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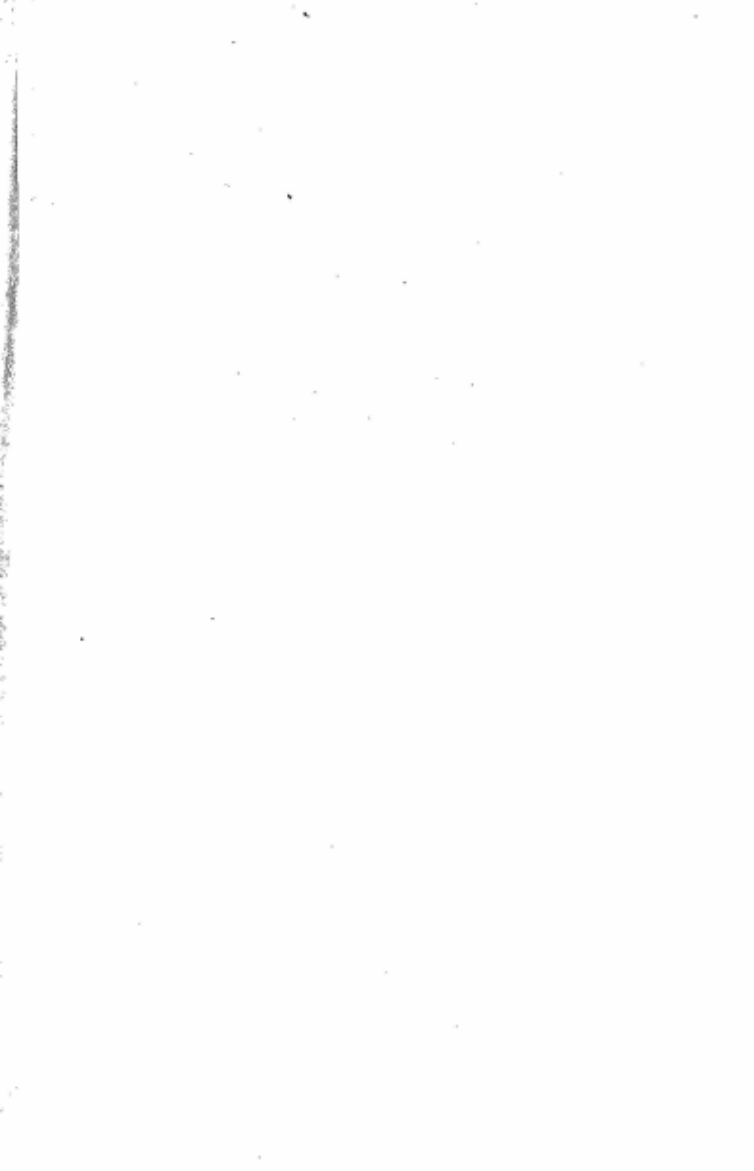
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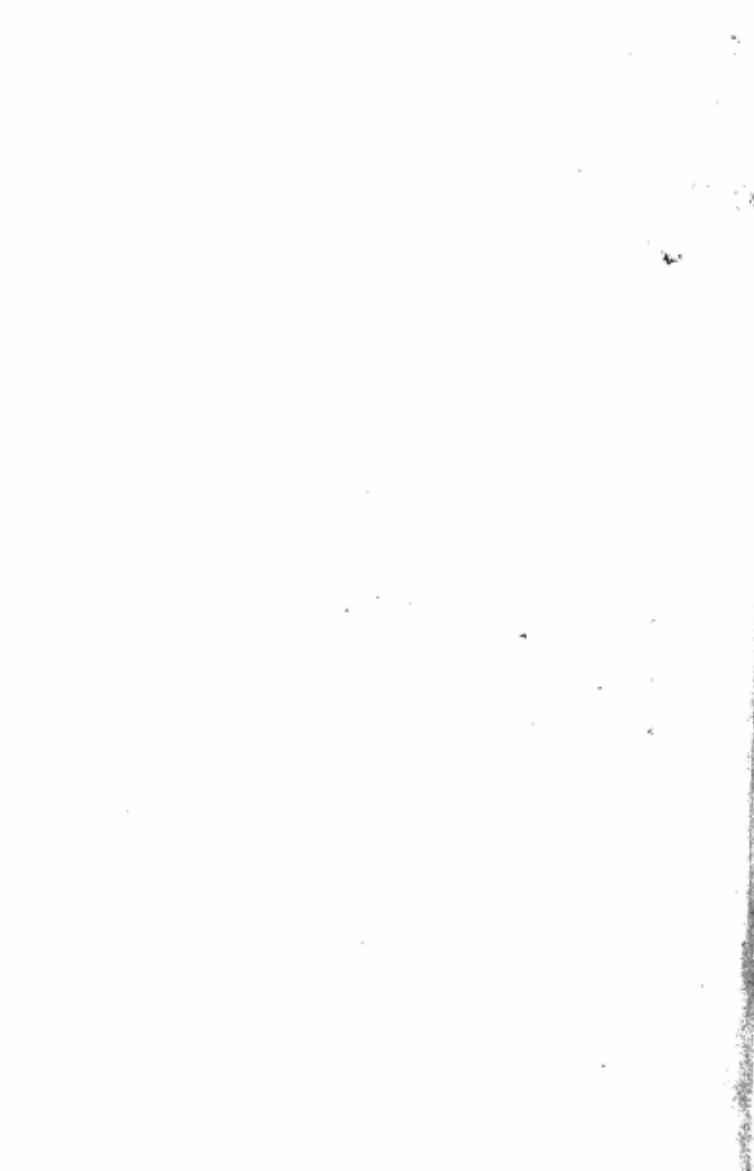
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ANGLO-NEPALESE RELATIONS
IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

KANCHANMOY MOJUMDAR

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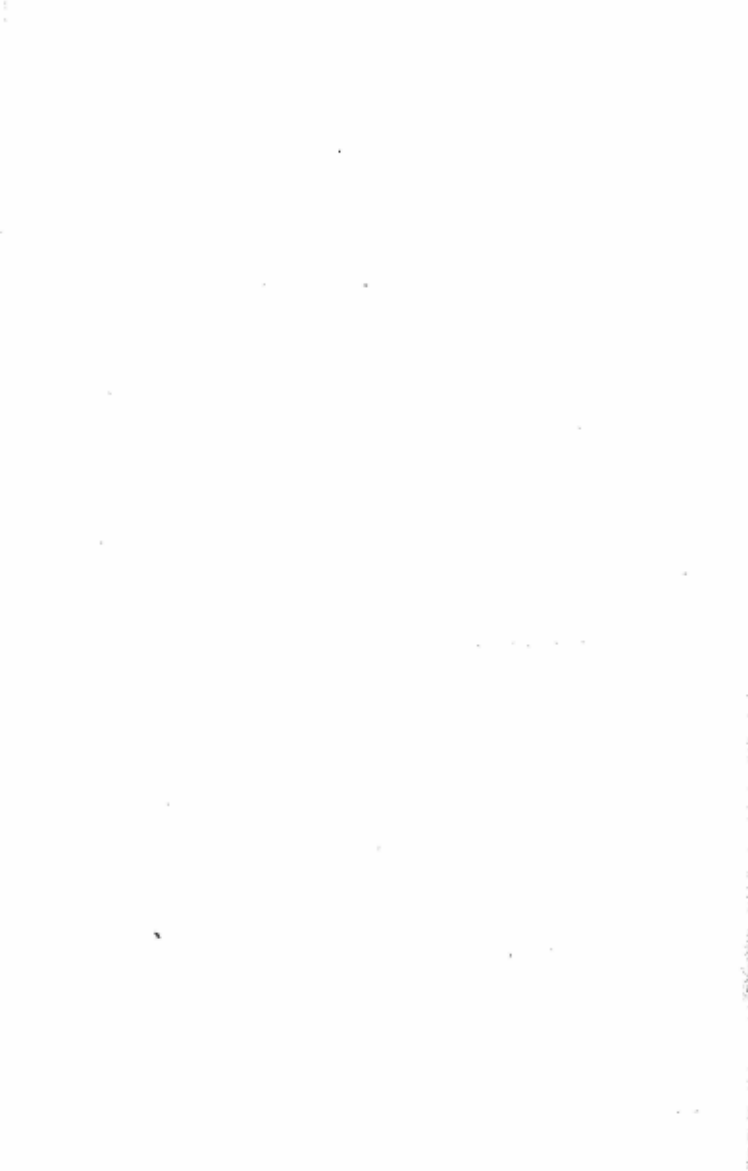
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TO
MY MOTHER



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ABBREVIATIONS

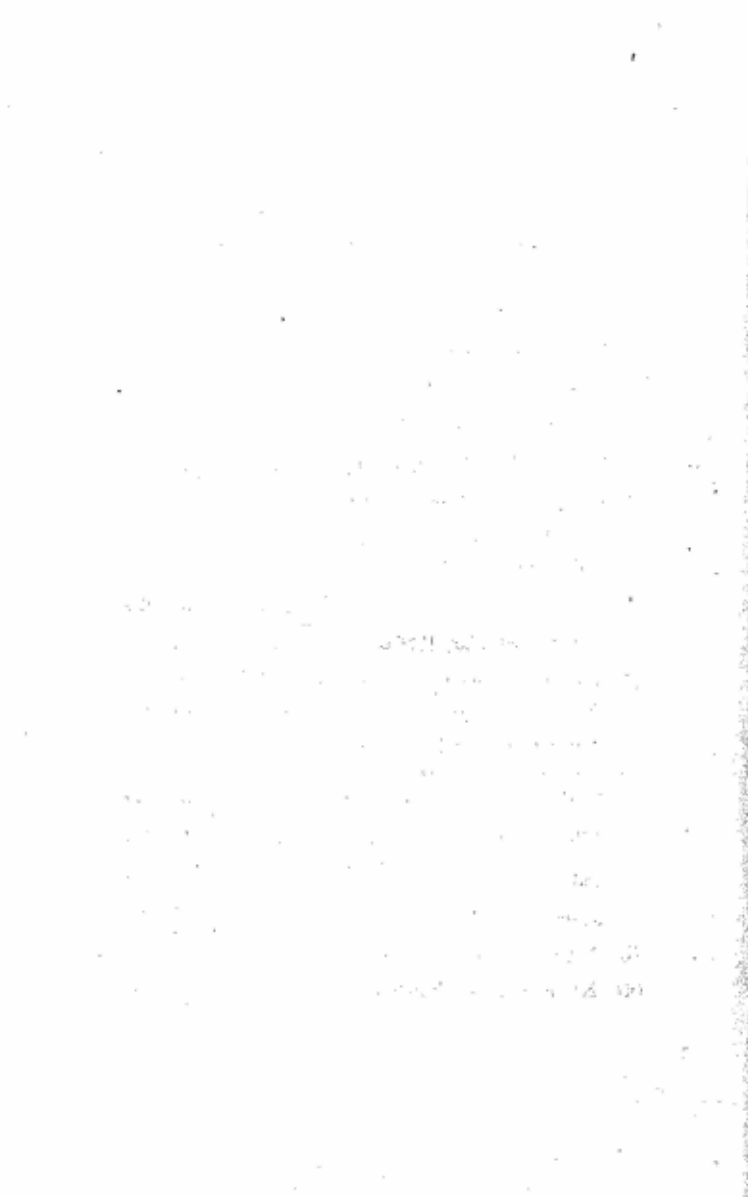
AP	Accounts and Papers presented to Parliament.
BMAM	British Museum Additional Manuscripts.
CMP	Chelmsford Papers.
CP	Cross Papers.
CRP	Curzon Papers.
Dept. Note	Departmental Notes.
DFP	Dufferin Papers.
DP	Durand Papers.
DRCLI	District Records of Champaran, Letters Issued.
EC	External Collections.
Enclo.	Enclosures.
EP	Elgin Papers.
FM	Foreign Miscellaneous Proceedings.
FPA	Foreign Political Proceedings, A category.
FPB	Foreign Political Proceedings, B category.
FSA	Foreign Secret Proceedings, A category.
FSE	Foreign Secret Proceedings, External Branch.
HBP	Hobhouse Papers.
HC	Political and Secret Home Correspondence.
HDP	Home Department Political Proceedings.
HM	Hodgson Manuscripts.
IFP	India Foreign and Political Proceedings.
IMP	India Military Proceedings.
JASB	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.
JRCAS	Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society.
JUSI	The Journal of the United Service Institution of India.
KCPLI	Kumaun Collectorate Political Letters Issued.
LNP	Lansdowne Papers.

LP	Lytton Papers.
MNP	Minto Papers.
MP	Morley Papers.
NR	Nepal Residency Papers.
PC	Foreign Political Consultations.
PEF	Political and Secret External Subject Files.
PF	Political and Secret Files.
PIHC	Proceedings of the Indian History Congress.
PIHRC	Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission.
PLA	Private Letter Book of Lord Auckland.
PSI	Political and Secret Despatches to India.
PSLI	Political and Secret Letters from India.
PSM	Political and Secret Memoranda.
Pt.	Part.
RBP	Roberts Papers.
Reg. No.	Register Number.
RP	Ripon Papers.
SC	Foreign Secret Consultations.
SCRO	State Central Record Office.
V.S.	Vikram Samvat.
WP	White Papers.

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Preface

The relations between India and Nepal have been intimate through the ages. Geographical propinquity, shared history, cultural influences and economic ties account for this intimacy. But it was not before India passed under British rule and Nepal under Gurkha rule when the relations between the two countries assumed an overwhelmingly political character. The British viewed Nepal, politically united and militarily strong, as a security problem for India. Nepal had, therefore, to be brought under the British sphere of influence to ensure its enervation and harmlessness. All means were applied to secure this end: political pressure and war, persuasive diplomacy and pecuniary temptation. In the end the British succeeded in reducing Nepal into a protected, client state, internally independent, but within the broad framework of the British Empire in India, its interests being co-ordinated with those of the Empire.

The Nepalese, for their part, looked upon the British as an aggressive and expansionist power; they were fearful and suspicious. Since absolute aloofness was impossible, relations with the British were kept to the minimum to prevent their domination. The result of this policy was that Nepal retained its political integrity, despite the British impact on its life—no mean achievement for the small state.

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, a pattern had emerged in Anglo-Nepalese relations; they had developed neighbourly relations of understanding and interdependence—the result, partly, of policy, and partly, of the force of circumstances. Their policy of accommodation of respective interests and adjustment proved of mutual benefit. Each now had appreciated the value of the other's good-will. The Gurkha recruitment in Nepal was for the British as much a military necessity as it was for the Nepalese government an indispensable means of economic support. But then, as is natural of neighbours, there were also occasions of misunderstanding. Nepal's policy towards China and Tibet, for example, was not always compatible with British interests, nor was Nepal's traditional policy of restricted dealings with foreigners agreeable to the British.

I am thankful to His Majesty's Government of Nepal, the authorities of the National Archives of India, the Uttar Pradesh State Archives, The State Central Record Office, Bihar, the West Bengal State Archives, the Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi, the National Library, Calcutta, the British Museum, London, Public Record Office, London, and the India Office Library, London for providing me with facilities for research.

I owe a heavy debt of gratitude to my teacher, Professor B. Das, sometime Professor of English, Tribhuban University, Kathmandu, for his help during my stay at Kathmandu in 1961. To my other teachers, Dr. N. K. Sinha, Dr. K. K. Datta, Dr. Tara Chand, Professor K. A. Ballhatchet and Professor A. L. Basham, I am thankful for their encouragement and helpful criticisms and comments.

But for my friend, Shri M. K. Rays' help, the book would not have come out as soon as I had wanted it to, and for this I am grateful to him.

September, 1971.

K. Mojumdar

ERRATA

- p. 2, para 4, line 7, for *Saha* read *Shah*.
- p. 4, para 4, line 4, for *rules* read *rulers*.
- p. 7, para 1, line 3, for *justice* read *juice*.
- p. 12, para 1, line 15, for *not* read *now*.
- p. 12, para 1, line 19, after *than* insert *a*
- p. 14, para 1, line 9, after *off* insert *was*
- p. 14, para 1, line 9, delete *was* after *due*.
- p. 14, para 1, line 15, read *Nepāl* for *Nepals*.
- p. 15, para 1, line 1, for *its* read *her*.
- p. 17, para 2, line 5, for *objective* read *objectives*.
- p. 22, para 2, line 8, for *Sindhi* read *Sindhia*.
- p. 22, para 2, line 9, for *Sindhi* read *Sindhia*.
- p. 23, para 2, line 10, for *look* read *looks*.
- p. 25, para 2, line 25, for *of* read *and*; for *the* read *and*.
- p. 26, para 1, line 3, after *written* insert *to*.
- p. 29, para 1, line 2, delete *the fact*.
- p. 29, para 4, line 4, for *is* read *in*.
- p. 38, para 2, line 18, for *alone* read *along*.
- p. 39, para 3, line 12, for *great* read *large*.
- p. 40, para 1, line 6, for *in the* read *on the*.
- p. 40, para 2, line 27, for *weights* read *weight*.
- p. 45, para 3, line 4, for *has* read *had*.
- p. 47, para 2, line 4, for *Nihar* read *Nihal*.
- p. 48, para 1, line 8, for *Pandes* read *Pande*.
- p. 78, para 4, line 5, for *same* read *some*.
- p. 78, para 4, line 12, for *Tarat* read *Tarai*.
- p. 100, para 1, line 8, for *gardually* read *gradually*.
- p. 119, para 5, line 1, for *everting* read *exerting*.
- p. 144, para 3, line 1, for *apper* read *appear*.
- p. 146, para 3, line 15, between *far* and *likely* insert *more*.

1944

1. The first part of the report is a general statement of the purpose and scope of the study. It is followed by a brief review of the literature on the subject.

2. The second part of the report is a description of the methods used in the study. This includes a description of the subjects, the instruments used, and the procedures followed.

3. The third part of the report is a presentation of the results of the study. This includes a description of the data collected, a summary of the findings, and a discussion of the implications of the results. The results show that there is a significant relationship between the variables studied, and that the findings have important implications for the field of study.

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1994	72
2004	78

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NEPAL LAND AND PEOPLE

Nepal lies to the north of India between 80°-88° east longitude and 26°-30° north latitude, its western boundary being formed by the river Mahakali and the eastern by the river Mechi. It is a stretch of about 555 miles. To Nepal's north lies Tibet, now a Chinese province, and to the east the district of Darjeeling in west Bengal and Sikkim, an Indian protectorate. Nepal is a small country, 55,000 square miles being its total area, where live about ten million people, its total population by the latest (1961) reckoning.

Geographically, Nepal is a land of variety. The northern part of the country, called the Great Himalayan region, is an entirely mountainous tract with climate too cold for human settlement. The high passes in this region—Tuglakot, Mustang, Hatla, Keruna, Kuti and Wallongchoong—have for ages served as trade routes to Tibet and consequently, as bones of contention with the Tibetans.

For fifty miles south of this region there are mountains still, though lower in altitude, allowing vegetation and settlement. This is the Inner Himalayan region. Below this is a sandstone range, called the Churia hills, where timber and Savana grass grow. Ensconced between the hills are many valleys, the main centres of human habitation and intensive cultivation.

South of this region lies a twenty-mile deep lush green plain-land, called the Tarai, once swampy and malarial, but now considerably reclaimed, facilitating extensive cultivation and growth of settlement. Economically, it is the most productive region. Seventy one per cent of Nepal's population live in the hilly regions which constitute eighty three per cent of the total land surface.

Nepal is a land of numerous rivers, the main ones being, from west to east, the Mahakali, Karnali, Rapti, Kali Gandaki, Narayani, Bagmati, Kosi and Mechi, each with its many tributaries.¹

The uniqueness of Nepalese culture lies in its syncretic character. It is the result, mainly, of Nepal's interposition between two great cultural centres of Asia, the Tibeto-Mongoloid and the Indo-Aryan, and, partly, of her own ethnic variety. Many races and tribal groups inhabit the land. The Sherpas and Bhotias who live in the northernmost part of Nepal have been markedly influenced by the Tibetan culture. The western and west-central regions are inhabited by the martial tribes of Nepal, the Magars, Gurungs, Khas and Thakurs, all known by their popular generic name, the Gurkhas².

In the central valley of Nepal live the Newars with distinctly Mongoloid traits. The Kirats, Rais, Sunwars and Limbus are the main tribal groups in eastern Nepal. The people living close to the Indian border, the Tharus and Boksas, for instance, have strong cultural affinity with their southern neighbours. In the 13th-14th centuries Muslim invasion drove a number of Rajput ruling families to the hills of Nepal, and this also constituted a powerful cultural force.¹

Geographical factors and ethnic variety pose difficulties as much to administrative integration and external contact as to acculturation between peoples. Lateral communication is especially difficult on account of the transverse ridges and longitudinal flow of the numerous rivers and streams.

The Bagmati valley with three towns, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhatgaon, in it constitutes the political and cultural hub of the Country; the first named town is the capital of Nepal. Originally Nepal meant this valley alone. The many Buddhist and Hindu shrines in this valley have drawn through the ages hundreds of pilgrims from Tibet and India. It is here that the composite character of the Nepalese culture is most apparent.

Modern Nepal has a fairly recent history. It dates from the latter half of the 18th century when the rulers of Gorkha, who traced their ancestry to the royal house of Chittor, welded the state out of the numerous petty princedoms checkerboarding the land. One of these rulers, Prithvinarayan Shah, conquered the Bagmati valley in 1768-9 and established the rule of the Saha dynasty which exists to this day, the present King of Nepal, Mahendra Vir Vikram Shah Deb, being Prithvinarayan's lineal descendent. Prithvinarayan's successors launched the state upon a course of unremitting wars of conquest until it embraced the entire submontane territory between the rivers Sutlej to the west and Tista to the east. By the first decade of the nineteenth century Nepal had emerged as the most powerful state on the northern border of India.

FOOTNOTES

1. For the geography of Nepal see P. P. Karan, Nepal, *A Cultural and Physical Geography*. Karan and W. M. Jenkins, *The Himalayan Kingdoms: Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal*, pp. 79-88. O. H. K. Spate, *India and Pakistan, A General and Regional Geography*, pp. 403-13. Ministry of Defence (U.K.), *Nepal and the Gurkhas*, pp. 1-15. S. G. Burrard and H. H. Hayden, *Sketch of the Geography and Geology of the Himalayan Mountains and Tibet*, 4 Vols. B. H. Hodgson, "On the Physical Geography of the Himalaya", *JASB*, Aug. 1849, pp. 761-88. K. Mason, "A Note on the Nepal Himalaya", *The Himalayan Journal*, 1934, pp. 81-90.

2. Strictly speaking, the name should apply to only those who inhabit Gorkha, a small place about fifty miles west of Kathmandu. In the Indian army, however, both during the British rule and now, all the Nepalese soldiers are called Gurkhas. E. Vansittart, *Notes on Gurkhas*, p. 10. W. J. M. Spaight, "The name 'Gurkha'", *JRCAS*, Apr. 1941, pp. 202-03.
3. For the races of Nepal see Karan, op. cit., pp. 63-6. E. Vansittart, "The Tribes, Clans, and Castes of Nepal", *JASB*, 1894, pp. 213-49. B. H. Hodgson, "Origin and Classification of the Military Tribes of Nepal", *Ibid*, May 1833, pp. 217-24. H. Kihara, ed., *Peoples of Nepal Himalaya*.

BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS NEPAL*

British policy towards Nepal was evolutionary in character. The policy was, of course, of their own making, but both in its formulation and implementation they had to take into account a significant fact: Nepal, too, had her own policy towards the British. British policy in Nepal had thus in it the nature of an interaction of the Nepalese and British diplomacy, of the challenge of the one and the reaction of the other, of mutual adjustment and accommodation resulting in mutual benefit.

British objectives in Nepal were not always the same: they varied with the change in their position and power in India. In order of urgency and importance they changed as well. In addition, they were to a great extent conditioned by Nepal's internal situation which was beyond British control.

British policy in Nepal had several phases of development. The first phase spanned about fifty years from 1767 to 1816.¹ During this period the object at first was to safeguard and foster the customary trade between Bengal and Tibet through Nepal, and to secure thereby the supply of gold from Tibet which the East India Company needed for its China trade. Gurkha military activities in the 18th century threatened peace in the lower Himalayas, and as a result trade and commerce of the region was affected. The Company sought to forestall the Gurkha conquest of the valley of Kathmandu by a military expedition in September 1767. The expedition proved fatuous.² Its only result was to sow in the mind of the Gurkha conquerors of Nepal the feeling of distrust and hostility towards the British which lay at the root of Nepal's policy of jealous exclusion of and non-interference with the foreigners.

Intervention cost the British much. Not only in Nepal, but in the regions around, their commercial schemes foundered on the studied opposition of the Gurkha rulers.³ The Company then sought to make amends by conciliating the new rules of Nepal, but to no purpose. Later, attempts were made to establish political influence in the court of Kathmandu by exploiting the party squabbles.⁴ This reinforced the Nepalese fear that the British were an intriguing power, and that the best defence against them was to have no truck with them at all. The Nepalese saw that their internal dissensions paved the way for British intrigue. A strong regime was needed to guard against both Nepal's political instability and foreign intervention. Such a regime was set up in 1804 by Bhim Sen Thapa, one of Nepal's greatest ministers.⁵ Within a decade of

his rule the Nepalese had conquered the cis-Himalayan territory from the Sutlej in the west to the Tista in the east. They made nibbling encroachments on the Company's territory in the south; they pillaged the defenceless villages; they spread panic and consternation. By 1814, Nepalese military expansion had become the greatest threat to the Company's richest territory. Promotion of trade with Nepal and Tibet as an object of the Company's policy fell into the background; security of the most vulnerable frontier of British India became the paramount concern of the Company. A war followed, and a pyrrhic victory achieved by the British¹.

The object of the Anglo-Nepalese war was to impose a limit on the Nepalese military expansion; the Treaty of Sagouli (December 1815) secured it. Indo-Nepalese frontier was delimited and subsequently demarcated. Nepal was circumvallated by British territories and by Sikkim whose protection from Nepalese inroads became henceforth a British responsibility². The British would not leave any outlet for Nepal's martial spirit.

The British had restrained Nepalese ambitions by arms; after the war they would do so by maintaining the political relations established by the Treaty of Sagouli. They would neither press for any commercial concessions nor for a subordinate alliance. Nepal should just keep to the terms of the treaty and realise that any breach of the terms would not be tolerated. The treaty came naturally to be looked upon as the very basis of Anglo-Nepalese relations. The war had cost the British enough in men, money and morale; they would not have another war except as a last resort. The risk of a war with Nepal and appreciation of her people's intense love of independence served as two major influences on the British policy towards Nepal in subsequent years.

The war and the loss of one-third of her territory sobered Nepal. The Nepalese realised that their mountains and swamps were no impregnable defence against a determined enemy, far superior in resources. Their respect for British arms increased; their fear, too. The Treaty of Sagouli was a galling restraint, and yet it had to be endured for the dread of another and possibly more disastrous war. The British in India were a compelling phenomenon, and Nepal had to reconcile herself to it. Nepal's history from now on would be dominated by this phenomenon. None was convinced of this more acutely than Bhim Sen himself, who continued in power as Minister. Thus, both the British and the Nepalese desired peaceful relations. The British hands were full with wars with Indian powers, and Nepal needed a breathing spell to recover from the shock of the war. Bhim Sen, for his part, would require some time to rehabilitate his prestige which defeat in the war

had tarnished. Bhim Sen had learnt one more lesson : single-handed Nepal could never outmatch the British in war.¹

For twenty years after the war there was peace in Anglo-Nepalese relations, but no cordiality. Nepal lay sulky and aloof, nursing her wounds, full of resentment and fear. The British Resident at Kathmandu posted after the war was dreaded as an instrument of British imperialism and as a sinister agent of intrigue. Keeping the Resident a virtual prisoner was regarded the only means of protecting Nepal from the natural result of the British connexion : gradual erosion of Nepal's independence and integrity. Bhim Sen could not help viewing with alarm the steady weakening of Indian powers and their reduction to feudatories of the British government.

The British acquiesced in Nepal's haughty aloofness. They, however, appreciated Bhim Sen's strong rule, for it had checked the turbulence of Nepal's martial people. The British policy was one of absolute non-interference in Nepal's internal affairs. Nepal was safe in Bhim Sen's hands ; India's more than five-hundred-mile long frontier with Nepal was secure, and Indo-Nepalese relations free from intermittent convulsions. From time to time the Nepalese government did intrigue with Indian powers, but the British winked at such efforts, which were but manifestations of the characteristic restlessness of the Nepalese people.

Change came in the 1830s. Bhim Sen's long monopoly of power ranged the king and ambitious nobles against him. He was deposed in August 1837, and two years later took his own life. Then followed about a decade of political confusion and uncertainty, of cabals and intrigues, of lust for power which assassinations alone could put to rest. Political instability in Nepal knocked off the plinth of Anglo-Nepalese relations. That instability was to some extent the British Resident's own doing. The Resident, Brian Hodgson,² intervened at first covertly and later openly in the Nepalese court politics. He had his own reasons to do so, although he scarcely anticipated that in sowing the wind he would reap the whirlwind.

The time then was out of joint. A war was imminent with Afghanistan and China ; Burma was hostile ; the Indian states were in varying stages of restiveness and disaffection ; all about there was an air of eager expectancy and high events. Hodgson took fright. The British were about to be engaged in large scale wars, and the Nepalese, he feared, would certainly seize the opportunity to settle old scores with them. Nepalese army, well drilled and armed to the teeth, and kept for two decades in leash was a veritable thorn in the most exposed frontier of British India. It seemed to Hodgson that the only means of dealing with this certain

Nepalese menace was to help the rivals of Bhim Sen to cause his fall, to let loose all the centrifugal forces in the state and to keep the Nepalese stewing in their own justice till the troubles of the British were over. In a divided court with nobles having conflicting ambitions, the Resident could hope to assume commanding influence. In spite of the conciliatory policy of two decades, Nepal had not become friendly to the British government. What could explain this attitude but that the Nepalese government were biding time to avenge their defeat in the last war? This was Hodgson's argument."

Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, sought to justify this interventionist policy as a political contrivance to weather a crisis; it was a *pis aller*. Its result, however, was to stir up unprecedented anti-British feelings in the court of Kathmandu. During the first Afghan war, Nepal spun plots with almost all the important Indian states; Nepalese emissaries were seen seeking support from the courts of Lahore, Kabul, Teheran, Ava, Peking and Lhasa. The Nepalese records of the period seem to suggest that the object of these intrigues was to form an anti-British confederacy. Nepalese troops broke into north Bihar and Oudh, and relations with the Government of India came close to a violent breach. Twice the British sent troops to the frontier. The Supreme Council in Calcutta pressed Auckland to send a punitive expedition to Nepal. Auckland, however, would not take this risk until his hands were free. A war with Nepal, he feared, would be a signal for Indian states to rise in arms. In such circumstances political pressure was remorselessly exerted on the king of Nepal followed by threats of invasion. The king was eventually obliged to concede what Hodgson had wanted: a ministry with the Resident as its adviser and, indeed, the only prop. With the end of the wars in Afghanistan and China, Nepal's restlessness abated. Auckland's interventionist policy had worked¹¹; Hodgson and his proteges in the court of Kathmandu had kept peace, however precarious it may be, at a very critical time.

The experience of both the British and the Nepalese during these years was bitter, but the lessons learnt were wholesome. The Nepalese once again realised that their internal dissensions provided openings for British intrigues and intervention, and that a masterful Resident could create problems. To the British it was clear that active involvement in Nepalese court politics increased rather than curbed anti-British feelings; that political instability led to excitement in the Nepalese army, for every aspirant to power pandered to its warlike propensities; and, finally, that a crisis in British India set off reactions in the Nepalese court. Nepal could be a menace to India during crises, if the turbulence of her people were not

kept in check by a strong rule. The policy of intervention was, hence, abandoned and that of disengagement from the internal affairs of Nepal adopted.¹³

Political confusion consequent upon Bhim Sen's fall in 1837 ended in September 1846, when Jang Bahadur Rana assumed power as Minister after massacring a number of Nepalese nobles.¹⁴ This marked a great divide in the history of Nepal's relations with British India. Jang Bahadur gave the British what they wanted : a strong and friendly regime. He ruled for more than thirty years as an absolute despot; he kept the Nepalese army in full strength—but in leash. He earned the appreciation of the British by making a trip to England.¹⁵ He was co-operative and obliging. He concluded an extradition treaty to prevent the Nepalese forests and swamps in the south from being a safe sanctuary of outlaws from the adjoining British territory. He got from the British what he expected of them : consistent support, though not an openly declared alliance. The British did not question the way he clinched power not the way he ruled. They treated him as a ruling chief of an independent friendly state. They excited his vanity by flattering allusions to his able rule and his alliance with the mighty British empire.

The Mutiny of 1857-58 was at once the test and vindication of the policy of mutual trust, understanding and co-operation which the two governments had embarked upon. The Nepalese government did not exploit the greatest crisis of the British in India. Instead, they actively helped them to put down the very forces which Nepal had earlier tried to rally against the British. Jang Bahadur was naturally looked upon as the best guarantee of the friendly relations between the two governments. British titles and honours were lavished on him; the western Terai wrested from Nepal in 1816 was restored to her as a reward for Jang Bahadur's military assistance during the Mutiny. The Nepalese troops who fought in the Mutiny alongside British troops were loud in their praise of the British for their liberality shown in the form of battas and high rates of pay. The House of the Ranas became henceforth the surest insurance against impairment of Nepal's friendly relations with British India. Jang Bahadur initiated the Nepalese government in the policy of active co-operation with the British government with a view to earning political and financial dividends; and this policy all his successors scrupulously followed. The Nepalese government under the Ranas had now finally abandoned Nepal's traditional policy of exploiting British difficulties.

With this a great political objective had been achieved : the Nepalese were now not only safe neighbours of British India, but dependable allies, too. There was, however, a fly in

the ointment: Nepal was still a closed land for the British. The Resident's movements were still rigidly restricted, although unlike earlier, his personal relations with the Minister were cordial. Jang Bahadur with all his effusive friendliness could hardly conceal his deep-seated prejudice that too close relations with the British and admission of their agent into the interior of Nepal would ultimately result in British domination.¹⁵ Jang Bahadur felt that the Nepalese government should have that much of connexion with the British as would conduce to Nepal's own interests. Nepal would live in peace and amity with British India, but the latter should not expect a greater degree of cordiality than the Nepalese could safely allow them. Jang Bahadur tried to convince the British that Nepal's friendliness was a policy of her own choice. The British, however, fully knew that the policy was for the Minister and his family an indispensable means of strength to meet internal threats.

Jang Bahadur died in 1877, but his policy survived him. Lord Lytton, the Governor-General, saw in his death rather an opportunity than an occasion for anxiety. He made an attempt by political pressure to increase the Resident's influence in the court of Kathmandu and to force the latter to eschew its traditionally exclusive policy. The Nepalese government doggedly resisted the move, causing-albeit for a short while—strain in their relations with the British.¹⁶ The British realised that the Nepalese government would never give up their exclusive policy, for it was to them Nepal's only means of defence against a neighbour whose influence spread as much by a conscious effort on its part as by its sheer position and overwhelming power. Never hereafter would the British risk a rift with Nepal on this score. This was the Nepalese government's strongest susceptibility; and the British always reckoned with it.

From the 1870s the most engaging preoccupation of the Government of India was the defence of the frontier from Russian and French pressure. The Indian military establishment was reformed and expanded to meet the situation. Now the demand was mostly for men having better fighting qualities and more intimate acquaintance with mountainous terrain, men, who were also politically less excitable and, therefore, safe and dependable. Nepal had just this sort of men.¹⁷ The Gurkhas had since 1815 been recruited in the Indian army and firmly established themselves as its best element. Their unquestioned obedience to and admiration for the British was matched by their contempt for Indian soldiers. They were, hence, prized by the British as the most effective counterpoise to the Indian troops, and as a safety valve against a mutiny by the latter. Unlike other regiments in the Indian army expansion in the

Gurkha ranks did not require a proportionate increase in the number of British soldiers to maintain the balance, and this was an additional reason why the Gurkhas were most sought after.¹⁸

There were some political problems as well in the last decades of the nineteenth century. China asserted her suzerainty over Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, basing her claim on traditional relations with them.¹⁹ The fear was not so much of an actual invasion of India's north-east frontier as of Chinese subversion and intrigue in a region which the British had so long looked upon as their exclusive sphere of influence. In view of these political and military exigencies closer ties with the Rana Government became a compelling necessity for the Government of India. The importance of Nepal as a frontier state, its military resources and potentialities were now closely studied by the British. It was now being increasingly felt that in Nepal lay the fulcrum of India's north-east frontier. This led to an adjustment in the British attitude and the adoption of a new policy: winning Nepalese confidence by liberal concessions, and progressively increasing their obligation to the Government of India. A deal was struck by which the British undertook to supply the Nepalese government modern arms in exchange for unrestricted supply of Gurkha recruits for the Indian army²⁰. Nepal's military strength was no longer unduly dreaded as a menace to India's security; it came to be regarded now as an essential accessory to India's own military resources. The arrangement—arms for Gurkhas—bound the governments of Nepal and India by the ties of mutual dependence and served as the most important plank of their relations. The British were obliged to be solicitous in their attitude to the Rana government, enabling the latter to wring concessions and favours²¹.

When, in the 1870s, British commercial interests in Tibet were revived,²² Anglo-Nepalese relations assumed a new perspective. Nepal's traditional relations with Tibet and China assumed in the British eyes significant political implications. A thorough probe was made into Nepal's commercial interests in Tibet to ascertain how far they affected British policy in Tibet. Thus, in Anglo-Tibetan relations Nepal came to play a significant role. The events leading to the Younghusband mission to Tibet (1903-04) could be cited as a case in point²³. Russian activity in Lhasa alarmed the Nepalese government as much as the Government of India, leading them to take concerted action to safeguard their respective interests. Nepal proved a great help to the British at this time, especially in making the Lhasa authorities agree to Younghusband's terms of settlement. The Nepalese legation at Lhasa served as an intelligence transmitting centre²⁴. Ever afterwards Kathmandu

remained an important link between Calcutta (and later New Delhi) and Lhasa. British policy in Tibet came to be influenced by Nepalese reactions to it.

Chinese forward policy in Tibet in 1904-14 brought Nepal and India closer still. British interests in Tibet were imperilled by the Chinese policy of converting Tibet from an autonomous region under Chinese suzerainty into a directly administered province. The Dalai Lama was deposed by the Chinese and was obliged to escape to India in 1910. Chinese troops tore through Eastern Tibet, destroying monasteries; the local people rose in arms. The Chinese intrigued with Bhutan, refusing to recognise the Anglo-Bhutanese treaty (1910); they crept into the tribal territory north of Assam and set up colonies; they dropped feelers at Nepal, too, trying to interest her in a league against the British. The Chinese proceedings activated the normally quiet north-east frontier of India.²⁸ In dealing with the Chinese menace and in ensuring Tibetan autonomy, the British made ample use of Nepal. The Nepalese government were concerned over the forcible change in the political status of Tibet by the Chinese and the consequent injury to Nepalese interests in Tibet²⁹. The British assured Nepal protection against a Chinese invasion; the security of Nepal's interests in Tibet was also guaranteed. At the British instance the Nepalese government formally repudiated their traditional allegiance to China; the quinquennial tributary mission—the token of the allegiance—sent from Kathmandu to Peking since 1792 was discontinued. The British also secured a measure of control on Nepal's relations with Tibet and China at this time³⁰. From 1915 to 1947 the British were an important factor in Nepal's relations with Tibet; they preserved peace between them and mediated in their frequent disputes. The Chinese proceedings in Tibet and the north-east frontier of India in the first decade of the present century thus resulted in the diminution of their influence in the area and the proportionate augmentation of British influence. The British government did not openly ask the Rana government of Nepal to have no relations with the Chinese Republic³¹, although they made it amply clear that the relations had better not have any political content.

By the 1920s areas of agreement and co-operation between the governments of Nepal and India had widened considerably, and their interests, particularly political and military, had become to a great extent interdependent. Nepal only wondered if the trend of events would lead eventually to the disappearance of her independence under sheer force of circumstances; the British would not make any conscious effort at obtaining such a result, but then, their influence was an irresistible fact. The problem of the Nepalese government:

was how to forestall the natural result of this influence. The British government fully appreciated Nepal's uneasiness. In 1923 a treaty, called the Treaty of Friendship, was concluded with Nepal which explicitly recognised her internal and external independence²⁹. Prior to this the Nepalese government had been given an annual present of rupees ten lakhs in recognition of their assistance in the World War I;³⁰ during the War, Chandra Shamsher, the Nepalese Prime Minister, had supplied 55,000 Gurkha recruits as against an average of 1,500 recruits in the pre-war years. The Nepalese government were also allowed to freely import arms and machinery for manufacturing munitions—a concession so long withheld by the British for fear of making Nepal unmanageably strong. The Nepalese government made much of the treaty; Chandra Shamsher could not convince the people that he had obtained for Nepal a concession which was until then a political desideratum: a definite guarantee of her integrity from the British. From the British point of view, however, the treaty was little more than necessary formality; it was a means to satisfy the Rana Government's *amour propre*. Treaties made little change in the actual fact that both policy and concatenation of circumstances had brought Nepal well within the political orbit of the British empire in India. Nepal was, in fact, an Indian political and military outpost, serving the purpose of an outer strategical frontier, Nepal's internal autonomy was guaranteed by the British, but her external relations were subordinated to the considerations of British interests. It was a state economically heavily dependent on India; and its rulers' obligations to the British made them subordinate partners in safeguarding and fostering British imperial interests in Asia.

The intensity of the nationalist movement in India from the 1920s and such factors as the growing Japanese influence in China and their interest in Tibet and Mongolia, the rise of Bolshevik Russia, and the disturbed situation in India's north-west frontier, culminating in the third Afghan war (1919), necessitated the maintenance of good relations with Nepal. A review of the British military position in India at this time established that the Government of India should estimate their military resources in the worst contingency on the sole basis of the strength of the Gurkha corps in India and that of the troops which the Nepalese government could spare as mercenaries. In fact, the Gurkhas came now to be highly valued by the British government not only for their military skill but even more for their detachment from those political, racial and religious influences which complicated and embarrassed the military organisation of the Government of India. It was recognised, particularly by the India Office, that

such a powerful Hindu state as Nepal could exert considerable influence on Indian anarchist elements; and the more articulate these elements became the greater became the need for keeping on good terms with the Rana government in Nepal.¹¹ The Ranas actively helped the Government of India in dealing with the anti-British forces in India. Indian newspapers bearing seditious writings were banned in Nepal; and the Indian employees in Nepal were warned against any anti-British activity. Arrangements were made to rush Gurkha troops from Nepal to the Punjab during nationalist disturbances following the Jallianwallahbagh massacre. During both the World Wars large contingents of the Nepalese army were posted in India for the maintenance of internal security. The Home government particularly feared that the Nepalese government could exercise powerful influence on Indian politics, and that if they were disaffected, the revolutionary movement in India could assume a much graver aspect. Attempts at tampering with the Gurkha troops were made often. During the first World War the Germans made an abortive effort in intriguing with Nepal through Raja Mahendra Pratap, the noted Indian revolutionary¹². When relations with Afghanistan and the Pathan tribes on the north-west frontier were strained, the Gurkha troops were looked upon by the British as an effective counterpoise to the Muslim elements in the Indian army.

This was also the time when a small band of young Nepalese raised their voice against the Rana autocracy and urged for a more liberal regime. These Nepalese were educated in India; and they formed the intellectual elite of Nepal desiring social, economic and political changes. The educated and enlightened Nepalese in India formed associations of which the All India Gurkha League was the most important¹³. They also published a paper from Benaras, called the *Gorkhali*, which for its anti-Rana tone was banned by the British government in 1922. By the treaty of 1923 each of the two governments undertook to prevent its territory from being used for purposes prejudicial to the security of the other. In the 1930s several attempts were made by the anti-Rana elements at exterminating the Ranas by political assassinations. The attempts failed, but the anti-Rana spirit did not die out. During World War II the Rana government were much worried by the close link between the anti-British elements in India and anti-Rana elements in Nepal¹⁴. Discontent against the Ranas assumed such magnitude in the years following the war that the Ranas were forced to make a gesture of reforms in 1948. The reforms, however, failed to meet the situation. Ultimately the Ranas had to bow out in 1951¹⁵.

The British relations with Nepal were thus a history of the gradual conversion of a challenge into an opportunity, of

a source of danger into one of benefit. The British policy was one of tactful management of a proud, sensitive, freedom-loving nation which would not grudge the loss of *de facto* independence provided an appearance of its *de jure* independence were kept up by profuse assertions to that effect, by avoidance of interference in the internal affairs of the state, by periodical bestowal of honours, titles and subsidies to its autocratic rulers, and by the provision of employment to its martial peoples. That this policy paid off due was to several factors: the British understood the Nepalese people with all their sentiments, prejudices and susceptibilities; secondly, the British appreciated the fact that Nepal had a personality of her own, and quite a strong one at that; thirdly, the British adjusted their needs to the Nepalese expectations. To these must be added two more factors: the isolation of Nepals; and the monopolisation of Nepal's diplomatic relations by the British.

Events in India, particularly of political and military character, had profound impact on Nepal, but they could hardly unsettle the relations between the two governments on account of the watchful policy of the British. In 1839 political pressure had obliged the then government of Nepal to undertake to have no relations with Indian states⁶⁶ and this restriction continued to operate until 1923, when on the representation of Chandra Shamsher, it was formally lifted. The British policy was to isolate Nepal from her neighbouring States, Bhutan and Sikkim, in order to prevent their absorption in Nepal. Sikkim was taken under British protection with this object in view; the conversion of Sikkim into a British protectorate prevented east-ward expansion of Nepal, and this ensured Bhutan's security against a Nepalese invasion. The rise of militant Nepal under the Gurkhas had disturbed the balance of power in the lower Himalayas, and it was gradually restored when the British confirmed their political influence in Sikkim and Bhutan, and later in Tibet.

The British also discouraged Nepal from establishing relations with any foreign power. Nepal's desire for diplomatic representation at the court of St. James was not met until 1934, for fear that Germany, Japan and Soviet Russia might indulge in anti-British intrigues with Nepal through her embassy in London. When Chandra Shamsher sent a few Nepalese to Japan for technical training,⁶⁷ there were not a few in the India Office who felt uneasy. It was, in fact, held as an axiom that the political and military exigencies of the Indian empire could not allow Nepal to pass out of the British sphere of influence into that of any other power. Nepal's landlocked position and economic dependence on India, and the lack of any power in her neighbourhood which could

prevent its gravitation towards India enabled the British government to exercise this monopoly on Nepal's diplomatic relations. Nepal could not play the same role as Afghanistan between Russia in Central Asia and the British in India. Nepal did serve as a buffer state when China was powerful in Tibet. But the progressive weakness of China and the emergence of an independent Tibet under British guarantee made India's north-east frontier safe; and correspondingly Nepal's importance as a buffer state decreased.

Politically, British influence on Nepal had both a stabilising and retardatory effect. British support to the Rana regime ensured peace and stability in a country where geographical obstacles and ethnic variety impeded administrative integration and political unity. British support to the Rana family made it strong against its political rivals. But it also made the setting up of any other rule impossible, let alone any other form of government. The Nepalese could, therefore, have no experience of political experiments; and this was no small handicap for them when they were faced with the problem of running a democratic form of government after the fall of the Rana regime in 1951.

In Nepal's social life the British had no pretensions to act as a conscious catalytic agent. Yet, their abhorrence of social evils like sati and slavery encouraged the Ranas to abolish both, if gradually. The need for dealing with the British obliged the later Ranas to educate themselves, and to open a few schools at Kathmandu. The British encouraged the Ranas to travel freely in India and to go to Europe with a view as much to impressing on them the power and resources of the British empire as to enlarging their mental horizon. British policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Nepal was tempered by their positive opposition to change of power by violence; and this partly explains the comparatively less bloody events in Nepalese history in the twentieth century. Jang Bahadur's travels in Europe broadened his outlook, the result of which was seen in the moderation of the criminal laws of Nepal.²⁰ With British help a very limited arrangement was made for the improvement of sanitation and public health at Kathmandu. Ropeways and a light railway were built, and a few industries started in the Terai region. A newspaper, government controlled, also made its appearance. The British did not want to force the pace of modernisation in Nepal, for it was certain to be resented by the Rana government as an interference in the internal affairs of Nepal. If the Ranas took a few slow and hesitating steps towards reforms and development, the British gave them all encouragement and support. Geographical obstacles, lack of communication and mobility in life, the Nepalese policy of isolation,

and the British anxiety to humour the Ranas—all these prevented the dissemination of even a limited degree of liberal ideas prevailing in India. The Nepalese had the innate fear that appurtenances of modernism were but instruments of political enervation; and the Ranas, in their own interest, kept up this fear. A modern Nepal, helped in her development by the British, they feared, would be reduced to an adjunct of British India. Beneath this lofty patriotic ideal there lurked the apprehension that modern ideas and institutions and the resultant enlightenment of the people would weaken the autocratic Rana rule. Isolation and non-intercourse with the outside world thus served the family interests of the Ranas. The Ranas made full use of the British support to ward off internal challenges to their rule.

British influence on Nepal was thus limited; and this was partly due to the fact that this influence had practically only one agency to operate through, the Nepalese government, whose policy was to keep this influence rigidly restricted. There was no ban on the movement of Nepalese to India, but for the Indians Nepal was a closed country, except during festivals. The introduction of a passport system by the Rana government in the thirties of the present century was a measure to prevent the entry of undesirable Indians and other aliens into Nepal. Gurkha soldiers who served in India were attached to the British by economic ties, and this served as the strongest deterrent to their exposition to anti-British and anti-Rana influences. There was not a single village in Nepal which had not sent men to fight in the British Indian army. There were many Nepalese immigrants to India, concentrated mostly in tea gardens of Assam and Bengal.

The Ranas discouraged education, fearing it as an instrument of enlightenment and political agitation. An intellectual class was, therefore, conspicuous by its absence until a few years before the fall of the Rana regime. In 1947 there were only one college and four high schools in Nepal. In 1948 there were only seven B.As and M.As, fortyeight undergraduates and fourteen with Sanskrit degrees.²⁰ The small number of educated men were either absorbed in government service or purged out of the country on the slightest suspicion of being anti-government.

Indo-Nepalese relations during the British period had thus a very narrow base; it was a relationship of a family oligarchy in Nepal and an alien government in India, both of which became in course of time unpopular. Anti-Rana forces naturally looked to the anti-British elements in India for support. The Indian nationalist press assailed the Rana regime, particularly when the Gurkha corps were used to put down nationalist agitations in India.²¹ Anti-Rana forces had

intimate connexion with the Indian National Congress, many top ranking leaders of which, such as Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahabir Tyagi, actively assisted the discontented Nepalese to sow sedition in the Gurkha ranks; they also sought to enlist Nepalese volunteers for the civil disobedience movement.⁴¹ During the Quit India movement, 1942, a number of Nepali leaders were arrested in India, and Indian newspapers criticising the Ranas were muzzled. During the movement the people of Saptari in the Nepalese Terai broke open the Hanumannagar jail where Jay Prakash Narain, Rammanohar Lohia and other Indian leaders had been interned by the Rana government when they escaped to Nepal from India. Anti-Rana movement in the Terai became a strong political force in 1946-7 which compelled the Rana government to concede some reforms. The Rana-British relationship appeared to the anti-Rana forces as an unholy alliance, a partnership in the exploitation of the Nepalese people. The British were condemned as supporters of an autocratic regime which was galling to the people.

When the British left India, the Ranas found it impossible to adjust themselves to the new situation created by the independent Government of India's insistence on a new and broader basis of relationship between the two states. The British with their limited political and military objective tolerated a regime very different from their own administration in India. The new government of India with their democratic ideals not only regarded this regime as a political anachronism but actively assisted in its fall. The British had but little interest in a modern Nepal; independent India, on the other hand, actively helped in effecting a rapid transformation in Nepal's political, social and economic life. While the British were accused of having stretched the principle of let alone too far and thereby inhibiting the progress of Nepal, the problem of the government of India today is to help Nepal in such a way as not to engender in the Nepalese the feeling that India was overdoing her role as Nepal's guardian and pace-setter.

FOOTNOTES

* Published in *The Modern Review*, June 1966, under the title "British Policy Towards Nepal, 1767-1947", pp. 472-9.

1. K. C. Chaudhuri, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations*. B. D. Sanwal, *Nepal and the East India Company*, pp. 69-214.
2. N. L. Chatterjee, *Verelst's Rule in India*, pp. 21-39.
3. Prithvinarayan Shah, ruler of Gorkha, a small state to the west of Kathmandu, conquered the Nepal valley in 1768-9. The present

- ruling family of Nepal traces its descent from him. S. V. Gyenvali, *Prithvinarayan Shah*. D. R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, pp. 42-103.
4. PC, 18 September 1837, Nos. 69-71: Report on Political Transactions with Nepal, by A. C. Campbell, Asst. Resident.
 5. Chittaranjan Nepali, *General Bhimsen Thapa Ra Tatkalin Nepal*.
 6. Nepal lost the entire hill country between the Sutlej and Mahakali, and almost the entire low lands (Tarai) west of the Gandak. *Papers Relating to the Nepaul War. Military Sketches of the Goorkha War in India in the years 1814, 1815, 1816*. C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, II, (1909 edn.), pp. 110-12.
 7. *Ibid*, pp. 94, 322-3.
 8. H. A. Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal*, I, pp. 298-9.
 9. W. W. Hunter, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson*.
 10. Campbell's Report, op. cit. SC, 5 Mar 1833, No. 24; 28 Jun. 1833, No. 11; 18 Sept. 1837, No. 69. PC, 12 Jun. 1834, No. 140; 10 July 1834, No. 144; 9 Oct. 1834, No. 17.
 11. SC, 18 Jan 1941, No. 74: Excerpts from the letters of the Resident ...to Government from 1830 to 1840, by J. R. Tickell, Asst. Resident. BMAM, No. 37694, PLA, Vol. 4, pp. 62, 99, 225. PC, 11 Nov 1853, No. 23: A Narrative of Principal Events in Nepal from 1840 to the end of 1851, by Capt. Nicholetts, Asst. Resident.
 12. HM, Vol. 9, p. 30; Vol. 16, p. 5. H. B. Edwardes and H. Merivale, *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, pp. 321-3. A. Law, ed., *India Under Lord Ellenborough*, pp. 109, 195-200.
 13. Pudma Jang Bahadur Rana, *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal*. SC, 31 Oct 1846, Nos. 151-60.
Jang Bahadur founded the Rana regime, an absolute autocracy, which lasted until 1951.
 14. Kamal Dixit, ed., *Jang Bahadurko Vilayat Yatra*.
 15. FPA, Aug 1864, No. 51. FSA, Dec 1877, No. 119. D. Wright, ed., *History of Nepal*, pp. 71-3.
 16. FSA, May 1877, Nos. 36-56; Dec 1877, Nos. 104-33. LP, 518/2, Lytton to Queen (Victoria), 24 Apr 1877, Lytton to Salisbury, 3 Oct 1877.
 17. RP, IS, 290/5, Ripon to Kimberley, 5 Jun, 14 Aug. 1884, IMP, Vol. 2557, Aug 1885, Nos. 2822, 2829.
 18. DFP, Vol. 19, Dufferin to Kimberley, 23 Mar 1885.
 19. See below.
 20. PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067. DP, Letter Book, Apr 1884-July 1890, Durand to General Chesney, 4 July 1884, Durand to Editor, *The Pioneer* (private), 7 Sept. 1884.
 21. PSLI, Vol. 44, No. 101, 19 Jun 1885 and enclosures; Vol. 73, No. 4, 3 Jan 1894; Vol. 77, No. 189, 17 Oct 1894. PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067. RBP, X20923, R96/1: Notes...to secure a sufficiency of Gurkha recruits, 27 Sept 1886; R96/2: Roberts' Minutes, 8 Feb 1890, 4 Sept 1891; R100/2: Roberts to Duke of Cambridge, 4 May 1891, 8 Apr 1892. LNP, Vol. IX/V, Lansdowne to Kimberley, 22 Feb 1893.

22. Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, pp. 111 et seq.
23. Parshotam Mehra, *The Younghusband Mission An Interpretation*.
24. PSLI, Vol. 143, Reg. No. 571; Vol. 144, Reg. No. 644; Vol. 145, Reg. Nos. 807, 899; Vol. 149, Reg. Nos. 1169, 1396; Vol. 150, Reg. No. 182; Vol. 159, Reg. No. 1592A; Vol. 169, Reg. No. 1675. *The Times*, 24 Oct 1900. CRP, Vol. 162, Curzon to Hamilton, 28 Dec 1902. Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, pp. 267-88.
25. PF, 1914, Vol. 11, Reg. No. 2964: Tibet Conference, Final Memorandum, by Henry McMahon, 8 July 1914. PSM, B177: Chinese Forward Policy in the North-East Frontier of India, 3 Dec 1910; B191: Tibet, by A. Hirtzel; B201: Tibet, the Simla Conference, by J. E. Shuckburgh. MP, Vol. 5, Morley to Minto, 24 Feb, 3, 9, 17, 23 Mar, 30 Jun, 18 July 1910; Vol. 23, Minto to Morley, 17 Mar, 14 Apr, 30 Jun, 9, 21 July 1910. MNP, No. 996, Minto to Morley, 29 June 1910. AP, 1910, LXVIII, C 5240: *Further Papers Relating to Tibet*. Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, 2 Vols. E. Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer*.
26. These interests were mainly commercial. See below.
27. PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. 334; Pt. 6, Reg. Nos. 1763, 1781, 1809, 1867, 3120, 4546; Pt. 7, Reg. Nos. 1475, 1674. See below.
28. Chinese Republic was established after the revolution in 1911.
29. AP, 1924, XXVI, C 2112: *Treaty Between United Kingdom and Nepal*. PEF, 3085/1912, Pts. 2, 1, 3, 4.
30. *Ibid.*, Pt. 1, Reg. Nos. 2612, 5596. CMP, Vol. 10, Chelmsford to Montagu, Telg. 9 May 1919.
31. *Ibid.* PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. Nos. 386, 2612, 5780.
32. PEF, 4353/1920, Pt. 1; 3443/1914, Pt. 6. Mahendra Pratap, *My Life story of Fifty Five Years*, pp. 41, 56.
33. EC, No. 21, File No. 2, Reg. No. PZ489/1932. HDP, File No. 258/1931.
34. EC, No. 21, File No. 6 contains several documents, mostly reports from the British Envoy, regarding the anti-Rana feelings in Nepal.
35. Anirudha Gupta, *Politics in Nepal*, pp. 30-50.
36. SC, 26 Dec. 1839, No. 154. Aitchison op. cit., p. 68.
37. Foreign External-B, Apr 1902, Nos. 78-81.
38. Oldfield, op. cit, pp. 244-6, 400. Wright, op. cit., pp. 45-6.
39. Gupta, op. cit. p. 17, fn. 49.
40. EC, No. 21, File No. 6, Reg. Nos. PZ5448, 6191/1939; 640/1940.
41. EC, No. 21, File No. 2, Reg. Nos. PZ 1410/1931; 5371/1935; 1316/1932. HDP, File Nos. 14/9 of 1931 and 3/39 of 1942.

II

NEPAL AND INDIAN STATES, 1800-1850*

Geographical proximity notwithstanding, political relations of Nepal with Indian States, other than those on her immediate border, were far from intimate before the 19th century. Mountains, rugged terrains and pestilential swamps in the foothills prevented intimate contact between Nepal and the princely states of India. Consequently, Nepal remained mostly unaffected by the changes in India's political scene.

The latter half of the 18th century forms a great divide in the history of Nepal. By the end of this century the rulers of Gorkha, one of the twenty-four states to the west of Kathmandu,¹ had, by successive strokes of arms and subtle diplomacy, welded the congeries of mutually warring Nepalese states into a kingdom, viable, vigorous and militant. Expansion by conquests was the main plank of Gurkha state policy, organisation of a strong army the first care. The rise of militant state of Nepal was the most important political development in India's northern border in the 18th century. Aggressive and expansionist Nepal posed an abiding menace to the Indian states in her vicinity. The Gurkhas absorbed the small independent states on the Indo-Nepalese border by a policy of nibbling encroachment and conquest. The first decade of the 19th century witnessed Nepal's territorial limits stretched from the river Tista on the east to the river Sutlej on the west, embracing a number of hill states on the Himalayas.²

Flushed with success, the Gurkhas swooped upon the Punjab hill states, stimulating thereby the jealousy and hostility of the two powers interested in these states—the Sikhs under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the British. The expansionist policy of the Gurkhas had affected the Company's interests; politically, it engendered frequent border disputes which were likely to culminate in a full-scale war between the two powers; economically, it had damaged the Company's trade in the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan regions. The occupation of the Punjab hill states and particularly the Kangra valley by the Gurkhas was strongly disliked by Ranjit Singh who cherished the dream of uniting all the Punjab states under his own authority.

The Gurkhas besieged the fort of Kot Kangra, the capital of Kangra, in 1809, compelling its ruler, Sansar Chand, to appeal to the British for protection. The British, eager to

keep Ranjit Singh in good humour on account of the apprehended Franco-Russian schemes in the north-west of India, did not respond to Sansar Chand's appeal.³ In despair, Sansar Chand gave himself up to Ranjit Singh who drove out the invading Gurkhas. In the Sikh-Nepalese encounter at Kangra both the powers had appealed to the Company for military assistance. Lt. Colonel David Ochterlony was requested by Ranjit Singh to restrain the Gurkha general, Amar Singh Thapa, from invading the tributaries of the state of Lahore. Ranjit Singh was eager to drive the Gurkhas away from the hill states, but the British viewed his thrust into these states with much concern. The British, therefore, refrained from involvement, their policy being to let the two powers clash with each other and weaken themselves. The Governor-General instructed Ochterlony that as a "general principle, Government would not be disposed to exercise a power of restraint over the project of Ranjit Singh....."⁴ The powerful state of Lahore, firmly allied to the British by the Treaty of 1809, served as an effective restraint on the Nepalese expansion further west.

Thus baulked in the west, north and east,⁵ the martial spirit of the Gurkhas found an accentuated vent to the south where the ill-defended British dominion lay in tempting opulence. The result was a series of encroachments on British territory by the Gurkhas, claims and counter-claims to disputed territories on the ill-defended border, accumulation of mutual bitterness and ultimately a full-scale war and a pyrrhic victory of the British.

During the course of the war, the Nepalese frantically sought the help of such powerful Indian states as Lahore and Gwalior. For some time past Ranjit Singh was growing increasingly restive; the Mahrattas, smarting under the defeat in 1803-05, turned receptive ears to the Nepalese entreaties; and so did Amir Khan, the leader of the Pindaris. The Indian princes watched the progress of the war with great eagerness and expectancy.⁶ The many reverses suffered by the British and the death of veteran British generals in the war exploded the myth of the invincibility of British arms.

Lord Hastings the Governor-General, found with intense anxiety nothing but "elements of war on all sides"; failure in the war, he realised, "would be the first step to a speedy subversion of our power"; indeed, "the name and the character of the Government and of the British nation were felt to be committed on the issue".⁷ Sharpest vigilance was, hence, maintained on the Mahrattas and the Sikhs, in particular. None of the Indian powers, however, sent any active help to Nepal. The ultimate victory of the British in the war was a severe shock to Nepal.

Defeat in the war could not daunt Nepal, nor could the humiliation subdue her spirit. She smarted under the yoke of the Treaty by which the British seized one-third of her territory, and sought to destroy her martial spirit, ending for ever her career of military expansion. Eager to avenge the defeat and restore the lost territories, Nepal sought to incite the Indian powers against the British. Bhim Sen Thapa, the all powerful Minister of Nepal, kept up lively interest in the British activities in India and maintained close relations with Indian powers. In fact, the Nepalese records bear ample testimony to Bhim Sen's abortive efforts to rally the Indian powers against the British in India. In the courts of the Mahrattas and the Sikhs, agents were maintained, and tried emissaries were sent annually to different parts of India to report on the activities of the British and the state of feeling among the Indian powers.

Thus, during the third Anglo-Mahratta war which followed in the immediate wake of the Nepal war, the Nepalese tried to form a confederacy of the Mahrattas and the Pindaris against the British. A tried emissary, Pandit Padmapanee, was sent to Daulat Rao Sindhia for this purpose. Padmapanee sent from Gwalior a detailed report to Kathmandu referring to the Mahratta politics, and the attitude of the Peshwa, Holkar and Sindhi towards the British. On being asked by Sindhi about Nepal's reactions to the imminent war, (Anglo-Mahratta war), Padmapanee said :

The Maharaja [Sindhia] was the prince of the Deccan ; that if he would enter into serious and solemn engagements with my master and ratify them with religious ceremonies ...that in every way we should be ready and should act according to writing ; that we did not fear the English ; that we should enter into no agreement with them ; that if we made one, nothing after could be done, on which the Maharaja Sindhia gave me every assurance of satisfaction... The Poona affairs are thus : Trimbakji Danglia has created great tumult...and the English had opposed the Peshwa who has now yielded up some of his best forts...his army is opposed to them. If you get ready, I am willing to engage them... There is no dependence on their words... The Pindaries amount to 25000, and have brought spoil by the plunder of the European country who have killed many of their sowars. Notwithstanding, the Pindaries are still very strong and ready to fight, but they have no place of strength... Their safety is from Daulat Rao. The Europeans are ready to oppose them... The Maharaja's ministers have leagued with the English, this alarms and prevents him from quarrelling with them... The Maharaja [Sindhia] and

Hindu Rao wish to send you [King of Nepal] letters, but defer it on account of the road. I shall bring them with me".

Sindhia's immediate reaction was one of doubt as regards Nepal's sincerity; he, therefore, refused to commit himself to Nepalese plans, wondering if they were not a British stratagem to know his attitude to the war. Very soon, however, Sindhia gave up his hesitancy and actively tried to forge a league of the Marhattas, the Sikhs and the Nepalese. The Peshwa, in the meanwhile, earnestly sought Gurkha military assistance, for he felt that "if there is anyone to save the Peshwa and now, that is to be done by the Gurkhas to whom everybody here look." Military preparations were set afoot in Nepal, evidently to keep the army in readiness for this anticipated league. The *darbar* urged the British to abrogate the Treaty of Sagouli, which the Nepalese resented as a national disgrace, and to substitute it by a new treaty, omitting altogether the article providing for the cession of the lowlands between the rivers Kosi and Gandak to the British¹¹.

The British at first did not take these developments seriously. The Resident, Edward Gardner, even asserted that Nepal was just toying with a hope and that she had no malicious intention. Shortly, however, he was "pretty certain" that the Nepalese really meant mischief¹².

But the political situation in India suggested the wisdom of a soft-pedalling policy. The hands of the British were full with the Marhatta and the Pindari wars; stern measures against Nepal were certain to throw her into the inviting arms of these hostile powers; the result was certain to be a general flare-up in India. The British were fully aware of Nepal's intrigues, but they winked at these. Gardner was clearly instructed thus :

In the present state of things it would be obviously inexpedient even if the proofs were complete to raise any question with the government of Nepal which would interrupt the good understanding between the two governments [of Nepal and British India] and whence it is so essential to maintain while all our forces are employed in distant service¹³.

No restrictive or punitive measures were taken against Nepal, nor were her agents in Marhatta courts arrested or detained. A mild remonstrance alone was made with the Nepalese *darbar*. Soon after, the British entered into treaties with Sindhia and Amir Khan, the knowledge of which damped the zeal of the Nepalese *darbar* to forge offensive leagues with them. Following the Resident's representation, the *darbar* officially disavowed the activities of Padmapanee¹⁴.

In fact, ever since the termination of the Nepalese war, the British sought to salve the soreness of their foe by a policy of conciliation and scrupulous non-interference in Nepal's internal affairs. A harsher treaty was not imposed on Nepal for the British were eager to impress on her that they were not vindictive but forbearing and generous to their gallant foe.

The British Resident's primary duty was to reconcile this over-bearing and proud enemy to the political relations with the British government, with a view to gradually transforming Nepal into a friendly neighbour or, at the least, a peaceful one:

The Government have no motives for reducing the Nepal power and resources below the present state, when many powerful considerations suggest the expediency of avoiding a war with that people, however justly provoked, if peace can be maintained without loss of honour¹⁴.

It is in pursuance of this conciliatory policy that during the third Anglo-Mahratta war, the eastern Tarai, between the rivers Kosi and Rapti, taken from Nepal in 1816 was restored to her¹⁵, evidently as a sop.

The British could not object to Nepal's intercourse with the Indian powers, for the Treaty of Sagouli provided no ban on it. They knew that the Indian powers were disunited and the Nepalese projects of alliance amorphous. They were confident that,

The Nepalese...are not in a condition to wage an offensive war against the British government and are strong enough in the only vulnerable points of our territory with reference to that nation to feel secure against any desultory attempts... The plan, therefore, [of league of Indian powers] what it may be, is likely to be harmless in its effects on our interests¹⁶.

With the consolidation of British hold on Indian states and the confirmation of their military superiority over the latter Nepal's intriguing propensities decreased. There was slow but perceptible thaw in the tension between Nepal and the British government; the former realised the futility of rallying the mutually distrustful Indian powers against the British, and the latter was convinced of the worth of a stable rule in Nepal under its able Minister, Bhim Sen Thapa, who had effectively restrained the turbulence of the Nepalese army and had kept peace with the British¹⁷.

The policy of Bhim Sen was peaceful but not friendly; nor was it free from distrust. He maintained a consistent attitude of jealous exclusion of the British from the internal affairs of Nepal, and confined their political intercourse to rigidly-defined and closely-guarded limits. This seemed to him the only means of safeguarding Nepal's political integrity and

independence from that scheming power which before his eyes had reduced and weakened the principal Indian powers—Mysore, Hyderabad, Oudh and the Marhattas as much by arms as by subtle diplomacy. The Resident was distrusted as the agent of British influence; being closely watched in his movements by guards placed around the Residency, unable to move beyond a fixed distance, and deprived of any kind of social relations with anybody, he was virtually a pariah, kept under a galling and perpetual surveillance. Bhim Sen's constant concern was to prevent the Resident from assuming any form of influence, direct or indirect, in the court of Nepal. In every overture of the British government for closer relations, Bhim Sen discerned some devious project of a dangerous and encroaching neighbour, scheming to conquer and annex his country. Jealous exclusion of the British from Nepal and non-intercourse with them were his cardinal principles, adopted to preserve his country's independence at a time when the powerful states of India were slowly being reduced into vassals of the British, though euphemistically called their protected allies.

Ever since the assumption of power, Bhim Sen's primary aim had been to organise an army, imposing in size and a model in efficiency. Under his fostering care, the Nepalese army became a "tower of strength", as formidable as it was during 1814-16. The martial spirit of the Nepalese was actively fostered and zealously conserved with the fond hope of using it at an opportune moment when the British would be seriously engaged either in quelling an internal disturbance or fighting a powerful Indian state or warding off a foreign invasion¹⁰. Single-handed it was impossible to fight the British at any time other than a crisis. Consequently, there was a synchronism between the troubles of the British and exacerbation of Nepal's warlike spirit. A crisis in British India invariably coincided with the vigorous attempts of Nepal to forge leagues with the Indian powers with a view to exploiting the British difficulties. The barometer of Nepal's diplomatic and military activity was regulated by the frequency and intensity of the British troubles. A causal relation may, hence, be found in the stable and peaceful relations of the Nepalese and the British governments is 1823-35 and the general calm and order in the political state of India during that period. Except the Anglo-Burmese war (1824-26), the British were not involved in any major military operation at this time, nor was Nepal's diplomatic activity too vigorous of her warlike spirit alarming. Nepal was by the large peaceful, she was quiescent, if not cordial. The Burmese war provided a stimulant to Nepal's restlessness and excitement.

Emissaries were exchanged between Kathmandu and Ava, carrying what was suspected to be schemes of hostility towards the British. The Nepalese King was alleged to have written his Burmese counterpart, undertaking to engage the British towards Brindaban and facilitate the Burmese occupation of the territories contiguous to Assam. Presumably to lull the British suspicion, the King of Nepal offered military aid to them against the Burmese. The overture was politely declined while the Resident requested the darbar to keep the Rajguru (Head Priest) of Burma as hostage, should he go to Nepal. The victory of the British in the war acted as an effective damper to Nepal's machinations. Earlier, Ugrath, the deposed Raja of Assam, had solicited the help of Nepal against the British, and the Nepalese were inclined to respond in lieu of a reward of Rs. two lakhs. But as the Raja soon patched up a reconciliation with the British the project fell through²⁰.

From the 1830s the British in India had a difficult time, attributable mainly to their confrontation with Russia in the north-west frontier of India. The frontier soon became the cockpit of Russian, British and Sikh diplomacy, the confluence of their ambitious schemes and discordant interests. A feeling of restlessness and an "ignorant expectancy—a looking outwards in the belief of some change, the nature of which no one understood"²¹, ran through India. Indian states, already in "brooding discontent" grew increasingly restive; they were agitated; some even showed disaffection. Rumours of Russo-Persian invasion of India and the imminent collapse of the 'Company's Raj' gained wide currency and ready credence. Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, was naturally uneasy at this spectre of "a vast change" opening before the British—a phenomenon which was certain to tax the resources of the British government, both military and economic, as never before.²² These were England's woes and Nepal's opportunities. The jingo spirit at Kathmandu increased; the army grew excited over the prospects of invasion and plunder of the British territories. The general tone of the Nepalese darbar became bellicose commensurate with the increasing pre-occupation of the British with troubles in the north-west.

To add to the British difficulties the Nepalese court was now rent with internecine strifes, the King, the Queens and the ambitious nobles belonging to rival parties²³ scrambling for power. All were up against Bhim Sen, the all-powerful Minister whose absolute monopoly of power for three decades had created intense jealousy among his rivals. In 1832 the old Regent, Queen Lalit Tripura Sundari died. It was a major crisis in the state, for her death was the first material blow to Bhim Sen. She was the strongest prop of Bhim

Sen's power; her commanding personality had kept so long in effective restraint the rivals of Bhim Sen; her death emboldened them to undermine by intrigues the Minister's predominance. Before long a strong anti-Bhim Sen faction was formed in the palace, composed of the King, the Queens and the nobles, all bound by the common spirit of jealousy and vengeance and a common thirst for power²⁴.

To stave off his fall, Bhim Sen resorted to the familiar course of activating the foreign policy of the state as a means, presumably, of deflecting the attention of his rivals from affairs at home to those abroad. A spirit of restiveness was rearing its head in the army, long starved of martial exploits; his peaceful policy towards the British had been branded by his enemies as supine and pussillanimous, an impolitic appeasement of Nepal's traditional enemy, and, anti-national. The army being the repository of power in Nepal, humouring it was naturally the cardinal policy of Nepalese statesmen, as much as its enmity was the surest means of destruction of a regime Bhim Sen well knew that nothing was dearer to the Nepalese than intrigues against the British and nothing more alluring than the prospects of war with them²⁵. But war with the British was an extremely hazardous project; political intrigues were, hence, the most effective expedient to absorb the attention of his rivals in the court, as also to mollify the restless army. Besides giving a lie to his political opponents' charge of appeasing the British, it would convince the army that Bhim Sen was just awaiting the right opportunity to strike at the national enemy of Nepal.

In consequence, there was a "renewal or at least a sensible increase" of intrigues with the Indian states²⁶. Considerable agitation and ferment in Nepal followed. Speculations were in spate regarding the overwhelming strength of the Russo-Persian army about to invade India, the comparative weakness of the British army, the uneasy neutrality of Ranjit Singh, the rebellious disposition of Raja Man Singh of Jodhpur, the likely movement of the whole British army to the north-west and Rajputana and the resultant exposition of the rich Gangetic plain to Nepalese invasions. Emissaries were sent to Lahore and Teheran to pick up intelligence with a view to ascertaining the authenticity of the rumoured Russo-Persian invasion. Increased correspondence with Doorjan Sal, the ex-Raja of Bharatpur, Raja Mitterjit Singh of Tikaree, Raja of Bettia and other influential zamindars of Bihar suggested some conspiracy. There was as yet no positive evidence of hostile machinations on the part of the zamindars of Bihar, but the political character of their correspondence with the court of Kathmandu, the exchange of secret emissaries and

the disavowal of these proceedings by Nepal strengthened the presumption that the latter meant mischief²⁷.

Fateh Singh, a Nepalese agent, arrived in Lahore and met Ranjit Singh. Karbeer Khattree, another agent, followed Fateh Singh, after completing his journey to various parts of India, undertaken with the ostensible object of seeing the military and other resources of the British. He met Ranjit Singh and gave him complimentary presents from the King of Nepal. Similar presents were sent by Ranjit Singh to the King of Nepal as a reciprocation of friendliness. Nepal also despatched embassies to Kamran Shah, the ruler of Herat²⁸. Soon after, the rumour of Russo-Persian invasion passed off to the relief of the Resident and the disappointment of the Nepalese.

In July 1837 Bhim Sen was deposed; he languished in a dungeon, in utter disgrace and despair, condemned to a fate, gloomy, horrid and uncertain²⁹. The fall of Bhim Sen was a domestic revolution in Nepal and a landmark in Indo-Nepalese relations. By the efficient administration of the state and firm control of the martial Gurkhas and by equally able handling of the conflicting ambitions of aspiring nobles, he had given Nepal three decades of peace, prosperity, progress and power. His fall unleashed the fissiparous elements, so long kept in restraint; a bitter wrangle for power ensued; the jingo spirit, the lust for plunder and war increased in the *darbar*; the pent-up martial ardour of the army was about to burst forth in all its accumulated fury. Indo-Nepalese relation entered upon a new phase—a phase of strain as never before. Never was there a period when so much misunderstanding was created between Nepal and the British Government as in the decade following the fall of Bhim Sen. It was a time when one state stood in apprehension of invasion by the other, when many wrongs were committed, leaving a legacy of hostile and bitter feelings in both. At this very time the British were passing through one of the most critical phases of their career in India. The Indian states were known to be in a state of sullen discontent; the north-west frontier was ablaze; China and Burma were hostile; and the state of the Indian army left much to be desired; in short, all affairs were full of gloomy portents. With the fall of Bhim Sen the mainstay of Nepal's internal stability and pacific relations with the British was swept away. The long spell of strong government in Nepal was broken; Nepal lay politically weak after him, corroded with dissensions, providing ample scope for British interference.

A period of transition ensued when the internal administration was in a flux, chaotic and unstable. In the court several factions contended for exclusive power; of all the parties

squabbling for power, the Pandes had acquired little administrative experience³⁰ and still lesser the fact the dexterity with which Bhim Sen managed the British. They were headstrong, impulsive and rash, extremely jealous, revengeful and bitterly hostile to the British government. This anti-British sentiment was the linch-pin of their policy. The Resident, Brian Hodgson, noted:

They [Pandes] saw that they must be war ministers or no ministers at all, for their long exile had stripped them of all legitimate weight among their fellow nobles..... Thus all circumstances of their character and position correspond to make the Kala Pandes determined opponents of responsible intercourse with our government at Kathmandu and of that peace and good neighbourhood which could by such means only be secured to us.³¹

It was these Pandes who gradually established their absolute ascendancy in the Nepalese darbar, and it was their warlike policy which earned them the sobriquet the 'war party', in contradistinction to the 'peace party', formed of nobles advocating peaceful relations with the British³².

The war-party's main policy was to spin a network of intrigues with the Indian powers. Emissaries were sent to almost all the important states of India and to some outside India with the fond expectation of finding allies in Nepal's scheme of exploiting the political troubles of the British.

Situated close to the storm centre in the north-west, alliance with the Punjab, the richest independent state of India, as also the strongest, was most prized by Nepal, and consequently, much dreaded by the British. The British were aware of Nepal's great interest in the Lahore darbar and Lahore's like disposition. Between 1833 and 1836 several Nepalese missions had been seen at Lahore receiving warm welcome from Ranjit Singh. In May 1837 a Nepalese embassy, headed by Kaji Kalu Singh and Captain Karbeer Singh, arrived in Lahore with a grand suite and presents for Ranjit Singh. A month later, another emissary, Ek Krishna Baid, reached Lahore. Bhopal Singh Thapa, a Nepalese officer in one of the battalions of the French legion in the Khalsa army, was actively engaged in forging alliance between Lahore and Nepal. Captain Wade, the British political agent at Ludhiana, kept watch on the proceedings of the Nepalese emissaries. Ranjit was not averse to reciprocating the friendly gestures of the Nepalese King, although it was not certain if he was at that time very keen on effectuating the political alliance, particularly when it was openly anti-British in nature. Besides, Ranjit Singh's hands were then full with the task of putting down the insurrection in the mountains lying immediately east

of Attock, led by Payanda Khan, the famous insurgent of Durband²². To the British he gave a clear understanding that his coquetry with Nepal had no ulterior object. Captain Wade, hence, reported to Government:

...adverting to the present disposition of His Highness [Ranjit Singh], I have no idea that Ranjit Singh will now listen to any overtures of hostile tendency to the British government which either the ambition or military spirit of the Nepalese may induce them to make²³.

In Ranjit Singh's court, however, the Dogra Rajas, particularly Raja Golab Singh, was keen on forging alliance with Nepal as a means of linking up the Sikh territory, now expanding down the course of Spiti, with the north-western border of Nepal. A direct territorial connexion with Nepal would not only promote trade between Lhasa and Ladakh, a Dogra territory since 1834-5 but would also.

...establish a direct intercourse with a power which he [Golab Singh] thinks will not only tend greatly to augment his present influence but lead to an alliance which may at some future period be of reciprocal importance²⁴.

There was, however, no evidence to prove that Ranjit Singh encouraged Golab Singh's designs any more than there was any possibility of Lahore-Nepal coquetry maturing into a political league. Nevertheless, in so far as it stimulated the intriguing proclivities of Nepal, it was desirable to put an end to such political intercourse. But the British had no treaty right to check such intercourse nor was there any inclination on their part to take any "indirect measure" to that end. The Court of Directors' instruction was clear on this point:

In the case of Ranjit Singh you [Governor-General] had no right to control the mutual intercourse of the two parties, and we should have seen no advantage in your refusing passports to the envoys from Nepal. We are happy to perceive that Ranjit Singh's conduct in the matter has not been of a kind to justify any distrust of his intentions²⁵.

Meanwhile, in the north-west the crisis deepened. Persia besieged Herat; the shadow of Russia loomed large in Kabul; Dost Muhammad, the Amir, grew increasingly restive, poised between the fear of the British and the allurements of Russian overtures for alliance. Nepal was astir with "feverish speculation" on the probable fall of Herat, the likely advance of Persia at Russian instigation, the defection of the Afghan chiefs and the estrangement of the Lion of the Punjab²⁶. Evidently, Nepal was very receptive to the stirring news of the North-west; she trimmed her sail to every passing wind.

Meanwhile intrigue was going on between Nepal and Herat beneath the apparently harmless negotiations for trade in horses. In December 1837, Saifullah, "the recognised envoy of Herat", arrived at Kathmandu³⁸. Some months later, Indeer Beer Khattree, a Nepalese envoy, was sent to Herat but was detained by the British at Ludhiana. His trusted agent, Hamir Singh Khattree, however, managed to cross the Sutlej and present letters to Dost Muhammad³⁹.

The Nepalese also sought to exploit the uneasy relations between the British and the Burmese governments. Emissaries in the guise of merchants and mendicants were sent to Ava to report on the King's illfeelings towards the British, his military strength, and military preparations of the British in that quarter. They carried offers of military aid to the Burmese if, as was supposed, they contemplated a break with the British. The King of Ava was reported to have solicited Nepal's aid in his imminent war with the British⁴⁰.

In March 1838, Matabar Singh Thapa, the nephew of the deposed Minister, Bhim Sen, was sent to Lahore to report on Ranjit Singh's reactions to the events in the north-west and, if possible, to coax him into a political alliance with Nepal. The game was seen through by the British; they detained Matabar at Ludhiana and kept him under strict surveillance. But the intercourse between the two states did not cease nor did the hope of Ranjit Singh's favourable reception to Nepal's overture dim. The Nepalese agents already at Lahore kept alive the impression at Kathmandu that Ranjit Singh entertained the highest esteem for Bhim Sen and his nephew, Matabar Singh, and that should the latter act as a go-between, the much-desired alliance between the two states could be effectuated⁴¹.

Corresponding with the British involvement in the Afghan troubles, the attitude of Ranjit Singh changed for the worse. Far from discouraging the Nepalese embassies, he sent some agents to Kathmandu, with letters conveying his "express desire" to know the "real footing of the Gurkhas and the English." It seemed that Ranjit Singh was "waiting upon events before he germinates himself to a policy." Signet rings were exchanged between the Rulers of Lahore and Nepal, suggesting their mutual regard. It was alleged that he had helped Matabar at Ludhiana with money, asking him to come to Lahore by "all means of fraud or force". He sought also to persuade the British to free Matabar from surveillance. Reports on Ranjit Singh's eagerness to enlist Gurkhas in larger numbers in the Khalsa army⁴² added to the concern of the British. There was no doubt about the

existence of a "perpetual intercourse" between Lahore and Nepal. Hodgson asserted that

with respect to Lahore, it would certainly appear that Ranjit himself has dallied with the Durbar and is still doing so, despite his friendly professions to us⁴⁵.

The Nepalese King was reported to have written to Ranjit Singh "that the English and Muslims have now united, the Hindus must look closer to themselves". The war-party in Nepal welcomed the intelligence sent by Matabar that Dost Muhammad's joining the Russo-Persian confederacy had greatly alarmed the British, and that Macnaghten, the British political agent at Lahore, had failed in his mission, having been treated by Ranjit Singh in a cavalier fashion⁴⁶. Hodgson gravely warned:

...Should therefore, Ranjit play us false or the Emperor of China afford any encouragement to Gurkha aggressions, and should matters not assume a happy aspect in Ava, a rupture with us and expulsion of the Residency must, I fear, be looked for at the hands of the Nepalese⁴⁷.

For long Hodgson had urged the adoption of a "decisive course of action". Otherwise, he feared, the darbar.

Will shilly-shally through the cold season and show the cloven foot at its close when any present redress will be impossible to us⁴⁸.

If the British did not restrain the manifestly hostile disposition of the darbar by political pressure, elaborate and expensive defensive measures would be necessary to deal with the certain Nepalese invasion, he contended. He urged that Matabar be sent back to Nepal, for his presence at Ludhiana and clandestine intercourse with Lahore served to exacerbate the restlessness of the Nepalese darbar. The best expedient to check Nepal was to keep alive her fear of the British army by its periodical display on the Nepalese frontier⁴⁹.

Lord Auckland was totally averse to Hodgson's suggestions, for they seemed to him too provocative. He feared that a military demonstration as suggested by Hodgson was certain to give a handle to the war-party, enabling it to unite all against the British; it would not subdue the jingo spirit but aggravate it. When Hodgson had sounded the first note of warnings in the beginning of 1837, Lord Auckland had merely shrugged it off as "alarmist" reports, having no strong foundation. He had found no sufficient evidence to credit the alleged bid of Nepal to forge offensive alliances with Lahore, Rajput states and China, nor anything unusual in her policy of non-intercourse with the British. He had advised patience and forbearance, for it was the "height of folly"

to resort to "demonstration of anger", and to hasten thereby an armed reckoning with Nepal which was neither unavoidable nor necessary⁴⁰.

Warlike preparations in Kathmandu were stepped up commensurate with the aggravation of British troubles in Afghanistan, Burma and China. The unceasing traffic of men and materials of war to the military posts east and west of Kathmandu, the constant marching of soldiers in the capital, coupled with the contumelious treatment meted out to the Resident, left no doubt as to Nepal's hostile intentions. In fact, the Resident reported that

Collision with us [the British] is spoken of as a thing certain to be, without attempt at concealment.

He warned the Government again, pointing out that "facts and rumours relative to the state of things in Ava, Cabool and Persia, conspiring with the unsettled state of administration here, are producing the worst effect."

Nepal made vigorous attempts to rally the Indian powers against the British. A number of spies were recruited by Prabhu Shah, the father-in-law of the King of Nepal, at Gorakhpur with instructions to visit the British cantonments and to send reports on their military preparedness. The deposed Minister, Bhim Sen, volunteered information to Hodgson relating to the Pandes' hope of active assistance from Ranjit Singh and moral countenance from the Chinese Emperor. The arrest of Matabar by the British had thoroughly alarmed Bhim Sen who was eager to convince the Resident that the reported efforts of Matabar to persuade the Persians and Afghans to invade India were absolutely baseless.⁴¹

The Rajput and the Central Indian states, some of them with simmering anti-British feelings, extended a warm welcome to the Nepalese emissaries sent to their courts. The attitude of Raja Man Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur, and of Apa Sahib, the ex-ruler of Nagpur and now a political emigre at Jodhpur, called for close vigilance. All measures were taken by the British to frustrate the projected escape of Apa Sahib from Jodhpur to Nepal with the connivance of Raja Man Singh and the active assistance of Nepalese spies. In the Court of Udaipur attempts were made to station an agent of Nepal as an effective instrument of political intercourse between Kathmandu and Chittor.⁴²

As for the Marhatta states, an alliance with Sindhia was the most prized object of Nepal. The Nepalese emissaries at Gwalior, found Janardan Pandit, the Rajguru, Tantia Sastri, the Naib, Jagannath Sastri and Bhow Dikshit receptive to schemes of hostility towards the British. Encouraged, the King

of Nepal sent some more agents with complimentary present and letters to Sindhia, evincing his desire to revive the long-discontinued political relations between the two states. The attitude of Sindhia himself was, however, one of cool indifference. He not only dismissed the Nepalese agents with studied contempt but was even keen on arresting them. The Resident at Gwalior was confident of Sindhia's loyalty to the British government and absolute apathy to Nepal's overtures. The Gaikwad of Baroda was lukewarm. He was evidently convinced of the grave risk of estranging the British.²²

With the ex-Peshwa, Baji Rao II, the Nepalese emissaries were more successful. By lavishly entertaining the Nepalese agents, by despatching his own men to Kathmandu, by promising financial help, as also by undertaking to enlist the co-operation of Marhatta states, the ex-Peshwa brightened up the hopes of Nepal. Banarag became the rendezvous of the Nepalese and the Marhatta intriguers, actively engaged to spark off a conflict with the British at the time of *Dusserah*, the time being deemed most propitious. Baji Rao himself contemplated paying a visit to Mathura, presumably to meet important Nepalese agents.²³

One Srinivas Rao, suspected to be the agent of Baji Rao, was caught on his way to Kathmandu. Interrogated by the British, he deposed that he had been deputed sometime earlier to Nepal by Baji Rao with the mission of enlisting Nepal's aid in restoring his lost authority. For Nepal's aid Baji Rao was stated to have promised a reward of Rs. two crores. Srinivas Rao further gave out that an agent of Baji Rao had been living in Ava for five years. Although Srinivas Rao was shortly found to be an "arch imposter" and his deposition utterly unreliable, the "chain of evidence" against the ex-Peshwa was otherwise complete enough to convince the British of his complicity in Nepalese intrigues.²⁴

Hodgson was greatly alarmed, and naturally so. It was this very development which he had not only foreseen but of which he had forewarned the Government. With greater force he urged the adoption of a stern policy in regard to Nepalese intrigues; forbearance and moderation, he held, had utterly failed to curb the intriguing propensities of Nepal. The war-party was exciting the King to expel the Resident immediately as a prelude to an open break with the British. Hodgson's remonstrances with the *darbar* had proved completely infructuous. It was clear to Hodgson that the *darbar* was eagerly awaiting

a favourable occasion of open attack on us, in concert with powerful allies, which the *Durbar* fully expects will occur in the coming year or two.²⁵

Lord Auckland found himself in a quandary. He was not unaware of the "extremely ramified" intrigues of Nepal through "mysterious" emissaries, aimed presumably at securing allies for an aggression on British territory. He was aware, too, of the warlike feeling running high at Kathmandu and the danger it posed at such critical times. Yet, he felt it imprudent to exert strong political pressure on Nepal, let alone adopt armed measures. Consequently, he chose to temporise, to bide time till his hands were free to deal effectively with the Nepalese menace. His policy of deliberate inaction was influenced by the troubles in Afghanistan, Burma, and China, the political situation in various parts of India and the inadequacy of the British army to meet these exigencies. His hands were full with these pressing cares; naturally he was now eager to avoid a break with Nepal.⁵⁰

As regards the intrigues, the policy adopted by him was one of circumspection and vigilance. However disagreeable the intrigues might have been, Auckland still regarded them as

rather originating in the struggles of faction than any determined and concerted scheme of hostility to the British power.⁵¹

It was patent that the Governor-General was deliberately under-playing a grave situation, for the extensive intrigues, viewed in the context of the *darbar's* mood, left no doubt about their real object. Lord Auckland found that the intrigues had failed to result in any league of hostile powers, although Nepal had been trying for long.⁵²

Above all, in June 1838, a treaty of alliance had been concluded with Ranjit Singh, "whereby the British and the Sikh interests had been completely identified."⁵³ It gave a lie to the floating rumour that Ranjit Singh nursed unfriendly feelings towards the British. With Ranjit Singh being won over by the British, the key-stone of Nepal's intriguing scheme was removed. Relieved, the Governor-General noted :

the confirmation of British and Sikh alliance is so complete and so notorious that their [Nepalese] failure to attach to their interests the Maharaja of Lahore can be reasonably considered as likely to produce a still greater distaste to engage in their cause among the other powers of Hindoostan.⁵⁴

It was further ascertained that Ranjit Singh had taken strong exception to the collusion of the Nepalese agents with Raja Dhian Singh and Matta Singh, as also to their exaggerated reports of his disaffection towards the British and response to Nepalese overtures. With natural relief the Governor-General found that "Ranjit's mind is effectually diverted

from any Nepalese connections" and that the suspected "intimate alliance" of Nepal and Lahore was but idle rumour. Ranjit Singh was kept in good humour, or else, he might give a "renewed activity" to Nepalese intrigues.⁴¹

All this convinced Lord Auckland that it was impolitic and unnecessary to "notice too openly" or to "pry into the details of these intrigues", involving almost all the Indian states. Hodgson was accordingly instructed:

To be known to have information directly incriminating Nepal which it might be highly inconvenient for us to use, yet which to abstain from using might appear justly liable to the imputation of apprehension and weakness, is a position in which it must be undesirable for our Government to be placed.⁴²

The movement of the Nepalese agents was closely watched, but they were neither arrested nor detained, for as

we seek not an instant quarrel with Nepal..... it has never been permitted that her emissaries should be used roughly in a manner openly offensive to her.⁴³

Yet it was wise to be on guard. The Indian states were warned against entertaining Nepalese agents; strict watch was kept on their journey to the trans-Indus region. Political Officers were asked to take "special care" about collecting presumptive evidence of Baji Rao's hostile disposition; all correspondence from and to Bithoor was subjected to "vigilant scrutiny", and even the "apparently trifling events" were carefully probed into. A mild hint was also given to Ranjit Singh that the British government did not like his flirtations with the Nepalese intriguers.⁴⁴

Auckland's Nepal policy was not quite approved by either the Commander-in-Chief or the members of the Supreme Council. The situation in the north-west was coming to a head, requiring a large portion of the British army to be moved to that quarter. At such a time the attitude of Nepal called for "the most serious reflection" of the Government, Sir Henry Fane, the Commander-in-Chief, held. Nepal's army, 40,000 strong and long starved of martial exploits, was restive, eager to descend to the Gangetic plains, "the garden of India", now denuded of troops, utterly defenceless and exposed to invasion. Fane strongly held

that the Government of India has needlessly allowed a thorn to grow in her side, which must greatly paralyse her efforts elsewhere and which it behoves her to pluck out or eradicate at the earliest favourable opportunity.⁴⁵

Nepal's geographical situation was such that a war with her was certain to affect the adjoining kingdoms of Oudh and

the states of Sindhia and Holkar and several others, forming a line across the whole of Bengal from the Himalayas to Narmada. Thus, a war with Nepal would set the whole territory between Bombay and Calcutta ablaze. But the state of affairs, Fane admitted, was such that the British were not in a position even to defend their territory from a likely Nepalese invasion, let alone to undertake offensive measures against Nepal.

The President and the members of the Supreme Council in Calcutta also urged the Government to demand full explanation from the Nepal darbar of its hostile activities, giving it a warning that the issue of war and peace hinged solely on the nature of the explanation. This was imperative in view of the grave apprehension of a Nepalese break-through towards Darjeeling, then inadequately garrisoned. Colonel Monson, a member of the Supreme Council, vehemently criticised the soft policy of the Government regarding the Nepalese missions, having avowedly hostile intentions—a fact itself justifying preparations for war on the part of the British government. The absolutely defenceless state of the Presidency of Bengal needed the “earliest and most serious considerations” of the Government. Colonel Monson held that

the safest means of preventing the invasion of our own provinces would be to attack the Gurkhas in their own country and at their own capital.⁶⁶

Lord Auckland admitted the weight of these suggestions. Yet, his pre-occupations allowed him to adopt nothing but only precautionary steps. The strength of the Bengal Native Infantry was augmented; topographical and other information relating to the military routes to Nepal and her most vulnerable places were collected through the Resident. An army of observation under General Oglander was posted on the Gorakhpur frontier as a “measure of precaution and activity, if necessary;” a local corps was formed at Darjeeling to keep watch on the events in Eastern Nepal and Sikkim, which was strongly suspected of having been won over by Nepal.⁶⁷

These “measures of precaution and preparation”, Lord Auckland thought, would suffice. The relations with Nepal were manifestly unfriendly, but it appeared to him imprudent to strain those relations abruptly to the breaking point. It was safer to temporise. Lord Auckland noted :

Nepal has given us just cause of offence and stands in a position towards us which is not long to be borne. But it would not be wise to seek more than one great military operation at a time, and unless forced to bring matters to an issue, for which I would be prepared, I would bide my time.⁶⁸

Thus, avoidance of war at a critical time was the core of Lord Auckland's policy in Nepal, and in this he relied on Hodgson. Hodgson was asked to refrain from "more busy activity," "to remain a passive but observant spectator" of the events around him, and to "exert the most strenuous and persevering efforts to ward off so serious a contingency" as the breach of even the "nominally friendly" relations between the two governments.⁴

At Kathmandu the King and his advisers grew uneasy; they dreaded the precautionary measures adopted by the British as preludes to an invasion of Nepal. The King undertook to recall the emissaries and to send a complimentary mission to Calcutta as a token of penitence and goodwill. Hodgson was too shrewd to be taken in by this *volte face* of the *darbar*. He kept up the King's fear of British reprisals, for it was this fear, he well knew, that had caused this sudden change in the tone of the *darbar*. Nepal strengthened her frontier posts in the south and west as a defensive measure; it spread panic in the border and strengthened the rumour that a war with Nepal was imminent. Alarmed, Hodgson, in circular letters, cautioned General Oglander and the Magistrates of Gorakhpur and Bihar districts. This earned him a strong censure of the Government; his alarmist reports, he was told, gave unnecessary, dangerous and rather erroneous publicity to the objects and policies of the Government, and created trepidation along the border. He was sternly told that the Governor-General

sees the necessity of watchfulness and of preparation but he sees also the danger of the two countries being, by mistrust, led into a competition of armaments and defiance and from these into mutual provocation and war. His Lordship has every reason to hope that by proper measures on our part, peace may at present be preserved with the Nepalese Court.....nothing should be undertaken (beyond such measures of precaution) as are absolutely necessary which may have the effect of forcing an irreconcilable difference to a premature issue."

The British had already decided to launch a war against Afghanistan; soft-peddling policy towards Nepal was, hence, a painful necessity.

Meanwhile, in the *darbar* the war-party under the Pandes had got into stride, and the peace-party, working hand in glove with the Resident, was fast recoiling before the pressure of the jingoists. The dream of war and plunder went into the head of the King, and the pacific counsels of the Resident seemed a far, faint and futile cry of reason. The intrigues with the Indian states, suspended for a while, were resumed, mostly

under cover of bride-seeking missions.⁷¹ The King and the senior queen were anxious to get the heir-apparent married, and Hodgson cashed in on this anxiety. He refused to grant passports to these missions until the *darbar* desisted from its hostile activities. Hodgson was convinced that

so long as the Heir-apparent's marriage is not accomplished, so long shall we have a very useful check upon the behaviour of the *darbar*.⁷²

In February 1839 one Bansraj Biswanath was arrested at Banaras on his way to Udaipur. Letters bearing the seal of the Rana of Udaipur and addressed to the King of Nepal were found in his custody, as also a blank paper with the red seal of the King of Nepal on it. Evidently a man enjoying the confidence of the Rana of Udaipur and the King of Nepal, Bansraj was one of the many spies who, in the guise of *Gossains*, *Pandits* and *Harkaras* came to India. In one month alone, as many as five hundred Nepalese subjects arrived at Banaras and many more at Patna on pretence of pilgrimage; the police reported that never before were the Nepalese seen in such a great number at a particular place or time.⁷³

At Banaras, a band of mendicants, called *Paramhangsas*, formed the "corps de essence" of espionage, serving as links between the Nepalese intriguers and the influential residents of the city. Commensurate with the deteriorating British relations with Burma, Nepal's intrigues with the Court of Ava increased, so much so that there was grave concern in Calcutta that the rumoured coalition of Nepal and Burma had really been effectuated. The *poojaree*⁷⁴ of the temple at Kamakshya and the Raja of Assam were certain accomplices, for they not only entertained the Nepalese and the Burmese agents, but they themselves despatched some emissaries to both Kathmandu and Ava. There were evidences to prove Nepal's active bid to incite the governments of Sikkim and Bhutan against the British. Frantic appeals were made to Lhasa and Peking for help.⁷⁵

As these Himalayan states had relations with China,⁷⁶ the strained British relations with China were most likely to rouse all of them against the British; the situation in the north-east indicated trouble. Hodgson warned:

It would be awkward if all these North-Eastern gentry clubbed together against us in certain possible emergencies.⁷⁷

He bitterly complained that the political officers in India had shown "pernicious callousness" in not following the many clues and indications he had given them; they had wasted many opportunities to intercept the emissaries and, in conse-

quence, much valuable time had been lost. Since no rigorous measures had yet been taken to curb Nepal's intriguing propensities, it had created the natural presumption in the Nepalese *darbar* that the British were too enmeshed in the Afghan troubles to deal with Nepal. Nepal's activities had spread unease in the border; restlessness was seen in Sikkim; insurrection flared up in Bhutan—troubled waters for Nepal to fish in. The King of Nepal talked openly of holding in his hands the fate of the British in India; he was gloating over his success in winning over the Marhattas and the Rajputs who, he fondly hoped, would rise at his signal, while the rulers of China and Burma were avowedly sympathetic towards him. People in large numbers were recruited in Bihar and Gorakhpur, presumably to form a huge army, through agents supposed to be Nepalese, and with money supposed to be the ex-Peshwa's.

With greater zeal and greater hope of success, intrigues were resumed with Lahore for an alliance, still a desideratum. Ranjit Singh had died in June 1839, and with him had departed all the moderation and sagacity of the Sikh *darbar*. His grandson, Nao Nihal Singh, the *de facto* ruler of Lahore, seemed inclined to respond to Nepal's overtures. Matabar Singh had managed to escape to Lahore where he tried to make anti-British plots. Kathmandu became, by the middle of 1839, a rendezvous of agents from Burma, Gwalior, Satara, Baroda, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Kotah, Bundi, Rewa, Pannah, Lahore, besides many petty states in the Indo-Gangetic plain. Stories of likely combination of the Sikhs, the Mahrattas, the Rajputs, the Chinese, and the Burmese, as also of the Persians, Afghans and the Russians against the British were deliberately floated by the Pandes. It was strongly rumoured that in the ensuing winter a war would break out between Nepal and British India. "Signs of more and more extended combination seemed to multiply around us," Hodgson gravely reported.² He strongly criticised the "continued practical acquiescence and lenient and forgiving language" of Lord Auckland's admonition to the King of Nepal. The policy of temporisation had manifestly failed. He charged the Government with having been wilfully blind to stark realities which he had not only foreseen but of which he had forewarned them. The latter had not only been impervious to his repeated warnings, but had even censured him as an alarmist. In consequence, the Resident had lost all weights in the *darbar*, his repeated remonstrances having been shrugged off as but empty threats; the impression had gained ground that the Resident was not backed by the Governor-general. In a tone full of despair Hodgson noted:

Yet all my anticipations have been proved but pro-

phetic. Had something been done to stay Nepalese insolence when our hands were free, we might now have been at ease in respect to her, but *now she feels* her advantage and is bent on pushing it to the utmost should our trouble increase according to her expectation."

There was now every reason to apprehend that the Nepalese army would sweep over Sikkim and Bhutan, join the hostile Burmese through Assam and expel the Resident. To ward off this danger, Hodgson urged the adoption of "some special and immediate measures of precaution," such as garrisoning the military posts of Titalya and Mullaye on the Nepalese border. This should be accompanied by "decided warning and rebuke" of the Governor-General himself to the King of Nepal; this alone would sustain the peace-party and smother the Pandes.⁵¹ Nepalese intrigues, Hodgson cautioned the Government, were but

important parts of a system of general intercommunication between all our evil-wishers, how remote so ever, and hence,

restrictions of increasing severity upon the Durbar's intercourse with the plains constitute perhaps the true secret.....for controlling its wanton spirit of alienation and hostility towards the paramount government of the plains.⁵²

The Government took heed. The summary arrest of all the Nepalese found without passport in the British territory was ordered, as also of all the emissaries of Indian states trying to sneak into Nepal without the requisite authority of the Government. Sterner warning was served to all the Indian states. Lord Auckland in a firm tone admonished the King of Nepal that he would not suffer the King's matrimonial necessities being pressed into political purposes, prejudicial to British interests.⁵³ However, the Government were against more frequent apprehension of individuals on mere suspicion for it was certain to

most vexatiously interfere with that freedom of national intercourse which it is the part of our general and commercial policy to encourage with every neighbouring country.⁵⁴

The restrictive measures adopted by the British had a telling effect on the darbar, although for a while only. The King was as much eager to send the bride-seeking missions to India as the Resident was determined to refuse them the necessary passports. The Resident played on the King's extreme eagerness to get his son married. He was instructed by the Government to withhold the passports till he was convinced that the King's policy had really changed and that he

would cease to give any more offence to the British. The King, then in utter obfuscation, was obliged to order the dismissal of all the agents of Indian states in Nepal, and to demonstrate his repentance by despatching a complimentary mission to the Governor-General. Thereafter, passports for marriage missions were given; the King was sternly warned against sending these missions to the Indian states lying south of the Jumna.⁴⁶

By the end of 1839, the tone of the *darbar* began to ring a little soft. The signal triumph of the British at Ghazni disabused the Pandes of the imminent fall of the British *Raj*, their intrigues had failed to bring about any alliance worth the name; a confederacy of the Indian powers was still a mere wishful thinking. The dread of British invasion in the approaching cold weather was now a haunting nightmare for the Pandes. The *darbar* hastened to undertake afresh—this time by a written engagement—to desist from intrigues, as also to allow the Resident to move freely within a radius of twenty miles from Kathmandu—an unprecedented concession.⁴⁷ The *darbar* even offered its troops for employment against the Afghans—“a magnificent piece of humbug”—to borrow Hodgson's caustic expression.

Hodgson was too familiar with such tactical move of the *Durbar* to feel smug. These were valuable concessions indeed, but they had been made not voluntarily but wrung out like “drops of life blood.” He knew that Nepal

at present ... consents and signs with the worst will to the work of keeping peace with the British, and she will bolt, if temptation again arises.⁴⁸

Peace had, at long last, been made with the *darbar*; it was but a hollow peace; the *darbar*, needed a breathing spell for more overt hostility in future. Relapse to hostility could be prevented and the *darbar* pinned to its “new course” by no other means than a policy of abiding firmness demonstrated by the display of force in the vicinity of Nepal.

Corresponding with their provocative foreign policy, the Pandes carried on a policy of vengeance in regard to their rivals and enemies in Nepal. All classes of nobles were ruthlessly deprived of their wealth and property. This “policy of vengeance at home and violence abroad” released a strong, though subterranean, wave of indignation in a large section of the nobles, some of whom even contemplated appealing to the Resident for his intervention. They were concerned that the provocative policy of the Pandes would bring on Nepal British invasion. The King's junior queen appealed to the Resident to save her from the machinations of the senior queen.⁴⁹ Many nobles even preferred the conquest of Nepal

by the British to the continuance of the Pande misrule. Hodgson reported:

All persons of rank now look to the Company's government and earnestly hope that the Governor-General will ere long be led to address the Raja in such terms as may frighten him with justice at home and abroad and redeem him from the toils of the Ranee [Senior] and Pande [Ranjang Pande] whose unjust and irregular ambition threatened equal mischief to the state in its domestic and in its foreign relations.⁸⁸

It seemed to Hodgson that if Nepal were invaded now, she would "succumb thoroughly and once for all". With the Court divided, the ruling party unpopular, a number of nobles having been won over by bribery⁸⁹ and attached to the Resident, victory in the war seemed to Hodgson "a comparatively facile achievement." Therefore, he suggested:

that if there be any inclination to the other course with Nepal [i.e. war], many circumstances combine to render the present season one of singular advantage to us. If Nepal will not be ruled by advice, she may be humbled, I strongly incline to think, with a speed and certainty that would surprise, the world as much as has lately done the acquisition of Afghanistan.⁹⁰

The members of the Supreme Council in Calcutta also strongly felt that it was now imperative to give up the policy of temporisation and forbearance, and resort, instead, to more active interference in the court politics of Nepal. They felt the urgency of forming or openly countenancing a "British Party" in the darbar, composed of the junior queen, the Thapas, the Gurus, the Chautarias and all others hostile to Pandes. This party would act as a counterpoise to the war-party. The Councillors strongly held that the Government should demand a drastic change in the Nepalese administration or else they should be fully prepared for an armed invasion of Nepal. A change in Nepal's policy should be "compulsorily exacted", if she were to be reduced "to the footing of a faithful and useful ally". With wars in Afghanistan and China, and an imminent showdown with Burma, the British rule in India was approaching a crisis when its future itself would be at stake. Before such a crisis befell, it was prudent to settle scores with Nepal, by either crushing her by arms or rendering her innocuous by political means. It was "absolutely fatal" to let this "most formidable power" to vent its "decidedly hostile" spirit on the weakest and the richest part of British India at this critical time. The Councillors confidently held that Nepal could be reduced in a

single campaign in one season, and that she would be a very profitable acquisition.²¹

Lord Auckland had now realised the gravity of the situation. He realised, too, that the wars in Afghanistan and China had keyed up Nepal's bellicose spirit, and that a war with her could not be avoided for long. He was also aware that

our next war with Nepal must be a war of conquest and must not be entered on until after much accurate examination and perfect preparations. We have more pressing cares before us and must not attempt too many things at once.²²

Nepal was certainly a thorn in the side of the British dominion in India, but not one of "active and immediate peril." It seemed to him, "wholly improbable" that single-handed Nepal would hazard a rupture with the British; nor was there any likelihood of a coalition of Indian powers under her guidance and inspiration. It could be hoped that the internal dissensions would keep her engrossed for some time, while a British invasion was certain to unite all the parties, now squabbling for power, against the British. As for the "British Party", Lord Auckland was manifestly sceptical, for

though all in their turn might try to use us for the sake of rising to power, we can look to no consistent and faithful support from any of them.²³

If such a party were created by the British, the latter would have to protect it against all its enemies. It was evidently an onerous obligation which the pressing cares of the British did not warrant undertaking. Besides, such overt interference in the internal affairs of a foreign court was "clearly inconsistent with the principle and right", so long as there had not been an open break with that court.²⁴

Further, a war with Nepal was likely to spark off a war with Burma, with which state she had reportedly reached an understanding.²⁵ Even a more drastic policy regarding the intrigues was risky, for all the Indian states were strongly suspected to be in a state of restiveness. In Hyderabad there was a nascent revival of Wahabism; a widely-ramified plot was unearthed there, with Prince Mubarezuddaulah as the main accomplice. The rulers of Lahore, Baroda, Rohilkhand, Rampur, Panna, Bhopal, Satara, Jodhpur, and others were also suspected to have been involved. The conspirators contemplated a simultaneous attack on Allahabad, Kanpur, Meerut, Delhi and Muttra. The Government, however, did not take the matter very seriously; it was impossible for the Indian states to be politically united, and the idea of their military combination was "absurd", the Foreign Secretary confidently asserted.²⁶

Since almost all the Indian states were in varying degrees of restlessness, it was impolitic to take too stringent measures against them for such a policy involved much wastage of time and betrayed "nervous weakness" on the part of the British government. Auckland was "decidedly opposed to a course of policy which would involve the Government in minute and extensive scrutinies into supposed ramifications of vague and incoherent plots".⁹⁷

Besides, he had "perfect confidence" in the rulers of Oudh, Gwalior, Nagpur and Hyderabad, "and all others are inconsiderable".⁹⁸

To the members of the Supreme Council this policy was impolitic. Lord Auckland, they held, had so long soft-pedalled Nepal, but to no purpose; his policy had not tempered Nepal's hostile attitude but has intensified it. With greater vehemence the Councillors urged :

We have little hesitation in declaring that there appears to us to be no security for the stability of the British empire in India, so long as the power of Nepal remains unreduced..... an operation which in comparison with a war either beyond Indus or in Ava would cost but little and which would contribute more than anything else to place us in a position calculated to secure to England the undisturbed possession of India for ages to come.⁹⁹

Now was the time for drastic action; now or never. To this Lord Auckland replied :

I have no hesitation in recording my decided opinion that we ought not to court the risk of a war with Nepal in the approaching season, (for) I do not share an acute apprehension of immediate danger from the government of Nepal. I by no means regard that power as likely to venture an assault upon us on the plains under any circumstances of which we can at this time contemplate the probability.¹⁰⁰

He strongly deprecated the "tendency to over-alarm" as he was sure that Nepal would "bark long before she ventures a bite." Hence, he stuck to the "policy of peace and patience."¹⁰¹

In February 1840, Ranjang Rande was confirmed as Minister. The jingo spirit in the darbar was at its height now; the Engagement of November 1839 was honoured more in breach than observance; the difficulties of Hodgson increased as did the danger to the British government. With the absolute preponderance of the Pandes, the Indo-Nepalese relations, precariously maintained so long seemed destined to a violent breach.

Intrigues with the Indian states suspended for a while, were resumed with renewed zeal, though under more delusive pretences. News of Russian advance to Khiva was hailed with delight; British hostility with China was a welcome development, and the widening rift between the Sikhs and the British animated the hope of a Lahore-Nepal League. Emissaries continued to pass from one state to another. Attempts were made to tamper with the Gurkhas in the Indian army, and to stir up disaffection among the Rajas and Zamindars of Bihar and the North-West Provinces.¹²³

In April 1840 a band of Gurkha soldiers broke into the Ramnagar estate, in Champaran district, and occupied ninety-one villages.¹²⁴ Preparations for war were stepped up in Nepal and attempts were made to set the frenzied soldiers upon the Resident who had hitherto foiled all the efforts of the *darbar* to rouse the Indian states against the British. Wild cries as

"down with the Chiefs, down with the Feringhees, we will be Chiefs ourselves, we will have back our old territories. We will conquer to the Ganges," reverberated in the Nepalese Capital.¹²⁵

Hodgson's reaction could easily be imagined. He was now convinced that nothing but the removal of the hostile war-party from power could help.

Lord Auckland was extremely worried. It seemed the policy of masterly inaction had utterly failed. The attitude of Nepal, viewed in the context of the Ramnagar outrage, attempts on the Residency and the bellicose temper of the war-party, vindicated the repeated assertions of Hodgson.

Active deliberations were set afoot in Calcutta to formulate such a plan of campaign as would bring the inevitable war with Nepal to "a most prompt and successful issue". It was planned to launch a direct attack on Kathmandu with a mixed corps of European and Native Regiments, numbering in all twenty thousand regulars and moving into Nepal from Tirhut and Sarun. The object of the war was not to crush the nation, but to overthrow the existing regime and replace it by an administration peaceful and friendly to the British.¹²⁶

The Councillors were eager for war; the Press was fretting; so was Hodgson; only Lord Auckland was calmly anticipating the timely submission of the Nepalese *darbar*. He fondly hoped that Nepal would be scared by the stern admonition of the British government, and that the war could still be avoided.¹²⁷ His hope did not prove vain. His military preparations had thoroughly alarmed the King, who soon withdrew the troops from the Ramnagar estate and vacated the occupied lands. The immediate *casus belli* was gone; Lord Auckland sighed a breath of relief. Yet, as a measure of precaution, the show of military preparations was

kept up on the Nepal frontier.¹⁰⁷ It served as an admirable scarecrow to cow Nepal to quiescence.

Meanwhile, British relations with the Lahore darbar worsened; the issue of the passage of the British troops through the Punjab reinforced the mutual bitterness. The Sikhs were busy hatching intrigues.¹⁰⁸ Nao Nihar Singh and Raja Dhian Singh, the two strong men in the darbar, were interested in the Nepalese alliance. Their attitude was in marked contrast to that of Ranjit Singh. The latter was, generally speaking, cautious in regard to Nepal-Lahore alliance; he dallied with the scheme, but he was

much too shrewd to trade the advantage of a British alliance for the dubious guarantee of a connection with Nepal.¹⁰⁹

After his death missions were exchanged between Kathmandu and Lahore with greater frequency; Lahore was eager to employ the Gurkhas in the Khalsa army, and Nepal ready to supply them. Matabar Singh was brought out of his erstwhile "obscurity", and Nao Nihal Singh settled a pension on him, giving him hopes of employment in the Sikh army. Raja Dhian Singh, Bhai Ram Singh, Lehna Singh and Devi Singh buoyed up the hope of Matabar Singh of accomplishing the alliance.¹¹⁰

Lord Auckland was alive to the menace of Lahore-Nepal league. Yet he felt it unwise to press the Sikhs too hard to abandon their flirtations with the Nepalese. He was wholly opposed "to attach undue weight" to the intrigues of the two states, for they were "occurrences which are to be expected in an Asiatic Court." He felt that the war-party in its own interest was giving the widest possible publicity to the alliance. Notwithstanding the Dogra Rajas' keenness, the Lahore darbar, for its part, was still wavering; the risk of an overtly anti-British alliance seemed to balance the temptation it offered. Hence, a mild warning alone was given to Lahore,

that the maintenance of any close intercourse with the Sovereign of Nepal would...ill accord with the duty and the interest of the Lahore state.¹¹¹

Nepal made one more effort, a more daring one, to win over Lahore. In August 1840, Karbeer Khattree, an experienced Nepalese spy, was sent with a draft treaty of alliance, written by the King himself, to Banaras. There he was to meet Attar Singh, an influential *Sardar* of Lahore. The treaty was to be finalised by both these persons. Should Karbeer be intercepted by the British, Attar Singh, provided with a similar draft by the Lahore Durbar, would go to Kathmandu. Karbeer escaped from Kathmandu with the Resident's passport after having deluded him by a cock and bull

story. He coaxed the Resident to wink at his mission, which he assured the Resident, was just a ruse to wheedle the Pandes, his enemies, and to escape from their clutches. Once out of Nepal, Karbeer convinced Hodgson, he would assist the British in all possible ways to ruin the Pandes. Hodgson believed him, for his acquaintance with Karbeer was of long standing; he knew Karbeer as one of the many chiefs chafing under the Pandes rule and keenly desiring its overthrow. Besides, Hodgson himself had helped Karbeer's family to escape from Nepal, with fear of torture at the hands of the Pandes haunting them.¹¹⁸

No sooner had Karbeer reached Banaras than the real nature of his mission was revealed. Karbeer, along with his agents, was immediately arrested. He was found, carrying besides the draft treaty, *khareeta* of the King of Nepal to his counterpart in Lahore. Similar missives were found addressed to the Queen of Lahore and to Attar Singh, Dhian Singh and Govind Ram. There were, besides, letters addressed to Matabar Singh and some influential persons at Lucknow, Kumaon, Ambala and Banaras. The circumstantial evidences were strong enough to prove Nepal's malicious designs; the extent of Lahore's complicity in these designs was also patent as never before. It was clear that the mission "must have had the distinct sanction and encouragement of the Court of Lahore." Lord Auckland, who was hitherto averse to attaching too great an importance to the reports of these intrigues, was constrained to

believe much more in an inclination at Lahore to intrigue with Nepal; for there is far more sympathy in politics, habits and religion between the two nations, and it is difficult to believe that the letters which were seized upon Karbeer Khattree at Benares were not looked for by Attar Singh and written to meet the known inclinations of some of these to whom they were addressed at Lahore.¹¹⁹

More decisive step was, hence, a compelling necessity. The first move was towards Matabar. He was the king-pin of Nepal-Lahore intrigue, being esteemed highly at Lahore. He was a valuable political weapon which could be profitably used. He was an inveterate enemy of the Pandes, the ruling party in Nepal; he was ready to serve any cause which would destroy them. The Pandes, for their part, were morbidly afraid that he would go over to the British to wreak his vengeance on them (Pandes). They had, hence, kept his family as hostage at Kathmandu. Matabar was fearful that his family would be tortured by the Pandes; Matabar had even implored the Resident, through agents, to save his children at Kathmandu

and, if possible, to smuggle them out of Nepal. More recently he found himself in financial difficulties at Lahore in spite of the stipend. He had even appealed to the British Political Agent at Ludhiana to help him get an allowance from the British government. Matabar was getting gradually low in spirit; the fear of torture to his family at Kathmandu troubled him. All these suggested the feasibility of winning him over to the British side. In fact, Hodgson had already suggested that

in the too probable event of a war with Nepal, Matabar Singh's services would be of extreme value to us..... for not to mention the energy of his character, he is now looked upon as in some sort, the head of his late exiled party, i.e., the Thapas.¹⁵⁴

Matabar had an intimate knowledge of the passes and routes of Nepal; in the Nepalese army he was immensely popular. Hence, Hodgson held :

such a man being merely shown in front of our ranks or being but known to be there would half paralyse the army of Nepal in the act of striking.¹⁵⁵

At any rate, the knowledge that Matabar was an ally of the British would restrain the Pandes from persisting in their hostile policy.

Matabar was assured that the Resident would take personal interest in the safety of his family at Kathmandu. He was promised suitable reward for helping the British against the Pandes. Assurances of a secure living and the temptation of a reward led Matabar to accept the British overture. He lived hereafter at Ludhiana, under close surveillance.¹⁵⁶ On representation by the British, the Nepalese agents were dismissed from the Lahore court; Maharaja Kharak Singh asked the King of Nepal to refrain from keeping up intercourse with Lahore, except through the British Government, to whom, he pointed out, the Sikhs were attached by "firm friendship and alliance".¹⁵⁷

Meanwhile, Hodgson had gone far in creating, with the nobles hostile to the Pandes, a party well disposed towards the British; this party, with the support of the Resident, sought to overthrow the Pandes from power. Hodgson played upon the acute rivalry between the various elements in the *darbar* and assured the peace-party of all help for seizing power. It is the persuasion of these peace loving nobles, coupled with the pressure of the Resident and his own morbid fear of reprisals by the British that led the King to undertake to abide by the engagement of 1839, as also to desist from intriguing with Lahore and other Indian states. The King was now

increasingly aware that the schemes of the Pandes were illusory and their *modus operandi* extremely hazardous. In utter panic, the King was disposed to dismiss the Pandes whose provocative foreign policy was certain to result in a war with the British.¹²⁸

The British took full advantage of the situation "when the palace is yet more divided, the chiefs for more openly disgusted, and the army half organised,"¹²⁹ besides,

there being a large and distinguished portion of the chieftaincy which would be now glad to find honourable safety under the aegis of the predominant influence, though not of the direct dominion, of the British Government.¹³⁰

Accordingly, Lord Auckland in a sternly-worded *Khareeta* asked the King to bring about an "entire change" in the administration "as shall conduce to the prosperity of the Nepal state itself, while giving security to the adjoining territories." To add to the King's fear, a corps under Colonel Oliver was moved closer to the Nepal frontier.¹³¹ That dished the lot.

On 1 November 1840, Ranjang Pande was deposed by the King. A pro-British noble and a prominent member of the peace party, Choutaria Fateh Jang Shah, was then made Minister. The latter, with Hodgson's active help, soon set up a regime under the "moral aegis" of the British government and the protective influence of the Resident—a regime amenable to British wishes and conducive to their interests.¹³² It was acknowledgedly a *pis aller*, a political expedient to weather a crisis; but it was designed, as Hodgson himself admitted, to be a nucleus of British influence in the Nepalese *darbar*.¹³³ The pro-British regime lasted for almost three years, during which the predominant influence of the Resident kept Nepal thoroughly subdued, leaving no scope for indulgence in machinations with Indian states.¹³⁴

Matabar received the news of the formation of a pro-British ministry in Nepal in cool grace. This shattered his hope of going back to Nepal and assume supreme power with the help of the British, his recent allies. He found to his utter dismay that they had given him only false promises to grind their own political axe; they had neither rescued his children from Kathmandu nor backed up his bid for power. A rankling grievance of being thoroughly duped by the British made him restive; he resumed his intriguing pursuits. He started from Ludhiana a systematic vilification campaign against the new regime at Kathmandu, branding the ministers as minions of the British and traitors to the country. He sought to excite the King's jealousy and fear of the ministers

and to persuade him to depose them. He gave himself out as the King's most loyal servant, the only man who could foil the sinister designs of the British. In a secret petition to the King Matabar sought to convince the latter of his persistent efforts to win over Lahore at a grave risk to his own life. He wrote that Sher Singh and Dhian Singh were extremely eager for the alliance, realising that

there is old friendship between the Sikhs and the Gurkhas; now is the time for Nepal to rise. Unless both Sikhs and Gurkhas rise together, nothing effectual will be done.¹²⁶

Sher Singh was reported to have been willing to pay for forty to fifty thousand Nepalese soldiers for two years. Matabar entreated the King to use his good offices to effect his (Matabar's) release from the surveillance of the British. Once freed from the British clutches, he would form the Sikh-Nepalese alliance in a couple of months; and even if he failed to remove the Residency from Kathmandu, he would "at least restore things to the state they were at Bhim Sen's time." As an evidence of his loyalty to his country, he declared that he had spurned the offer of Rupees twenty thousand which the British had made, should he lead the British army based in the Tarai into Nepal. The King was exhorted to take full advantage of the British plight in Afghanistan and to reciprocate the Lahore darbar's eagerness for alliance.¹²⁷

It seemed to the British that Matabar was "reviving the semblance of reality" of the alliance with a view as much to deluding the King of Nepal as to creating problems for the new ministers. Matabar was trying to animate the King's fondness for intrigues and to augment his own importance as the most efficient agent for the purpose. It was evident that Matabar would persevere in his pursuits

the more recklessly in proportion as he finds that we cannot and will not fulfil his aspiring aims at power and revenge—his sole chance of deluding his own sovereign is in the character of a successful negotiator with Lahore.¹²⁸

Matabar's proceedings were highly suspicious and, hence, called for close watch. His political intercourse with the King was carried on beneath the profuse professions of friendship with the British. He sought to disabuse the British of their suspicion of Sikh-Nepalese coalition by impressing on them that notwithstanding the keenness of the Pandes, the Sikhs were reluctant to stake their long-standing amity with the British for the dubious advantage of alliance with "so inefficient and poor a government as Nepal has for years

been"¹²⁸ The British Political Agent at Ludhiana was convinced that Matabar was in a difficult position; he was inclined to the view that Matabar was playing a subtle diplomatic rope trick, by wheedling the Pandes into the belief that the Sikhs were agreeable to the contemplated league, and that he was sincerely trying for it.

Having now seen a good deal of Matabar Singh, [Clerk noted.] I am strongly impressed with the belief that his dominant desire is to serve his own interests and avenge himself on the Pandes by any means; that the means he would prefer as most prompt and affording him the best security for the future would be to precipitate hostilities between the British government and Nepal, he exerting himself in our side, but that failing his hope of reaching his aim, he would gladly avail himself of those means which a league prompted by himself between Lahore and Kathmandu might be effected by his party, afford of lifting him into power.¹²⁹

The British could hardly be duped by Matabar's deft political game. More rigorous surveillance was imposed on him, and shortly after he was removed to Simla. Lord Ellenborough, who succeeded Lord Auckland, was opposed to the latter's Nepal policy.¹³⁰ Matabar's position seemed to him absolutely "anomalous"; it was an odd policy, he held, to maintain with a subsidy a man who made no bones about his hostility towards the British, or at any rate, who was seeking to grind nothing but his own axe. Lord Ellenborough was, hence, keen on setting Matabar free; he even instructed the Resident to sound the *darbar* if it would give a guarantee of Matabar's personal safety at Kathmandu.¹³¹ Hodgson vehemently opposed this policy, for

so long as Exul [Hodgson's pseudonym for Matabar] remain with us, we retain in the event of rupture with Nepal, a valuable instrument to facilitate her punishment. If peace were maintained with Nepal under Kala Pande guidance, the counterpoise of the Thapas, of whom Exul is the head, might be beneficial.¹³²

An extremely ambitious, revengeful and choleric character, Matabar could rest content with nothing but supreme and exclusive power as Bhim Sen had wielded. It was certain that he would be disagreeable to the ruling ministers; his impulsive and insolent nature was certain to alienate all elements, and his vaulting ambition would unleash party strifes; the political set up admirably serving the British interests would collapse; Indo-Nepalese relations would relapse to the same dangerous state as before.

These were weighty arguments; Lord Ellenborough changed his mind;¹³³ Matabar was retained under British custody till April 1843, when, following the complete change in British government's Nepal policy, he was freed and allowed to return to Nepal. In December 1843 Matabar became the Minister of Nepal.¹³⁴

Stringent measures against Matabar were all the more needed for there was a strong belief that the Dogra Rajas were keen on enlisting his services in their war with Tibet.¹³⁵ The Rajas had by 1835 been masters of Ladakh, and were carrying fire and sword into western Tibet. They were trying to link up Nepal and Ladakh by a chain of forts. George Clerk, the political agent at Ludhiana, cautioned the Government that

it can never be safe for the Government of India to allow the approximation to Nepal of any other powerful and aspiring hill state.¹³⁶

The gradual advance of the Dogra territory along the British frontier, as evidenced by their occupation of Mandi, invasion of Kulu, and the demonstration against Bushir, tended to give substance to this apprehension. A junction of Sikh—Nepalase territories would "grievously and durably" affect the British interests at Kumaun, the recovery of which formed one of the most cherished desires of Nepal.¹³⁷

The Dogra-Tibetan war caused fresh excitement in Nepal; she was eager to join the war and make political capital thereof. The King of Ladakh appealed to Nepal for military help against the Dogras, who in their turn, sought Nepal's aid against Tibet. Nepal was in a fix. If she helped the Dogras, she could hope to be rewarded with some Tibetan territory. But such a policy was risky, for Tibet being a tributary of China, the latter might intervene on her behalf. Neither Tibet nor China desired Nepal's involvement in the Dogra-Tibetan war; both had deep distrust of Nepal; both were aware of Nepal's eagerness to exploit the situation.

The King of Nepal even sounded the Resident if he (the King) would help the Dogras against the Tibetans, vassals of China, and with China the British were having war. Hodgson turned down the overture, warning the king that the British disapproved of the Dogra invasion of Tibet, and that.

We had no desire to do injury to China in any quarter, and should willingly desist from our compulsory operations in China proper so soon as justice had been rendered to us.¹³⁸

The British were concerned for three reasons: First, the Dogra-Tibetan war had set off disquiet in the Punjab hill states; secondly, it had given fresh impetus to Nepal's bellicose

spirit; thirdly, it was likely that China, Tibet's overlord, would intervene on the latter's behalf. The appearance of China in the neighbourhood of Nepal would aggravate the latter's hostile attitude towards the British. Besides, Dogra-Nepalese coalition against Tibet would rouse Bhutan and Sikkim having ties with Tibet and China. Thus, there was great risk of the British being involved

in a labyrinth of trans-Himalayan politics, the clue to which may be difficult to find, and impracticable to use when found.¹²⁹

Pressure was brought to bear upon the Lahore *darbar* to call off the invading Dogra army, for its activity had greatly harmed British commercial interests in the Punjab hill states. Hodgson kept a rigid control over the state of affairs at Kathmandu. The King was warned against taking undue interest in the war. Hodgson was confident that so long as the pro-British ministry was in power there was no fear of Nepal's joining either the Dogras or the Tibetans in the war. The Dogra-Tibetan war could not assume complexity due to the effective control of Nepal by the Resident.

By the end of 1843, the troubles of the British had been over. Afghanistan was quiet and Burma relatively less troublesome; the Indian states were quiescent. Restlessness in Nepal ebbed in consequence; the most critical phase in the Indo-Nepalese relations was over by 1844. Nepal hereafter found herself torn by domestic feuds; the squabbles of the nobles for power were the main political events in the following two years.

Towards the end of 1843, the British had to resolve a serious rift between Oudh and Nepal. Darshan Singh, the Nazim of Oudh, a notorious persecutor of tenants, forcibly evicted Raja Digvijoy Singh, a talukdar of Balrampur, on the charge of non-payment of revenue. The latter took refuge in Nepalese territory and indulged in systematic raids on Darshan Singh's men at Balrampur. Darshan Singh pursued the desperadoes into the Nepalese territory and plundered it. The Nepalese government waxed great wrath over such violent intrusion into their territory. Contemplating retaliation, a large army was assembled on the Oudh-Nepal border, spreading alarm in the whole area. In panic the King of Oudh appealed to the British government for protection. The British found themselves in an embarrassing predicament; Oudh was their protected ally, and with Nepal they had no desire to pick up a quarrel; besides, Nepal had a just cause for indignation. The Resident at Lucknow advised the King of Oudh to take precautionary measures by connecting Lucknow with the Nepal-Oudh border by a net-work of roads. However, thanks to the Resident's in-

tercession, the matter was settled; an indemnity was paid by the King of Oudh; Darshan Singh was dismissed from service and the Nepalese *darbar*, its anger assuaged, recalled the troops from the border.¹⁴⁰

When, following the fall of Matabar Singh, a coalition Ministry was in power,¹⁴¹ there occurred two incidents which suggested the revival of Nepal's interest in the political affairs of India. One of them was the first Sikh war, and the other, the abortive Patna conspiracy of 1846.

During the first Sikh war, the Resident maintained a policy of mingled vigilance and firmness. In April 1844, the Resident reported to the Government that Heera Singh, an influential Sikh *Sardar*, was trying to incite the Nepalese King against the British. Arms were sent from Kathmandu to all frontier outposts but nothing untoward happened, thanks to the Minister, Matabar Singh's, preference for peace.¹⁴² When the Anglo-Sikh war broke out in 1845, some officers in the *darbar* were excited; a grand council at Kathmandu eagerly debated whether or not to furnish military assistance to the Sikhs. Jang Bahadur and Kaji Gagan Singh, two members of the coalition ministry, advised the King and the Queen to have no truck with the Sikhs. The King, on their advice, twice offered the British Nepalese troops for employment against the Sikhs; twice the offer was politely declined. "Utmost friendliness" was maintained by the *darbar* throughout the course of the war. The Resident confidently held that "neither the Sovereign nor the Heir-Apparent nor any party of weight in the Nepal *Durbar* has or had a serious thought of venturing on a collision with the British power."¹⁴³

The King, however, asked for a reward of some territory in Kumaun or elsewhere as a price for his neutrality. But his request was turned down as a "sturdy and shameless begging."¹⁴⁴

However, the Resident could not fail to note that Nepal was none too happy over the reduction of Lahore, the only state to which she could look for help during any troubles with the British in future. Her congratulations on the British victory could ill conceal her genuine uneasiness.¹⁴⁵

About the same time a wide-spread conspiracy, with Babu Kunwar Singh as its main accomplice, was unearthed at Patna. The object of the conspiracy was to set up a league of principal Hindu and Muslim rulers including those of Nepal, Lahore and Delhi. Letters bearing the names of Kunwar Singh and the Patna Nawab were believed to have reached the Nepalese agents at Kathmandu. It was suspected by some British officers that the King of Nepal had promised Khawaja Hussain Ali Khan and Kunwar Singh, all help "to erase the names and

marks of the Europeans from Hindoostan." Some of the prominent Rajas and Zamindars of Bihar were known to have joined the conspiracy. On thorough investigation, the reports of Nepalese complicity turned out to be baseless. The Resident, J. Colvin, strongly doubted if the alleged sojourn of Kunwar Singh at Kathmandu was true, although he did not wholly discount the likelihood of Hussain Ali's having found political asylum in Nepal. There was not "the least hope of assistance and support" of Nepal to the conspiracy, Colvin asserted. But when the conspiracy petered out, many accomplices found the Nepalese Tarai a haven of refuge.¹⁶

With Jang Bahadur's assumption of power in September 1846, a new era dawned in Indo-Nepalese relations. It saw the restoration of domestic order and stability after many years of tumult and chaos; and internal order in Nepal was the prerequisite to stable relations between the two governments. The era of active enmity ended and that of good faith, understanding and cooperation began. The idea of wreaking vengeance on the British, who were hitherto distrusted as the national enemies, yielded place to that of experimenting with their goodwill. The policy of active hostility was abjured in favour of restricted friendliness and cautious deference to the British. Jang Bahadur realised that the goodwill of the British was the *sine qua non* for the consolidation of his regime. His main aim was to convert the British government from a source of menace to Nepal to that of strength for his own rule. Peace with the British was his settled policy, for without it, he knew, warlike spirits at Kathmandu would raise their head; these spirits would breed internal instability and invite external danger. He knew that close relations with Indian states were disagreeable to the British; the latter, he was convinced, wanted Nepal to remain isolated from Indian states and Indian politics. In consequence, during Jang Bahadur's rule Nepal's relations with Indian states were far less intimate than they were in the decade immediately before his assumption of power.

Jang Bahadur was keen on removing the sources of discord with the British government, and evincing his friendliness towards them. Thus, during the Second Anglo-Sikh war (1848-49), he offered the services of Gurkhas under his personal command. Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, politely declined the overture, in spite of the Resident's pleadings for its acceptance. Dalhousie was shrewd enough to notice that Jang Bahadur's friendly gesture was as much a "gratifying circumstance", promising "well for the future peace of India", as it was suggestive of his anxiety to provide employment to the vast, but idle, Nepalese army.¹⁷ Jang Bahadur was naturally disappointed. During the course of the war, he, along

with the King, all the important civil and military officers, 32000 soldiers and 52 guns, encamped in the Tarai forests on the Indo-Nepalese border. The ostensible object was hunting and strengthening the Nepalese posts on the frontier for administrative convenience. The Resident did not entertain any apprehension, confident as he was of Jang Bahadur's eagerness to ingratiate himself with the British. But Lord Dalhousie had some misgivings and concern; the timing of the hunting expedition was "unusual and suspicious." It appeared to him as an attempt, on the part of Jang Bahadur, at creating a diversion in favour of the Sikhs, by obliging the British to keep a force tied down in the Nepal Tarai, and thereby preventing them from despatching additional troops to the Punjab. As a measure of precaution five hundred horsemen were quickly brought from Madras and three hundred men of the Queen's 80th Foot, recently brought from Dinapore, were hastily sent back to that station. The Resident accompanied Jang Bahadur to the Tarai. Lord Dalhousie made a strong representation with the *darbar* for spreading alarm on the border. The expedition soon returned from the Tarai. Dalhousie heaved a sigh of relief.¹⁴⁸

In April 1849, Maharanee Jhinda, the ex-queen of Lahore, escaped to Nepal from the fort of Chunar where she had been interned after the second Sikh war. The British did not press the Nepal *Durbar* for her surrender when Jang Bahadur assured that his government would keep the Queen under strong surveillance, and that he would be personally responsible for her safe custody.¹⁴⁹

In the closing months of 1849, British relations with Sikkim were strained following the incarceration of Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, and of Dr. Hooker, the celebrated naturalist, by the Raja of Sikkim. When remonstrances were of no avail, Lord Dalhousie seriously thought of withdrawing from the Raja the guarantee of protection of his territory from Nepalese invasion. This guarantee, contained in the Treaty of Titalya (1817), alone had hitherto saved Sikkim from aggression by her more powerful neighbours. Hence,

to cancel this engagement [i.e. Articles I and IX of the Treaty of Titalya] is virtually an invitation to all these [Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan] to possess the remainder of Sikkim.¹⁵⁰

Nepal being the strongest of the three states, it was likely that withdrawal of British protection from Sikkim would be immediately followed by her incorporation into the Nepalese dominion. A large force would then be necessary to keep watch on Nepal, as also to prevent Darjeeling from "fall-

ing into the inappropriate speck in the immense mountain kingdom of Nepal'. Jang Bahadur was eager to help the British against Sikkim, presumably with the hope of some territorial reward in the area on which he had set his heart for long. Ultimately the Raja of Sikkim was cowed by the threat that if he did not submit to the British demands, he would forfeit their guarantee of protection from Nepalese invasion.¹⁵¹

The British then occupied the Sikkimese lands bordering on Nepal, thus cutting off the approaches from Nepal to Darjeeling. They also held one of the two passes leading into Nepal on the line of the river Rummo. The increasing British influence in Sikkim caused uneasiness in Nepal, and the roads built by the British in the area to promote their commercial interests, were viewed with suspicion and disfavour at Kathmandu.¹⁵²

By his pacific and friendly policy, Jang Bahadur soon convinced the British of the real change in Nepal's foreign policy. Nevertheless, the British government maintained vigilance. Sir Charles Napier, the Commander-in-Chief, while pinpointing the defects in the Indian military administration, laid great stress on the danger of an alliance between Jang Bahadur and Golab Singh. Such a combination appeared to him the "greatest external danger" of the British. To guard against this menace, he strongly pleaded for strengthening the British military posts on the Himalayas.¹⁵³

Nepal's relations with Indian states were far more intimate in the first half of the nineteenth century than either before or after. These intimate relations were coeval with the most active phase in the history of Nepal's foreign relations, as also with the stormiest era in her domestic history. Nepal's relations with Indian states were influenced less by neighbourly feelings than by political considerations. In the first decade of the nineteenth century Nepal looked upon the weak Indian states on the southern slope of the Himalayas as objects of conquest and aggrandisement. After the defeat at the hands of the British and the establishment of political relations with them, Nepal realised the worth of alliance with Indian states as a means of setting up a confederacy against the British. Various attempts were made to unite the Indian states, as also to articulate their brooding discontent and sullen disaffection towards the British. Close watch was kept on British proceedings in these states; moral support and military assistance were proffered to them if they planned a break with the British; Nepal wanted to create a grave internal crisis for the British and to keep them occupied while she could launch a sudden invasion and recover her lost territories. Alone Nepal did not dare risk a collision with the British and, hence, her eagerness for coalition with Indian powers. No wonder,

England's woes were Nepal's opportunities; there was an invariable synchronism between the crises of the British in India, exacerbation of hostile spirit in Nepal and intimacy of the latter's relations with Indian states. Unfortunately for Nepal, all her efforts to rally Indian states proved abortive due mainly to the fact that their fear of British arms far outweighed the allurements of Nepal's overtures; the risk of enmity with the British balanced the temptation of exploiting their troubles. Besides, there was hardly any unity among Indian states, and the British maintained sharp vigilance over their proceedings.

Very often diplomatic relations with Indian states were strengthened and made more intimate by the ruling parties in Nepal as a means of earning prestige at home. Parties squabbling for power threw in machinations with Indian states; they indulged in intrigues with the latter to meet their own political ends by humouring the army and exciting the jingo spirit of the martial tribes of Nepal. Such intrigues were expected to bear fruit in a combination against the British; nothing was dearer to the Nepalese than harassing the latter, their sworn enemy; whichever party succeeded in forming a confederacy of Indian states and, with its help, defeating the British, was certain to entrench itself deeply into the esteem of the Nepalese people in general and the army in particular. In consequence, the most tumultuous period in Nepal's internal history coincided with the most active phase in her foreign relations, and active foreign policy was demonstrated by close relations with the Indian states. An active foreign policy kept the Nepalese in a state of eager expectancy, and the army in abiding excitement.

Commensurate with the consolidation of the British rule in India and the resultant weakness of the Indian states, Nepal's intriguing propensities considerably abated. The risk of estranging the powerful British government weighed heavily on the Nepalese government and dampened their hostile propensities. And since Nepal looked upon the Indian states as but means of meeting her own ends, her relations with them became tenuous.

NOTES

* Published in *Journal of Indian History*, Aug. 1965, pp. 403-65, under the title, "Nepal's Relations with Indian States, 1800-50".

1. These twentyfour states, a loose confederacy, was called *Chaubisi*; further west another group of small states existed, called *Baisi*. Most of the states were ruled by the scions of the Rajput dynasties who had fled from India in the 13th-14th centuries. D. R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, pp. 1-42.

2. Ibid., pp. 104-26. F. Buchanan-Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal and of Territories annexed to Dominion of the House of Gorkha*, pp. 291-316. E. H. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Districts of the North-West Provinces of India*, II, pp. 607-97.
3. PC, 13 Sept 1811, No. 56.
4. On the Sikh-Nepalese war and the British attitude to it see A. Farooqi, *British Relations with the Cis-Sutlej States, 1809-23*, pp. 43-4. PC, 4 Oct 1811, No. 19.
5. Between 1788 and 1792 Nepal invaded Sikkim and Tibet twice. The Chinese, overlords of the Tibetans, who, in their turn looked upon the state of Sikkim as their dependency, intervened. In the war that followed the Nepalese were defeated. Thus Nepalese expansion to the north and east was checked. See p. below.
6. Chitranjan Nepali, op. cit., pp. 285-91. H. L. O. Garrett and G. Chopra, eds, *Events in the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1800-1817*, pp. 178-82, 190-94, 217.
7. Marchioness of Bute, ed., *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings*, I, p. 298.
8. H. T. Prinsep, *History of the Political and Military Transactions during the administration of the Marquess of Hastings, 1813-1823*, I, p. 134.
9. SC, 14 Oct 1829, No. 23. In 1820 Bhim Sen made an appeal to the principal Indian states to rise against the British. A stirring poem composed by Banindhi, the Nepalese court poet, was circulated in various Indian courts. C. Nepali, op. cit., pp. 158-9, 175-81, 285.
10. Govt. to Gardner, British Resident in Nepal, 7 July 1817, NR, Vol. 2.
11. Govt. to Gardner, 23 July, 6 Aug, 20 Nov 1817, NR, Vol. 2.
12. SC, 22 Aug 1817, No. 36; 26 Dec 1817, No. 87.
13. Govt. to Gardner, 13 Oct 1817, NR, Vol. I. SC, 19 Dec 1816, No. 29.
14. Govt. to Gardner, 8, 20 Nov, 30 Dec 1817, NR, Vol. 2.
15. SC, 19 Dec 1816, No. 29. Major Ross of Bladenburg, *The Marquess of Hastings*, p. 71.
16. Aitchison, op. cit., 155-6.
17. Govt. to Gardner, 13 Oct 1817, NR, Vol. 2.
18. The British Residents paid high tributes to Bhim Sen's administrative ability. PC, 2 Sept, 1820, No. 11; 29 Apr 1825, No. 30. FM, Vol. 198, pp. 17-23, 246.
19. FM, Vol. 152. Hodgson to Macnaghten, Political Secy., 13 Aug 1833; Vol. 125: Hodgson's Memorandum on the Army of Nepal, pp. 74 et seq. Campbell's Report, op. cit.
20. NR, Vol. 2, Govt. to Resident, 4 Feb, 30 Apr, 24 Jun 1824. Dhanabajra Bajracharya and Gyanamani Nepal, eds., *Aitihāsik Patrasangraha*, pp. 82-6.
21. J. W. Kaye, *History of the war in Afghanistan*, I, p. 290.
22. BMAM. 37689, PLA, Vol. I, p. 80. Metcalfe to Auckland, 15 Oct 1836; 37691, PLA, Vol. II, p. 60, Minute of Auckland, 19 Jun 1837.

23. Besides the King and his two queens, each jealous of the other, there were four principal parties in the court. The Chautarias were the royal collaterals. The Gurus were the spiritual advisers of the King and his family. The Thapas emerged as the ruling party during the rule of Bhim Sen Thapa. The Pandes were the ruling party under Damodar Pande, the Minister, who was overthrown by Bhim Sen and the Thapas in 1804. The Pandes had two branches, the Gora Pandes and the Kala Pandes, the latter being the deadliest rivals of the Thapas. There were, besides, three small parties, the Bishtas, Bashnaites and the Bohras.
24. Tickell's Memorandum, SC, 18 Jan 1841, No. 74.
25. PC, 12 Feb 1833, No. 180.
26. Tickell's Memorandum, op. cit.
27. PC, 28 Jun 1833, No. 21; 28 May 1833, No. 4; 19 Dec 1833, No. 14. H. R. Gupta, "Sikh-Nepal Relations", *PIHRC*, Hyderabad, 1954, pp. 52 et seq.
28. PC, 15 Jan 1835, No. 43.
29. SC, 14 Aug 1837, No. 35.
30. The Pandes were out of power during the long rule of Bhim Sen.
31. Resident to Govt. 22 Jun 1842, SC, 7 Sept 1842, No. 88.
32. The 'Peace Party' was formed with Hodgson's covert encouragement and support as a counterweight to the War Party.
33. PC, 12 June 1837, No. 41.
34. Wade to Macnaghten, 29 July 1837, SC, 21 Aug. 1837, No. 35.
35. PC, 12 June 1837, No. 41.
36. Political Letter from Court, 24 Oct 1838, No. 61.
37. SC, 29 Aug 1838, No. 2.
38. SC, 13 Jun 1838, No. 9. PC, 17 Jan 1838, No. 30.
39. SC, 18 July 1838, No. 11; 26 Dec 1838. No. 65.
40. SC, 12 Dec 1838, No. 47; PC, 14 Mar 1838, No. 171.
41. SC, 22 Aug 1838, Nos. 19-21. PC, 4 Apr 1838, No. 92.
42. Ranjit's army had a Gurkha corps.
43. SC, 20 July 1838, No. 1; 28 Nov 1838, No. 41.
44. SC, 26 Dec 1838, No. 65.
45. SC, 21 Nov 1838, No. 149.
46. Resident to Govt., 6 July 1838, SC, 21 July 1838, No. 1.
47. Resident to Govt. 24 Sept 1837, PC, 9 Oct 1837, No. 46.
48. SC, 21 Nov 1838, No. 150.
49. BMAM, 37691, PLA, Vol. 2, p. 224, Colvin, Private Secy. to Auckland, to Resident, 31 Aug. 1837. PC, 9 Oct 1837, No. 47.
50. SC, 22 Aug 1838, No. 23.
51. SC, 13 Jun 1838, Nos. 8-9; 25 July 1838, No. 7; 1 Aug 1838, Nos. 35-9; 17 Oct 1838, No. 166. PC, 23 Jan 1839, Nos. 24-36.
52. SC, 13 Jun 1838, Nos. 8, 10, 16; 25 July 1838, Nos. 7, 12; 1 Aug 1838, Nos. 35-9; 22 Aug 1838, Nos. 40-47; 25 Nov 1838, No. 41.
53. SC, 28 Aug. 1828, Nos. 41-4.
54. SC, 7 Aug 1839, Nos. 17-20, 22, 25-6.

55. Resident to Govt., 5 Aug 1838, SC, 22 Aug 1838, No. 7.
56. BMAM, 37693, PLA, Vol. 3½, pp. 22, 53, Auckland to Hobhouse, 3 June 1828, Auckland to Fane, 21 June 1838. Governor-General to Secret Committee, 10 Sept 1838, No. 21.
57. SC, 17 Oct 1838, No. 178.
58. Governor-General to Secret Committee, 5 July 1838, No. 15.
59. Govt. to Resident, 30 July 1838, SC, 17 Oct 1838, No. 161.
60. Govt. to Resident, 5 July 1838, SC, 12 Sept 1838, No. 16.
61. BMAM, 37694, PLA, Vol. 4, p. 62, Colvin to Hodgson, 28 Aug 1838.
62. Ibid., 37693, PLA Vol. 3½, p. 67, Colvin to Hodgson, 2 July 1838.
63. Ibid., 37694, PLA, Vol. 4, p. 62, Colvin to Hodgson, 28 Aug 1838.
64. Ibid., 37693, PLA, Vol. 3½, p. 30, Colvin to Macnaghten, 9 Jun 1838.
65. Fane to Auckland, 24 Jun 1838, SC, 29 Aug 1838, No. 3.
66. SC, 20 July 1838, No. 5.
67. SC, 29 Aug 1838, No. 4; 12 Sept 1838, No. 1. Also SC, 22 Aug 1838, Nos. 9-14.
68. Auckland to Prinsep, 20 Oct 1838, PLA, Vol. 4, p. 164, BMAM, 37694.
69. Govt. to Resident, 5 July 1838, SC, 12 Sept 1838, No. 16.
70. BMAM, 37694, PLA, Vol. 4, p. 169, Colvin to Hodgson, 22 Oct 1838; Ibid., p. 145, Auckland to Hodgson, 16 Oct 1838.
71. The Nepalese royal family had matrimonial relations with the Rajput families in India.
72. SC, 20 Jan 1839, No. 44.
73. SC, 20 May 1839, No. 16.
74. Priest.
75. SC, 26 Dec 1839, Nos. 124, 127, 137, 140.
76. See p. below.
77. SC, 26 Dec 1839, Nos. 127, 136-9.
78. SC, 18 Dec 1839, Nos. 87-112; 26 Dec 1839, Nos. 124-7, 151; 5 Feb 1840, No. 58.
79. Hodgson to Colvin, 30 May 1839, SC, 26 Dec 1839, No. 127. Hodgson to Father, July 1839, cited in Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 177.
80. SC, 26 Dec 1839, No. 135.
81. Resident to Govt., 12 Mar 1839, SC, 18 Dec 1839, No. 99.
82. Ibid., Nos. 97, 105-07.
83. Govt. to Resident, 3 Jun 1839, SC, 26 Dec 1839, No. 120.
84. SC, 18 Dec 1839, Nos. 102-07.
85. SC, 26 Dec 1839, No. 154. Aitchison, *op. cit.*, (1929 edn.), Vol. XIV, p. 68.
86. Hodgson to Prinsep, 18 Oct 1839, SC, 26 Dec 1839, No. 149.
87. SC, 18 Dec 1839, No. 82; 26 Dec 1839, No. 121. The Senior Queen with the help of her supporters, the Pandes, was scheming at the forcible deposition of the King and the execution of the Junior Queen and her two sons. The Senior Queen wanted to set up her son, the Heir-Apparent, as the King with herself as the regent.
88. Resident to Govt., 14 April 1839, SC, 18 Dec 1839, No. 115.

89. SC, 26 Dec 1839, No. 164.
90. Resident to Govt., 8 Dec 1839, SC, 26 Dec 1839, No. 164.
91. SC, 18 Dec 1839, Nos. 67-75.
92. Auckland to W. Bayley, 23 Jan 1840, PLA, Vol. 9, p. 7, BMAM, 37698.
93. Auckland to President in Council, 18 July, 2 Sept, 1839, SC, 18 Dec 1839, Nos. 68, 73.
94. BMAM, 37696, Vol. 6, pp. 159-60, 178, 382-3. Governor-General to Secret Committee, 7 Feb 1839, No. 3.
95. BMAM, 37696, PLA, Vol. 6, p. 102, Auckland to Hobhouse, 18 Jun 1839.
96. SC, 12 Jun 1839, Nos. 10-15.
97. Ibid., No. 12, Minute of Auckland, 22 Apr 1839.
98. BMAM, 36474, HBP, p. 3, Auckland to Hobhouse, 10 May 1839.
99. President in Council to Governor-General, 9 Oct 1839, SC, 18 Dec. 1839, No. 74.
100. Ibid., No. 73.
101. BMAM, 37696, PLA, Vol. 6, p. 206, Colvin to Capt. Jenkins, 30 July 1839.
102. SC, 5 Feb 1840, Nos. 55-62; 31 Aug 1840, No. 80. Bengal Political Proceedings, 4 May 1840, Nos. 16-8; 15 June 1840, No. 1.
103. Jt. Magistrate, Champaran to Resident and Govt., 12 Aug 1840. District Records of Champaran, Letters Issued, Vol. 17. Bengal Judicial Proceedings, Criminal Branch, 9 Jun 1840, Nos. 72-7. SC, 27 July 1840, Nos. 99-104; 17 Aug 1840, Nos. 69-86; 31 Aug 1840, Nos. 78-81.
104. SC, 20 July 1840, No. 59. Oldfield, op. cit., I, pp. 318-9.
105. SC, 31 Aug 1840, No. 86; 14 Sept 1840, Nos. 1-2; 26 Sept 1840, Nos. 2-6.
106. BMAM, 37701, PLA, Vol. 12, p. 42, Auckland to Hobhouse, 15 Aug 1840.
107. Ibid., p. 196, Colvin to Hodgson, 28 Aug 1840. SC, 24 Aug 1840, No. 104.
108. BMAM, 37701, PLA, Vol. 12, pp. 138, 185, 284, 300.
109. R. A. Huttenback, "Gulab Singh and the Creation of the Dogra state of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Aug 1961, pp. 467-88.
110. SC, 17 Aug 1840, Nos. 79-82. Ganda Singh, ed., *The Punjab in 1839-40*, pp. 172, 178, 188, 193, 199, 244, 247, 249-50. I. B. Banerjee, "Nao Nihal Singh and the Nepalese Mission to Lahore", *PIHRC*, Oct 1945, pp. 17 et seq.
111. BMAM, 37700, PLA, Vol. 11, pp. 12, 30, Torrens, offg. Secy, Foreign Dept., to Clerk, 1 Jun, 4 Jun 1840.
112. SC, 31 Aug 1840, No. 71.
113. BMAM, 37702, PLA, Vol. 13, p. 99, Auckland to Hobhouse, 20 Nov 1840.
114. Resident to Govt., 27 Jan 1840, SC, 18 Feb 1840, No. 67.

115. Ibid. Also, SC, 29 Jun 1840, No. 85.
116. Ibid, Nos. 85-7.
117. SC, 23 Nov 1840, No. 64.
118. SC, 5 Oct 1840, Nos. 153-4; 26 Oct 1840, Nos. 128, 135.
119. Resident to Govt., 3 July 1840, SC, 20 July 1840, No. 59.
120. Resident to Govt., 22 Sept 1840, SC, 5 Oct 1840, No. 153.
121. SC, 26 Oct 1840, Nos. 134-5.
122. SC, 23 Nov 1840, No. 130.
123. SC, 7 Sept 1842, No. 88.
124. HM, Vols. 9, 10, 16, Hodgson's letters to several persons. See also *Notes on the Services of B. H. Hodgson*.
125. SC, 28 Feb 1842, No. 67.
126. Ibid.
127. Resident to Clerk, 9 Apr 1842, SC, 3 Aug 1842, No. 70.
128. Clerk to Govt., 23 Nov 1840, SC, 21 Dec 1840, No. 96.
129. Ibid.
130. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 204 et seq. A. Law, ed., *India Under Lord Ellenborough*, pp. 26 et seq. Governor-General to Secret Committee, 8 July 1842, No. 21. Hodgson was recalled in December 1843.
131. SC, 3 Aug 1842, No. 73.
132. Resident to Govt. 20 Aug 1842, SC, 5 Oct 1842, No. 142.
133. SC, 3 Aug 1842, Nos. 72-3, 85-6.
134. J. T. Wheeler, *Diary of Events in Nepal, 1841 to 1846*, p. 31.
135. See below pp.
136. Huttenback, op. cit., p. 123.
137. SC, 11 Oct 1841, No. 49.
138. SC, 3 Jan 1842, No. 128.
139. SC, 11 Oct 1841, No. 89.
140. PC, 27 Jan 1844, Nos. 141-81, 185-7; 3 Feb 1844, Nos. 217-29, 237-51; 9 Mar 1844, 118-20.
141. Matabar was assassinated in 1845, whereafter a coalition ministry was formed of which Jang Bahadur was a member. SC, 13 June 1845, No. 15; 29 Nov 1845, Nos. 38, 40.
142. NR, Vol. 5, Diary of Resident, 15-23 Apr 1844.
143. Resident to Govt., 6 Mar 1846, SC, 25 July 1846, No. 142; 25 July 1846, Nos. 129-32.
144. NR, Vol. 7, Colvin to Lawrence, 7 Apr 1846, SC, 25 July 1846, No. 150.
145. "All reports tend to prove that Nepal is full of mourners for the defeat of the Sikhs". Offg. Resident to Govt., 10 Jan 1846, SC, 28 Feb 1846, No. 21.
146. PC, 28 Feb 1846, Nos. 12-4; SC, 25 July 1846, Nos. 144-5.
147. SC, 24 June 1848, No. 65, Dalhousie's Minute, 8 June 1848.
148. SC, 30 Dec 1848, No. 45; 27 Jan 1849, Nos. 57-62; 24 Feb 1849, Nos. 37-9. Ganda Singh, ed., *Private Correspondence Relating to the Anglo-Sikh Wars*, p. 160.
149. See pp. 66 below.

150. PC, 14 June 1850, No. 433, Campbell's Memorandum, 1 Feb 1850.
151. Ibid., Nos. 369-554, J. D. Hooker, *Himalayan Journals*, pp. 124, 426-63.
152. See p. below.
153. Lt. General Sir W. F. P. Napier, ed., *Defects, Civil and Military of the Indian Government*, by Lt. General Sir Charles Napier, pp. 371-2.

III

MAHARANI JHINDAN IN NEPAL *

After the annexation of the Punjab, the British government incarcerated Maharani Jhindan, the wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, at Banaras, whence, following the interception of some suspicious letters written by her to Sardars Chattar Singh and Sher Singh in the Punjab, she was removed to the fort of Chunar.¹

In April 1849, on account of the "scandalous carelessness" of the fort authorities, the Rani escaped, and soon after appeared in Nepal. The flight of the Rani, particularly when the British rule had not been firmly established in the Punjab, caused the British some concern. The Rani was an inveterate enemy of the British and given to intrigues; it was feared that her influence still worked in the Punjab and her name cast a spell.²

Arriving in Nepal, the Rani sought political asylum of the Nepalese government. Jang Bahadur acceded to her requests. The British did not demand the extradition of the Rani, but they committed her custody to the Nepalese government. Jang Bahadur was warned that his government would be held responsible if the Rani escaped, and if she indulged in intrigues against the British. Jang Bahadur undertook to keep the Rani under strict surveillance and prevent her from having any communication with anybody in India. The Rani lived in a magnificent palace in the vicinity of Jang Bahadur's residence at Thapathali on the outskirts of Kathmandu. Jang Bahadur settled on her an annual pension of fourteen thousand rupees—an amount she always held as rather paltry.³

The British Resident wanted Jang Bahadur to treat the Rani as a state prisoner to be always prevented from public appearance.⁴ Notwithstanding the measures adopted by the Nepalese government, the Rani, true to the suspicion of the British government, began to intrigue with her followers in India with a view to escaping from Nepal. The Resident reported that she maintained epistolary communication with some Sikh prisoners in the Allahabad fort, and that some Sikh sardars had made abortive attempts at sneaking into Nepal through the Chisapani fort. The Resident, George Ramsay, remonstrated with the acting Prime Minister, General Bam Bahadur,⁵ but could elicit from him nothing but a disavowal of the Rani's complicity in the alleged intrigues.⁶

In the middle of 1852, the Resident came to know of a plot the object of which was to facilitate the Rani's escape with the help of Golab Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, and with the connivance of Jang Bahadur himself. The Rani's servants deposed before the Resident that letters had been exchanged between the three accomplices, and that the middle of July had been fixed as the time for the Rani's escape. Jang Bahadur admitted that some female relatives of the late Heera Singh, a brother of the Rani and a "prime favourite" of the late Ranjit Singh, had recently arrived and settled at Kathmandu. The Resident kept watch, although he had doubts if Jang Bahadur would actively help the Rani to escape and incur the displeasure of the British government. There was, nevertheless, a lurking fear that "were he [Jang Bahadur] inclined to do so, it would be easy for him to conceal the fact." The Board of Administration, Punjab investigated the matter and established that the reported intrigues of Golab Singh were baseless, for "however hostile might be the intentions of the Maharaja he is... most unlikely to dream such a thing as bringing up the Maharanee." It appeared to the Board more likely that the Rani was trying to prop up her position in Nepal by creating a make-believe of Golab Singh's alliance with her.⁷

Sir Charles Napier, the Commander-in-Chief, however, held strong suspicion about Golab Singh, who could incite the Nepalese against the British. An alliance of the states of Kashmir and Nepal, Napier warned, constituted "the greatest external danger we have to apprehend, and if it comes the Indian army will need all the courage of the troops and all the skill of their leaders."⁸

However Lord Dalhousie was less worried; he dismissed the reported intrigues as "fiction, for it is a series of improbabilities from first to last". It seemed to him as much unlikely for Jang Bahadur to connive at the escape of the Rani and invite British annoyance as for Golab Singh to "gratuitously make an enemy" of the British government by harbouring their "bitterest enemy." Indeed, the Governor-General believed that Golab Singh "would as soon wish to see Ranjit Singh himself back in Cashmere as his mischief making widow."⁹

Nevertheless, the Resident was asked to be vigilant. It soon transpired that for some time past Jang Bahadur's relations with the Rani had been strained. Jang Bahadur coveted the magnificent palace of the Rani and her treasures. The Rani bitterly complained that the annual pension was too inadequate for her maintenance. Jang Bahadur was irritated and wanted to get rid of her. He even hinted to Ramsay that if the Rani managed to escape, the Nepalese government would not receive her back. In such circumstances, it was not unlikely

for Jang Bahadur to encourage the Rani to escape in order that she might be caught while escaping and then delivered up to the British. This done, Jang Bahadur would occupy her palace and get her treasures, besides being spared of the expense on her account. The British government strongly warned Jang Bahadur against such schemes and asked him to prevent the Rani's communication with her followers in India.¹¹

During the revolt of 1857 the Rani's presence in Nepal assumed political significance. The Nepalese government kept her under strict surveillance, particularly after it was suspected that the rebel leaders were trying to win her over to their cause. Hukum Singh, a Sikh emissary, came to Butwal in Nepal with *Khareetas* from the Emperor of Delhi to the Rani and Jang Bahadur. In a *Hukumnamh* the Emperor asked all the nawabs, Rajas, nazims, chuckladars and influential men in the territories between Nepal and Lucknow and Lahore to support him. In an *urzee* to the Rani Hukum Singh sought her help to enable him to reach Kathmandu from Butwal where he had been held up by the Nepalese police. Jang Bahadur sent soldiers to seize him but he managed to escape with the *Khareetas*.¹²

Towards the end of 1858, when British relations with Jang Bahadur were a little strained following the latter's half-heartedness regarding the apprehension of fugitive rebels, more evidences of the Rani's attempts at escaping from Nepal came to light. Letters with fictitious names were intercepted; they were believed to have been addressed by the Rani to Maharaja Randheer Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. It was planned that Randheer Singh would march on Simla some time in December, and then a large scale military operation would follow, the participants being Babu Koer Singh of Jagdishpur; Umar Singh, the Begum of Oudh, Benee Madho, Devi Singh, Mahdee Hossain and Nana Saheb. An anonymous letter believed to have been written by the Rani to one Chart Singh of Amritsar contained the information that Jang Bahadur would march down via Chitlang and his brothers would invade Darjeeling and Patna.¹³ The Resident, Ramsay, then at Allahabad, strongly suspected that Jang Bahadur was in league with the rebel leaders and the ruler of Kashmir.¹⁴ Reports of emissaries from Kashmir having met the Rani added to the suspicion. In March 1856 and December 1858 the Resident reported that Jawahir Singh, a brother-in-law of the late Maharaja Kharak Singh, and an employee of Raja Golab Singh, came to Kathmandu and stayed with the Rani, although Jang Bahadur disclaimed any knowledge of the matter.¹⁵

Nothing came of these intrigues; the Rani ultimately lost all hope of escaping from Nepal. Prolonged incarceration told on her health; lack of adequate provisions for her maintenance

caused her constant worry. Her relations with Jang Bahadur worsened. The latter grew impatient and several times requested the Resident to induce her to leave Nepal on the false pledge of suitable pensions.¹⁶ The British government too felt that she was now incapable of doing any great mischief to them.

Towards the end of 1860 Maharaja Dalip Singh, the Rani's son, returned from London to Calcutta. The British government permitted the Rani to come down to Calcutta and settle in India on condition that she would not take up residence in or visit any part of Bengal west of Monghyr, and that she would keep the Government informed of her movements. It was decided to provide her with an annual subsidy of rupees thirty thousand. The Rani accepted the offer. Before setting out from Kathmandu on 16 January 1861, the Rani apprised the Resident of the many attempts of Jang Bahadur at intrigues with the leading men at Lahore and Kashmir. The British government took no official notice of these allegations, for fear that further investigations would create unpleasantness with Jang Bahadur.¹⁷

NOTES

* Published in *The Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Jan-Dec. 1961, pp. 241-5, under the title "Maharani Chanda Kaur in Nepal".

1. SC, 26 May 1849, No. 108.
2. *Ibid*, No. 115.
3. Commandari Kitabkhana, Nizamati phant, Registers for 1908, 1911 (V.S.).
4. SC, 22 Mar 1850, No. 408.
5. Bam Bahadur was the brother of Jang Bahadur who had gone to England at the time.
6. SC, 26 Sept 1850, Nos. 15-7.
7. SC, 25 Jun 1852, Nos. 134, 140-41, PC, 5 May 1854, Nos. 36-8.
8. Lt General W. F. P. Napier, *Defects, Civil and Military of the Indian Government*, by Sir Charles Napier, p 364.
9. SC, 25 Jan 1852, No. 135, Governor-General's Minute, 18 May 1852.
10. *Ibid*, No. 137-8, Governor-General's Minute, 22 May 1852.
11. SC, 29 Oct 1852, No. 109. PC, 5 May 1854, Nos. 36-8.
12. SC, 27 Nov 1857, Nos. 448-53.
13. PC, 30 Dec 1859, Nos. 1044-52.
14. SC, 25 Feb 1859, No. 28.
15. PC, 19 Sept 1856, No. 6; 31 Dec 1858, Nos. 4572-5.
16. Jang Bahadur told the Resident: "You might make the promise to her, and when you have got her down to Segowlee, have her seized and put in irons and send her away where you please, put her into jail or keep her in the fort of Allahabad". Resident to Govt., 26 Aug 1856, PC, 19 Sept 1856, No. 6. See also FPA, Nov 1860, No. 317.
17. FPA, Jan 1861, Nos. 144-51.

IV

NEPAL AND THE INDIAN MUTINY, 1857-8 *

Political events in India have always had a profound impact on Nepal. In the 19th century the Nepalese government closely watched the consolidation of British power in India; with consternation and fear they saw the gradual reduction of Indian States into vassals of the British. Nepal had herself felt the weight of British arms in 1814-6. She had acquiesced in the political relations with the British established by the treaty of Sagouli. She was for long sullen, resentful and hostile. There were many in Nepal who fondly hoped that some day the British rule would be threatened either by external invasion or internal disturbance, when Nepal would fight them and recover her lost territories.

The British government knew that Nepal was a bad neighbour, and that she was biding her time. Naturally, in their eyes Nepal's keen interest in the political events in India was suspect. Therefore, isolation of Nepal was a great political object of the British. A watchful eye was always kept on her.

The mutiny of the sepoys at Meerat on 10 May 1857 sparked off the smouldering discontent of the Indian troops, turning it into a challenge to the Government. With great speed the insurrection spread until, by the end of June, a considerable portion of the North-West. Provinces and Oudh had fallen into the hands of the rebels. In Lucknow, particularly, the situation was perilous. Here Sir Henry Lawrence, the Commissioner of Oudh, was holding out grimly with a few European troops against increasing odds and with fast-receding hopes. The fall of the Lucknow Residency seemed imminent, and with it the collapse of the British authority in Oudh. Equally critical was the position at Gorakhpur. The districts to its west had fallen in rebel hands, and those to the south were about to fall. Mutineers from Fyzabad and Azamgarh were surging upwards, flushed with success.¹

All this created excitement in Nepal. Exaggerated reports of the success of the sepoys and imminent crash of the British rule received wide currency and ready credence. The army grew restless; officers in the court of Kathmandu were agitated; the lure of plunder of the rich plains of northern India seemed overpowering, and so also the overtures of rebel leaders with jingling money bags. Nepal was astir; her pent-up martial energy was about to explode in all its accumu-

lated force; in the *darbar* speculations were in spate.¹ A number of nobles urged Jang Bahadur to join the rebels; some preferred to wait and watch; others counselled absolute neutrality. Jang Bahadur overruled them all; fully sensing the restlessness of the army, he decided to take part in the event—and as an ally of the British. He was said to have reasoned with the anti-British party in the *darbar*: to fight the British would be suicidal for Nepal; for

we may enrich ourselves for the time being. We may prosper for two or three years, but our time will infallibly come, and we shall then lose our country.²

In June 1857, Jang Bahadur offered the services of his troops to the Resident, Major George Ramsay. Jang Bahadur offered to personally lead fifty thousand troops to India. At first the offer was not taken very seriously by Ramsay, for it was made in a rather vague manner. At any rate, it seemed so to Captain Byers, the Assistant Resident:

...this offer of the Durbar is something like a general invitation to dinner, 'Come my dear fellow whenever you like there is always a plate for you', given without the slightest intention of being accepted. for on Major Ramsay's implying that it might be, surprise is the general feeling.³

Soon after, however, alarming reports came pouring in from Oudh. Ramsay overcame his initial hesitation and accepted the offer with unconcealed eagerness.⁴

Pending the Government's approval, Ramsay made prompt arrangements for despatching three thousand Nepalese troops to Lucknow, Banaras and Patna, and another two hundred to Gorakhpur. The authorities, both civil and military, at these places had been making urgent requests to the Resident to send Nepalese troops. Checking the spread of the revolt from Gorakhpur to Champaran and Tirhut in Bihar had now become a pressing necessity.⁵

To Lord Canning, the Governor-General, Ramsay's proceedings appeared "extraordinary". He could hardly restrain his "greatest surprise and concern". The Resident had no authority for what he did. Canning feared that if the Nepalese were allowed entry into the disturbed districts, they would plunder them. Their sudden descent into the plains might also strengthen the rumour that Nepal had sent her people to assist the rebels. The Resident was, therefore, censured for his unauthorised, unwarranted, impolitic and hazardous proceedings. He was asked to request Jang Bahadur to recall the troops. The mortification of the Resident could well be imagined, as also Jang Bahadur's annoyance.⁶

But hardly ten days had elapsed after this censure when

the Government of India frantically appealed to the *darbar* through the Resident for the aid which they had spurned before. It was belatedly realised that without the Nepalese aid, Lucknow could not be held. Ramsay made a fresh requisition for troops, and six thousand Nepalese were sent to Sagauli for the relief of Lucknow. The troops were still on their way, marching in slow pace, laden with a long train of baggages for soldiers, palanquins for officers and carriages for the sick when the defence of Lucknow collapsed with the death of Lawrence on 4 July 1857. In August Gorakhpur was lost to the rebels. The Nepalese were then rushed to recover Azamgarh and Jaunpur, the former station being very important as an outpost of the Banaras division and as commanding the direct route from Oudh to Ghazipur and further east.⁹

The situation in Bihar in the meantime had worsened. The sepoys at Dinapur and Sagauli had mutinied; the districts of Saran, Champaran and, to a lesser extent, Tirhut lay at the mercy of the rebels of Gorakhpur, Azamgarh and other affected areas.¹⁰ Two Nepalese regiments were, therefore, promptly sent from Kathmandu to Sagauli and Motihari to restore confidence among the local people, as also to check the spread of the disturbance from the west. Besides, there was the paramount object of keeping the line of communication open between Calcutta and Kathmandu through Patna, Muzaffarpur and Motihari.¹¹ Late in October a Nepali corps was posted to Sewan to deal with the rebels from Gorakhpur. Towards the end of 1857 a corps of 290 Nepalese troops was sent to Kumaun to prevent a likely raid on that station.¹²

By November 1857 the rebels, having been worsted in Delhi and other places, were massing at Oudh and Gorakhpur with a view to making a desperate stand against the British. To put them down and to restore the British authority, Canning, after much hesitancy, accepted the offer of about ten thousand Nepalese troops under the personal command of Jang Bahadur. In fact, Jang Bahadur had for some time been making repeated offers of military assistance on a large scale. He was "thirsting" to earn the prestige of a great hero and to prove his loyalty to the British. Canning's hesitation made him fidgety and indignant. He pointedly asked the Resident:

I am the only Minister of Nepal who has ever tried to befriend the British government. Why should I be refused a reply to my offers? Tell me that you accept my service or that you reject them.¹³

He offered to go to the battle field personally, and to put Nana Saheb to death, so that the British government would consider him not merely as a Nepalese *Sardar* [chief], "but as an European officer", irrevocably attached to the British.¹⁴ He

took an oath before the troops that if he entered into any intrigues with the rebels, he may be "proved to be the son of two fathers". "This is perhaps the strongest and the most binding oath in Nepal", Ramsay informed Canning.¹⁴ To overcome the latter's doubts, Jang Bahadur even offered his wives and children as hostages.¹⁵

The troops under Jang Bahadur served as auxiliaries to the British army organised under Sir Colin Campbell for the recovery of Lucknow.¹⁶ The Nepalese assisted in the recovery as also in the restoration of British authority over Gorakhpur by dispersing the rebels under the self-styled Nazim, Muhammad Hossain. While restoring British rule at Lucknow, the Nepalese joined in the general loot and spoliation of that rich city.¹⁷

The success of the Nepalese in Bihar, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Allahabad and Oudh¹⁸ justified the trust reposed on them by the Resident. However, there were some who had opposed their employment. Henry Tucker, the Commissioner of Banaras, for instance, had telegraphed to Canning :

I would most earnestly protest against any Nepalese troops being permitted to enter the country. If we cannot hold it ourselves without the aid of Nepal, it is time to leave. The appearance of Nepalese troops would produce a most injurious effect among the natives. I should be ashamed to see them at Benaras.¹⁹

Tucker dreaded the Nepalese more than the whole of the Bengal army, and talked of their "annexing Gorakhpur" as an accomplished fact. Even the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Frederick Halliday, was distrustful of the Nepalese troops.²⁰ Canning himself took quite some time to make up his mind; acceptance of Jang Bahadur's offer was not free from risks : it could be interpreted as an admission of the inability of the British government to deal with the situation themselves. It was quite a hard task for the Resident to persuade the Governor-General to accept the offer. A former Resident, Brian Hodgson, then living a retired life at Darjiling, also pleaded on Jang Bahadur's behalf. Hodgson went to Calcutta and reasoned with Canning, stressing the reliability of the Nepalese government under Jang Bahadur. He also suggested to "form a tie" on the Minister of Nepal by offering him western Tarai as a reward for his help.²¹

Jang Bahadur's attitude after he returned from the operations at Lucknow was not agreeable to many British officers, some of whom even complained of the overbearing conduct of the Nepalese chiefs and of the lack of adequate discipline in the troops. This was in sharp contrast to the excellent disposition of the Nepalese troops who were sent to India earlier

in June 1857, and who were under the overall command of British officers. Jang Bahadur was careful to keep his own troops away from British officers, preventing the "slightest semblance of interference with or check over his men".²² He came to India possessed with the ego of a veritable deliverer; he was treated, some British officers later complained, with impolitic latitude. This added to his natural vanity and made him a swollen-head. His haughtiness and arrogance were subjects of animadversion in the British officers' camps,²³ and the rapacity of his troops was noted with disapprobation. To many it appeared as though the fair name of the Nepalese troops as good fighters had been smudged during the indiscriminate loot of Lucknow.²⁴

Sri Colin Campbell himself was none too happy with the general performance of the troops commanded by Jang Bahadur and his brothers. He was indignant over their slow march and thirst for plunder. He was even prepared to undertake the relief of Lucknow without the Nepalese troops under Jang Bahadur. Canning, however, feared that this was most likely to be misinterpreted by the Minister as an intentional slight. He advised Campbell to wait for Jang Bahadur to arrive, or else, the latter would be

wild to find himself jockeyed out of all share in the great campaign...The loss of this help of his would be very inconvenient, but to find ourselves on bad terms with him would be much more so.²⁵

Worse was Campbell's reaction to Jang Bahadur's insistence that a corps of British soldiers escort his troops on their way back home through the rebel-infested regions bordering his state.²⁶

Even emissaries from rebel leaders were reported to have been hobnobbing with Jang Bahadur's men. It was alleged that Dumman Khan, a zamindar in the Nepalese Tarai and a confirmed ally of the rebels, had been engaged by Jang Bahadur to act as a liaison with the rebel leaders. Dumman Khan frequented the rebel camps and kept Jang Bahadur posted with developments there. When the Begum of Oudh had fled to the Tarai, Dumman Khan was known to have requested her to appoint him governor of the areas adjoining Bansi; he received presents from her, too. The rebels even tried to tamper with Nepalese troops and sought his help. There were even grounds to suspect that Dumman Khan and his men had attempted to incite the inhabitants of Gorakhpur against the British government, giving them hope that a Nepalese army would shortly come to assist them in effecting the fall of the British raj.²⁷ And Jang Bahadur treated Dumman Khan as one who had

served me so excellently as to gain my entire confidence and goodwill, and, therefore, he was counted as one of my well-wishing and faithful servants.²⁰

The Begum of Oudh was known to have offered Jang Bahadur Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Arrah, Chapra, Banaras and even Oudh itself. It was reported that 'the whole energies and talent of Oudh are now devoted to attempt to buy over the Nepalese'.²¹ Muhammad Hossain, the Nazim of Gorakhpur, later deposed that Palwan Singh, who was the officer commanding the Nepalese troops sent to India in June 1857, visited Bala Rao's camp after the battle of Lucknow on 25 March 1858 and demanded ten million rupees as price for fighting the British on his behalf. Muhammad Hossain asserted in his deposition that he had seen a letter written by Jang Bahadur to Bala Rao asking for the amount in cash.²² Explaining the attitude of the Minister, Ramsay reported :

I am persuaded that when Jang Bahadur first went to the British provinces, he did so with the intention of actually assisting us, but he found himself so utterly uncontrolled and uninfluenced that he soon commenced that course of hypocrisy and deception...²³

The *Times* correspondent also noticed some change in Jang Bahadur's attitude, holding that the conditions under which he rendered the aid were indefinite; possibly he had some high hopes which the British did not quite entertain, creating in him the feeling of an "ill-used man".²⁴

Yet, the situation was such that the British officers had to put up with him;²⁵ having swallowed the camel, it was unwise to strain at a gnat. Besides, Jang Bahadur's cooperation was badly needed to hunt down the rebels who had fled to Nepal after the revolt had been crushed. The fugitive rebels posed a great obstacle to the restoration of peace and order in the bordering districts. Indeed, the assistance of Jang Bahadur was in a way more important at the end of the mutiny than during it.

The Nepalese Tarai soon became a political Alsatia, a sanctuary of lawless elements of every stripe. The measures adopted by the Government to deal with them were ineffective due as much to the inadequate police arrangements on the frontier as to the lukewarmness of Nepalese frontier officers. Jang Bahadur was urged to prevent the entry of the rebels into his territory and to ask his officers not to entertain them as they were reported to have been doing. Very little heed was given to these requests. Nana Sahib, Bala Rao, the Begum of Oudh, her son, Brijis Kadir, and many other leaders

with their followers escaped to Nepal with the connivance of Nepalese frontier officers.³⁴ The rebel leaders also made ineffectual attempts at organising an army with the help of Jang Bahadur.³⁵ Their men prowled over the British districts below. The Nepalese Tarai soon became a base of organised predatory activities. There were strong evidences that the Nepalese "warden of the marches", Jai Kishen Puri and Dumman Khan, took a share of the spoils.³⁶ In the darbar a section of the chiefs, led by Jang Bahadur's brothers, maintained close connexion with the rebel leaders. The chiefs resolutely held that the rebels should not be made over to the British government.³⁷ The Resident reported :

The more I hear and see what is passing in this darbar the more convinced I am that the sympathy of the sardars and of the army are rather with the rebels than with us.³⁸

The British officers engaged in the apprehension of the rebels on the border shared this opinion. They found Nepalese frontier officials bearing deep grudge against the British and sending Jang Bahadur false reports of Nepalese villages being plundered by British troops and people being molested.³⁹

The British government could no longer put up with this situation; the rebel leaders had baffled all attempts to apprehend them. The Government suspected that either Jang Bahadur was powerless to restrain his officers from helping the rebels or he was himself a party to their activity. Reports came thick and fast that the rebel leaders were desperately trying to win over Jang Bahadur; at times he was offered tempting rewards, sometimes threatened with punishment if he delivered them up to the British. As a result the Resident found him showing

perfect apathy and the sardars and the army so much sympathy with the rebels, all of whom they consider should receive unconditional pardon.⁴⁰

Naturally, "a strong disinclination exists here of attacking them".⁴¹ The British government even suspected that Jang Bahadur was withholding information with a view to foiling their attempts at capturing the fugitives. It was alleged that he had gone to the Tarai for procuring arms and ammunition from the Begum of Oudh. In such circumstances, when Jang Bahadur refused to take action against the rebels, the British strongly condemned his attitude; he was charged with deliberate remissness and "infringement of neutrality, not to say of good feelings and alliance."

Rumour was rife that Jang Bahadur, backed by the fugitive rebels, was making preparations to invade Darjeeling, Kumaun and the districts of Bihar adjoining Nepalese

territory; he was also reported to have requested China to call upon Bhutan and Sikkim to join Nepal against the British.⁴¹ The intercepted correspondence of the exiled queen of Lahore at Kathmandu with some influential persons at Lahore led to the suspicion that Jang Bahadur was implicated in the intrigue.⁴² Dr Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, took prompt measures. The Acting Resident at Kathmandu, Captain Byers, however, retained 'implicit confidence' in the friendliness of Jang Bahadur. He assured the Government that the Minister had no malicious designs, nor was there any league between him and the rebel leaders in Nepal. There was not even "a shadow of foundation" in his alleged scheme regarding Darjeeling.⁴³ Ramsay, too, dismissed the news of his intrigues with the exiled queen of Lahore as "a tissue of nonsense", because "the Minister would never break with us, if he can possibly help it"; the queen was "now spiritless and indolent and is very nearly blind", having no influence in Nepal at all.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, it was wise to be on guard. The Supreme Council in Calcutta suggested a display of troops on the Bihar border as a warning to Jang Bahadur: "although a rupture with Nepal is improbable, we must not continue to act as though it were impossible".⁴⁵ The Lieutenant-Governor warned that although Jang Bahadur was convinced of the risk of hostility with the British, there was no guarantee that he would not take a chance, just as such conviction had not earlier deterred the Lahore *darbar* from making war with the British for the second time. Jang Bahadur was, therefore, warned that if he shirked his "plainest duty" of suppressing the predatory rebels and if he continued to shelter them, British troops would enter the Nepalese territory to hunt down the rebels even without the necessary permission of the Nepalese government.⁴⁶ This had a telling effect. At the instance of the Resident, Dumman Khan, "the declared and the bitter enemy of the British government", but a "well-wishing and faithful servant" of Jang Bahadur was punished by him.⁴⁷

It was not long before Jang Bahadur himself realised that his softness towards the rebels had turned out to be misplaced clemency. Effectively checked in their activities by the British border forces, the fugitive rebels turned to Nepalese villages for plunder. Above all, Jang Bahadur realised that the British were very sore with him. In the Indian press strong demands were being made to call him to account.⁴⁸ In such circumstances, Jang Bahadur asked the British government's cooperation to mop up the rebels, who were represented in the Nepalese king's letter to the Viceroy as a menace to both the governments.⁴⁹

Notwithstanding the British suspicion about Jang Bahadur, it has to be conceded that it is difficult, in the absence of clear evidences, to assert that he was personally inclined to shelter the rebels. He found it difficult to take strong measures against them when his brothers, the chiefs and even the army were in favour of a soft policy. Besides, the malarial climate of the Tarai was unsuitable for any military operation in the summer and rainy seasons. In such a situation, possibly, he found it politic to keep up an appearance of friendliness with the rebels till the cold season when an expedition was possible. The Resident himself admitted:

I have long been of opinion that the Durbar has been trimming between the rebels and ourselves, and it has wished *them* to believe that it was friendly to their cause. I have also felt convinced that it has been covertly playing into their hands and I am equally convinced that it will never openly assist them.¹⁸

Nor does it seem improbable that Jang Bahadur hoped to wring further capital out of the British anxiety over these rebels. Presumably, his plan was to undertake a grand military expedition against them in the winter season with the British defraying the expense of the expedition. This would please his troops, still restless. But the British government could not be tricked. They gave him no encouragement to launch an expensive expedition. In fact, he was plainly told that in crushing the rebels he would not oblige the British so much as he would relieve his own state of a horde of plunderers. He was, however, assured of full cooperation in an action against the rebels.¹⁹

The last two months of 1859 saw a combined operation by the British and Nepalese troops in the Tarai. The principal rebel leaders were either killed or captured with hundreds of their followers. Many had died earlier of starvation and disease in the swamps of the Tarai; some had given themselves up; others had sneaked their way back home, a helpless horde of fugitives, forlorn, bemoaning a cause lost for ever.²⁰ In January 1860, Brigadier Holdich, Officer-in-Charge of the mopping up operation, confidently reported that the "suppression of the last of the rebellion" on the banks of the river Rapti was "most complete... I do not believe that an armed rebel remains in the Tarai".²¹

As a "substantial proof of its gratitude" and "confiding friendship", the British government returned to Nepal the entire low lands between the rivers Kali and Rapti and the districts of Gorakpur which were formerly wrested from Nepal after the war of 1814-6. The territory ceded was two

hundred miles in extent.⁴⁴ Jang Bahadur's services were acknowledged in glowing terms, the Secret Committee in London writing to Canning:

These are great services rendered to us in our utmost need. We are unwilling to imagine the position in which we should have been without this aid from the Maharaja, still less to think of the course of events must have taken had the Maharaja⁴⁵ taken advantage of our distress and directed against us the force he has employed in our defence.

In recognition of his services, Jang Bahadur was made a G.C.B.⁴⁶

There were several motives which prompted Jang Bahadur to help the British when he had ample opportunity to throw his whole weight against them. He was convinced that the British government were powerful enough to retrieve their position in spite of some initial setbacks. He confided to the Resident that he quite knew the power of the British and, therefore,

were I to take part against it, although I might have temporary success for a time, my country would afterwards be ruined and the Gorkha dynasty annihilated.⁴⁷

He was shrewd enough to realise that his friendliness with the British had so far served him well; indeed, he could have scarcely consolidated his rule by risking their hostility. He also realised that much of the confusion and tumult in the internal politics of Nepal in the decade preceding his assumption of power was due to the anti-British policy of his predecessors which had provoked the British. The latter had now grown into a formidable power. Besides, the strength of the British lay in their national institutions, the knowledge of which during his trip to England in 1850-51 had created a strong impression on his mind. It was clear to him that supporting the rebels would have been like backing the wrong horse. As the Resident put it:

Dread of our power has been the main spring of Nepalese national policy and action for years past.⁴⁸

Jang Bahadur would have remained neutral if it were not for the scope the mutiny offered for reaping political dividends. From the very outset he had placed himself in a bargaining position. And behind the facade of his unconditional offers of aid there lurked "embarrassing hints of expectations"⁴⁹ He coveted some territories in Oudh, particularly Tulsipur and Chanda. His desire was to appease the anti-British elements in the darbar.⁵⁰ He also wanted to earn a lasting fame in Nepal by extending its area. As he said to Ramsay:

I have many enemies in Nepal who accuse me of befriending the British government to serve my own private

purposes, and who believe that I should sacrifice my country to further my own and my brothers' personal views—show them that this is false. Give me *izzut* [honour] in the eyes of my own country and of the world... I ask nothing for myself individually, but I desire that it should be handed down to posterity that during my ministership I obtained for my country from the British Government an extension of her dominions, however trifling that may be. This will silence all my enemies and will give me great name hereafter."⁴

Jang Bahadur succeeded in convincing the British that but for him and his loyalty to them, the *darbar* would have sided with the rebels. He impressed on Canning that he had not only withstood the temptations of plunder and had restrained his army but also risked his own reputation by supporting the British in the face of opposition of his brothers and influential chiefs. He hoped that if the British were convinced of his personal responsibility and the risk he had undertaken to assist them, they would, as a matter of obligation, support him and his regime in times of crisis and crises were not rare in Nepalese internal politics. He told the Resident of this expectation :

I know that upon the success of the British arms and reestablishment of the British power in India its government will be stronger than ever, and that I and my brothers and my country will all then benefit by an alliance with you as your remembrance of our past services will render our present friendship lasting and will prevent you ever molesting us."⁵

He could even hope that the British would acquiesce in his attempts to assume the "de jure sovereignty" of Nepal. For some time past he was making strong but subtle bid for the throne. By reducing the king to a figurehead he had already clinched supreme power. In disgust and despair the king often thought of abdication and even suicide in preference to suffering "the splendid misery of royalty and prison."⁶ The British government were aware of Jang Bahadur's ambitions, and had opposed them. From time to time the Resident warned him against his attempts. In fact, but for the opposition of the British, the reigning, Shah dynasty in Nepal would have been supplanted by the Ranas. It was certain that if the British gave him "the slightest countenance", he would have instantly driven the king from the throne.⁶ The mutiny now provided him with an opportunity to secure their acquiescence in, if not approval to, his ambitions. Lord Dalhousie had already shrewdly observed :

... if the Government suppose that Jang Bahadur is

doing all that he is doing "for love" they are mightily mistaken. Jang's drawing a bill upon them—at long date perhaps—but one which they will be called upon to pay, in return for value received, some day or other, as sure as fate. The Jang had long been obviously working his way to the musnad [throne] of Nepal... Jang Bahadur was the ruler himself... when the time and opportunity come, the Rajah will have an accident of some kind, Jang will appear as Bajah, and the British government will be expected to show its gratitude for aid in Oude by recognising, if not aiding in turn, the new dynasty in Nepal.⁵⁵

Jang Bahadur repeatedly hinted that as a reward for his services during the mutiny, the British recognise him as an independent ruler of at least a part of Nepal, just as they had recognised Golas Sing as the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, once a part of the Kingdom of Lahore.⁵⁶ Ramsay flatly refused to entertain the idea. Undaunted, Jang Bahadur made a fresh attempt. In June 1857 he decided to personally meet Canning, ostensibly with a view to consulting him on some administrative problem, but really to persuade Canning not to oppose his ambition for the throne. Canning saw through the game and gave him no encouragement whatever. Jang Bahadur took this to heart; till the end of his life he bore the disappointment and bitterly grudged the unobliging attitude of the British government.

There were some more reasons why he helped the British. The Nepalese army was so excited and restless that it was difficult to be kept in control. In fact, all was not well in the army. A serious outbreak at Kathmandu was apprehended shortly before the mutiny. The Resident's timely intervention and Jang Bahadur's deference to the Resident's advice alone averted a disturbance which could have a far-reaching consequence.⁵⁷ Jang Bahadur's power rested to a great extent on his popularity with the army, his cardinal policy being to keep the troops in good humour. Had the excited soldiers not been employed by the British, Jang Bahadur would have possibly failed to restrain them from plundering the British territories below. This would have entailed British retaliation. Besides, the army out of control would have threatened the political stability of his state. Indeed, considering the temper of the army, the more the troops were sent away to India as allies of the British the greater was the security of Jang Bahadur's position in Nepal. There were many in the darbar eager to exploit the British difficulties; there were many others who decried the Minister's anglophil policy. All these elements could have tried to use the excited Nepalese army as their handle.

Therefore, the great eagerness and vigorous insistence with which Jang Bahadur repeatedly offered his troops to the British would suggest that he was as much concerned over the effect of the mutiny on his own troops and on his own regime as the British were on theirs.

In a way the mutiny was a fortunate occurrence for Anglo-Nepalese relations, in general, and for Jang Bahadur, in particular. The mutiny could certainly have been used by Nepal as her readiest weapon to harm the British; instead, it turned out to be the strongest of the ties binding the two governments. For long the British had been obsessed with the suspicion that Nepal was lying in wait for an opportunity to strike at them. For long the fear persisted that a serious uprising in India or an external invasion would goad the Nepalese to break with the British government. It was now proved that both the suspicion and fear were baseless. British confidence in the Rana regime increased in consequence.

The mutiny provided the acid test to Jang Bahadur's profession of fidelity to the British. It convinced the British how greatly he valued their friendship. The mutiny was, indeed, the greatest crisis which the British faced, and the last opportunity for Nepal to cash in on the British difficulties.

The mutiny also provided a test to the British policy of non-interference in Nepal, resumed after the recall of Auckland and reinforced with the ascendancy of Jang Bahadur. That the latter kept peace and actively helped the British was an ample vindication of that policy. Jang Bahadur was obliged to the British for their policy, for their tolerance of his despotic rule, for their friendship and moral support—all of which had helped him in consolidating his rule. He was thus under deep obligation to the British; above all, in the maintenance of the British rule in India he had a personal stake. The mutiny thus bound the *de facto* ruler of Nepal and the British by the ties of mutual obligation.

Although the assistance of Jang Bahadur led to only a "moderate accession" to the military power of the British government during the crisis, the moral effect of the assistance was great. In the words of Ramsay :

There can be no doubt that the presence of the Gurkha army in British provinces under Maharaja Jang Bahadur's command had a fine moral effect, but their services in a military point of view were not what had been expected from them.⁶⁸

The very fact that this powerful Hindu Kingdom, which was formerly hostile to the British, collaborated with them to fight several Hindu princely houses served as a damper for the

rebels. The Indian princes will have been surprised to find Nepal helping the British when some years ago she had zealously tried to form a league of Indian powers against the British. The signal proof of Jang Bahadur's loyalty lay in the fact that he succeeded in restraining his people from paying off old scores against a power which had not only robbed their country of a part but had rendered any military expansion impossible.

The British appreciated Jang Bahadur's difficulties in persuading the anti-British elements in the *darbar* to accept his policy. The Resident advised the Government to play into Jang Bahadur's hands for a time in order to strengthen his position. The present of territory, which formerly belonged to Nepal and was "unimportant" to the British themselves, was made because it would

ensure the British the warmest support of Jang Bahadur and of *sardars* and will put the troops into great good humour.⁶⁹

Such support to Jang Bahadur and a sop to the army was essential to enable the Minister to pursue his pro-British policy in the face of opposition of influential elements in the *darbar*.

In consequence, Jang Bahadur emerged stronger. The trust which the British reposed on him, the honour they gave him and the reception he received in India—all this left his people convinced of his standing with the British. This served to dishearten his potential enemies and increased his prestige in Nepal. Exultingly, Jang Bahadur told Ramsay :

I shall be indebted to yourself for my new character and for all the izzut that I shall henceforth possess in the world. People generally call me a tyrant and a murderer, and your newspapers abuse me as such, but I am not what they represent me and this the world will now soon see and admit. I am, indeed, indebted to you for all this. You could not have bestowed a greater favour upon me than you have now done. If you had given me lacs of rupees in money and miles of country as a *jagheer*, they would have been valueless compared with the izzut you have given through me to the whole Gurkha nation.⁷⁰

The mutiny was thus a great event in Jang Bahadur's career ; it was a vindication of his policy as well. He could now show his people that his policy of cooperation with the British had earned Nepal territory, wealth and prestige—and all this without compromising Nepal's traditional independence. This was a striking contrast to his predecessors' policy of hostility towards the British—the policy which had brought Nepal nothing but years of chaos, commotion and concern. Jang Bahadur thus

gave a new turn to Nepal's policy towards India. The old idea of profiting at the cost of the British gave way to the expectation of gaining with their friendliness.

The Nepalese troops who served during the mutiny carried with them lively memories of the trust and confidence which the British officers had shown them; they were also impressed with the British liberality in matters of pay and other benefits unavailable in the Nepalese army.⁷¹ For all these men service under the British offered a great allurements. The British did not fail to notice the moral effect of the mutiny on the Nepalese in general :

The Resident is of opinion that this expedition strengthened our [British] prestige immensely throughout the Nepalese dominions and the Gurkhas have a far higher appreciation of and respect for our power now than they ever entertained before.⁷²

It was also clear to the British that his despotic powers notwithstanding, Jang Bahadur could not afford to be unfriendly to the British; his policy of friendliness was, indeed, a necessity for him. As Ramsay clearly saw, the exigencies of his internal position "must make the reality and appearance of a personal connection with us [British] of value to him".⁷³ The British in turn had to placate him to keep the anti-British elements in the darbar checked.

This was the first occasion when the British government in India had accepted the military assistance of Nepal, hitherto distrusted as a bad neighbour. However, it was an extreme measure of political expediency adopted with utmost reluctance.

NOTES

* Published in *Bengal Past and Present*, January-June 1966, pp 13-39.

1. SC, 25 Sept 1857, No. 497.
2. *Ibid*, 26 Jun 1857, No. 129. Ramsay, Resident of Nepal, to Holmes, Officer Commanding, 12th Irregulars, Sagauli, 2 Jun 1857, NR, Vol 12.
3. *Narrative of Political Transactions of the Government of India with Native States*, p 214.
4. Byers to Holmes, 4 Jun 1857, NR, Vol 12.
5. SC, 25 Sept. 1857, No. 487A-B.
6. *Ibid*, No. 489. Wynyard to Ramsay, 28 May, 9 Jun 1857, Cooper, Secy to the Chief Commissioner, Oudh, to Ramsay, 22 May 1857, NR, Vol 9.
7. Talbot, Private Secy to Canning, to Ramsay, 8 July 1857, NR, Vol 9. Govt to Resident, 13 Jun 1857, SC, 25 Sept 1857, No. 488.
8. *Ibid*, Nos. 498, 521A, 560, 580.
9. Bengal Govt. Judicial Dept. Proceedings (Abstract of Mutiny), Vol. I, 10 Aug 1857, No. 260. K. K. Datta, *History of the Freedom Move-*

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10. *Ibid*, Vol 12, Ramsay to Samuells, Commissioner of Patna, 6 Sept 1857, Ramsay to Raikes, 8, 14, 23 Aug 1857.
 11. KCPLI, Vol. 6, No. 51, Commissioner to the Govt. of the N. W. Provinces, 9 Dec 1857. SC, 18 Nov 1857, No. 436; 27 Nov 1857. Nos. 432, 434-5, DRCLI, Vols. 5, 17. *Minute of the Lt. Governor of Bengal on the Mutinies as they affected the Lower Provinces under the Government of Bengal, 1858.* K. K. Datta, *Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh*.
 12. NR, Vol 12, Ramsay to Canning, 15 Nov 1857.
 13. SC, 27 Nov 1857, No. 423, Ramsay to Edmonstone, 17 July 1857.
 14. NR, Vol. 12, Ramsay to Canning, 29 Nov. 1857.
 15. SC, 27 Nov 1857, No. 423.
 16. *Ibid*, No. 425. PC, 1 Oct 1858, Nos. 55-7.
 17. SC, 29 Jan 1858, No. 508; 30 Apr 1858, Nos. 164-6. Reports of Brigadier MacGregor, Political Officer attached to Jang Bahadur, to Ramsay, NR, Vol. 8.
 18. *Ibid*: Letters connected with the Gurkha auxiliary expedition in the Lucknow Campaign of 1857-8. SC, 30 July 1858, No. 119.
- Two registers written in Nepali and dealing with the Gurkha activities in the Mutiny could be seen in the Army Head Quarters, Kathmandu and in the *Commandari Kitab Khana, Jangi Phani, Kathmandu*.
19. SC, 18 Dec 1857, No. 665, Telg. from Tucker to Canning, 13 Jun 1857.
 20. Ramsay to Samuells, 6 Sept 1857, NR, Vol. 12.
 21. HM, Vol. 9, p. 103. *Notes on the services of B. H. Hodgson, collected by a Friend*, p. 23. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 256-8.
 22. *Narrative of Political Relations*, op. cit., p. 217.
 23. SC, 25 Feb 1859, No. 17.
 24. R. Montgomery Martin, *The Indian Empire*, II, pp. 481-2.
 25. G. W. Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, II, p. 303. Lt. General Shadwell, *Life of Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde*, II, pp. 131, 156. M. Edwardes, ed., *My Indian Mutiny Diary*, by W. H. Russell, pp. 100-05.
 26. Telg from Campbell to Canning, 6 Apr 1858, quoted in C. Ball, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, II, pp. 271-3.
 27. SC, 25 Feb 1859, No. 17, PC, 3 Sept 1858, No. 85, Keep with.
 28. *Yaddasht* from Jang Bahadur to Capt. Byers, 12 July 1858, PC, 3 Sept 1858, No. 91. See also PC, 22 Oct 1858, No. 73.
 29. *Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh* (by Govt. of Uttar Pradesh), II, p. 269.
 30. Kelly, Officer-in-Charge, Nepal Field Force, to Ramsay, 5 Apr 1858, NR, Vol. 8.
 31. SC, 25 Feb 1859, No. 17, Resident to Govt., 25 Oct 1858.
 32. Edwardes, op. cit., p. 277.

33. Secret Despatch from Court to Governor General, 23 Mar 1858, No. 1935.
34. Letters from officers, Nepal Field Force, NR, Vol. 8. J. W. Kaye and G. B. Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, V, pp. 199-208.
35. SC, 27 Aug 1858, Nos. 97-108. PC, 19 Nov 1858, No. 76; 15 July 1859, Nos. 229, 413L; 5 Aug. 1859, No. 267; 19 Aug. 1859, Nos. 183, 193; 30 Sept 1859, No. 205; 30 Dec 1859, No. 560-61.
- 35A. Hope Grant, Commanding Field Force on Oudh border, to Resident 8 May 1859, PC, 20 May 1859, No. 375. See also letters of British officers in NR, Vol. 8.
36. PC, 13 May 1859, No. 323; 22 May 1859, No. 267. SC, 30 Dec 1859, Nos. 558-68.
37. Ramsay to Kelly, 25 Mar 1859, PC, 22 Apr 1859, No. 22. Also see *Ibid.*, 15 July 1859, No. 413P. *Friend of India*, 19 May 1859.
38. NR, Vol. 8.
39. Resident to Govt., 25 Aug 1859, PC, 30 Dec 1859, No. 995.
40. *Ibid.*
41. SC, 26 Nov 1858, Nos. 72-123. PC, 23 Sept 1859, No. 211; 31 Dec 1858, Nos. 2523-6, 4302-06.
42. PC, 30 Dec 1859, Nos. 1044-52.
43. SC, 26 Nov 1858, No. 96.
44. PC, 15 July 1859, No. 413P (enclosure).
45. SC, 26 Nov 1858, Nos. 124-6.
46. PC, 19 Aug 1859, No. 187; 23 Sept 1859, No. 249.
47. PC, 3 Sept 1858, Nos. 85-92; 22 Oct 1858, Nos. 72-6; 31 Dec 1858, Nos. 2086-8; 11 Mar 1859, Nos. 375-81.
48. *The Friend of India* wrote on 26 May 1859: "... the position of Jang Bahadur towards the British government has been changed ... If our Government have not yet demanded from our so-called ally an account of his conduct, it should no longer be delayed."
49. PC, 15 July 1859, No. 413C; S.C., 22 July 1859, Nos. 199-200.
50. Resident to Offg. Commissioner of Gorakhpur, 17 Sept 1859, PC, 30 Sept 1859, No. 209. Ramsay to Kelly, 25 Mar 1859, SC, 22 Apr 1859, No. 200.
51. PC, 15 July 1859, No. 413P; 22 July 1859, Nos. 208-9.
52. More than three thousand rebels were captured by the Nepalese troops and made over to the British. Mummo Khan, Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly, Mirza Feroz Bakht Bahadur, Umer Singh and Jwala Prasad were some of the rebel leaders captured. Bala Rao, Devi Baksh, Azimullah, Golab Singh, Har Prasad and Hardat Singh died in the Tarai. Beni Madho was killed by the Nepalese troops. The Begum of Oudh, the two wives of the ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II, and the wives of Nana Saheb and Bala Rao were given asylum by Jang Bahadur. PC, 30 Dec 1859, Nos. 452-3, 462-3; 20 Jan 1860, Nos. 136-50, 152; 24 Feb 1860, Nos. 247-9, 251-4; 2 Mar 1860, Nos. 247-55; July 1860, No. 265.
53. PC, 20 Jan 1860, Nos. 149-50. H. Knollys, *Incidents in the Sepoy*

War, 1857-58, compiled from the Private Journals of General Sir Hope Grant, pp. 318-34.

54. SC, 27 Aug 1858, Nos. 124-5.
55. Secret Despatch from Court to Governor-General, 17 Mar 1858, No. 1933. Jang Bahadur wrested from the King the title of Maharaja in his bid to assume "*de jure* sovereignty". The King was hereafter designated Maharajadhiraja. P. J. B. Rana, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-4.
56. PC, 23 Sept 1859, No. 8.
57. Ramsay to Edmonstone, 10 Dec 1857, SC, 29 Jan 1858, No. 377.
58. Resident to Canning, 24 July 1857, NR, Vol. 12.
59. SC, 27 Nov 1857, No. 423, Resident to Govt., 17 July 1857.
60. SC, 27 Nov 1857, No. 426. Ramsay to Canning, 24 July 1857, NR, Vol. 12.
61. Ramsay to Canning, 25 Nov 1857, NR, Vol. 12.
62. SC, 29 Jan 1858, No. 377, Resident to Govt., 10 Dec 1857.
63. SC, 25 Sept 1857, No. 471. F.P.A, Nov 1864, No. 33; May 1865, No. 181.
64. SC, 29 Aug 1856, Nos. 55-6, 63.
65. Dalhousie to George Couper, 15 Apr 1858, J. G. A. Baird, ed., *Private Letters of the Marquise of Dalhousie*, pp. 414-5.
66. SC, 27 Nov 1857, No. 423.
67. A discontented soldier tried to incite the army against Jang Bahadur. Many other disaffected elements in the capital sought to intrigue with the army officers to overthrow Jang Bahadur, who was determined to execute the intriguers. Ramsay dissuaded him, warning that such a step would spark off a general mutiny in the army and possibly a civil war. Jang Bahadur accepted Ramsay's advice. SC, 26 June 1857, No. 129.
68. *Narrative of Political Relations*, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
69. Ramsay to Edmonstone, 21 July, 29 Nov. 1857, NR, Vol. 12.
70. Ramsay to Edmonstone, 10 Dec 1857, SC, 29 Jan 1858, No. 377.
71. Ramsay reported that the liberality of the British government in respect of pay and special allowances to the Nepalese troops "occasioned quite a sensation among them". Letter to Govt., 27 June 1857, SC, 27 Sept 1857, No. 524. See also SC, 27 Aug 1858, Nos. 109-21; 26 Nov 1858, Nos. 56-66.
72. *Narrative of Political Relations*, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
73. Ramsay to Talbot, 5 Nov 1857, NR, Vol. 12.

* LATER DAYS OF NANA SAHEB

The later days of Nana Saheb are still one of the unresolved mysteries of Indian history. It is, however, certain that being chased by the British forces, Nana, accompanied by his close kinsmen and a considerable force, took refuge in the forests of the Nepalese Tarai.¹

From the Tarai the rebels carried on, for a time, systematic predatory operations on the British territories below, posing a menace to the law and order of the region. The Nepalese government took no restrictive measures; on the contrary, Nepalese officers in the Tarai assisted the rebels and shared their spoils. The Nepalese army and senior officers in the *darbar* were all in favour of the rebels. Jang Bahadur himself was lukewarm in regard to checking the latter's activities. The Tarai became, in consequence, a political Alsatia, a safe sanctuary of malcontents and desperadoes of every stripe.²

The British sternly remonstrated with Jang Bahadur, but to little purpose. The British could not send their own forces to weed out the fugitive rebels from the bordering areas in the face of Jang Bahadur's consistent opposition to it and his army's similar disposition.

Gradually, however, the vigorous measures adopted by the British for the security of their own frontier made it increasingly difficult for the rebels to continue their predatory pursuits. Provisions became scarce; famine stalked in the rebel camps; the pestilential swamps of the Tarai forests took a heavy toll of lives; all around there was disease, death and despair. The rebels then turned upon the Nepalese villages for plunder, leading Jang Bahadur to the belated realisation that they were as much a menace to his state as to the British Government. At long last he allowed the British troops to enter the Nepalese territory and himself launched an expedition against the rebels. The principal rebel leaders were either killed or captured with hundreds of their followers.

The wives of Nana Saheb and his brother, Bala Rao, the two wives of the ex-Peshwa, Baji Rao II, the Begum of Oudh and her son, Brijis Kadr, were given political asylum at Kathmandu where they lived long on the subsidy provided to them by the Nepalese government.³

As to Nana's whereabouts no authentic information could

be had, in spite of the earnest efforts of the British. Repeated pressure on Jang Bahadur elicited nothing but his strong disavowal of any knowledge of Nana.

He sought to convince the British that Nana had died, and that it was futile to hunt for the willow of the wisp. The British totally discredited Jang Bahadur's reports; there was lurking suspicion that Jang Bahadur had himself sheltered Nana or, at any rate, he knew his whereabouts. All sorts of rumours were afloat, deepening the mystery. No effective co-operation to trace Nana could be expected of Jang Bahadur, nor was any proffered by him. The British, hence, relied on their own means to ascertain whether Nana had actually died.

In the beginning, the British army officers engaged in exterminating the rebels from Oudh and its environs reported that Nana had really died in the Tarai along with his brother and principal rebel leaders. These reports were based not on independent enquiry but on the information supplied by the Nepalese army officers in the Tarai.⁴ Brigadier Holdich, commanding the Oudh Frontier Forces, reported that Nana had perished with Bala Rao and Azimullah in the Tarai, his death having thus been "most satisfactorily accounted for."⁵ The Government gave full credit to this report, particularly after it was ascertained that the Brahmins at Bithoon had performed Nana's obsequies.⁶

Lord Canning himself was not very enthusiastic about what appeared to him a wild goose chase; nor was he anxious to overtly disprove the rumour of Nana's death in the Tarai. For it would have animated the rebels' hope of Nana's being alive and provided an incentive to disaffection.⁷ There was, however, a strong belief in England that Nana was alive and that the Government of India were not only feigning ignorance of it but, for political reasons, giving wide publicity to the rumour of his death.⁸ In the Anglo-Indian Press, too, similar views were aired.

In September 1860, the Resident at Kathmandu, Colonel George Ramsay, suspected, on the basis of the deposition of a spy, that Nana might be living in a Tibetan village close to the Nepal-Tibet frontier. He had strong misgivings about the veracity of Jang Bahadur's statements; it was very likely that from the very first Jang Bahadur was keen on shielding Nana, and his persistent assertions regarding Nana's death were designed to lull the British suspicion and to delude them. Jang Bahadur himself could adduce no positive proof of the death of Nana, and this made his statements seem all the more suspicious to the Resident. Ramsay strongly suspected that Jang Bahadur had actually facilitated Nana's escape from the Tarai to an unknown place somewhere in Nepal or beyond.

and had thereafter spread the news of his death with a view to providing a damper to the zeal of the British to track him down. His evasive and conflicting statements were clear proof of his ardent efforts to draw a veil over the matter; his impatience was patent when the issue was squarely laid before him by the Resident. Ramsay pointed out :

He [Jang Bahadur] had declared long beforehand that the event [death of Nana] would take place and when it was reported, he seemed anxious that it should at once be taken for granted and he avoided as much as possible recurring to the subject. My own impression has always been that the Nana would be suffered to escape.⁹

It seemed likely to Ramsay that Jang Bahadur did not dare to seize Nana, a Brahmin, and surrender him to the British, for fear that his officers, who were all in favour of the rebels, would strongly disapprove of the measure, particularly when they apprehended that the British would execute him. In fact, Nana had appealed to Jang Bahadur, in the name of Hindu religion, to guarantee his personal security. Thereafter Jang Bahadur had given the Resident clear impression that even if he were able to capture Nana, he would not be delivered up to the British in the face of this appeal, for it would be, he declared, an act of treachery. Such statements confirmed the suspicion that Jang Bahadur had already made up his mind to shield Nana when he launched the expedition against the fugitive rebels in the Nepalese Tarai, and the spread of the death news was a premeditated and calculated artifice to facilitate Nana's escape. It was clear that Jang Bahadur had no "serious intention of catching the Nana."¹⁰

Secret enquiries revealed that "active connivance and assistance" of Jang Bahadur himself had enabled a large number of rebels to escape from the Nepalese Tarai to the lower hills of Nepal, and some of them from the latter place to the snowy sierras of the Nepal-Tibet border. It was very probable that Nana Saheb had thus managed to reach the north-western border of Nepal. Thorough sifting of Jang Bahadur's own statements were also pointers to this fact. Hence, Ramsay held :

...it is not unreasonable to suppose that there are rebel leaders...whose existence he [Jang Bahadur] has some interest in concealing.¹¹

The fact that the female relatives of Nana did not show any sign of mourning when they first arrived from the Tarai to Kathmandu would also disprove Jang Bahadur's contention that Nana had actually died then. Later, however, the wives of Nana observed the usual ceremonies of mourning by cropping their

hair short, wearing white clothes and distributing alms to the poor.¹²

The Resident had by July 1861 "exhausted all the means of enquiry", but had failed to "throw additional light upon the matter." He was convinced that Jang Bahadur alone knew Nana's whereabouts, and that he would never actively help the British in getting at the truth. Jang Bahadur in his turn was confident that without his help the British would never find Nana out. In fact, when the Anglo-Indian press urged the Government to probe more deeply into the mysterious disappearance of Nana Saheb, Jang Bahadur flung a challenge that if they wanted they could send persons to Nepal to track Nana down, but that if they failed in their purpose they must cede to Nepal the low lands constituting the British Indian Tarai, north of Eastern Oudh lying between the Arrah nadee and Bhagura Tal. It was, Ramsay observed,

a wager... which he [Jang Bahadur] could not lose as he could with utmost facility keep the Nana or any other party out of the way of any cavalcade of persons, attended by officials of his own government, who might be moving about in search of him.¹³

The Resident received the intelligence of Jang Bahadur having sold a tract of land in the Butwal Tarai to the members of Nana's family for Rupees 36000/-, and having bought at a low price their and the Begum's [of Oudh] jewellery worth a large sum of money.¹⁴

Such floating rumours and stray reports deepened the mystery as much as it enlivened the Resident's hope of getting at the truth. He was, however, certain that Nana was not at Kathmandu. Western Nepal seemed as his more likely hide out. It was safer and more feasible, Ramsay felt, to send spies from the Gorakhpur border into Nepal than from Kathmandu where the Nepalese police maintained constant and close watch on him and his staff. Utmost secrecy and circumspection were requisites for success, for knowledge of such clandestine operations of the British was certain to give umbrage to Jang Bahadur and cause serious impairment in the relations between the two governments. Accordingly, one Ramsing, formerly a *kotwal* of Nurpur, an adept spy, was sent to western Nepal in disguise, with a view to getting first hand information of the persons supposed to be living in the shrines there. He was soundly briefed about his delicate mission, and caution and discretion were repeatedly enjoined upon him. Arresting any of the rebels in Nepal was out of the question; obtaining "corroborative evidence" of Nana's death alone was the object of this secret mission.¹⁵

Ramsing, accompanied by Lalsing as his guide, entered the Nepalese territory by Hardwar and the Almora hills, and stayed at Kathmandu for some time. They returned with nothing but the widely held belief in Nepal that Nana had actually died of fever sometime in September 1859, as had Bala Rao some months earlier. Ramsing and Lalsing reported that Jang Bahadur's relations with the female relatives of Nana were intimate enough to give rise to popular gossip, and that he had let the northern passes of Nepal open to enable some rebels to escape to Tibet.¹⁷

The absence of any definite evidence robbed the reports of Ramsing and Lalsing of much of their worth. The Government did not discredit them; but the reports were not of much value. It was very likely that these two spies had confined their activities only to the Kathmandu valley, whereas it was western and northern Nepal, particularly Muktinath and its immediate vicinity, from where information was most needed.¹⁸

The Government did not relax its efforts, for the Secretary of State for India as well as the Anglo-Indian press refused to be taken in by the widely held views that Nana had really died. In April 1860, Nanak Chand, a secret emissary, reported that the widows of the ex-Peshwa, who were well disposed towards the British government, had been forcibly detained by Nana before they were carried off to Kathmandu in September 1859. Two personal valets of Nana Saheb admitted to Nanak Chand that they had seen Nana dying of fever and dysentery in the hills of Dewankpur on 26 December 1859; thereafter his corpse was cremated. They further stated that Bala Rao had died on 28 July 1859 in the Bankee mountains about 30 coss from Butwal; Azimullah had died earlier.¹⁹

In September 1861, Ramsay sent a report to the Government, embodying "fair presumptive evidence of the Nana's existence."²⁰ It is significant to note that long before the death of Nana was officially reported to Ramsay, Jang Bahadur, in his personal parleys with the Resident asserted time and again that the death would take place soon. This led to the natural suspicion that these assertions were designed to lead the British to anticipate the announcement of Nana's death. It was evident that he disliked the reopening of the issue; for the death of Nana, he gave out, was an established fact. He parried the matter whenever asked by the Resident to make thorough enquiries; he sought to make light of it, knowing well the "intense interest" of the British in it.²¹

A *fakir*²² deposed before the Resident's havildar that he had seen some "persons of consequence" (Burra Admi), presumably rebels (*Buggies*), at Muktinath, a shrine in northern

Nepal. The statement of the *fakir* that Nana was alive and had been summoned by Jang Bahadur when he went down to the Tarai (in November-December 1859) was an important revelation; for it belied the repeated avowals of Jang Bahadur that Nana had died on 24 September 1859.²⁸

The Resident's havildar met another Panjabi *fakir* who claimed to have "actually seen the Nana" at a village called Doongurgaon, about a mile west of the river Bonganga in western Nepal. The village was in the jurisdiction of the Raja of Lamjung²⁹ who had posted a posse of sentries around a camp where a "great Marhatta Raja" used to stay with three/four hundred followers, all disguised as *sadhus*.³⁰ The Panjabi *sadhu* gathered from the latter that their master was the brother of the late Bala Rao, and that he was very sore with Jang Bahadur who had robbed him of his valuable jewellery and female relatives. Few days later several parties of *sadhus* who had just come to Kathmandu from Muktinath told the Resident's havildar that they, too, had heard of a great Marhatta Raja in the hills beyond Muktinath and that they were sure of Nana's being alive. Some of these men claimed to have been Nana's personal attendants. All these led the Resident to entertain strong suspicion that a number of rebels, disguised as *sadhus*, did reside in the vicinity of Muktinath, and that it was likely that Nana was one of those men.³¹

Some time ago, a jamadar who had come from the Butwal Terai, and who claimed to have frequented the rebels camp in the Tarai, told the Resident's havildar that Nana was living in the lower hills north-east of the Butwal Tarai, and that he (Nana) went there after Jang Bahadur had summoned all the fugitive rebel leaders in the Tarai to meet him in November-December 1859.³² Ramsay came to the conclusion that in the winter months Nana might have moved to the lower hills of Nepal to escape the severe cold in the vicinity of Muktinath where he lived in the warmer period of the year.³³

In April 1861 one Ramdeen Pande, an alleged mutineer, deposed before Lt. Hewell, Assistant Commissioner, Gonda, that he had seen Nana only five months ago, and that Jang Bahadur himself facilitated his escape in the guise of a mendicant. Ramdeen stated that with a large number of men Nana went towards the Nepal-Tibet frontier where he was still living under the protective care of the Tibetan authorities.³⁴

In December 1861, however, Ramdeen made another deposition where he averred that Nana had died in Dang (in the Tarai) in the winter months of 1859-60. The discrepancy in his two depositions was too glaring to warrant any credit being given to them. It was further ascertained that Ramdeen had

been, before the mutiny, in the service of Jay Kishen Puri, a Nepalese zamindar in the Tarai and a friend of the fugitive rebels and all sorts of desperadoes.²⁰

On being asked by the Government, the Raja of Balrampur sent an agent, Badri Tewaree by name, to Nepal with the same object in view. Tewaree had an intimate knowledge of the Nepalese Tarai where Nana had taken refuge. Tewaree's report was just a reiteration of the belief current in Nepal that Nana had died of disease on 14 September 1859 at Deokhar in the Tarai where Bala Rao and some other rebel leaders had also perished.²¹

The unabated interest of the British in Nana and the demands of the press to place the matter beyond doubt caused some concern to Jang Bahadur. It was evident that the British had not taken him by his words any more than they had relaxed their enquiries. Reports of secret enquiries conducted by the British made him all the more uneasy. Jang Bahadur, hence, changed his tactics. In a meeting with Doctor Oldfield, the Residency Surgeon, Jang Bahadur made some remarks about Nana which differed from his earlier statements. He averred that it was not Nana but Jwala Prasad and Bala Rao who were responsible for the Kanpur massacre. What is more, he admitted for the first time that he himself entertained strong misgivings about Nana's death, since his earlier reports on it were based on the statements of Tharoos, "a very degraded and ignorant class of people" living in the Tarai, who claimed to have seen a carcass being burnt. Jang Bahadur stated that the carcass in question could well have been anybody else's, and not necessarily Nana's. He admitted that not a single Gurkha officer or any responsible person was present in Nana's camp when he was supposed to have died, and his funeral rites performed. Jang Bahadur, however, asserted that if Nana were alive, he was certainly not in Nepal or Tibet; he could not be in Nepal escaping the notice of Jang Bahadur any more than he could be in Tibet without the knowledge of Nepalese traders in Lhasa and other Tibetan marts. Even if Nana were in Tibet, Jang Bahadur held, the Tibetans would not surrender him either to the British, whose authority they did not recognise,²² or to Jang Bahadur, with whom they had no cordial relations.²³ It was more likely, Jang Bahadur stated, that Nana had "gone to the south".²⁴

This admission, though made in a deliberately casual manner, served only to deepen the Resident's suspicion. Ramsay remarked:

... he [Jang Bahadur] either suspects that we are making enquiries upon the subject or supposes that I may

have obtained intelligence calculated to shake his own former statements and he therefore desires to be able, hereafter to declare, should the Nana's existence be eventually proved, that he not only shared our doubts respecting his alleged death but that he actually told Dr. Oldfield that he believed him to be alive or to have gone somewhere or other to the southward (*Dakhin ko gaya*); an expression, by the bye, which is inconsistent with the rest of his remarks and which conveys the inference that he knows more about the Nana than he chooses to express."

Some time later Jang Bahadur in his conversations with the Resident made an "undisguised admission" that Nana was alive during his (Jang Bahadur's) expedition against the rebels in the Tarai in November-December 1859, and that he went across the hills in north-western Nepal. This statement was in glaring contrast to his earlier assertions that Nana had died in September 1859 and that he knew nothing of him thereafter."

In June 1863 the Foreign Secretary, Colonel H. M. Durand, was telegraphically informed of the capture of Nana Saheb in Ajmere. One Gaya Prasad, a Brahmin of Bithoor, who claimed to have an intimate knowledge of Nana, informed Major Davidson, Deputy Commissioner, Ajmere and Mhairwara, that he had a long conversation with a distinguished looking man, who gave himself out as Nana Saheb. The supposed Nana revealed to the Brahmin that he had come down from Nepal on the assurance of support and help of the rulers of Kashmir, Bikaner, Udaipur, Jaipur, Hyderabad and Cutch against the British, and that the real Tantia Topi was still at large at Bikaner. Major Davidson made prompt arrangement for the capture of the supposed Nana, exultingly reporting to the Government :

Although it has been so often reported that the Nana had been captured, I cannot from all the circumstances but feel that in the present instance we really have got the man himself."

Both the military and medical officers at Nusserabad and Ajmere certified that the captured man answered closely to the published descriptive roll of Nana. The supposed Nana was then brought over to Kanpur, and precautionary steps were taken against a sudden uprising at Ajmere. At Kanpur, however, the authorities having knowledge of the appearance of Nana, unanimously averred that the prisoner bore no likeness to the real Nana "in either voice, age, general appearance or special marks." The case evidently was one of mistaken identity; the prisoner was, hence, set free to the natural disappointment of the captors."

All efforts of Ramsay to resolve the mystery ended in failure. He retired from his office with the strong belief

that the Nana really is or was alive long after his death was declared by the Durbar to have taken place, I think is beyond doubt... but if he be alive now, I do not think that he is in Nepal, certainly not at Kathmandu.³⁹

Jang Bahadur's relations with the female relatives of Nana having become intimate, it was not difficult for them to communicate with their kinsmen in India; there were good grounds to suspect that Jang Bahadur winked at these communications.⁴⁰

With the departure of Colonel Ramsay from Nepal, the zeal for tracing Nana flagged considerably. Colonel Richard Lawrence, Ramsay's successor, discounted Nana's being alive; the general impression in Nepal, too, strengthened his contention.⁴¹

In November 1874 the Foreign Department received a welcome jolt when news reached it that Sindhia had personally captured Nana. Sindhia had "not the least doubt in his being the true Nana Saheb Peshwa", particularly when he was identified by no less a person than Baba Apte, a close relative of Nana.⁴² The captured man, when interrogated by Sindhia, confessed that he was Nana. The Governor General's Agent, Central India, too, hailed it as a "grand stroke", hoping "for Sindhia's sake as well as on other grounds that we have the man." There were, however, some officers who were less exultant. Brigadier-General R.O. Bright, the officer commanding, Gwalior, for example, held strong misgivings about the identity of the captured man who, notwithstanding his appearance as "a disreputable fellow, cringing and humble" bore some resemblance to Nana Saheb. "Still I cannot go so far as to swear he is that man; all I can say is that the likeness is extraordinary..." Bright noted. The prisoner was brought to Kanpur where the Civil Surgeon, Dr. Tressidor, firmly held that the prisoner was not Nana. Dr. Tressidor had an intimate knowledge of Nana, in his capacity as the latter's personal physician. Not only was the captured man about fifteen years younger than the real Nana (who, in 1874, would have been about fifty), but his "well preserved" health did not betray "any of the appearances which a man harassed with cares and anxieties (such as it is fair to suppose the Nana has undergone) would doubtless present". On this "conclusive opinion", the supposed Nana was set free. The Government finally disposed of the matter by recording that Sindhia's zeal in this regard was "a most gratifying evidence of his attachment to the British government which the Viceroy has cordially acknowledged."⁴³

In 1875 the British authorities at Constantinople apprised

the Foreign Department of the fact that the Indians at Istanbul firmly believed that Nana was living in Mecca spinning a plan to subvert the British rule in India with some fellow fighters in the mutiny then living at Constantinople. The accomplices in the above plot were Shahajada Sultan Ibrahim, who claimed to be a scion of the royal family of Delhi, Feroz shah, the brother of Emperor Bahadur Shah II, and Yahiya Khan, who was said to have commanded a regiment at Lucknow during the revolt. The British at Constantinople and Cairo were alerted. It proved, however, to be a false rumour."

With the years the hope of tracing out the arch rebel grew dimmer. Tales continued to float in India that Nana lived, and most likely in Nepal. It was held for some time that Nana was living at Thapathali in Kathmandu in the protective care of Jang Bahadur himself who had settled upon him a monthly subsidy of Rs. 150/-. For a time after the reported death of Nana, the servants of Kasi Bai, his wife, used to worship Nana's personal belongings, his silver chain and bed, for instance. There were even speculations about Nana's staging a dramatic comeback at the head of a mighty Russian army. There were people who testified to Nana's annual visit to his wives at Kathmandu⁴⁵ and at times to the Nepalese Tarai. The President of the Cow Protection Society, Allahabad, claimed to have seen and dined with him as late as 1885, at the Kumbha mela. In 1865, during the Anglo-Bhutanese war, rumour was rife among the Indian troops at Dewangiri that Nana was present with the Bhutanese army.⁴⁶ In 1896 at a place about 30 miles from Rajkot an old mendicant was arrested. He seemed to have been deranged in mind; on being asked who he was, he gave himself out as Nana Saheb Peshwa. The Government, however, telegraphically ordered his immediate release. On this Percival Landon comments:

"If there be any truth in this story, there is hardly any desolate picture in history than that of Nana Sahib old, discredited, half witted, but still claiming the horrible honour of being himself—contemptuously set free by those whom he had so foully injured, to wander still along the roads, the laughing-stock of the children of his own people, vociferating his ancient claims to idle wayfarers who passed on to their own business with only a smile for the homeless and broken old man whose brain God had filled with illusion."⁴⁷

Years rolled by. Nana Saheb, the stormy petrel of the Indian Revolt, melted into obscurity. He lived in the world of legends, of myth, wrapped with an aura of romance; for the Indians, a martyr for the noblest cause, a revered memory, and for the British, an infamous rebel, the 'butcher of Kanpur'.

NOTES

- * Published in *Bengal Past and Present*, July-December 1962, pp. 96-107.
- 1. PC, 25 Mar 1859, No. 15; 22 Apr 1859, Nos. 196, 200, 203; 13 May 1859, No. 320; 3 June 1859, No. 378; 24 June 1859, No. 107; 15 July 1859, No. 236; 5 Aug 1859, Nos. 266-7; 23 Sept 1859, No. 50.
- 2. NR, Vol. 8. Important Judicial Bundles, Alphabet M, No. 37, SCRO.
- 3. PC, 2 Mar 1860, Nos. 247-55. F. PA, July 1860, No. 265. Commandari Kitabkhana Nizamati Phant, Registers for the years 1921 (V. S.)—1929.
- 4. PC, 20 Jan 1860, Nos. 141, 144.
- 5. Ibid., No. 148. It was supposed that Jang Bahadur wanted one of his sons to be married to a daughter of Bala Rao, brother of Nana Saheb. Ibid., No. 152.
- 6. PC, 24 Feb 1860, No. 184.
- 7. P. Landon, *Under the Sun*, p. 272.
- 8. *The Times*, 28 Dec 1860.
- 9. Ramsay to Beadon, 3 Sept 1860, NR, Vol. 12.
- 10. Ibid.
- 11. Ibid.
- 12. Ibid. Nana Saheb's mother insisted that both of her sons had died. Landon, op. cit., p. 161.
- 13. Resident to Govt., 22 July 1861, F.P.A., Aug 1861, No. 177A.
- 14. Richard Lawrence, Resident, to Aitchison, Foreign Secy., 30 Apr 1871, NR, Vol. 13.
- 15. Police Officer.
- 16. F.P.A., Aug. 1861, No. 177, Note of the Governor-General, 11 Aug 1861.
- 17. Ibid., Mar 1864, Nos. 152-3.
- 18. Ibid., No. 151.
- 19. F.P.B., Sept 1861, No. 469.
- 20. Resident to Govt., 20 Sept 1861, F.P.A., Oct 1861, No. 33.
- 21. In June 1859, Bala Rao was supposed to have requested Jang Bahadur to help him and Nana Saheb to escape to Farasdanga, a French settlement in Bengal. Landon, op. cit., p. 160.
- 22. religious mendicant.
- 23. F.P.A., Oct 1861, No. 33.
- 24. Lamjung is about eighty miles north-west of Kathmandu.
- 25. religious mendicants.
- 26. F.P.A., Oct 1861, No. 33. Landon, op. cit., p. 165.
- 27. PC. 30 Dec 1859, Nos. 452, 462.
- 28. F.P.A., Nov 1861, No. 81.
- 29. F.P.A., Jan 1862, Nos. 84-9.
- 30. Ibid.
- 31. F.P.A., Sept 1861, Nos. 562-3.
- 32. F.P.A., Dec 1861, No. 17.

33. On this point see pp. 108-09 below.
34. "*Dakhin ko gaya*". Resident to Govt., 23 Nov 1861, F.P.A., Dec. 1861, No. 17.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Major Davidson to R. Simson, Secy. to Govt., N. W. Provinces, 23 June 1863, F.P.A., Aug 1863, No. 116.
38. F.P.A., Aug 1863, Nos. 111-26; Oct 1863, Nos. 39, 64; Nov 1863, Nos. 166-8; Dec 1863, Nos. 38-40.
39. Resident to Govt., 5 Apr 1866, NR, Vol. 13.
40. Ibid. Father of Nana's wife, Krishna Bai, met her at Kathmandu. Ramsay to Foreign Secy., 8 May 1867, NR, Vol. 13. On 28 Feb 1863 Ramsay reported on the communication of Nana's family with Feroz Shah, (the brother of the Emperor Bahadur Shah) then at Herat.
41. Lawrence to Aitchison, 30 Apr 1871, NR, Vol. 13.
42. Baba Apte's son married the ex-Peshwa's (Baji Rao II) daughter.
43. F.P.A., Nov 1874, Nos. 43-89.
44. F.S.E., Feb 1875, Nos. 61-116.
45. The palace where the female relatives of Nana Saheb lived can still be seen at Thapathali on the outskirts of Kathmandu. An inscription of Sai Bai, Baji Rao II's wife, at Thapathali states that she owned some villages in the Nepalese Tarai. The inscription is dated 1949 (V.S.) *Magha Shukla Trayodasi som 19 Gate*.
46. Landon, op. cit., pp. 284, 286-7.
47. Percival Landon, *Nepal*, I, p. 170.

BRITISH ATTITUDE TO NEPAL'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND TIBET IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

One of the important factors which influenced the British policy in Nepal was their recognition that Nepal's relations with Tibet and China had considerable bearing on Britain's interests in the latter two countries. The development of these interests led to cautious British involvement in these relations and ultimate British control of them. This control, however, was indirect but, nevertheless, quite effective. It was secured gradually, the Nepalese government resenting any interference with their external independence.

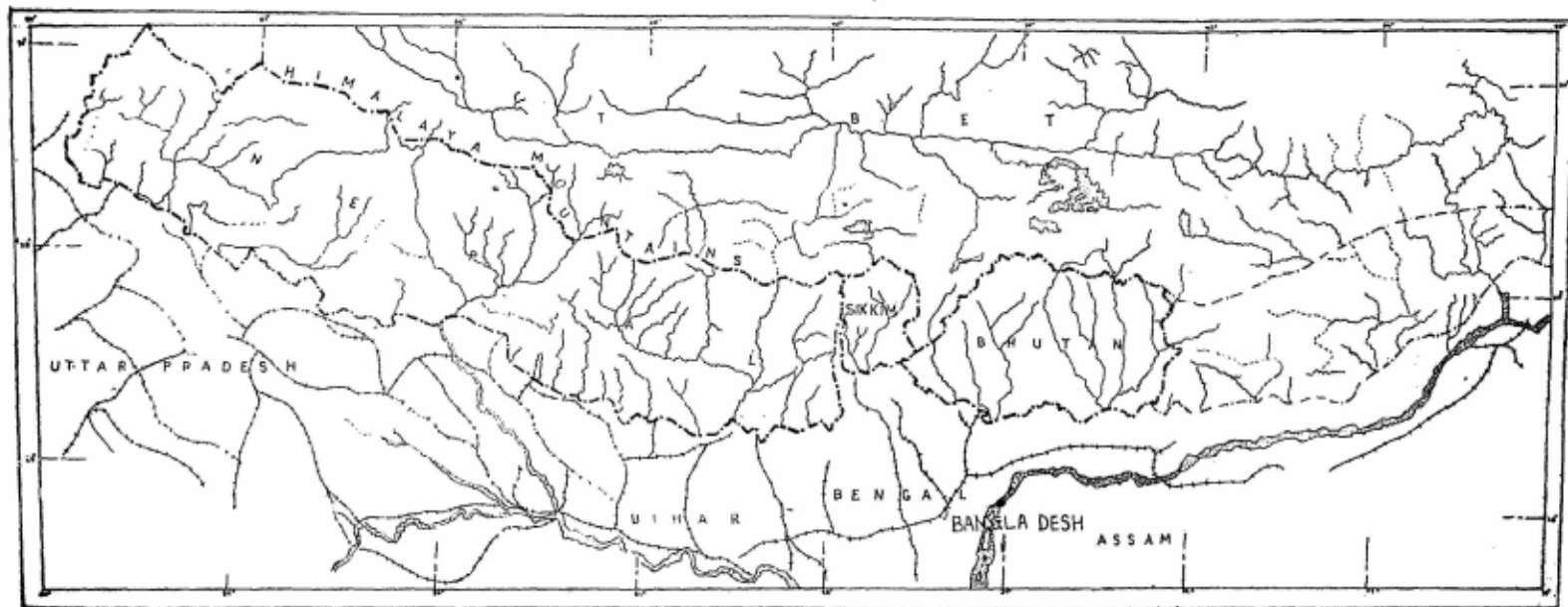
Nepal had long-standing relations with Tibet, the results of geographical propinquity, shared history and cultural ties; trade and commerce forged more tangible links. In Tibet's trade Nepal enjoyed an important position which commercial agreements between the two countries further strengthened. These agreements provided for the closure of the easier Indo-Tibetan trade route through Sikkim so as to prevent any diversion of this trade from the Nepalese route and the resultant loss to the Nepalese government of incomes through duties on imports and exports. Nepalese coins were also introduced in Tibet and the exchange rates of Nepalese rice and Tibetan gold, silver and salt settled. The early disputes between Nepal and Tibet had always a commercial element in them.²

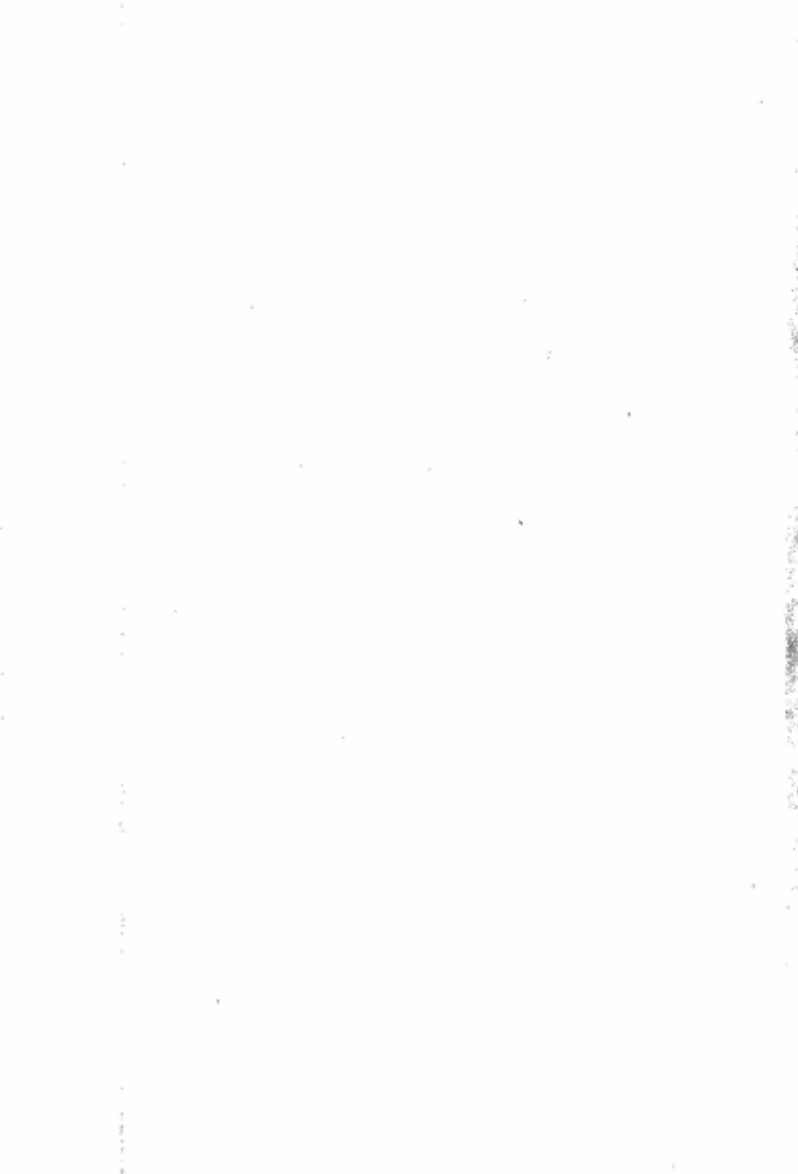
Nepal had less frequent intercourse with China, the early evidence of which lay mainly in the exchange of complimentary missions from time to time between Kathmandu and Peking. Not until the Chinese power had been firmly established in Tibet in the 18th century³ did Nepal assume importance in China's political thinking.⁴

The emergence of Nepal in the latter half of the 18th century as a powerful expansionist force in the lower Himalayas worried the British and the Chinese alike. The East India Company's policy in Nepal in its earliest phase was linked up with its commercial projects in Tibet and western China. The conquest of Nepal valley by the Gurkhas and their jealousy and exclusive policy frustrated the Company's hope of developing an alternative overland trade route to China through Kathmandu and Lhasa.

The Chinese found the Gurkhas a menace to Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan, the last two countries, for their close relations with Tibet, being regarded as dependencies of the Lhasa

NEPAL AND HER NEIGHBOURS.





government.² The defence of Tibet and her dependencies impelled China to intervene in the Nepalese-Tibetan war (1788-92). The war was an expression both of the military ambition of the Gurkhas as well as of their determination to further Nepal's economic interests in Tibet which had been guaranteed by the Tibetan government in an agreement made in 1775. The agreement had confirmed all the earlier trade arrangements and had fixed the proportion of alloy and fine metal in the Nepalese currency (called *mohar*) which was to be the only legal tender in Tibet.³

China's victory in the war had far-reaching results on Nepal's foreign relations. Nepal came under the Chinese tributary system; quinquennial missions from Kathmandu to Peking were looked upon by China as tokens of Nepal's acknowledgement of China's political and cultural primacy. Like Burma, Annam, Korea and Siam⁴ Nepal was regarded as a client state lying outside the administrative jurisdiction and direct political authority of the Chinese government but treated as having subordinate relations with the Celestial Emperor. China's prestige increased in the Himalayas as much as her control on the Tibetan administration by the augmentation of the powers of the ambans.⁵ Preventing a future Nepalese attack on Tibet became the most important object of China's policy towards Nepal. Peace between Nepal and Tibet was essential for, among other things, the safe passage of the Nepalese tributary missions to Peking through the intervening Tibetan territory. Nepalese-Tibetan frontier, so the Chinese annals claim, was demarcated at this time and boundary pillars set up.⁶ Chinese troops manned the military posts on this frontier. Nepal had to give up the Tibetan territories occupied during the war. The recovery of these tracts, lying south of the main Himalayan watershed and commanding the passes of great strategic and commercial importance, remained henceforth the cherished ambition of the Nepalese statesmen and, consequently, an abiding source of dispute with the Tibetan government.⁷

For the British the Sino-Nepalese war was at once an opportunity and a cause for anxiety. Fear of China and the hope of military assistance from the British led the Nepalese government to agree to a commercial treaty with the Company; such a treaty the Company had sought for long in vain.⁸ But the British had no desire for any military involvement with China for Nepal's sake; yet at the same time they could not overlook that "no event was more to be deprecated than the conquest of Nepal by the Chinese", because in the resultant contiguity of the British and Chinese frontiers lay the dangers of recurrent border disputes.⁹ In such circumstances Lord Corn-

wallis, the Governor-General, attempted a diplomatic solution of the problem; but this attempt, far from realising his objective, damaged British relations with both Nepal and China. To Nepal's fear that the British were an aggrandising power was added her distrust that the British were unreliable allies. The Chinese suspected the British having been hand in glove with the Nepalese; the known British interests in the Tibetan trade, the recent Anglo-Nepalese treaty and the Nepalese invasion, all suggesting some causal relationship. Samuel Turner, who was sent by Warren Hastings to Tashilumpo (in 1783) to promote Bengal's trade with Tibet, believed that the "similarity of dress and discipline" between the Gurkha troops and the Company's sepoys might have reinforced the Chinese suspicion. The Nepalese-Tibetan war provided the Chinese with sufficient excuse to take a cold attitude towards Lord Macartney's mission to Peking (1793) seeking greater commercial facilities for Britain in China.²

The increased Chinese prestige and influence in the Himalayan border states after the war was for the British an unwelcome political development; commercially it proved ruinous. Tibet was closed to British trade by the Chinese, and remained so for almost a century. The Sino-Nepalese war and its results showed the British that Nepalese action could injure British interests in Tibet and China even if the British gave no support to this action.

The Company had no adequate knowledge of the "nature and extent" of China's relations with Nepal established by the peace of 1792, but it was recognised that this knowledge was necessary to ascertain how China would react if the British sought closer connexion with Nepal for commercial reasons. Enquiries through Abdul Kadir and Captain Knox³ established that there was no love lost between the Nepalese and the Chinese and that the amban's attempt to influence Nepal's internal politics had been foiled by a strong anti-Chinese element in the Court of Kathmandu.⁴ Nevertheless, in dealing with Nepal the Company was wary. With all his eagerness to establish British influence in the Nepalese Court through an alliance with the ruling party, Lord Wellesley, for instance, had to consider that this alliance did not give umbrage to China. Wellesley was glad that Nepal was "not in any degree dependent on the Chinese empire", and that "no connexion subsists" between Nepal and China of a nature "to limit the Raja of Nepal to contract engagements with Foreign Powers or to render the proposed alliance... a reasonable subject of complaint or jealousy to the Chinese government". Yet, the British took care to avoid any pro-

vision in their treaty with Nepal (1801)¹⁷ which would suggest "a defensive engagement against China" and affect Chinese interests in Nepal "in the remotest degree".¹⁸ The British view of Sino-Nepalese relations at this time seem to have been this: it was unlikely that Chinese connexion with Nepal would develop into Chinese domination, but Nepal did belong to the Chinese sphere of interest. Consequently, the fear of provoking China and thereby damaging Britain's Canton trade had a sort of moderating influence on the Company's Nepal policy.

This was apparent during the Anglo-Nepalese war (1814-16), when the risk of Chinese military intervention in favour of Nepal made Lord Moira, the Governor-General, anxious. Lord Amherst's commercial embassy was then about to go to Peking, and Moira was worried lest it met the same fate as Macartney's earlier mission. Moira was at pains to convince the Chinese authorities at Lhasa that the war had been forced upon the Company by the Nepalese, and that nothing but punishing the aggressors was the British object. The British, he added, had no intention or interest in extending their authority beyond the natural limits of India marked by the mountain ranges. The British had, thus, no desire to compete with the Chinese interest in the Himalayan area, for less to contest it.¹⁹

The Nepalese, seeking to pit the Chinese against the British, had represented to the amban that the British attack on Nepal was a prelude to their invasion of Tibet; the Chinese were entreated to attack Bengal and create a diversion in Nepal's favour. The Chinese Emperor sent a general with troops to Lhasa to ascertain if the British had really any design on Tibet and to oppose them if they had.²⁰

Although by then the war was over, Moira was troubled with the thought that China might resent the British having established treaty relations with Nepal ignoring her suzerain. A British residency at Kathmandu established by the treaty of Sagauli (1815) could also stimulate China's jealousy and suspicion, particularly as she herself had no such establishment in Nepal. The Nepalese exploited this anxiety. They informed the Resident, Edward Gardner, that

China was deeply offended, considering Nepal as tributary to the Emperor as this government having entered into war and concluded peace with the English without his sanction and knowledge.²¹

To meet the supposed Chinese wrath, the Nepalese government sought British protection, calculating that rather than risk a conflict with China, the British would withdraw

the Residency and restore the Nepalese Tarai they had annexed.²¹ The stratagem had very nearly worked. Moira, who was having troubles with the Marhattas and the Pindaris, could have hardly defended the British position in Nepal if openly challenged by China. He was, therefore, prepared, should the Chinese insist, to withdraw the Residency and avert a misunderstanding with China for the sake of England's China trade.²²

Fortunately, however, the Chinese authorities in Tibet were apparently satisfied with Moira's explanation of the war and his assurance that the Company's relations with Nepal would not affect China's position there. What the British had done was "perfectly correct and proper", the Chinese assured Moira.²³ The Chinese Emperor had confidentially asked the amban to keep the British away from Kathmandu, but the amban made rather a mild request for the withdrawal of the Residency "out of kindness towards us [Chinese] and in consideration of the ties of friendship".²⁴ Moira chose to ignore this, and the Chinese did not press further; in May 1818 they declared having been finally satisfied with the Company's settlement with Nepal.²⁵

China's attitude during the war was a clear evidence that she had little sympathy for Nepal and no desire to be drawn into a conflict with the British for Nepal's sake. The amban and the Chinese general sent to Lhasa strongly distrusted the Nepalese. Not to speak of military assistance, not even pecuniary help was given to Nepal because, as the amban explained in his letter to the Nepalese, "it is not customary to give treasures of China to other countries." The general also had no faith in the Nepalese; he wrote to Moira to explain the cause of the war so that he could expose "the falsehood of the Goorkha raja". It seemed to the general "quite inconsistent with the usual wisdom of the English" that they should invade Tibet when they had such a heavy stake in the China trade. The Nepalese government were threatened with punishment if their allegations against the British proved false.²⁷

China did not claim any monopoly of relations with Nepal; the Emperor clearly disavowed any responsibility for the removal of the British Residency from Kathmandu; he told the Nepalese King that since he and the British lived "in far distant countries", the "sovereign authority of the Emperor of China does not extend over" Nepal.²⁸ What alone China seems to have been interested in was the continuance of Nepal's tributary relations with the Manchu Court. It is significant that while disavowing any obligation for the protection of Nepal from the British, the amban reminded the Nepalese

government of their obligation to regularly send tributary embassies to Peking.³⁹ Obviously, from the Chinese point of view, Nepal's treaty relations with the British had made little change in her status as a Chinese tributary.

The Anglo-Nepalese war had some other results as well. The Residency henceforth served as an observation post in the Himalayan region whence the British could take a better view of the Chinese in Tibet. At Kumaun and Garhwal the British territory became directly conterminous with the Chinese territory in Tibet. Sikkim, which had helped the British against Nepal, was brought under British protection without any apparent Chinese opposition. The British appeared as a potential force in the Himalayan area where China had already established her influence.

The Nepalese policy after the war was to balance China against British India as a measure of security against domination by the latter. Politically, relations with China were now found more useful to the Nepalese government than ever before. Missions were sent to Peking with scrupulous care and regularity, bearing tributes of indigenous products and letters from the Nepalese kings, paying homage to the Chinese Emperors and invoking their blessings. The missions took normally a year and a half to cover the journey both ways. The distance between Kathmandu and Peking through Tachienlu and Chengtu⁴⁰ was 2530 miles. The missions brought valuable presents from the Emperor along with a letter to the king of Nepal advising him to govern well and to receive the Emperor's blessings. The members of the missions were provided with food, transport and accommodation by the Tibetan and Chinese authorities as soon as they crossed the Nepalese frontier. The goods carried by the missions on their outward and return journeys passed duty free.⁴¹ On their return these missions were received three miles away from Kathmandu by the king of Nepal. Then, accompanied by the highest officers of the state and a large body of soldiers, the king escorted the missions into the capital where people stood in hundreds to welcome this impressive symbol of their country's relations with the richest and the most powerful oriental state. In the full *darbar* the Emperor's presents brought by the missions were displayed and his "decree" blessing his loyal and humble vassal read. And all this the British Resident noted, together with the implied warning: keep off Nepal on pain of Chinese reprisal. The Nepalese government strongly believed, as Brian Hodgson, the Resident, reported to the Government, that the British

should hesitate at any time to push to extremities an acknowledged dependent of the celestial empire.⁴²

For Nepal connexion with China was not merely a useful deterrent to British domination but a means of embarrassing the British government as well. No wonder that the Anglo-Chinese war (1840-42) should be seized by the Nepalese government, then dominated by the bitterly anti-British Pandes, as their opportunity. Emissaries were sent to Peking and Lhasa offering assistance to the Chinese and seeking their support against the British who were represented as a common enemy of China, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. The King of Nepal, Rajendra Vikram Shah, Hodgson reported, professed "extreme eagerness to throw off his allegiance to the British and to resume the old career of his ancestors" by strengthening relations with the Emperor. Throughout the China war, which coincided with the Afghan war and other troubles, Hodgson was concerned that the Nepalese situation would turn even worse if China gave military aid or even moral encouragement to the Pandes.³⁹

The situation became further complicated when the Dogras invaded western Tibet in May 1841. The Dogras under Golab Singh and Dhian Singh had brought Ladakh, which paid tribute to Lhasa, under their sway in 1834-5.⁴⁰ Both the ruler of Ladakh and the Dogras, the latter possibly fearing Chinese intervention, asked for Nepalese assistance. Rajendra Vikram was willing to help the ruler of Ladakh and asked the amban for authority to do so. As price he wanted the Tibetan territory adjoining the Kerung and Kuti passes. But the Chinese did not want any embroilment with the British on the Indian frontier when at home they were being defeated by the British. Therefore, to the Nepalese entreaties for assistance against the British the Emperor gave a "stern refusal"; the Nepalese king was warned against excessive restlessness. He was censured for his "silly requests" for Tibetan territory.⁴¹ Rajendra Vikram was told that the Chinese government "has little or no purpose to interfere with Ladakh politics" and so the Nepalese would do well to confine themselves to "the established circle of connection cherishing peace and good faith within that circle and [to be] less heedful of novelties beyond it."⁴² A Nepalese-Ladakhi alliance, so the Chinese will have thought, could lead to the intervention of Lahore government where the Dogra rajas had commanding influence; and it might even bring in the British who had treaty relations with the Lahore government.

Rajendra Vikram then sounded Hodgson if the Nepalese government could help the Dogras against the Tibetans; the king perhaps expected that the British would welcome such a means of harming the Chinese. Hodgson had no doubt that

the real intention of the king and the Pandes was somehow to involve the British with the Chinese, and therefore he discouraged the king. "We had no desire", Hodgson told Rajendra Vikram, "to do injury to China in any quarter and should willingly desist from our compulsory operations in China proper so soon as justice had been rendered to us".³⁷

In the autumn of 1841 the Dogras conquered Gartok and the neighbouring Tibetan territories. Hodgson was now apprehending the appearance of a Chinese army on the scene counting on whose support the Pandes would goad the Nepalese troops to invade the British territory. Further, since the Dogra rajas were subjects of the state of Lahore, which was in alliance with the British, the Chinese might suspect the British having incited the Dogras to attack Tibet, and if so, they "are very likely to resent it by letting loose Nepal upon us", so Hodgson warned the Government. And then, he added,

with Chinese, Sikhs, and Gurkhas we shall ere long find ourselves of necessity involved in a labyrinth of trans-Himalayan politics the clue to which may be difficult to find and impracticable to use when found.³⁸

Besides, the Dogra military activities in Ladakh and western Tibet had seriously affected trade in shawl wool, borax, salt and opium in which both the British and Chinese governments had an interest.³⁹ This led the British government to make a strong representation to Maharaja Sher Singh, the ruler of the state of Lahore, that the Dogra activities must stop. Towards the close of the year a Sino-Tibetan army arrived and routed the Dogra troops, killing their general, Zorawar Singh. With the end of the war, Nepalese restlessness abated.⁴⁰

Neither the Anglo-Chinese war nor the Dogra-Tibetan war could be exploited by Nepal because the Chinese refused to play into the Nepalese hands; the Chinese would not encourage Nepalese militarism in any way nor give Nepal any excuse for realising her territorial ambitions in Tibet. Nepal's offer of assistance against the British might have appeared to China rather a ruse to serve her own interests than a token of sincere allegiance to her suzerain. Hodgson's reports suggest that the Nepalese King even tried to blackmail the Chinese. His letter to the amban contained a threat that if the Chinese did not help Nepal against the British, the King "shall be necessitated" to seek British assistance against the Chinese "which he has only to ask for in order to get".⁴¹ The amban coolly replied that the Emperor "never sends troops to protect the lands of foreign barbarians."⁴² Once again the Nepalese

had seen how difficult it was to stir up the Chinese against the British and to reap political harvest therefrom.

From the middle of the 19th century the pattern of Nepal's relations with China and Britain started changing as a result of two developments: the establishment of the Rana regime, with its settled policy of friendliness and cooperation with the British government; and the decline of the Chinese power. The Nepalese government were no longer eager to exploit the British troubles; they sought to profit by the British alliance. China's weakness was exposed in her successive discomfitures, both military and diplomatic, at the hands of Britain, France, Russia and Japan; revolts and insurrections in the outlying provinces and dependencies exposed the Chinese imperial government's loosening grip over these regions.

The decline of China's power stimulated Nepal's military ambitions in Tibet; the hope of British support made Chinese retribution a less dangerous prospect in Nepalese eyes than it was before. Since the war in 1788-92, Nepal's relations with Tibet had been uneasy as indicated by the periodical disputes over border tracts and trade matters. The ambans mediated in these disputes, but not always to the Nepalese satisfaction. There were also other causes of soreness. The Nepalese merchants at Lhasa complained of maltreatment and the Nepalese missions to Peking of their harassments by the Tibetan authorities. In fact, however, these were but pretexts for Jang Bahadur, who found in the Chinese preoccupation in the Taiping rebellion his opportunity to annex some Tibetan territory. This is why Jang Bahadur offered military assistance to the Emperor to crush the rebellion,⁴³ and then invaded Tibet in 1855 when the Emperor declined the offer.

The British government's attitude to the Nepalese-Tibetan war was one of keen interest, sharp vigilance and non-interference in what they regarded as an internal crisis in the Chinese empire. Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, saw that he had "no right to interfere and no interest in interfering in an issue which is wholly between Nepal and China",⁴⁴ and "when it does not appear calculated in any way to injure the interests of the British government or unduly increase the power of Nepal". Nepal, he believed, was a tributary of China. Yet, as Chinese intervention was not impossible nor also the involvement of Sikkim and Bhutan, the Government of India could not just be indifferent to the event, and Jang Bahadur was told accordingly.⁴⁵

Jang Bahadur asked for British assistance when the Nepalese army suffered reverses and when the amban stepped up pressure on him for peace. The British government's reply

to Jang Bahadur was : "whatever emergency might occur and whatever disaster might happen to his troops", no help could be given to Nepal because

besides involving a breach of treaty [it] would disturb mercantile transactions annually amounting to from thirty to forty times more than the gross revenues of this Kingdom [Nepal].⁴⁶

The British policy of non-involvement was based on their interpretation of China's attitude to the war. Colonel Ramsay, the Resident, was confident that China would abstain from military intervention until the Nepalese troops entered deeper into Tibet, and this appeared to Ramsay impossible for several reasons : the defeats lately sustained by the Nepalese army and the resultant damage to its morale, the enormous cost of the war and its general unpopularity in Nepal, the increasing pressure of the amban on Jang Bahadur to end the war, and Jang Bahadur's growing fear of Chinese army's arrival to assist the Tibetans.⁴⁷

In March 1856 the war ended with a treaty very favourable to Nepal. It required the Tibetan government to pay Nepal an annual tribute of ten thousand rupees ; Nepalese merchants would trade in Tibet duty-free ; a Nepalese *Vakil* would reside at Lhasa to safeguard his country's interests. Nepal undertook to assist Tibet in the event of external aggression.⁴⁸ But under the amban's pressure Jang Bahadur had to give up his demand for the Tibetan territory which the Nepalese army had occupied—Kuti, Kerung, Tuglakot, Chowur Gumba and Dhakling. Jang Bahadur, no doubt because the Chinese power was an obstacle to Nepalese ambitions, wanted to remove that power from Tibet. One of the conditions for peace he laid down was that the Chinese should completely withdraw from Tibet and recognise Tibet's independence ; China should only retain a *Vakil* at Lhasa just like Nepal would have hers. The amban not only flatly rejected this proposal, but obliged both the Nepalese and Tibetan governments to "agree that the Emperor of China is to be obeyed by both states as before."⁴⁹ But this apparent political gain of China carried with it what proved to be an onerous responsibility. Nepal looked to China as the guarantor of her (Nepal's) Tibetan interests : it followed, then, that China's failure to protect these interests would compromise her relations with Nepal.

China's suzerainty over Nepal as confirmed in the Nepalese-Tibetan treaty of 1856 did not lead to any strengthening of her actual position in Nepal, and so the British government were not at all worried. They had no suspicion that Jang

Bahadur would make a political capital out of Nepal's relations with China. Orfeur Cavenagh, who went to Kathmandu as Jang Bahadur's guest in 1851, had no doubt

that Jang Bahadur would have severed the connection between Nepal and China which he evidently considered derogatory to his own country, but then, he dared not estrange the Chinese without an assurance of British support.⁴⁰

In Jang Bahadur's loyalty the British government had confidence which his assistance during the Mutiny fully confirmed. This assistance was all the more significant when contrasted with the fact that he had readily exploited China's preoccupation with the Taiping rebellion. It was also noteworthy that Jang Bahadur did not take advantage of the synchronism of the Mutiny and the second Anglo-Chinese war. The defeat of China in this war tarnished her image in Nepal and proportionately enhanced the British prestige. In the words of Ramsay,

The late change in our political relations with China has caused great excitement here very favourable to our prestige, for although the Gurkhas admire our superiority as a nation to themselves, they had great doubts as to whether our power could in any way be compared with that of China—now the *sardars* are asking whether we have not lately conquered and taken possession of that country.⁴¹

Jang Bahadur's attachment to the British seems to have made the Chinese a trifle uneasy. In 1860 the Emperor asked him to furnish an account of his services to the British in the Mutiny and the honours he had received from them; the Emperor also wanted to bestow some equally high honour on Jang Bahadur.⁴² Earlier, in 1857-8, according to Chinese sources, the Emperor had given presents and buttons of rank to Jang Bahadur and Surendra Vikram, the Nepalese King.⁴³ The Chinese sources also reveal that the Emperor wanted the resumption of Nepalese tributary mission which the Taiping disturbances had interrupted. In May 1870 a Chinese ambassador visited Kathmandu; in the following year Jang Bahadur received the title, *Thwang Ling Pimma Ko Ko Kong Wang Syang*, which, as translated by his son, meant "Leader of the Army, the Most Brave, in every Enterprise, Perfect in Everything, Master of the Brave People, Mighty Maharaja".⁴⁴

The Government of India viewed the Nepalese missions to Peking as of mere symbolic importance to both Nepal and China; and so from the British interests point of view they were unobjectionable. When Jang Bahadur sent a mission in

1866, the Government of India did not suspect any political motivation. The Resident saw "cupidity" as the impulse; Jang Bahadur, Ramsay reported to Government, was eager to receive from the Emperor presents which were of "great intrinsic value and consist of

bales of silk and satin, Chinese embroidered bukkos or cloaks, porcelain, ivory, jade, tortoise shell and other ornaments, pictures and sorts of artificial curiosities."

The Nepalese tribute to the Emperor was of "trifling value".³⁸ The mission's return from Chengtu in 1869 led J. W. Wyllie, Actg. Foreign Secretary, to comment that the "last links" between Nepal and China "are broken, and that Nepal had been drawn into somewhat closer union with the British Empire of India". This, he added, "matters little for England" but for China it was of great significance, "for the final loss of all connexion with China distinctly marks a further stage in the decadence of the Empire."³⁹ It proved, however, a false prophecy. In 1876 the British Minister at Peking, Sir Thomas Wade, reported that the Nepalese government had asked for the amban's sanction to send a mission to Peking. The Indian government's reaction was expressed thus:

We have no reason to question the loyalty of Sir Jang Bahadur, but rather the contrary, and it appears... in the highest degree improbable that this periodical interchange of presents will lead to a rapprochement with China in a sense hostile to us. The fact is that Sir Jang Bahadur's cupidity is the motive spring. He sends yak's tails and gets back gifts, *picta vestis et aurum*. He gives a trout and catches a salmon. Any attempt on our part to interfere would be unwise.⁴⁰

Although it was recognised that "these missions kept up an artificial importance for the Chinese throne which its military power could never have gained for it", the Indian government had no "*locus standi*" in the matter. Wade was informed accordingly.

"The Government of Nepal", ran the Indian Government's despatch, "is not, in fact, in the position of the feudatories of the Indian Empire. It enjoys an independent national life, and possesses the power of making war, entering into treaties and sending embassies without let or hindrance from the British government. . . . But apart from these considerations, the relations at present subsisting between the British government and the Government of Nepal, as represented by H. E. Sir Jang Bahadur, are of so cordial a character that the Governor-General in

Council has no reason to apprehend that this periodical interchange of presents with China will lead to complications.¹¹⁸

In fact, these missions were for the Rana government means of profitable commercial transaction; a large variety of commodities, opium being the main, was sent along with the missions for sale in China, and all the commodities passed duty-free. For the British government these missions served as useful means of obtaining information about inner regions of Tibet and China; besides, when British explorers in China found themselves in difficulty with the local people, they sought the help of these missions.¹¹⁹

In fact, the British government had no reasons to be troubled by the Sino-Nepalese relations which seemed to indicate coolness rather than cordiality. Chinese distrust of the Rana government had increased commensurate with the latter's intimacy with the British. The Nepalese missions to China were suspected of indulgence in espionage for the British; they were closely examined while entering and leaving the Tibetan territory to prevent any Englishmen travelling in disguise. The 1866 mission was not allowed to go to Peking and was asked to deliver the tributes at Tachienlu. There it was kept waiting for several months before being permitted to proceed to Chengtu. The mission was accommodated in "a dirty hovel" outside the city where the local Chinese officers treated it with "extreme discourtesy", hoping thereby to effect its return to Kathmandu. In May 1869 the Resident reported that the death of several members of the mission had angered Jang Bahadur so much that it was unlikely that any more mission would be sent to Peking in future. The situation, so it appeared to the Resident, was developing like that in 1854, when maltreatment of a Nepalese mission had afforded Jang Bahadur a pretext to invade Tibet. At Chengtu the Nepalese mission received the Emperor's final order to return to Kathmandu because the road to Peking was unsafe owing to disturbances. Jang Bahadur, however, suspected that this was a mere plea; possibly, he thought, the Emperor was annoyed that the mission had been sent four years later than its due date. Opium, worth four and a half lakhs of rupees, carried by the mission could not be disposed of in China and had to be brought back and stored in the Nepalese godowns at Lhasa before it could be sold at a much lower price to the Indian government.¹²⁰ The 1877 mission was also subjected to much harassment before it could reach Tachienlu, and this led Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, to anticipate a Nepalese attack on Tibet. The mission after great difficulty

reached Peking in late December 1879 and was lodged in "the dirty buildings". Wade saw the leader of the mission although the Chinese officer in charge of the mission did not like it. The mission returned to Kathmandu in June 1882; instead of the normal period of a year and a half it had taken about five years to complete the journey. E. C. Baber, the British consular officer at Chungking, believed that

the reasons why the Chinese government keep the Nepalese at a distance is probably that it is by no means anxious to maintain close relations with a country so nearly connected with India.

Besides, he added, "as the tribute missions are little more than disguised trade ventures, the Chinese fear that they will sooner or later develop into a commercial establishment in Western China".⁴ And this establishment might serve the economic and political interests of the British, Jang Bahadur's allies. The steadily deteriorating relations between Nepal and Tibet in the later decades of the century, and the former's bellicose attitude was an additional worry for the Chinese, who seemed to Baber to be

apprehensive not for the integrity of their frontier but for the security of its bulwark or rather buffer, Tibet.⁵

The Chinese, so it seemed to the British, came to treat Nepal as Britain's vassal. During the second Anglo-Chinese war, for instance, the Russians were believed to have instigated the Chinese to goad the Nepalese against the British in India, but the Chinese Emperor in rejecting the suggestion was reported to have told the Russians:

Nepal is subject to the English barbarians. Were we to propose that it should place its resources at our disposal for an attack upon India, it would be certain to decline giving offence to the English, and the only result would be to open the door to their demands and reclamations.

From this the Indian Foreign Department deduced this conclusion:

...the Chinese not only look upon Nepal as a feudatory of England, but that they regard the tie binding her to us as much stronger than that by which she is bound to them, and which latter probably consists of nothing more than the so called embassy.⁶

From the mid-1870's the British were seen taking increasing interest in Nepal's relations with China and Tibet, the result of which was the gradual establishment of indirect British control over these relations. Britain's general attitude and policy towards China and Tibet, in which Nepal came to figure prominently, influenced this development.

The period saw international scramble intensified for concessions in China and for spheres of influence in Chinese dependencies some of which bordered on Britain's Indian Empire. France, for instance, established her sway over Annam and Tongkin, threatening British interests in Burma and Siam. Russia strengthened her position in Chinese Turkestan, the Pamirs and the Upper Oxus, and was able to put pressure on the northern border of British India. The Indian government, as a measure of security, made counter-moves, stepping up their activities in Chinese Turkestan, the Pamirs, Hunza and Nagar, Burma and Siam. Such activities alarmed the Chinese government which for the British government in England was a matter of serious worry.

The Home government's policy on the Indian frontier was generally cautious. They considered the Indian frontier problems from the wider standpoint of their bearing upon Britain's relations with other European powers. The Indian government were, therefore, repeatedly asked to avoid any precipitate action on the frontier which would damage Britain's imperial interests in the wider sense. Any misunderstanding with China on the Indian frontier, the Home government feared, would compromise Britain's general relations with China, and this Britain's rivals in Asia, France and Russia, might exploit. Britain's global conflict with Russia and France found a reflection on the Indian frontier, and for the sake of this conflict the Home government considered it worthwhile to be on good terms with China and if possible to use her as an ally.⁶⁶

The second half of the 19th century was "an era of commercial optimism". The British were actively interested in developing trade with Tibet. Explorers, adventurers, missionaries and officials stimulated this interest, and their reports convinced the British trading community that Tibet was a veritable traders' paradise. Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim provided direct approaches to Tibet, and it was natural that the British should be active in these states. In 1861 an expedition was sent into Sikkim followed by a treaty confirming British protectorate over it. In 1889 its administration was taken over by the British, the administering authority being the British Political Officer residing at Gangtok. Trade routes were developed in Sikkim. A campaign into Bhutan in 1865 resulted in the annexation of the Dooars.⁶⁷

Incessant pressure by international powers made the Chinese government anxious; they resented the British activities in the outlying Chinese dependencies, particularly Tibet, fearing threat to Chinese interests in these regions where the Imperial government's hold had already weakened. The Chinese would not easily concede commercial facilities to the

British in Tibet in view of the known opposition of the Tibetans as well as China's own distrust of the British intentions. Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan were looked upon by China as forming the outer defence of Tibet; therefore, increasing British influence in these states was from the Chinese point of view a threat not only to the security of Tibet but to China's traditional position in her satellite states. Tributary relations with these states had for the later Manchu rulers of China considerable prestige value, and so they would not acquiesce in the loss of these relations."

The Indian government, on the other hand, viewed Chinese suzerainty over the Himalayan border states as only a myth and as having little practical validity. They had not interfered with the traditional relations of these states with China and Tibet because they had not yet affected British interests in these states, but should they do, the Indian government would not hesitate to contest the Chinese suzerainty. This became increasingly apparent from the last two decades of the 19th century.

In such circumstances Nepal's relations with China and Tibet assumed considerable significance in the eyes of the British government, the more so after Jang Bahadur's death in 1877, when British government's relations with Nepal became for a while uneasy."

One of the first acts of Ranuddip Singh, Jang Bahadur's successor, was to despatch a mission to Peking, presumably to inform the Emperor of his assumption of power. He received in 1878 the Chinese title given earlier to Jang Bahadur by the Emperor. In 1883 a Chinese officer came to Kathmandu to present Ranuddip with a dress of honour appertaining to the title. Bir Shamsher, the next Prime Minister, was also reported to have sent a mission in August 1886 to obtain the Emperor's recognition of his coming to power. In 1889 a Chinese delegation came to Kathmandu to confer on Bir Shamsher the usual Chinese title. Bir's reception of the delegation in customary pomp and ceremony was interpreted by the Resident as his "open subservience" to China; he wanted the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, to make a representation to the Prime Minister." Lansdowne, however, was cautious. He could not let China undermine British position in Nepal any more than he could damage Britain's general relations with China by openly challenging her customary relations with Nepal. The Indian government had by now had several diplomatic bouts with China regarding the Pamirs, Hunza and Nagar, Burma, Siam and the Tibetan trade. China had made it clear to the British that she would not abandon her claim of suzerainty on states having historical relations with her.

What made the Indian government more worried was the report of China being active in Sikkim and Bhutan. In 1876, for example, a Chinese and a Tibetan officer were reported to have arrived in Bhutan; the Deb Raja undertook to oppose any road building activity by the British government, and received the assurance of Chinese help. This appeared to J. W. Edgar, Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling, as "a sort of offensive and defensive alliance" between China and Bhutan.⁹ In 1888 the amban was reported to have sent another mission to Bhutan with the suspected intention of exploiting the local political instability and strengthening Chinese influence. Mortimer Durand, the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, warned the Viceroy that the incident deserved "careful watching".

The next year, during negotiations with China on the Sikkimese-Tibetan boundary demarcation issue, China vigorously asserted her suzerainty over Sikkim.¹⁰ Lansdowne, while privately admitting that China's claim was not altogether baseless, could not publicly entertain it for fear of strengthening similar Chinese claim on Bhutan and Nepal. Durand, who was the British representative in the Sikkim boundary negotiations, advised Lansdowne not to "look with complacency" to what appeared like China's attempt to establish her authority on the Himalayan border states. He warned that grave difficulties would arise if these states were not brought under exclusive British influence. It was in his view clearly anomalous that Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan should continue to have dual relations with Britain and China.¹¹ Earlier, Durand had expressed his belief in "untold strength latent in China", and had seen "nothing wildly impossible" in China's "innumerable slowly moving armies quietly overflowing Nepal which has seen them before and pays tribute" to the Chinese.¹² All this, it appeared to Lansdowne, deserved "serious attention" of the British government. He had "no doubt that all along the slopes of the Himalayas the Chinese are endeavouring to set up the exercise of some kind of authority beyond their own frontier". Upon Nepal, the Viceroy saw, China was "clearly endeavouring to increase her hold". It was a "source of great danger to us", he informed Lord Cross, the Secretary of State, especially when Bir Shamsheer's relations with the Indian government were "still very ill-defined and likely to lead to complications". Chinese mission to Nepal, seen in the context of China's action in Sikkim and Bhutan, suggested to Lansdowne that she had "deliberately adopted as a part of a general policy" the subversion of the relations of these states with the British government. The exiled Badi Maharani¹³ wrote to the Viceroy, pointing out that Bir Shamsheer had

some political object in entertaining the Chinese mission when it was not unknown to him that over the Sikkimese issue the British were having troubles with China.

Lansdowne could not "help being afraid that we may have trouble with the Nepalese and through them with China before long".²⁴ But then, however disquieting the incident might be, was the ground strong enough for immediate intervention? Lansdowne on sober reflection thought not. "The Chinese and the Nepalese", he admitted, "were both strictly within their rights in sending and receiving the mission now at Kathmandu". The occurrence was "more or less an usual one". Besides, Nepal was an independent state; on her foreign relations, Lansdowne noted, the British government could claim no control. Lansdowne was cautious in his Nepal policy, his object being to draw the Nepalese government closer to the British to ensure regular supply of Gurkhas for the Indian army. Therefore, he chose to wink at this incident until some other and stronger evidence was found regarding a Sino-Nepalese intrigue prejudicial to the British interests.²⁵

Lansdowne's decision was influenced by the Home Government's general policy that China should not be rubbed hard on the Indian frontier so that her bitterness could be exploited by Russia and France. Cross reminded Lansdowne that the Foreign Office wished for "many and I dare say good reasons to keep on the best of terms" with China, which, he added, should be given "no reasonable ground of offence". Lord Salisbury, the Foreign Secretary, while generally agreeing with Lansdowne that in Sikkim British influence should be exclusive, advised the Viceroy to show "utmost forbearance towards the Chinese", because Sir John Walsham, the British Minister at Peking, had warned that China would be very annoyed if the Indian government repudiated her symbolic suzerainty over Sikkim.

Lansdowne himself held that although in Sikkim his government would establish "exclusive and undivided" supremacy, his general policy should be to deal with the Chinese "as tenderly as we can in order to remain on good terms with them in other parts of the continent". Lansdowne wanted to persuade the Chinese government that Britain and China's interests in Central Asia were "identical", and so they should join hands to oppose Russia; the Viceroy also hoped to use China as a bulwark against the French in Siam and the Russians in the Pamirs. In regard to Kashgar, Hunza and Nagar, Burmo-Chinese frontier and Siam the Home government urged the Indian government to give due consideration to China's susceptibilities and as far as possible to accommodate her

interests. In such circumstances, the Indian government had to be circumspective in regard to the suspected Chinese moves towards Nepal. They recognised how embarrassing Nepal's relations with China could be for India but the time was not yet ripe for interference with these relations. Lansdowne noted that if in future

an opportunity for placing our relations with China and Nepal on a less precarious footing were to offer itself, such an opportunity should not be allowed to go by.³⁹

In regard to Nepal's relations with Tibet the British government's attitude was more than one of watchful interest; it was one of anxiety and disapproval. The main object of Nepal's policy in Tibet was to defend the rights and privileges secured by the treaty of 1856; and when this proved difficult due to the growing opposition of the Tibetan government, the Nepalese sought territorial compensation in the bordering Tibetan tracts by threats of military action. For several years the Nepalese traders at Tingri Maidan had been complaining of ill-treatment at the hands of the local Tibetans. In the 1870's the Nepalese merchants at Lhasa made similar complaints. The Nepalese Vakil at Lhasa observed military spirit increasing among the Tibetans and their mounting hostility to Nepalese interests in Tibet.

In 1871 the Chinese delegation which came to Kathmandu to confer Chinese title on Jang Bohadur failed to bring about any improvement in the strained relations between Nepal and Tibet. In 1872-73, following the Nepalese Vakil's withdrawal from Lhasa, both the governments made military preparations. At Kathmandu rumours spread that one of the amban had toured along the southern Tibetan frontier presumably to ascertain the strength of the Nepalese forces on the border. In 1883 Nepalese shops at Lhasa were looted by Tibetan monks who were provoked by the swaggering behaviour of the local Nepalese traders. Kathmandu demanded compensation of three lakh taels. Upon orders from Peking an enquiry was made by a commission consisting of the amban, some Tibetan officers and the Nepalese Vakil. The commission found the Tibetan monks guilty and fixed the indemnity at one lakh taels. Rejecting the sum as inadequate the Nepalese government made military preparations and despatched four regiments to the border. Soon after a high ranking Lama was reported to have been sent from Peking who managed to coax the disputants into a settlement. Towards the end of 1885 Kathmandu received 90,900 taels as compensation, the Chinese government having paid on behalf of the Tibetans as much as 80,000 taels.

Some years after troubles recrudesced, this time over the barter rate of exchange between Nepalese rice and Tibetan salt. The Nepalese traders refused to take salt at the rate demanded by the Tibetans whereupon the latter tried to smuggle it, at times by even killing the Nepalese customs officers. The Commissioner of Kumaun reported Nepalese troops having been sighted on the border near Tuglakot. The Lhasa government tendered apologies, and then the Nepalese troops pulled out. In November, 1895 on the amban's persuasion the two governments held a joint commission for the settlement of the barter question as well as certain boundary disputes. The following year a settlement was made which the Nepalese government hailed as their diplomatic victory."

The Indian government in the 1870's disliked this "almost yearly appearance of hostilities" between Nepal and Tibet because of their injurious effect on Bengal's frontier trade. Jang Bahadur's request for military and financial assistance was turned down by Lord Mayo, the Governor-General, which damped the Prime Minister's zeal for war; but his brother, Dhir Shamsher, was undeterred. The Court of Kathmandu was divided into two parties, one in favour and the other against a Tibetan campaign. Charles Girdlestone, the Resident, urged the Government to advise Jang Bahadur to peacefully settle the dispute and to strengthen his hands in dealing with the "war party". Girdlestone requested Jang Bahadur to replace his Vakil by another, more agreeable to the Tibetans.

The Indian Government offered to mediate in the dispute but Jang Bahadur showed no desire to avail himself of the offer.⁷⁸ This, however, was hardly surprising in view of the extreme jealousy with which the Nepalese government viewed the British commercial aspirations in Tibet which threatened Nepal's own commercial interests in that country. As early as 1862, for instance, when the Bengal government were trying to develop their trade with Tibet through Sikkim, the Resident had observed Jang Bahadur's concern because

our opening trade with Lhasa would be a serious blow to its [Nepal's] own commerce there of which it has now a complete and lucrative monopoly.

Jang Bahadur was suspected of exerting "secret influence" on some parties at Lhasa to foil the British objective; he pointed out that the British road building activities in Sikkim had some ulterior political motive, and that if the British were not totally excluded from Tibet Tibetan religion and society would be endangered. Jang Bahadur was also reported to have tried to increase his influence at Lhasa by backing a party contending for power; he was believed to have promised the

party his support if it kept the British away from Tibet and promoted Nepalese commercial interests there. Ramsay, on being instructed by the Government, lodged a strong protest with Jang Bahadur with the warning that

as the British government is always desirous to see the peaceful and civilizing influence of commerce and mutual intercourse between nations as widely as possible extended, it did not fail to view with disfavour any attempt on His Excellency's part to perpetuate the policy of the exclusion of Europeans from Tibet.¹⁹

There was another reason why the British discouraged Nepalese hostility towards Tibet: possibility of international complications and rift with China following the impression that the British were using Nepal as a tool to further their own objectives in Tibet. The risk of misunderstanding with China increased further when the Indian government supplied arms to Nepal. In 1883-4, when a war between Nepal and Tibet seemed very likely, the Indian government were eager to supply arms to Ranuddip Singh with a view to getting in return Gurkha recruits. In 1889, when the Tibetan intruders refused to vacate Lingtu in Sikkim, Mortimer Durand thought of asking Bir Shamsher to forcibly eject the Tibetans. He privately asked the Resident, Major E. L. Durand, about "the practicability and expediency of getting the Nepalese to try their new weapons as our allies or substitutes". The idea, he confessed, had "some objection", and was "doubtless immoral", but still "seems worth considering". Durand wanted to know what the Nepalese wanted in Tibet and whether they were afraid of China.²⁰

Lansdowne's arms arrangement with Bir Shamsher²¹ coincided with a fresh round of disputes between Nepal and Tibet. Lord Elgin, who succeeded Lansdowne, refused to meet Bir Shamsher's "preposterously large" requisition for arms partly because of the Home government's consideration of adverse Chinese reaction. For "imperial reasons" the India office wanted "specially to be on good terms with China" at this time. Britain's difficulties with Russia and France regarding the Pamirs and Siam respectively and the negotiations with China for the delimitation of the Burmo-Chinese frontier had now entered upon their final and most delicate phase. It appeared to the Political and Secret Committee of the India Office that

The Government of India in providing facilities for the importation of arms to a country over whose foreign relations they had no control were taking a new departure and undergoing a new responsibility.

Consequently, before agreeing to give arms, Elgin gave the Nepalese King to understand that in view of their many international obligations the British government could not permit the importation of warlike material into Nepal in quantities which Your Highness' other neighbours might consider excessive or as constituting a menace to them and would expose the Government of India to the risk of imputation which might possibly involve very undesirable complications.

The Nepalese government had, therefore, to undertake not to use the British arms against Tibet. This undertaking applied to all subsequent delivery of arms to Nepal; and this could be said to have given the British a measure of indirect control on Nepal's relations with Tibet to the extent of preventing Nepalese attack on Tibet.⁸²

Nepal's dispute with Tibet reached an acute stage in 1895-6. Elgin thought that he would persuade Bir Shamsheer to rely upon the British government's influence with the Chinese who would be requested to make the Tibetans agree to an immediate settlement of the dispute. Elgin's real object, as he disclosed to Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State, was just to "use the name" of China more with the object of humouring her than to actually bring her in as active mediator and thereby to strengthen her influence on Nepal and Tibet. It was necessary to humour China because Elgin saw her "oscillating towards Russia and France whose influence is on the wax in China while ours is on the wane."⁸³

The India Office, however, objected to this policy. It appeared to William Lee Warner, the Secretary to the Political and Secret Committee, as "a marked departure in the history of our relations with Nepal", because on all earlier occasions when Nepal had quarrelled with Tibet, the Indian government had refrained from involvement. Chinese mediation on British sponsorship, S. C. Bayley, a member of the Secret Committee, noted, might anger the Nepalese who were not yet known to have approached China for mediation. Nepal and Tibet had both relations with China and could, if they so liked, make such appeal themselves. Therefore, "if China does not interfere spontaneously or at the instance of either party". Bayley would not "take the initiative, at all events at the present stage" nor urge Nepal to do so. Besides, if China intervened at the British instance and Nepal rejected the Chinese advice, China would naturally expect British support to enforce her decision. If then, the British supported China, Nepal would be annoyed, while if they did not, misunderstanding with China could not be averted. Besides, Hamilton

observed that China was so weak and "so discredited that we can hardly believe her capable of any assertive authority over her quasi-vassal states". Elgin was advised against "any undue use of China's name and authority". If the British asked China to intervene in Nepal's disputes with Tibet on the present occasion, it would be interpreted by China as British acknowledgment of Chinese suzerainty over Nepal, and this the Indian government themselves would find most undesirable. It was also significant that although arms had been supplied to Nepal, China had as yet made no protests; either she was ignorant of the matter or had regarded it as the natural manifestation of Britain's special interests in Nepal. If, however, the Chinese did protest now, on the ground that it exacerbated Nepalese militarism, Lee Warner would tell them that Nepal had purchased all arms "fairly" and so the British government saw no reason to interfere with such purchases. This, however, was not Hamilton's view. Hamilton did not want any rift with China on account of Nepal, and therefore asked Elgin to consider this while giving arms to Bir Shamsher.

In fact, the Resident's reports suggested that the dispute with Tibet was but an excuse for Bir Shamsher to increase the armed strength of Nepal with British assistance. In such circumstances the India Office decided to wait and watch the course of the dispute. China, it was seen, was too preoccupied with war against Japan to attempt a military intervention in the dispute. But if she did or if Tibet defeated Nepal—an equally unlikely event—the British would intervene, since "India could never allow a foreign power to occupy Nepal". However, soon the dispute was settled thanks to China's mediation. The reaction of the India Office was one of relief because it was feared that a war between Nepal and Tibet "must have produced" for the British "embarrassments and complications with China".²⁴

The recurrent disputes between Nepal and Tibet were no doubt pointers to China's difficulty in managing her satellite states. China's disastrous defeat by Japan further lowered her prestige in Nepal and Tibet. Under the ambitious 13th Dalai Lama the spirit of Tibetan resistance to Chinese authority intensified. The Tibetan government refused to abide by the conventions made by China with the British regarding trade and Tibet's boundary with Sikkim. Their contention was that China had no authority to make such agreements with foreign powers. With the British determined to assert their treaty rights in Tibet and the Chinese desperately anxious to hold on to their position at Lhasa and the Dalai Lama opposed to both the British and the Chinese, a crisis developed

in Tibet in the beginning of the present century; and this crisis, since it affected Nepalese interests in Tibet, had far-reaching effect on Nepal's future relations with China, British India and Tibet.

NOTES

- * Published in *Bengal Past and Present*, Diamond Jubilee Number, 1967, pp. 169-84.
1. D. R. Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, pp. 125-31, 144, 150-51, 162-3, 166-9, 175-82, 185, 194.
 2. PSLI, Vol. 246, Reg. No. 326: Memorandum of the Early history of the relations between Nepal and Tibet and China compiled by the Nepal Durbar (in 1909).
 3. Tieh-Tseng Li, *The Historical Status of Tibet*, pp. 33-58. W. W. Rockhill, "The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China, 1644-1908", *T'oung Pao*, Series 3, Vol. XI, 1910, pp. 1-105.
 4. On Nepal's relations with China in the 9th-12th centuries see L. Petech, *Medieval History of Nepal*, pp. 99-101, 152, 201-11.
 5. The Sikkimese royal family was Tibetan in origin. The rajas of Sikkim held jagir in the Chumbi valley, the strip of Tibetan territory between Sikkim and Bhutan; they sent religious offerings to the Dalai Lamas of Tibet. *History of Sikkim*, compiled by Maharaja Sir Thutub Namgyal and Maharani Yashay Dolma of Sikkim (1908), Typescript in the India Office Library, London (Mss Eur. E/78), pp. 19, 47, 59, 72-4, 76, 96-8, 106, 121, 124.
The Bhutanese government paid tribute to the Lhasa authorities and sent annual embassies to Lhasa; the Amban (Chinese High Commissioner) at Lhasa issued annually an imperial mandate to the Deb and Dharma rajas of Bhutan advising them in matters of administration. HC, Vol. 91, Nos. 16, 69. J. C. White, *Sikkim and Bhutan*, pp. 285-90.
 6. Memorandum of early history of Nepal's relations with Tibet and China, op. cit.
 7. Burma sent tribute to Peking once in ten years; Korea and Amman did so every four years, and Siam every three years. H. B. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, II, p. 341.
 8. Tieh-Tseng Li, op.cit., pp. 53-8.
 9. E. H. Parker, "China, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim", *Journal of the Manchester Oriental Society*, 1911, p. 146. Notwithstanding this demarcation, frontier disputes often created tension between Nepal and Tibet.
 10. P. Landon, *Nepal*, I, pp. XV-XVII.
 11. K. C. Chandhuri, op. cit., pp. 34-9, 62-75, Alitchison, II, pp. 103-05.
 12. W. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. iii-xi. Kirkpatrick was sent to mediate in the Sino-Nepalese dispute.
 13. Cammann, op. cit., pp. 130-43. Samuel Turner, *An Account of an*

- Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet*, p. 442. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 371-9. E. H. Parker, "Nepaul and China", *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, Vol. VII, 1899, pp. 74-7.
14. Maulavi Abdul Kadir was sent to Kathmandu on a commercial mission in 1795. Captain W. Knox was sent to Kathmandu in 1802 as the first British Resident. G. N. Saletore, "Indian Trade delegation to Kathmandu, 1795", *PIHRC*, Feb., 1956, pp. 10 *et seq.* Chaudhuri, op. cit., pp. 119-40.
 15. PC, 7 Mar. 1796, No. 9.
 16. The Treaty provided for peaceful settlement of border disputes, extradition of fugitive criminals and exchange of diplomatic representatives (*vakeels*) between the governments of the East India Company and Nepal.
 17. Bengal Secret Letters to the Court, Vol. 5, Letter to Secret Committee, 1 Jan., 1803.
 18. *Papers Relating to the Nepaul War*, p. 720, Moira to Secret Committee, 2 Aug. 1815. Marchioness of Bute, *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings*, II, pp. 144-5. Leo E. Rose, "China and the Anglo-Nepalese War, 1814-6", *PIHC*, Delhi, 1961, pp. 208-16. Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, pp. 39-49.
 19. J. B. Fraser, *Journal of a tour through part of the Himalayan mountains*, pp. 526-7. Rose, op. cit., pp. 210-11.
 20. SC, 14 Sept, 1816, No. 41.
 21. SC, 14 Sept, 1816, Nos. 39, 41-2.
 22. *Ibid.*, No. 43.
 23. SC, 9 Nov, 1816, No. 19.
 24. Parker, "Nepaul and China", op. cit., p. 78.
 25. SC, 11 Jan, 1817, No. 6. Prinsep, op. cit., II, pp. 209-13.
 26. SC, 11 Jan 1817, No. 7; 15 May, 1818, No. 69.
 27. SC, 13 July, 1816, No. 17; 27 July, 1816, No. 12. Chittaranjan Nepali, op. cit., pp. 301-2, 312-4.
 28. SC, 22 Jun, 1816, No. 31. Parker, "China, Nepaul, Bhutan and Sikkim", op. cit., pp. 149-50.
 29. *Ibid.*
 30. Tachienlu on the Szechuan border was an important trade centre. Chengtu was the capital of Szechuan.
 31. B. H. Hodgson, *Miscellaneous Essays Relating to Indian Subjects*, I, pp. 167-73.
 32. SC, 14 Oct, 1829, No. 23.
 33. See pp. 53-4 above. Parker, "Nepaul and China", op. cit., p. 80.
 34. A. Cunningham, *Ladak, Physical, Statistical and Historical*, p. 333.
 35. Parker, "Nepaul and China", op. cit., p. 80.
 36. SC, 31 May, 1841, No. 154.
 37. SC, 3 Jan, 1842, No. 128.
 38. SC, 11 Oct, 1941, No. 89. See also pp. below.
 39. Cunningham, op. cit., pp. 244, 248. Lamb, op. cit., pp. 56-8, 64-71.
 40. See pp. 128-37 below.
 41. SC, 14 Sept, 1842, No. 83.

42. Leo E. Rose, "Sino-Indian Rivalry and the Himalayan border states", *Orbis*, Summer 1961, p. 202. Hodgson also reported that "no importance is attached by the Chinese to their relations with Nepal and they are maintained by Nepal chiefly or solely to be played off against us [British], if need be". Letter to Govt., 9 Nov, 1833, PC, 21 Nov, 1833, No. 36.
43. Parker "Nepaul and China", op. cit., p. 81.
44. SC, 25 Aug, 1854, No. 52. See also No. 54.
45. See pp. below.
46. SC, 30 Nov, 1855, No. 58.
47. See pp. 143-4 below.
48. SC, 30 Nov, 1855, Nos. 77-81, 88.
49. Aitchison, op. cit., pp. 97-100 f.n. SC, 28 Dec, 1855, No. 81.
50. Orfeur Cavenagh, *Reminiscences of an Indian Official*, p. 169.
51. Resident to Govt., 10 July, 1861, F.P.A., Oct, 1861, No. 44.
52. IFP, Vol. 760, July, 1871, No. 100.
53. Parker, "Nepaul and China", op. cit., p. 81.
54. Pudma Jang Bahadur Rana, op. cit., pp. 281, 285.
55. Resident to Govt., 9 June, 1886, F.P.A., Jun, 1866, No. 163.
56. W. W. Hunter, *Essays on the External Policy of India*, by J.W.S. Wyllie, p. 197.
57. Foreign Secret Proceedings, Sept, 1876, Nos. 129-33, Dept. Notes: T. H. Thornton, Offg. Foreign Secy., to Wade, 25 July, 1876.
58. *Ibid.*
59. T. J. Cooper, one such explorer, sought the help of the Nepalese embassy to China when he was at Chengtu and Bathang. The Nepalese, however, refused to take him along with them to Lhasa for fear of Chinese annoyance. Cooper, *Journal of an overland journey from China towards India*, pp. 53, 68, 74.
60. F.P.A., Oct, 1867, No. 127; Aug, 1867, Nos. 53-4; July, 1868, No. 203; June, 1873, Nos. 462-75. Foreign Secret Proceedings, (Intelligence), 1870, Nos. 400-04. Cooper, *Travels of a Pioneer of Commerce*, pp. 158-9, 398. NR, Vol. 13, Richard Lawrence to Col. Houghton, 13 Apr, 1869. F.P.A., May, 1875, No. 104A. Foreign Revenue B Proceedings, Apr., 1872, Nos. 4-7.
61. Political and Secret Letters Received from India, 1882, No. 65, 14 July, 1862, Encl. 3-6. *Ibid.*, Vol. 20, No. 140 of 1878: E. C. Baber to Fraser, Charge d'Affaires, Peking, 2 Aug, 1878.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Foreign Secret Proceedings, Sept, 1876, Nos. 129-33, Dept. Note.
64. G. N. Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, pp. 276-80. S. H. Roberts, *History of French Colonial Policy*, II, pp. 419-98. D. H. Dallin, *The Rise of Russia in Asia*, pp. 15-41. Lamb, op. cit., pp. 54-238. G. J. Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier*, 1865-1895. H. B. Morse, op. cit., pp. 239-415. Dorothy Woodman, *The Making of Burma*, pp. 205-331.
65. Lamb, op. cit., pp. 87 et seq. AP, 1862, XL: *East India (Sikkim Expedition)*. History of Sikkim, by Maharaja, op.cit., pp. 134, 175-

207. White, *op.cit.*, pp. 19-32, 275 *et seq.* AP, 1865, XXXIX : *Papers Relating to Bhutan. Political Missions to Bhutan: Report of Ashley Eden.*
66. J. K. Fairbank and S. Y. Teng, "On the Ch'ing Tributary System", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, June, 1941.
67. There were two main complaints of the British against the Nepalese government : the exclusion of the British from the interior of Nepal, and the obstacles placed in regard to Gurkha recruitment in Nepal by the *darbar*.
68. IFP, Vol. 1216, Feb 1878, Nos. 178-83. HC, Vol. 92, 282, British Minister at Peking to Foreign Office, 4 Jan 1887. LNP, Vol. XIII, Note on Nepal affairs, by Lansdowne, 18 Sept 1889.
69. IFP, Vol. 1216, Feb 1878, Nos. 166-76.
70. In July 1886 Tibetan troops intruded into Sikkimese territory at Lintu. This led to a small British expedition in March 1888. The Chinese, overlords of the Tibetans, negotiated with the British for the delimitation of the Sikkimese frontier with Tibet . . . Since the Raja of Sikkim held a Chinese title and paid homage to the Lhasa government, and the Tibetans "being vassals of the Chinese", "such homage would in effect have been rendered to China". The Amban insisted that the Raja continue to pay homage even if he was a British Protected Prince. The British rejected this claim, and China ultimately accepted Sikkim's status as a British protectorate. This was embodied in the Anglo-Chinese Convention in 1890, which was followed by a trade convention in 1893 giving the British trade concessions in Tibet. LNP, IX, Vol. 1, Lansdowne to Cross, Secy. of State, 29 Jan, 22 Apr, 24 May 1889. DP, D.O. Letter Book, Vol. II, p. 308, Durand to Lansdowne, 23 Dec 1888. Younghusband, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-53.
71. DP, Sikkim Commission (Jan 1889), Durand to Wallace, Private Secy. to Lansdowne, 1, 3 Jan 1889, Durand to A. Lyall, 29 Jan, 12 May 1889. LNP, IB, Vol. I, Memorandum by Durand, 1 Jan 1889; *Ibid.*, IX, Vol. I, Lansdowne to Cross, 15, 22 Jan, 22 Apr, 24 May 1889.
72. Durand to George Chesney, 26 Jan 1882, DP, Letter Book, 1882-3.
73. Wife of Ranuddip Singh (who was murdered by Bir Shamsheer and his brothers in 1885) who lived in India as a political refugee.
74. LNP, IX, Vol. I, Lansdowne to Cross, 6 Aug 1889.
75. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, Lansdowne's Note on Nepal Affairs, 18 Sept. 1889.
76. *Ibid.*, IX, Vol. I, Lansdowne to Cross, 29 Apr, 26 July 1889. Cross to Lansdowne, 24 Apr, 6 Jun, 12 Dec 1889; *Ibid.*, IX, Vol. III. Cross to Lansdowne, 2 Dec 1891.
77. F.P.A., July 1871, No. 100; Jun 1873, Nos. 462-75; Aug 1874, Nos. 1-9; Oct 1874, No. 97, Dept. Notes. IFP (External), May 1883, No. 302; Jun 1883, No. 427; Sept 1883, No. 89; Apr 1884, Nos. 329-42; Jan 1886, No. 90. HC, Vol. 58, No. 581, Foreign Office to India Office, 3 Sept 1883; Vol. 64, No. 487, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 31 May 1884; Vol. 65, No. 702, Political Letter from India

to Secy. of State, No. 41, 27 June 1884. Secret and Political Despatches to India, Vol. 20, 2 Feb 1894, No. 8 : Note of Sarat Chandra Das, 31 Dec 1883. PSLI, Vol. 85, D.O. Letter from Resident to Govt., 14 Apr 1896, and Govt.'s reply, 22 Apr 1896; Vol. 86, No. 101, 19 May 1896; Vol. 87, No. 118, 16 Jun 1896; Vol. 89, No. 184, 21 Oct 1896. EP, Vol. 19, Elgin to Hamilton, Secy. of State, Telg. 25 Feb, 17 Apr 1896, Hamilton to Elgin, Telg. 4 Mar 1896.

78. F.P.A., Jun 1873, Nos. 462-75; Oct 1874, No. 97, Dept. Notes.
79. Resident to Govt., 17 Apr 1862, F.P.A., Apr 1862, No. 302. See also F.P.A., Aug. 1862, No. 38; Sept. 1862, Nos. 35-6. S. C. Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*, (Ed by W. W. Rockhill), p.91.
80. PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067 : India Secret Despatch to Secy. of State, No. 30, 30 May 1884. DP, Letter Book, Apr 1884-July 1890, Durand to General Chesney, 4 July 1884; D.O. Letter Book, No. 2, p.169, Durand to Major Durand (Resident), Private Telg. 9 Nov 1888.
81. Bir Shamsheer became the third Rana Prime Minister in 1885 after murdering his uncle, Ranuddip Singh.

By the arms arrangement the British agreed to supply arms to Nepal on the understanding that the indents for arms should be made to the Resident. The British expected the Nepalese to stop smuggling of arms from India and also manufacturing them locally. PSLI, Vol. 73, No. 4, 3 Jan 1894.

82. Ibid. Vol. 77, No. 189, 17 Oct 1894, Encl. 2-5. PSI, Vol. 20, No. 8, 2 Feb 1894, Minutes of S. C. Bayley and A. C. Lyall.
83. EP, Vol. 14, Hamilton to Elgin, 30 July 1896, Elgin to Hamilton, 18 Mar 1896. HC, Vol. 64, No. 183, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg., 25 Feb 1896.
84. Ibid., Notes by Lee Warner and Bayley, Secy. of State to Viceroy, Telg. 4 Mar 1896; PSLI, Vol. 86, No. 101, 19 May 1896. EP, Vol. 14, Hamilton to Elgin, 28 Feb, 10, 17 Apr 1896.

VII

NEPAL AND THE DOGRA-TIBETAN WAR, 1941-2

In the fourth decade of the nineteenth century British relations with Nepal were strained almost to the breaking point. Never was Nepal so much hostile. Never were the British in India so much perplexed with manifold troubles, never so ill-prepared to meet Nepal's threats of invasion. Nepal, then ruled by the Pandes, was out to exploit the grave crisis which the British in India were passing through. The British stuck for long to the "policy of peace and patience"; they temporised, hoping that Nepalese restlessness would die out soon. Ultimately, however, they realised that the soft-peddling policy had accentuated rather than curbed Nepal's hostile spirit. Since the Pande ministry was at the root of all evils, the British compelled the King of Nepal to dismiss it and to set up a ministry composed of pro-British nobles. Accordingly, in November 1840, such a ministry was formed, much to the King's resentment. The ministry depended on the Resident, Brian Hodgson, for its continuance. With this pillar in Nepal the British hoped to weather the critical times, and to deal with her drastically at a more favourable time in future. The pro-British ministry was consolidating its hold and calm was settling down in the darbar when war broke out between the Dogras and the Tibetans following the former's invasion of western Tibetan territories.

The relations between the Dogra Rajas, Golab Singh and Dhian Singh, and the Tibetan government were uneasy since the former's occupation of Ladakh, a tributary of Tibet, in 1834-5. After the death of Ranjit Singh, the Dogra Rajas became very powerful in the court of Lahore. Their overweening presumption, vaulting ambition and intriguing propensities worried the British. Itching for glory and cherishing a secret design of creating a sphere of authority independent of the state of Lahore, it was the Dogra Rajas who sent a strong army under Zorawar Singh to western Tibet in 1841, creating thereby a dangerous situation in the western Himalayas.¹

The war came to the King of Nepal as a god-send. Smarting under the control of the ministers who were protected by the Resident, and yet too weak to defy them for fear of British reprisals, the King was extremely eager to seize the opportunity as a means of grinding his own political axe. The war animated the prospects of gain at the expense of the parties

involved. The King's restlessness increased when he was asked by the belligerents to render military assistance.

The war also roused Ladakh's hope of emancipation from the oppressive Dogra rule. The ruler of Ladakh sent envoys to Lhasa seeking support in his bid for independence. Similar appeals were made to the British, too.² But neither the Tibetans nor the British were in an obliging mood. The ruler of Ladakh, therefore, appealed to the King of Nepal for support. In March 1841, two Ladakhi envoys arrived on the Nepalese frontier. For a time they were seen hanging around Jumla, where the Nepalese governor, Hastbeer Khwas, was instructed to ascertain if the mission was a ruse of the British to feel the Nepalese reaction to the Dogra activity. The envoys narrated to Hastbeer the sad plight of their country under the Dogras and offered to place it under the Nepalese King—as a dependency—if he rendered military assistance against the Dogras.³

The Dogras, for their part, were equally eager for Nepal's assistance. They were very keen on effecting an alliance between the states of Lahore and Nepal, seeing in the alliance prospects of gain for both.⁴ It was strongly rumoured that Nepal and Ladakh, a Dogra territory, would be linked by a chain of forts, which led George Clerk, British Political Agent at Ludhiana, to warn the Government that it would

never be safe for the Government of India to allow the approximation to Nepal of any other powerful and aspiring hill state.⁵

Excitement rose at Kathmandu. Eager to take advantage of the Dogra invasion of western Tibet, the King summoned his counsellors, the Minister Chautaria Fateh Jang Shah, his brother, Guru Prasad Shah, and other influential chiefs such as Dalbhanjan Pande, Kaji Kalu Sahi, Ranganath Pandit and Ramdal Pande, for advice. The King wanted to launch an attack on Tibet from Jumla and to occupy by a coup de main a neighbouring gold mine. Once the mine had been taken, it could be "easily held by compromise or bargain" with either the Dogras or Tibetans as the price of military assistance to either of them. The counsellors, however, were against a "furtive attack on Tibet", which had given no offence to Nepal. It also seemed to them impolitic to be involved in a war when relations with the British were not yet in a completely settled state. Above all, it was very likely that the British would strongly disapprove of Nepal's involvement.⁶ Even a commitment in favour of the ruler of Ladakh was risky in view of the latter's special relations with Lhasa, which was Peking's protectorate. Still, the Ladakhi envoys

were not dismissed, but they were not given any definite assurance of military assistance either. Their appeal for such assistance was referred to the Chinese amban at Lhasa through the Nepalese agent there. Nepal impatiently awaited the Chinese reaction to the Dogra invasion of western Tibet.

The Nepalese King's restiveness increased when the Dogras reached the western border of Nepal. By the autumn of 1841, Zorawar Singh and his army had reached Tuglakot and had occupied a portion of the adjacent Tibetan territory. The Nepalese King, with no hope of support from his advisers, himself sought to establish relations with Zorawar Singh through Hastbeer. Hastbeer was asked to meet Zorawar and to convince him of the King's readiness to help him in his projects of conquest of western Tibet. Hastbeer was also instructed to tell Zorawar that the King was very eager for an alliance with the state of Lahore.¹

But there was a snag. The Dogras at Tuglakot claimed that the Bhotia inhabitants of Jumla, who had close commercial and religious ties with the Tibetans in the neighbourhood, should pay taxes to the Dogras who had now become the masters of the adjacent Tibetan territories. Dogra response to the Nepalese King's overtures depended on his compliance with this demand. The King found it rather a hard bargain. While efforts were made to settle this problem, twelve hundred Nepali troops were hurriedly sent to Yarri to guard the frontier. Although the advance of the Dogras was welcome—for it brightened up the prospects of a direct territorial link between the states of Lahore and Nepal—the Nepalese King was jealous that the Dogras had occupied the areas in south western Tibet which Nepal had coveted for long.

The British reaction to the war was one of surprise and unease; and their policy was one of keenest vigilance and non-interference. For a time neither the real intention of the Dogras nor the extent of their ambition was very clear to the British government. What the latter was most worried about was the excitement in Nepal created by the war. Pre-occupied with the Afghan war, the British dreaded an alliance between the courts of Lahore and Nepal. To add to their worry, the Lahore *darbar's* attitude was becoming increasingly hostile as reflected, for instance, in their opposition to the passage of British troops through the Punjab to Afghanistan. There were also rumours of a combination of the Sikhs, the Nepalese and the Chinese Tartars against the British. The rumours, however, proved to be without foundation. It was extremely unlikely for either China or Tibet to allow the Nepalese to take the Mansarovar route to join the approaching

Dogras : both the Chinese and Tibetans were aware of Nepalese ambition to occupy the bordering Tibetan territories. Besides, the Dogras, with their hands full with the expedition, were most unlikely to invite hostility with the British by joining a league against them. Moreover, notwithstanding their uneasy relations, the Lahore darbar would not break with the British.⁹ George Clerk, the British Political Agent at Ludhiana, discounted the possibility of a combination of the Sikhs, the Nepalese and the Chinese Tartars. He pointed out that the Lahore darbar was neither responsible for nor interested in the conquest of western Tibet; it was a project of the Dogra Rajas alone, who were keen on establishing an independent domain of their own. Clerk noted that the Lahore darbar had, in fact,

at times evinced more jealousy of Zorawar Singh's successes than seems to have been or indeed have been felt by the British government.¹⁰

Hodgson, too, dismissed the reports of the combination as an "improbable figment" of imagination, although he did not disbelieve that some Nepali soldiers had really gone to Mansarovar in order to "lick into shape" the contemplated coalition of Lahore and Nepal.¹¹

Nevertheless, it was prudent to take precautionary steps. Accordingly, two companies of the Nusseri battalion were ordered to make for Kotegarh, whence small detachments would be sent to guard the bridges across the Sutlej from Keepoo in Kotegarh to Wangto in Bushir. The raja of Bushir, a protected prince, was asked to guard all the bridges above Wangto, and to alert the British authorities if any movement of Chinese Tartars were sighted in that quarter. Since there was no basis for the rumour of warlike preparations at Jumla or Doti in western Nepal, the need for the "extreme measure" of asking the hill rajas under British protection to supply troops for meeting the apprehended Nepalese invasion did not arise.¹²

But the progress of the Dogras showed that mere vigilance was not enough. Once the Dogra military activities affected British interests, sterner measures were called for. By the autumn of 1841, the Dogras had penetrated deep into western Tibet, occupying territories around Tuglakot and Gartope.¹³

The British concern increased—and for three reasons. First, the Dogra military activities had created a stir in the western Himalayas; secondly, it had accentuated the restlessness of the King of Nepal; thirdly, Chinese intervention in favour of the Tibetans was not unlikely. Besides, the occupation of Mandi by

the Sikhs and their advance by Kulu and Ladakh under the Dogras were events

"fraught with much future mischief and calculated, if not promptly met, eventually to imperil the prosperity and tranquillity not only of Kumaun" but of the entire North-West Provinces."

The territorial link between "the most wealthy" (Lahore) and "the most warlike" (Nepal) of the independent neighbouring states of British India was certain to imperil the British position at Kumaun, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Provinces warned.¹³ The contiguity of the Sikh rule to the Punjab hill states under British protection was most undesirable for the additional reason that the rapacity of the Sikhs would drive the local people to the neighbouring British protected territories, creating thereby the problem of extradition of fugitives and providing the Sikh government with an excuse for incursions into these territories. Besides, the recovery of Kumaun, militarily vulnerable, was the cherished desire of Nepal; and in this she might count upon Sikh support.¹⁴

Of greater concern was the possibility of Chinese intervention in favour of the Tibetans. For some time past the King of Nepal and his Pande advisers had been urging China for assistance against the British. Missions had been sent to Peking and Lhasa for this purpose. The King had professed his eagerness to throw off his "allegiance" to the British, and "to resume the old career of his ancestors" by strengthening Nepal's ties with China.¹⁵ It was, therefore, not unnatural for the British to wonder if China, then having her first war with Britain, might not instigate a Nepalese attack on the British territory in India. Besides, since the Sikhs had treaty relations with the British, it was very likely for China to imagine that the aggression of Tibet, a Chinese protectorate, by the Dogras, who were subjects of the state of Lahore, was inspired by the British. Such an impression was certain to affect the peace negotiations of the British in China.¹⁶

Unfortunately for Nepal, all her requests to Lhasa and Peking for assistance ended in failure. The "drowsy Tibetans" could not be awakened¹⁷; and the Chinese not only refused to assist but even warned the King of Nepal against excessive restlessness. Relieved, Hodgson could report to Government:

Lhasa, so far as it appears, continues to be shy of Nepal and deaf to her instigations against us, nor... can I imagine her inviting foreign soldiers into Tibet instead of directly urging them by her money and countenance upon our provinces.¹⁸

As for the Chinese, they were evidently too fearful of the

British, who had defeated them to risk a conflict with them for Nepal's sake. Both the Tibetans and the Chinese had deep distrust of the Nepalese; they disliked the latter's involvement in trans-Himalayan politics. Consequently, neither was taken in by the Nepalese King's profession of concern for the Tibetans and his allegiance to the celestial emperor.³¹ To Nepal's enquiry as to what she would do in regard to Ladakh's appeals for assistance against the Dogras, the Chinese amban at Lhasa replied that Chinese government had

no title or purpose to interfere with Ladakh politics and that the darbar would do well to confine itself to its established circle of connection, cherishing peace and good faith within that circle, and [being] less heedful of novelties beyond it.³²

Nepalese restlessness was deemed as much undesirable by China as by the British.

So long as China maintained this attitude the British had little cause for worry, for it was unlikely that without the authority of China Nepal would actively involve herself in the issue concerning Tibet. Hodgson had, therefore, confidently noted :

If Gartope be declaredly and *de facto* a protected dependency of China, China must by argument or force procure the removal of the Sikhs ... But I doubt, if China will, if she can help it and with reference solely to these events, kindle the flames of war on this frontier, and without China's direct instigation and aid, this darbar will not, certainly under its present Ministry, meddle at all in the matter.³³

Hodgson had full control on the ministry, which was advised not to bother about the incident.³⁴

But the situation, by October 1841, had come to such a pass that it was very difficult for Hodgson to maintain this optimism. The relentless march of the Dogras into Tibetan territory had awakened the Chinese to the urgency of immediate action against the invaders.³⁵ By the occupation of Gartok the Dogra Rajas had wrested from the Sino-Tibetans the control of trans-Himalayan trade in salt, borax and shawl wool.³⁶

The Chinese appearance on the Indian frontier was most disagreeable to the Government of India. It was certain to be exploited by the Nepalese, who could then strike at the British from behind the Chinese shield, and might even pit the Chinese against the British. Besides, Chinese involvement in the war was likely to stir up Himalayan states having traditional relations with China and Tibet. The entire northern frontier might

then be aflame. In a note Hodgson expressed his anxiety on this score and warned the Government that unless the "unbridled ambition" of the Dogra Rajas were checked,

With Chinese, Sikhs and Gurkhas, we shall ere long find ourselves, of necessity, involved in a labyrinth of trans-Himalayan politics, the clue to which may be difficult to find and impracticable to use when found.²⁷

Meanwhile, the situation at Kathmandu added to the anxiety of the Resident; the ministers were finding it hard to restrain the King. Panic-struck, Hodgson reported to Government:

It is not the desire of the Government that the attention of China should be...needlessly drawn to this quarter [Nepal]...the mere intrigues of Nepal at Lhasa have, I believe, been disregarded but actual invasion of districts owning the sovereignty of the Chinese will probably have effect at Lhasa and Peking, particularly should other events be now drawing curiosity in this direction.²⁸

The Dogra military activities had affected British commercial interests in the area. The Dogras had obtained exclusive control of the Pishin trade; by occupying the important trade routes in the region, they had successfully prevented the traffic of shawl wool from the Chinese Tartary into Bushir, their object being to channelise this article to the Kashmir market alone.²⁹ The trade in Bushir, till then flourishing, had come to a standstill, causing injury to the economic life of the local people. The invasion of Garo by Zorawar Singh was intended to confine the shawl wool trade to Ladakh, over the trade of which the Dogra Rajas had established monopoly since they had occupied the state in 1834-5. Ladakh, Kashmir and the many hill states in the neighbourhood served as entrepôts of trade with Tibet and Chinese Turkestan. The Dogra military activities had thus affected the commercial interests of both the Chinese and the British.³⁰

All this led the British to take a stern attitude to the Dogra activities. George Clerk was instructed:

...the interests of the British government are strongly affected by such proceedings; an excitement has already been caused at Kathmandu which it is very desirable to check...the British government would not permit any aggressive measure which might obstruct the free transit of commerce through the Bushir state or through any other district entitled to British protection.³¹

Even if it were true that the activities of Zorawar Singh had not been prompted by the Lahore *darbar*, and that the Dogras were acting on their own the responsibility for their proceed-

ing lay squarely with the *darbar*, for the Dogras were its subjects.²² Therefore, strong remonstrances were made with Maharaja Sher Singh; he was warned that if Zorawar Singh were not restrained, Anglo-Sikh relations would be irreparably strained. The officers at Subathu and Kumaun were alerted, being asked to take all measures to repel a likely Dogra intrusion into the British territory.²³ This warning worked. Sher Singh assured Clerk that orders had been sent to recall Zorawar Singh, and that he had been asked to return the revenue he had extorted from the British subjects near Almora. Sher Singh also admitted that he could not afford to alienate the British.²⁴

Towards the end of 1841 the British received reports of the arrival of Chinese troops on the scene. The Government sent Captain J. D. Cunningham to the frontier with instructions to report on the developments there. Clerk advised the Government to post the Nusseri and Sirmur battalions on the frontier so that they could "act promptly for protection or for interference or it would give weight to advice," which he might offer the parties involved. But the Government rejected this suggestion, fearing that this might involve them in the war. Clerk was told :

The Governor-General does not contemplate any armed interference in disputes beyond the mountains, believing such interference to be altogether inconsistent with British interests.²⁵

Nevertheless, in a war between the Dogras and the Sino-Tibetans, the sympathy of the Government of India seemed to have laid with the former to whom best wishes were conveyed through Cunningham.²⁶ The Commissioner of Kumaun was instructed to give political asylum to Zorawar Singh and his men if they fled to that quarter.²⁷ The war raged furiously; in several pitched battles the Chinese, overwhelming in number, completely routed the Dogras and the Sikhs. Severe cold and inadequate provisions took a heavy toll of Dogra and Sikh lives. Zorawar himself was one of the dead. In utter discomfiture ended the Dogra ambition in western Tibet.²⁸

The Sino-Tibetan troops then invaded Ladakh and besieged its capital, Leh.²⁹ The ruler of Ladakh invited Cunningham to Leh and asked for British help in preventing a war between the Dogras and Sino-Tibetans in his territory. The British government could hardly comply with this request without incurring the hostility of both the Dogras and the Sino-Tibetans, for the one was as determined to retain hold on the territory as the other was bent upon occupying it. Yet, between the Chinese occupation of Ladakh and the continuance of Dogra rule there,

the latter seemed to the British the lesser of the two evils. However, the British were not only unwilling to give protection to Ladakh from the Dogras and the Sino-Tibetans, but also were averse to extending their sphere of authority and influence to Ladakh for fear of provoking the Chinese. The best course for them was to help maintain the status quo in the region. The ruler of Ladakh was given nothing but a flat assurance that British Indian subjects would be protected from harrassments by either the Sino-Tibetans or the Dogras.⁴⁰

The King of Nepal was closely following the events. The Nepalese officer at Jhulaghat kept the *darbar* posted with the developments.⁴¹ However, the King's hope of exploiting the war ended when the Dogras and Sino-Tibetans concluded peace in August 1942.

The war could not assume greater complexity due partly to the restraining effect of the British and Chinese diplomacy on the King of Nepal. Both were against Nepalese involvement in the war. The real intention of the King of Nepal was not unknown to China. China was little inclined to support Nepal against the British, far less to be pitted against them. Hodgson was equally aware of the King's real intention. The King, so it seemed to Hodgson, desired involvement in the war mainly with a view to ingratiating himself with the army and embarrassing the pro-British ministry; he was also anxious to annex bordering Tibetan territories and thereby satisfy the cherished ambition of Nepalese rulers. It seemed to Hodgson that the King was not particularly interested in joining any side; all that he wanted was the promotion of Nepalese interests. Therefore, he seemed "to be equally ready to assault the Chinese, Sikhs,⁴² English or Bhutanese,⁴³ as circumstances might suggest."⁴⁴

It is interesting to note that at the time Chinese forces were fighting the Dogras, the King of Nepal was eager to ascertain the British reaction to the Chinese intervention on behalf of the Tibetans. The King asked Hodgson if the British would support the Dogras against the Chinese. Hodgson made no secret of British disapproval of Zorawar Singh's "wanton aggression" of Tibetan territory, and of the British pressure on the Lahore *darbar* to recall him. Hodgson told the King:

we had no desire whatever to do injury to China in any quarter, and should willingly desist from our present compulsory operations in China proper, so soon as justice had been rendered to us.⁴⁵

The Dogra-Tibetan war convinced the British government that the preservation of peace in the northern frontier of India necessitated control over Nepalese militarism. The war showed

that a major event in any part of the Himalays might create a stir in the neighbouring areas. The British were keen on localising the war, and this explains their pressure on the Lahore darbar to recall Zorawar and his army. Chinese involvement was also likely to bring in its train that of Bhutan and Sikkim, both having commercial and cultural ties with Tibet. The war drove home to the British that the ambition of the Himalayan powers might create a situation on which they [British] could have no control, and yet which could prove prejudicial to their interests.⁴⁵

The war had one more result. It led to closer acquaintance of the Government of India with the western Himalayas. Cunningham submitted a report to the Government containing a history of and his comments on the interrelations of the Himalayan states, their trade and commerce, and their connexion with Tibet and China. The relations, he pointed out, were in many cases anomalous, some states owing allegiance simultaneously to China, Tibet and British India. Such "multiplicity of relations and division of allegiance" created "a state of uncertainty" on the Indian frontier. Urging "some remodelling" in these relations, Cunningham observed:

The consolidated empires of England and China have met one another along the Himalayan mountains and it is true that doubts should be at an end. It is not for us to share with others the allegiance of petty princes nor should we desire that our petty princes should have claims upon the territories of foreign states. Our feudatories should have no political connection with strangers, although we may allow them to interchange friendly letters and even visit their neighbours under the rule of others.⁴⁶

Another suggestion made at this time was that the Government of India take Ladakh under their protection. Such a measure, considering the Dogra, the Tibetan and the Chinese interests in the region, would then have been a bold step on the part of the Government. On the other hand, the suggestion, if accepted and acted upon, would have ensured British influence over Ladakh, strategically of great importance to India.⁴⁷ Possibly also, much of the present troubles on India's northern border could have been avoided had the suggestions been accepted by the Government of India at that time.

NOTES

* Published in *Bengal Past and Present*, Jan.-June 1963, pp. 12-25 under the title "Nepal and the Sikh-Tibetan War, 1841-2".

1. K. M. Panikkar, *Founding of the Kashmir State*, pp. 74-89. Cunningham, *Ladak*, op. cit., pp. 333-55.

2. SC, 16 Oct 1841, No. 94.
3. SC, 12 Apr 1841, No. 144.
4. PC, 12 Jun 1837, No. 41.
5. PSLI, Vol. 79, Thomason to Lushington, 1 Sept 1841. SC, 4 Oct 1841, No. 40; 11 Oct 1841, Nos. 46-9. R. A. Huttenback, "Gulab Singh and the creation of Dogra state of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Aug 1961, pp. 476-88.
6. Resident to Govt., 31 July 1841, Pre-Mutiny Records of the Kumaun Collectorate, Political Branch, Series III, Vol. I, No. 117.
7. SC, 17 May 1841, No. 103. K. Sajanlal, *Side Lights on Lord Auckland's Foreign Policy*, p. 52.
8. Resident to Govt., 6, 10 Sept 1841, Kumaun Collectorate Records, op. cit.
9. SC, 19 Oct. 1840, No. 50; also No. 57.
10. Clerk to Maddock, Foreign Secy., 23 Nov. 1840, SC, 21 Dec 1840, No. 96.
11. SC, 26 Oct 1840, No. 139.
12. SC, 19 Oct 1840, Nos. 55, 57.
13. SC, 16 Aug 1841, No. 34; 4 Oct 1841, No. 40.
14. Thomason, Secy. to the govt. of N. W. Provinces, to Maddock, 17 Aug 1841, SC, 30 Aug 1841, No. 27.
15. SC, 11 Oct 1841, No. 49. The British annexed Kumaun from the Nepalese after the Anglo-Nepalese war mainly with a view to preventing Nepalese expansion to the west and obtaining control of Kumaun's trade in shawl wool with the Chinese Tartary. *Papers Relating to the Nepal War*, p. 761.
16. SC, 11 Oct 1841, No. 49, Lt. Governor's Minute, 28 Sept 1841.
17. SC, 14 Sept 1842, No. 83.
18. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, p. 67.
19. SC, 26 Oct 1840, No. 139.
20. Hodgson to Tapp, 9 Oct 1840, SC, 26 Oct 1840, No. 139.
21. SC, 14 Sept 1842, No. 82.
22. Resident to Govt., 20 May 1841, SC, 31 May 1841, No. 154.
23. Hodgson to Lushington, 17 Aug 1841, SC, 30 Aug 1841, No. 32.
24. SC, 16 Aug 1841, No. 44; 23 Aug 1841, No. 65.
25. Sajanlal, op. cit., p. 125.
26. SC, 16 Aug 1841, Nos. 34-6.
27. Resident to Govt., 2 Oct 1841, SC, 11 Oct 1841, No. 89.
28. Resident to Govt., 30 July 1841, SC, 16 Aug 1841, No. 41.
29. Ibid., Nos. 34-6; 23 Aug 1841, No. 65. Principal imports from western Tibet were shawl wool, sheep, woolens, sheep wool, borax and salt, besides, silk, tea, leather, sulphur, musk, chinaware, coral, amber etc. Principal exports to Tibet were mules, wooden cups, cotton piece goods, grain, dried fruits, brass pots and spices; besides a considerable quantity of indigo, broad cloth, sugar, tobacco and medicinal seeds and herbs were carried to Ladakh and Garo. Rampur

in Bushir was a busy trade mart. Opium, until the prohibitive regulations of the Chinese govt., was exported to Tibet and then on to the Yarkand markets from Ladakh. The balance of trade was in favour of Tibet on account of the great quantity of shawl wool exported by her. The merchants of Kumaun purchased shawl wool at Garu and sold them to Kashmiri merchants in Kumaun. Shawl wool was also produced in Ladakh and throughout the valley of the Indus and its tributaries above Leh. SC, 13 Dec 1841, No. 42.

50. SC, 5 Oct 1842, No. 73.
31. Govt. to Clerk, 16 Aug 1841, SC, 16 Aug 1841, No. 39.
32. Ibid.
33. SC, 30 Aug 1841, No. 27.
34. SC, 18 Oct 1841, Nos. 67-71; 20 Dec 1841, No. 79.
35. Clerk to Govt., 17 May 1842, Govt. to Clerk, 25 May 1842, SC, 6 July 1842, Nos. 40, 43.
36. Ibid, No. 43.
37. SC, 20 Dec 1841, No. 36.
38. Panikkar, op. cit., pp. 74-89.
39. SC, 10 Aug 1842, No. 126.
40. SC, 6 July 1842, No. 42.
41. SC, 20 Dec 1841, No. 35.
42. Really the Dogras, who were subjects of the Sikh State.
43. Tibet was called Bhot in Nepal. The term "Bhutanese" would perhaps mean the people of Bhot, that is, the Tibetans.
44. SC, 14 Sept, 1842, No. 82.
45. Resident to Government., 20 Dec 1841, SC, 3 Jan 1842, No. 128.
46. Alastair Lamb, "Tibet in Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1767-1842", *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, October 1957, pp. 161-76.
47. Cunningham to Clerk, 3 Aug 1842, SC, 7 Sept 1842, Nos. 28-30.
48. Tapp to Hodgson, 21 May 1841, SC, 21 Jun 1841, No. 68.

VIII

NEPAL-TIBET WAR, 1855-6*

The war between Nepal and Tibet in 1855-6 forms an important episode in the history of the inter-relations of the Himalayan states on the northern border of India. The relations between Nepal and Tibet in the middle of the nineteenth century were far from cordial; and although a showdown had not taken place after 1792, a state of intermittent tension persisted. Disputes regarding territories on the ill-defined frontier exacerbated the tension. Tibet was vigilant, concerned; Nepalese aggression on a large scale was a perpetual bogey. The uneasy peace in the first half of the nineteenth century did not terminate violently mainly because Nepal was pre-occupied with domestic troubles. All was not well in the darbar. Parties were scrambling for power; there were bickerings and blood baths. There was, besides, the exciting game of spinning intrigues with Indian states with a view to setting up a confederacy of powers against the British. In the middle of the century political order was restored in Nepal, and stability in the relations with the British rehabilitated with the emergence of Jang Bahadur as the Prime Minister of Nepal.

Besides, China's suzerainty over Tibet had always served as a restraint on Nepal's bellicosity. In the middle of the nineteenth century China's hold on Tibet showed signs of weakening. This had a perceptible bearing on Nepal's relations with Tibet.

The settlement and delimitation of boundary was only one of the issues worrying the governments of Nepal and Tibet; there were several others as well. The Nepalese government alleged that their subjects in Tibet were ill-treated; cases of looting of Nepalese property multiplied; armed clashes between the Nepalese and Tibetans were not rare either; Kathmandu was convinced that the Tibetan government had full knowledge of these incidents, and possibly were a party to them. The Nepalese government remonstrated without avail. The Chinese ambans at Lhasa were apprised of these happenings, but they took no step to prevent their occurrences; even a direct appeal to Peking proved in vain.¹ To make matters worse, the Nepalese embassy to China sent in 1852 returned in May 1854, six months behind schedule, carrying the news of ill-treatment by the Tibetans on the way. A more inflammatory report

followed: a Nepalese subject was murdered by the Khampas in eastern Tibet. This was the last straw. Kathmandu served an ultimatum on Lhasa.

Pending a satisfactory reply to the ultimatum, Jang Bahadur made extensive military preparations. Strong detachments took position at the passes opening out to Tibet, with the dual object of a multi-pronged offensive and defence against a sudden thrust by the Tibetan army into Nepal through the passes. The four regiments at Sisagarhi, Dullu, Peuthana and Salleana were ordered to proceed to Jumla in western Nepal and to be in readiness there under the command of Colonel Krishna Dhoj Kunwar Ranajee, the Governor of Doti. The troops had the orders to guard western Nepal and to move into Tibet by the Yarri pass². Colonel Kharag Bahadur, a cousin of Jang Bahadur, was ordered to proceed to Dhankuta in eastern Nepal and take command of five regular regiments; they would guard eastern Nepal and march into Tibet through the Wallungchung pass³. The Kirats and Limbus, tribes of eastern Nepal, were also asked to be in readiness. The main offensive was to be launched by two large forces through the Kerung and Kuti passes, the Kerung troops, ten thousand strong, being commanded by General Bam Bahadur, a brother of Jang Bahadur, and the Kuti regiment of thirteen thousand men, being led by Colonel Prithwi Dhoj Rana.⁴ If the Tibetans did not oppose the Nepalese advance through Kuti and Kerung, the two forces were to forge ahead until they met at Tingri Maidan. Should they be opposed by the Tibetans, two more divisions would be sent from Kathmandu under the command of Jang Bahadur himself and his brother, General Jagat Shamsher. Jang Bahadur was hopeful of securing the assistance of the Bhotia inhabitants of Kuti and Kerung by promising them the resumption of their grain trade with Nepal which had lately been stopped under orders of the Tibetan government.⁵

It was now the autumn of 1854. Kathmandu was agog with enthusiasm. Yelling young men vied with one another for enlistment in the army; regiments were drilled to perfection; arsenals were being supplied with war materials of all kinds; foundries were over-worked; frontier depots were stocked with provisions carried by an unending stream of porters. All about there was the clink of arms, the air of eager expectancy and excitement. It was difficult to hold the excited troops in leash till the winter was over when the operations were scheduled to be launched. The Tibetans, too, braced themselves up; their troops converged on Digarchi.⁶

Before the commencement of the war, the Nepalese govern-

ment wrote three letters—one to the Chinese emperor, the second to the ambans at Lhasa, and the third to the four Tibetan *Kajis* at Lhasa—asserting that the apathy of the emperor and the ambans to the Nepalese grievances and the hostility of the Tibetans had compelled Nepal to take recourse to war. The letters were intended to serve as a notice to both the Chinese and the Tibetans, for Jang Bahadur felt that

it is proper that we should fight openly like honest people and that we should not be guilty of any treachery towards each other. before any of our troops set foot in your country [Tibet] ...you may be properly prepared to meet us.⁷

The real object, however, was to gauge the reaction of the Chinese and Tibetans to the projected expedition and to ascertain whether they intended giving satisfaction to Nepal or repelling the invasion.

As the spring drew nearer Nepalese military preparations were stepped up. The greatest problem was that of supply and transport of provisions to the frontier depots. A proclamation was issued, asking every householder to make arrangements for the despatch of rice to one of the five depots; if porters were not available, the provision must be carried by the supplier himself. Under this order the poorest land owner and householder had to deliver about thirty two seers of rice. A defaulter was liable to capital punishment and to loss of caste and expulsion from the country, if he were a Brahmin. No concession was allowed, no exemption permitted. Even the highest officers of the state, Jang Bahadur including, were brought under this order. To soothe the soreness of the soldiers, a number of promotions were made, many new posts created and the quota of enlistment increased⁸. Bam Bahadur marched on 6 March 1855 with three regiments and twelve guns towards the Kerung pass, as did Prithwi Dhoj towards the Kuti pass with two regiments.

Nepalese military preparations made the Tibetans uneasy, obliging them to send, in February 1855, a peace mission to Kathmandu. Jang Bahadur told the emissary that Lhasa must purchase peace by surrendering Kuti and Kerung together with a crore of rupees. The price, Jang Bahadur himself admitted, was "preposterously large", and he was prepared to make peace even with a lesser amount of indemnity. But Jang Bahadur could hardly overlook that the ostensible eagerness of Lhasa to make peace had been followed by the reported movement of a large Tibetan army to Tingri Maidan and to passes opening out to Nepal⁹.

In April 1855 the war began; in a skirmish at Chusan, near Kuti, the Nepalese under General Dhir Shamsher, brother of

Jang Bahadur, drove away about five thousand Tibetan troops. The victory was duly celebrated at Kathmandu with a salvo of twenty one guns. Flushed with success, the Nepalese forged ahead and occupied Kuti. Another contingent, under Jagat Shamsher, occupied Kerung without any encounter with the Tibetans. The two victorious corps marched on to Jhunga, about ten miles from Kerung, and met with a stiff resistance near the fort of Ghantagarhi. After nine days of hard fighting, the Tibetans gave in, and Jhunga fell into the hands of the Nepalese.²⁰

So far the Nepalese had achieved success, but not without difficulties. Extreme cold weather and unusually heavy snow storms had rendered many guns unworkable, frozen many soldiers to complete inactivity, and some to death. The unusually inclement weather at such a time of the year the Nepalese attributed to the necromantic craft of the Tibetan lamas. It disheartened them. It was foolhardy to fight the supernatural elements, they murmured; some even deserted the ranks. The report of a large Tibetan army under the Sethia Kaji (the Tibetan Commander-in-Chief) having assembled at Tingri Maidan added to their concern.

It was not long before Jang Bahadur found to his dismay that the expedition would not be just a cake-walk affair; he had been rather over-sanguine; difficulties had, of course, been anticipated, but not of any great magnitude. Boosting the spirit of the troops was the paramount necessity. A more elaborate plan for recruitment was laid out. General Badri Narsing, a brother of Jang Bahadur and Governor of Palpa, was asked to keep twenty thousand men ready for service; and General Krishna Bahadur, another brother of Jang Bahadur, was instructed to enlist all those who were prepared to serve as volunteers. From the Kirata country in eastern Nepal one man from every house was called up. Steps were taken to recruit the whole fighting population of Nepal, about two hundred thousand, for a war which might assume a national character. Jang Bahadur himself left for Kerung on 7 May 1855 with a contingent of Nepali troops.²¹

With the occupation of Kerung and Kuti the prime object of the war may be said to have been realised. The superiority of the Nepalese army had been established; the defeat of 1792 had been avenged and the national prestige recovered. Jang Bahadur was, hence, prepared for a cease fire and start negotiations for peace; his condition was: "not an inch of the occupied territory" would be given up by the Nepalese. But then, there were disturbing reports that the Chinese may in-

tervene. Ramsay, the Resident, diagnosed Jang Bahadur's mind:

The dread of eventually coming in contact with the Chinese army now appears, by His Excellency's own account, to be uppermost in his mind-but the fact is he entered hastily into the war, without a proper estimate of its difficulties and cost, and he finds himself quite unequal to overcome the one or to meet the other.

Indeed, he does not appear to have made up his mind to anything, but to get out of the war somehow or other.¹²

In May 1855 came the heartening news of the Nepalese occupation of Sona Gumba, commanding the approach to the Kuti pass. This led the Tibetans to ask for peace. A high Tibetan officer, deputed by the amban, met Jang Bahadur at Jhunga, and invited him to Lhasa to sort out the problems confronting the two governments. The offer was not accepted by Jang Bahadur.

Shortly thereafter, in June 1855, Jang Bahadur returned to Kathmandu along with his brothers, Jagat and Dhir Shamsher, abandoning his earlier plan of marching on to Tingri Maidan due to the extreme difficulty of supplying provisions to the forward bases. It was thought wiser to hold on to the fort of Jhunga and strengthen it as a springboard for further advance after the rains.¹³

In August 1855, another Tibetan peace mission came to Kathmandu with the offer of a very nominal amount of money to indemnify the Nepalese war expenses. Jang Bahadur spurned the offer, repeating his demand for the cession of Kerung, Kuti and Tuglakot, or in lieu thereof, a crore of rupees. He further pointed out that the dispute between Nepal and Tibet would never be settled until China withdrew from Tibet, recognising the latter's independence. China should retain only a *vakil* at Lhasa, and so would Nepal. It was the Chinese relations with Tibet which Nepal found as being the most difficult obstacle to the imposition of a settlement on Tibet, and hence Jang Bahadur's demand for China's withdrawal. The price of peace was too high, and the Chinese leader of the mission refused to commit himself to the cession of "a single inch of territory upon any condition whatever." Eventually, however, the stalemate was got over by the Nepalese decision to depute a mission to Shikarjunga in Tibet.¹⁴

The Nepalese mission under Kaji Til Bikram started for Shikarjunga carrying an impressive account of Nepalese grievances. His primary object was to ascertain if there would be an armed intervention by China. He was also asked to make it clear to the Chinese and Tibetans that Nepal would not make peace unless Kerung, Kuti and Tuglakot, all formerly belong-

ing to Nepal, were made over to her.¹⁵ The price for peace was deliberately set high with the hope that hard bargaining would yield better dividends.

Jang Bahadur was now seriously thinking of peace; only that it should be an honourable one. Discontent was spreading among the troops, and the officers were in no better mood either. Provisions were running out and replenishment proved difficult. Blinding storm numbed the Nepalese soldiers at Jhunga. Hundreds took to bed with complaints of sore eyes, upset bowels and frost-bitten fingers and toes. Eight regiments returned to Kathmandu from the forward bases.¹⁶ The Resident reported:

I believe not only that Jang Bahadur is really anxious for the termination of the war, but that whatever may happen, the Gurkha army will not move beyond the Tingri Maidan. I do not think that it will advance from Jhunga, and consider it very doubtful whether it will ever retain that fort.¹⁷

Til Bikram Thapa had a cold reception at Shikarjunga. His mission failed, Chinese officers resolutely maintaining that no part of the Tibetan territory could be ceded without the sanction of the Chinese emperor. The Chinese, however, admitted that the Nepalese grievances were genuine. The amban urged the Nepalese government to accept two lakh and thirty thousand *kala mohars* (a small Tibetan coin), equivalent to about Rupees 50,642 from the Lhasa government. The money was, in fact, sent to Kathmandu along with some costly presents for Jang Bahadur. The Sino-Tibetans further undertook to remit all transit duties in the Nepal-Tibet frontier to facilitate Nepal's trade with Tibet. They sternly warned that if the overture for peace were not accepted and the Tibetan territory not vacated, the Chinese army would intervene, ravage Nepal and reduce its capital to rubble.¹⁸

The war situation in the closing months of 1855 was anything but encouraging for the Nepalese. Heavy snow had clogged the passes, cutting off communication between the Nepalese acquisitions in Tibet and the supply depots in the rear. On 1 November, the Tibetans, 12,000 strong, launched a surprise attack on Kuti and occupied it, killing a large number of its defenders. Those who survived fled to Listi. At Kerung the situation was no better. There 6,000 Nepalese were holding out for about a week against a Tibetan force, eight times stronger. Simultaneously, a body of about 15,000 Tibetans attacked Jhunga, snapping its communication with Kerung. The Nepalese in the fort 2,500 in number, were trapped, threatened with annihilation.¹⁹ The news of a relieving force, under Sanak Singh, hacking its way through the intervening

enemy-infested region was the only ray of hope for the besieged troops.²⁰ The Humla column under General Krishna Bahadur was also in trouble at Tuglakot.²¹ A relieving force was promptly despatched from Kathmandu to Kuti under Dhir Shamsher, and another contingent to Kerung under Jagat Shamsher.

Dhir Shamsher reorganised his troops, now about 6,000 strong, at Listi, and succeeded in relieving the fort of Kuti, after a hard fighting which took 1,100 Tibetan lives. It was difficult to retain the force in the face of a renewed attack by the Tibetans and, hence, Dhir Shamsher had the authority of Jang Bahadur to destroy the fort and withdraw his troops a few miles away from Kuti towards Khassa (in Tibet, situated between Listi and Kuti). Fierce fighting raged at Jhunga; 1,800 Tibetans fell fighting. At long last Sanak Singh could reach Jhunga with his relieving force, on the way killing 1,100 Tibetans. The Tibetans besieging Jhunga took to their heels, crossed the Bhairab Surpur mountains and converged on the environs of Tingri Maidan, resolved to recover Jhunga, a sacred place for the Tibetans. Nepalese troops massed at Kuti, the most important of their possessions.²²

This, then, was the war situation—evidently far from encouraging for the Nepalese government. A grand darbar was held at Kathmandu to plan the future course of action. The nobles were in no mood to carry on the war; the military officers were halfhearted; the darbar preferred the Chinese peace offer, "comparatively humiliating though they be", to continuing the expensive and difficult war. A face-saving settlement was better than what they feared would be the result of an armed intervention by China: destruction of Nepal. The Resident, too, felt that it was politic for the Nepalese to accept the Chinese offer. Jang Bahadur alone remained unbending. He exhorted the nobles and upbraided those who wanted to yield to the "disgraceful terms" of peace. He had now no illusion about the extreme difficulty of the campaign; but then, obedience was far likely to yield better results than weak submission. It was better, he urged, to perish manfully on the battlefield than survive with a stain on national honour. He pleaded, imprecated, cajoled, thundered. After a wearisome debate, he won his point; the darbar resolved to go on with the war.²³

The war had been launched with much fanfare. To abandon it now without adequate gains would lower Jang Bahadur in the eyes of his people who would hold him responsible for the loss of men, money and morale; it might also give a handle to his enemies. In short, the war was for him not

only a matter of prestige but an issue threatening his position. His eloquence and resolution carried the day. The dispirited nobles braced themselves for, what they realised, a national war. Nothing save a complete rout, they asserted, could dislodge the Nepalese from their positions in Tibet. Ramsay reported the mood:

I attribute the result entirely to the personal power and influence of Jang Bahadur who evidently made up his mind to carry out the war *coute de coute*, and is able to talk over or to browbeat all who are opposed to his wishes, binding upon the Maharaja and his father to an apparently cordial acquiescence in his plans.²⁴

In December 1855, Kuti and Jhunga staged several fiercely fought engagements. The Nepalese got the better of their enemies in most of the battles. Jang Bahadur was vindicated; to him it seemed possible now to enter farther into Tibet—as far as Tingri Maidan, at least, reportedly defended by a force of 16,000 Tibetans.²⁵ Heart was put back among the Nepalese, but the strain on their purse was not relieved. A tax was levied on all landed property to the tune of one-third of the produce. All officers, civil and military, excepting the sepoys, havildars and jamadars, were subjected to the tax. Even the landed endowments to the temples were not spared.²⁶ But even then the Nepalese purse could not be made long enough to sustain the expensive war.

At the end of 1855, the prospects of peace seemed brighter than ever. By now the belligerents had realised that the war had cost more than what it was expected to achieve. Early in 1856, the Tibetans made sincere efforts for peace. In January, one Neema Dhundoo, a high ranking Tibetan officer, offered to come down to the Nepalese post at Jhunga along with the Sethia Kaji's son for peace negotiations. The offer was not accepted by Jang Bahadur. Nepal, he firmly declared, will not relent except on honourable terms.²⁷ Another offer for peace was made by the Sethia Kaji himself. The terms were: the Tibetans would pay ten thousand rupees "annually as permanent tribute to Nepal"; that transit duties would not be levied on Nepalese traders; that a Nepalese sardar would be posted at Lhasa to deal with the cases involving Nepalese subjects; that the Dogra and Sikh prisoners in the Dogra-Tibetan war (1841-2) would be freed by the Tibetan government;²⁸ that subjects of one country would be free to move into the other and also to settle there; that all the prisoners of the war were to be repatriated to their countries; and that the Nepalese would be allowed to trade in Tibet without paying duty. The duty-free trade would relieve Nepal of three lakhs of rupees annually as transit duties, as

it would also facilitate the free export of opium to Tibet. Ramsay was hopeful that the terms offered would serve as the basis for a cease-fire. He observed :

both countries are evidently desirous of peace though some delay may take place before the Nepalese evacuate their positions in Tibet. I feel pretty confident now that there will not be another campaign.²⁹

Jang Bahadur had, in fact, issued orders to stop further recruitment.

True to Ramsay's expectation, Jang Bahadur accepted the terms, but the final ratification of the treaty was delayed until March 1856, due mainly to the distrust between the two governments. It was difficult for Jang Bahadur to overcome the suspicion if the draft treaty of the Tibetans was but a ruse to gain time and to lull the Nepalese to a sense of relief and make them off-guard.³⁰ The treaty, finally ratified, consisted of the provisions included in the draft, together with a Nepalese pledge to help Tibet if she were attacked by any other power. Both the states further undertook not to punish their subjects who had helped the enemy in the war. In the preamble of the treaty both the states agreed to obey the emperor of China as before.³¹

In April 1856, Nepalese troops began to pull out of the forward posts. The troops on return were given heroes' reception; triumphal arches were built; the roads of Kathmandu were full of people eager to "welcome the victorious countrymen". Jang Bahadur made a suitable speech, referring to his hopes having been fully realised by the "indomitable valour" of his men who "caused the snow to melt and the mountains to bend down their heads, and who scattered the Tibetans "like a flock of sheep". Medals were cast; rewards were given; soldiers were given two months leave with pay to "recoup their health".³²

The peace was one of mutual exhaustion. After the first flush of enthusiasm, the Nepalese in general felt that little gain would come out of the war. Ramsay sensed the mood while reporting:

The war has been unpopular since its very commencement and all classes throughout the country has suffered by it in proportion to their means, or it would be more correct to say, out of all proportion to their means... All trade has been severely interfered with and in many parts of the country even the cultivation of soil has been partially interrupted. In short, the prosperity of the state has been most injuriously, though perhaps temporarily, affected.³³

Jang Bahadur had for some time been trying to know the Resident's reaction to the war. Before he had started the

war, he had dropped several cautious feelers to ascertain whether the British would support him if China helped Tibet. The British government's feeling was: the dispute between the two states did not directly concern them. Yet, tension on the Indian frontier was far from desirable. Ramsay, therefore, advised Jang Bahadur to settle the dispute by peaceful negotiations.³⁴ By 1854, Jang Bahadur had clearly seen that the time for an attack on Tibet had come; he only needed an assurance of British non-intervention. Ramsay clearly saw this while apprising the Government:

The Minister seems fully to understand that the British government will not permit itself to be mixed up in any quarrels that may occur between the Nepalese and their northern neighbours... I cannot help thinking that the real object of his visit [to the Residency] was to find out whether my own government will view with dissatisfaction the circumstances of this Darbar embroiling itself with the Tibetans, or in other words, with China, our relations with that government being on a friendly footing.³⁵

Jang Bahadur at first sought to conceal the real object of his military preparations. He gave out that he had been asked by the amban to send military help to the Chinese emperor to put down the Taiping rebellion; but that without the permission of the British government he did not dare complying with the amban's requests.³⁶ Later, however, Jang Bahadur told the Resident that he had many grievances against the Tibetan government, whose behaviour had compelled him to undertake a punitive expedition.³⁷ But Ramsay was not impressed. The Minister's allegations of Nepalese subjects and the Nepalese missions to China having been ill-treated in Tibet was at variance with the reports he gathered not only from the Kashmiri merchants in Nepal and Tibet but also from the leader of the Nepalese mission, Bhim Sen Rana. The Kashmiri merchants avowed that well behaved traders were as safe at Lhasa as they were at Kathmandu, and that "they meet with no molestations whatever".³⁸ Bhim Sen Rana told the Resident that he had received nothing but courtesy and consideration all along his journey, and that he had nothing to complain about the provisions and amenities provided by the Tibetans.³⁹ The report of the murder of a Nepalese in eastern Tibet by the local Khampas also had no foundation. Nor was it true that Jang Bahadur's assistance had been sought by the Chinese to deal with the Taiping rebellion. The frontier dispute had also been satisfactorily settled about a year ago.⁴⁰ It was, hence, reasonable for Ramsay to suspect that Jang Bahadur had some bee in his bonnet. The real object of the expedition, as it ap-

settled policy was to prevent her from being too powerful.

The British policy of non-interference in the war was influenced by two main considerations. First, Chinese reaction to the event. Secondly, the likelihood of Sikkim and Bhutan being involved. As regards China, the British were soon relieved to find that she had no intention of being involved in the war in any way except exerting pressure on the belligerents for peace. Ramsay had earlier contended that if the Nepalese did not enter deep into Tibet, the Chinese army will not make its appearance. It was also soon clear to the Resident that Jang Bahadur had found that the war was expensive and difficult and so it was unlikely that he would continue it for long. Even if the Chinese army intervened, Ramsay was hopeful of the Nepalese putting up a plucky fight. In short, there was little possibility of Nepal being defeated by China as completely as in 1792²⁴

The British wanted the war to be localised, for otherwise it would stir up the other neighbouring Himalayan states. Sikkim and Bhutan were watched, especially after the receipt of the news that Jang Bahadur was trying to rope them in. Jang Bahadur requested the British government for a free passage of his troops through Sikkim, it being the easiest route to Tibet. The British refused to oblige him. Jang Bahadur was then suspected of attempts to win over the Raja of Sikkim by offering him military assistance to recover the Sikkim morang from the British. Sometimes, he even affected concern over an alleged Sikkimese plan to ravage eastern Nepal at the instance of the Tibetan government, which looked upon Sikkim as their dependency. Dr A. C. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjiling, had strong suspicion that Jang Bahadur meant mischief. He had reports that Jang Bahadur had either made an offensive and defensive alliance with the Raja of Sikkim or, failing to achieve this object, had threatened the latter with invasion should he oppose the movement of Nepalese troops through Sikkim.²⁵ Campbell furnished a lot of information about Sikkim and Bhutan's interest in the disputes of Tibet with Nepal; he believed that the traditional relations of the two states with Tibet would make them act at her bidding.²⁶ Chinese intervention, supported by "Russian intrigue and gold" seemed not unlikely to Campbell.²⁷ These reports, however, created no impression on Dalhousie. The Governor-General agreed with Ramsay that Campbell's fear did not have any basis; the Resident was certain that Jang Bahadur would never risk a war with the British over Sikkim, "a small and valueless province", for he knew that Sikkim, being a British

protectorate, would not be allowed to meddle in any way in the war.²⁸ Ramsay had already warned Jang Bahadur in "courteous but decided language" that

the British government can never permit Nepal to possess itself of Sikkim, whether permanently or temporarily. It is resolved to act up to the treaties which were long ago framed to that effect.²⁹

The invasion of Bhutan by Jang Bahadur, as apprehended by Campbell, was impossible without the passage of his troops either through Tibetan territory, where resistance was certain, or through Sikkim. It thus seemed very unlikely to the Resident that Jang Bahadur would invite trouble with the British when he was having enough of it with the Tibetans.³⁰

The war was not without some lessons for the British. They had reports of the waning power of China in Tibet,³¹ which had stimulated Nepal's ambitions. It is the fear of China in Tibet that had so long restrained these ambitions; and such restraint was essential to the peace of the northern border of India. It was also obvious that Jang Bahadur was exploiting his friendly relations with the British to further his own interests. Hitherto when relations with the British were strained, Nepal had sought to play the Chinese off against the British; and now it was the other way round: Jang Bahadur wanted to use his relations with the British as a source of strength in meeting the Chinese pressure.

The role of China during the war showed that she was as much desirous of peace in the Himalayan area as the British. Both wanted to localise the war; and the war did not assume greater magnitude and wider ramification due as much to the British neutrality as to China's political intervention. Both had a restraining influence on the belligerents.

The intervention of China influenced the peace negotiations. Nepal could not overlook China's special relations with Tibet, and this damped Jang Bahadur's zeal to continue the war. It also toned down his demands.³² The final ratification of the treaty was delayed partly on account of the provision in the treaty obliging Tibet to send an annual tribute to Nepal. Since Tibet was a dependency of China, she could not obviously send tribute to Nepal without offending her overlord. The problem was ultimately resolved when the treaty embodied the Nepalese undertaking of obedience to the Chinese emperor. Nepal also agreed to treat Tibet as a state having special relations with China. The main Nepalese demand—the cession of Kuti, Kerung, Tuglakot, Chowur Gumba and Dhakling—was given up under Chinese pressure. Doubtless, China's relations with Tibet stood the Tibetans in good stead, and British neutrality

let Jang Bahadur down. The British avoided even a semblance of support to Jang Bahadur for fear of China's military intervention which would perhaps have rendered British assistance to Nepal unavoidable; and the British involvement must have served as grist to the Russian mill. The inability to retain the territory which Nepal claimed as belonging to her influenced her subsequent attitude to both Tibet and China: she never lost sight of these territories.

China's position in Tibet was strengthened—an important development in view of reports of machinations of a section of Tibetan high officials to overthrow the Chinese yoke. Jang Bahadur had reported to Ramsay that he had been requested by some Tibetan officers to help them achieve this object. This might have been put forward by Jang Bahadur to justify his invasion of Tibet, but circumstances, particularly in eastern Tibet, in the following years seemed to suggest that a spirit of resistance to Chinese rule was building up.

The war also drove home to the British once more that the Himalayan states were so situated that a major event in one set off repercussions in others. Nepal, being the strongest of the states, was feared by her neighbours. Nepalese ambitions in Tibet had important implications for the British government; and therefore these ambitions had to be kept in check. This inevitably led to British involvement in Nepal's relations with Tibet and China and ultimately British control of these relations. This was a development strongly resented by Nepal, for it affected her external independence; but her resentment failed to stem the process.¹²

NOTES

* Published in *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, Apr-Jun 1964 under the title "Nepal-Tibet War, 1855-56", pp. 175-94.

1. SC, 30 Jun 1854, Nos. 42-3. P. J. B. Rana, op. cit., pp. 172-4. Oldfield, op. cit., I, pp. 413-4.
2. Resident to Govt., 2 Sept 1854, SC, 29 Sept 1854, No. 23. Oldfield, I, pp. 416-7.
3. SC, 29 Sept 1854, No. 23.
4. Ibid.
5. SC, 26 Jan 1855, No. 164.
6. Ibid., No. 44.
7. SC, 23 Feb 1855, Nos. 40-41.
8. SC, 26 Jan 1855, No. 44. More than 12,000 persons were promoted to higher ranks involving for the government an expenditure of about five lakhs of rupees annually.
9. SC, 27 Apr 1855, Nos. 27-8.
10. SC, 26 May 1855, Nos. 39, 41. Oldfield, II, pp. 6-7.

11. SC, 26 May 1855, Nos. 41, 43.
12. SC, 31 Aug 1855, No. 60.
13. SC, 27 July 1855, No. 64.
14. SC, 28 Dec 1855, No. 81.
15. Kuti and Kerung formerly belonged to Nepal. In 1792 they were made over to Tibet by the Chinese. Oldfield, I, p. 414.
16. SC, 27 July 1855, No. 64.
17. Resident to Govt, 10 Aug 1855, SC, 28 Dec 1855, No. 81.
18. Ibid., No. 89. Oldfield, II, p. 12.
19. SC, 28 Dec 1855, Nos. 86-7.
20. Oldfield, II, p. 13.
21. SC, 28 Dec 1855, No. 85.
22. Oldfield, II, pp. 14-7. P. J. B. Rana, op. cit., pp. 183-7.
23. SC, 28 Dec 1855, No. 88.
24. Ibid.
25. SC, 25 Jan 1856, No. 73.
26. SC, 28 Feb 1856, No. 38.
27. Ibid.
28. The British government urged Jang Bahadur to effect the release of the Sikh and Dogra prisoners held in Tibet since 1842 when the Dogra-Tibetan war ended.
29. Resident to Govt., 15 Feb 1856, SC., 28 Feb 1856, No. 40.
30. SC, 30 May 1856, No. 26.
31. Aitchison, *Treaties and Engagements*, II, (1909 edn.), pp. 97-100 and f.n.
32. P. J. B. Rana, op. cit., p. 191.
33. Resident to Govt., 15 July 1856, SC, 29 Aug 1856, No. 45. Also Ibid., 27 July 1855, No. 65; 30 Nov 1855, No. 81; 28 Dec 1855, No. 81. The war cost Jang Bahadur Rupees 2,683,568. Subba Buddhiman Vamsavali. There are two registers dealing with the war in Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya at Patan, a few miles from Kathmandu, and in the Commandari Kitabkhana, Jangi Phant, Kathmandu.
34. PC, 22 Oct 1852, Nos. 61-2, Minute of Dalhousie, 18 Oct 1852.
35. Ibid., No. 61. FM, Vol. 360; Report of Orfeur Cavenagh.
36. SC, 26 May 1854, No. 50.
37. SC, 29 Dec 1854, No. 32.
38. SC, 26 Aug 1854, No. 50.
39. SC, 29 Dec 1854, No. 27. Also Ibid., 26 May 1854, No. 50.
40. Ibid. "Jang Bahadur has never made any secret of his desire to meddle in Chinese affairs, or of the part he would take were he invited to interfere by the Manchus or even by the *ambans* of Lhasa-he would side with either against the other". Resident to Govt., 24 October 1854, SC, 29 Dec 1854, No. 27.
42. P. J. B. Rana, op. cit., 6. 175.
42. SC, 27 Oct 1854, Nos. 46,
43. SC, 29 Dec 1854, No. 28.

44. Resident to Govt., 5 Aug 1854, SC, 25 Aug 1854, No. 50.
45. Resident to Govt., 6 May 1854, SC, 26 May 1854, No. 50.
46. SC, 25 Aug 1854, No. 58.
47. Minutes of Dalhousie, SC, 25 Aug 1854, No. 52.
48. Ibid. Also No. 58.
49. SC, 29 Sept 1854, No. 25.
50. SC, 26 May 1854, No. 50, Minute of Dalhousie, 12 May 1854.
51. SC, 30 Nov 1855, No. 81.
52. Rajendra Vikram disclosed that Hodgson had earlier assured him that if he (King) provided facilities for Gurkha recruitment, the British would help him in the occupation of Tibet. SC, 30 Nov 1855, No. 88.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., Nos. 77-81, 88.
55. Ibid., No. 84; also, SC, 27 Oct 1854, Nos. 46, 48.
56. The Raja of Sikkim, in fact, had closed all the routes connecting Sikkim and eastern Nepal. Campbell to Govt., 17, 25 May 1855, NR, Vol. 9. SC, 30 Nov 1855, No. 84.
57. Ibid., Nos. 81-2, 91-7.
58. SC, 29 Dec 1854, Nos. 31-2.
59. SC, 27 Oct 1854, No. 50. The defence of Sikkim from foreign aggression was the British responsibility.
60. SC, 27 July 1855, No. 64; 30 Nov 1855, Nos. 81-2; 29 Dec 1854, Nos. 31-2.
61. SC, 31 Oct 1856, No. 76, Secy. to Superintendent of Trade, Hongkong, to Secy. Foreign Dept., 15 Sept. 1856.
62. SC, 29 Aug 1856, No. 45, Resident to Govt., 15 July 1856.
63. See above, Chapter VI.

IX

THE RECRUITMENT OF GURKHAS IN THE INDIAN ARMY*

The 'little Goorkhees', those short, broad-chested, flat-faced, snub-nosed men, with their national weapon, khukri, on their waist belt, are a conspicuous element in the Indian army. Their hardihood, love of enterprise, tenacity in adversity and contempt for caste prejudices have made them one of the finest troops and have justly earned them world wide reputation. The history of the development of the Gurkha ranks in the Indian army is the story of the avowed recognition of their worth as soldiers, and of the fulfilment of the hopes which lay behind their first enlistment.

The rapid expansion of the Gurkha power preceding the Anglo-Nepalese war and their exploits in the Punjab hills caused concern to the British.¹ Yet, not till that war could the British sufficiently appreciate the great martial qualities of these highlanders.² The victory in that war was almost a pyrrhic one. It was achieved amidst a run of reverses and death of veteran generals. Numerical superiority and the "length of purse" of the British enabled them to win the war. The war drove home to the British: "we have met with an enemy who shows decidedly greater bravery and greater steadiness than our troops possess",³ and "the Company's soldiers could never be brought to resist the shock of these energetic mountaineers on their own ground".⁴

It was during the war that the Gurkhas were for the first time enlisted in the British Indian army. Out of the prisoners who surrendered during the capitulation of the Malaun fort on the Kumaun frontier four rifle regiments were raised, called respectively, the Malaun battalion, the Sirmur battalion, the Nusseri battalion and the Kumaun battalion, the last being provincial corps for civil duties at Kumaun.⁵ The first and the fourth battalions were based in the Punjab hills, the second at Dehra Dun, and the third in the Simla hills. Most of these men brought their families, and so grew the Gurkha colonies at these places.

From the very beginning the Gurkhas displayed, along with their martial qualities, a spirit of unwavering fidelity to their new masters, whom they had fought so doggedly and who had humbled their pride. This served to show their dependable

nature—the most important reason why the British valued them so much; the bond once forged between them never snapped hereafter. Yet, not till 1825-6, when the British were engaged in the siege of Bharatpur, were all the Gurkhas engaged in active service along with the British Indian troops.⁴ In this campaign, as in all later ones, the Gurkhas amply justified their employment in the British Indian ranks. In 1817, the third Anglo-Maratha war necessitated a large expansion of the army. That year an infantry levy was raised at Fatehgarh, and in March 1818, it swelled to one thousand men. The 9th Gurkha regiment had these men as its nucleus.

In 1825, Sir Edward Paget, then Commander-in-Chief of the Indian army, proposed the augmentation of the strength of the Gurkha battalions and the formation of new ones by fresh recruitment of Gurkhas in Nepal.⁵ The Resident at Kathmandu, Edward Gardner, while agreeing on the great fighting qualities of the Gurkhas, doubted if the plan of the Commander-in-Chief was feasible and politic. For, he believed that

even on entering our service, the Gurkhas would not separate themselves entirely from their native country as they could not remove their families from Nepal [in the face of the Nepal Government's strong disapproval of it] and ...that however faithfully they might conduct themselves on general occasions, in the event of any future rupture with Nepal they possessed that feeling of patriotism which would induce the greater part of them to adhere decidedly to their national allegiance.⁶

Instead, Gardner suggested that a body of Nepalese troops be employed occasionally as mercenaries. He hoped that the Nepalese Minister, Bhim Sen, would agree to such an arrangement, as it would relieve him of the expense of maintaining a large, well drilled army in a state of enforced idleness and restiveness. Besides, their employment, even occasionally, could be looked upon by the British government as an insurance against an invasion of British territories by the Nepalese government.⁷ Hodgson, Gardner's assistant, supported the suggestion, "so complete being its combination of instantaneous preparation, economy and convenience".⁸ But the Government were opposed to the employment of foreign troops as mercenaries.⁹

The issue was revived with greater keenness when, in 1833, Hodgson assumed charge of the Residency. He strongly urged the Government to adopt as a policy the drafting of the surplus soldiery of Nepal in the Indian army. The plan, he earnestly pleaded, was not only feasible, but it called for immediate

implementation as a measure of military policy, political expediency and security of the British dominion in India.¹² Militarily, as the Gurkhas had proved themselves superior to the sepoys, their employment in the Indian army in larger numbers would strengthen it. Hodgson elaborated the point thus :

I calculate that there are at this time in Nepal no less than 30,000 *Dhakareahs* or soldiers off the roll by rotation, belonging to the Khas, Magar and Gurung tribes (the three chief military tribes of Nepal). I am not sure if there exists any insuperable obstacle to our obtaining in one form or other the services of a large body of these men, and such are the energy of character, love of enterprise and freedom from the shackles of caste, that I am well assured their services, if obtained, would soon come to be most highly prized. In my humble opinion they are by far the best soldiers in India, and if they were made participants of our renown in arms, I conceive that their gallant spirit, emphatic contempt of *madhesias* (people of the plains) and unadulterated military habits might be relied on for fidelity; and that our good and regular pay and noble pension establishment would serve to counterpoise the influence of nationality, especially in the Magars and Gurungs.¹³

The moral effect would be no less considerable. The physical and moral qualities of the Gurkhas would serve as a salutary example for the sepoys, mostly orthodox high caste men. They would, besides, introduce a new element in the "unduly homogeneous" Indian army, and provide a safety valve in times of emergency. The deep-seated scorn of the Gurkhas for the sepoys and the jealousy of the latter would prevent any combination of the two, and in the event of disaffection of the one the Government could count on the support of the other.¹⁴

Political considerations were weightier. The martial population of Nepal, well armed and itching for wars and plunder, and restrained with considerable difficulty by Bhim Sen and, hence, restive, was like a heap of explosives awaiting ignition. Hodgson strongly suspected that the policy of Bhim Sen was to keep up the martial zeal of the people, conserve their strength and then use it at an opportune moment against the British. The relations between the British and Nepalese governments were far from cordial; and there were reasons to apprehend Nepalese mischief when the British hands were full with several problems. Therefore, it seemed politically wise to employ Gurkhas in the Indian army before they turned against the British. The security of India demanded the em-

ployment of Gurkhas in the Indian army; such was Hodgson's argument. This employment on a large scale would not only quench their thirst for active service, the opportunities of which were unavailable in Nepal, but would also wear out their deep-seated distrust of the British. Besides, the Gurkhas could be held as pledges for Nepal's good behaviour during any emergency. The more these turbulent martial people were drained away from Nepal, the brighter would become the prospect of Nepal being a weak and peaceful neighbour of British India. Hodgson's intimate knowledge of Nepal and her peoples led him to assert that, individually proud, overbearing and extremely suspicious, the Gurkhas, when in ranks, were "as docile and steady and peaceable a body of troops as any other in the world". In sum, Hodgson averred:

If we could draw off the surplus soldiery of Nepal into our army, we might do her an immense service, enabling her to adopt her institution to her circumstances, at the same time that we provided ourselves with the best materials in Asia for making soldiers out of.¹⁵

However, Hodgson's proposal failed to meet the approval of the Government. During the Mutiny Hodgson, then in retirement, took up the issue again, noting:

It is infinitely to be regretted that the opinions of Sir Henry Fane, Sir Charles Napier [both were Commanders-in-Chief of the Indian army] and of Sir Henry Lawrence [Resident in Nepal, 1843-6] as to the high expediency of recruiting largely from this source were not acted upon long ago.¹⁶

Lawrence had suggested that service conditions should be made more attractive for Gurkhas, reserving three-fourths of the native commissions for them. He had also recommended that popular officers should be sent to Nepal to enlist Gurkhas with the assistance of the Resident.¹⁷

In 1850, the 66th Bengal Native Infantry at Fort Govindgarh was disbanded for its mutinous behaviour over the service batta, and the Nusseri battalion was taken en masse into the line, being renamed the 66th Bengal Infantry. A new Nusseri battalion was then raised in the same year but disbanded on general reduction of the army in 1861. The Gurkha battalions were reorganised on a permanent and regular regimental basis in 1861. The 66th Bengal Infantry now came to be known as the First Gurkha Regiment. The Sirmur battalion was made a regular Gurkha regiment in 1850, and in 1861 it was named the Third Gurkha Regiment. The Fourth Gurkhas were raised in 1857, becoming a regular Gurkha regiment in 1861. The

Fifth Gurkhas were raised in 1858; they were a part of the irregular force raised from the Gurkha corps in the Sikh army.¹⁸ Their colony was set up at Abbotabad as a deliberate policy of thrusting this strong Hindu element as a political wedge in this predominantly Muslim area.¹⁹ This corps consisted of a number of Kumaunis, Garhwalis and Gurkhas of western Nepal and was recruited by Major Henry Ramsay, the Commissioner of Kumaun. In 1879 there were five Gurkha regiments with a total of sixteen Gurkha officers and eight hundred and twenty five men in each regiment. They were based at Dharamsala, Bakloh, Dehra Dun, Almora and Abbotabad respectively, their regimental Head Quarters being at Dharamsala, Delwa and Abbotabad. Besides, a large number of Gurkhas served in the 42nd and 44th Native Infantry regiments, originally called the Assam Light Infantry, and later designated the 8th and 10th Gurkha Rifles.²⁰

The recruits were obtained from western, central and eastern parts of Nepal. Generally, the recruits were obtained from the fairs held in the winter months at places on the Indo-Nepalese frontier. Recruiting was difficult; very often four-five months elapsed before men of the required tribe and physical standard could be procured. From Kumaun, Bettiah, Gorakhpur and Darjiling small recruiting parties were sent from time to time, composed mostly of veteran Gurkha non-commissioned officers, sometimes with the authority of the Nepalese government, most often without it.²¹

Gurkhas of several tribes were recruited in the Indian army. The Magars, Gurungs, Chettris, Thakurs and Khas were obtained from the western districts of Nepal, and Limbus, Rais, Tamangs and Lamas from the eastern regions.²² The first two tribes were the most sought after for their acknowledged superiority over the rest; they were also most difficult to procure, the Nepalese government's restrictions on them being the strictest. After the Mutiny a strong prejudice against the brahmanical elements in the army led the Government to disfavour the enlistment of the Khas—this tribe being more susceptible to brahmanical prejudice than other tribes.²³ In the 3rd Gurkhas, Garhwalis and Kumaunis were also enlisted, but in the 1st and 2nd Gurkhas the Officers Commanding strongly opposed such admixture.

For a time the Government were not very keen on raising fresh Gurkha regiments and remained content with enrolling just as many of them as required for filling up the occasional depletion in the Gurkha corps caused by retirement, disablement and death. The Government did not seem to have any settled policy regarding recruitment until 1885, when an

engagement was entered into with Bir Shamsher Rana, the Prime Minister of Nepal.

The Nepalese government's attitude to the enlistment of Gurkhas by the British was one of consistent opposition, although at times this opposition was veiled under profession of co-operation. An injunction existed against the Nepalese taking service under the British, but it was not enforced with uniform efficacy at all times. The prohibition was all the more rigorous in regard to the recruits intending to take their families to India. During the rule of Bhim Sen and in the decade after his fall, relations between the two governments were far from cordial; and recruitment question did not figure large at that time. The British government always faced considerable difficulty in getting from Nepal even the limited number of men required for the maintenance of the Gurkha corps in their allotted strength.

In the absence of a definite agreement with the Nepalese government regarding recruitment until 1885, and in view of the known opposition of the *darbar* to recruitment of their men, the British government had to carry on the recruiting operation *sub-rosa*.⁴⁵ The Commanding officers at Gorakhpur, Almora and Darjiling used to send recruiting agents to Nepal secretly. Experienced Gurkha subedars, while returning from home after leave, smuggled out a few young men. In spite of the *darbar's* opposition, the British carried on their clandestine operations. In the 1840s officers of the British frontier military posts at Pithoragarh, Gorakhpur and Almora, while keeping a watch on the frontier, recruited Gurkhas, which led the *darbar* to take stronger measures against such unauthorised enlistment. Hodgson, therefore, advised that large, regular depots should not be allowed to operate on the Nepal frontier, for this made recruiting operations very conspicuous; nor should recruiting parties be sent too frequently to Nepal. Hereafter recruiting was done more surreptitiously and more cautiously.⁴⁶

The situation did not ease when Nepal passed under the rule of Jang Bahadur, who professed friendliness with the British. Jang Bahadur's attitude to recruitment of Gurkhas was one of positive discouragement, if not overt opposition. He viewed the interest of the British in Gurkhas as a sinister design to denude the country of its fighting population and weaken it. It was, therefore, suicidal for Nepal to cooperate with the British in this matter. Jang Bahadur issued strict orders against the Nepalese leaving the country without authority of the *darbar*; none could go beyond Noakote and the Trisuli Ganga river without a passport issued by the *darbar*. Gurkhas in the Indian army were not allowed to come to Nepal to meet

their family except when they had taken discharge from the British service. This made the Gurkhas naturally anxious. They also found it difficult to send money to their families in Nepal. Service in the Indian army thus resulted in their virtual banishment from hearth and home. All these restrictions served as a deterrent to enlistment in the Indian army where the pay scale was higher besides there being pensions and other benefits. Jang Bahadur when pressed by the Resident to remove these restrictions, pleaded that since the British would not allow the *darbar* to employ Europeans, they should not grudge the steps he had taken in the interests of his state. George Ramsay, the Resident, was convinced that

we must expect fewer liberal measures from General Jang Bahadur than from any of his predecessors despite the intentions he proclaims.

It was not that Jang Bahadur was powerless to override the opposition of the *Baharadars* (councillors) to recruitment, but he was himself bitterly against obliging the British in this matter, although he would not declare it openly.*

The British government remonstrated against this attitude and did not relax pressure on Jang Bahadur until he gave in. The Prime Minister agreed to allow the Gurkhas in the Indian army to return home, provided they came in civil dress and behaved as Nepalese subjects when in Nepal. They were to avoid Kathmandu, the neighbouring military stations, and the direct route from Sagouli to Kathmandu through the Sisagarhi fort." Jang Bahadur had strong reasons to suspect that the Gurkhas served the British as suppliers of military and other information which he wanted to keep secret. It was also arranged that the Gurkhas in India would make remittances to the Residency at Kathmandu where money would be disbursed to their families." It was "not a very graceful concession" on the part of Jang Bahadur, but the British accepted it in the absence of any alternative arrangement."

Unable to oppose openly the recruitment of Gurkhas in Nepal, Jang Bahadur took indirect measures to restrict the flow of these men to India. All the Gurkhas who wanted enlistment in the Indian army were required to obtain passports from the Nepalese government before leaving Nepal; all recruiting parties sent by the British were required to obtain letters of authority from the Government. Guards at the pass on the border were authorised to shoot at sight any one trying to sneak in or out. The British Commanding Officers were asked by the Government not to send recruiting agents without letters of authority." It seems that recruiting was still a problem, for

the Gurkhas in the British service were not free from harassments. Captain Byers, the Acting Resident, pointed out:

The records of this office during the last few years show the unavailing efforts made to obtain recruits for the British service with the assistance of the Darbar, but they will not assist us; and although they say they throw no obstacles in the way of our obtaining recruits, the rule relative to those who do enter the service not being allowed to return to Nepal, no doubt, prevent great numbers from enlisting.³¹

During the Mutiny the Nepalese soldiers came in close contact with the British and a happy camaraderie and mutual esteem developed. The liberal provisions for their maintenance while they were in India, the behaviour of British officers, the donation *batia* and compensation allowance for death and disablement, all left a very favourable impression on the Nepalese troops.³² They were "loud in their praises of the liberality of the British government". The Resident confidently noted: "that a very different spirit now exists among them to what was formerly felt there cannot be the smallest doubts".³³ Jang Bahadur was opposed to the payment of pension by the British government to the families of Nepali soldiers killed or disabled during their service in India, for fear that it would bring his men into constant communication with the Residency and induce them to join the British service. Evidently, he did not like the Nepalese "to become conscious of the difference between the British service and his own".³⁴ The British government, too, were at first not very keen on paying pensions to the families of Nepali soldiers; they preferred the payment of compensations for death or disablement to the families concerned. But the Resident, Ramsay, insisted on the payment of pensions, considering "the advantages resulting from the probable change in the feelings of the Gurkhas towards our services".³⁵ But it was often a problem to trace the relatives of Gurkha soldiers in Nepal to whom pensions had to be given, for Jang Bahadur would render no cooperation in this matter. Later, however, he yielded when the British warned him:

It would neither be honourable on the part of the British Government to relinquish the practice [of paying pensions] nor friendly on the part of the Nepal Durbar to refuse its good offices in the matter.³⁶

The Commanding Officers of the Gurkha regiments continued to obtain recruits *sub rosa*, with the full knowledge, and some times with the covert encouragement of the Government, notwithstanding the existing orders against such proceedings. After the Mutiny recruiting operations were continued on a

wider scale, the men being obtained mostly from the border areas. As a result, while there was an appreciable increase in the number of recruits, there was considerable fall in their quality, for most of them were fugitive criminals and outlaws, men of very low castes deemed unfit for military service in Nepal." These men passed themselves off as genuine Gurkhas and got enlisted in the British service. There were no means of verifying the descriptive rolls of the recruits in the face of the *darbar's* "covert opposition and jealousy". Most of these so-called Gurkhas were employed on police duties in the bordering districts of the North-West Provinces and Bihar, and some in regular Gurkha regiments. Many of these recruits absconded with public money into the Nepalese territory; many of them deserted their ranks as well.⁸ Their surrender could not be demanded by the British government, for until 1866, these crimes lay outside the scope of the Extradition Treaty made between the two governments in 1855. Jang Bahadur justly complained that by recruiting these bad characters, the British were hindering the enforcement of law and order in the bordering Nepalese territory and indirectly encouraging these men.

Besides, the behaviour of the recruiting agents caused the *darbar* much irritation. These agents often made invidious comparison of the power and resources of the British with those of the Nepalese government: they openly assumed a disdainful attitude to Nepalese officers, behaving in an "impudent, swaggering and contemptuous manner". Ramsay warned the Government that such enlistment of Nepalese outlaws in large numbers would cause "nothing but trouble, inconvenience and disappointment" to both the governments, besides undermining the efficiency of the Gurkha regiments. The Government took note, and such indiscriminate recruiting was prohibited. The Commanding Officers were instructed to take special care in recording the caste and family background of the recruits and the place where they came from. The recruiting agents were asked to behave themselves while on their mission. It was also decided to stop *sub rosa* recruitment.⁹

The British government were in no doubt that "the Nepal *Durbar* have always played a double part as regards the enlistment of Gurkhas in the British army". While avoiding open opposition to British efforts, successive Nepalese governments had taken measures to ensure their failure.¹⁰ Whenever under pressure the *darbar* itself supplied recruits, they were found physically unfit. Thus, in 1851, the Acting Minister, General Bam Bahadur, professed cooperation to supply men for the new Nusseri battalion, but "took every underhand means for thwart

ing the wishes of the British government, and rendered the attempt to enlist Gurkhas altogether ineffectual". Out of the six hundred men sent by him to the Residency, "only two ruggamuffins" could be induced to enter the service; and out of the sixty men who had been enlisted earlier, not more than thirty two indifferent recruits marched for India after considerable delay.⁴ This recruiting operation cost the British more than ten thousand rupees.

While the British government condemned the jealousy of the *darbar* regarding the recruitment of Gurkhas, they themselves were absolutely opposed to the employment of Europeans by the *darbar*⁴. But in regard to the employment of Indians in the Nepalese army, the Government did not seem to have a uniform policy. Thus, when, in 1857, the Resident received the representation of some Sikh soldiers in the *darbar's* army regarding unfavourable treatment by the *darbar*, Dalhousie refused to raise the issue with Jang Bahadur, holding that

if the service were a tempting one, it would be impossible to prevent the Sikhs from seeking it, and if it continues what it has appeared to be [that is, unfavourable to them] there is no fear of their doing so.⁵

But, in 1872, the British government strongly urged Jang Bahadur to desist from recruiting in his army the Sikhs of the violently anti-British Kooka sect.⁶ Generally, the Nepalese government, as a matter of policy, did not employ aliens in their army, but both Bhim Sen and Jang Bahadur had engaged a few Hindustanis and Sikhs as drill masters and artificers in the magazines.⁶

After Jang Bahadur's death in 1877, the Government of India under Lord Lytton exerted strong pressure on Ranuddip Singh, the next Prime Minister, for recruiting facilities. The need for such facilities had become very urgent in view of the second Anglo-Afghan war which broke out soon. After much persuasion and pressure the Resident could obtain from the *darbar* 559 men, of whom as many as 393 were summarily rejected, being found "the lame, the halt, the maimed and the blind". The proceeding cost the Government more than ten thousand rupees. The impression was strengthened that it was futile to depend on the *darbar* for the supply of recruits of the required standard.⁶

It also became increasingly difficult to maintain the Gurkha regiments in their allotted strength. The Magars and Gurungs, the best tribes, were the most sought after and the most difficult to procure; and the military authorities were opposed to the induction of other inferior tribes into the "pure Gurkha" corps,

Colonel Sale Hill of the First Gurkhas explained the problem :

if the Nepal darbar supplies us with recruits similar to those lately received, we shall either have to reject them at an expense to the state or to flood our ranks with a class of men that will deteriorate Gurkha regiments.⁴⁷

The Government continued with clandestine recruitment, which led the Nepalese government to take stringent measures. People were warned against taking British service on pain of severe punishment, forfeiture of property and torture to families left in Nepal. There were also reports of execution of men trying to escape from Nepal.⁴⁸ However, matters considerably improved after 1884, when mutual interests led the two governments to change their policy. As for the British, their confrontation with Russia in India's north-west frontier had now reached its acutest stage with the possibility of a war. The Government of India were in great need for an immediate expansion of their army. The Commander-in-Chief, General Frederick Roberts, was extremely anxious to augment the Gurkha ranks. The Nepalese government, for their part, were anxious to obtain arms and ammunition from India for use against Tibet, with which Nepal had strained relations. All this resulted in the adoption by the British of the policy of "mutual concessions": they agreed to provide Nepal with arms and ammunition, and the Nepalese government undertook to regularly supply Gurkha recruits.⁴⁹

Ranuddip's successor, Bir Shamsher, gave a similar undertaking in 1885. The British had hereafter no worry regarding recruits.⁵⁰ By the end of the nineteenth century, all the five Gurkha regiments had their second battalions.

Recruiting arrangements were thoroughly reorganised by Roberts to ensure efficiency. Recruiting operations were systematised; a central depot was set up at Gorakhpur to coordinate the operations in other depots at Darjiling, Pilbhit and Bahraitch; men having long experience of service in the Gurkha regiments and known for their tact, resourcefulness and initiative were engaged as recruiting officers who strove to establish friendly relations with Nepalese officers on the border. Not the Magars and Gurungs alone but other tribes, Limbus and Rais, Thakurs and Khas, were also recruited⁵¹. Roberts' visit to Kathmandu in 1892 and his personal friendship with Bir Shamsher also improved the situation. With the years the Rana government's increasing dependence on the British for arms and the latter's dependence on the Ranas for Gurkhas conduced to friendly relations between the two governments. As Roberts observed, the British could not

"afford to fall out with the state" from which their "best native soldiers are drawn".⁸³

However, there was no regular treaty with Nepal regarding Gurkha recruitment. In the 1920s the British were keen on making a statutory agreement with Nepal on this issue, for they suspected that the Rana government were trying to exploit the British dependence on Gurkhas as a lever to wring political concessions. Ultimately, however, the British had to give up this hope, for the Rana government were firmly opposed to any hard and fast agreement on Gurkha recruitment other than the one conceded by Bir Shamsher earlier.⁸⁴ The Ranas found that the existing informal arrangement was advantageous to them, for it gave the impression that the British obtained Gurkhas not as a matter of right but as a special favour of the Ranas who, therefore, were justified in claiming concessions and rewards. Gurkha recruitment remained the main interest of the British in Nepal and the main basis of the relations between the Government of India and the Rana government.

It is important to note that the British were ever careful to keep the Gurkhas isolated from the rest of the Indian troops. The Gurkhas bore a feeling of separateness from other ranks in the army because of the insularity of their own country which was the result partly of the policy of the Nepalese government. The special treatment which they received at the hands of the British, the prestige they enjoyed combined with the deliberate policy of the British of never giving their commands to the Indians⁸⁵—all these accentuated their feeling of separateness. On the other hand, no efforts were spared to attach them closer to British troops and British officers. The best British officers commanded them. The welfare of the Gurkhas was the foremost care of the military authorities in India; "purposely the Indian government have allowed them to become a cult, a service apart", wrote one who knew the Gurkhas well.⁸⁶ The Gurkha regiments were valued by the British as the most dependable, "the *nulli secundus*" of the Indian army and as an effective counterpoise to other ranks. A high military authority bears out:

Their lack of interest in Brahmanical holiness and in anti-British intrigue and hatred is the despair of those subtle brains who fish in troubled waters and who would sow discord at any price.⁸⁷

Nationalist agitations in India had their impact on the Indian army; there were strong evidences of anti-British feelings in some ranks of the army. Both the British and the Nepalese governments were anxious over the possible infiltration of

sedition in the Gurkha regiments which led them to take measures to isolate them all the more. There were attempts by the nationalist elements to tamper with the Gurkha ranks which increased the British anxiety.⁸⁷ However, the economic dependence of the Gurkhas on the British government served as the most effective insurance against their involvement in overt anti-British activity.

NOTES

- * Published in *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, Apr-Jun 1963, pp. 143-57, under the title "The Recruitment of the Gurkhas in the Indian Army, 1814-1877".

1. *Punjab Government Records: Records of the Delhi Residency and Agency*, I, pp. 249-72. See also pp. 20-21 above.
2. "Before we come to the contest, their powers of resistance are ridiculed. Their forts are said to be contemptible, and their arms are said to be useless. Yet we find on the trial that with these useless weapons in their contemptible forts they can deal about death among their assailants and stand to their defences, notwithstanding the skill and bravery of our army". Memo of Charles Metcalfe to Lord Moira, quoted in E. Thompson, *The Making of the Indian Princes*, p. 191.

"It made us acquainted with a formidable power whose military strength was previously unknown and egregiously underrated. Then for the first time in India, recourse was had to superiority in numbers to overpower the bravery and discipline of our enemy, combined with the natural advantages of his defensive positions." Quoted in J. W. Kaye, *Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, p. 186.

With a force of less than 16,000 men the Nepalese fought the British Indian army of 46,629 men, of whom 4,557 were Europeans. FM, Vol. 360: Cavenagh, Report on Nepal, 1852.

3. Quoted in Thompson, op. cit., p. 192.
4. Confidential letter from Ochterlony to Moira, quoted in E. Vansittart, *Notes on Gurkhas*, p. 20.
5. L. W. Shakespeare, *History of the 2nd King Edward's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles)*, pp. 1-5, 168-77. N. W. Woodyatt, *History of the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles*, pp. 321-7. Frederick Young, *First Commandant of Sirmoor Battalion*, by L. H. Jenkins, pp. 40-52.
6. The Sirmoor battalion, however, was engaged during the third Anglo-Maratha war (1817-9). Shakespeare, op. cit., p. 5.
7. SC, 18 Sept 1837, Nos. 69-72, Campbell's Report on Political Transactions with Nepal.

8. Quoted in *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. FM, Vol. 125; Memorandum Relative to the Gurkha Army, By B. H. Hodgson, 14 Feb 1825.
11. Hunter, *Life of Hodgson*, op. cit., p. 107.
12. *Ibid.* In Nepal all military and civil services were held by annual tenure; every year services had to be renewed. All tenure of lands was attached to actual service. A soldier off the roll of service was called *Dhakareah*, and one on the roll was called *Jagera*. In consequence, there were many who had no employment. Hodgson's Memorandum on the Gurkha army, op. cit. Oldfield, op. cit., I, p. 175.
13. Hodson's Report to Govt., Cct 1832, *Selections From the Records of the Government of Bengal*, No XXVII.
Comparing the Gurkhas and the Sepoys, Hodgson wrote: "These highland soldiers, who despatch their meal in half an hour and satisfy their ceremonial law by merely washing their hands and face, and taking their turbans off before cooking, laugh at the pharasaical rigour of the Sipahis who must bathe from head to foot and make puja ere they can begin to dress, their dinners they must eat nearly naked in the coldest weather, and cannot be in marching trim again in less than three hours.

In war the former readily carry several days' provisions on their backs; the latter would deem such an act intolerably degrading. The former see in foreign service nothing but the prospect of glory and spoil; the latter can discover in it nothing but pollution and peril from unclean men and terrible wizards, goblins and evil spirits. In masses, the former have all that indomitable confidence, each in all, that grows out of national integrity and success; the latter can have no idea of this sentiment which yet maintains the union and resolution of multitudes in peril better than all other human bonds whatsoever, and once thoroughly acquired, is by no means inseparable from service under the national standard." *Ibid.*
14. Campbell's Report, op. cit. The Report was written under the direction of Hodgson. Dr. Campbell was assistant to Hodgson.
15. Hodgson's Memorandum, op. cit.
16. Vansittart, op. cit., p. 32. Hodgson wanted to recruit Sikhs and Gurkhas to make the British Indian army less dependent on the high caste men who constituted the army. Hodgson to Eliza, 26 May 1857, HM, Vol. 9, p. 90.
17. Henry Lawrence, *Essays on the Indian Army and Oude*, p. 230.
18. There was a Gurkha corps in the Sikh army under Ranjit Singh and his successors. W. G. Osborne, *The Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh*, pp. 107-8.
19. *Historical Record of the 5th Gurkha Regiment*, p. 170.
20. F.P.A., Mar 1880, Nos. 95-110, 152-4. *History of the Fifth Royal*

Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force) 1858-1928. R. Macdonald and M. Macaulay, *A History of the 4th Prince of Wales' Own Gurkha Rifles, 1857-1937*. F. S. Poynder, *The 9th Gurkha Rifles 1817-1936*.

21. Later the system of rewarding the recruiting agents for their efforts was introduced. Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, p. 153.
22. For the military tribes of Nepal see Report of Hodgson to Govt., Oct 1832, op. cit.
23. Lt. F. G. Cardew, "Our Recruiting grounds for the future", *JUSI*, Vol. XX: 86 (1891), pp. 131-56.
24. C. J. Morris, *The Gurkhas*, p. 128.
25. SC, 19 April 1843, No. 52.
26. PC, 11 Aug 1854, Nos. 11-2, Resident to Govt., 29 Jan 1854.
27. Ibid.
28. PC, 14 Jan 1853, Nos. 123-4.
29. Foreign Secy.'s Note, 14 July 1854, PC, 14 Aug 1854, Nos. 11-2.
30. PC, 12 Nov 1858, Nos. 74-5.
31. PC, 31 Dec 1858, No. 2530, Capt. Byers to Dr. Campbell, 21 Oct 1858.
32. The Nepalese were given Rs. 20 per month, besides *battas*; in Nepal they received a salary of Rs. 4½ per month. Registers in the Army Head Quarters, Kathmandu.
33. SC, 25 Nov 1858, Nos. 56-60.
34. FPA, Sept 1869, Nos. 92-3, Keep with.
35. SC, 25 Nov 1858, Nos. 56-60.
36. F.P.A., Aug 1866, No. 156.
37. Ibid., Nos. 64-6. Magras, Gurungs, Thakurs and Kirats were enrolled in the Nepalese army. The non-martial races, Domais, Lohars and Newars, were never enrolled. Cavenagh's Report, op. cit. Hodgson's Memorandum, op. cit.
38. F.P.A., Sept 1864, Nos. 87-9.
39. F.P.A., Aug 1866, No. 156.
40. F.P.A., Sept 1869, Nos. 92-3.
41. PC, 11 Aug 1854, No. 11.
42. PC, 24 Jun 1859, Nos. 104-06.
43. PC, 23 Jan 1857, Nos. 113-4, Governor-General's Note.
44. F.P.A., Feb 1872, Nos. 39-49.
45. Ibid. In the war between Nepal and Tibet in 1855-6, a Sikh corps of 104 soldiers was employed in the Nepalese army. Register dealing with the Nepalese-Tibetan war in the Commandari Kitabkhana, Kathmandu.
46. F.P.A., Feb 1879, Nos. 243-56, Dept. Notes; Mar 1880, Nos 95-100, Dept. Notes; F.P.B., Apr 1882, No. 69.
47. F.P.A., Mar 1880, Nos. 95-110, Dept. Notes. *Appendix to Report of the Army Organisation Commission*, II, pp. 629-37, 658-90, 747.
48. F.P.A., Mar 1880, No. 153. F.P.B., Apr 1882, No 69, G.H.D. Gimlette, *Nepal and the Nepalese*, p. 207.

49. PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067, Memorandum on the possibility of improving our relations with Nepal, by C. Girdlestone, Resident, 31 Dec 1883. See also pp. 9-10 above.
50. WP, Vol. 24, Minute on Native Troops, 28 July 1893. PSLI, Vol. 73, No. 4, 3 Jan 1894, with enclosures.
- Altogether 7, 662 recruits were supplied in 1886-92, mostly Magars. Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, pp. 174-5.
51. RBP, X20923, R100/7, Roberts to General Browne, 23 May 1891. Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, pp. 144-57. Morris, op. cit., pp. 129-31.
52. RBP, X20923, R100/2, Roberts to Duke of Cambridge, 8 Apr 1892.
53. During negotiations for the treaty in 1923, the British government made an attempt to include Gurkha recruitment as one of the clauses of the treaty. PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2 deals with the treaty.
54. "Ever since we had first raised the Nassiri battalion and the Sirmoor and the Kumaun battalion in 1815, it had been agreed, perhaps unwisely, that Gurkha regiments in our service would never be officered by Indians. For one hundred and thirty odd years that rule has been carefully kept. . . Thus the Gurkha connection, though it has been through the Indian army, has been with Britain, and always with the British rather than with India. It may be that, because of this, the men regarded themselves as belonging to a force apart from the Indian army. . . In fact they came to look upon themselves as being in India rather as British troops were in India, as mercenaries to see that the Indians did not molest each other. . . Thus whenever progressive steps to Indianise the Indian army were taken by increasing the number of Indian officers in units, the Gurkha brigade was specifically excluded from the scheme and remained intact with their British officers. No written promise was ever made to the Gurkhas except perhaps by Lord Linlithgow to the Maharaja of Nepal, but the rule was well known that Indians would not be posted as officers to Gurkha battalions. Francis Taker, *While Memory Serves*, p. 631.
55. G. MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India*, p. 198.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 199. It was politically and militarily wise to employ Gurkhas in larger numbers in the Indian army, for "the more Gurkhas we have in our service, the safer we should be", D. C. Boulgar, *England and Russia in Central Asia*, p. 65.
57. See pp. 16-7 above.

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APPENDIX

English translation of a secret report from Major Raghbir Singh and Jamadar Mannu Singh (Nepalese Secret agents to the Punjab), to the King of Nepal, 1895, Sravan Sudi 15, Roj 1.

"We have solicited Ranjit's help. He asked us to meet Dhian Singh. Captain Arjan Singh Thapa¹ was at that time in Dhian Singh's court; he arranged a meeting between us. Raja Dhian Singh asked us about the King of Nepal and the Minister Ranganath.² Dhian Singh said that whenever any sardar of His Majesty's Government of Nepal would go to China³, he [Dhian Singh] should be informed of it eighteen months in advance, so that he would send some presents to the Chinese Emperor; and it would be better if the Nepalese envoy carried them to Peking. The Raja said that he had a great desire to see the picture of the Chinese Emperor and a map of China. If there were any such picture and map, please send them to the Raja.

"Dhian Singh continued: 'Now you are going to Simla. As you are friends, would you do me a favour? The King of Ladakh has sought the help of the Governor-General against me.⁴ The Governor-General has written to us many times. Our Government does not approve of what the Governor-General says. Try, if you can, to forge friendship between us and the King of Ladakh. Let the King withdraw himself from Lhasa.⁵ We will please your King by all means'.

"The King of Ladakh said that had the King of Nepal helped him, he would have saved his country. The King of Ladakh has sent a letter to you, asking for aid and also narrating his troubles. From that letter Your Majesty would know everything. As we are your servants, we did not respond to Dhian Singh's requests; we only sent you the letter of the King of Ladakh. Dhian Singh says: 'It is not proper to send letters through any Tom, Dick and Harry. Har Prasad⁶ is a person of low rank. It is not expected of the ruler of the Punjab to give him audience and discuss matters of state with him. Therefore, we did not reply to the King's [of Nepal] letter which he presented. You please take this [letter] and give it to your King. We shall await his reply'.

"[As regards the British], the Post Master⁷ says that the Governor-General has ordered that all letters should from now onwards be shown to him before they are despatched. We

have very good relations with these postal employees, and so he [Post Master] discloses all this to us. He says that whatever we write would now be opened and shown to the British authorities, for they suspect our hostile intentions.

"The Governor-General has set up check-posts around Simla; strict watch is being kept on the movement of all persons from and to Simla; all letters brought by them are being scrutinised. There is an order to arrest persons having letters from Indian states with them. This order has been issued from Calcutta. The Resident has informed the Governor-General that the King of Nepal has sent his Captains and Pandits' on the pretence of pilgrimage to various Indian courts with a view to transmitting intelligence. The Governor-General has, therefore, ordered to arrest persons carrying suspicious letters with them.

"The General [Officer Commanding] of Dinapore has informed the Governor-General thus: the King of Nepal has sent a man named Dharmarikhi to Patna to pick up intelligence. As that man came to inspect the soldiers at the barracks, my men met him. They asked him his intention of coming to Dinapore, and assured him thus: 'if you tell us your real purpose, we will tell you everything'. Dharmarikhi told them about the intention of the King of Nepal, and how he had been sent to Dinapore to collect information about the troops stationed there.

"The Governor-General decided in his Council in Calcutta: 'The King of Nepal in his open letter expresses friendship with the British, but his proceedings prove that he intends to start a war. So he has sent persons to different places to see things and collect intelligence...' The Governor-General has asked the Officer Commanding at Dinapore to reward his spies so that they would remain in touch with Dharmarikhi in order to find out his real intentions.

"Having received reports from the Council in Calcutta, the Governor-General has ordered all the Officers Commanding at various military stations, all the Brigadiers and Generals to raise the strength of their corps by two companies. He has also ordered them to re-enrol the corps disbanded earlier. Everyone is allowed to join the army if he so wishes. A warning has been issued particularly to Meerat and Karnal that 'this year there may be a war with some power. Who knows when and where the war would take place? Keep the army in readiness for twenty-four hours. Otherwise it will be dangerous for the Company.'

The Governor-General adds in his message: 'The Resident in Nepal writes that the King of Nepal has ordered him not

to go to Court with shoes on. Thus the King of Nepal is trying to find an excuse for war. The King has relations with Burma. Thus he has fixed his mind on war.'

"The Governor-General had his military Council at Simla. The Council decided that the British government would have to fight with the following states: the topmost priority has been given to Russia; next, to Burma; and then, to Jodhpur.⁹ They are prepared and have stocked arms for war. The Governor-General has conveyed to all the representatives of the different states residing at Simla his intention to undertake a tour for six months.¹⁰ Therefore, everyone has to be ready with all sorts of arrangements. He, who would not receive the Governor-General, will be punished. In the month of Aswin¹¹ the Governor-General will go to meet Ranjit in great pomp.¹² After meeting Ranjit, he would return by the south, on the way seeing the various rajas and zamindars. Macnaghten and the relatives of the Governor-General who are to go to Lahore with the Governor-General have reached Simla. Macnaghten has brought with him the second agreement.¹³

"The Russians have sent a letter to Ranjit saying: 'We have very great desire to see India. Our army has come up to Herat. If God wishes, it would reach your place [Lahore]. If you help our army with provisions, well and good. If you don't, be prepared for war.'

"Macnaghten has brought this letter from Lahore to Simla. Ranjit has asked for help from the British through Macnaghten. The British have promised help. Formerly, when the British tried to raise barracks at Ferozepur, Ranjit had opposed them. Now he has agreed. After the *Dusserah*¹⁴ Ranjit's army will march towards Kabul via Jalalabad, and it is said that the British army would go to Kandahar via Shikarpur, after taking Shah Shuja¹⁵ with them from Ludhiana. Ranjit has great intimacy with the British. He consults Captain Wade¹⁶ on very small matters. We think Ranjit is very apprehensive of the British. So Nepal could hardly expect any help from him.

"The British have four regiments at Ferozepur, four at Ludhiana, fifty at Karnal and Meerat. The information about the Governor-General and Ranjit Singh will be sent from the persons deputed to different places. Havildar and the soldier¹⁷ are very clever and careful. In the British territory we cannot send letters through our men. So one *kahar*¹⁸ was sent to Nepal on payment of rupees four. We could gather all this news because of our friendship with the treasurer and the Post Master. They are also hopeful of Your Majesty.

The news from Delhi must have reached you through

Balashankar¹⁸. Sadashankar¹⁹ and Balashankar have conferred with Bell²¹ regarding Nepal. They did not divulge the secret. 'We have tried to send as much news as we could gather.'

Notes

The Original, in Nepali, was seen by me in the records of the Foreign Office at Kathmandu. The English translation of the original document was published in *Bengal Past and Present*, Jan-June 1967, pp. 1-7, along with a "Note on Anglo-Nepalese Relations in 1838".

1. Arjan Singh and Bhopal Singh, a Captain in the French Legion of Ranjit's army were the two principal secret agents of Nepal engaged in forging an alliance between Nepal and the state of Lahore.
2. Ranganath Pandit was the minister of Nepal in August 1837—August 1838.
3. Since 1792 Nepal had been sending tributary missions to Peking.
4. M. Fisher, L. Rose, R. Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 47.
5. The Raja of Ladakh sent tributary missions to Lhasa; and the Lhasa government looked upon the Raja as a vassal.
6. A Nepalese secret emissary.
7. It seems some postal employees acted as informers, and were paid by Nepalese agents.
8. Nepalese agents moved about in the guise of mendicants.
9. The Raja of Jodhpur, Man Singh, was bitterly anti-British.
10. J. W. Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, I, p. 316.
11. October.
12. The meeting of Auckland with Ranjit Singh took place at Ferozepur on 29 November, 1838.
13. Sir William Macnaghten was Secretary to the Political and Secret Dept. He was sent to Lahore in May 1838. The Tripartite Treaty was signed by Ranjit on 26 June 1838.
14. A festival which usually takes place in October.
15. The exiled ruler of Kabul for whose reinstatement the First Afghan War took place.
16. Captain (later Sir) Claude Wade was British Political Agent at Ludhiana.
17. Nepalese secret agents.
18. A letter carrier or messenger.
19. A Nepalese emissary.
20. A Nepalese emissary.
21. British Political Agent at Delhi. Bell did not know the Nepalese agent's real identity.

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