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The Rape of Garhwal

By

Dr: Shiva Prasad Dabaral "Charan"

We shall now present an account of the events that occurred in Garhwal after the 1849 Samvat (A.D. 1792) treaty was signed with the Gorkhalis.

The Gorkhalis had signed the treaty, which stipulated payment of a tribute amounting to only Rs. 3,000 a year, because of the crisis they were facing as a result of the Chinese invasion. At that time, it was not possible for the Gorkhali army to be involved in a protracted war for the conquest of Garhwal. But as soon as the crisis was over, Gorkhali military commanders started acting in contravention of the treaty. The government of Nepal had signed two treaties with the East India Company in similar circumstances, which it violated at the first available opportunity. If the government of Nepal could deal in that manner with the powerful East India Company, the Kingdom of Garhwal, weak and torn by internal dissensions, could hardly expect a better treatment.

According to Maularam ("Rana Bahadur Chandrika", unpublished MS.), the Gorkhalis were able to occupy Garhwal only after nine years of continuous fighting. This means that they had started violating the terms of the treaty about two years after it was signed, that is, around A.D. 1794. The Gorkhalis made repeated attempts to occupy Langurgarh, but without success. Their commanders in Kumaun encouraged their troops to make frequent raids into Garhwal's territories. Records available at the District Magistrate's Office at Paudi show how the Gorkhali raiders ruined the country, massacred the inhabitants in a barbarous manner, or sold them as slaves. They set fire to houses and destroyed villages.

It was not possible for the King of Garhwal, Pradyumna Shah, to station troops all along the frontier. Because of the chaos prevailing in the kingdom, and the depredations of Parakrama Shah, he had very few troops left. Consequently, the inhabitants of the border areas had no alternative but to make their own security arrangements. They had frequent encounters with the Gorkhalis, with much cruelty on both sides.

The annual tribute of Rs. 3,000 stipulated in the A.D. 1792 treaty was soon raised to Rs. 9,000 on various pretexts. The King of Garhwal had also to bear the expenses of the Nepal Wakil and his staff. Nepali officials frequently visited places of pilgrimage in the Himalayan region, and stopped at Srinagar in order to receive gifts befitting their rank. All this raised the amount paid to the Court of Nepal to about Rs. 25,000 a year, according to Edwin T. Atkinson.

Because of this heavy economic burden, a terrible famine ravaged the Kingdom of Garhwal in A.D. 1795. Thousands of people died, and thousands more sold themselves into slavery. The famine further worsened the economic condition of Garhwal and there

was delay in payment of the annual tribute to Nepal. There was no money even to meet routine administrative expenses. Captain Hardwick, who visited Srinagar in 1796, has recorded that Pradyumna Shah had become so poor that he had no money even to meet his personal needs and was wearing ordinary clothes. Extensive areas had become desolate. Pradyumna Shah was even mortgaging villages in Garhwal to borrow money from the Badrinath temple fund or from moneylenders. Even then, there is no evidence that his financial condition improved.

Even before the second Gorkhali invasion (A.D. 1803), Garhwal had fallen into utter anarchy. A virtual civil war raged in the capital and the adjoining areas. Maularam has given an eye-witness account of the situation in his work Ganika-Nataka. He has recorded that Parakrama Shaha's atrocities had reached their climax from early A.D. 1800. He increased the size of his army and struck terror in the minds of Pradyumna Shah and his ministers. Pradyumna Shah was unable to protect his subjects from the atrocities of Parakrama Shaha. Any one who mentioned Pradyumna Shah's name became an object of Parakrama Shaha's anger. Parakrama Shah began to issue his own orders, superseding those of the King. He took away any beautiful girl who attracted him, and looted gold and other wealth from any house he liked. He thus ushered in what was virtually Ravana-Raj in Srinagar. Parakrama Shah considered loot and adultery a prowess. No woman was safe from him, irrespective of her caste or status. If any person was found to be keeping a concubine, she was taken away from him as a punishment. Moreover, his property was confiscated, and members of his family were enslaved. Maularam had a beautiful concubine named Laxmi, who had lived with him for seven years. For that offense, his property, including his jagir, comprising fourteen villages, were confiscated. Laxmi was taken away, and he was imprisoned. Maularam's petitions, which he submitted to Parakrama Shah from jail, were ignored. He was freed only after spending about six months in jail and paying a fine. However, his concubine was not restored to him.

Parakrama Shah severely punished any person who was a supporter of the King, Pradyumna Shah. Ministers who supported Pradyumna Shah were thus afraid that Parakrama Shah would have them murdered whenever possible. Accordingly, they began to recruit troops on Pradyumna Shah's instructions. Pradyumna Shah's supporters included Ramapati Khandudi, Dewan Mohan Simha, three Negi clans, and their followers, whereas Shishram Sakalani and his brother, Shivaram Sakalani, Radha Guru, Chitramani, Srivilasa Nautiyal, and Dhaukalananda were the Chief supporters of Parakrama Shah.

Parakrama Shah told Pradyumna Shah: "This Kingdom (Garhwal) belongs to me. I have acquired it by killing Jayakirti Shah. Our father had given you the Kingdom of Kurmachala (Kumaun). Why do not you go there? I have tolerated many things because you are my elder brother. If you do not do what I say, I will deal with you in the same manner as with Jayakirti Shah." With great cleverness, Parakrama Shah took possession of the royal palace and began to live there. Consequently, Pradyumna Shah was unable to come out of the palace and meet his supporters. Once he tried to come out, but was stopped by Parakrama Shah.

Pradyumna Shah's supporters then tried to contact Raj Kumar Sudarshan Shah, a brave and courageous youth of 16 or 17 years of age. Ramapati Khandudi sent him a secret message informing him that his father was being kept in confinement by Parakrama Shah and requesting him to come out of the palace and meet his supporters. He also promised to place Sudarshan Shah on the throne. Sudarshan Shah then secretly left the palace and met Ramapati Khandudi. He then sent a message to Parakrama Shah asking him to leave the royal palace, or else meet his nephew (i.e. Sudarshan Shah) on the battle-field.

Parakrama Shah, however, remained in the royal palace, while his supporters, and those of King Pradyumna Shah and Raj Kumar Sudarshan Shah, fought with each other. Each side started plundering the houses of the other side. If they could not get in, they would pull down the roof and gates and set them on fire. They also fought with bows and arrows at several places. This continued for two months. According to Maularam, thousands of people were killed on both sides. In the beginning, Sudarshan Shah was victorious in the Srinagar region, but Parakrama Shah remained in control of the royal palace. Some of his troops encamped at Ranihat across the Ganga river, from where they used to conduct surprise attacks on the forces of Sudarshan Shah. Finally, the two sides fought a pitched battle at a place near Srinagar. Many among Parakrama Shah's troops were killed, and the rest fled to Devaprayag, with the troops of Sudarshan Shah pursuing them. The Gorkhali troops who had been recruited in Pradyumna Shah's army fought bravely, and so did his Rohilla troops, and his Commander Miza (Khan). The Rohilla troops used to open concerted fire with their muskets, which emitted a pall of smoke in the battlefield. The battle was won by Sudarshan Shah. Many soldiers of Parakrama Shah who tried to cross over to their camp at Ranihat across the Ganga river were washed away by the river when the suspension rope was cut. Some fled to the forests, while others fled to Devaprayag and Hardwar. The others were encircled by Sudarshan Shah's forces. Finding no way out, Parakrama Shah approached the king in tears and requested him to restrain his soldiers. He begged for pardon and promised to obey the king in the future. Pradyumna Shah was a simple-minded man, so he pardoned Parakrama Shah and ordered fighting to be stopped.

But when Sudarshan Shah and his forces left, Parakrama Shah summoned his troops from Ranihat at midnight to Srinagar and laid sieze to both the town and the royal palace. He told Pradyumna Shah that the troops would continue to do so unless the latter sentenced his ministers to death and gave him territories extending from Badrinath to Hardwar on the right banks of the Alakananda river, leaving territories on the left banks of the river to Pradyumna Shah. Powerless to resist, Pradyumna Shah accepted the partition plan and ordered that necessary documents be prepared. It was also decided to levy a nazarana payment amounting to 25 rupees for each Jyula of land. A list of soldiers who were to be sent for collecting the levy was also compiled.

Parakrama Shah ordered Srivilasa Nautiyal to mint coins in his name, but dies were not available. Maularam was then ordered to make dies and mint coins. He made the dies but expressed his inability to mint coins, and requested that his concubine, Iaxmi, be restored to him. Parakrama Shah accepted the dies but did not return the concubine.

Parakrama Shah took away Pradyumna Shah to Ranihat, and then ordered the rope bridge on the river to be cut. He also started making arrangements for the administration of the country. Fearing a danger to his life, Pradyumna Shah secretly sent a messenger to contact his supporters in Srinagar. He advised them to strike a bargain with Parakrama Shah and secure his release. Ramapati Khandudi and other ministers, on receiving this message, met Sudarshan Shah and discussed means to cross the river and reach Ranihat.

Meanwhile, the Gorkhali Wakil, whose name was Chanchaladhara according to the Garh Rajya Vamsha-karya, reached there. He said he had been sent by the king of Nepal to mediate in the dispute between Pradyumna Shah and Parakrama Shah. The Nepali Wakil also threatened to banish or sentence to death or imprisonment, any one who disobeyed his orders.

In addition, the Nepali wakil sent a message to Parakrama Shah asking that the rope bridge on the Alakananda river be reinstated, so that he might cross the river. Parakrama Shah did so and invited the Wakil to a meeting with great cordiality. The Wakil read out a royal order which said, "We have granted the Kingdom of Garhwal to Pradyumna Shah. You have not done well by imprisoning him. Release him as soon as you receive this order. Otherwise, our troops will vanquish you and reinstate Pradyumna Shah on the throne." Parakrama Shah, however, warned the Nepali Wakil that the Gorkhalis would find it difficult to stay on in Kumaun if they opposed him. He denied that he had kept Pradyumna Shah in confinement, and claimed that both he and Pradyumna Shah had been driven out of the capital by the ministers.

Thanks to the mediation of the Nepali Wakil, an agreement was concluded among Pradyumna Shah, Parakrama Shah, and the ministers. Both sides disbanded their troops, Pradyumna Shah returned to Srinagar. Those who had fled from that town also returned there. The Nepal Wakil then left for Kumaun.

Notwithstanding the agreement, the tussle between Parakrama Shah and Pradyumna Shah's ministers continued. Parakrama Shah once more collected troops and laid siege to the royal palace. The King's party then sent a message to Bam Shah requesting him to send back the Wakil to Srinagar. Bam Shah did so and asked Pradyumna Shah to meet him at Badhan Gadhi. Pradyumna Shah and his minister, Mohan Singh, accompanied by their troops, reached Badhan-Gadhi. Bam Shah too reached there from Kumaun. Harshadeva Joshi's son, Jaya Narayan Joshi, seems to have been imprisoned along with his Garhwali troops at Johar a few days earlier. Pradyumna Shah had no hand in sending them there, but they had proceeded to Johar through Garhwal and had tried to organize a

rebellion in support of Ram Bahadur Shah in Doti. However, Bam Shah suspected Pradyumna Shah's involvement in the affair because Jaya Narayan Jishi was accompanied by Garhwali troops, and also because Harshadeva Jishi had introduced himself to Cherry and other officials of the East India Company as Wakil of the King of Garhwal. Bam Shah angrily told Pradyumna Shah, "We had conquered your Kingdom in 1850 Samvat (A.D. 1793), but had retained you on the throne at our will. We will now defend our territory ourselves. There is no need why you should maintain an army. We shall drive them out. Go to Garh and enjoy life there."

Pradyumna Shah came to the conclusion that the Court of Nepal wanted to establish its authority over Garhwal. He was even afraid of his life. Accompanied by his minister, he, therefore, left Badhan-Gadhi for Srinagar secretly at midnight. He decided to leave Srinagar for some safe place before the Gorkhali army reached there. Next morning, the Garhwali troops were surprised to find that both the king and the minister had fled. Bam Shah told them: You did not fight in defense of the kingdom or for its expansion, but only obtained your salaries. Whatever may have happened in the past, we have now occupied your kingdom. If you want to save your lives, leave this place at once. Otherwise, you will have to repent. Your property will be plundered and you will be sentenced to death. Frightened at this, the Garhwali troops left Badhan-Gadhi for Langur.

Before Pradyumna Shah reached Srinagar, Parakrama Shah had left for a meeting with Bam Shah through Salan. Probably near Dwarikhal he received information that Pradyumna Shah's troops had arrived there. He proceeded to Langur, and there won over the troops to his side by giving them some money. It seems that the Rohilla, Pathan, and other mercenaries did not hesitate to betray their master for money.

At Srinagar Pradyumna Shah was told that Parakrama Shah had already left for Langur. He wanted to inform Parakrama Shah that the Gorkhalis were planning to occupy the Kingdom of Garhwal, and to discuss their own plans for the future. Pradyumna Shah, therefore, sent Ramapati Khandudi to Parakrama Shah requesting him to come to Srinagar after disbanding his troops. Ramapati Khandudi reached the village of Ramdi Phalinda near Langur where Parakrama Shah was staying. Both Ramapati Khandudi and Dharanidhar Khandudi were supporters of the King, Pradyumna Shah. Sudarshan Shah had been able to prevent Parakrama Shah from occupying the Kingdom of Garhwal as a result of Ramapati Khandudi's active cooperation. Parakrama Shah and Rampati Khandudi were, therefore, not on good terms with each other. Rampati Khandudi spent the night in the company of a prostitute, and was assassinated there by Parakrama Shah's men. The prostitute went to Parakrama Shah to save her own life. Parakrama Shah was very pleased to see her and began to caress her. He then advanced toward Srinagar along with his troops. He wanted to assassinate Dharanidhar Khandudi also. The latter's influence in the Court of King Pradyumna Shah had grown when in A.D. 1792 he had succeeded in negotiating a treaty with the King of Nepal and securing freedom of the enslaved inhabitants of Salan. Parakrama Shah, and his supporters, including Shishram, Shivaram, and Dhaukalananda were, therefore;

jealous of Dharanidhar Khandudi and were conspiring to have him assassinated. Even before reaching Srinagar, Parakrama Shah had this done through Dhaukalananda. It is said that Dhaukalananda told Dharanidhar Khandudi that Pradyumna Shah had summoned him. Dharanidhar Khandudi immediately accompanied him unarmed. Dhaukalanand suddenly attacked him with a sword at a place called Shitala-Ki-Reti on the banks of the Alakananda river, and beheaded him.

(To be continued.)

(Source: Dr. Shiva Prasad Dabral "Charan", Uttarakhanda Ka Rajanaitika Tatha Samskritika Itihasa, Part V: Kumaun, Garhwal, Aur Himachale Par Gorkhali Shasana, Samvat 1847-1872 (A.D. 1790-1815), Dogadha, Garhwal: Vir-Gatha Prakashan, 2030 (A.D. 1973), pp. 107-117.

* * * * *

Hastadal Shahi

Hastadal Shahi was an illegitimate son of Birabahu Shah, and grandson of Chandrarup Shah. The latter was a grand-uncle of King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Bam Shah and Rudravir Shah, who occupied prominent position in district administration during the last years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century, were Hastadal Shahi's older and younger brothers respectively.

(Perceval Landon, Nepal,
("Genealogical Table of the Reigning (Shah) Family of Nepal,"
at the end of Perceval Landon's Nepal, Vol. 2).

HastadalShahi was appointed chief administrator of Garhwal on Shrawan Badi 8, 1867. References are as follows :-

1. "Royal Order Regarding Appointment of Hastadal Shahi as Amanat Administrator of Garhwal", Shrawan Badi 7, 1867. Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 39, pp. 288-89.
2. "Royal Order to Sardar Chandrabir Kanwar And Others Regarding Appointment of Hastadal Shahi as Administrator of Garhwal", Shrawan Badi 7, 1867, Ibid, pp. 280-81.
3. "do. to Mahant Hari Sevak and others," do, Ibid, p. 280.
4. "Regulations for Tarai Areas of Garhwal in the Name of Subba Hastadal Shahi," Shrawan Badi 7, 1867, Ibid, pp. 281-88.
5. "Royal order to Subba Hastadal Shahi Regarding Confiscation of Jagir and Manachamal Lands in Doon", Shrawan Badi 8, 1867, Ibid, p. 290.

17.	do. of Chhipis	...	Rs	2-4
18.	do. of liquor merchants	...	Rs	2-8
19.	do. of Kushle Pradhan	...	Rs	2-8
20.	do. of Middlemen (<u>dalal</u>)	...	Rs	7-8
21.	do. of Tathe-Naike	...	R	1-15
22.	do. of Tol Mahane	...	R	1-0
23.	do. of Chitaidar of Gardens (<u>bari</u>) and Ponds (<u>Pokhari</u>)	...	R	1-8

Jestha Sudi 15, 1859
Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 24, pp. 534-36.

The Rape of Garhwal

By

Dr. Shiva Prasad Dabara "Charan"

(continued)

Pradyumna Shah was deeply grieved to know that both Ramapati Khandudi and Dharnidhar Khandudi had been assassinated, and that Parakrama Shah was approaching Srinagar along with his troops. He was also afraid that a man who could assassinate the loyal Brahman brothers could treat his King in the same manner. Pradyumna Shah, therefore, reported these matters to Bam Shah and appealed for help. According to Nepali sources, it was at this time that the Nepali envoy in Srinagar, Dalabir Rana, rebelled against his government. Maularam has made no reference to this event, but has only recorded that the Gorkhali troops sided with Sudarshan Shah in his struggle against Parakrama Shah. It is possible that these troops were the bodyguards of the Nepali envoy. King Pradyumna Shah had been making delay in the payment of the annual tribute to Nepal for some years past. Bam Shah reported the matter to his government. This provided a favorable opportunity to execute the plan to take over Garhwal in order to resolve the financial crisis facing the government of Nepal and also keep the army engaged.

A terrible earthquake occurred in Garhwal and Kumaun at about 1:30 A.M. on September 8, 1803. Tremors continued for a week. Garh was more seriously affected by the earthquake than Kumaun. Many buildings in Srinagar were severely damaged, including the royal palace. There was also considerable loss

of life and property. The general belief was that the calamity had occurred because of the assassination of the two innocent Brahmans, Ramapati Khandudi and Dharanidhar Khandudi.

On his return from Badhan-Gadhi, Pradyumna Shah decided to flee from the capital, Srinagar, before the Gorkhali troops reached there. Thinking that the Gurkhalis would occupy only the territories adjoining the Alakananda river, he planned to take refuge in Doon. Emperor Aurangzeb had granted the Doon valley and the parganna of Chandi to Pradyumna Shah's ancestors. Fouzdar Ummed Singh of Doon was Pradyumna Shah's son-in-law, and the Gujar ruler of Landhaur, Ram Dayal Singh, was his friend. Moreover, Pradyumna Shah had granted territories in Doon as Jagir to the Raos of Khedi, Sakharanda, and Raipur. Miyan Dulel Singh of Prithivipur, Surajan Singh of Dhalanwela, and several other influential persons of the Doon Valley were specially devoted to Pradyumna Shah. He may have believed that he would be able to stem the Gorkhali advance with the help of these persons. Pradyumna Shah, therefore, collected important documents from the state archives, which included firmans issued by the Mughal Emperor, with which he could substantiate his claim over the Doon valley, the parganna of Chandi, and the Kingdom of Garh. It is possible that he sent away the royal throne, ornaments of the Badrinath temple which he had obtained on loan, and other valuable objects through his brother, Pritam Shah, his sons Sudarshan Shah and Devi Simha, and other trusted persons to the Doon valley by way of Kanihat across the Alakananda river. It may be noted that there were royal palaces at Nawaga and Dehra also.

Meanwhile, Parakrama Shah and Pradyumna Shah remained in Srinagar. Harikrishna Ratudi, in his work Garhwal Ka Itihasa (Hindi), writes that Parakrama Shah's wife had left for Handur a few months previously to join her brother, Ram Sharan Das, while Pritam Shah was not yet married. However, Harikrishna Ratudi has wrongly reported that Pradyumna Shah's wife had already died. His Chief Queen, Mandaraliji, who was also known as Kumauni Rani, was the mother of Sudarshan Shah. She remained alive for several years after his coronation. Sudarshan Shah had built a separate house for her near his palace in the capital, Tehri. The house was long known as "Mandaraliji-ka-Kotha." The Bichitra Shah Library in Tehri is in possession of a document which contains the names of people with whom Sudarshan Shah used to correspond. The list mentions "Bandaraliji", instead of "Mandaraliji". Pradyumna Shah had two other queens besides Mandaraliji. One of them was the daughter of Ajab Singh Guleriya, while the other was the sister of Kamal Miyan. They must have accompanied Mandaraliji had they been alive at that time. There must also have been some slaves of both sexes.

Sudarshan Shah was seventeen or eighteen years old at that time. He was brave, ambitious, and sagacious. In contrast, Devi Singh whom Harikrishna Ratudi has described as Pradyumna Shah's illegitimate son, and Miyan Prem Singh (Guldast - Tabarikh Kot Tihri-Garhwal), as his son born of a slave girl, was a peace-loving person. The

two brothers were of about the same age. Devi Simha and Pritam Shah do not seem to have played an active part in the conflict between Parakrama Shah and Sudarshan Shah. But Devi Simha proved a sincere and trusted well-wisher of Sudarshan Shah during his life in exile.

In those days, the ladies of high-class families travelled in palanquins. Accordingly, dozens of porters and soldiers must have accompanied the ladies of the royal family. Pradyumna Shah had raised about Rs. 150,000 by mortgaging the ornaments of the Badrinath temple, and an additional Rs. 50,000 by selling some of them. He is not likely to have paid the full price for those valuable objects in view of his misfortunes. Because gold was cheap at that time, the total weight of those objects must have been five or six maunds, and dozens of armed men must have accompanied the royal family for transportation and safety.

No information is available about the top-ranking persons and officials who accompanied the royal family during the flight. On kartik Sudi 15, 1865 (November 1808), Sudarshan Shah issued a document in the name of his cook, Hiramani, which shows that none of those persons whom Pradyumna Shah had favored with tax-free land grants and official posts stood by him at his hour of misfortune. The Gorkhali troops had not yet reached Srinagar by the time when Pradyumna Shah fled. Pradyumna Shah was in control of the state and it is likely that the intended flight was known to many people. It is, therefore, possible that some top-ranking persons and officials had accompanied him, and had dispersed after he was defeated in the battle of Badahat, or after he was killed in the battle of Khadbuda. Hiramani, the cook, had accompanied the royal family, as also Kishen Singh, Pradyumna Shah's favorite attendant. There may have been some others too in the royal party, but nothing is known about them.

It is likely that the royal party reached the Doon Valley from Ranihat through the Maletha-Takoli-Diul-Tiri route. At Tiri or Tipri, there was a suspension bridge on the Bhagerathi river. The route then passed through Chamuwakhal and Saklana, before crossing the Song river at Asthal, where the famous fort of Nalapani was located. The route then continued in the direction of Nawada and Dehara. The headquarters of the Doon valley was previously located at Nawada, but was later shifted to Dehra. It was, therefore, impossible for the royal fugitives to take shelter at either place. According to Miyan Prem Singh, they finally stayed at Nalagadhi (Nalapani), about six miles east of Dehra. The fort of Nalapani was situated in the midst of a dense forest. The royal fugitives would be able to stay there only with adequate arrangements. It is possible that they stayed there only for a few days.

The Kingdom of Garh had been ravaged by famine, civil war, and earthquakes. The Court of Nepal considered this a favorable opportunity to occupy that Kingdom. Gorkhali troops reached Srinagar about three weeks after the earthquakes (September 8, 1803). Nepal wanted to conquer the entire mountain region up to Kashmir. Amara Simha Thapa had been appointed as the Gorkhali Commander on the western front. He had under his command about 3,000 regular troops, and an equal number of irregular troops. Chautariya Hastidal was appointed as his deputy, and Kaji Ranadhir Simha Basnyat as assistant.

The Gorkhali troops advanced toward Srinagar from three directions. The first unit advanced from the east, possibly through the Chandpur route, and the second unit, which was led by Bhaktibir Thapa and Chandrabir Kunwar, through the Langurgarh route. The third unit had proceeded to Johar to suppress Jaya Narayan Joshi and his Garhwali troops, and had by that time occupied the Himalayan territories of Kumaun. It reached the valley of the Pindar river through Danpur and finally marched to Srinagar.

When the Gorkhali troops reached Srinagar, Pradyumna Shah held consultations with his ministers and courtiers. Parakrama Shah too came to his senses and joined the king. His troops lacked the courage to face the Gorkhalis. Amara Simha Thapa sent a letter from the Nepal Court to Pradyumna Shah, who then fled across the Alakananda river along with Parakrama Shah and joined their families in the Doon Valley.

The inhabitants of Chandpur, Lohwa, and Salan were already well-acquainted with the cruelty of the Gorkhalis. Stories of their oppression were widespread. The Gorkhalis unleashed a reign of terror immediately after they reached the capital. People in the northern areas fled to the forests along with their cattle, while the people of Salan fled to the plains. Extensive areas were rendered desolate, for no one remained to cultivate the land and protect the crops.

The Gorkhalis, when they learnt that both Pradyumna Shah and Parakrama Shah had escaped, probably sent search parties toward Rishikesh through Devaprayag, as well as to the Bhagirathi Valley through Ranihat. The Gorkhali troops spread all over the Kingdom in search of the fugitives. The Garhwali supporters of Pradyumna Shah tried to check the Gorkhali advance at Badahat, but their efforts were of no avail before the well-trained Gorkhali troops. The Gorkhalis reached the Doon Valley in a few days, leaving a trail of plunder, devastation, and rape behind them. Finding himself unsafe at Nalagarhi (Nalapani), Pradyumna Shah decided to take refuge in the territories of the East India Company. In Aswin 1860 (October 1803), the Gorkhalis occupied the Doon Valley. A few days before Amara Simha Thapa occupied Dehra, Colonel Burn of the East India Company's forces had occupied Saharanpur.

When the Gorkhali troops reached Dehra, Pradyumna Shah left for Saharanpur through Khedi-Ghat (now Mohan-Ghata), along with his family. One of his ancestors, Lalit Shah, had given two villages in the Doon Valley as jagir to the Rao of Khedi. The Gorkhalis had occupied these villages also, so the Rao naturally felt sympathy for Pradyumna Shah.

In those days, the foothills of the Siwalik range from the Yamuna to the Kali river were inhabited by two Muslim fighting communities known as Hedi and Mewati. They used to offer their mercenary services to any one who could afford them. Pradyumna Shah began negotiations with the Hedi chiefs, but the Hedis stole everything they could lay their hands on at the royal camp. They even began to kidnap Garhwali boys and girls, as well as prostitutes, for sale in the plains. All this left Pradyumna Shah, Sudarshan Shah, and Parakrama Shah helpless.

Pradyumna Shah, accompanied by his family then took refuge with his priest (panda), Kuparama. According to Harikrishna Ratudi, he had done so at Jwalapur. Miyan Prem Singh, on the other hand, gives the name of that place as Kanakhal. The royal priests of Tehri, who now reside at Hardwar, originally did so at Kanakhal. It is possible that they later built a house at Jwalapur. In 1803, Hardwar was a small settlement. Even by 1808, it had not developed much. In fact, it was only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ furlongs long along a 15 feet wide street. After it was occupied by the East India Company, Henry Wellesley built the bridge at a distance of about three miles. He also built an inn for traders who visited Hardwar during festivals, as well as some other buildings. However, security arrangements were not made. A Gorkhali checkpost was located near the ghat on the road from Hari-Ki-Pairi. Pradyumna Shah, therefore, could not remain safe in Hardwar.

Jwalapur, which was also known as Dhogpur, was a small village inhabited by cattle-farmers. It was neither convenient nor safe for the royal fugitives to take refuge at such a place.

In those days, Kanakhal was a prosperous town, with ghats made of slabs of stone. The main road of the town was very beautiful and proceeded parallel to the river from north to south. Affluent Brahmans and merchants had built palatial houses on both sides of that road, as well as elsewhere in the town. The residents of Kanakhal were regarded as important and influential. Most of the houses were made of brick and lime. Their front was decorated with portraits of different people, including English men. Some of those houses are still in existence at Kanakhal. Between 1803 and 1808, Dilbeli Singh, a Saraf of Nazibabad, Raja Hira Singh Gujar, and many Gosains built durable and beautiful houses at Kanakhal with bricks and stone slabs. In 1803, Hardwar, Kanakhal, and Jwalapur were all under the control of the East India Company. Kanakhal was thus a very appropriate place of refuge for the royal fugitives. So Miyan Prem Singh's version appears to be correct.

In subsequent years, Jwalapur too expanded, and some time before 1815 Sudarshan Shah began to live there. When he returned from Delhi in 1815, his family was living in Jwalapur, but they used to live at Kanakhal until 1814. It was in that year that Hearsey, William Fraser, Burton, Ross, and Alexander had met him. However, the author has not been able to identify the buildings that the royal fugitives occupied in Jwalapur and Kanakhal.

According to Miyan Prem Singh, the priest (panda) with whom Pradyumna Shah took refuge at Kanakhal was called Kriparama. However, inquiries at Kanakhal, Jwalapur, and Hardwar revealed that he was actually called Sardar Mayaram, because he was the Chief (Sardar) of the local pandas. Avinash Kumar, a descendant of Sardar Mayaram, told the author that when Sudarshan Shah received the state of Tehri, he made a grant of 1500 bighas of land to Sardar Mayaram at Khara and Pradipnagar. The Khara lands have been acquired by the Forest Department, but the Pradipnagar lands are still in the possession of Sardar Mayaram's descendants, who are still priests of the Tehri royal family. Kriparam and Mayaram refer to the same person, or are father and son, or brothers.

(To be Continued)

In addition, Bali Thapa was concurrently appointed as subedar of the Naya Sri Warahadal Company, replacing Jasya Khawas, and granted Jagir lands in Naulpur and elsewhere.

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 25, p. 21.

On Poush Badi 13, 1842, the Jagir lands of the Naya-Sri Warahadal Company in Rajgadh, Jhapa, in the Kamala-Mechi region, were placed under the jurisdiction of Bali Thapa, replacing Jasya Khawas. He was empowered to appropriate revenue from all existing sources on those lands.

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 25, p. 21.

The same day, the Chaudharis, Kanugoyes, Mokaddams, and ryots of the Bhotgaun area were informed of the replacement of Jasya Khawas by Suoba Bali Thapa and ordered to provide him with necessary assistance and cooperation.

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 25, p. 21.

The Rape of Garhwal

By

Dr. Shiva Prasad Dabaral "Charan".

(Continued)

Twelve years previously, when the Gorkhalis had invaded the eastern part of Garh and Langurgarh, no Garhwali had been willing to side with them against his own king. But now Garhwali officials were convinced that the Garhwal royal dynasty had come to an end. They believed that this was the result of the curses of the queens of Salim Shah (Suleiman Shukoh) and Jaya Kirti Shah, murder of the Brahman brothers Ramapati Khandudi and Dharanidhar Khandudi, and oppression of the people, and that the Gorkhalis were only an instrument. Garhwali officials accordingly started extending cooperation to the Gorkhalis. All leading officials had received land grants from the state on a tax-free basis. They obtained free labor and cash income from these lands, so that they were able to live in comfort. These lands would have been taken away from them had they not extended cooperation to the Gorkhalis. Moreover, they could be charged with treason for not extending such cooperation. Amara Simha Thapa summoned all officials, Sayanas, Kamins, and other respectable people (phala manush) and directed them to maintain law and order in the Kingdom. He also reconfirmed their land grants. This shrewd step on the part of Amara Simha Thapa made it necessary for them to invite refugees back home and persuade them to continue cultivating their lands.

Hardly had the Gorkhalis finalized necessary administrative arrangements in Srinagar than they received reports from the military commander of Doon that Pradyumna Shah had reached there with his troops. Pradyumna Shah had left his family at Kanakhal and proceeded to Saharanpur. There he raised a sum of Rs. 150,000 by mortgaging his throne, and an additional Rs. 50,000 by mortgaging the ornaments and other valuable objects of the temple of Badrinath. With the help of the Gujar, Sardar Ramadaya Singh of Landhaur, he assembled a force of about 12,000 men composed of Ramghads, Pundirs, Gujars, and Rajputs. A Gorkhali force led by Amara Simha Thapa, Bhaktibir Thapa, and Ranajit Kunwar meanwhile reached there from Srinagar. On May 22, 1860 (January 1804) a fierce battle was fought in the plain of Khaabuda, about half a mile away from the palace of Guru Rama Raya. Pradyumna Shah's two brothers, namely, Parakrama Shah and Pritam Shah, and his two sons, namely, Sudarshan Shah and Devi Simha, were present in the battlefield. Pradyumna Shah's Chief attendant (Chopdar) received three sword wounds, and his head was practically cut into two through another sword thrust from the left cheek to the right ear. Pradyumna Shah stood his ground bravely, with Shaligrama and the Gita in his arms. He was on horseback near his c.m.p talking to Miyan Dulal Singh of Prithvipur when he was struck by a shot fired by Ranajit Kunwar. His troops then began to run away from the battlefield. The battle thus came to an end.

It seems that Parakrama Shah, Pritam Shah, Sudarshan Shah, and Devi Simha remained safe. Parakrama Shah then left immediately for his father-in-law's place at Hindur (Nalagadh) without any care for the funeral rites of Pradyumna Shah, whereas Sudarshan Shah and Devi Singh escaped to Kanakhal along with some faithful servants.

Amara Simha Thapa showed due respect for the body of Pradyumna Shah. He covered it with a shawl and sent it to Hardwar under the escort of Surajan Singh Rawal of Dalanwala and other persons. It is possible that the escort included some Gorkhali soldiers also. Because Sudarshan Shah and Devi Simha could not be found, the last rites were performed by Devi Simha. Pritam Shah was grieving the loss of his brother and the disappearance of his nephew, but was captured by the Gorkhalis and sent to Nepal.

According to Hari Krishna Ratudi, the Gorkhali Sardars sent Pradyumna Shah's body with great honor to Sudarshan Shah in Hardwar, and the body was cremated with great pomp. Bhaktadarshan following Ratudi, says that the cremation took place at Jwalapur in Hardwar. Miyan Prem Singh's version, however, is more credible. It is possible that the body of Pradyumna Shah was cremated by Pritam Shah at Hardwar. After the cremation, Pritam Shah was captured by the Gorkhalis. Sudarshan Shah and Devi Simha too could have been captured had they been present there. Pradyumna Shah had at least one queen and some slaves with him at Kanakhal. Had Pradyumna Shah's body been sent to Sudarshan Shah, one or two of them would certainly have become a Sati. But no evidence is available to show that this happened.

Panic spread in the Doon Valley as soon as the news was received that Pradyumna Shah had been killed. People left their villages and fled to the mountains. The Gorkhalis tried their best to lure them or intimidate them to go back to their village but no one did so. The Gorkhalis started looting the Doon Valley, so that the entire region became desolate. For full one year, no one returned to his home, and no land was cultivated. The Gorkhalis, thinking that Mahant Harasevak was a supporter of Pradyumna Shah, imposed restrictions on his movements and confiscated the lands of the Guru-Darbar.

Back in Srinagar, the Gorkhalis tried to enlist the cooperation of prominent people and top-ranking officials. Maularam was a reputed poet, philosopher, painter and ideologue of Srinagar. His fame had spread even to Kantipur, the capital of Nepal. Chautariya Hastidal Shah and other Gorkhali commanders tried to win him over to the Gorkhali side. They asked him to describe the origin of the royal dynasty of Garh and the events that took place during the reign of the important kings. Chautariya Hastidal Shah, Amara Simha Thapa, and other Gorkhali bhardars were very pleased to hear his accounts. They reconfirmed Maularam's Jagir village, as well as the allowances he used to get from the Kingdom of Garh. They assured him that he would be able to ^{to} forcibly taken away Maularam's concubine, Laxmi. Amara Simha Thapa promised to find her out and restore her to Maularam. However, the poet refused to accept her back. Amara Simha Thapa, pleased at this, presented him a horse and also honored him with robes, weapons, and a gold head dress with his own hands. The Gorkhalis won over Maularam in this manner and consulted him in important matters.

^{to}live happily in the Gorkhali Kingdom. Parakrama Shah had After the assassination of Ramapati Khandudi and Dharanidhar Khandudi, the influence of the Saklani brothers, Shishram and Shivaram, started growing. They received the villages of Salenani, Deuri, Athoor, Kotpudiyar and Sonargaon as Jagir. The Saklani, collaborated with the Gorkhalis in the beginning. According to Miyan Prem Singh, Jwalaram Saklani turned traitor after the battle of Khadbuda and became a collaborator of the Gorkhalis. However, during the Nepal-East India Company war, Shivaram went over to the East India Company's side.

The sons of Ramapati Khandudi and Dharanidhar Khandudi, namely, Gajadhar Khandudi and Krishnadatta Khandudi, and their brothers, namely, Krishnananda and Harshapati, collaborated with the Gorkhalis like the Saklanis. All these four persons were appointed as Dafdari in 1861 Vikrama (A.D. 1804). Amara Singh Thapa wrote to the court of Nepal that these Khandudis had been given the task of pacifying the peasantry, collecting the revenue, bringing back the peasants who had fled to the plains, restoring lands to cultivation, resettling depopulated villages, and maintaining land revenue records, and that they were performing their duties faithfully. However, on the eve of the Nepal-East India Company war, the Khandudis had developed contacts with Rutherford.

All officials of the kingdom of Garh, high or low, Sayanas and Kamins, influential people, and sycophants thus offered active cooperation to the Gorkhalis and succeeded in retaining their Jagirs and other privileges. Some of the Garhwali troops joined the Gorkhali army. Garhwali officials started running the administration according to the orders of the Gorkhalis. The independence of the kingdom of Garh and the Garhwali people thus came to an end.

Bandha Land Grants During Bahadur Shah's Regency

In June 1785, Bahadur Shah assumed power in Kathmandu in the capacity of Regent. The following bandha lands were made a few months thereafter:-

- (1) On Aswin Badi 10, 1842 (September 1785), 14 khets (1,400 muris) of rice fields at Ikhadol and elsewhere, along with homesteads, were confirmed as bandha in favor of Shaktiballabh Bhattacharya on payment of Rs. 1,421. "The mortgage shall be redeemed when the money is paid back."

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 25, pp. 1-2

- (2) On Kartik Badi 7, 1842 (October 1785), one dihi (homestead) in Markhu Valley, previously held by Chhatra Simha Pradhan, was granted as bandha to Shiva Narayan Khatri on payment of Rs. 201. "The mortgage shall be redeemed when the money is paid back."

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 25, p. 4.

- (3) On Kartik Badi 7, 1842 (October 1785), 96 ropanies of land and the attached homesteads at Paknajol and Thabahil in Kathmandu were granted as bandha to Ranabhanjan Pande on payment of Rs. 1501. "The mortgage shall be redeemed when the money is paid back." The lands were previously held by Balakrishna Jaisi and Harilal Pandit.

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 25, p. 4.

- (4) Poush Sudi 13, 1842 (December 1785): 200 muris of rice-fields held by Kuber Padhya and Srikrishna Padhya, along with the attached homesteads, were confirmed in their possession under bandha tenure on payment of Rs. 878. "The lands shall be returned when the money is paid back."

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 25, p. 22.

- (5) Falgun Sudi 2, 1842: 240 muris of rice-fields and attached homesteads, previously held by Tikaram Padhya, Jivur Jaisi, and Dasharath Tiwari, to Tikrama Pantha for Rs. 3,513. (RRC, Vol. 25, p. 33).

Gorkhali Rule in Garhwal

By

Dr. Shiva Prasad Dabaral "Charan".

From A.D. 1803 to 1815 (1860 to 1872 Vikrama), Amar Simha Thapa kept himself preoccupied with plans to expand the Gorkhali empire to Kangra, Jammu, and Kashmir after overrunning several principalities in Himachal Pradesh. His mercenary troops from Doti, Kumaun, and Garhwal, who numbered twice the Gorkha troops, kept shedding their blood for the sake of making the people of Himachal Pradesh slaves of the Gorkhals on the orders of the Gorkhali commanders.

No detailed study has been made so far regarding the way Doti, Kumaun and Garhwal were administered at that time. Doti is now a part of Nepal. Gorkhali rule over Kumaun was generally described as "Gorkhyol", which we will describe in the history of Kumaun. In this chapter, we will describe the main features of Gorkhali rule over Garh, known as "Gorkhyani".

The King of Nepal directly ruled over Kumaun for nearly 25 years, and over Garh for 12 years. The Gorkhali authorities were required to remain in constant touch with the Palace in Nepal. They regularly received orders bearing the royal seal from the Palace. It was necessary for them to receive prior permission from the Palace for executing any important plan. Occasionally, they were transferred after a short period on the orders of the Palace. However, no contemporary register, document, diary, or record providing coherent and detailed information about the authorities who ruled the regions to the west of the Kali river, and about their work is available in Kumaun, Garh, Himachal Pradesh, or Nepal.

Materials shedding light on this subject may be available in the private libraries of reputed families in Nepal. However, efforts of scholars of Nepal, India and foreign countries to acquire them have not yet been successful. The rule of the Rana family, who must have possessed such materials, came to an end in 1951. No effort has been made since then to search, compile, preserve, edit, and publish those materials.

So far the following materials on Gorkhali rule in Garh written in the Gorkhali language have been found.

(1) Letters written by the Gorkhali authorities to the Kamins of Gujadu and Dhangu, including the orders of Hastidal Chautariya, Kaji Randhir Simha Basnyat, Bhaktibir Thapa, Tularam Adhikari, and others. These documents are in the possession of the descendants of Kamins Vishnu Simha, Gorla Rawat, and Autar Simha Rawat.

(2) Copper-plates dating back to the reign of Ran Bahadur Shah and Girban Yuddha Bikram Shah, which are preserved at the Kamaleswar Temple of Srinagar, the Kedarnath Temple, the Ukhirmath and other temples. Some other copper-plates referred to by Traill, which, according to Atkinson, were in the possession of the District Office at Pauri, but are said to have disappeared.

(3) Sanads issued by Gorkhali officials to individuals and temples, which are mentioned by Traill.

(4) Documents on land tenure arrangements, issued by Gorkhali officials particularly, Kaji Bahadur Shah Bhandari and Bakshi Dasharath Khatri, in favor of several kamins. On the basis of those documents, Traill had made a preliminary land settlement in Garhwal.

Maularam's Works

The works of Maularam, a contemporary writer, particularly Rajavanshakavya, Ranabahadur Chandrika and Shumshere Jung-Chandrika, and his miscellaneous poetry selections, provide much important and interesting information about the Gorkhali conquests and administration of the western hill region. In 1867 Vikrama (A.D. 1810), Kaji Bakhtawar Simha Basnyat, who had been sent by the Nepal Palace to the western front, reached Srinagar. At his request, Maularam described to him in detail the Gorkhali administration since 1861 Vikrama (A.D. 1804). Pleased with him, Bakhtawar Simha Basnyat gave him 61 gold sovereigns, a horse, a robe, and weapons as a reward. He also restored to Maularam his jagir villages, and the daily allowances which had been suspended by his predecessors.

Maularam composed the Bakhtawar Yasha-Chandrika, and dedicated it to Bakhtawar Simha Basnyat. The work dealt with the past, present, and future of Gorkhali rule over Garh. Maularam probably revised this work after the end of the Gorkhali rule. Like the Garhrajya-Vamshakavya, this work predicted that Gorkhali rule in the region west of the Kali river would eventually collapse. I have tried hard to find this work, but so far I have not been able to do so. Manmathasagara and one other book written by Maularam, are also said to shed some light on contemporary politics. However, not only Manmathasagara but also six other works of Maularam have mysteriously disappeared. In the form of answers to questions by Maniram Bairagi, Maularam has also described in a separate poem the political changes which had resulted in the destruction, in 1875 Vikrama (A.D. 1818) of Srinagar, which had been a thriving city in 1812 Vikrama (A.D. 1755). Only one page of this work has been discovered so far.

During Gorkhali rule, Captain Raper, Lt. Webb, Captain Hearsey, Colebrooke, and Moorecroft had toured Kumaun and Garh and collected vital information. Rutherford and Hodgson also had tried to gather information from different sources. Shortly after the Gorkhali rule, Fraser had toured Tehri and Garhwal and recorded much interesting information.

Other Sources

Information made available by Harshadeva Joshi regarding Gorkhali rule to Cherry, Graham, Fraser and Hearsey, materials compiled by Traill on the basis of documents concerning the Gorkhali administration, accounts of Garhwal and Kumaun, written by Moorecroft and others in the early days of British rule, reports of Beckett, Batton, Poe and others, documents preserved in the archives of Tehri state, and the pre-mutiny British records preserved in Pauri, Dehraun and Almora, provide important information about Gorkhali rule in Garhwal. During the Gorkha war, letters written by some Gorkhali commanders, as well as by several Garhwalis passed into the hands of employees of the East India Company. These letters contain interesting information about the contemporary situation. Several contemporary documents are preserved, albeit in scattered form, in the Uttar Pradesh State Archives in Allahabad and the National Archives in Delhi.

Military Rule

As in Kumaun, the Gorkhali rule in Garh state was essentially military in character. In this state, the Gorkhalis had three battalions of troops each comprising five companies. These troops were paid emoluments from the local revenues. The number of troops stationed in each garkha depended on the amount of revenues collected there. Thus, according to a letter written by Sardar Bhakti Bir Thapa in March 1807 (Chaitra 14, 1864), revenues in Dhangu Garkha were used to pay emoluments to 25 soldiers. The responsibility of collecting revenue and handing over the same to the Sardar was entrusted to kamins. Any delay in this regard was not tolerated by the troops. Kamins were entrusted with the responsibility of handing over a sum specified in a written order issued by the Sardar immediately after receiving it. The presence of Gorkhali troops in every garkha turned the Gorkhali rule into a most cruel one and reduced the subjects of Garhwal to the status of slaves forced to supply provisions to the army. They could be sold as slaves in case they failed to pay their taxes.

Although Kumaun and Garh were both under Gorkhali military rule, there was a notable difference between their administrative systems. During their 14-year rule from A.D. 1790 to 1804 (1847 to 1861 Vikrama) the Gorkhali governors of Kumaun initially treated the subjects brutally, but later started improving relations with them. Due to the absence of any new campaign of military conquests during that period, they had, thanks to the active cooperation of opportunists like Joshi, gradually shaped the administration of Kumaun in a way which helped to bring the rulers and the ruled closer to each other. On the other hand, the Gorkhali commanders in Garh had had to engage in a continuous campaign of conquests in the western region immediately after their occupation of Garh. They were competing with each other for getting as much credit as possible in that campaign. They were no less attracted by the wealth accumulated by the unorganized principalities of Himachal through generations, as well as by the prospect of satisfying their sensual and other desires.

The governors assigned to Garh usually stayed away from that state in order to be able to continue their campaign of conquest in the Himachal region, or to maintain their siege of Kangra fort. They delegated their functions in Garh to their assistants or representatives, who were called Bichari (judge) or Achari (deputy administrator). These Bicharis and Acharis considered themselves representatives of the governor and exercised all his powers at their own discretion.

These days, high-ranking authorities are subjected to criticism if they appoint their relatives in important posts. But during the Gorkhali rule, the authorities had full freedom to do so. Indeed, the state itself accepted such a practice as justified. Many of the officials stationed in the conquered territories to the west of the Kali river belonged to the Thapa family. The top authorities appointed Bicharis and Acharis as their representatives usually from among their relatives, since they were regarded as more trustworthy. It was believed that such representatives would never do anything that might harm the interests and prestige of the top authorities who were their own relatives.

In Garh, as in Kumaun, administrators with the ranks of Subba, Naib Subba and commander (Senapati) were appointed. The Subba was the Chief Officer of the province or state. There were one or more Naib Subbas under him who managed the affairs of different administrative units. The commander (Senapati) was the chief military officer of the army deployed in the state. According to his orders, companies of Gorkhali troops assisted in maintaining order and security as well as in the collection of revenue. It is difficult to say anything about the exact nature of the relationship among Subba, Naib Subbas and commanders (Senapatis). Traill, who took over the administration of Kumaun and Garhwal shortly after the end of the Gorkhali rule, did not find any definite clue in this regard.

In modern times, the authorities of the state are divided into two main categories: civil and military. Authorities belonging to the two categories have separate jurisdictions, powers, and duties. But no such arrangement existed during Gorkhali rule. No restrictions were imposed on the conduct of these state functionaries, who were directly appointed by the Nepal Palace. It was not necessary for these functionaries to be educated and civilized. Nor did any age limit apply to them. They were usually transferred according to the orders of the Nepal Palace, and were all responsible to it.

Relations among some of the authorities of the state were not good. They sent reports about each other's faults to their superiors as well as to the Nepal Palace. They did not have a clear-cut policy regarding the way they should deal with the subjects. For instance, a criminal punished or imprisoned by one officer could be freed by another if the latter so desired. They also followed contradictory policies in dealing with foreigners.

During British rule, Garhwal was made just a pargunna or Tahasil of Kumaun. Even after Garhwal was up-graded to a district in 1839, Kumaun remained the headquarters of all government departments stationed there, and remains so. Garhwal was subsequently upgraded to the status of a division with a Commissioner, but the headquarters of government departments have been retained in Kumaun. During Gorkhali rule, Kumaun and Garhwal were administered as separate and independent units. Accordingly, Subbas, Naib-Subbas and commanders (Senapatis), were separately appointed for the two units. The whole of Garh state (including Tehri and Doon) was considered part of Garhwal. The state was divided into three Tahasils, namely, Srinagar, Langur (or Dhangu), and Kainyour (or Chandpur). Srinagar was the headquarters of the state.

Military Leadership of Amar Simha Thapa (1804-15)

On his return from Kashi, Ran Bahadur Shah appointed Amar Simha Thapa as military commander in the region west of the Kali river. Amar Simha Thapa was a brave, courageous and dedicated planner and successful commander. The troops had boundless faith in him. They were ready to participate in any battle under his command. Both soldiers and civilians believed that victory always smiled on him. He had a moustache, kept his beard and hair long. He used to wear an iron helmet and an iron shield. Amar Simha Thapa was fair in complexion. He was handsome and strong. His eyes were deep and impressive. Certainly he was the greatest military commander of Nepal, for he had sent the flag of Nepal flying as far as the fort of Kangra across the Sutlej river. From A.D. 1804 to 1815 he remained the supreme military governor of the conquered territories, stretching from the Kali river to the region beyond the Sutlej. The Subbas, Naib-Subbas and commanders appointed by the Nepal Palace were required to act as ordered by Amar Simha Thapa. The Nepal Palace acted according to his advice in matters concerning the administration of the conquered territories to the west of the Kali river. Only those persons in these areas whose loyalty was confirmed and commended by Amar Simha Thapa were granted Jagirs by the Nepal Palace.

During 1860-61 Vikrama (A.D. 1804) when the Gorkhali army was engaged in a campaign to conquer the valleys of the Alakananda and Bhagirathi rivers, and the Doon region, after defeating Pradyumna Shah, Amar Simha Thapa was the supreme military commander in both Kumaun and Garhwal. Hastidal Chautariya was appointed Naib Subba, and Kaji Ranadhir Simha Basnyat as commander for Garh under him. So far, I have not found the original texts of orders issued by Amar Simha Thapa with regard to the administration of Garh. But a document issued by Hastidal Chautariya and Kaji Ranadhir Simha is available. It contains the seal of Hastidal. The two men jointly issued it to the landowners of Sanglakoti.

There was one special reason for despatching Hastidal Chautariya and his brothers to the western front. At that time, an intense power struggle was taking place between the Thapa and Chautariya factions. After the assassination of Ran Bahadur Shah by Sher Bahadur Chautariya, Bhimsen Thapa, Prime Minister,

obtained a good pretext for eliminating the Chautariya sardars, who were powerful foes of the Thapa faction. He immediately had Sher Bahadur, Narasimha Kaji, Tribhuwan Kaji and Bidur Shahi who were prominent Chautariyas, executed. But it was not possible to wipe out all powerful Chautariya sardars. Bhimsen Thapa removed many of them from their posts, and confiscated their Jagirs. Anticipating strong opposition to any attempt to execute Brahma Shahi (Bam Shah), an uncle of the king, and his two brothers, Hastidal Shahi and Rudravir Shahi, Bhimsen Thapa deputed them to the western front. There was little possibility of these Chautariya Sardars raising the banner of revolt once they were posted in distant Kumaun and Garhwal, where Amar Simha Thapa, a close confidant of Bhimsen Thapa, was chief military Commander.

At the time of the Gorkhali attack on Garh state a majority of the rural people of Salana, who were familiar with the atrocities of the Gorkhalis, had fled to the plains in panic. The inhabitants of the central part of this area had shifted to pasture areas along with their livestock. Several villages, where none stayed to look after crops or cultivate farms, became depopulated.

It was in this manner that villages in Doon valley became depopulated. Anarchy prevailed in the Tarai areas in the south of Kumaun and Garhwal. Oppressed by their administrators, the local people fled to the hills or to the plains, but nowhere did they find security. Archibald Seton, British Commissioner of Kashipur, has given a description of the state of anarchy that prevailed in Kumaun under the administration of Rudravir Shahi. His description applies to Garh as well. A terrible famine ravaged Rohilkhand, Moradabad and the southern regions of Kumaun and Garhwal in 1860 Vikrama (A.D. 1803). Public life became insecure in those regions because of the depredations of Hedi, Mewali, and other lawless elements. It was in this situation that Amar Simha Thapa made an attempt to restore order and tranquillity in Garh with the help of the former officials.

Amar Simha Thapa made preliminary administrative arrangements in Srinagar with the cooperation of former Defdaris, Kamins, and other functionaries and respectable people. He tried to enlist the cooperation of Maularam and other prominent and influential persons. He left the traditional land system of the state unchanged. As before, Kamins remained responsible for the collection of revenue in the village. Nor was any change made in the practice of collecting duties at ferry-points. Land endorsements made by the Kings of Garh to temples were reconfirmed. Amar Simha Thapa did not interfere with the Jagirs and allowances of those officials who cooperated with the new rulers. Accordingly, they pledged their cooperation. Amar Simha Thapa appointed Ranjit Kunwar, Angad Sardar, and Sardar Parashuram Thapa, his deputies, as chief of the three revenue divisions of Garh, namely, Srinagar, Langur, and Kainyour (Chandpur).

(To be Continued)

Gorkhali Rule in Garhwal

By

Dr. Shiva Prasad Dabral "Charan"

(Continued)

Amar Simha Thapa had arrested Kunwar Pritam Shah and sent him to Nepal, while Parakrama Shah fled to Hindur (Nalagarh). Sudarshan Shah fled from Khudbuda and took shelter with the priest Kriparam at Kanakhal. Pradyumna Shah's chief chamberlain, Kishan Singh, assumed charge of his protection. He had been with Pradyumna Shah in the battle of Khudbuda. A Gorkhali soldier had caused him a deep wound from the left ear to the right through his nose. He had somehow managed to bandage the wound and accompanied the royal family to Kanakhal. Amar Simha Thapa did nothing for the maintenance of the royal family. Even those Garhwali officials and others who extended their support to the Gorkhalis did not like this policy of Amar Simha Thapa.

Meanwhile, the displaced ruler of Sirmur, Karmaprakash, requested Ranjor Thapa, Amar Simha Thapa's son, for assistance in regaining his kingdom. Amar Simha Thapa took immediate advantage of this situation to make a success of the Gorkhali campaign of territorial expansion in the region west of the Jamuna river. He placed Ranjor Thapa in the military command of Kumaun and Garhwal and marched toward Sirmur accompanied by Bhaktibir Thapa, Hastadal Chautariya, Randhir Simha Basnyat, and other military officers.

Amar Simha Thapa remained engaged in the military campaign on the western front from that time till 1868 Vikrama (A.D. 1811). He had, consequently, no time to attend to the administration of Garhwal. However, from 1869 to 1872 Vikrama (A.D. 1812-15), we find both Amar Simha Thapa and his son, Ranjor Simha Thapa, taking special interest in the administration of Garhwal. Both the father and the son issued orders making numerous jagir assignments during this period.

The Gorkhalis had arrested Jayanarayan, Harshadeva Joshi's son, in Johar, and sent him to Nepal. After the death of Pradyumna Shah, Harshadeva Joshi had left for Kanakhal out of frustration. It now became difficult for him to take an active part in politics. Direct opposition to the Gorkhalis would have been dangerous for his son, who was being kept as a captive in Nepal. Harshadeva Joshi was seeing the hardships of the Gorkhalis sold as slaves by the Gorkhalis at Hardwar near Kanakhal. He had himself invited the Gorkhalis to invade Kumaun, his motherland, and rendered them all possible help in subjugating Kumaun and Garhwal. He now repented his misdeeds. He sent several letters to the East India Company's representative in Delhi, Frazer, describing the atrocities perpetrated by the Gorkhalis on the people of the hills. On the other hand, he very much desired that the situation in Nepal should be favorable to Ran Bahadur Shah, with whom he had regular correspondence. His hopes collapsed when Ran Bahadur Shah was assassinated in Baisakh 1863 (April 1805). Harshadeva Joshi then maintained contacts with Sudarshan Shah.

Ranjor Simha's Administration, A.D. 1804-5

Ranjor Simha has been described as a man of excellent character. He was not as severe and cruel as other Gorkhali administrators, He wanted the subjects to be treated with justice. The Garh-Rajavamsha - kavya does not describe Ranjor Simha's administration in Srinagar. It is possible that such a description was contained in Bakhtwar-Yasha-Chandrika. The Garh-Rajavamsha-kavya highly praises Ranjor Simha's administration in Sirmur. According to Maularam, towns and villages which had become depopulated revived under his administration. The Bicharis and Acharis appointed by Ranjor Simha were polite and just. He had also set up an advisory council consisting of top-ranking officials. Ranjor Simha was a patron of men of arts and letters, such as Maularam, who has described him as a very generous person. People used to say that the son (Ranjor Simha) excelled the father (Amar Simha). Maularam's account may be exaggerated, but Fraser's account shows that Ranjor Simha was a benevolent administrator who wanted to maintain order and tranquillity.

However, Ranjor Simha's subordinate officials were very harsh and cruel. As conquerors, they looked upon the subjects with contempt. They freely plundered villages situated near the capital, insulted respectable people, and raped women. The Gorkhali civil and military officials abducted the wives and daughters of the people or paid a few rupees for them, and kept them as concubines for as long as they liked. Instead of winning over the hearts of the subjects, these officials believed that severity and cruelty were the only means to subdue them. The tradition of oppression and plunder that began in Garhwal during the time of Ranjor Simha continued till the end of Gorkhali rule.

Changes were introduced in Garhwal's traditional systems of taxation and the administration of justice. New taxes were imposed in addition to the land tax, such as taxes on ghee, looms, salami, and saunefagu, for the sake of revenue. New methods of trial by ordeal were introduced. Fines and penalties began to be collected according to the financial capacity of the guilty person. Revenue from taxation was deposited at the state treasury, while fines and penalties were appropriated by the officials. Those who were unable to pay their taxes in time were auctioned as slaves along with their families.

Panic spread in the Doon Valley as soon as the news spread that Pradyumna Shah had been killed. The Gorkhalis plundered the villages and town thoroughly. The Gorkhali authorities deprived Mahant Harasevakarama of the Guru-Mandir of his positions because they believed that he was a supporter of Pradyumna Shah. He was also accused of murder. Since the Mahant refused to confess, and since no witness could be found, the Amil of the Doon Valley, Sisaram Sakanyani, took resort to trial by the ordeal of boiling oil according to Gorkhali custom. The Mahant's hand was put in a cauldron of boiling oil and was badly burnt. This was taken to mean that Mahant Harasevakaram was guilty, so he was punished with a heavy fine. The Mahant's jagir villages in the Doon Valley were ruined. Other villages too remained uninhabited.

It was Kaji Amrit who, for the first time, took steps to check the plunder and prevent the Doon Valley from being completely ruined. Hastidal, Ranjor's successor, also did praiseworthy work in this regard.

After their conquest of Kumaun, the Gorkhals had constructed a track from Kathmandu to Almora. After the conquest of Srinagar, it was considered necessary to extend that track to Srinagar, and then to Dehradun. According to Traill ("Sketch of Kumaun", Asiatic Researches, Vol. 16, p. 142) kos-stones had also been installed on that track. It is not known when construction of the track started and when it was completed. It is possible that the project was begun during the time of Ranjor Simha. Gorkhali officials and troops travelled to Kangra through Almora and Srinagar along this track.

Like the inhabitants of Juhar in the Himalayan region of Kumaun, the inhabitants of Niti in the Himalayan region of Garhwal did not voluntarily accept Gorkha's sovereignty. The rulers of Garh had offered the village of Managram to the temple of Badrinath. It was therefore contrary to the policy of the Gorkhals to collect revenue from that village. There were many exaggerated stories about the wealth of the inhabitants of Niti valley, and the Gorkhals were eager to make large revenue collection there. A Gorkhali force proceeded to Niti valley, but the local inhabitants checked their advance by destroying the suspension bridge on the Rini (Rishiganga) river. But the winter trade between Niti valley and the lower valley, was also dislocated as a result. The inhabitants of Niti valley had, therefore, no alternative but to accept Gorkhali rule. A Gorkhali force was stationed in the valley, and the cost of its maintenance was raised from the local inhabitants. (Traill: "Report on the Bhotiya Mahals of Kumaun," Asiatic Researches, Vol. 16, p. 30). Gorkhali military personnel collected the revenue themselves, and their treatment of the local inhabitants was oppressive. The Gorkhals soon raised the amount of the revenue to such a figure that many people were forced to leave their villages.

Ranjor Thapa had to leave for the western front after about one year. Even when he was in Srinagar, he had to pay special attention to the supply of men and materials for the western front. The date when Ranjor Thapa left Srinagar is not known. His name is not found in the list of Gorkhali officials in Srinagar in the Vikrama year 1862. The list mentions the names of Chandrabhanu Kunwar, Vijayananda Padhya, and Gaja Simha only. They were probably responsible for revenue collection in different divisions. It was during those days that Maularam composed Rana Bahadur Chandrika. Rana Bahadur had not yet been assassinated, so he received a reward from the royal court of Nepal.

Hastidal Chautariya's Administration, A.D. 1805-8

The Thapa faction, which controlled the government of Nepal as well as the army on the western front, regarded the Chautariya Sardars with suspicion. When ruthless officials severely oppressed the people of Garhwal, and compelled them to leave their villages,

it was felt necessary to appoint an administrator of moderate temperament such as Hastidal Chautariya. Meanwhile, Ritudhwaj Thapa, Vijaya Simha Shahi, and Hardatta Simha Ojha had been sent to kumaun to revise the revenue settlement and redress the hardships of the people. In the Vikrama year 1862 (A.D. 1805), the royal court of Nepal sent Hastidal's brother, Rudravir Shah, to relieve him in the siege of Kangra fort. Hastidal was then appointed administrator of Garh.

Hastidal Chautariya was 43 or 44 years of age at that time and of medium height and stout build. He was of polite temperament and his appearance was imposing. He gave much importance to agriculture and tried to improve the condition of the peasantry. He was a generous man who usually forgave minor mistakes. He tried to keep the people satisfied.

Immediately after assuming charge of the administration of Garh, Hastidal Chautariya took up the problems of the Doon valley, which had been ruined as a result of oppression by the army and revenue collectors. (Williams, Memoirs of Dehradun, pp. 118-20). Most of the people of the valley had gone to other areas, and the cultivated area was diminishing rapidly. Hastidal Chautariya reinstated Mahant Harasevakaram in his post and also restored his privileges and perquisites. The Mahant was the only Jagirdar in the Doon Valley who had some influence among the people. He used his influence to bring back people to their villages and made every possible effort to develop agriculture. Thanks to these efforts, the condition of the Doon Valley began to improve. Its revenue had declined from Rs 100,000 a year during the rule of the kings of Garh to only Rs 9,000, but increased to Rs 16,000, and then to Rs 18,000, within two or three years. (State Papers, Judicial Series, p. 52; English Pre-Mutiny Records, Saharanpur, Vol. 23, pp. 117-126).

During the rule of the kings of Garh, the Doon Valley was frequently plundered by the Ranghads, Jats, Gujars and Rohillas of Saharanpur, and the Sikhs of Punjab. Their depredations continued during the Gorkhali rule. It was at this time that the East India Company stationed a native cavalry regiment and an infantry battalion to protect Saharanpur from the marauding Sikhs. This step checked the Sikhs in the region west of Saharanpur district, but had no effect on the Doon Valley. The Gorkhali administrator of the Doon Valley, therefore, announced that as many villages of the marauders would be set on fire as the number of their bands raiding the Doon Valley. In defiance of this announcement, a band of Sikhs raided the Doon Valley and carried away a large number of women and cattle. The Gorkhali administrator sent 200 troops in pursuit. These troops reached the villages of the bandits and set them on fire. Anyone who tried to escape was killed. Only a few women were able to save their lives because of their beauty. This method of checking the banditry, although barbarous, was effective, and the number of raids on the Doon Valley declined.

Amrit Kaji and Harasevakaram did commendable work in resettling villages and promoting agriculture in the Doon Valley. Hastidal Chautariya took several steps with these objectives. He gave liberal taccavi loans to peasants in the newly-settled villages and fixed the land tax on entire villages at a figure which was as low as five rupees a year in the name of Sayanas. He made land allotments subject to the payment of one-twelfth or even one-sixteenth of the produce as tax. These measures made it possible for the paraganna of Kalyanpur, in particular, to attain a level of prosperity which remained unmatched even during the period of British rule.

Bam Shah in Kumaun

In the Vikrama year 1862 (A.D. 1805), Ritudhwaj Thapa, Vijaya Simha Shahi, and Haradatta Simha Ojha were revising the land settlement in Kumaun. Ritudhwaj Thapa was recalled from Kumaun the following year and sentenced to death for some crime in Doti. He was replaced by Bam Shah, Hastidal Shah's brother, as Subha of Kumaun. Bam Shah remained in that post until 1815. Like Hastidal Shah, Bam Shah was a liberal ruler. He initiated administrative reforms in Kumaun and succeeded in enlisting the cooperation of several Brahmans and other influential people. As a result, he was able to thwart the feeble attempts of Lal Simha and his associates to spread intranquillity in Kumaun. Bam Shah also took steps to protect the property of the people. Jagir grants made by former rulers were restored. Efforts were also made to reform the judicial system. The practice of selling the families of people who were unable to pay their taxes as slaves was stopped.

As before, Garh remained divided into three tahasils and 84 pattis for purposes of revenue administration as before during the time of Hastidal Chautariya. His chief assistants were Ashtadal Thapa, Kaji Ram Bahadur, and Parashuram Thapa. Hastidal's brother, Rudravir Shah, was in command of the siege of Kangra on his behalf. According to a document dated Chaitra 14, 1804 (March 1808) of the time of Hastidal Chautariya, revenue from Dangu was appropriated for the emoluments of 25 Gorkhali troops. The area had been placed under the jurisdiction of Sardar Bhaktibir Thapa.

The success that Bam Shah attained in improving the condition of the people of Kumaun eluded Hastidal in Garhwal. In Garhwal, any person who was unable to pay his tax or fine was deprived of his moveable and immoveable property, and both he and other members of his family were sold as slaves. If any other person made such payments, he was entitled to appropriate them as slaves. Otherwise, the slaves were sent to the Gorkhali post near Bhimgoda on the road leading to Har-ki-pairi in Hardwar. At that place, slaves from all over Garhwal, ranging in age between three years and thirty years, were auctioned. In those days, a Punjabi camel fetched 75 rupees in Hardwar, and an ordinary horse 250 to 350 rupees, but the unfortunate Garhwalis were sold by the Gorkhali officials for no more than 10 to 150 rupees each. (Asiatic Researches, Vol. 11, p. 459).

In addition to those auctioned in the slave market, Gorkhali military men kept Garhwali women as concubines, and Garhwali children as slaves. Their officers did not object to such practices. The soldiers were accompanied by their slaves and concubines wherever they went. No provision was made for pack-animals to transport food and military supplies, so this work was done by the slaves and concubines. The Gorkhalis took along with them thousands of Garhwali women and children on their march to the western front. They also took many of them to Nepal when the war was over.

The Nepal-Almora-Srinagar track was of great importance for the movement of civil and military employees, as well as for the transportation of military supplies. The Hardwar-Badrinath track was also important for pilgrimage, as well as for the slave traffic. Hastidal Chautariya repaired the track from Devaprayag to Srinagar. This was the easiest track in the whole of Garhwal, which was kept in repair through the compulsory labor (begar) of the inhabitants of the adjoining villages. (Traill, "Sketch of Kumaun", Asiatic Researches, Vol. 16, p. 142).

In 1795, Maulvi Abdul Kadir, who had been sent to Nepal by the East India Company, reported that direct trade with Tibet would be much more profitable than through Nepal. In 1803, Captain Knox had suggested that the East India Company acquire Almora (Kumaun) from the Gorkhalis anyhow, so that direct trade with Tibet through the Himalayan passes might be possible. Thereafter, several employees of the East India Company, as well as other persons, began to collect geographical and other information about Kumaun, Garhwal, Doon, and Sirmar. They included Crawford, Buchanan, Colebrooke, Hearsey, Richards, and Rutherford, Chief of the East India Company's factory at Kashipur.

In A.D. 1808, the East India Company sent Captain Raper along with Lt. Webb and Captain Hearsey to Garhwal with the permission of the government of Nepal. Their formal objective was to identify the source of the Ganges. In April 1808, Raper reached Hardwar. He saw the Gorkhali post at Bhimgoda where Garhwalis were auctioned as slaves. With a Brahman from Kumaun, named Harabalam, as his guide, Raper reached the village of Khadkhadi on April 20, where he met Hastidal Chautariya. It is said that Hearsey had once saved Hastidal's life by treating him of injuries inflicted by a bear, so Hastidal felt grateful to him. Hastidal informed the Englishmen that he had been replaced by Bhairav Thapa as Chief administrator of Garhwal. For that reason, Hastidal was unable to give much help to Raper.

Maularam obtained a reward from the royal court of Nepal for his work Ranabahadur-Chandrika. He also composed poems eulogizing Ran Bahadur's son, Girban Yuddha Bikrama Shah. Pleased at this, the royal court of Nepal reconfirmed his jagir villages in 1865 Vikrama (A.D. 1808). It also restored his daily allowance which had been stopped by the bhardars of Srinagar.

Rudravir Chautariya, a brother of Hastidal and Bam Shah, had been deputed to the Kangra front in 1863 Vikrama (A.D. 1806) along with Dalabhanjan Pande. These two Gorkhali bhardars were persuaded by Sansar Chand to leave the fort along with his family and property. But Sansar Chand did not hand over the fort to the Gorkhals. At this, Amar Simha Thapa complained to the royal court of Nepal that Rudravir Chautariya and Dalabhanjan Pande had lifted the siege because they had been bribed by Sansar Chand. The court then recalled the two Gorkhali bhardars. Hastidal too became a victim of the royal anger. He was removed from Garhwal in A.D. 1808. Bhairava Thapa was then appointed as his successor.

Bhairav Thapa's Administration, A.D. 1808-11

Bhairav Thapa was not a liberal administrator like Hastidal Chautariya. In fact, his behavior was harsh and cruel toward the subjects. He looked upon foreigners with suspicion and raised all sorts of obstacles before Raper and his colleagues, who had been granted permission by the royal court of Nepal to tour Garh. Bhairav Thapa's subordinate bhardars, namely, Chhannu Bhandari, Buddhi Thapa, Parashuram Thapa, and Jamadar Inti Rana Gurung, were also harsh and cruel.

Soon, however, the Nepal Court deputed Bhairav Thapa, Buddhi Thapa, and Parashuram Thapa to the siege of Kangra fort. Bhairav Thapa's duties were taken over by his son, Shishta (Shrestha) Thapa, who had already worked in Kumaun. The Kamin records of Dhangu contain the names of several Gorkhali officials who drew their emoluments from revenues collected in that area.

These Gorkhali officials, not content with their emoluments, extorted extra taxes and other payments from the subjects. For instance, they collected fines and penalties according to the financial status of the offender. Every kamin was required to provide three buffaloes and two goats during the month of Chaitra, and four buffaloes and two goats in the month of Aswin, for sacrificial purposes during the Dashain festival. Payments had to be made to the Subedar and the Fouzdar when they were on tour. These officials also exacted a 3-anna silver coin called timasi from each family along with taxes. People had also to supply ghee to each bhardar or military officer.

As a result of such oppression and exploitation, villages became depopulated and lands went out of cultivation. According to Hearsey, the Gorkhals sold more than 30,000 Garhwali men, women, and children in the slave market for their failure to pay taxes, fines, and penalties. About 80,000 other Garhwals fled to the plains to escape the Gorkhali terror. These figures may be exaggerated, but are not wholly baseless.

Maularam sent a letter to Bhimsen Thapa through a trustworthy person recounting Garhwal's sufferings. When Bhairav Thapa came to know about that complaint, he confiscated Maularam's jagirs and stopped his daily allowance. (1866 Vikrama/A.D. 1809). Maularam appeared before the royal court of Nepal with a poem eulogizing the King. Bhimsen Thapa then restored his jagirs and allowance. However, nothing was done to improve the condition of Garhwal.

In 1866 Vikrama/A.D. 1809, Bhimsen Thapa sent Kunwar Birabhadra to the Kangra front. Birabhadra was the son of Kunwar Chandrabir. His mother was a daughter of Amar Simha Thapa. Birabhadra reached Srinagar in the month of Falgun. He carried a royal order restoring Maularam's houses, orchards, and jagirs; and his daily allowance of one rupee. One month later, Amar Simha Thapa sent him to occupy the fort of Morani along with Ranjor Thapa.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the East India Company government made repeated efforts to send its commercial products to Tibet through Kumaun and Garhwal and also deal in the products of the mountainous region. With that objective, it had established a factory at Kashipur. In 1804, duties on goods sold in the fairs and markets of the mountainous region were abolished. Rutherford, manager of the Kashipur factory, started supplying advances to the farmers of Kumaun and Garhwal for the supply of hemp. This step encouraged the khas peasantry to grow hemp in large quantities in the Chaugarkha area of Kumaun, particularly in Lakhanpur, Daron, Rongad, Salam, Badaro, Assi, Chaubisi, Achhyuru, Mahrur, Gunces, Dhyannirau, and Talla-Chaukot. Peasants of the Pabila community in the Bachan, Lobha, Chandkot, Chandpur, Dhanpur, and Dewalgarh in Garhwal were similarly encouraged to grow hemp. This helped them to mitigate to some extent the heavy tax burden imposed by the Gorkhali rulers. Not only the peasantry, but kamins, sayans, and other influential people of Kumaun and Garhwal as well, and even Gorkhali bhardars, started making profits from the trade in hemp fiber and cloth, hemp seeds, and chares.

Rutherford also obtained permission from the royal Court of Nepal to extract and collect resin from the abundant chir trees found in Kumaun, Garhwal, and Doti. The Governor-General had written to Nepal on April 10, 1809 requesting such permission. The resin was used to manufacture pith and turpentine, which were of better quality than those procured from Britain. Trade in hemp and resin was so important for the East India Company that it made no protest when a Gorkhali bhardar constructed a fort at Kheri in the East India Company's territory and stationed troops there in 1811, when relations between Nepal and the East India Company had begun to deteriorate.

(To be Continued).

Gorkhali Rule in Garhwal

By

Dr. Shiva Prasad Dabara "Charan"

Since oppression and exploitation by the military ruined Kumaun, the royal court of Nepal sent a mission headed by Kaji Rewanta there. Kaji Rewanta studied the hardships and grievances of the people and took a number of steps to redress them. However, he was unable to deal with the basic problem, that is, payment of emoluments to the military. Military personnel accordingly continued oppressing and exploiting the inhabitants of the villages that had been assigned to them for their emoluments. In the Vikrama Year 1866 (A.D. 1809), Subedar Bam Shah, therefore, introduced a completely new land system in Kumaun. The system continued until the end of Gorkhali rule in Kumaun. A similar situation in the Himalayan Valleys of Kumaun resulted in the introduction of a new land system by Captain Bhakti Thapa, which mitigated the burden of the people to some extent. But no such step was taken to mitigate the sufferings of the people of Garh.

In the beginning, revenue was assessed in Garhwal on the basis of the estimated income from all sources in each village, rather than from the land alone. The assessment was fixed at such a high figure that the sayanas of most villages were unable to discharge their fiscal obligations.

The Gorkhali soldiers, who were entitled to collect revenues from the villages assigned to them against their emoluments, severely harassed the kamins, sayanas, and other people, looted their movable property, and even sold their women and children as slaves. There was no one to stop such oppression. As a result, the people of Garhwal at some places even put up an armed resistance. Such sporadic outbursts of violence were suppressed by the Gorkhalis with great barbarity. This led to the progressive depopulation of villages. The Gorkhalis believed that violence and oppression were the only way in which they could collect revenues from the impoverished peasantry of a ruined territory and that they were entitled to enslave men and women for default in payment of revenues. But the more the oppression, the more the country became ruined. There was, consequently, delay in payment of revenues, and arrears accumulated. Because of the armed resistance of the peasantry and delay in collection of revenues, the Gorkhalis sent many petitions to the royal court of Nepal. Imminent conflict with the East India Company made the court alert and it started paying attention to the proper management of the revenue system in Garhwal, so that the emoluments of the troops could be collected regularly.

For this purpose, the royal court of Nepal sent Kaji Bahadur Bhandari and Bakshi Dasharath Khatri to Garhwal in the Vikrama Year 1867 (early 1811 A.D.). They were accompanied by Subedar Simhabir Adhikari and Bakhwar Simha Basnyat.

Maularam, in one of his writings, has recorded that Ranadhvaj Thapa, Balenarasimha, Bhim Bahadur, and Gat Bahadur had been posted in Srinagar at this time. According to a document dated Monday, Poush Sudi 2, 1868, in the possession of the temple of Kameleshwara in Srinagar, Kaji Bahadur Bhandari was the chief administrator of Garhwal, with Bakshi Dasharath Khatri, Subedar Ajav Bhandari, Daftari Krishnananda Khanduri, Jamadar Harku Gurung, and Hawaldar Bagdar Khatri under him to revise the revenue settlement. Sardar Bhairava Simha was military commander of Garh at that time.

Kaji Bahadur Bhandari classified lands in all villages of Garh into five categories, namely, Abal, doyam, sim, chahar, and sukhabasi, and assessed revenues on the basis of the yield. A more or less similar system was adopted during British rule as well. Revenue records compiled on this basis, known as Lal Dhadda, were then approved by the royal court of Nepal.

Meanwhile, the Gorkhali army was being rapidly expanded in order to continue the campaign of territorial conquest, maintain strict control over the conquered states, and provide for the imminent war. The royal court of Nepal had to mobilize new resources in order to pay the emoluments of troops and bhardars stationed in extensive territories. Land ritually gifted to Brahmans in Kumaun had already been confiscated. Bahadur Bhandari and Dasharath Khatri scrutinized jagir land grants made by the kings of Garh, and cancelled almost all of them. The grants were renewed only in a few cases under the signatures of Bahadur Bhandari and Dasharath Khatri. Those whose jagir grants were renewed in this manner included the sons of Ramapati Khanduri and Dharanidhar Khanduri, namely, Gajadhar Khanduri and Krishnadatta Khanduri, as well as their brothers, namely, Krishnananda Khanduri and Harshapati Khanduri. Lands granted to temples by the kings of Garh were similarly scrutinized, and renewed under the seal of King Girban Yuddha Vikram. However, Kaji Bahadur Bhandari confiscated the jagirs of Maularam, even though these had been reconfirmed under the royal seal, and reduced his daily allowance from one rupee to half a rupee.

Because the military were allowed to continue collecting their revenues directly from the villages, these measures did not mitigate the sufferings of the people of Garh. The tax burden, no doubt, declined in the Doon Valley and some other areas, but elsewhere villages became depopulated and the military were unable to persuade the fugitives to come back. Many influential persons who opposed the Gorkhali policies were exiled or put to death, and several others left Garh of their own accord. In the Vikrama year 1869 (A.D. 1812), Kaji Bahadur Bhandari was recalled to Nepal, while Dasharath Khatri remained in Garh for some time more.

Amar Simha Thapa had extended the frontiers of the Gorkhali kingdom to the Sutlej river. On Chaitra Badi 3, 1868 (1812), he was granted the title of Kaji. This was the highest honor that could be conferred on a person who did not belong to the royal family. Amar Simha was about 60 years of age at that time. He had spent his entire life in the battle-field. It was his ambition to extend the territories of his king up to Kashmir. Because he had become senile, his goal was further conquests, rather than the proper management of the territories that had already been conquered.

Amar Simha Thapa had great faith in the predictions of astrology. Shivadatta Roy was one of such astrologers. He was born of a Tibetan father and had settled down in the state of Bilaspur. His predictions about the Gorkhali conquests had earned him the trust of Amar Simha Thapa as well as the royal court of Nepal. Amar Simha Thapa kept Shivadatta Roy along with him during the campaign on the western front and consulted him frequently. It is said that Shivadatta Roy had foretold the invasion of the Yamuna-Ganga basin by the East India Company.

Meanwhile, the prospects of a war between Nepal and the East India Company were increasing. Amar Simha Thapa sent several letters to the Governor-General through Ochterlony. He tried his best to maintain amicable relations between Nepal and the East India Company. Hastidal was appointed in Doti, and Bam Shih in Kumaun, while Amar Simha Thapa, and his son, Ranjor Thapa, remained in charge of the administration of Garh, as well as the territories between the Yamuna and Sutlej rivers.

In May 1811, Amar Simha Thapa conquered the southern part of Busehar. He adopted a liberal attitude in the administration of that territory. The main trade route between the valley of the Sutlej and Tibet passed through Busehar. Thanks to centuries of trade, the inhabitants of that state had become cultured and were not willing to bow down before the invader. That was the reason why Amar Simha Thapa adopted a liberal policy toward them. But the inhabitants of Garh were unruly, turbulent, and pugnacious. Amar Simha Thapa's rule in Garh was, therefore, harsh and ruthless. The Gorkhali were never able to consolidate their hold on Busehar. During their brief rule, they had neither the time, nor the means, nor even the courage to ruin Busehar's villages and kill or drive out its inhabitants. To be sure, they destroyed a number of forts in Busehar, but the havoc they wrought in Garh has no parallel.

During the period from 1812 to 1815, the following persons administered Garh as representatives of Amar Simha Thapa:-

1812: Fouzdar Padmaram, Shrestha Thapa, Badhu Thapa, and Bhakti Thapa. The kamin of Dhangu possesses documents listing many other Gorkhali bharoars and military officers.

1813: Subedar Tularam Adhikari, Sardar Bhairava Simha, and Ranajor Thapa.

1814: Subedar Tularam Adhikari, Subedar Hikmat Simha, Subedar Ramakrishna, Fouzdar Kalu Pande, Fouzdar Hari Rana, Kaji Arjun.

1815: Subedar Tularam Adhikari, Bhaktwar Simha Basnyat, Sardar Bhairava Simha, and Fouzdar Sawayan (Som) Giri.

Jagir grants were made to several persons by Amar Simha Thapa in 1869-70 Vikrama (A.D. 1812-13), and in 1871 Vikrama (A.D. 1814) by Ranajor Thapa. One such grant was made by Subedar Hikmat Simha also in 1871 Vikrama (A.D. 1814).

In A.D. 1812, Moorecroft and Captain Hearsey travelled to Tibet through Kumaun and Garhwal in order to gain information about shawl wool. Hearsey had travelled to Badrinath along with Raper in A.D. 1808. In A.D. 1811, he had purchased the Parganna of Chandi and the Doon Valley from Sucarshan Shah, son of King Pradyumna Shah of Garh. During the 1812 expedition, Hearsey was in charge of locating the route with the help of a compass and recording accounts of the journey. The party included Gulam Haider Khan and Harakdeo Pandit. The Pandit was responsible for ascertaining distances on the route by counting the number of footsteps. Two of his steps were equal to four feet. Moorecroft and his companions were dressed as Gosain pilgrims. They had also about fifty porters from the hills along with them.

On May 9, 1812, Moorecroft and his party reached Kumaun through Ramnagar, and, travelling through the valley of the Ramaganga, reached Karnaprayag. On May 24, they reached Joshinath. Two years previously, Colonel Colebrooke had used the same route to visit Kumaun. On June 4, Moorecroft and his party reached Nitigaon. They returned from Mansarover on August 8. On their back, Moorecroft and Hearsey put on European clothes. In October, Bandhu Thapa, the Gorkhali Bhardar of Chandpur, inquired why they were travelling without permission in Gorkhali territory in disguise. He was told that the Tibetan government did not let any European visit Tibet, so it was necessary to be disguised as Gosain pilgrims. Bandhu Thapa was also told that thousands of Nepalis visited the territories of the East India Company every day without any hindrance, so the Gorkhali government should raise no objection if Europeans visited its territory. These explanations apparently satisfied Bandhu Thapa, but on October 15 Gorkhali bhardars on the border arrested them. They were released on November 5 on the orders of Subba Bam Shah of Kumaun. Hearsey has written an interesting account of his travels in Kumaun and Garhwal.

The southern boundaries of the territories conquered by Nepal touched the territories of the East India Company and its protectorates. Border clashes soon began in the Terai, where the boundaries of those imperialist powers touched each other.

When efforts to resolve such disputes in a peaceful manner failed, the Governor General, Lord Minto, wrote a strongly-worded letter to the King of Nepal on June 4, 1813. This increased the possibilities of war. Lord Minto's successor, the Marquess of Hastings (Lord Moira), assumed office on October 4, 1813 as Governor-General and Commander. Relations between Nepal and the East India Company progressively worsened, and, on November 1, 1814, the East India Company declared war. The borders between Nepal and the East India Company in the Garh region were not in dispute, but from the viewpoint of military strategy it was necessary for the East India Company to occupy Garh and separate the Gorkhali army into two parts. For that reason, the forces of the East India Company invaded the Doon Valley on October 22, 1814.

The administration of Garh remained in the hands of Subedar Tularam Adhikari until April 1815. Bakhtwar Simha Basnyat was sent there only a few days before the war ended. When the East India Company occupied Kumaun in May 1815, Bakhtwar Simha Basnyat returned to Nepal along with the bhardars and military officers of Srinagar.

King Rama Shah

By
Dinesh Raj Panta

Gorakhako Itihasa (A history of Gorkha), Kathmandu: the author, 2041 (1985), pt. 1, pp. 82-111 (Condensed).

After the death of Chhatra Shah between 1666 and 1671 Vikram, his brother, Rama Shah, ascended the throne of Gorkha.

Rama Shah visited Parbat to marry the daughter of King Raja Malla. However, the wedding did not take place because of the disrespect shown to Rama Shah by King Raja Malla. On the way back to Gorkha, Rama Shah met Narayana Malla in Galkot, who offered him the hand of his niece, a princess of Musikot. The wedding accordingly took place at Galkot.

In his Malladarsha, Premanidhi Panta has described King Raja Malla of Parbat as the son of King Narayana Malla of Galkot. Narayana Malla had divided his kingdom among his three sons.

The eldest son, Jitari Malla, became king of Galkot, while the second son, Raja Malla, received the kingdom of Parbat. It seems that Narayana Malla was living with his eldest son in Galkot, rather than with his second son in Parbat. Apparently dissatisfied with the behavior of his second son, Raja Malla, and with the aim of maintaining amicable relations with Gorkha, he seems to have offered the hand of his niece in marriage to Rama Shah.