathmandu that was cleansed by his orders—although much still remains to be done—but other places too received his attention. In a country where sanitation is unpopular and Government measures to promote cleanliness are resented, he did much to alter the people's habits and to inculcate upon them the value and necessity of living in hygienic surroundings. This alone is sufficient to entitle the Maharaja to the gratitude of his subjects throughout his dominions. Men are slow to give up their old habits but there are now many Nepalis who appreciate the value of these measures and recognise the safeguarding of public health as a matter of supreme importance. For administering medical relief new hospitals were opened and the old ones were extended and provided with modern equipment.

In the administration of Government offices and institutions

much reform was effected. The old abuses were removed and everywhere an attempt was made not only to make the working of the Government machinery smooth and efficient but also to raise higher the standard of public intelligence against enormous odds. Most of the Maharaja's reforms were calculated to redress the grievances of his subjects and to create conditions in which they could live in security and comfort, enjoying in the midst of their families the fruits of their toil and industry, unmolested by any public official or village tyrant. The establishment of the branches of the Supreme Judicial Court in various districts was a great blessing to the people. Formerly appeals against the District Governor's court had to be carried to the appellate court in the valley, a practice which caused much inconvenience to litigants. Under the new arrangement the Tarai people were freed from the necessity of undertaking long journeys to the capital. The separation of the Executive from the Judiciary, effected in the valley, was also brought about in the Tarai. The Governors of districts were wholly confined to executive functions and found ample time to supervise the condition of the districts and to attend to the wants of the people. The condition of prisons in the Tarai was highly unsatisfactory. To feed criminals at State expense and keep them in comfort was looked upon as a wasteful extravagance in the past in many countries in the east and therefore, Governments paid little attention to prison reform. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of the Punjab, looked upon the confining of criminals in jail as a costly device to correct wicked men and preferred mutilation of limbs to imprisonment. There were others who did the same. But the Maharaja was convinced of the need for reform and tried to remove abuses. In the Tarai formerly male and female prisoners were huddled together in a narrow space and no adequate provision was made for feeding and clothing them. The Maharaja constructed better prison houses with separate quarters for prisoners of both sexes and ordered arrangements for their proper feeding and clothing to be made. The re-organisation of credit was another reform attempted by the Maharaja. To free the people from the clutches of money lenders and to facilitate commercial transactions branches of the Nepal Bank were established at Birgunj, Bhadrapur, Nepalgunj, Biratnagar, and other centres.

The courts and offices were reorganised in many places and residential quarters were provided for officers. The other things worthy of mention were the establishment of free kitchens in times of drought, the abolition of monopolies, the construction of an aerodrome at Simara, the survey of all lands in the Tarai and the proper management of forest affairs.

The moving spirit in all these beneficent activities which extended over a wide field of the administration was the Maharaja himself. His patriotism was based on enlightened self-interest. His benevolence disarmed criticism and evoked gratitude. Despite the enormous expenditure necessitated by the reconstruction after the earthquake of 1934, he was able to find money to be spent on the moral and material well-being of his subjects. It is true, much still remains to be done but there is no doubt that if the war had not intervened, the forward drive would have continued with unabated enthusiasm and like Birgunj and Morang the other parts of the Tarai would have also made a considerable progress. The Maharaja knew the needs of his people. Like the Hindu kings of old he toured widely in his dominions. All kings and emperors of our race from Asoka downwards had done this and the Chinese pilgrim Yuan-Chawng, who visited India in the seventh century A.D., writes how king Harsha of Kanauj used to go out on extensive tours in his dominions and wherever he went, people waited upon him with their offerings of curds and milk and acquainted him with their difficulties and grievances. The Maharaja followed these noble examples, and the present writer has seen him living in camp for the sake of his people with far less pomp and show than that which attended the peregrinations in the rural areas of an officer of the Indian Civil Service in our country. These tours served a double purpose. They enabled him to organise, partly for his own recreations and partly for the protection of men and cattle from wild beasts, grand shoots a spell of adventure as thrilling as romance itself and to acquaint himself with the condition of the country and the needs of the people. The latter took advantage of such opportunities to place their grievances before the Maharaja who was always accessible and ready to listen to such representations. Wherever he went, he was accorded a most cordial welcome and his entry into the district headquarters was greeted with the erection of

triumphal arches, the sprinkling of vermilion and the loud and vociferous demonstrations of loyalty. Parts of Tarai like Morang and Nayamuluk which had not been visited by the rulers of Nepal for decades, being far too distant, received the Maharaja's attention and benefited by his reforms. His advent in the countryside heralded useful reforms and the impression went abroad that wrongs would be righted, grievances would be redressed and progressive measures would be devised for the public good if only the people could have a chance of representing their case to the Maharaja. It was so in a number of cases. In certain areas these visits were frequently repeated and caused widespread satisfaction.

The Tarai is a valuable part of Nepal. It is a vast reservoir of strength upon which the country can draw to satisfy its material wants. But it is still in a backward condition and the need for reform in many directions is imperative. Some of the immediate requirements which have only been partially fulfilled may be restated for the sake of emphasis. These are : (1) extension of irrigation facilities by digging canals from the Kosi, Bagmati, Kamla and Narayani rivers to water the districts along their banks; (2) further industrial development and the production of abundant raw materials; (3) growth of more towns and the construction of pucca houses in large numbers to protect the people against rain and dampness; (4) extension of metalled roads to facilitate travel and the transit of goods from one district to another without taking a circuitous route; (5) more and more supply of pure drinking water; (6) development of cottage industries to keep the peasants occupied during off seasons; and (7) improved methods of cultivation.

More than once the Maharaja declared that his desire was to put these schemes into execution and he spent large amounts of money to implement his promises. But as the saying goes, Rome was not built in a day, and large schemes of economic reconstruction in primitive conditions must necessarily take a long time to mature and fructify. When the plans, which the Maharaja had in mind for his country's development, are extended to all parts of the Tarai, it will be a paradise not only for the sportsman but also for thousands of men and women, the humble toilers in the fields and forests, who are its inhabitants.

Nepal and the Second World War

But who, if he be called upon to face
 Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
 Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
 Is happy as a lover.
 And through the heat of conflict keeps the law
 In calmness made, and, sees what he foresaw.
 Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
 Nor thought of tender happiness betray.

—Wordsworth

In a previous chapter the relations between Nepal and Great Britain have been described at some length and evidence has been adduced to show how constantly friendly the mountain kingdom has been towards her great ally during all these years. When the first World War broke out (1914), Nepal acted her part nobly and her splendid sacrifices in men and money called forth the most generous tributes from the highest authorities both in India and in Europe. During the Second world war also she did her utmost to uphold the allied cause and shed her blood and treasure to rescue the world from Fascist and Nazi tyranny. The entry of an Asiatic power like Japan into the war made the situation extremely serious but even in the most critical periods Maharaja Juddha saw with the perspicacity of a far-sighted statesman on which side victory was to lie. He had no misgivings about the ultimate issue, and though many people thought at one time that the British

Empire was almost would up and the democracies had suffered an irretrievable disaster, he was clear in his mind that in the end the allied cause would triumph and tyranny would go to its inevitable doom. As the news of German and Japanese aggression reached Nepal, the Maharaja became more and more anxious to see the struggle through and offered every kind of help to defeat the designs of the Axis Powers. Himself a veteran soldier, he felt no difficulty in arousing the enthusiasm of his warlike people to the highest pitch and from all sides came the response to his fervent appeal for help and service. His country passed through great trials and sufferings caused by high prices and scarcity of food and cloth but neither the Maharaja nor the people flinched from their resolve in the slightest degree. If the war happily ended in the victory of the allied nations, and India was saved from the horrors of a foreign invasion, the credit for this result was due in no small measure to Maharaja Juddha and his brave soldiers who fought against heavy odds with undaunted valour and heroism.

Nepal had been watching with eager anxiety the gathering of the war clouds on the political horizon of Europe. The Chanceries were busily occupied in discussing the ways and means of averting what was likely to develop into a disaster for the civilisation of Europe. In August 1939 when differences between Germany and Czechoslovakia became acute, the Central News Agency enquired of the Nepalese Minister in London what the attitude of his Government was likely to be if war broke out. The Minister communicated this query to His Highness, the Maharaja, asking him what reply he should give. Forthwith a cable was sent by the Nepal Government conveying the message: "Nepal's traditional friendship will surely tell." On the 27th August the Private Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja visited the *Charge d' affaires* at the Legation in Kathmandu on his behalf, and in the course of conversation informed him that in the event of Britain being involved in a war it was presumed that the Nepali troops would be required for garrison duty in India, particularly on the North-West Frontier as was done during the last Great World War, and as there was no barrack system in Nepal, notice would be required for moving the troops. He added that at least two months would be required for the troops to settle their domestic affairs, and, therefore, it was necessary to inform them in time, if there was.

such a probability. In the meantime came the news that Chamberlain had signed the Munich Pact with Hitler. Nepal heaved a sigh of relief and His Highness the Maharaja sent a cable congratulating the Prime Minister on his successful efforts in arriving at a settlement. With a sigh of relief the world hailed the news praying for a happy close and reiterating Nepal's traditional friendship with Britain vindicated so often. Mr. Chamberlain promptly replied and thanked His Highness for the assurance of Nepal's sympathy and support at such a critical juncture in the history of the world. This was followed by a letter from the British Minister on the 4th October 1938 saying that His Britannic Majesty's Government had asked him to convey to His Highness their warm appreciation of His Highness's generous offer to lend troops for duty in India in the event of the War. The letter further added that the Government of India also desired to be associated in thanking him for the generous offer and that in the event of Great Britain being involved in war they would be very grateful if all the Nepali troops could be made available by the Nepal Government for garrison duty in India. Scarcely a year had elapsed since the Munich Pact was signed when the situation in Europe worsened and on the 25th August, 1939 the Nepali Minister in London informed His Highness that the war situation was most uncertain. The Radio broadcasted the news all the world over that there was grave cause for anxiety. The Maharaja deputed his son General Bahadur and the Badakazi to tell the British Minister that he would offer 8000 troops for garrison duty in India. But for the removal at least two months' time would be required so that the soldiers might go to their homes in the interior of the hills and leave their families there. The British Minister thanked the Maharaja for his renewed offer of support both on behalf of the British Government and the Government of India. On the 4th September 1939 His Highness drove to the Parade ground to inspect the troops which were to be sent to India and rejected the invalids who were unfit for active service. From there he proceeded to the British Legation in Kathmandu and informed the British Minister that most of the troops selected by him had made their arrangements for going abroad. Meanwhile the war clouds grew thicker and thicker, and on the same day the Maharaja was officially informed that War had

broken out between Great Britain and Germany. A few days later, His Highness again wrote to Mr. Chamberlain regretting the failure of his zealous intervention in the cause of peace and added : "The settlement reached and the declaration signed on the occasion raised hopes that after all good will come out of the sacrifice made and peace in Europe will remain undisturbed for long in future. It did not, however, take many months to see those hopes shattered and then events marched on rapidly changing in their phases which roused the interest of the world like the successive acts of a tragic drama". It is indeed difficult to foresee how long this horrid war with its deadly preparation in arms may last or how far and wide it may spread and what other nations may have to join it through self-interest or for self-protection. Your Excellency is aware that following only the dictates of traditional friendship and the promptings of conscience for what was right and just, I have volunteered such offer of help as we are capable of rendering to our great friend in the hour of need. I fully hope and believe that, righteous as the cause is, untainted either with expectations of gain or territorial aggrandisement, it will by God's grace, be surely crowned with victory and Your Excellency's name will go down to posterity as the deliverer of the weak from political serfdom under the hegemony of the strong."

Mr. Chamberlain's reply reiterated His Majesty's Government's appreciation of Nepal's generous offer and referred to the friendship which existed between Nepal and Britain in glowing terms: "the friendship between our countries has been founded on a traditional respect for each other's needs and each other's independence, and it has been confirmed by years of loyal co-operation. It cannot fail, therefore, to appear the more valuable at the present time when the unashamed use of force against weaker nations is so openly and so widely challenging the principle of peaceful co-operation between the free and the independent states. It is this principle which His Majesty's government are pledged to defend and in defence of which they have been reluctantly compelled to take up arms. During the long and hard struggle which may follow, and from which we shall not flinch, not the least source of strength which His Majesty's government will possess will be the knowledge that they enjoy the sympathy and support of men

of good will, like Your Highness, throughout the whole world.”

The Viceroy of India (Lord Linlithgow) also thanked His Highness and wrote on the 9th September, 1939 :

“I was deeply touched to learn from Colonel Betham that Your Highness, remembering the association of Nepal with India in the last war, had renewed your magnanimous offer to send 8,000 Nepalese troops for garrison duty in India during the present war. On behalf of India I thank Your Highness for this inspiring offer, which I regard as a most convincing proof, if proof were needed, of the ancient ties of friendship between Nepal and the British Empire. I am consulting my military advisers and hope to be able to send a reply very shortly.” The Commander-in-Chief was equally grateful and welcomed the opportunity of seeing the Nepalese troops in India as was the case during the last Great World War. The Maharaja was deeply touched by this cordial appreciation of his offer and again wrote to the Viceroy :—

“Perfectly true and well-tryed as has always been the traditional friendship between our two Governments and staunch and true as I and my country remain to it, I suppose I need hardly say that my army will not fail to show the same zeal in the defence of India as when defending its own hearth and home and cement still more firmly by gallant deeds while exerting its utmost to be of such service and help as it is fit for and capable of the existing happy friendly relation with Britain.”

In all these letters the Maharaja emphasized the fact of Nepal's independence which had been his dominant passion since he was raised to the Prime Minister's *gaddi* and reaffirmed his friendship with Britain which rested on mutual esteem and confidence.

Lord Halifax's reply was characteristic :—

“It is the conviction of His Majesty's Government that between independent nations relations which are free and uncompelled will ever prove the firmest basis for friendly co-operation and lasting peace. I think Your Highness will agree with me that this is a conviction which has been abundantly justified in the history of the relations between our two countries. No one who is familiar with that history could doubt its truth. Unfortunately this belief in the value of friendly co-operation is one which is not shared by all powers in their

dealings with their neighbours, and the utmost efforts of His Majesty's Government have failed to secure, through peaceful but earnest representations, its wider acceptance in Europe when it was most urgently needed."

War having been officially declared, arrangements for sending contingents to India began to be made. Major Eustace was appointed on behalf of the military department of the Government of India to discuss matters with the Government of Nepal which was represented by the Maharaja's eldest son Commanding General Sir Bahadur. The agreement was fully signed by General Bahadur on behalf of his Government and by General E.D. Burgh on behalf of the Government of India. The conditions of service were closely defined and mutually agreed upon by the parties. Every care was taken to maintain the dignity of the State of Nepal and elaborate rules and regulations were drawn up about pay and pension, leave, honours and rewards, rations, discipline, training, the use of arms, medical aid, clothing, etc., and it was clearly stipulated that the contingents will be for service in India or on the N.W. Frontier and will not be sent overseas. A senior officer of the Nepalese army was to be attached for duty as the staff of the Commander-in-Chief in Delhi and Simla with a view to putting forward the views of the Nepalese Government and advising the Indian authorities on matters affecting the contingent. He was to be given full facilities for paying frequent visits to the troops for purpose of inspection. The Maharaja commissioned General Bahadur to make it clear to the British Government that Nepalese troops will not be employed to put down any internal disorder or against unarmed mobs in the country but that they shall be used only against external enemies. The Viceroy readily agreed to this condition and in his letter dated the 27th March the Commander-in-Chief assured the Maharaja of his Government's intentions. He said :-

"Your Highness may rest assured that in normal circumstances there is no intention of calling upon them (Nepalese contingents) to face or fire on unarmed mobs."

Nepal's aim in making this offer was to help her great ally in the hour of danger and to use the Maharaja's words" to stand by her friendly neighbour in an hour of grave peril and thus to strengthen and cement still further the traditional

friendship existing between the two nations. Addressing the troops before their departure for India the Maharaja dwelt upon the importance of efficiency and discipline in the army :

“The army is the chief ornament of the nation. To keep it unstained and lustrous should be our principal goal. Protection of the country, winning laurels on the battlefields and triumph over the enemy are some of the most essential duties of a soldier. If there are any of the unworthy elements in this supreme sacrifice (Yajna), you can imagine what a great harm to the country is likely to result from them. As I say all this, I desire to reiterate our unswerving attachment to the government of Britain. Ours is a small hilly kingdom, our resources are slender. Whatever help we have been rendering to our traditional friend in a time of emergency may mean only a small addition to her vast strength but the value of things lies not so much in quantity as in quality.”

He exhorted them to do their best in order to enhance the illustrious name of the Gurkhalis as a gallant and fighting race and declared that though absent they would be rendering a great service to their country by taking full advantage of the opportunities of training while they were on active service in India. It was impossible for Nepal, went on the Maharaja, to provide for training in all modern modes of warfare and the use of up-to-date arms and weapons and he hoped that his men would energetically strive to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with modern military tactics. In mechanised warfare the manoeuvres were quite different from those in a hand to hand fight and it was absolutely essential for every soldier who aspired to distinction in his line to be all round and efficient.

Himself a seasoned soldier, the Maharaja knew well, the value of *morale* in military organisation. He exhorted the soldiers who were leaving Nepal to be careful in dealing with men of other religions and nationalities. He said :

“Look upon extravagance as a sin and remember that prudent economy is the sheet anchor of an honest citizen. To borrow money in a foreign country is to bring your own country into disrepute. Rowdyism, gambling and the use of intoxicating drugs should be avoided. Keep on friendly terms with all. Discipline is a matter of vital importance; indeed; the prestige and the practical skill of the army depend upon the observance of rules and regulations.”

On behalf of the troops General Bahadur who was the G.O.C. 'in C' of the contingent thanked His Highness for the generous sentiments to which he had given expression. The Maharaja himself led the troops for a short distance and then bade farewell to them. Thus did the Nepali troops leave for India.

Facilities for the training of officers and men were to be provided and it was agreed that for administrative and other reasons it was absolutely essential that the troops should arrive in India not later than the 20th March 1940. The first training cadre of 24 officers and 120 non-commissioned officers of the 1st brigade entrained Raxaul on the 1st December, 1939 from Abbotabad and the second cadre consisting of 24 officers and 120 non-commissioned officers of the 2nd brigade started for the same destination on the 22nd January 1940. The movement of the 1st and 2nd brigades from Raxaul began on the 8th of March 1940 at the rate of one battalion daily, the last battalion being entrained on the 15th March. A Nepalese officer had already proceeded to Abbotabad a few days in advance to discuss the detailed arrangements. The arrival of the contingents was much appreciated by the Viceroy who wrote to His Highness on the 28th March :

“I have been so glad to hear of the arrival of the two Brigades of Your Highness’s troops, and I look forward very much to the pleasure of seeing again Commanding General Bahadur Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana when he arrives in Delhi early next week, and to hearing the latest news of Your Highness. Your Highness is well aware how deeply I appreciate the signal mark of friendship shown by the despatch of the Nepalese contingent, and how greatly it is valued by His Majesty’s Government.”

The training started atonce and the Commander-in-Chief was very much satisfied with the progress that was made during the initial period of training. The majority of the battalions were ready to move to their places alongside troops of the Indian army. In his letter dated 21st October 1940 he wrote to His Highness :

“Many difficulties have been overcome and shortcomings remedied, and recent reports testify to a gratifying improvement all round. This is largely due to the keenness and energy

displayed by all ranks, but in no small measure my thanks for this satisfactory state of affairs are due to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Contingent, Your Highness' eldest son, Sir Bahadur Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, C.B.E. His energy, frankness and quick appreciation of what was necessary in the way of changes, coupled with his invariably ready co-operation, have been of the greatest value. His advice and invariable friendliness have been of the greatest assistance and done much to facilitate the task of my staff dealing with the contingent."

The troops replaced a large number of the finest British and Indian troops who were transferred to the various theatres of war where their need was imperatively felt. Efforts were made to keep up the soldiers to their full strength by the despatch of fresh detachments. The first Jangi Auxiliary Pioneer Battalion of 1000 strong and the Jagannath Auxiliary Pioneer Battalion of the Nepalese army rendered valuable services and their work deservedly won the appreciation of the Commander-in-Chief of India who wrote as follows :

"The first Jangi Auxiliary Pioneer Battalion and the Jagannath Auxiliary Pioneer Battalion of the Nepalese army are about to leave India on return to Nepal and I would like to convey to you and to them my high appreciation of the services they have rendered to our common cause. At the time when we made our request to you for assistance of this nature our need was great, and I am most grateful to you and your Government for your generous and speedy offer of help. The work done by these units under very adverse climatic conditions and in the face of enemy air attack has merited the highest praise and has been a most valuable contribution to the preparations necessary for our offensive against the Japanese."

It may be noted here that the supply of those contingents for defence service in India was only a small part of the help rendered to the allied military force by Nepal. In June 1940 a request to raise six and afterwards nine more battalions out of the existing British Gurkha regiments was received. With his characteristic alertness the Maharaja acceded to the request. He had foreseen such an eventuality and made a survey of available recruits who were more than the required number. This addition was raised to ten battalions and when the request was repeated again, an addition of ten more

battalions was made, thus bringing the total strength to 40 battalions. As three battalions were lost at Singapur, permission to raise three more battalions in their place was given by His Highness in March 1942. Recruiting went on vigorously and the country was denuded of the flower of its manhood. In many a village only old men, women and children were left, the able-bodied men having gone on active service. As labour became scarce, women did the work of men and the agricultural community felt the pinch everywhere. Cultivation was much hampered for want of labourers and workmen but those who were left behind bravely shouldered the burden and carried out their duties without complaint or murmur. The total number of men who left Nepal for service abroad amounted to 148,000.

Besides the help in man power a modest aid in the shape of arms was also given. A loan of 25 vicks vicke V machine guns and 70 Lewis-guns for use either in the regular army or the new territorial formation was offered on the 11th August 1940. These were not sent as they were not required by the Government of India. Three years later in January 1943 in response to an appeal made by the Commander-in-Chief a loan of 192 service revolvers and 144 Binoculars was offered and it was thankfully accepted. Towards the close of 1939 the Government of India had shown an eagerness to acquire walnut trees from Nepal. Immediately an offer of 100 walnut trees free of cost from forests in the drainage area of the Kali River and its tributaries was made by the Maharaja's Government.

It will not be out of place to mention here the brave deeds of the Gurkhas belonging to the British Indian army. They fought on the frontiers of India in Assam and Burma, in the middle east and other theatres of war and gave amazing proof of their valour and heroism. As many as ten Gurkhas won the Victoria Cross and received the warmest praise from the military authorities. Subedar Lal Bahadur Thapa of the 2nd King Edward VII's own Gurkha Rifles fought in the middle east and during the Allied attack on Rass Az Zondi feature, he showed unexampled valour and capacity for leadership. He fought his way up a narrow gully straight through enemy fire and managed to reach the crest in complete defiance of danger and death and produced a decisive effect on the success of the

whole operation. Similar heroism was displayed by Havaldar Ghaje Ghale of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Gurkhas Rifles on 24th-27th May 1943. He engaged the Japanese in a stubborn hand to hand fight in the Assam-Burma frontier and for his bravery was awarded V.C. The thrilling encounter is thus described in a military report :— “The Havildar dominated the fight by his outstanding example, dauntless courage and superb leadership. Hurling hand grenades and covered with blood from his own neglected wounds, he led assault after assault, encouraging his platoon by shouting, the Gurkha battle cry ‘Ayo Gurkhali’ The Gurkhas stormed and carried the hill by a magnificent all-out effort and inflicted very heavy casualties on the Japanese. The Havildar then held and consolidated the hard won position under heavy fire. It was only when consolidation was well in hand that he went refusing all help, to the regimental all post, and then only when he was ordered to do so by an officer. The courage, determination and leadership of this N.C.O. under trying conditions are beyond all praise.”

The Nepal Government was not slow to recognise their gallantry and the Maharaja awarded them the medal of Prajja-wala Nepal Tara, a dignity which had not been enjoyed by any one there before.

The gallant deeds of Kali Bahadur, Sher and Mahendra Dal regiments will always live in history. The first two checked the Japanese advance towards the Indian frontier and the second fought a number of battles with them in operation to retreat into Burma.

In March 1944 when the Japanese invasion of Assam was started, the Mahendra Dal regiment was hurriedly sent from Upper Assam to Silchar and was commissioned to protect Silchar-Bishanpur track, a stretch of one hundred miles rising up hill and down dale. During the siege of Imphal the Regiment worked in that area for four months and its patrols had occasional clashes with the Japanese. They made the enemy feel the presence of a big striking force on the Silchar side and the great achievement was the successful maintenance of the means of communication in the hilly country of the Nagas. when the campaign of Burma began, the regiment marched into the country and pushed forward inspite of the difficulties placed in their way by man and nature. The hardships which

they suffered are difficult to describe. Sometimes they had to cut their way through deep under-growth and at places they had to made through water forty times in a single days' march. In certain places the country was so dry that the water was scarce and whatever could he had was mixed with sodium-hydroxide which adversely affected the health of the soldiers. The most notable achievements of the regiment during the advance was its capture of the oil wells at Indaw on the 14th December 1944. This was followed by their heroic march from Ukhrul into Bruma, covering a distance of 500 miles and active patrolling which extended over 1200 miles without any means of transport except a few miles and one or two elephants. They fought a number of actions against the Japanese in which the latter were definitely worsted. The supreme allied commander of the S.E.A.C. Louis Mountbatten in a letter to the commander of the Regiment thus expressed his appreciation of their heroism :—

“I was most impressed by their appearance and their bearing on parade and have written to His Highness the Maharaja and the Commanding General Sir Krishna Shumshere informing them that I had seen the Regiment and found it in very good order.”

The Regiment played a distinguished part in the battle for Sagaing. It suffered casualties, killed enemies and received decorations. The army commander who saw Gurkhas personally in action in the Sagaing hills near Mandalay was much impressed by their cheerfulness, gallantry and efficiency. His Highness the Maharaja sent a congratulatory message to the Regiment.

“Delighted to hear of the good work done by the officers and men. You have proved yourselves true to the salt of your Government ; you have kept good name and tradition of your forefathers and of the Gurkhas and you have enhanced the glory of Nepal. For this, I am thankful to the commanding officer and the rank and file. You will carry on the future operations with such courage as will befit the Gurkha name.”

Similar bravery was shown by this Regiment in the battles of Mount Papa and Kama fought against the Japanese. After three days' march across a dry and barren country, it entered the village Ingyaung at the foot of the mountain in the midst

of a heavy rain and storm. The enemy force had concentrated on the top, and, therefore, the regiment was ordered to attack the mountain and occupy a hill feature. The attack began at early dawn under a heavy fire from all sides and the progress was rendered difficult by the hilly nature of the country. The Regiment slowly climbed up the hill in the face of stubborn opposition by the enemy and at last it was able to occupy a ridge which made other companies' advance on to the ridge a bit easier. In order to obliterate the defences of the regiment the enemy had recourse to heavy shelling which was so intense and pinpoint that about 85 shells landed within the perimeter. A few bunkers collapsed and men were buried under the *debris* while a few others were completely blasted. The gallant fighters did not lose heart and forced the Japanese to withdraw into the jungle country, leaving the M.T. Vehicles and guns behind. The result of this victory was the capture of the Papa village and a number of M.T. Vehicles and guns. The retreating Japs were pursued and artillery fire was directed on to the enemy position all through the night. There was heavy and ceaseless fighting for three hours at a very close range and the parties engaged with desperate fury cursing and challenging each other with great zeal and vigour. At last the Japs were routed and suffered heavy casualties.

In the Kama area also the Japs suffered a crushing defeat in spite of their overwhelming superiority in numbers. Fifty seven were killed and many more were wounded. Captain Bala Bahadur's plan for the ambush as well as the withdrawal was executed bravely and successfully and he was awarded M.C. for his gallantry.

During the battle that raged round Kohima which was regarded by army men as a 'miniature Stalingrad' vigorous attacks were launched by the Japanese on the field supply depot on Treasury hill. The Gurkhas fought stubbornly against heavy odds and gave a good account of themselves. On the 5th April 1944 B. Company was detailed to relieve one platoon of Assam Rifles who were holding the treasury. The 11 platoon which was leading had nearly passed the branch road near the treasury Hill while the remainder of the company were ambushed by the enemy. The enemy fired at them, killing two on the spot and wounding eight others. The 11 platoon was completely cut off from the company.

Commander Sailendra Bahadur when he saw the platoon in such a predicament, maintained his presence of mind and led his platoon down the road to Cinema Hall and waited there for the rest of the night. Here he could distinctly hear the enemy making noise on the treasury Hill and he succeeded in his attempt. A powerful assault began with the battle cry of 'Ayo Gurkhali' which startled the Japanese from their sleep and they fled in pell-mell confusion. The hill was occupied and Sailendra asked for ammunitions and reinforcement immediately. These were promptly despatched and the company commander sent a message that the hill had been occupied and the position was perfectly safe.

No other regiment contributed so much to the good name of the contingent as the Mahendra Dal—a fact which is borne out by the many distinctions and awards conferred upon its officers and men by the Maharajah, the American correspondent of the Army Magazine 'Yank' was much struck by the noble bearing of the Gurkhali soldier and paid a tribute to him: "Not as glamorous as the Sikh, but every bit as good a fighting man is the pint-sized Gurkha from the independent state of Nepal on the North East frontier. Rated the most feared soldier of World War II, the Gurkha is a 5 foot 2 inch warrior, whose favourite weapon is his long bladed *kukri* knife. Many a headless Jap or German bears mute testimony to the Gurkhas' skill with the *Kukri*. However, reports that the Gurkha throws his *kukri* or never returns it to its scabbard without drawing blood are fallacies. The Gurkha's proudest boast was their record of World War I which showed not a single desertion in any Gurkha unit despite long stretches of front line action in France, Egypt and Mesopotamia."

Nepal's help was warmly appreciated by the British Government as is evidenced by the letter written to His Highness by the greatest statesmen of Britain. In inaugurating the Defence Council in 1941 the Viceroy said: "In paying tribute to the gallant fighting men of India I would associate with it a word of gratitude for the immense assistance given us by our neighbour, the warrior kingdom of Nepal to the sympathetic support and co-operation of whose Prime Minister we owe so much and whose troops played their part with distinction which we have come to expect of them in the various theatres of war in which they have been engaged."

The Commander-in-Chief who had a first hand knowledge of the assistance given by Nepal bore testimony to the gallantry of the Gurkha troops and the ready and generous help given by the Prime Minister. In a letter to His Highness dated 24th December 1941 His Excellency wrote :

“Need I say how heartily I share your Highness’s good wishes for early and successful termination of the war. I cannot, however, let this opportunity pass of thanking you again most warmly for invaluable and constant assistance which Nepal has lent to the empire at this critical moment in the history of the world.”

Again in another letter dated the 14th December 1942 we find similar sentiments expressed.

“.....I know that in achieving that end (peace) Britain and India can count in good days as in bad upon the unfailing determination of your Highness’s Government and upon the gallantry of the Gurkha soldier to see the task through to the end.”

The Government of India was equally appreciative of the steadfast support given by Nepal and the Viceroy at the annual meeting of the Associated Chamber of Commerce in December 1942 referred to her as “the warrior kingdom of Nepal to which and to whose Prime Minister we are bound by such close ties.”

As the news came in from the various theatres of the war and the valour of the Gurkha soldiers became known, Britain’s gratitude to the Maharaja found clear and sincere expression in the letters and utterances of her most distinguished statesmen. In his letter of the 8th January 1943, the Viceroy wrote to the Maharaja :

“.....As I have already assured Your Highness, it was a great pleasure to me to have the opportunity of expressing publicly my deep sense of obligation to your Highness and to Nepal for the ready and generous assistance you have given us. Encouraged by enduring friendship and the most valued help of your Highness and of your people. We will look forward to a New Year in which the prospects are bright for the crowning of our united efforts with final Victory.”

The foreign Secretary Mr. Eden recognised with equal warmth Nepal’s share in the titanic struggle and in a letter to the Maharaja paid her a well-merited tribute.

“—————The great efforts of the Allied nations, indeed, seem at last to be meeting their reward and in his joint efforts to overcome the enemy Nepal is playing a noble part. It is my earnest hope that success will continue to crown our partnership in this struggle.”

The Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief and the foreign Secretary of Britain were not the only persons to commend the Maharaja's efforts in the allied cause. From the very beginning of hostilities, the Prime Minister of England, Mr. Churchill, had admired Nepal's attitude and in his letter dated the 28th March 1943 he wrote to the Maharaja :

“—————the help which your country is giving us, in the prosecution of the war and in particular the part played by the Gurkha Regiments of the Indian Army are a valued contribution towards victory of our common interests.”

Such thankfulness on the part of the highest authorities encouraged Nepal's sons to do their best in helping the Allied cause. As the struggle became more and more intense and the heroism of the Gurkhas in effectively combating the Japanese menace spread their fame in foreign lands, recognition of Nepal's support became more emphatic as is clear from the following words of Mr. Churchill in a letter dated the 11th March 1944.

“—————The personal interest of your Highness is a source of deep satisfaction to me, for I know that I may read in it as yet further proof of your country's steady support in the war which we are waging against the evil forces of German and Japanese aggression and in which we are glad to have the aid of the brave Gurkhas of Nepal. Hurrah for the Gourkhas.”

The fall of Tunisia caused rejoicings in Nepal as in other allied countries and in a durbar held to celebrate the victory the Maharaja spoke of the valour of the Indian Gurkha troops who had contributed in no small measure to the attainment of victory. The British Minister who was present on the occasion warmly reciprocated his sentiments.”

“—————In winning this wonderful victory in North Africa every man has played his part and with our soldiers have stood shoulder to shoulder in cheerful comradeship the representatives of Nepal. I am proud to include the Gurkha regiments which have fought side by side with the other units

of the glorious 4th Indian Division in General Montgomery's 8th Army and which earned for themselves a place for ever among those who will never be forgotten. They have made history, and as such, they will be, for ever, immortal."

The Minister went on to pay a generous tribute to His Highness, He added :

"—————Here, in Nepal, your Highness's subjects have been able to look to their Maharaja for similar inspiration. For five years I have had the honour of working with Your Highness. For nearly four out of these five years we have been at war and all that time I have never seen Your Highness be any thing but steadfast and optimistic, a staunch believer in our victory and a great and strong head of our ancient and friendly ally Nepal."

The Maharaja desired the British Minister to convey his congratulations to General Eisenhower, Alexander and Montgomery whose courageous leadership in the various campaigns he admired but he was careful to add that the Nepali contingents sent to India were meant only for garrison duty and that they should not be used against unarmed mobs or in quelling civil disorder.

The war ended in May 1945 in the victory of the allies and the Axis powers were completely destroyed. Japan too was defeated and her forces were driven back from Burma. As a true friend of Great Britain and a supporter of the allied cause Maharaja Juddha held victory celebrations on a large scale. He felt proud of the share Nepal had taken in defeating the Axis Powers and was justified in dwelling upon the contribution he had made to the allied cause. To the grandees of the realm and civil and military officers, assembled at Tudikhel, he addressed words of hope, encouragement and sympathy and recounted the exploits of the Nepal contingents. He particularly mentioned the Kali Bahadur, Sher and Mahendradal regiments and described the service they had rendered in driving the Japanese out of Burma. He rejoiced to think that the deadly carnage had come to an end and the prospect of peace was in sight. He expressed sincere admiration for the courage and gallantry of his soldiers who had defied death and destruction in his service and brought glory to their motherland. Speaking of the help he had given to his ally and friend Great Britain the Maharaja said :

Ours is a small mountainous country and our resources are by no means very considerable. Yet in her hour of need we have helped Britain to the utmost. The total number of men sent from this country comes to about 148,500 and this is by no means an insignificant figure when we bear in mind the strength of our country. In this number are included 1,32,000 recruits, 4,000 labourers and a pioneer battalion consisting of 1,25,000 with necessary equipments. The Gurkhas are a war-like people. Indeed war is the element in which they live, move and have their being. We are proud of their brave deeds which have been the most effective means of cementing further the traditional friendship that exists between Nepal and the Great Britain.”

The war being over that Nepali regiments which had been sent abroad began to arrive in Kathmandu and by the first week of October 1945 all reached there. The Maharaja, who had deliberately postponed his retirement from his exalted office, for this very purpose, received the Mahendradal, Sher Battalion and Kali Bahadur at Hanumandoka and then a procession was formed by His Highness and proceeded to Tudikhel. A short extempora speech followed in which the Maharaja offered his thanks to the troops for the gallantry which they had shown in fighting against the Japanese. The troops dispersed to their homes after performing *Panipatia*,¹ the purificatory rite which is obligatory on those who return from their journey overseas. The Maharaja rewarded all those who had given proof of their valour and heroism in the war with medals and decorations and promotions. The British and Indian officers attached to Nepali regiments were similarly honoured and distinctions were conferred upon them. The number of such decrees was 135.

After the arrival of the troops Sir Claude Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of India, paid a visit to Nepal, accompanied by fifteen British and Indian officers. He reached Nepal on the 24th October, and was received at Kalimati by General

1. *Panipatia* :—The soldiers assemble at Tudikhel and purify themselves. They shave their heads, bathe in the Baghmati, have a darshan of Pashupati and perform *godan* (gift of a cow) according to the directions of the Raj Guru. This purificatory rite is called *Panipatia*. By it the sin of crossing the waters is purged,

Bahadur who extended to him a cordial welcome on behalf of the Maharaja. Crowds gathered to have a glimpse of the redoubtable British soldier and the road along which he passed was lined on both sides with spectators. Next day Sir Claude met His Majesty, the Maharajadhiraj of Nepal at Hanumandoka and in a durbar held there, the latter dwelt upon the magnificent services rendered by him in the African theatre of war and in foiling the attempts of Rommel by putting a brake upon his march to Suez and the Middle East and also in organizing the Indian Army to the highest pitch of efficiency. The Maharajadhiraj told the Commander-in-Chief how Nepal had sent the flower of her manhood for the defence of India's frontiers and how her soldiers had splendid opportunities of crossing swords with the Japanese and once again establishing their reputation as a first class fighting nation. He concluded by admitting Sir C. Auchinleck to the rank of an Honorary General of the Nepalese Army and invested him with the honourable Insignia of the Honorary Supradipta Manyabara Nepal Tara of the most Refulgent Order of the Star of Nepal.

The Commander-in-Chief felt proud of having under his command those five Regiments of the Nepal Army which were so spontaneously and willingly placed at the disposal of the King Emperor in 1939 at the time of the outbreak of the War. He spoke in terms of high appreciation of the friendship that subsisted between Nepal and the British Empire. He added :

“I would like to express my personal deep appreciation of the wise and co-operative spirit which my esteemed friend His Highness the present Maharaja has always shown in dealing with the many requests and suggestions I have had to put before him during the recent war, particularly in connection with the great expansion carried out in the Gurkha rifle regiments of the Indian army and the tremendous increase in the recruitment of Gurkhas. His Highness has never failed to do his utmost to meet our needs and I have valued very greatly his friendship and help.

“Of the Gurkha soldiers of the Indian army no less than ten have won the Victoria Cross, the supreme award for courage. The number of other decorations awarded to them for gallantry also are very numerous.

“Their conduct and courage in all theatres of war has been

beyond praise and many as are the decorations they have gained, every one has been well deserved."

On the 26th December the Commander-in-Chief paid a visit to the Maharaja at the Singha Durbar where he was received with great cordiality and distinction. He presented him with a sword of Honour and the hat of a Nepalese General as tokens of the esteem in which he was held by the Government of Nepal and the army and thanked him for the excellent arrangements that had been made for the return of the contingents.

Sir Claude Auchinleck was deeply touched by the kindness that was shown to him and feelingly gave expression to his sentiments regarding his distinguished host and the warrior nation over which he ruled. He bore testimony to the fine work of the contingents and referred to Nepal's "Spontaneous and generous offer". He said :

For six long years they have done their duty not only on the battlefields of Burma, but also in the heat and hardships with which those soldiers who served on the North West Frontier have to contend. I can say without hesitation or fear of contradiction that had we not had their aid, we should have been hard put to it in many critical situations to carry out our task.

"Since I have held the high office of Commander-in-Chief, I have done my best to ensure that their stay in India should be made as pleasant as possible and I am pleased and proud to have been able to visit many of the regiments and renew my acquaintance with them.

"When, with the fall of Germany, the time came for them to return to this country, it was with great sorrow and some misgiving that I saw them go. It has not been easy to fill the gap they left and it would have been hard indeed had it not been for the unexpected collapse of our last enemy Japan.

"I must refer to the magnificent contribution which Nepal has made to the Indian army in providing over 100,000 recruits during the years of war and I wish to express my personal gratitude to Your Highness for your unfailing co-operation and ready help in this great effort, which I know put a severe strain on the manpower of your country."

The Commander-in-Chief informed the Maharaja that before discharging the Nepalese contingents, full facilities were

provided for their training in agriculture, cottage industries, hygiene and sanitation. The disabled soldiers were kept on the active list of the army and arrangements were made for the due care and protection of blinded Gurkha soldiers who wished to remain with the regimental centres instead of returning to Nepal. The function ended, and the Commander-in-Chief presented to the Maharaja as personal tribute a banner bearing the badge of the India command and the sword of General Hamda, the late Chief of Staff of the Japanese Eighteenth area Army which General Sir William Slim, the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied land forces in the South East Asia command had specially sent by air with the request that it should be presented to the Maharaja of Nepal in recognition of the part played by his troops in the defeat of the Japanese.

This was followed by a victory parade at Tudikhel in honour of the distinguished guest and a march past and review of the troops which were witnessed by thousands of spectators. The Commander-in-Chief thoroughly enjoyed his stay in Nepal and on the fourth day left for India. He was escorted by General Sir Bahadur as far as Kalimati. The Maharaja coveted no title for himself and accepted none but he was successful in securing distinction for his nephew the Commander-in-Chief and the Senior Commanding General. They were both invested with the K.C.S.I. and G.C.I.E. respectively.

The foregoing pages have clearly shown that behind these elaborate arrangements for war and military equipment the guiding spirit was Maharaja Juddha. As always in the past his clearness of vision stood him in good stead. From the outset of the war, his discerning eye could see how it was going to end and not for a moment did he feel any doubt or misgivings about the Allied Victory. Even in the midst of the most acute crises when the Allied position was seriously threatened both in the east and west, when the Germans and the Japanese dealt shattering blows to the Allied forces in the various theatres of the War, the Maharaja never felt any doubt about the ultimate issue and regarded these reverses as merely temporary. In his speech on the occasion of the Victory celebrations he referred to a Japanese doctor who happened to be in Kathmandu before the outbreak of the war. 'Ask your country to keep out of the war', said the Maharaja, 'else

the rising sun will turn into the setting sun.' Though the doctor skeptically listened to his words at the time everybody knows how true the Maharaja's prediction had proved. Japan was ruined and the short-sighted policy of her war-lords had led to disastrous results.

The Maharaja's offer of help was unconditional; there was no spirit of bargaining, and the zeal and vigour with which his Government plunged into the details of preparations shows how clearly he grasped the main issues involved in the conflict and anticipated its far-reaching effects on the position of the nations of the world. Besides, as a Kshatriya Prince whose Code of honour admits of no foul play, he expressed his determination to maintain the traditional friendship between Nepal and Britain. His attitude was greatly appreciated and the most distinguished British statesmen were deeply impressed by his readiness to place his resources at the disposal of the Allies. The wanton acts of unprovoked aggression committed in flagrant violation of international law in Burma, Malaya, Singapore and Hongkong deeply moved him, and when the Japanese advanced towards India he at once sent his forces to guard the Eastern frontier. His regard for India led him to tell the British Government frankly that his troops were not to be employed in quelling civil disorders or in suppressing unarmed mobs and this condition was readily accepted by the highest civil and military authorities. At the fall of the Axis Powers the Maharaja rejoiced like others who had borne the heat and burden of the day and his joy was like that of a warrior who returns from the battlefield in the full consciousness that his cause has triumphed. For five years his country passed through an unprecedented economic crisis but he took vigorous steps to mitigate the hardship caused by high prices and the scarcity of the necessaries of life.

The gates of Janus were closed and Nepal's sons returned to their normal life. Their heroism had raised their country's status in the world and brought glory to her name. The Maharaja was no longer the Supreme Commander of the Nepalese forces. He had turned his back upon the world and taken to a life of asceticism. He cared no longer for the boast of heraldry and the pomp of power but the Nepali army will never forget how much it owes to him. In his day he tried to raise it to the highest pitch of efficiency and by precept and example kept alive the martial spirit of his race.

The Maharaja as a Sportsman

It is n't mere convention. Everyone can see that the people who hunt are the right people, and the people who do'nt are the wrong ones

G. Bernard Shaw.

From time immemorial hunting has been a favourite pastime of royalty all over the world. Kings and noblemen in the hills as well as in the plains have always been fond of game shooting and have looked upon it not merely as a recreation but as a duty incumbent upon men born in the purple. The ancient books of the Hindus furnish ample evidence of the proficiency attained by members of the ruling aristocracy, both in the theory and practice of hunting. The princes of Kshatriya descent regarded it as their duty to kill wild and ferocious animals, who did injury to human life, and the manner in which they organised their hunts shows how minute was their knowledge of the denizens of the forest. The rulers of Nepal, like the Kshatriya princes of old, have practised big game shooting with an assiduity and skill which are worthy of admiration. They have shown a great appetite for adventure and that thrill of delight which results from a duel with the lords of the jungle. The aptitudes and habits of men are largely the outcome of their physical and geographical surroundings in which they live and in this respect the peculiar situation of Nepal and her multitudinous flora and fauna have created in her sons a love of excitement which inevitably attends all hunting expeditions.

Thus the braver spirits seek distinction in this sphere as they do in battles and campaigns. The organisation and management of a hunt and the successful tracking of a dangerous quarry call forth the highest qualities of human character—valour, presence of mind, keen insight, coolness, correct judgment, skill of the hand and the eye and inexhaustible patience when the intended victim eludes one's grasp and disappears in the impenetrable forest. It is true that almost every member of the ruling family in Nepal knows the art of big game shooting but none has achieved such success and renown as Maharaja Jooddha who had killed a large number of blood-thirsty animals and had shown an extraordinary capacity for bold and courageous action. He was a born shikari; he had a genius for sport and was gifted by nature with an unerring insight and an iron nerve which no danger, however, imminent or serious, could shake. He went to the forest like an ardent lover whose soul is aflame with passion to seize the object of his desire. He concentrated his full attention upon his prey and pursued it with undaunted vigour sometimes in complete defiance of death. He surpassed all his contemporaries in Nepal and elsewhere in planning great hunts and as we read the account of his daring feats of adventure, we are reminded of the Qamargah hunts of Akbar the great Mughal Emperor, which are described in the pages of the Akbarnamah. The Maharaja was a specialist in his line; he had a minute knowledge of the jungle; he had not only practised shooting with wonderful skill but had also mastered its technique and suggested new methods and devices by following which a man can avoid waste of time and labour and achieve good results without incurring an easy loss of his life. It is for this reason that the Maharaja's name became a household word in the world of sport and *Shikar* and no apology is needed for describing at length in a book dealing with the events of his life his glorious feats as a hunter and a sportsman. One who has actually seen him at work has drawn the following portrait of him :—

What strikes one chiefly and primarily about His Highness is his absolute fearlessness. He goes into a ring raging with tigers, and remains throughout cool, clam and collected, never flurried and ready for all eventualities. By nature and abundant practice he is a magnificent rifle shot, quick to spot the

animal in the thick grass of undergrowth and quick to kill it as soon as a fair opportunity arises. His knowledge of wild animals of the jungle is immense, and his shikar-Craft most impressive."

Nepal abounds in hills and valleys full of evergreen forests which are the hunts of tigers, leopards, rhinos and other wild animals. Specially rich in game is the *Tarai*, a strip of wet jungle, extending over 500 miles and watered by countless springs. It is a fertile, well-watered, alluvial plain and has rightly been called "the sportsman's Paradise". In the *Tarai* is a tract of land called the *Nayamuluk* which is 80 miles in length and 15 to 20 miles in breadth. It is covered with forests of sal, saj, karma and sallo trees and is the favourite abode of tigers, leopards, wild elephants and all kinds of beautiful birds. The scenery is grand and in the cold weather the climate is superb. To the shikari and the lover of nature this tract of the *Tarai*, having its own peculiarities makes an irresistible appeal. North of the *Tarai* belt lies *Bhabar* (*Charkosiya Jhari* or Eight mile wide forest). This is malarious and unfit for cultivation but an ideal place for the growth of trees, and here the *Maharaja* indulges in his sport of big game shooting. The forests are deep but they are here and there broken up with patches of cultivated land. The inhabitants are mostly *Tharus*, an aboriginal tribe, who are cultivators and possess an intimate knowledge of the jungle and the ways and habits of wild animals. They keep large herds of cattle and are very fond of killing deer, pigs and jungle fowls. To the north of *Bhabar* are the foot hills—the *churia* range—broken and uninhabited. It is intersected by ravines and streams with their banks covered with grass. It is the home of tigers, leopards, wild dogs and the deer—*Sambhar*, *chital* and others—in which they live. Behind them is a range of sand-stone hills. Between these two ranges are found the 'Duns' and the largest and the most famous of them is the *Chitawan* big games preserve in the *Rapti* valley. It is pear-shaped, four or five miles broad at the eastern end, stretching towards *Hetaura*, and getting 25 miles wide towards the western end, and extending over nearly a thousand square miles.

It is an admitted fact that the fauna of a country depends upon its flora, while the flora depends principally on altitude, soil and rainfall. Nepal has all these things and therefore, it

shows an amazing variety of both. The country can be divided into three zones according to altitudes:—(1) The lower region in which are comprised the Tarai, Churia (Siwalik) foothills up to about 4,000 feet; (2) the central region containing the hill ranges and valleys from 4000' to 9000' or even 10,000 feet; (3) the Alpine, region which includes the main Himalayan Chain and peaks above 10,000 feet and magnificent mountains clad with snow.

The variety of fauna increases as the altitude decreases and vegetation grows in quantity. Luxuriant vegetation is highly favourable to the growth of fauna and consequently the Tarai zone has the largest amount of game. The forests of Tarai are the homes of tigers, leopards, the wild bear, the wild elephant, the rhinoceros and the buffalo.

There are several kinds of deer including the shmbhar, Chital, the hog-deer and the little mouse deer and a large variety of small animals. The principal game birds are the peacock, jungle fowl and the black partridge and the lakes and rivers of the Tarai swarm with migratory ducks and geese. No wonder if the fertile and forest-covered lands of the Tarai with their luxuriant vegetation and enormous variety of beasts and birds have attracted the native and the foreigner alike. The inhabitants of these parts, who are mostly cultivators, have excited the wonder and admiration of sportsmen by their minute knowledge of the jungle and dexterous skill in shikar. It was here that king George V came in 1911 for shooting and the prince of Wales in 1921 and both of them had thrilling experiences.

It is natural to expect that the ruler of such a country and people would be a superb sportsman, Maharaja Juddha took from his early days a keen interest in the national pastime of Shikar and his diary shows that from 1933 onwards he had been without a break shooting in the Tarai and having some of the most exciting and unique experiences. The Shikar diary is full of heroic tales of adventure and is crammed with information which enables us to realise how brave the Maharaja was and how extraordinary was the control which he exercised over his nerves. He gave up Shikar several years ago partly on account of advancing age and partly out of a desire to abstain from injury to life, but whenever he heard of a beast endangering the life of man and cattle in a locality, he at once took steps to bring about his destruction.

The Maharaja hunted rhino, bears and other animals but nothing raised his spirits so much as an infuriated tiger. Normally a tiger is not a dangerous animal but once he is cornered he rushes upon his foe with a mad rage and becomes a mass of "diabolical fury", caring nothing for gun-shots or the ponderous weight of elephants. In the jungle of the Tarai, in the midst of thick grass which sometimes grows as high as the howdah of an elephant, surrounded on all sides by huge trees which spread out their leafy branches in all directions, trampling on shrubs and plants, which sometimes entwine round the feet of the beast which carries you, it is a dangerous task to face a tiger in a state of desperate fury. The sudden flight of the elephant, if he is seized with panic, is sure to plunge the rider head-long into disaster and ruin.

"It is no sport for bad shots, hasty excitable people, or those with no stomach for danger. Even the most *blase* hunter is likely to experience for a second or two a sudden spasm of fear when he first hears the blood-curdling roar of an infuriated tiger and sees in the great striped body launched in its charge, a thunder-bolt of death and anger in mid-air. It is one of the most terrific sights in the world."

The Maharaja never failed or faltered in the face of danger. Imagine the plight of a hunter following in the thick forest a wounded tiger—the striped and whiskered monarch of the jungle roused to fiendish fury yet His Highness never betrayed emotion or lost his nerves. More than once he pursued a wounded tiger to its lair and gave proof of his courage and self-possession. One incident of the Maharaja's life fully illustrates the equanimity with which he entered upon the scene of his exploits. Once on January 20th, 1933 a tiger was seen coming straight towards the *howdah* from a spot over a hundred yards away. The scene is thus described :—

"It was a nerve-breaking situation. With ears thrown back, brows contracted, mouth open and glazing yellow eyes scintillating with fury, the cruel claws plucking at the earth, the ridgy hair on the back, stiff and erect like bristles, and the lithe, lissome body, quivering in every muscle and fibre with wrath and hate, the beast came down to the charge with a defiant roar which the pulse of the Shikar party bound and the breath came short and quick."

It seemed as if the brute emitted from his face pitiless ferocity and fiendish rage, The party was seized with panic and shouted: "Look, look, the tiger is going to charge. Your Highness should shoot him without delay". 'Yes' replied the Maharaja coolly, 'Yes. I see him' and then added after a short pause, 'I will shoot him at a range of three yards'. All the time while the hair of the party stood on end, the Maharaja continued to watch with delight the charge of the infuriated beast towards himself. At last he shot him dead and the incident came to an end with a broad smile upon His Highness's face.

In all these daring adventures which went on incessantly during the Shikar season the Maharaja's knowledge of game and insight into the forest stood him in good stead. Never fond of ease and luxurious living, he went out every winter to hunt even if it were only for a few weeks, Generally these excursions lasted from two to three months in the season. The area of the hunt was not always the same. It changed from year to year. In a particular year if he went to Nayamuluk, next year he would go to the glorious wilds of Chitawan and in the third year to Morang. It was impossible for him to stand the full monotony of one place and he tried to go away as soon as he obtained relief from administrative business. As we looked at his impressive figure even when he had exceeded seventy one we could form some idea of the strength, energy and determination he must have been in the heyday of his manhood. His loud voice and sparkling eyes are indicative of the leonine majesty of his nature which could not fail to strike even a casual observer.

The peculiar genius of the rulers of Nepal has developed a unique method of *Shikar*. Never lacking pluck and courage in war or sport, they have reduced Shikar to a fine art. They have bestowed much care and thought upon its organisation and evolved new tactics to cope with dangerous situations. As the old method of hunting a tiger with sword and spear was found wholly unserviceable, Jung Bahadur, a man of erratic genius but brave as bravery itself, evolved a system known as the 'King Method'... a method peculiar to Nepal which was brought to the highest pitch of perfection by Maharaja juddha. In fact in no other country are to be found the many concomitants of the 'King shoot' a large stud of trained Shikar elephants,

skilled Mahawats who knew how to keep cool and guide their hearts in terrible moments. Shikaris who are past-masters in their job, who are fully acquainted with every nook and corner of the jungle, the vast expanse of forests like the Tarai and the abundance of big game such as we find in these deep, impenetrable recesses, which fill the uninitiated with awe and wonder. Without these it is impossible to have a successful and rich tiger-hunt. The tiger is a cunning, ferocious king of the feline tribe more fitted for destruction than any other animal in the whole range of zoology. He combines extreme cunning and agility of limbs with prodigious strength and his ferocity and savage fury mark him out as the very type of a beast on whom every hunter should exercise his valour, ingenuity and skill. It is for killing him that the Nepalese have devised this system.

Before the commencement of the shoot motor roads and bridges are constructed to connect the various jungle camps and all the paths, streams and river beds are examined to locate the abode of tigers. The Shikaris dexterously trace their foot marks and follow them. Overnight or in the afternoon young buffalo calves (*padas*) are tied up in scores or even hundreds in likely places to entice the tiger out of the surrounding in which he hides himself. In the morning the game keepers and the Shikaris go round to see if any of those animals had been killed. A tiger after killing his victim drags it to a distance and then devours enough of it to satisfy his hunger and then lies down to rest, not far away from the place where he has left the mangled remains of the young buffalo. The Shikaris come and examine the drag and determine the direction taken by the ravenous aggressor. Then they noiselessly go round and make a circle, a quarter or a half mile in diameter, carefully marking the circumference with grass knots or small twigs. Thus the drag is enclosed and the final circle is called 'The Ring.'

The tiger having been approximately located, the process of driving him out of his resting place begins. About a hundred and fifty 'pad' elephants that is to say elephants not intended to carry guns, proceed to the appointed place. Along with them are many female elephants with their young ones roped to them for training. They divide themselves into two parties and in perfect stillness move forward towards the jungle to the

right and left following the circumference of the circle. Thus a ring is formed and when it is complete, the order '*Mudi Phira*' is given which means that heads are to be turned inwards. The elephants with the hunting party mounted on them advance towards the centre, closing in gradually until they almost touch each other. The circle grows smaller and smaller about two or three hundred yards in diameter and the tiger is driven towards the centre. The men of the party scream and shout and the movement of elephants stops when the tiger is firmly enclosed on all sides. He charges the ring with a terrible roar in desperate fury and produces a great excitement. The howdah elephants with guns move forward and his attacks are repulsed by rifle shot. At this moment the excitement is at its highest pitch. The beast leaps forward in fury, roars like thunder dashes against the ring, making frantic efforts to escape, until he is brought down by a succession of well-aimed shots. The struggle sometimes goes on for hours in the midst of strange cries of men and the thumping and gurgling of elephants and it is only when the tiger is killed that the thrill and excitement come to an end. In the old days when a tiger escaped by breaking through the ring, Jung Bahadur used to give a good thrashing with his stick to the *mahouts* and saw that the animal was successfully ringed again.

Maharaja Juddha introduced certain changes in the 'Ring Method'. The Shikar started with a smaller number of elephants. They were sent to ring the tiger and when he had been circumscribed, long strips of white cloth were fixed upon small posts of trees just in front of the circuit of elephants, thus making a *purdah* of cloth, which flapping in the wind, aroused the suspicions of the tiger. Thinking that there might be greater danger behind the cloth wall, he kept within the ring and fought on until he was killed. Another party of elephants was sent to another locality to deal with other beasts. In this way in a single day several tigers could be killed without employing a large number of elephants.

Another change which the Maharaja made in the 'Ring system' was intended to reduce the period of hunting inside the ring and to increase the thrill and excitement of the hunt. It was a dangerous innovation, involving risk of life, but the Maharaja being a rack rifle shot and a magnificent snapshot did not mind these dangerous possibilities. Instead of waiting

at one point on his elephant, while the other elephants were struggling with the tiger, the Maharaja dashed forward into the ring, flanked on either side by another elephant, with three or four forming a barricade in front. As soon as the tiger was noticed, the front line withdrew and the Maharaja advanced forward, in complete disregard of danger, and fired at the beast who was brought down to the ground in a short time. An eye-witness thus comments upon the efficacy of the system introduced by the Maharaja :—

“The ring of white cloth, added to the ring of elephants, facilitates this mode of Shikar, and helps to prevent the tiger from charging the ring. By these innovations and improvements the tempo of big game shooting has been greatly accelerated, and this has enabled some phenomenal daily bags of big game to be obtained in the Maharaja’s shoots, not only tigers but also bears and the great Indian rhinoceros. Thus seven tigers have been shot in one day, and on another occasion 6 tigers in one ‘Ring’. Again no less than five rhinos have been hunted and shot in one day (but not in a ring) and elsewhere five bears on another day. Daily totals on this scale are believed to be unique in India or anywhere else in the world.”

“The organisation was indeed marvellous but the splendid results would have been impossible without the extraordinary skill presence of mind, and the courage of the Maharaja. Many tigers were enclosed and killed according to the new method but it was one which could be followed only by one who had attained a high standard of proficiency in shooting.”

Another big game which is found in the dense forests of the Tarai is the Rhino. In hunting the rhino the ‘Ring Method’ is not employed for the obvious reason that the elephant is a timid animal and is scared away by the huge beast. A rhino can easily break a ring and put the elephants to flight in pell-mell confusion. The usual method followed in dealing with the rhinos is to stalk them or track them down with three or four very powerful elephants. The rhinos are found mainly in the Chitwan area and steps have been taken by Government to protect them against the ravages of poachers, who used to make much money out of the rhino horn which was sometimes sold for more than Rs. 1,500. A rhinoceros horn is often handed down from generation to generation as an heir-loom. It is

considered so auspicious that when a child birth is expected in the family, it is kept near the mother to save her from the pangs of labour. The shooting of rhinos is interdicted in Nepal since Maharaja Jung Bahadur's day so that no one can shoot a rhino without the express permission of the Government. The rhino is a huge figure and its heavy footsteps and breathing easily announce its advent. Maharaja Juddha shot many rhinos but he regarded this heavy, slow-footed animal as 'a poor form of sport.' The tiger is incomparable and strains to the uttermost a sportsman's dexterity, courage and presence of mind.

The ring method is not applicable in the case of elephants also. As the elephant represents the God Ganesa in the Hindu pantheon, its killing or shooting is strictly forbidden by the Government of Nepal and the object of Shikar, therefore, is merely to capture him alive. There are three methods employed for this purpose. (1) The 'Kheddah' method which means driving a herd of elephants into a fortified place and then get them trapped; (2) the second is the method of snaring them into pits by alluring them towards female elephants; (3) the third which is commonly used in Nepal is the *jangi* or war kheddah. The wild elephant is hotly pursued by tame elephants who are well fed for the purpose and is ultimately caught when he is exhausted. He is bound in ropes and then tied to a tree or a post. In captivity he is extremely fidgety but he is rendered powerless. For sometime he is not allowed to have any sleep and gradually he is trained to obey man's command. The Maharaja has never hunted a wild elephant though he has watched with interest the operations leading to its final capture.

The Shikar exploits of the Maharaja will require a volume to themselves and all that can be done here is to mention some of the most conspicuous instances of his courage and dexterity as a hunter. No ruler of any country in the world has had such a distinguished record to his credit; none has bagged such a large number of ferocious animals. As has been said before, the Maharaja had an innate aptitude for hazardous adventure in the hunting fields, indeed he was to the manner born. He had an iron will and no difficulty or disappointment could make him flinch from his resolve. Once in December 1933 he was in Nayamuluk and on learning the report that a tiger had

Killed a buffalo he went in search of it and sent the elephants to form a ring but darkness set in and the animal could not be traced. The royal camp was far away and the Maharaja had to pass the night in a Tharu farmer's hut. A Charpai was provided by his host who was bewildered to see the Maharaja and his entourage accustomed to the luxurious life of palaces, seeking shelter in those humble surroundings. The Maharaja, who was tired, had a sound sleep and next morning when he was about to depart, generally recompensed the farmer for his hospitality. He granted him a piece of land in perpetuity and ordered the construction of a brick house in place of his thatched hut.

In the cold weather of 1936-37 the Maharaja was again in Nayamuluk and shot a large number of tigers. On the 29th December occurred an incident which is the most remarkable in the whole career of the Maharaja as a sportsman. The ring was formed and the Maharaja moved forward on the back of his elephant and fired at a tiger and his mate who was wounded. They disappeared in the thick grass but the Maharaja pursued them—a most dangerous step to big game shooting. The Commander-in-Chief offered to go forward but His Highness prevented him from doing so as his elephant was nervous and timid, and not likely to bear the strain of a terrible struggle. The tiger could not be traced in the wild grass and shrubs but all of a sudden from a range of 8 feet the tigress dashed towards the Maharaja's elephant in great fury and catching hold of his trunk began to bite it and tear it with her claws. The other elephants bolted away as fast as they could, but the Maharaja's elephant Bhimgaj stood his ground and tried to kill the tigress by striking her to the ground. In doing so he bent his head so much that the howdah in which the Maharaja was seated tilted downwards almost to the ground and it became impossible for the occupants to remain in their seats. If they were thrown out, they would have immediately fallen into the jaws of death for the tigress's mate was hovering about.

“In this critical situation defended by the mad roaring of the tigers and the trumpeting of the elephants, His Highness kept his position by bracing his legs against the front of the howdah and firmly clutching the hard rail. General

Surya (who was entrusted with organisation of the shoot) who was terrified of falling on to his father and knocking him out similarly clutched the back of the howdah with all his might."

The struggle between the elephant and the tiger went on breathlessly in the midst of great excitement and no shot could be fired. How the Maharaja killed the wild beast at last is related in the Shikar Diary which is an authentic document prepared under His Highness's personal supervision. The Diary gives a graphic description :—

"The scene was very terrible and pitiable, for the heads of the boy, the tiger, and the elephant appeared to be all together, the tiger was holding on to the elephant's head with one paw and to the mahout's leg with the other. A soldier on the pad was holding on to the boy mahout by his belt, and he was holding on to the elephant's ear with both hands. After a long minute the tiger dropped to the ground; he had torn away the flesh of the mahout's leg down to the bone, which was immediately bandaged by Dr. Ganga Prasad."

The Maharaja failed to kill the wounded tiger but he successfully aimed at a tigress and then turned towards the infuriated animal who had broken through the ring. He was closed in again but undaunted this majesty of the forest attacked the elephants again and tore slices of flesh from the legs of two of them. The Maharaja was ready with his rifle; he fired several shots which brought him to the ground. It was after a life and death struggle lasting for one hour and a half that the animal was killed. He was a magnificent tiger measuring 10 feet 4 inches.

After a few days the Maharaja faced another tiger who appeared in the ring and attacked an elephant called Moti Prasad. We have a graphic description of the fight between the two animals.

"The tiger suspended itself from the elephant's belly and began to tear at it. The elephant also kicked with its trunk and legs and tried to dash the tiger down against the ground; the tiger also tried to hurt the elephant and for some minutes they were engaged in a deadly scuffle. Then the tusker dropped down and rolling over crushed the tiger with his enormous weight. The kunkun noise of the elephant and the A-O-Ao groan of the tiger were heard and there was a great excitement all round."

The elephant pressed the tiger with all his might against the ground so that only the latter's head was visible. The mahout and the man at the back were thrown down and luckily they succeeded in climbing up a tree. The beater mahouts shouted and the men on the elephant were killed by the tiger and there was a great uproar and excitement.

As soon as the Maharaja heard the noise, he moved fearlessly into the danger zone and on seeing him, Moti Prasad left the tiger and came near His Highness's elephant. The tiger was lying on the ground with ribs seriously damaged and therefore, unable to rise. A couple of shots finished him and the Maharaja was pleased to hear that the men who had been thrown down were alive.

At the close of January 1933 a party of European ladies and gentlemen including the British Minister, the Earl of Aylesford, Major-General Sir Richard Howard-Vyse, and Colonel Stevenson, the Legation Surgeon came to the royal camp and the Maharaja, always generous to his guests, gave each of them an opportunity of bagging a tiger. A few days later the British Minister was asked by His Highness to bring Field-Marshal Mannerheim of Finland who was his guest, to the hunt along with other friends. The Field Marshal experienced the thrills of a tiger ring shoot and was greatly impressed by the hospitality which the Maharaja extended to him. The Field-Marshal killed a tiger who measured 10 feet 7 inches and was the recipient of congratulations from all sides.

The Chitawan area is indeed a shooting paradise. It is full of tigers and was visited thrice by the Maharaja during the period 1933-40. Within a few months after his accession to the Prime Ministership, he went there and bagged a number of ferocious tigers but on January 16th he saw a tiger crossing the Rapti river to escape into the jungle. A ring was formed but the beast was not easily cowed down; he rushed towards His Highness's howdah but he was checked by a shot from him. This scene is also reproduced in a painting which used to hang in the Durbar Hall at Kathmandu. The tiger measured 10 feet 9 inches, probably the largest which the Maharaja had shot so far. During three successive days three tigers were killed, measuring 10 feet 2 inches, 10 feet 5 inches and 10 feet 9 inches—a fact which goes to show what a wonderful sportsman the Maharaja was.

A more deadly encounter took place on January 17th, 1933 when the Maharaja had a hair-breadth escape. In the course of a shooting expedition in the woods of Bhagadi, an injured tiger made a tremendous bound and clutched at the Maharaja's howdah. There was no time to lose and with cool courage he repeated the shot. Stunned by this blow, the tiger relaxed his grasp and rolled off. But now it turned towards the elephant Bikkram Prasad and began to chew its trunk. The elephant tried to crush the tiger and the two engaged in a terrible scuffle which lasted several minutes. The situation was so tense that minutes seemed like hours and the Maharaja was again and again violently tossed about in the howdah which was shaking like a toy. But with his marvellous skill and courage he steadfastly kept his position and maintained his grip on his rifle. In the end Bikkram Prasad trampled over his foe and crushed the life out of him.

What followed nearly cost the life of the Maharaja. Seized with an impulse of sudden fright, the elephant turned tail and rushed madly forward, sweeping every thing before it. The Mahout's attempt to arrest the flight proved of no avail. Had the elephant dashed against trees or fallen into ditches in the course of his headlong career, the expedition would have ended in a tragic disaster. But unfortunately the animal stopped before the outer ring of elephants and the Maharaja had a providential escape.

Let us read the picturesque narrative in the official Diary which brings the scene vividly before our eyes.

"Ten or fifteen seconds later, this mighty tusker, who had come out with such flying colours from the fray, all of a sudden bolted from the field like a frightened child to the utter surprise and consternation of all. It was strange that well-trained elephant should run helter-skelter through the jungle without a care for the noble occupants on its back. The mahout tried all he could, but to no use. The terrible jolting on this occasion and the great risk of the huge beast crashing into trees roused the alarm of everybody. After careering thus madly for a hundred yards, the elephant came to a stop as abruptly as he had jerked off. The Maharaja had had a lucky escape—so shouted all the shikaris. His Highness considered it a thrill, and called the day a good one which had provided such a tingling adventure."

It is a fine example of the Maharaja's coolness and courage. That he should have called the day a, good one' shows what stuff he was made of and with what imperturbable composure he could act in perilous situations.

The Maharaja was a splendid host and in December 1936 he extended an invitation to shoot in the jungles of Nepal to Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India. The latter came with a party consisting of his wife, three daughters and the Viceregal staff. Grand shoots were organised in the Chitawan area where the Maharaja was himself present but they were different from those of which we have spoken before.

During a Shikar the Maharaja revelled in danger—indeed, it was the element in which he lived, moved and had his being—and the greater the risk of life, the higher rose his spirits, but he did not want to expose his distinguished guests to the frightful risks of tiger-shooting and, therefore, eliminated from the arrangements 'the nerve-cracking episodes' which were the delight of his soul. A good deal of big game was bagged and the Viceroy and his family enjoyed the most thrilling experiences. At the conclusion of the shoot which had been so wonderfully organised Lord Linlithgow acknowledged the Maharaja's hospitality in a farewell speech in these words:—

“Nothing could have been more delightful than the setting which Your Highness has chosen for our camp. The memory of the amazing shikar which you have provided for our party will indeed be a lasting one, and I cannot be sufficiently grateful to you for having given me a chance to shoot rhinos. Let me take the opportunity to say how greatly we have enjoyed the activities of the wild tusker who stepped in occasionally to make his brief appearance on the stage in the river valley. I thank Your Highness once again most warmly on behalf of myself, Lady Linlithgow, my family and my staff for your unvarying kindness to us all, and for the immense trouble you have taken of every detail of this never-to-be forgotten visit.”

The total bag of the Viceroy and his party in eight days amounted to 14 tigers and 3 rhinos.

After the departure of the viceregal party the Maharaja

remained at Thori for a few days and had a strange almost unprecedented experience which deserves a brief mention. On December 13th a wild elephant of huge size with sharp pointed tusks was seen near a stream. He was decoyed by female elephants into the open and the stage was set for an elephant fight. Bikkram Prasad and Bahadur Prasad were brought to attack the wild tusker but the latter turned tail and bolted away. Then a young *Makana* called Ram Prasad (a tuskless male) came forward and with astonishing pluck and audacity engaged his opponent. The fight continued for sometime and the scene was watched by the Maharaja, the Bada Maharani and his staff from the top of a bluff 50 feet high. The official Diary describes the encounter:—

“The tussle was a very thrilling one, and although his trunk was wounded by the tusk of the wild elephant, Ram Prasad knocked him about and the mahout wounded him with his lance. No other elephant would go forward to help him against the wild one. For four or five minutes the fight continued and the spectacle was most exciting and dramatic. Then our elephants made an encircling movement round the wild elephant at close quarters, who turned and bolted away along the stream banks, and Ram Prasad pursued his rival, striking him with his trunk, pulling his tail, and trying to entangle his back legs, while the mahout too made thrusts with his lance in an admirable manner, and the whole pack of tame elephants followed closely behind. It was a very fine sight to see the wild one being pursued by the domestics like a hawk sometimes pursued by a flock of crows.”

But soon the struggle took a new turn. Ram Prasad was violently attacked by his opponent and was thrown down badly wounded. The Mahout was also thrown off and he crawled away to save his life. Ram Prasad was about to be killed when General Bahadur and others came forward and began to fire in the air but the aggressor would not turn aside. Then some one fired a bullet which struck him in the leg and he fled into the jungle. Poor Ram Prasad lay down on the field of his fame, fresh and covered with blood. His heroism impressed all and the Maharaja called in the doctors to dress his wounds. Again he pulled himself up and got ready to rise as if to engage in another bout with his antagonist but he

was prevented from doing so. His wounds were serious and he died after a few days. The Maharaja then ordered the capture of the wild tusker who was chased and hemmed in on all sides and bound with ropes. Ram Prasad's death was fully avenged.

Till the end of February the shikar went on and the Maharaja's total bag, during a period of three months, amounted to 120 tigers, 38 rhinos, 27 leopards, 15 bears, 1 elephant (captured), 2 lions, 10 crocodiles and about 70 deer...an amazing record to which no parallel can be found any where in the world.

There is one other thrilling episode in His Highness's shikar career which deserves to be mentioned. In February 1936 when the Maharaja was staying in the Shaktimuhar and Chaughadamodi camps, he had an encounter with a ferocious tigress who was accompanied by four cubs. He advanced into the ring with Bikkram Prasad and other elephants. The tigress came out with a bound making a terrible noise with her tail lifted up in the air and the cubs created a tremendous uproar. She rushed towards the Maharaja's howdah and he fired at her. Again she charged with a violent fury at the Maharaja but the elephant repulsed her attack. The tigress then clutched his hind leg with both of her claws and clung to it fast making it difficult for the Maharaja to fire a shot. The elephant ran off and dragged her for a dozen yards. With a violent jerk he threw her on the ground and the Maharaja at once killed her with a Winchester. The 3 cubs which measured 5 feet each were captured alive and sent to the camp.

While at Rajghat camp the Maharaja successfully shot a wild buffalo which has now become scarce in the Morung district. At one time this animal was found in abundance in Morung and in the neighbouring Jungles of the Darbhanga district but perhaps due to increased cultivation and deforestation its number has decreased and the only remnant of a plentiful tribe is a small herd. The wild buffalo does not molest the simple, half-baked villager, who has no fear of her and is accustomed to see her grazing near his fields without attracting much attention. But she hates modern sartorial equipment and the following entry in the Shikar Diary is interesting.

“The wild buffalo seems to dislike modernity in dress, and is fanatically opposed to coats and trousers. He charges at sight of one or two products of twentieth century fashion.”

It is not an easy thing to shoot a he-buffalo because of his unwillingness to enter the ring. Even if he enters it, he tries to break through it and bolts away. As soon as the Maharaja heard the news that a buffalo with enormous physical dimensions was roaming about, he mounted his elephant and went in pursuit of him. On seeing the elephant and his illustrious rider, his suspicions were roused. He took to flight immediately and galloped at full speed. The Maharaja continued to fire at him with the greatest dexterity, firmness and steadiness and did not abandon the chase. After traversing a distance of about two miles, the buffalo concealed himself in a thick grass where it was impossible to pursue her. The Maharaja ordered the ring to be formed and before the buffalo could bolt away, he quickly fired at her and the huge beast came down to the ground. The Shikaris got down from their elephants and went to inspect their victim but when they saw her quivered, they fled in terror. The Diary says :-

—“his last moment had not yet come. He summoned his last strength to bring himself on to his legs and turn round to face His Highness’s elephant once more, and this movement sent his inspectors off in wild terror to their mounts to clamber up with their hearts going pit-a-pat. This is the only wild buffalo which the Maharaja had shot. He was 14 feet in length, the height at the shoulder being 6 feet and each of his horn was 3 feet in length.”

Another visit was paid to Morung by the Maharaja in the cold weather of 1937-38. On December 10th at Amlekganj General Bahadur ringed a tiger. His Highness learnt in camp that Lady Halifax, wife of the ex-Viceroy of India with a friend had just arrived at the station *enroute* for Kathmandu. A car was at once sent to bring her to the royal camp and as the Maharaja was talking to his guests in the drawing room, news came that a tiger had been ringed. He asked Lady Halifax and her friend to accompany him and watch the shoot. They were delighted and when the tiger (9 feet 7 inches) was bagged, they offered their thanks to the Maharaja for receiving them so kindly and providing them with such a wonderful entertainment. Day after day the Shikar proceeded with un-

interrupted excitement and on December 20th a man-eating tigress that had already devoured eight human beings in the neighbouring villages was shot by His Highness. The last victim of this blood-thirsty animal was an old man with a grey beard for human hair were found in her stomach when it was ripped open.

Towards the end of the first week of January (1938) the Maharaja proceeded by special train to Biratnagar where he was accorded an enthusiastic welcome. So great was his popularity among his subjects that they gathered in thousands to greet him and decorated the route by which he was to pass with triumphal arches and festoons of flowers. We read in the Diary :

“Everywhere in the plains where His Highness has travelled he has received a hearty welcome, but none of the districts or divisions could excel the grand gala reception which the officials and people of Biratnagar had organised. His Highness’s car passed slowly through the wildly cheering streets of Biratnagar, but even then many people were deprived of a glimpse of His Highness due to the immense crowds.”

During his stay at Biratnagar the Maharaja indulged in Shikar to his heart’s content and bagged a number of formidable animals. Want of space forbids a detailed description of all the thrills that were experienced during this period and, therefore, only the most notable incidents can be related here. On January 18th four big tigers were enclosed in the ring and as soon as the Maharaja entered it on his elephant Bhimraj, a tigress furiously charged at the *howdah* and the shot that was fired missed its aim. Encouraged by this misfire the tigress was about to rush at Bhimraj, when Bikkram Prasad, who was on the right advanced forward and knocked her down. He kicked the tigress like a football with both of his forelegs for about 20 feet and crushed her with one of his legs so that her ribs were broken. Bikkram displayed great bravery as on several previous occasions and protected Bhimraj from the attacks of the tigress. The Maharaja asked General Bahadur to fire and the latter shot her immediately. The father of the family, who measured 10 feet 5 inches, was bagged by His Highness.

But more thrilling than all these episodes was the adventure which resulted in the shooting of a tigress who was engaged in a scuffle with a bear. Efforts were made to bring her out of her retreat for two hours but in vain. As it became dark, His Highness called off the shoot and returned to his camp. Next morning General Bahadur was deputed to see what had happened and on examination it was found that the bear had gone out but the tigress was still there. A ring was formed again, and the Maharaja, who soon afterwards arrived on the scene, shot the tigress. The scene is thus described:

“The beating started again with the same zeal as yesterday, if not more so. The elephants threw broken branches with their trunks where the tigers were concealed, uprooted and pushed down trees towards them. Pistols and revolver, were fired, and even fires were lit to provoke the hiding tigers to break cover. After all this, the attempt was at last successful, and a tigress, magnificent for her size and colours came into view of His Highness, who chose an opportune moment and fired two shots. She fell at once dead with shots through the chest and backbone to the great satisfaction of His Highness. She measured 9 feet 8 inches, equal to the record size for a tigress in Nepal. One thing peculiar was noted on the body of the tigress; there was fresh wound on her back of the size and shape of a human hand, which was explained by the fight with the bear that had been heard overnight.”

Attempts were made to shoot the other tiger who had disappeared in the under-growth but they failed. Then His Highness suggested the employment of small elephants and the tiger charged but again disappeared. He was spotted again by General Bahadur who fired at him and shot him.

During the next fortnight three or four tigers were shot but the most remarkable incident of the period was the killing of a tigress who had concealed herself in the thick foliage of a Gयो tree. It was extremely unusual for a tigress to climb a tree and to go up higher still from one branch to the other when a shot was fired at her. It was the Maharaja's third bullet which brought her down to the ground from a height

of 20 or 30 feet. The shikar season had now ended. It had proved highly successful. The total bag amounted to 57 tigers, 13 leopards, 4 bears and numerous other animals. The arrangements were excellent and their success was due to the indefatigable energy and organising capacity of General Bahadur who worked early and late to make the arrangements and personally supervised the details.

A study of these hunting expeditions clearly shows that the Maharaja loved the excitement of the game and utterly disregarded danger which only added to his enthusiasm and determination. It is this which entitles him to rank among the greatest sportsmen of our time.

The Maharaja was not only a good shot and a first class sportsman but also a great connoisseur of animal skins. From the heap of tiger skins you take out any and place before him and he will tell you where, when and how he shot it and you feel thrilled to hear his account.

The tale of the Maharaja's *shikar* has an epic grandeur about it. It is impossible to describe all his heroic exploits in the compass of a single chapter. The subject has been dealt with by Mr. E.A. Smythies in his book '*Big game shooting in Nepal*' which has been freely drawn upon in writing these pages. The reader who wants to have a full measure of the Maharaja's greatness as a Shikari must delve for facts in the pages of his wonderful diaries which record with great minuteness and accuracy his feats of valour and endurance. Danger only served to strengthen his nerves and he countered animal fury with a rare coolness of mind. At a time when tigers furiously charged his elephant and made a dash towards him so as to imperil his life, he smiled and allowed them to come within a narrow range, and then fired at them. Few men could handle their rifle with ease in a ring, confronted by a number of tigers and leopards, roaring and foaming with rage and clawing the trunks of elephants and fewer still could pursue the wounded beast to his lair under a thick cover inside the ring. While panic seized other men, the Maharaja rejoiced in the excitement of the hour and cared more for the thrill of the adventure than for the safety of his life. On

numerous occasions his courage was put to the test but each time he came out of the ordeal unscathed. No man in our times has shown such fearlessness in the midst of nerve-shattering danger and none has acted with such intrepidity and swiftness in shooting big game. When he invited guests to have shooting in his jungles, he fully provided for the security of their lives. Day after day the shikar proceeded yielding unprecedented thrill and excitement. Europeans were charmed by his hospitality and bewildered by the variety of game which he placed within their reach. With breathless admiration they followed the Maharaja into the jungle and watched his performances. Truly the stories of his accidents and encounters would make a thrilling reading as wonderful as the Arabian Nights. Men marvelled at his inflexibility of purpose his utter disregard of personal safety, his reckless courage his preciseness of aim and his accurate knowledge of animal psychology, and by common consent assigned to him an honoured place among the sportsmen of the world. If an international congress of world shikaris were held, we would have unhesitatingly chosen to be represented by His Highness Maharaja Juddha Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana of Nepal, and we are confident that our choice would have been completely vindicated.

The Maharaja's success was unique. During the seven seasons (1933—40) his total bag amounted to 433 tigers, 33 rhinos, 93 leopards, 22 bears, 20 crocodiles, 1 wild buffalo, 3 elephants (captured) and many wild dogs, hyenas, deer and other lesser animals.

The biggest tiger shot by the Maharaja measured 10 feet 9 inches (weight 705 lbs) a record unsurpassed in the whole world. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that the Maharaja was a born sportsman.

Renunciation

*For even the purest delight may pall
And power must fail, and the pride must fall,
And the love of the dearest friends grow small
But the glory of the Lord is all in all.*

—Wordsworth

According to our ancient lawgivers the life of a Hindu was divided into four stages (Ashrams)—Brahmacharya, Grahastha, Vanprastha and Sanyas. This fourfold scheme was intended for all persons irrespective of their social rank or status and there was a time when it was followed by princes and commoners alike. Our sacred books relate that some of the greatest Kshatriya kings like Raghu, Dalip and Janak in their old age retired from the world and spent the remaining days of their life in seeking the peace of the soul. The aspiration to attain the highest spiritual bliss has existed throughout the ages and we read of kings turning their backs upon the world and going into the solitudes of the forest, where dwells eternal calm, to practice meditation and prayer. Maharaja Juddha who was deeply religious by nature and conversant with the great epics always kept this ancient ideal in view and tried to follow it. In one of his speeches soon after his accession to the Prime-ministership he had declared that the interests of the country were paramount and that he would lay down the tools of office if he were unable to perform the duties pertaining to it. According to him duty was the highest law and no man had a right to disregard its dictates. This was treated merely as a conventional utterance at the time for no one

believed that the unlimited power which the Prime-Minister of Nepal weilds could be voluntarily abdicated. With great energy and vigour, he devoted himself to the business of the administration and it is a matter of common knowledge with ability, wisdom and farsightedness he governed the country for more than a decade. When he exceeded the allotted span of life he began to think of retiring from the world but again he was not taken seriously for he was in the full enjoyment of his physical vigour and capable of performing his duties. Before the outbreak of the war, he again reverted to the subject and indicated his wish in his inner circles but he was told that retirement at such a juncture would be unfavourably interpreted. No public announcement was made of the Maharaja's intentions but arrangements began to be made for the final step. The people at large had no faith in the rumours that were afloat but a few persons like General Bahadur who were in close touch with the Maharaja knew that he was a man of inflexible resolve and that once he had made up his mind, nothing would avail to deflect him from his appointed course. The members of his family were opposed to such an idea; indeed to most of them it was something inconceivable that the Maharaja should at all go into retirement while he was still in a fit state of health. But he continued to mature his plans. Being an independent ruler he had no necessity to seek the permission of the Viceroy of India but during his visit to Delhi in 1943 he broached the subject to him and later when the Viceroy went to the Tarai for a shoot he re-affirmed his intention to retire from public duties. He tried to impress upon him that he wanted nothing for himself; he had ample honours and distinctions but he felt that his country's claims should be recognised in a befitting manner. He assured the Viceroy that his successors would continue the traditional alliance between Great Britain and Nepal and knowing as he did his people he could affirm without the least hesitation that the friendly relations cemented by treaties would not be disturbed in the least. All this was going on behind the scenes and the general public had no knowledge of the developments that were to follow.

Meanwhile the Maharaja had changed his mode of life. The increased simplicity of his life, abstention from enjoyment or pleasure, the giving up of dainty dishes, the reduction of the number of attendants, attempts to accustom himself to a hard life in surroundings quite different from those to which he had been used all his life, the gradual withdrawal from his dear and near ones by providing separate residences and establishments for them foreshadowed his future plans. As he indicated in his last farewell speech he was preparing to fulfil the Dharma of the four Ashramas by having recourse to devotion and austerities in his old age. He had frequent converse with holy men, practised charities and sanctioned endowments for religious purposes. He visited temples and offered worship to the gods acting in a manner which revealed that he had experienced the lightening of the burden of the mystery and the weary weight of this unintelligible world. Those who were near the Maharaja were amazed at the change that had come over him and foresaw serious developments but the matter was still enveloped in secrecy and nobody knew definitely what he was going to do. There was a lot of whispering in court circles but nobody could predict with certainty the course of events. The worldly-minded shook their heads and refused to believe that royalty could be easily set aside as if it were a thing of no importance. But the Maharaja was silently gathering strength. He was pondering over the problems of life and the ephemeral nature of all earthly possessions. His convictions grew deeper and stronger and his non-attachment to the world and its attractions became more and more fixed. It was not advancing age or ill-health or the fatigue of official business that led him to take such a decision for he was still fit to carry on his public duties. His physical vigour was unimpaired, his faculties were in tact and not long before he had gone in pursuit of a tiger who had begun his inroads into the capital. But there were other higher considerations that urged him to leave his crown and kingdom and to his near and dear ones who begged him not to take such a step he seemed to reply like Lord Sidmouth in words of the beautiful old ballad :

“ I hear a voice you cannot hear,
which bids me not to stay;
I see a hand you cannot see,
which beckons me away.”

Gradually the rumour became persistent that the Maharaja was going to retire and that he would do so after the return of the troops from India. Nepal is a country autocratically governed and no body had the courage to discuss openly the *pros* and *cons* of such an unprecedented step. Even the most distinguished officers of the State chose to be silent and were prevented by prudential considerations from revealing what was still in the nature of a State secret. For the first time the present writer learnt definitely from General Bahadur about the Maharaja's intentions and later this was confirmed by what His Highness told him during his interview in the closing days of June 1945 in the Singh Durbar palace,

By October the Maharaja had completed his arrangements. The troops had returned from India and were accorded a warm welcome by His Highness. As the patriarch of his race the old Maharaja motored a little distance to welcome the brave men who had fought in the allied cause and brought glory to the country.

He rewarded them for their services and conferred honours and distinctions upon them. This being done, he made his intention to retire public and on the 6th November invited all officials high and low, to the Singh Durbar and distributed presents by way of mementoes in the form of his photographs and silver boxes. The variation was marked by the quality of the frame in which the photographs were encased and the weight of the box. In a lengthy speech he summarised the achievements of his administration and freely pointed out its shortcomings emphasising the directions in which improvement was needed. It was an elaborate document only portions of which were read by His Highness. The rest was read by Naib Bada Guruji, Pandit Hem Raj Sharma.

The public announcement of the Maharaja's intentions set all doubts at rest and every body anxiously awaited the day when he would lay down the reins of office for it was well known that he was not the man to flinch back from his resolve.

The 29th November 1945 was fixed for the final act of renunciation. On that day all the officials, high and low, the gentry and *elite* of the capital, the merchants and traders were assembled at Singh Durbar, the official residence of the Maharaja. To witness the function of handing over his crown to his nephew General Padma Shamsere and to bid him farewell, in an eloquent speech befitting the solemn occasion, Maharaja Juddha reiterated his services to Nepal, laid down the basic principles which he considered to be the best for the future government of his country and explained the reasons for his retirement. He referred to *Rajdharm* as it was laid down by the sages of old and pointed out the supreme necessity and advisability of devoting himself to spiritual ends while he was still physically and mentally fit. He told his hearers that his resolve was formed long ago and he felt thankful to God that he had given him strength to translate His wish into a reality. It was His intention, he said, to dedicate the evening of his life to the contemplation of God and to engage in *Tapasya* by living the life of a recluse in the inner recesses of the mountain regions far away from the din and bustle of ordinary life. He did all this without betraying emotion; and with a courage worthy of the stoics he took leave of his sons, kinsmen, officers and the leading men of the public. He referred to the qualities of head and heart with which his successor was endowed and expressed satisfaction at leaving the country in the hands of one who was wholly worthy of his trust and confidence. He reminded his audience of the noble services rendered by General Padma during the Earthquake of 1934. His sons General Bahadur and others expressed a desire to accompany him but he advised them to stay and devote their lives to the service of the country. General Bahadur was the recipient of a special compliment from his Highness for the meritorious services he had rendered to the state and the filial devotion and piety which had characterised all his actions. Turning to General Mohun Shum shere, the Senior Commanding General, the Maharaja exhorted him to be loyal and faithful to his brother like Bharat. He hoped that during the regime of Maharaja Padma the people would have a glimpse of Ram Rajya for Ram was the favourite deity of His Highness. Finally

he bade farewell to all assembled and appealed to them to forget and forgive, and seeking benedictions from the Rajgurus, he prayed to God to enable him to pass the rest of his days in peace and to realise the supreme wish of his heart.

The audience listened to this utterance with sobs and tears but the Maharaja was throughout calm and dignified. He discarded earthly pomp and power like a straw and felt no trepidation in leaving the scenes amidst which he had shone in regal splendour for well nigh fourteen years. Everybody was astonished at his great capacity for sacrifice and from all parts of the Assembly were heard the cries of Jai. General Padma offered worship at the feet of the Rajarshi with flowers and holy water (*Arghya*) with tears in his eyes, and when the Maharaja placed the crown upon his head, it was a sight for gods to see. General Padma was so deeply overwhelmed with emotion that he could not express his feelings and his voice was so choked that he found it difficult to read out his valedictory address. The officers of the State, civil and military, were moved to tears and even the austere and resolute General Mohun watched the unique spectacle with tearful eyes, visibly distressed at the thought of separation from one who had long been the guide, friend and philosopher of the royal family, and whose advice was always sought in times of difficulty and distress. For a time nothing was heard except sobbing in the distinguished assemblage and the Maharaja asked those present to be calm and unperturbed. All bowed at his feet and wished him success in his new career. The Maharaja then retired to his private shrini in the palace and after offering prayer to God emerged from there in an auspicious moment to start on his journey to Ridi. Dressed in a long black coat and Nepali trousers with a saffron coloured turban on his head, he seated himself in a state carriage drawn by four horses and was escorted by Generals rigendra, Bijaya and Surendra. His mind was perfectly at ease and his face was lit up with smiles; he received salutes from all including the new Maharaja. The entire route from the Singh Durbar to Kalimati was lined on both sides with thousands of spectators drawn from all ranks of the people—men, women and children who rent the skies with shouts of jai. The scene was wholly unprecedented in the history of Nepal and the people were really filled with grief

to see their Maharaja who had ruled over them like a father, giving up all comfort and ease in his old age. At Tudikhel the Maharaja received the salute of his troops in a calm and dignified manner. Himself the supreme commander of Nepali forces, he betrayed no sign of weakness in parting from them and bade good bye with a cheerful heart. Even Generals and Commanders marvelled at his extraordinary self-possession and praised his act of renunciation. As the royal carriage drove from Tudikhel towards Kalimati, men and women in thousands gathered to have a glimpse of the Rajarshi. His pictures were sold by hundreds and his praise was on everybody's lips and from the balconies and windows flowers were showered upon him. The Maharaja received their acclamations with a smile and felt proud of the esteem in which he was held by his people. They compared him with Janak and other ancient kings and recounted with gratefulness the beneficent activities of his reign. All eyes were wet with tears but the Maharaja was receiving the salutes with his usual smile and looked serene and dignified. In about an hour he reached Kalimati,

After the departure of the Rajarshi the Prime Minister-designate appeared before the assembled officials and gentry and received their homage. He was so overpowered with emotion that he was scarcely able to speak and in a subdued voice he dwelt upon the noble attributes of his revered uncle and invited the help and co-operation of all in the business of the state. He declared himself as the servant of the people and promised to do his best for their well being.

Then he drove to His Majesty the King's palace where he was after customary rites confirmed in his exalted office. On returning to his palace at Bisalnagar he again reiterated his resolve to serve his people and his country to the best of his powers.

The ex-Maharaja passed a night at Kalimati. No body was allowed to see him for he wanted to cut off all connection with the world which he had decided to leave. Next morning he left for Bhimphedi accompanied by Kanchi Maharani (one of the junior queens) and other members of the staff. The senior Queen, the Bada Maharani, almost an invalid, could not go with him on account of old age and protracted

illness. Besides those who were to go with him to Ridi, his retinue consisted of only a few persons and at certain places the Maharaja was put to inconvenience but he had trained himself to a life of hardship and therefore, spoke not a word by way of remonstrance or reproach. He reduced his wants, denied to himself all comforts and weaned his mind completely away from all earthly cares and anxieties. He stayed for two days at Bhimphedi. During his journey he received ovations from his subjects and wherever he came across a poor or homeless man he instantly gave him money to remove his want. The peasant folk lined his route as he passed and received gifts from him. Before leaving Kathmandu he had rewarded all those who had rendered him service but his sense of fairness led him to consider the cases of those who had been left out by inadvertence or oversight. He received presents on the way but he invariably gave in return more than their value. From Bhimphedi he moved to Amlekhganj where he stayed for four days and here too his benevolence was extended in an unstinted measure to the poor and the helpless. Occasionally he rode on elephant back into the forest, and was surrounded by eager suppliants whom he never left unsatisfied. It was at Amlekhganj that he bade goodbye to those who formed his escort and suitably rewarded them for their service and assistance. Then he boarded the train for Birgunj where he stayed for two days at Murli Durbar and as usual received an enthusiastic welcome from the people. Hundreds of men and women gathered to get a glimpse of the great ruler who had risen in their estimation to the level of a sage by reason of his noble sacrifice. In the midst of this busy town which he had previously visited on numerous occasions with all the pomp and splendour of the state the Maharaja forgot the past altogether and spent his time in meditation and prayer and in reading religious books. No thought of past glory marred his cheerfulness or ruffled the equanimity of his temper. He allowed no weakness to make him fail or falter in his determination. On reaching Raxaul his sons Surendra and Ravi were granted leave to return to the capital and with his slender retinue the ex-Prime Minister of Nepal left for Ridi to engage himself in austerities.

At the earnest request of the present Maharaja Colonel Gajrajung and Subba Mani Ram were allowed to accompany him to the abode of his retirement. Captain Nara Bahadur, and an engineer, had already proceeded thither to see that the arrangements for the Maharaja's stay were quite satisfactory. A few soldiers commanded by Captain Gupta Bahadur were also deputed to serve as his bodyguard upto his destination. By a vigorous effort of his will the royal sage abandoned all desire for creature comforts and prepared himself for a life of asceticism and self-denial and it was only at the special request of Maharaja Padma that he allowed himself a few conveniences which were nothing in comparison with what he had enjoyed before.

On reaching Ridi he was accorded a warm welcome by the hill folk who gathered in large numbers to pay him their respectful homage. How their rustic minds tried to grasp the transition from royalty to asceticism is more than the biographer or the historian can describe with absolute precision.

What is the charm of mysterious Ridi which has led a ruler accustomed to a life of splendour and unlimited authority to make it his retreat during his retirement. It is one of the quietest and holiest place in the western Tarai districts of Nepal. It is situated at the foot of the Himalayas near the bank of the sacred river Kali which is regarded by the Nepalese as holy as the Ganges itself. Rising from the snowy peaks of Muktinath, the farthest point of pilgrimage in the north, the river flows for nearly a hundred miles and then coursing through the hillocks amidst which Ridi stands, it descends into the plains of India. The nearest railway station is Nautanwa from which one has to go either on foot or by employing primitive modes of transport such as Dandies or Palanquins. The town lies 8 miles north-west of Palpa which is an important military station and a seat of the governor of Western Nepal. At the top of the neighbouring hillocks and in the mountain recesses there are numerous temples and shrines dedicated to the various gods and goddesses in the Hindu Pantheon but the presiding deity is Narayan who attracts a large number of worshippers. Another fact which invests the place with an added sanctity is the abundance in the river Kali of black spherical stones called Saligrams which are worshipped by the Hindus as emblems of

Siva or Vishnu. To the Nepalese Ridi is as holy as Varanasi itself and many of them resort to its banks to spend the evening of their lives in meditation and prayer in the belief that by doing so they will secure salvation. Besides the sanctity of the place what has led Maharaja Juddha to spend the remaining years of his earthly sojourn there at Ridi is its remoteness from the distractions and pre-occupations of modern civilised life.

Here on a Hillock amidst surroundings to which nature lends a peculiar charm, a double storeyed house with a roof of corrugated iron, having a suite of rooms has been constructed for the Maharaja. There are separate quarters for the servants and a *goshala* for the cows. This is the modest accommodation which the royal sage, the erstwhile occupant of palaces in which everything that wealth can buy was supplied, has assigned to himself. The number of attendants is small and creature comforts are rigidly excluded. There is nothing for recreation or amusement here and the place looks like a hermitage, breathing an atmosphere of piety and spirituality. The Maharaja was very sensitive to cold but now he has become indifferent to personal comfort. His time is spent in meditation and prayer and in listening to sacred books.

He rises early in the morning at 5, has *darshan* of the cows and the Brahman. After the necessary ablutions, he enters his chapel and devotes himself to worship till 11 A.M. Then he takes his meal and retires for an hour to take rest. The afternoon is devoted to the study of the Mahabharat and the Gita—his favourite books in a lonely room in which no one is permitted to enter. Riding is still his hobby; he goes out riding for an hour and on return the newspapers are read out to him. In the evening he is again busy with his worship and prayer which occupies him till 9 P.M. After taking his dinner applies himself again to the study of the sacred books and having thus spent a strenuous day he goes to bed at about 11 P.M. Even here his charity continues unabated and every day he is seen making gifts to Brahmans and distributing alms to beggars. As time passes it is likely that he may enter on Sanyas towards the end of his life and practise perfect renunciation. He has an iron will and it will be no surprise if one day he

decides to don the sacred robes like the Buddhas of old. Verily the Maharaja has become a Rajarshi and his example will shine not only across the pages of Nepali history but of modern Hinduism. He has excelled all his crowned contemporaries in the surpreme quality of sacrifice.

The Maharaja's renunciation suggests a few reflections. It will not be correct to call it retirement for he has resolutely turned his back upon the world and denied to himself all ease and comfort. It was his inner urge that led him to take such a step despite the entreaties of his kinsmen, nobles and courtiers. His life illustrates the force of religion and vindicates the anicent Aryan tradition, the continuity of which is a factor in the greatness of Hindu civilisation. Before a world swayed by pride, lust and ambition, he has placed a new appreciation of values and pointed out a path which even we, humbler men might tread for the good of the race. The tenacity with which men cling to office and power even when they are incapacitated by age to carry on their duties-gives us the correct measure of the Maharaja's sacrifice. His example has added to the stock of our rich spiritual heritage and there is no doubt that it will be a source of pride and inspiration not only to the people of Nepal but to every follower of the Hindu religion. He has applied the ancient ideal to modern life and has done it with a grace and dignity which adds infinitely to the charm of his personality. Kingdoms and empires vanish; even systems that have their day cease to be; the corroding influence of time and oblivion overtakes them all. But the spirit of a noble deed endures and continues to elevate the life of man inspite of the barriers of race, colour, georaphy and climate that too often divide us.

Personal

*Great deeds can not die;
They, with the sun and moon, renew their light
For ever, blissing those that look on them.*

—Tennyson

The achievements of the Maharaja have been described at length in the foregoing pages, and what has been said is sufficient to give the reader an idea of his greatness and to convince him that his claim to rank among the most remarkable rulers of modern times rests on solid foundations. His labours in the field of administrative reform have been discussed, and it has been shown how his creative mind grasped the problems before him, and tried to add to the happiness of his countrymen. Men of action who enforce their will upon others and dominate them, have a strange fascination for us. We are drawn towards them, impelled by the instinct of hero-worship and by the conviction that they have contributed much to human progress. The creative will does not trouble itself about the future but as Goethe said, "a capable man who has something to think about here and now, and who must daily struggle, fight and act lets the future world take care of itself and is active and useful in this one". He knows that in human affairs the element of circumstance counts, and he tries to get over it by his endeavour, leaving the rest to God. This struggle to achieve one's destiny is of great biographical interest, but there is something else which is more important.

That is the heart and its manifestation in outward actions, having a close relation to the evolution of the character and personality of human beings. He is truly great whose character and personality have deeply influenced the lives of others, and a true biography must, therefore, concern itself with the development of these just as it deals with actual achievements. The man behind the warrior and the statesman is a subject of absorbing interest, and it is proposed to describe in this chapter the human side of the Maharaja's life. The risks are obvious; the contradictions of life increase the difficulty of the task and make omissions inevitable, but the necessity of attempting it is justified by the fact that a great man like the Maharaja is not merely a private individual but he is national property. His life and example have an educative as well as an inspirational value, and in the moral and spiritual evolution of society it is a factor the importance of which cannot be exaggerated.

In person the Maharaja was a strikingly handsome, well-built man with a bald and massive head, strongly marked eyebrows, long arms, broad shoulders, sharp, penetrating and deep-set eyes which usually beamed with the soft light of sympathy and a tuft of mustache on his upper lip. His height measured 5 feet 7 inches and his forehead was indicative of considerable mental power. He had an expressive face, radiant with smile, a broad chin, a prominent nose, and a mouth which showed the gentleness and kindness of his heart, and firmly set lips which were an index to his inner strength and determination. Even when he had exceeded the Biblical span of three score and ten, he walked erect, bearing himself with a loftiness which befitted a man of his high rank. He looked every inch a king, and there were few indeed, who, when they came in contact with him, were not affected by the subtle magnetism of his personality. Thomas Carlyle writes about the voice of Frederick, the Great of Prussia :-

“All tones are in it from that of ingenious enquiry, graceful sociality, light-flowing banter up to definite word of command upto desolating word of rebuke and reprobation.” The same could be said of the Maharaja's voice. It was gentle as

well as stentorian, and could be employed with equal success in winning the hearts of those, who were sympathetic towards him and in castigating those who thwarted his will or incurred his displeasure. Though in his early years he suffered from chronic illness, he enjoyed in later years a robust health, and his body well-compact and strong by regular exercise and his foundness for game had given him much strength and power of endurance. When he advanced in age, he gave up vigorous physical exertion, but he continued horse-riding and went out on the back of his elephant in the evening every day except on Tuesdays and Saturdays. There were few in Nepal who could show greater feat of skill and strength in horsemanship. Until a few years back he used to gallop from Kathmandu to Bhimphedi in a few hours without any fatigue, and the best riders in Nepal failed to keep pace with him. His passion for sport was keen. He was always prepared to confront the lord of the jungle, and his shot was as effective in old age as it was in his earlier days. His memory, his vision and his auricular functions were all intact, and he possessed a knowledge of the flora and fauna of Nepal which few of his contemporaries could equal.

He had a strong will and determination. When he had made up his mind about any matter, it was difficult to shake his resolve. The first impression always counted with him and once it was formed, it was difficult to change it. He was gentle and courteous. When you went into his presence, he greeted you with a smile and gave you the impression of a man whose manners and habits were perfected by a careful education. He scrupulously avoided hurting the feelings of others wantonly, and made one feel happy in his presence. His *bon hommie* was remarkable; he talked in a gentle and familiar tone and observed little formality, but he could be stern and serious when he chose, and no one could take liberties with him or belittle his authority in the slightest degree. The royal etiquette in Nepal is very strict and deviation from it is never forgiven. His temper was generally cool and his patience was inexhaustible but when his anger was roused by some act of injustice or default of duty, he became violent and vociferous though after a short time he cooled

down and returned to his normal self. When he was angry, he could brook no opposition nor could he tolerate discussion even if he were in the wrong, but when the storm had blown over, he was prepared to listen to reason and re-examine the whole position dispassionately, and if convinced, he did not hesitate to acknowledge his mistake. He pitied the poor and was ever ready to relieve human misery and want. He never forgot a service done to him and took delight in rewarding it. His kindness was proverbial in Nepal. The stories of his benevolence, which extended to all irrespective of caste, creed or rank, were current among the people. He treated his domestics with great sympathy, and even the sons and grandsons of his deceased servants shared his bounty and received help from him. He was by nature a man of charitable disposition but his private charity was always unostentatious. In giving monetary help to the poor and the needy, he was guided by the principle :— ‘Let not the left hand know what the right hand doth.’

All kinds of people looked up to him for help and protection when they were in trouble, and he ordered prompt redress in just cases. Prone to overlook faults owing to the innate goodness of his heart, he sternly dealt with breaches of law and no guilty person could escape punishment at his hands. Of course in every case the measure of chastisement was determined by the nature of the offence and the motive with which it was committed. Generally he was known to be lenient, but in cases in which for political, military or other reasons, a deterrent sentence was called for, he never hesitated to inflict the highest penalty of the law. He treated foreigners with great kindness and never failed to extend the most lavish hospitality to those who visited Nepal. He did not know how to refuse a request made to him by respectable foreigners, and many of them European, American and Indian, who had the privilege of visiting Nepal as His Highness's guests either at Kathmandu or in his shooting camp, have borne testimony to his boundless generosity, his absolute freedom from racial or religious prejudice, and his keen desire to make their sojourn in his country as enjoyable and happy as possible. He was a genial host, and there were many persons of rank——occupants of royal thrones, ministers of states, administrators, military commanders and men of letters in the various parts of the

world who have a most pleasant recollection of His Highness's catholicity of outlook, charm of manner and nobility of temperament. It may be truthfully said of the Maharaja that he saw and conquered and many found the fascination of his personality irresistible.

The Maharaja lived a simple life. His time was carefully mapped out and from morning till late in the night every minute was utilised by him. Having long been in the army, he had a high sense of discipline, order and efficiency, and allowed nothing to be done in a haphazard or slipshod manner. He rose generally at 7 or 7.30 in the morning and after his ablutions heard reports regarding the state of affairs in his dominions. Then he entered his bath into which was poured Ganges water which was brought on foot from Patna. He then went to the room set apart for prayer and worship and performed his daily symbolic *godana* (gift of cow) which was in actual practice an offering of Rs. 5/8/- equivalent to the price of a cow to Brahman students of Sanskrit Pathshalas by turns. This was followed by the *Ghruta Chhaya* (reflection in ghee) ceremony, and the same student was given a quarter of a seer of clarified butter with a small golden image in it after the Maharaja had seen the reflection of his face in it. Left alone in the room, he engaged in prayer and worship for an hour and recited a *Vishnu stotra* (a eulogy of god Vishnu) from a manuscript. Then he went out for riding on horseback, which is a favourite hobby with him, in a ring in the palace compound. While riding, the complaints of the people were laid before him by two officers, a subba and a colonel, representing the civil and the military departments respectively. It was at this time that even the humblest subject could have access to the Maharaja and lay his grievances before him. He never felt vexed or annoyed at such petitions and in every case did what justice demanded. Here he also attended to the correspondence received from the various parts of the kingdom, requiring his immediate attention, and if there was any matter of great urgency, he at once passed orders.

At about 11 A.M. he returned to the palace and before he had his morning meal resorted to his daily practice of feeding birds and of giving fodder and barley flour to cows with his own hands. So great was his reverence for cows that on the *ekadashi* day (11th of the month according to

the Hindu calendar) all the denizens of the royal *goshala* (cow house) were sumptuously fed by his orders. After this between 11 and 11.30 A.M. he had his meal which consisted of rice, pulses, a few dishes of vegetables and milk. Before the Maharaja began, a Brahman was fed in the Kitchen and the cow's portion (*gogras*) was given to her. He took his food in the orthodox style, and near him were seated old and experienced Pandits and astrologers, well-versed in the Shastras, who recited to him stories from the great epics and through whom he kept himself informed about the affairs of the capital. After having his breakfast, he attended to official business on the phone and heard the reports of the Commander-in-Chief and the Directors-General of the various departments which sometimes took more than one hour. This being over, he heard radio news and newspaper reports and then retired and took rest for an hour or so. Meanwhile a large concourse of people assembled in front of the Singh Durbar, his official residence, to have his *darshan* which was usually given at 3 P.M. An opportunity was again given to aggrieved persons of representing their grievances to which the Maharaja listened with sympathetic attention. In half an hour he held his Durbar where almost all the high officers of the State, the Commander-in-Chief, the Senior—Commanding Generals, the Raj Gurus, the Bada Kazi and other officers and courtiers were present. Here again public business was transacted and according to a fixed routine the Maharaja heard the reports of his officers and discussed plans for the improvement of the country. Cases demanding his personal attention were also dealt with and necessary orders were passed. In the evening he went out mostly on the back of an elephant to acquaint himself personally with the affairs of the capital. Sometimes he entered the streets and alleys, lined on both sides with houses towering to the sky, in order to see that sanitation was properly looked after by his officers. The result of this was that the officers and the people both became more careful, and much of the filth and rubbish which used to affect adversely the health of the citizens was removed. When he went out on

his elephant, the people rushed to pay their homage to him by shouting 'Maharaja Ki Jai', and sometimes aggrieved persons took advantage of this opportunity to represent their grievances to him. If he was satisfied that the complaint was genuine, he deputed an officer to look into the matter and submit his report. The slow movement of the huge animal which carried him enabled him to see what was happening around him, and facilitated the task of those who approached him for the redress of their wrongs. On his return to the palace he had books and newspapers read out to him for about an hour and a half, which afforded him relaxation after the day's work, and acquainted him with the views of the press and the eminent statesmen of the world about international affairs. Another of his favourite recreations was the game of dice in which he indulged every evening except on Saturdays when he took complete rest. On Tuesdays, he looked into the affairs of his household, considered the reports of his officers, inspected the accounts and attended to the minutest detail of management. The dinner came off at 9 P.M. It was usually heavy, consisting of *Puries* (cakes of flour baked in ghee), a couple of dishes of meat, vegetables, and fruits. The Maharaja was fond of meat and eggs and took delight on days of rest in preparing dishes for himself and feeding the children and the other members of the family. Though simple in his tastes, he looked upon food as important for health, and himself often gave instructions for the dishes that were to be prepared in the royal kitchen. He asked people to eat well, and was much pleased with those who gourmandised in his presence and sought lustily the satisfaction of their appetite. Between the two principal meals he took nothing except a glass of home-made soda water, a practice which was partly responsible for the good health that he always enjoyed. From 10 to 11 P.M. he listened to radio broadcasts about world events and then went to bed after a day's strenuous work.

Though he had lived in the company of men addicted to drink he was temperate in his habits. His strength of character shielded him from the evil influence of such associates. He

had a special abhorrence of the drinking habit which in his opinion tended to lower man's morals and dignity and led to unhappiness in the family. Like many other eastern monarchs he smoked *huqqa* and enjoyed cigarettes of the Egyptian make. He had recourse to this relaxation even when he was engaged in transacting official business in the full court. No other man was allowed to smoke in his presence. Being highly orthodox, he did not smoke his *huqqa* if a foreigner, or one who had crossed the seas and had not performed the purificatory rite of *prayashchitta*, happened to be present in the assembly. Of course it was obligatory on the part of a Nepali to have purged himself of the sin in accordance with the injunctions of the Shastras.

The Maharaja's dress was like his habits precise. He generally wore a white Nepalese suit with a black Chesterfield coat coming down to his knees, a black ferge cap with the Prime Minister's badge of diamonds and rubies on the front. He affected a necktie of Nepalese pattern, made of white soft muslin, which suited him very well, had a great fondness for gloves, and used black half boots with buttons. He always put round his neck a garland of jasmine in summer and Coun Kesari in winter and his bed room was perfumed with the sweet fragrance of fresh seasonal flowers. He was not fond of pomp and show, and it was only on ceremonial occasions, when the pageantry of the State had to be displayed, that he appeared in his magnificent robes with his bejewelled head-gear which is one of the most wonderful possessions of the royal house of Nepal. His bespectacled eyes inspired awe and with their aid he "held us" like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. Altogether his tall, robust and majestic figure produced the impression of a great soldier and ruler, and the dress that he put on heightened its natural effect. Whether in the Durbar or in the shooting camp or in the parade ground at Tudikhel, the Maharaja was easily marked out from others. and by the force of his masterful personality he dominated the world around him just as the outstanding individuals among plants and animals rise conspicuously above their surroundings and form a class by themselves.

In conversation the Maharaja was always active and brilliant and being essentially a soldier, he was free from cant and hypocrisy. The quality of straightforwardness which he possessed was due to his love of truth and frankness, and lent a special charm to all his utterances. He did not confine himself merely to political matters ; his interests covered a wide range. He discussed problems with specialists, tried to acquaint himself with the results of their researches and eagerly anticipated their application to the industrial and economic conditions of his country. In his lighter talk he was gentle and graceful, and although he was not fond of cracking jokes—his religious temperament made him serene and dignified—he had a sense of humour which enlivened his conversation and put his visitors at ease when they felt embarrassed in his presence. His occasional oratory was of a high order, and the speeches which he made on public occasions revealed his command over his native tongue, the depth of his understanding, and the admirable capacity for saying the right thing at the right moment. He had a felicity of phrase and elegance of diction which persons trained in colleges and Universities might well envy. Whatever he said came from the depth of his heart, and his sincerity manifested itself in every thing that he did. He had a marvellous power of describing things and past events in a vivid manner with a touch of humour peculiarly his own. He had a special aptitude for making his narrative interesting to his listeners and for engaging them for hours together, especially when he described with a picturesqueness born of personal experience the thrilling incidents of the Shikar of which he was so fond. He was extremely sociable and delightful in company and mixed with equal ease with all kinds of men. His deep spiritual insight into things prevented him from making a parade of his lofty station, and he gained the confidence of the rich and the poor alike. Even in strange unfamiliar surroundings he made himself attractive by the charm of his manner and the flexibility of his temper, and won the goodwill of those with whom he had nothing in common. An instance of this is to be found in the Maharaja's treatment of European ladies and gentlemen who out of

curiosity examined his headgear at the Commander-in-Chief's party in Delhi in 1935.

The Maharaja was generous to those who were attached to him. He did not have many friends in his earlier days but those who were fortunate enough to enjoy his good will were always held in esteem by him. When he became Prime-Minister, he treated them with kindness and courtesy, and helped them to improve their social status and worldly prospects. Even the descendants of his friends shared his bounty and received very generous treatment at his hands. None of the playmates of his childhood are in the land of the living but there was a retired major who was with him at school and with whom he used to associate for purposes of study and sport. In remembrance of those happy days which they had spent together as companions, he was granted a special allowance and a piece of land to enable him to pass his old age in comfort. The Maharaja took special interest in the welfare of the children of his class mates. He recognised that friendships formed at school or college were sacred, that the bond of sympathy created there must endure as long as life lasted. He always remembered with affection a class mate of his Shridharanand by name who was a student with him in the Darbar High School, and who used to make notes for him and help him in his studies. His untimely death left his family in difficulties but the Maharaja came to their rescue. He gave his sons and nephews every kind of help and encouragement including scholarships for study, and one of them who obtained the M. B. B. S. degree was employed as a house-surgeon in the Bir Hospital. The Maharaja's allowances and stipends continued even when the family was no longer in want, and whenever he saw his friend's sons he greeted them with the remark that they were the sons of his old friend Shridharanand. Such kindness is rare indeed. Will modern students, who by the chance of life rise to positions of honour and eminence take a leaf out of the Maharaja's book and fashion their conduct according to his ideals ?

Though the Maharaja's education was interrupted by his father's untimely death, he made such a good use of his innate intelligence and energy that the early cessation of study did not impede his intellectual development. He continued to read;

tutors were employed for him by his brothers and by assiduous application he acquired a fair amount of knowledge useful to a Nepali young man who looks forward to a military career. Arms not books, drill and not the drudgery of examinations were the chief attractions of a scion of the Rana family in the Maharaja's youth, but his precocity helped him to get over this draw-back and cultivate a desire for acquiring more and more information about men and things. He studied the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and stored his mind with the valuable teachings contained in them. The *Mahabharata* made a special appeal to him. In his speeches and conversation he frequently quoted from it, and derived his illustrations from the lives of the great men whose virtues and vices were described therein. There was no greater political wisdom in any book than the *Mahabharata* he was often heard to say, and commended its lessons to those who had any thing to do with public affairs and the administration of a country. The other Puranas had also a great interest for him, and he got them read by learned Brahmans. He remembered many verses of the Gita and recited them with great fervour and devotion. So eager was he to popularise the teachings of the *Mahabharata* that when a firm of publishers in Varanasi approached him for a grant to bring out all the Parvas (chapters) in a single volume, he sanctioned a substantial amount in order to facilitate the sale of the book at a nominal price. Similar encouragement was offered by him to the publication of the *Bhagvad Gita* with a Nepali translation. He was always ready to encourage literary enterprise which, in his opinion, was likely to improve the moral and religious life of the people by placing before them the great truths preached by our ancient sages. Besides sacred books he was fond of reading history and biography and works of fiction. Sometimes he read himself but more often books were read to him by others, and he listened with great interest and attention. He spoke English but with Indians he preferred to talk in Hindi, and his expression was tolerably good except for the mistakes of gender that he sometimes made. He understood English better than he spoke and easily followed the news and reports contained in the newspapers. He spent his leisure hours in conversing with people around him about subjects of local or

international importance. He was always eager to learn and welcomed knowledge from whatever source he got it. The lives of warrior statesmen like Napoleon Bonaparte had a special attraction for him. He had made a special study of the events of Napoleon's life. He was fully conversant with the details of his sieges and campaigns, and his critical exposition of the strategy of that great man would have called forth the blushes of a tutor in a modern college or a University. So intimate was his knowledge of Napoleon's career that he could reproduce from memory almost all the important anecdotes relating to his life, and often dwelt with enthusiasm and delight upon the activities of his wonder-working mind. This probably gave the Maharaja a sense of fixity of purpose in life. Like Napoleon, in grim earnestness, undeterred by the fear or failure of disappointment, he pursued his goal and took no account of obstacles. To some extent this, along with his religious convictions, was responsible for his consciousness of the inevitability of human destiny which made him fearless, and sometimes led him to ignore even those precautions for personal safety which are necessary in an autocratic state.

The Maharaja took delight in relating the reminiscences of his school days and often recollected the help which some of his companions used to give him in making notes for him. He applied himself to his studies with diligence as is shown by the books which he read in his early boyhood, and in which the important passages and idiomatic expressions are carefully marked and underlined. He still possesses a collection of prize books which he received for proficiency in his studies. The method of imparting instruction in Maharaja's childhood was quite different from what it is now and among his tutors he had a lively recollection of two—Garuddhwaj and Kali Babu—who were strict taskmasters and whom it was difficult to trifle with. It was contact with a teacher employed by him for his sons, who created in him a special taste for study. With his help he acquired a working knowledge of English and enabled him to read Abbot's Life of Napoleon. Unlike many a young man of aristocratic descent today, who treats his tutor no better than a personal amanuensis or attendant, the Maharaja felt a great respect for his teachers and treated them generously. When Kali

Babu fell on evil days in his old age and was in sore straits for money, he (though not Prime-Minister then) promptly collected subscriptions from his old pupils in Nepal and sent him a substantial amount. On coming to know that the son of his old teacher Garuddhwaj was passing miserable days, he appointed him as a teacher in the Durbar High School, and when he expressed a desire to go on pilgrimage to India, the Maharaja granted him a handsome amount of money sufficient to enable him to fulfil his long-cherished wish.

Though not a man of learning himself, the Maharaja extended his patronage to learned men irrespective of religion and nationality and some of the most distinguished scholars of Europe and India received a warm welcome at his hands. He freely placed his rich collection of Manuscripts in the Bir Library at their disposal and gave them every facility they required. Of the famous European orientalist, two visited Nepal in his time. Dr. F. W. Thomas, the well-known Sanskritist and Professor Tucci of Italy who studied Tantric Buddhism for about three months, and was treated as a State-guest by the Maharaja. Several Indian scholars visited Nepal and were hospitably received by the Government. The Maharaja took a keen interest in the conservation of old monuments and inscriptions and offered encouragement to archaeological research. At Lumbini, the birth place of Gautama Buddha in the Tarai, he built a rest-house and a Dharmasala for the comfort of pilgrims. For the Bir Library which is rich in Manuscripts, he appointed a whole time Librarian who was asked to prepare a classified catalogue.

Being essentially a man of affairs, the Maharaja's views on education were definite and practical. Though he had made provision for it, he was not much in favour of a mere literary education which did not fit a man to earn his livelihood. He did not want young men, educated in Colleges and Universities, to knock about in search of employment and to work as clerks and stenographers in offices. He regarded this as a waste of national energy. He was deeply interested in technical education which, he thought, was sure to help the country's economic uplift and remove the poverty of the masses. Though an enlightened conservative, the Maharaja did not approve of

women's education in the form or spirit in which it is conducted in the western countries of the world. He would not extend it beyond a knowledge of the three R's. According to him a woman's proper place was the home and, therefore, she ought to get that education which would enable her to become a good housewife and a mother. He had no respect for the "emancipated woman" and was opposed to allowing women-folk much freedom, for in his opinion that was likely to do more harm than good to society. He laid stress upon the ancient ideal of womanhood which alone could lead to harmony and dignity in our social life. Opinions might differ about the soundness of the Maharaja's views on the subject, but there was one principle which he emphasized and which would find ready acceptance at all hands. He held that if education was not to lead to frustration or waste of national energy, it must be integrated to the life of the community, and must permeate with the spirit of religion so as to produce citizens, who are honest, dutiful, patriotic and God-fearing.

Nepal is a country where art is not only loved but practised by the people with great skill. This has been done from ancient times, and the Maharaja whose tastes were refined gave a high place to art in national economy. His attitude towards art was a reflection of the inner self. His mode of life was beautiful and dignified, and the steps he took to foster the artistic tastes of the people showed that he wanted them to follow his example. To promote art, he organised exhibitions and a Kala Pathshala and established a Kala Bhawan for the preservation of the ancient art of Nepal so that the people might feel inspired by the legacy of the past. He liberally spent money in decorating the gallery-Baithak which is a true expression of the Maharaja's ideals of Art. It represents an amalgam of Hindu and Buddhist traditions which are combined with modern ideas. The best specimens of metal and wood work are to be found there and the painter's art is seen at its best.

The Maharaja recognised the claims of culture but his conception of it was different from that which is commonly accepted. By culture he meant the cultivation of fine emotions, the aesthetic spirit, and the ennobling of the mind and not of pursuits that tend to effeminacy. He liked music but.

he did not want it to be employed for purposes of mere recreation and amusement. As an orthodox Hindu he took delight in devotional music, and appreciated songs which turn our minds towards God and all that is beautiful and sublime in creation. He had the same attitude towards cinema, the theatre and the radio. He appreciated their educative value, and was willing to make use of the means of spreading enlightenment among the people. But he was strongly opposed to their being employed for irrational amusement for that was likely to make men idle, wasteful and extravagant. He did not like films which made a sensational appeal and tended to debase morals. He was shocked to see the obscene talkies which had become the fashion of the day in the west, and regarded them as highly injurious to the best interests of society. It was for this reason that he prohibited public cinemas and theatres as regular pleasure resorts in the country, for they were in his opinion sure to vitiate men's character and drain the country's wealth. Nepal had no public Cinema Hall in his time and there were people who fretted and chafed against the restrictions imposed upon them by the Maharaja but there was a sensible section, which was grateful to him for saving them from the dreadful effect of dissipation and extravagance. The Maharaja had his own cinema hall at Singh Durbar where he generally saw historical and religious pictures to which he at times invited his Bhai Bhardars.

The Maharaja was a man of strong family affections. Though he was deprived by an adverse fate in his childhood of paternal care and guidance, he acknowledged the value of that discipline, order and economy which prevailed in his father's household. Though he was a mere stripling at the time of the latter's death, he was intelligent enough to appreciate the force of his character and personality. He admits that his father's example has been a continual inspiration with him. He had a large family with great cares and responsibilities, and he managed its affairs with considerable ability, tact and foresight. The virtues which a man imbibes in a well-governed family are capacity for sacrifice, obedience and discipline and a sense of justice and impartiality,

and these the Maharaja possessed in a large degree, and impressed their value upon his Kinsmen and subjects alike. He commemorated his father's name by erecting public monuments in his honour. The Dhir Dham at Darjeeling with a temple of Siva is a religious centre, intended to promote piety and spirituality among the Nepalese who inhabit that region. It is a rendezvous for all those who wish to engage themselves in prayer and devotional exercises. It not only acts as a centre of piety and reminds the people of General Dhir's noble qualities, but also serves as a cultural link between the mother country and the areas outside Nepal, inhabited predominantly by her sons. Beside the temple, there are the Dhirdhara at Birgunj and the dispensary in the Bir Hospital which are associated with General Dhir's name. The Maharaja speaks of his father with great respect, and on one occasion during a review at Tudikhel he told his sons and nephews that the tree, under which he was standing was planted by his father, and with true filial reverence he dwelt upon his administrative abilities. Like many other men who have attained greatness, the Maharaja cherishes a deep affection for his mother. She became a widow when he was a child but she bore up against her trial with great fortitude, and passed through the period of widowhood with a fairness of spirit and matronly dignity which extorted the admiration of all who knew her. She showed a great fertility of resource which adversity develops in persons of sterling character, and carefully brought up her only child in whom all her hopes were centred. The Maharaja fully required her love and never did any thing which was in the least likely to offend her or hurt her susceptibilities. It is said that he exercised complete self-possession in her presence, and for her sake did not allow even the greatest provocation to make him lose his temper. From the highest summit of human ambition which he had reached, the Maharaja looked back to the past, not always happy and bright, and remembered with gratitude the love and kindness with which she brought him up. He spoke always gratefully of the debt which he owed to her and acknowledged that her advice was always of the highest service to him. In unveiling

her statue in 1933 nearly seventeen years after her death the Maharaja said :—

“Nepal knows what a large family my father had. Mother’s deep devotion to her wifely duties, her singleness of purpose in serving her husband, her amiable disposition and general conduct, which avoided hurting the feelings of all and sundry and won the heart of every member in such a big family were admired and highly spoken of by all who had personal knowledge of these things as by others. It is superflous for me to dwell upon them at length. Father was in failing health during the last one or two years of his life. She was engrossed day and night in earnest endeavours to find ways and means of alleviating his suffering and of ministering to his comforts, and this made such a profound impression upon his mind that towards the close of his life he blessed her in these words :—

“Don’t worry at the thought that you have one little son. Your family will prosper. Turning towards his eldest son Bir Shumshere” he said, “Mark this, my eldest born, blood tells. Should I survive this illness, I shall show how much devotion is to be rewarded. If I die, I do commend her and her son to your loving care.” In later years Maharaja Bir used to say that it was due to that blessing that she had the good fortune of seeing the multiplication of her progeny. I presume there are many here who had heard His Highness utter these words.

“The characteristics of an ideal Hindu woman were present in her in a remarkable degree. Having discharged scrupulously the duties of a wife in her married life, she lived the hard life of an ascetic throughout her 32 years of widowhood, eating a strictly vegetarian diet only once a day, and devoting all her time to worship, recitation of prayers and religious communion. At last on Sunday the 13th day of the dark fortnight in Bhadra 1973 (Samvat) she passed away at the sacred Aryaghat, half immersed in water in true orthodox fashion, retaining her consciousness to the very last.

“One’s mother is, no doubt, dear to every one. Every soul is thrilled by the immortal words—*Janani Janma Bhumishcha Swargadapi Gariyasi* (the mother and the motherland are

greater than heaven itself). There is no one like the mother who can bestow love and care upon children and impart wholesome advice to them, the effect of which lasts throughout our lives. Though the debt one owes to one's mother cannot be repaid by the respect and homage which is offered to her during her lifetime or by the efforts made after her death to perpetuate her memory, yet who could there be who would not do his level best to achieve this noble object? However, it is not merely the deep debt of gratitude I owe to my mother that has actuated me to erect a monument to her but also the desire to place before you all a life-like representation of one who was an ideal, an ideal wife, an ideal mother, and an ideal mistress of a household—a model for all to follow.”

These words of final piety that came from the depths of the speaker's heart revealed the strain of true sentiment and affection in his character. From the giddy heights that he had scaled, he did not hesitate to proclaim that he owed to his mother all that he was in life. It was not only his parents for whom he had much a deep regard. For his kith and kin he always felt great sympathy and treated them with consideration. Indeed the love of relations was a potent factor of his policy. He admired Maharaja Jang Bahadur and spoke of his gallant deeds with a glow of enthusiasm. He served his brothers with great fidelity and devotion when they were alive and held them in esteem after their death. When the clock tower, the Bir hospital and the Bhim Sen tower were seriously damaged during the earthquake, the Maharaja sanctioned their reconstruction and allowed them to be associated with the old names. Even when new buildings were raised in place of the old ones, the names of the founders were inscribed on them to keep their glory intact. The credit for raising a statue of Maharaja Deva belongs to him, and an act which reveals the true nobility of his character was the postponement of ceremonies and processions relating to his accession to the Prime Ministership until the obsequies of his deceased brother had been performed. The Maharaja's relations with the other members of the Rana family were cordial, and

towards those among the latter who were not financially well off, his generosity flowed in an unstinted measure.

Though according to western standards an obscurantist in regard to the position of women in society, it must be said in fairness that the Maharaja respected noble womanhood and was always ready to recognise and admire the qualities which go to exalt the dignity of the fair sex. In unveiling the status of Maharani Loka Bhakta Lakshmidēvi, the Senior Queen of his brother Maharaja Chandra Shumshere, he described her as 'the ornament of my brother's family' and sketched the ideal of Gurkha motherhood in words of ringing eloquence. He said—

“Remember, she was no ordinary woman. She was the very pink and perfection of her race. To my brother in the poet's words, she was in relation a wife, in love a mother, in friendship a brother, in care a sister, in counsel a teacher, in attendance a servant, in domestic affairs a true helper. She was the true partner of hopes, the solace of his miseries, the inspiration of his dreams, and the devotion of his heart. And it has been truly said that had it not been for her, many of his dreams would have remained unfulfilled and many of his great deeds unaccomplished.

“To her my brother owed every thing in life and to her I owe a great deal of my early inspiration. She was the enlightener of my mind, my comforter in dejection and sorrow and a great helper in my sorest need.

“Though many years have passed since she shuffled of her mortal coil, her soul still shines forth in all its radiance and purity like a star, and the memory of her kindness is enshrined in my heart.

“She was a woman of whom we might be justly proud. In honouring her, we are honouring ourselves and in laying this wreath of personal devotion at her feet. I am paying tribute to the highest ideal of Gurkha mother-hood.

Thus did the Maharaja give expression to the noble sentiments of his heart. No modern feminist could have spoken with greater warmth and sincerity in describing the fine qualities of womanhood.

The Maharaja had a large family of his own. Besides the Bada Maharani, his chief consort, there were two other Maharanis by whom he had six sons. The Bada Maharani occupied the rank of the pre-eminent queen in the palace. The Maharaja's married life was very happy despite the fact that his household was ploygamous. He never did anything that was likely to impair the prestige or affect the position of the first lady of the Rana aristocracy of Nepal. She had shared his joys and sorrows through affluent and adverse circumstances for more than half a century, and with the snow of nearly seventy winters on her head, as the proud mother of four capable sons who hold commands in the Nepal army and the grand mother and great-grand mother of numerous children she is still an object of universal reverence throughout her husband's dominions. She is a pious and generous lady who never grudges to give relief to those in distress, and who never fails to reward service loyally and faithfully rendered. She contributed handsomely to the earthquake relief fund, and her piety manifested itself in the construction of works of public utility like the water taps of Tokha. The other Maharanis also ministered to the Maharaja's comfort and happiness. In recognition of her devoted service he allowed the Kancha Maharani's name to be associated with the water supply at the Chandragiri pass where they weary travellers found it difficult to get drinking water. To the other ladies of his family he was equally kind. He dedicated the Pachali Bridge and the water supply to the towns of Khokana and Bugmati to the memory of his oldest daughter-in-law in recognition of her able and tactful management of his household during her life. These are only a few instances of the Maharaja's chivalry, and no one who knows him can say that he was wanting in generosity to the fair sex.

But it must be added that according to the ancient custom of Nepal the Maharanis lived in the seclusion of the palace, and none of them was allowed to interfere in public affairs. Only the Bada Maharani occasionally made a public appearance in the company of the Maharaja to attend religious and State functions. But inside the palace they wielded enormous influence. They granted audiences to respectable ladies and

wives of officials who sought their help in representing their grievances to His Highness.

The Maharaja was not only a good husband; he was also a tactful, sympathetic and impartial *pater familias*. He took a keen interest in the welfare of his children and made suitable arrangements for their education by employing efficient tutors. As the head of the Rana family, he had multifarious duties to perform. He presided over social functions and religious rites regulated marriages, heard complaints and decided quarrels, and there is good evidence to show that his dealings with the members whether rich or poor, were always just and sympathetic. He was fond of little children too. Nature had adorned his soldierly character with flowers of human sympathy and endowed his heart with a real capacity for affection. It was an interesting sight to see the Prime-Minister Marshal of Nepal, the Supreme Commander of her military forces, before whom great warriors and generals trembled with fear, who rushed into the ring to charge the lord of the forest with amazing fearlessness, fondle a little grandson, and allowings his free access to himself in the midst of public business in an assembly of courtiers and grandees of the realm.

The Maharaja had four sons and two daughters by the Bada Maharani. One of his sons General Surya Shumshere who was a general in the army died in January 1945. The surviving sons are General Sir Bahadur Shumshere, General Agni Shumshere, General Hari Shumshere and General Narayan Shumshere who hold high posts in the administration. The oldest General Bahadur who was the Huzuria General—a sort of Chief Secretary, and Controller of the Household and the Chief of the Maharaja's Personal Staff—is an intelligent and capable man, fully conversant with the business of the State and efficient and careful in his methods. His duties were multifarious and on account of his hard and honest work he enjoyed the confidence of his father. He was also the Northern Commanding General and occupied the fifth place in the Roll of succession.

There are certain other characteristics of the Maharaja which deserve a brief mention. He was simple and straightforward and when he was convinced of a man's honesty and fidelity, he

not only honoured him with his confidence but rewarded him with titles and gifts. He was highly patriotic, he loved Nepal and burnt with a desire to leave it great and glorious ; in all his utterances he extolled the love of country as the highest virtue and exhorted all classes of people to make it rich and prosperous. He insisted on the preservation of the distinctive features of Nepali civilization, ancient customs and traditions wherein lay the strength of the mountain principality over which he ruled. His patriotism was particularly noticeable in his encouragement of Nepali literature and in his attempts to nationalise the theatre. Formerly the language used in theatrical performances was Urdu but the Maharaja encouraged the use of Nepali by giving rich rewards and prizes. Formerly the names on the sign boards in the offices and shops in the market, the numbers on cars and carriages were written in Roman Characters and sometimes contained English words, but the Maharaja replaced them by their Nepali equivalents. He was a lover of Swadeshi ; he used Nepali cloth and made large purchases when he paid visits to the exhibitions in his country. Fearlessness was a special quality of his mind, and while other men possessing political power were swayed by hatred and suspicion, his sheet anchor was plainness of conduct and sincerity of purpose. Intrigues and secret plans found no place in his scheme; he made it clear to all that the only way to his favour was honest and meritorious work. He hated flattery and cunning-devices commoly employed to gain the favour of potentates. Like a soldier he loved straight and direct methods. Espionage is an inevitable corollary of despotism but the Maharaja employed it to detect crime or to prevent corruption in the administration, and in one of his speeches he said that it was derogatory to the honour of a Kshatriya to carry tales or break his plighted faith. Being a religious man, he did not love money for its own sake, and in his country as well as abroad he was known as a philanthropist and magnificent prince who spent liberally and helped deserving public causes. Schools and temples could always count upon his generosity. On one occasion during his sojourn in India, he saw a large number of students, standing outside a railway station, which was guarded by the police, to welcome him. He called their teacher and asked him what they wanted. He was informed that their school had no building, and they requested him to give a donation of Rs. 1,000/-. The Maharaja promptly

offered Rs. 2,000/- and asked them to raise more money for the construction of a suitable building. Similar was his response to appeals for help by priests of dilapidated and ruined temples and shrines.

In a personal government it is the ruler who plays a prominent part. The happiness or misery of the people depends much upon his capacity or incapacity and in pronouncing a verdict upon him, we should not lose sight of this factor. Judged by this standard, Maharaja Juddha deserves a place among the successful rulers and statesmen of our time. He was a despot but his despotism was enlightened. His motto was "I serve" as is shown by many of his speeches. He was always anxious to promote the welfare of his subjects, and there is no reason to doubt the genuineness and sincerity of the sentiments to which he gave expression from time to time. The tears that trickled down his cheeks during the dark days of the earthquake when he saw the plight of his people, after his return from the Tarai tour, his refusal to move into the palace while thousands were encamped in the open air, exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather and the comprehensive measures he devised to afford relief bear testimony to his solicitude for the public weal. He became Prime-Minister at the age of 59 when most men retire from active service, but he brought to bear upon his work a fresh outlook and an independent mind, which helped him in dealing successfully with the problems that came up for consideration before him. Indeed, he more than justified the expectations formed of him, at the time of his accession. The wiseacres who felt doubts about his success were astonished at the remarkable aptitude he showed for the responsibilities of his high position. His authority was supreme in Nepal; no one could challenge his acts, or criticise his policy, but this did not mean that he was high-handed or impervious to reason. He consulted his council of Bharadars on important matters of State but reserved his judgment without letting them know his mind. He never gave his opinion until he had acquainted himself with all the facts of the case. He was very cautious but his caution was not the outcome of a doubting or hesitant mind but of his desire to be just and impartial. In Nepal people still believe that a divinity hedgeth round the person of a king, and they assembled every afternoon for his *darshan*, but the adoration of the multitude did not make him insolent or haughty. On

the contrary he behaved in a manner which was meet and proper for one whom the populace credited with the possession of noble attributes. He treated his officers well but punished them terribly when they oppressed the people, accepted bribes or embezzled public funds. When an officer went wrong, he received a warning, and if he did not mend his ways, he was dismissed. The Maharaja loved justice and nothing gave him greater offence than an attempt to deflect its course. He distinguished moral from legal justice and attached more importance to the former. To acquaint himself with the condition of the people he undertook tours in the Tarai. He visited every part of his kingdom which none of his predecessor had done except Maharaja Jang Bahadur. When he went on tour, a general order was issued that the people should attend his sawari camp if they had any grievances to represent to him. He treated all communities alike, and once in the Kum Dhik camp he settled amicably a dispute between Hindus and Muslims. He told them that they were equal in his eyes and threatened to banish those who created strife and dissensions. His Muslim subjects were satisfied with the administration and enjoyed an equal measure of protection along with the other sections of the population.

The Maharaja was not a believer in democratic institutions. According to him, they led to quarrels and factions and retarded the cause of good government. His ideal was a paternal government in which like Napoleon's system authority came from above and confidence from below. He was not convinced of the efficacy of franchise which he regarded as a source of great trouble in a country where the masses were ignorant, credulous and superstitious. Besides, he did not think it right that the average man should meddle with the business of government which was a highly technical job. These are the views from which many will emphatically dissent but they represent the Maharaja's convictions and deeply influenced his State policy.

He did not favour political agitation nor did he recognise the right of association or public meetings. He wanted peace and contentment and never refused to grant redress where wrong was done. It must be said to his credit that in many matters he did not stifle the free expression of opinion. Indeed, he frequently invited honest expression of opinion

from his Bhai Bhardars for the improvement of the country. He was tolerant in this respect and even in cases that called for heavy punishment his justice was tempered with mercy.

Though the Maharaja always acted on his own initiative, it was possible to persuade him to consider any scheme for public improvement which was submitted to him for disinterested motives. He did not hesitate to sanction it, if in his judgment it was likely to conduce to public welfare. He was not so self-centred as to reject good advice nor was he so close-fisted as to throw aside a scheme simply because it would entail expenditure on the Government.

The Maharaja's relations with His Majesty the King were always cordial, and towards the close of his regime they were strengthened by matrimonial alliances. He had fully established the doctrine of constitutional proportion and set at rest all fears, jealousies and suspicions, arising out of the undivided exercise of authority by the Prime-Minister. The then king Maharajadhiraj Tribhubana Vira Bikram Sah completed the 25th year of his reign in 1937, and the Maharaja decided to celebrate his Silver Jubilee, although the practice had never existed in Nepal. His view was that it was in complete accord with the Hindu principles of loyalty and was calculated to strengthen the bonds of affection between the people and their sovereign who was still regarded by millions as a symbol of divine power. Preparations were set on foot and orders were issued to all feudatory chiefs, grandees, abbots and officers to get uniforms ready for the occasion. The principal part of the function was the silver Tula Dan (weighing in silver) according to the Vedic rites and a grand procession in the streets of the capital. People received the king with an ovation and voiceferously demonstrated their loyalty to his person. There were similar festivities at Bhaktapur and Lalitpur where thousands gathered from far and near to witness the celebrations. Among the other features of the function was the presentation of silver caskets to the king, a state dinner to the grandees of the realm, and a military review. The ceremony ended with the distribution of sweets to an immense crowd of the poor and the needy. To commemorate the occasion the Maharaja graciously announced the remission of arrears of revenue under various head amounting to Rs.65,83,320 and

reduced by four months the sentences of all prisoners except life-convicts and notorious criminals whose existence was dangerous to society.

This was not all. In November 1944 the Maharaja readily agreed to the Maharajadhiraj going on a pilgrimage to holy places in India— an unprecedented step which had never been taken before by any Prime-Minister. It caused much surprise in Nepal and kinds of speculations became rife but the Maharaja never entertained any fear or doubt. The king visited several places of pilgrimage and historic cities like Delhi, Agra and Lucknow accompanied by high officers of the Nepal Government among whom was General Bahadur Shumshere, the eldest son of the Maharaja. The British Government received the king with great honours, and although the visit was a private one, wherever he went the fullest precautions were taken for his safety and officials were instructed to wait upon him.

Much was done during the Maharaja's regime to increase the king's prestige. He presided over almost all public functions and the Maharaja always received him with due honour and respect. The royal retinue was enlarged, and steps were taken to add to His Majesty's comfort and security. The guard of honour in the King's palace was a new feature introduced by the Maharaja. He erected a statue of the present King at Tripureshwar.

Religion played an important part in the Maharaja's life. As an orthodox Hindu he had a great sympathy with Hindus in general. Nepal is a stronghold of Hinduism, and tradition and environment both make man religious and even devout. The caste rules are strictly observed, and the old forms of worship are scrupulously adhered to. The Maharaja regulated his life according to the injunctions of the Shastras, eschewed forbidden fare and celebrated all the festivals and performed all the rites that are enjoined by our religion. Pasupati Nath is the patron deity of Nepal, and the Maharaja who had a great faith in his beneficence occasionally attended his holy shrine for worship. In times of difficulty he invoked his aid, and entered on no important undertaking without uttering his sacred name. He was also an ardent devotee of Shri Krishna and built temples at Jawalakhel and Resunga in Gulmi which were dedicated to him. He worshipped *Panchayan* (Ganesa,

Surya, Siva, Narayan and Devi) daily and spent about an hour in meditation and prayer. Himself a life-long student of the *Mahabharata*, he was fond of religious discourses, and heard the *Bhagvada* and other Puranas from the lips of learned and pious Brahmans. He was extremely tolerant in religious matters and allowed all forms of worship to prevail in his dominions. A large section of his subjects in the valley were followers of Vajrayan—a branch of Mahayan Buddhism—and they were allowed perfect freedom of worship. The Maharaja himself offered worship to Machenranath, a favourite god of Buddhists, and attended his *jatras* which annually attract large crowds of worshippers and spectators. He enhanced the importance of the *Jatra* by ordering all Government offices, courts and educational institutions to be closed for two days after it. During the earthquake in renovating ruined temples he treated the Hindu and Buddhist shrines with absolute impartiality, and thus gave proof of his tolerance in religious matters. Behind the multiplicity of creeds and diverse forms of worship and ritual, he saw the fundamental unity which all religions were endeavouring to reach, and, therefore, he was always disinclined to force his beliefs upon others. According to him religion was a matter of the heart; it was only a mode of paying homage and reverence to God and as such it might assume different forms with different persons. Creeds and modes of worship were merely externals which did not matter to one who aimed at the reality. It was his firm conviction that men should be allowed to follow and practise religion according to their beliefs. He deprecated the prosyletising activities of modern reformers, for that created bitterness and strife. He was definitely opposed to mixing religion with politics and regarded the exploitation of religion for political purposes as highly undesirable. Their separation was, in his opinion, conducive both to good Government and the happiness of men. He held religious men in esteem but hated bigotry and condemned the hypocrisy of those, who, under the cloak of religion, pursued their own selfish ends. According to the Maharaja it was difficult to find a truly religious leader in these days, and whenever he came across such one he treated him with great consideration. Although a strong upholder of the *Varnashrama dharma* (the fourfold division of Varnas), he was not opposed to religious and social reform. But he deprecated the excessive zeal

of enthusiasts who wanted to ride roughshod over ancient custom hallowed by time and usages deriving force and authority from prescription. The object of reform is to do good to the community, and that being so, all reform must be introduced slowly, carrying public opinion with it, so far as possible, and drastic or revolutionary changes should be avoided. Being a conservative by temperament and upbringing, the Maharaja did not like innovations nor did he approve of the senseless imitation of the ways and habits of Westerners.

Like many pious and orthodox people the Maharaja had visited most of the principal centres of pilgrimage in India. He had been to Puri, Dwarka, Rameswaram, *Hardwar*, Mathura, Brindaban, Kashi Prayag and many other places and made abundant gifts to Brahmans and priests. He had a great reverence for cows and was very fond of performing *godans* (gift of cows). He had given away thousands of cows to Brahmans, and he looked upon these gifts as highly meritorious. He took a keen interest in cow protection and liberally contributed to the funds of Goshalas. He appointed physicians who went from village to village to look after the health of the cows and distribute medicines free to the people. The result was that the breed of cows considerably improved in Nepal as was shown by the list of prize-winners in the cow-shows which were held every year. The Maharaja's measures to protect cows were much appreciated, and his example was followed by the people at large. Respect for cows became a universal national habit in Nepal as will be clear from the following words which occur in an address presented by the residents of Kathmandu to the Maharaja at the time of performing the opening ceremony of their Goshala. "But it is only Nepal which has preserved her national wealth of Hindutwa and the glory of her freedom. Not only has she not suffered these cardinal virtues to be lost but she has done every thing to maintain her position in this respect in the most trying and adverse circumstances. Let us take for example Cow-protection, which is one of the principal supports of Hinduism. Gurkha desires its name from the word '*goruksha*' meaning cow protection. That is why those who protect cows are called Gurkhalis. In whole world Nepal is the only country where

cow-slaughter is altogether unknown. Cows are allowed free-graving and are worshipped as goddesses."

To men who have received a tincture of Western education, these words may have no meaning, and the protection of cows may be a mere proposition of economics, but to the vast majority of Hindus it is a vital question bearing a close relation to their ancient faith and, therefore, worthy of the most earnest and respectful consideration.

Charity or *Dana* was the Maharaja's strong point. Like the great kings of old and his predecessors, he looked upon it as his highest duty and followed the dictum of the ancient lawgivers that it was the golden key that opened the gates of heaven in this age of moral decadence, he regarded charity as the surest passport to true happiness and the means of purifying the body and the soul. His charity took many forms such as grant of land to deserving persons, food and shelter to orphans the aged and the infirm, help to those whose houses were burnt by fire or who were troubled by famine, the recitation of *Saptaha* for spiritual welfare and the advance of loans in times of drought. The Maharaja performed *Kotiahutiya* and most of the great *danas* (gifts of charities) enjoined in the Shastras but his crowning act of charity was the *Suvarna tula dan* (weighing against gold) which was performed in October 1944 A.D. A special mandap was constructed inside the courtyard of the temple of Pashupatinath. It was a magnificent thatched pavilion of bamboo sheets which contained a Yajna mandap also, designed according to the dictates of the Shastras. On the first day the preliminary rites (*Parvanga*) were gone through, and worship was offered to various gods and goddesses by the Maharaja. Next day all the members of the ruling family attended the mandap to share the merit of the great gift. The Maharaja ascended the scales and got himself weighed against gold. The Acharya (the officiating priest) and other Pandits put tilak on the Maharaja's forehead and were richly rewarded. The ceremony concludes with an invocation to pashupatinath. Thousand of Brahmans and beggars were given gold chips in charity, and whatever remained of the precious gift was kept in reserve for public purposes. A stone pillar erected in the temple of Pashupatinath modestly records the gift in

plain and simple words which are indicative of the illustrious donor's piety and humility.

Besides making charitable gifts, the Maharaja built many temples, Dharamshalas, ghats, rest-houses, and wells throughout his kingdom. He endowed Pathshalas and sanctioned grants for repairing old places of worship. The Maharaja's gifts were sometimes accompanied by strage poetical jokes. He could conceal gold *mohars* inside a pumpkin and present it to a Brahman of his court. The latter was surprised at such a trivial gift from an august personage like the Maharaja but when his wife cut it often for cooking, she found to her utter amazement gold coins within. Once on the 'Kusmanda Nawami' day he gave a Kurindo (a kind of green pumpkin) to a poor Brahman. The poor recipient not knowing that it contained gold mohars inside passed it on to another needy person in disgust. He was greatly disappointed when he learnt of its contents later and wrung his hands in despair. The matter was reported to the Maharaja and he was much amused.

Being a religious man, the Maharaja took a keen interest in the management of places of worship. Nepal abounds in temples and shrines which are maintained by endowments in the shape of rent-free lands, the revenues of which go to defray the expenses of regular and occasional functions and the establishment. In many of them the funds were appropriated by the keepers to their own use, and the festivals and functions were altogether neglected. When the Maharaja came to know of this state of affairs, he passed an order requiring the custodians of such shrines to submit details of their endowments together with their actual budgets. This was followed by another decree which required them to prepare lists of ornaments and the sacristy of all temples in the valley. The management improved and the chances of misappropriation of temple funds were considerably minimised.

In summing up it may be said that the Maharaja lived a strenuous life, and his public career was an unique example of patience, perseverance and high aims, steadfastly pursued. In

the unfolding of his genius three factors played an important part—the disciplined economy of his father's home, the influence of his mother, and the study of the noble deeds of the heroes of the Nahabharata. In his early days he had his difficulties, his moods of depression, which cast their shadow across his path, and his constant struggle against ill-health and adverse circumstances. He overcame all these by sheer force of will and those, who saw him then were amazed at the subsequent transformation of his personality. As a soldier he distinguished himself and won the confidence of those who were under his command. A sincere desire to engage the enemy, said Douglas Haig on the occasion,—this was the message of the Maharaja to the troops who performed great deeds of valour during the first great World War. In the last great World War too his inspiring words evoked the highest courage and heroism on the part of the Gurkhas. His entry into the office of Prime-Minister marked an epoch in his life. Though nearly sixty years of age, he busied himself in promoting public good and forming plans for the country's improvement. He placed before himself the Puranic ideal of kingship and shaped his policy according to the precepts of the great sages enshrined in the epics. He was deeply religious, indeed religion was the keynote of his life, the mainspring of all his actions. He performed acts of charity and *Yajnas* like the great kings of old, and never ceased to exhort his kinsmen and subjects that true happiness did not consist only in the satisfaction of material wants but in the pursuit of higher ends and the constant endeavour to bring about progress in all directions. Wealth alone was not the real aim; power unless properly used was poison; politics was only a means to an end; and, therefore, rulers and statesmen should have a perception of right values. Such was the burden of the numerous addresses which the Maharaja delivered on public occasions. They were an index to his inner mind. They revealed a balanced outlook, a fervent desire to make his country great, a boundless love for his people, and a deep understanding of the problems of government. Though seated on a lofty eminence, he always said to

his people that he was one of them, and without their co-operation he could achieve but little. Critics will find much to deplore in his policy and methods. They will take exception to his conservatism, his unwillingness to adopt modern political ideas, his insistence on caste and the minute observance of ancient usages; his approval of polygamy and his retention of privilege. But they should not forget that the task of statesmanship and social reform is limited by the environment in which a man is placed and the force of custom which in a country like Nepal cannot be easily disregarded. Besides, it must be borne in mind that the Maharaja followed the Hindu ideals about the applicability of which to modern conditions there might be an honest difference of opinion. Still, his sincerity was unquestioned, and no honest man can deny his great services to his country. If he had done nothing else except battling against the earthquake of 1934 and repairing its grievous disasters with a heroic resolve, he would have ranked among the immortals of Nepali history.

His devotion to duty was exemplary. His courage in the supreme crisis of his country's annals was universally admired. Proud and majestic in dealing with the defiant and the recalcitrant, he was kind towards the poor, and was ever ready to protect the weak. He was generous to a fault, and the meanest peasant in Nepal knew how solicitous of his welfare he was. Indeed, the qualities of character which he possessed justify us in applying to him the poet's words :

“The elements

So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, “This was a man.”

Appendix

The following is the text of the speech delivered by the Maharaja on the day of renunciation.

I have invited you all here to-day to express before you an idea which has been working in my mind for sometime. I hope you will pay your kind attention to what I am going to say.

Thirteen years, two weeks and twenty-six days have elapsed since I assumed in my hands the reins of the administration of Nepal. The manner in which, after my accession to office, I devoted myself to the promotion of peace and the happiness and well-being of the people and the advancement of the country's prestige and status not only here but also abroad are well known to you. You are also aware of the heavenly calamity which befell us in 1934 and the steps taken by my Government to mitigate human misery and suffering. During all these years no efforts have been spared to maintain the traditional friendship with our allies and we have stood shoulder to shoulder with them in the hour of the darkest misfortune. Our troops sent for war help in the world war have, by the grace of Lord Pashupati, returned to their homes with the laurels of victory on their brows. They have enhanced our country's glory and it is with feelings of great pleasure that we have taken part in victory celebrations with our minds free from all anxieties.

As the result of the help we gave to our Great Ally, we are informed by the Minister that a sum of money sufficient to bear interest amounting to Rs. 10 lakhs a year will be set apart in lieu of the subsidy that is being paid to us. This will remove the difficulty arising from the dearth of capital for the development of industries and commerce etc. and furnish us with the means of improving the financial condition of the country. It is a matter of no little satisfaction to me that by God's grace I have been blessed with a number of sons and daughters. Though seventy-one years of age, I am in full vigour of mind and body and have been carrying out the duties of my office to the satisfaction of all. The reins of the administration of the kingdom of Nepal are still held tight in my hands and my authority is as great as ever. In the midst of this happiness and peace there is no reason why I should feel in any wise dejected and depressed and decide to abandon the world with all its joys. It is natural for man to feel disgusted with the world when he is in distress or placed in adverse circumstances. Being blessed with everything that man can desire why I have chosen to forsake the world I will tell you presently. I have, no doubt, your curiosity will be allayed.

There are two chief reasons for the course I have decided to adopt for myself. First, that my nephews and sons have all been carefully trained in the art of administration. They have acquired knowledge and experience and are fully conscious of the responsibilities that rest upon them as administrators and scions of the Rana family. They are fully competent to bear the burden of the State and have the sagacity and wisdom to move with the times. I may particularly mention in this connection the name of my dear nephew and successor Padma Shamshere who has always been distinguished for his piety and devotion to religion. Although decadence has overtaken man's faiths and beliefs owing to the changed circumstances, I am convinced that my successor will not allow the glory of religion to be diminished in any way. An administration based upon

the foundation of Dharma prospers and helps the ruler in promoting the happiness and well-being of the people. As my successor is devoted to Rama, I have no doubt during his regime, which is soon going to be inaugurated, you will have a glimpse of Rama Raj by reason of his constant endeavours to follow the noble example of his *Ishtadeva*. Those who will follow him are equally capable and qualified and it is this satisfaction which has enabled me to relinquish the reins of office with a calm and peaceful mind in the confident hope that the burden of which I am relieving myself today will be courageously born and no effort will be spared to promote the happiness of the people. The second reason why I have taken this step is that though I am hale and hearty I cannot keep away from my mind the thought that the world is subject to change and that everything on this earth is perishable. The pleasure arising from the possession of crowns and kingdoms is also transitory. Good actions are not always possible in the administration of a country. Sometimes we have to adopt harsh measures to achieve our end. Kings and monarchs have to be guided in the performance of their duties by the circumstances in which they are placed. It is not possible for them to attain spiritual bliss if they are immersed in the affairs of the world to the end of their lives. One can strive for spiritual advancement and the peace of the soul only when one possesses health and strength of mind and enthusiasm without which no great effort is possible. What can a man do when old age sets in and disables him completely. What after all is life? It is only a bubble on the lotus leaf. Death inevitably follows birth; it shadows one throughout life. As soon as our eyes are closed, we have to leave behind our treasure, our body and our dear and near ones. It is said that Dharma alone accompanies the *Jivatman* when it passes on to the other world. It has been truly said that Dharma is the only friend that follows us even after death and everything else perishes with the body. Therefore, Dharma is the only real friend that helps us in the end. It is only by the protection of Dharma that man can save himself.

I am seventy-one years old. As far as circumstances have permitted I have performed pious deeds but the duties of the administration have always been paramount with me. They have absorbed all my time and energy. I have not been able to follow the path of self-realisation which alone can bring peace to the soul. Hence getting rid of all earthly entanglements and responsibilities, I have resolved to dedicate the rest of my life to the attainment of spiritual ends. Man cannot fulfil all his obligations only by pursuing the selfish ends of the world. He alone can be called perfect who has attained both worldly and spiritual ends. History records instances of Kshatriya Kings in by-gone days retiring from the world to spend their time in seclusion and divine contemplation after entrusting their crown and kingdom to able successors. This was the ideal of the Rajarshis of our race; indeed the time-honoured custom of our tribe. Kalidas speaks of the scions of Ragh's race: "Who practised the acquisition of learning in their childhood, pursued the senses in their youth; in old age lived the life of ascetics and in the end gave up their lives in *yogic* contemplation."

In the existing circumstances, it is not always possible to follow this great ideal. But I have decided to merge the individual into the universal soul in the hope and belief that by resorting to this noble path at a time when a worthy successor is available, I shall compass not only my own welfare but also that of my people. It is with this object in view that I propose to invest the Commander-in-Chief Padma Shumshere with the supreme authority of the State and lay down my burden. I hope this proposal will have your full support.

Addressing Commander-in-Chief Padma Shumshere the Maharaja said :

"You acted your part nobly both as G.O.C. of the Nepalese troops in India in the first world war and also as Commander-in-Chief in the administration of the country and your work has given me satisfaction. Now, according to the Roll of succession which was revised by me to prevent undesirable

consequences from arising in the State, I invest you in this auspicious hour with the full responsibility of carrying on the government of this country. It is not an ordinary burden. He alone who wears a crown can feel how heavy it is. In the performance of royal duties a monarch has to be four-faced like Brahma, thousand-eyed like Indra, and thousand-handed like Kartivirya. Please accept my blessings from the bottom of my heart so that you may have strength and wisdom enough to carry on the administration of the country under the full protection of Dharma, placing the Crown upon your head and the people in your lap in accordance with the rules and regulations laid down by Jung Bahadur, the most illustrious scion of the Rana family.

Addressing his kinsmen, courtiers, troops and the people the Maharaja said :

‘I shall now from today entrust the reins of administration to my nephew Padma Shumshere. I am perfectly sure, you will all extend to him your full co-operation and help him to keep flying the flag of this independent country by planting it firmly on the altar of Dharma and by showing devotion and patriotism in your actions. As you know, the family ties, the bonds of love and affection which bind us all are not easy to forget, I will endeavour to do so gradually by regular devotion, faith and a keen desire to make myself a servant of the temple of spiritual peace. This is why I intend to go to a holy place of pilgrimage.

While thus going to lead a retired life according to Shastric injunctions, I could either leave behind my wife (the Bada Maharani) with her sons or take her along with me. As she has been my life-long companion since my boyhood, it was my desire to take her with me but her physical infirmities and continued ill-health have prevented me from fulfilling my wish. I am leaving her in charge of her sons. The second Maharani is also unable, owing to her heart trouble, to accompany me and I have, therefore, decided to leave her here. But as you are aware, it is difficult to attain self-knowledge (jnana) immediately after retirement and the preservation of health is neces-

sary to turn the mind in that direction, I am taking the Kan-cha Maharani with me for she knows well how to look after my comforts. Later, when the initial stages are over, I will dispense with such aid and act as circumstances require.

Addressing his eldest son General Bahadur the Maharaja said :

Dear Bahadur. It is your duty to tell me that you are willing to resign your post and accompany me with a view to rendering me service. But you have already attained to the position of a Commanding General in the State which carries great responsibilities with it. Besides being the eldest male member of the family, you will have to take care of your brothers and serve your mothers. For these reasons, I do not think it proper to separate you from them. It is time for you to serve your king and country. Your age holds out the promise of a successful career for you. I shall deem it an act of filial devotion on your part if you help to maintain peace in the country and make it great and glorious by your services.

My sons Lt. General Narayan Shumshere and Colonels Surendra and Shanta Shumshere have solicited my permission to accompany me. Narayan Shumshere being the youngest will stay with the Bada Maharani and look after her comforts. Surendra and Shanta are still young and it will be advisable for them to stay back and devote themselves to the service of the country.

As I am going into the forest for the peace of the soul by renouncing such a high position, I will advise you not to write letters to me for they are likely to deflect me from the true path by arousing attachment, passion and prejudice, the abandonment of which is a condition precedent of spiritual advancement. I shall be pleased with him who follows my advice. No reply will be sent to any letter addressed to me. I hope you will not take it amiss. I have already expressed my views on this subject to my successor.

It will be my endeavour to attain my heart's wish by spending the remaining days of my life either on the bank of the sacred Kali Gandaki or at some holy place of pilgrimage. I shall try to turn my mind towards the path of *jnan* by gradually forsaking all worldly desires and attachments. It is in the lap of this country that I was born and brought up and attained to a high position. I have given up that which belonged to her. It is now my last desire that this human clay should merge itself on the bank of the holy Gandaki in the soil of this dear land of ours.

Again turning to all assembled he said :

'I have taken much of your time but I have put my case before you to the best of my powers. Now permit me to chant the holy name of God. It is my wish that all those who have co-operated with me in administering the affairs of this country may prosper and I offer my blessings to them all. I have fulfilled all my worldly obligations. If ever in the performance of my duties any wrong or injustice has been done to anybody, I seek your forgiveness. I wish to bid you farewell in perfect joy and happiness. Adiea

Then the Maharaja addressed the Gurus in these words :

"I seek your blessings so that your disciple's life in the next world may be made better and his devotion to God may increase."

The concluding words which the Maharaja spoke were an invocation to the Almighty :

'Oh God ! I have now taken leave of all. I dedicate myself from today whole-heartedly to Thy feet. Take me, who am ignorant, under Thy shelter by showing unto me the right path.

असतो मा सद्गमय ।

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।

मृत्योर्ता ममस्तं पाहि ।

"From the non-existent lead me unto the existent,
From darkness lead me unto light,
From death lead me unto immortality."

