

N-92-5  
0+10+9

Regmi Research (Private) Ltd.  
Kathmandu: August 1986.

Regmi Research Series

Year 18, No. 8

Edited by

Mahesh C. Regmi.

<u>Contents</u>		<u>Page</u>
1. Gorkhali Rule in Kumaun	...	113.
2. Royal Orders of Kārtik 1867 Samvat	...	117.
3. Passport Regulations, A.D. 1800	...	121.
4. Timber Supply for Rana Palaces	...	123.
5. Additional Documents on Kumaun	...	124.
6. Royal Orders to the Ijaradar of Chitwan	...	127.
7. The Godan Levy	...	128.

\*\*\*\*\*

Regmi Research (Private) Ltd

Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Compiled by Regmi Research (Private) Ltd. for private study  
and research. Not meant for public sale or display.

## Gorkhali Rule in Kumaun

By

Dr. Shiva Prasad Dabara "Charan"

(Uttarakhanda Ka Rajanaitika Tatha Samskritika Itihasa, Part V: Kumaun, Garhwal Aur Himachala Par Gorkhali Sheshana Samvat 1847-1872 (1790-1815, Dogadha, Garhwal: Vir-Gatha Prakshan, 2030 (A.D. 1973), pp. 102-118L).

### The Gorkhalis in Kumaun (1790-1803)

The political and cultural traditions of Kumaun, like those of Doti, were different from the traditions of the Gorkhalis. Gorkhali rule in Kumaun was different from the rule of the Chand Kings, for it was an alien rule.

According to the system followed in Nepal, Gorkhali civil and military officials in Kumaun were transferred every year. After one year's service as jagirdars, military employees became dhakres and returned to their villages, and were replaced by new jagirdars. Civil and military officials similarly returned to Nepal.

The Subba was the chief of the local administration, with a Naib, or deputy, under him. These two administrators were often brothers or other close relatives. There was also a commander of the local military forces.

The Subbas, Naib Subbas, and military commanders of Kumaun during the period from 1791-92 to 1803 were as follows:-

1791-92	...	Subba Jog Malla.
1793	...	Subba Kaji Nara Shah. Naib Subba Ramadatta. Commander Kalu Pande.
1794	...	Subba Ajav Simha Khawas. Naib Subba Shrestha Thapa. Commander Jaswant Bhandari.
1795	...	Subba Amara Simha Thapa. Naib Subba Gobinda Padhya. Commander Bhakti Thapa.
1796	...	Subba Prabal Rana. Naib Subba Jaya Krishna Thapa.

1797-98	...	Subba Bam Shah. Naib Subba Rudravaira Shah. Commanders Amara Simha Thapa. and Sardar Angad.
1799	...	Subba Ajav Simha. Naib Subba Shrestha Thapa. Commander Bishrama Khatri.
1800-01	...	Subba Kaji Dhaukal Simha Basnyat. Naib Subba Major Ganapati Padhya.
1802	...	Subba Rudravira.
1803	...	Subba Kaji Gajakesar Pande. Naib Subba-Subedar Krishnananda Adhikari.

(Edwin T. Atkinson, The Himalayan Districts of N.W.P. of India, Vol. 2, pp. 614-15).

Small military posts were set up at different places in Kumaun. The military personnel stationed at these posts collected the rents assigned to them from the inhabitants of the adjoining villages. This pernicious system subjected the villagers to great hardships.

Military personnel who were stationed in Kumaun for the brief period of one year naturally tended to grab as much income as they could through any means. The level of their education, and culture, and character did not befit their positions. Some of them were ruthless and immoral and believed that the subjects should be treated with great severity so that they might remain docile. For them, human life had no value. Many stories are still current about their oppressive treatment of the people of Kumaun.

In particular, Nara Shah, who was the administrator of Kumaun in 1793, has been described as cruel and oppressive. (Badri Datta Pande, *Kumaun Ka Itihasa*, p. 393). Like the rulers of Garhwal, the Kings of Kumaun had appointed people belonging to the fighting communities of the Himalayan region in high-ranking civil and military posts in order to control their unruly khas subjects. Those who were so appointed in Kumaun belonged to Kangra and other hill Kingdoms in the west and were known as Nagarkoti. They had settled in Pali, Baramandal, and Shor and had entered into matrimonial relations with the local Rajput families. These Nagarkotis were more

freedom-loving than the people of Kumaun and were not prepared to tolerate oppression silently. Nara Shah, therefore, doubted their loyalty. He compiled a census of the Nagarkoti population and ordered his officials to massacre them in the night of a specified date, which happened to be Tuesday. Nagarkotis used to wear their hair long, so they could be easily identified. On that Tuesday, they were massacred all over Kumaun, and only a few of them were able to escape by cutting off their hair or disguised as mendicants. The day is, therefore, notorious as "Nara Shahi's Tuesday" in Kumaun.

Some administrators oppressed not only the subjects but even their own subordinate Gorkhali officials. Dhaukal Simha Basnyat, for instance, wanted to kill a soldier with his own hands when two soldiers quarrelled with each other. He was, therefore, assassinated by some dhakre soldiers (i.e. ex-servicemen) with the butts of their muskets. (Pande, p. 395).

Gorkhali administrators exercised full judicial authority over the people under their jurisdiction. They were empowered not only to impose fines but even inflict physical punishments, such as mutilation and death. There was no standard penal code, so the administrators were free to act as they liked. For one year, they were the despotic lords of the unfortunate people of Kumaun. They could place men, women, and children who were guilty of any offense in detention, or enslave them and employ them personally or sell them to others. There was no provision for appeals against such decisions. Political intransquillity was chronic in the royal palace of Nepal and nobody, other than the minor king, had his post secure. Who could then check the arbitrary rule of the administrators of Kumaun in the midst of such chaos?

### Revenue Collection

During 1791-92, Subba Jog Malla was the administrator of Kumaun. He made the first revenue settlement in Kumaun and assessed the revenue due from each village. The Joshis, who held top-ranking posts under the Chand Kings, provided full cooperation to the Gorkhalis in the revenue settlement operations as well as in the collection of revenue in order to win their trust. As such, the Gorkhalis did not face much difficulty in revenue collection.

Three categories of taxes were collected in Kumaun from (1) each adult, (2) each household, and (3) each village.

The rates of these taxes, as fixed by Subba Jog Malla, were as follows:

<u>Basis</u>	<u>Designation of Tax</u>	<u>Rate</u>
(1) Adult	<u>Manga</u>	One rupee
(2) Household	<u>Gharahi Pichhahi</u>	Two rupees
(3) Village		(1) One rupee on each <u>bisi</u> of agricultural land

Subbangi	(2) One rupee
Mejmani	(3) Two and a half annas

The Kamin of each village apportioned the amount of revenue from these taxes among each local household and thus prepared the assessment register. He then collected these taxes and transmitted the proceeds to the local administrator.

Several other taxes were also collected, such as timasi (quarterly) levy on behalf of the Subedar, the doniya levy, the ghee tax, the tanker levy, the manijhari and the kheni-khapini. When King Girban Yuddha Bikram ascended the throne, the nezarana levy was collected all over the Kingdom.

Brahmans were originally exempt from taxes. During 1797, Bam Shah and Rudravira Shah imposed a new tax known as Kusahi on Brahmans at the rate of five rupees for each Jyula (6 to 13 acres) of land. This step was taken with the objective of striking terror in the minds of Brahmans who took part in politics, that is, who opposed Gorkhali oppression. The kusahi tax was not collected from Brahmans who lived peacefully. (Pande, p. 394). In those days, revenue was collected by two officials known as Kaladhara and Brahmanda Padhya. It lay at their discretion to decide whether or not any Brahman was taking part in politics.

The tax collecting officials possessed unlimited powers. They had full powers to auction the lands, cattle, and other property, and even members of the families of tax-defaulters. Taxes were collected through the Kamin (thckdar, pradhan) of the village. In one case, villagers and Kamins refused to pay a newly-imposed tax. The Kamins of 1,500 villages were then summoned for clarifications on the measure, but were all massacred, so that no one should make any such objection in the future. (Pande, p. 400). Many people consequently fled to Rohilkhand. The Gorkhalis then sold their children as slaves to the Rohillas.

The cruel rule of the Gorkhalis has become notorious in the history of Kumaun. But their oppression was even worse in Garhwal. Kumaun is nearer to Nepal than Garhwal, so local administrators were not unduly oppressive. The people of Kumaun did not offer any strong opposition to Gorkhali rule. They had suffered such oppression during the rule of the Chands and the Joshis as well. The Joshis, Pantas, and Chaudharis offered active support to the Gorkhalis. Some Brahman families of Kumaun, were priests of the royal family and Thakuri families of Nepal (B.D. Sanwal, Nepal and the East India Company, p. 20). So the Gorkhalis showed some goodwill toward the people of Kumaun. Western Nepal had had contacts with Kumaun from ancient times. The Doti branch of the Katyuri dynasty once ruled over both sides of the Kali river. Even today, the people of Doti have closer contacts with Kumaun and Gorkwal than those of eastern and central Nepal. (Ibid., p. 12). But though the Gorkhalis did not impose a harsh rule on Kumaun, they were ruthless in the collection of revenue. The poet Gumani Panta has recorded that even

though bearing a heavy burden of compulsory portage services, the people of Kumaun did not leave the Gorkhali Kingdom (Pande, p. 426). But the truth is different. There is considerable evidence to prove that thousands of people fled from Kumaun during the period of Gorkhali rule.

-----

Royal Orders of Kartik 1867 Samvat  
(Continued from the June 1986 issue)

In this issue

1. Confirmation of Rajawar in Sorad.
2. Appointment of Grooms in Royal Stables.
3. Royal Order to Subedar Dharmananda Khawas
4. Land Allotment to Rajivalochan Arjyal
5. Disbursements from Doti.
6. Appointment of Mijhars.
7. Revenue from Adalats.
8. Tax Exemptions for Blacksmiths.
9. Restoration of Khuwa Holding
10. Land Reclamation

1. Confirmation of Rajawar in Sorad

Royal order to Udaya Singh Rajawar of Sorad:

"Local Amalis had reconfirmed you as Rajawar with jurisdiction over one-fourth of Sorad. We hereby endorse that reconfirmation. Appropriate your customary perquisites, resettle depopulated areas, and reclaim uncultivated lands. We also reconfirm you Sera holding of 40 muris of rice-fields. Anybody who disputes your authority in the territory assigned to you should be severely punished."

Monday, Kartik Badi 10, 1867.

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 38, p. 581.

2. Appointment of Grooms in Nepal Stables

On Monday, Kartik Badi 10, 1867, Sheikh Roz and Sheikh Khaderu were appointed as grooms at the royal stables (astabalkhana) on a monthly salary of Rs 10 and Rs 5 respectively.

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 38, p. 581.