



# THE GORKHA CONQUESTS



Nepal was forged out of the conquests by the principality of Gorkha, and Nepalese historians often view this process as consisting of 'national unification'. This work is a probe to see whether cohesive elements of nation-building were present in the past to warrant such a description. It examines some of the real motives behind Gorkha's desire to expand over the neighbouring hills and plains and beyond, together with its consequences on the society and economy of the peoples of great diversity living in those areas.

Eastern Nepal, also called Kirat, was one of the last areas to be conquered by Gorkha, but has received somewhat scant attention from Nepalese historians. This book provides a region-specific coverage to allow for a deeper understanding of the process of Nepal's political unification, and its impact.

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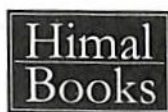


# THE GORKHA CONQUESTS

The process and consequences of the unification of  
Nepal, with particular reference to Eastern Nepal

**Kumar Pradhan**

with a new introduction by  
**John Whelpton**



Cover shows the expansion of the Gorkhali empire in the late 18th century.  
Source: *Nepal: Atlas and Statistics*, Harka Gurung et al, Toni Hagen Foundation  
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**To the memory of my father  
MANIKLAL PRADHAN  
(b. Kathmandu 20.4.1898, d. Gangtok 23.1.1990)  
whose recollections of his adolescent years in Nepal  
sowed the seeds of this work**

## Introduction to the 2009 edition

The publication of Kumar Pradhan's *The Gorkha Conquests* in India in 1991 marked an important milestone in Nepalese historiography because it was a direct challenge to a 'nationalist' orthodoxy presenting the military campaigns of King Prithvi Narayan Shah of Gorkha and his immediate successors as an heroic venture on behalf of all the people of Nepal. As early British sources make clear, Prithvi Narayan himself remained a revered figure among the new state's courtiers and soldiers in the years immediately following his death. However, he faded from public memory after the mid-nineteenth century, when the Rana Maharaja took centre-stage and the Shah king was reduced to an abstract religious symbol. It was almost a hundred years later in Darjeeling that Prithvi Narayan's modern cult was launched as Surya Bikram Gyawali and other Nepali-speaking intellectuals sought to enhance the status of their own ethnic group within Indian society by stressing a glorious past. This school of *bir* (heroic) history, as Pratyoush Onta has termed it, was taken up by the educational system in Nepal itself after 1951 and Prithvi Narayan's own place within it became even more important with the establishment of the Panchayat system in the 1960s and the regime's dual stress on nationalism and on the Shah dynasty's own role as the embodiment of national aspirations.

There were those, of course, who had reservations about the official narrative but pressures within Nepal made even scholars of undoubted competence and integrity think twice before openly opposing it. I was myself told many years ago by a former assistant of Mahesh Chandra Regmi's that he was instructed by Regmi not to publish a

document from government archives in which the Kathmandu authorities ordered raids on East India Company territory although the two states were still officially at peace. Another example, recently revealed by Ramesh Dhungel's work in the British Library, was Kirat historian Iman Singh Chemjong's decision, when translating a 19th-century Limbu account of the Gorkha conquest of Limbuwan, to suppress lines accusing the Gorkha forces of slaughtering not only Limbu males but also pregnant women.<sup>1</sup> Caution perhaps also extended to swallowing doubts about the *Dibya Upadesh*, the political testament which Prithvi Narayan was supposed to have delivered to his courtiers shortly before his death. Though most scholars still accept this as a genuine document, Kamal Prakash Malla had begun to suspect its authenticity in the 1960s but appears not to have made this public until recently.<sup>2</sup>

Nepalese writers who produced the major works of narrative history in the Panchayat era could not avoid treating sensitive issues. In some cases, such as that of Baburam Acharya, their evaluation of Prithvi Narayan and his successors was so laudatory that their work, though often valuable in other respects, reads more like propaganda than sober history. Others, like Dilli Raman Regmi and Ludwig F. Stiller, did not discard their critical faculties; Stiller condemned the rejection of eyewitness accounts of the cruel punishment of Kirtipur inhabitants after Prithvi Narayan finally took the town in 1765, whilst in the 1975 edition of his *Modern Nepal*, Regmi modified his original view of Prithvi Narayan as acting purely from patriotic motives to emphasise also his enthusiasm for conquest as an end in itself (Regmi 1975: 89). He also expressed mild scepticism on whether the *Dibya Upadesh* really had been dictated by Prithvi Narayan himself. Nevertheless, Regmi continued to see Prithvi Narayan's desire to protect the hill country from outside intervention as a major factor in his thinking and Stiller's use of terms such as 'vision' and 'inspiration' indicate a generally positive attitude towards the king and his ambitions.

A concentration on the negative aspects of the formation of the

1 Hodgson Collection (British Library), vol.85, no.6 ff. 31-132. See also Dhungel 2006.

2 In his acrimonious debate with Naya Raj Pant and his colleagues in the 1980s, Malla's target was only Pant's treatment of the *Dibya Upadesh*, not the document itself. See Malla (1983, 1984, 2006) and Whelpton (2007).



Nepalese state is found in much of Mahesh Chandra Regmi's work but his economic history does not take issue head-on with the cult of Prithvi Narayan, nor does it give emphasis to the ethnic aspect of domination in the way that Pradhan's work does. The latter's direct challenge to the Nepalese national myth, comparable in some ways to the work of Prasenjit Duara on China, Ayesha Jalal's study of the creation of Pakistan, or Norman Davies's survey of the history of Britain and Ireland, was probably only possible at the time for someone based outside of Nepal. And it is particularly appropriate that it should have been done by a scholar from Darjeeling, the region which saw the birth of Prithvi Narayan's modern cult in the first place.

Pradhan is certainly right to argue that what happened in the 18th century was not a 'unification' in the sense that one can speak of the unification of Italy or Germany a century later. Though hillmen in general did possess a joint sense of separation from the plains, and the Parbatiyas, especially those in the Gandaki basin, were aware of commonalities in religious belief and social structure, there was no shared literary language or consciousness of past membership of the same polity linking all those within the expanded kingdom. I share Pradhan's scepticism about the 'proofs' that the Lichchhavi state controlled territory roughly co-extensive with modern Nepal, and even if we suppose it did, all memories of belonging to that state had certainly disappeared long before Prithvi Narayan's time.

However, Prithvi Narayan certainly did bring the many populations in the central and eastern Himalaya under a single government and we can also understand 'unification' in that sense. The coercion of people into accepting a common overlord may in the long term result in a real sense of identity with the state so formed. Qin Shi Huang, for example, the man who forged a united Chinese state at the end of the 3rd century BCE, was every bit as ruthless as Prithvi Narayan Shah. As his successors enlarged the areas under their control, and Han Chinese settlers moved into new lands, the treatment of the indigenous population was no gentler than in eastern Nepal: a major reason that in China today those conquered by the dominant ethnic group make up only 10 per cent of the total population as against 30-40 per cent in Nepal is that so many were either physically eliminated or assimilated. Yet, the end result has

certainly been a strong, shared sense of 'Chineseness' among both the Han and even a considerable number amongst the surviving minorities. It also needs to be stressed that even in other cases where there *was* a strong pre-existing sense of unity, a significant proportion of the population often opposed the process of political unification and the balance between sullen acquiescence and actual enthusiasm for the coming of the new order is difficult to assess. My own feeling is, therefore, that, whatever judgment we may make of Prithvi Narayan's conduct, we can still speak and write of Nepalese unification without scare quotes.

Pradhan argues that the Gorkhali's new state 'did not unite the segregated groups brought under the unified kingdom: on the contrary it divided them' (p. 201) and that 'in the general case of Nepali society, there is hardly any case of upward mobility of any "caste" of Mongoloid origin to a higher Brahman-Chhetri status' (p. 164). There is some truth in this, but I would give more weight than he does himself to the integrative trend that seems to have been working, at least with the Magars until the Anglo-Gorkha War of 1814-16 put an end to Nepal's expansion. There is some evidence of members of this group switching to Nepali (then known as Parbatiya or Khas Kura) even before they came under Gorkha rule (Lecomte-Tilouine 1993: 31-32) and, as Pradhan acknowledges (p. 36), Magars could at one time achieve Chhetri status; this was reflected in Kirkpatrick's (1811; 123) striking phrase 'Khus and Mungur tribes of the Chetree class'. Again, as Pradhan himself also brings out, documents from both the Kathmandu Valley and Sikkim sometimes actually refer to the Shahs of Gorkha and to the Sen rulers in the east as Magars. It is worth quoting at length the impression gained by Hamilton, who accompanied Knox to Kathmandu in 1801:

the family of Gorkha, which now governs Nepal, although it pretends to come from Chitaur, according to...a good authority, is, in reality, of the Magar tribe; and, at any rate, these people are now firmly attached to its interests, by having largely shared in the fruits of conquest; and by far the greater part of the regular troops of that family is composed of this nation...By many of the [Magar] soldiery, owing to their frequent absence from home, for the purpose of attending at court, [the Magar language] has been entirely forgotten. In a short



time, therefore, it is highly probable that this people may unite with the mountain Hindus, and be considered as one of their casts (*sic*). (Hamilton 1986 [1819]: 26)

One has to allow for the fact that the writer's 'good authority' was an adherent of one of Prithvi Narayan's defeated opponents and thus not the most unbiased sources for the Gorkha king's ancestry, but Hamilton's general observations, based on conversations with many other informants, are striking. The line separating the bulk of the Magars from the *tagadhari* hardened during the 19th century but the earlier situation needs to be remembered.

I also have very slight reservations over the section of the book comparing Gorkhali rule in Kumaon and Garhwal unfavourably with conditions under the British after 1815. Pradhan is again broadly right in his indictment of the local Gorkha officials, an indictment which has since been made at greater length by Mahesh Chandra Regmi (1999) but the possibility of bias in the British accounts or of British administrators being hoodwinked by their own local intermediaries needs to be acknowledged. There also perhaps has to be a slight question mark over the reliability of the detailed revenue statistics both in Nepalese records and the British gazetteers.

If we follow a suggestion made elsewhere by Regmi and tentatively endorsed by Pradhan, the effects of the 1793 Permanent Settlement in Bengal may have initially made the British side of the Tarai border more attractive for agricultural development, but there is some evidence from the mid-19th century of cultivators being attracted to move north across the border because of a crack-down by Jang Bahadur Rana on some of the more flagrant extractions and also because of the pressure exerted on the Bihar peasantry by indigo planters. This, of course, raises the interesting paradox that in what is now Uttarakhand the hill-based Gorkhali empire was perhaps less successful at looking after the interests of fellow hillmen than their British successors proved to be, yet in the eastern Tarai the Gorkhas could offer the Madhesis a better deal than did the plains-based British Indian government.

As well as rejecting the attempt to see Prithvi Narayan as a proto-Nepali nationalist, Pradhan argues against Dilli Raman Regmi that it was not conquest per se but economic gain that the king was aiming



for. I would prefer to say myself that Prithvi Narayan aimed to be a successful Hindu king, which meant, among other things, becoming the master of a wider territory. Pradhan himself (p. 161) cites the words of a Nepalese official to Brian Hodgson when seeking British permission to attack Bhutan. He acknowledged that Bhutan had not offended Nepal in any way but said such an assault was 'the Gorkha's custom'. Although I no longer have the exact reference, I myself remember as a graduate student reading Hodgson's account of a similar conversation in which the Nepalese emissary remarked of King Rajendra: 'But he is a Kshatriya. Is he never to draw the sword?' For Prithvi Narayan and for his successors, war for control of a rich area made more sense than war for a poor one but conquest was still to some extent an aim in itself.

While *The Gorkha Conquests* is best known for its broad revisionist approach to the history of Nepalese unification, it also offers fresh and interesting detail on particular aspects. It sheds new light on the complex relationship between the eastern Nepalese hills, Sikkim and Bhutan, drawing on an unpublished Sikkimese chronicle as well as material in the Hodgson Collection which had already been made use of by Chemjong. Further mining of the Hodgson materials, in particular, should in future become easier when the descriptive catalogue Ramesh Dhungel has recently prepared is published and some of the principal documents made available online.

Pradhan also provides valuable accounts of the resistance to the initial Gorkha conquest offered by Rais and Limbus in Nepal and by the Lepchas of Sikkim, and also of the ethnic revolts in the region triggered by China's invasion of Nepal in 1791-92. He portrays this as fierce but uncoordinated and also beset by ethnic rivalries among the conquered. Particularly interesting is the fact that his Sikkimese chronicle, reflecting the viewpoint of Sikkim's ethnic Tibetan rulers, accuses the Lepcha brothers who spearheaded the resistance of preventing the arrival of help from Tibet by claiming that they themselves had already successfully repulsed the Gorkhali enemy. Clearly the Tibetan-Lepcha tensions which Pradhan emphasises in his account of Sikkim's earlier history were still playing a major role.

The book also deals briefly with the Josmani Santa tradition, originating in Prithvi Narayan's own time, which, Pradhan feels, might have offered an alternative, egalitarian alternative to the ideology of

caste hierarchy adopted by the Nepalese state. I remain sceptical of Chittaranjan Nepali's suggestion that King Rana Bahadur Shah was a supporter of Josmani beliefs and that his attack on the Brahmans and their temples in 1799 was motivated by principled opposition to orthodox Hinduism rather than rage over Brahman failure to prevent his wife's death. Nevertheless the sect, which is the subject of a study by Janaklal Sharma (1963/64), deserves further investigation and Pradhan's own unpublished work on one of the Josmanis' principal figures will hopefully, be made available before too long.<sup>3</sup>

In the course of discussing Prithvi Narayan's motivation, Pradhan discusses the famous words from the *Dibya Upadesh* which once hung above Darbar Marg alongside the many similar placards with quotes from King Mahendra or King Birendra's speeches: *mero saana dukhale arjyako muluk hoina sabai jaatko phulbaari ho*. He argues that the words, taken out of context, fundamentally misrepresent what the king is supposed to have said: rather than blowing an early trumpet for multi-culturalism, Prithvi Narayan used the garden metaphor for an outcome he wanted to avoid, not celebrate. When I first read *The Gorkha Conquests* in the early nineties, this came as a surprise to me and I spent some time consulting friends and colleagues on the point. The answer I finally accepted was that the language of the document is so disjointed and so different from modern Nepali prose style that nobody can be sure what the intended meaning was. This argument was advanced to me by Prayag Raj Sharma, although in the detailed discussion of the text in his essay in *Nationalism and Ethnicity in Nepal* he defended the conventional interpretation (Sharma 2008 [1997]).<sup>4</sup> However, the archaic nature of the language means that even non-native speakers can offer an opinion without seeming presumptuous, and so, to encourage anyone who reads Nepali to make up their own mind, I will give my own interpretation here.

The original Nepali, as published in Pokhrel (1974/75), but with the punctuation changed, reads:

3 This was Jnanadil Das of Ilam. There is a brief account of his life, drawn from Sharma, in Lecomte-Tilouine (2000: 90).

4 I am grateful to David Gellner for reminding me of this discussion. He himself argues in the same volume in favour of Pradhan's and Stiller's interpretation (Gellner 2008 [1997]: 24).



*sipaahi bhaibhaaraadaarle svakh garyanan bhannya charai khutmaa mero tarbar bajanaichha. svakhmaa paso bhanya mero saanaa dukhle aarjyaako muluk hoina sabai jaatko phulbaari ho. sabailai chetanaa bhayaa yo phulbaariko chhoto badaa chaarai jat chhatisai varnale, yo asil hindusthaan ho*

Pradhan's own English version given on p. 155 is:

If (my) soldiers and courtiers are not given to seeking pleasure, my sword can strike in all directions. If they are given to pleasure, this will not remain a kingdom acquired with no little pain by me, but (it will be) a common garden for all kinds (of people). But if everyone is watchful, this will be a true Hindusthan (Hindu Land)...of all higher and lower castes (*jat*) and thirty-six varna.

Pradhan's general interpretation is similar to Ludwig Stiller's (1968: 4), particularly regarding the phrase *sabaailai chetana byae* as a conditional (meaning 'if everyone is alert') qualifying the following rather than the preceding clause. I believe this is right, though I prefer Stiller's 'will not be my little painfully acquired kingdom' to 'will not remain a kingdom acquired with no little pain by me', which seems to translate twice over the negative in *hoina*. However, both Pradhan and Stiller ignore the repetition of *phulbaari* (garden) in the final sentence. I assume the word is used ironically the second time, and so would put it in scare quotes: 'But if everyone is alert, this "garden" with the four castes and thirty-six varnas will become a true Hindusthan.'

The environment in which this book is now being republished is radically different from that in which it originally appeared since Nepal is now no longer a kingdom and an emphasis on ethnicity, regarded as almost taboo before 1990, has now moved to the centre of the Nepalese political arena. The change was mirrored in the fate of Prithvi Narayan's statue outside Singha Darbar. Vandalised during a demonstration by ethnic activists in 2006 it has only recently been fully restored. In the new circumstances, it is possible that a negative evaluation of Prithvi Narayan himself will become the new orthodoxy and a harbinger of that shift is perhaps Kamal Prasad Malla's criticism of my own insistence (in Whelpton 2005)



on the king's pivotal role in Nepalese history. The debate will in any case continue and *The Gorkha Conquests* will remain an early but very important contribution to it. All who study Nepal's history should be grateful to Social Science Baha and Himal Books for making the work once more readily available.

John Whelpton  
Hong Kong 2009

## The Gorkha Conquests of Eastern Nepal and Sikkim

Despite the expansion of Gorkha power over Makwanpur and the Nepal Valley there was no guarantee of its permanence. Though a Sanskrit poem claims that other hill rajas felt faint on hearing about the conquest of Nepal,<sup>1</sup> this does not mean that they had not been put out of gear. As the rise of Gorkha disturbed the balance of power in the hills, the petty states of the west often tended to check Gorkha's move eastward by attacking it in the rear. If such diverting tactics had proved irritants before, a potential combination of jealous and antagonised states could now pose a real threat to Gorkha. Besides the Baisi and Chaubisi states, there were Sena rulers in the east, unhappy ever since the annexation of the collateral kingdom of Makwanpur. If an alliance of all those states could succeed in obtaining the support of the British, who were not very happy with the emergence of a strong kingdom between their Indian dominions and prospects of the Central Asian marts, the realised Gorkha dream would surely have been cut short.

Prithvinarayan could not afford to lose whatever opportunities he got for aborting such a possibility. Advantage could be taken of the internal feuds of the Baisi and Chaubisi states, and the British could be proffered a guarded friendship. However, despite the failure of the Kinloch expedition, there were Company servants who wanted to take strong action against Gorkha and restrain it.

Though aware of the great commercial possibilities of Tibetan trade since their arrival in India, the British had not taken any step to develop it until they occupied Bengal,<sup>2</sup> where the northern frontier was contiguous with the Himalayan foothills. Not only did the rise of

the British in Bengal coincide with the Gorkha conquests but both were also pursuing a somewhat parallel policy with regard to Tibet. The British considered trans-Himalayan trade vital for their commercial interests and Gorkha knew that the prosperity of their kingdom depended on close economic ties with Tibet. But as a result of the Gorkha conquests this trade was discontinued and at a time when the Company was beginning to appreciate its value as a possible source of specie to redress the adverse balance of China trade. A few months before the Gorkha occupation of Kathmandu and Patan the British had considered Nepal a means of access not only to the local trade of Tibet and the Himalayan hill states, but also to the fabulous markets of China. Such an alternative land route could avoid the restrictions of Canton. The Calcutta Council was, therefore, to 'obtain the best intelligence...whether trade could be opened with Nepal, and whether cloth and other European commodities may not find their way thence to Tibet, Lhasa and the western parts of China'.<sup>3</sup>

In August 1769, barely a couple of months before Bhadgau was taken by Gorkha, James Logan, a surgeon in the Company's service, had volunteered to go to Nepal to advocate a policy in support of the Newar Rajas. Logan believed that the Gorkha king could easily be defeated because the latter had lost the support of the Tashi (Panchen) Lama of Tibet, a close friend of Jayaprakash Malla, when he plundered the rich monasteries of the Lama's disciples in Nepal. Furthermore, 'Raja Coran Sain', or Karna Sena of Vijaypur, was an enemy of the Gorkha king since the deposition of his first cousin, the king of Makwanpur. Karna Sena had not only proposed a second attempt to Kinloch but had also invited Logan to negotiate the terms of an alliance between him and the Company. But, by that time, the Newar Rajas were already dethroned; Logan's mission was still-born.

Another reason for the stand taken by the Company against Gorkha was with regard to the status of Makwanpur and the Tauttar pargana. Keighly, the Chief of Darbhanga, held in 1771 that the Tauttar parganas, bounded by Champaran, Purnea, Gandak and the Tarai belonged to Bihar and was thus included in the grant of Diwani to the Company in 1765. He wanted the extension of the Company's boundaries to their 'lawful limits'. Similarly, the English Commercial Agent at Bettia advocated the policy of confining the Gorkha Raja 'within his own hills'. Immediately after the occupation of



Makwanpur, the Gorkha king had sent his agent, Dinanath Upadhyaya, a descendant of the Brahman revenue officers of Makwanpur and now a subject of Gorkha, to Darbhanga for negotiations with the Company.

Nepali and English sources affirm that he succeeded in establishing the fact that the Tauttar pargana belonged to Nepal as a right of succession to Makwanpur,<sup>4</sup> and that Makwanpur was never a zamindari of Bihar. The reply sent by the Patna Council to the Governor-in-Council<sup>5</sup> on July 30, 1771, was based on the information supplied by Sitab Ray who visited the pargana, then under Nepal, for some fieldwork for his report. This sojourn was not hidden from Prithvinarayan. On 15 February 1771, in a letter to his astrologer, the king wrote, 'Sitab Rai, the Subba of Patna, is reported to have come as far as Kesariya. It is not known whether his purpose was to fight with us or something else; he is said to have gone back to Patna.'<sup>6</sup> Prithvinarayan had sent five elephants valued at Rs 15,000 as tribute to the British and the Patna Council noted that there was 'no reason to complain of his having committed any acts of hostilities as yet, whatever may be apprehended from him hereafter'.<sup>7</sup> Besides, the Company was then in no mood to increase its military expenditure.

Baburam Acharya's arguments that Karna Sena and Avadhut Singh, the son of Ranjit Malla, the exiled Bhadgau king, were hatching a plot to kill Prithvinarayan cannot be sustained on a reading of the source material.<sup>8</sup> Avadhut Singh was trying to persuade the Company for military assistance to recover his father's kingdom and continued to do so till much later. But both of them were too feeble to create any problem for Gorkha.

Since the Baisi-Chaubisi in the west was always a potential problem, Prithvinarayan next directed his attention there. A start could be made by wooing Tanahu, which had once been defeated and restored by him. But Tanahu had started an anti-Gorkha flirtation with Lamjung. The Gorkha commanders Keharsingh Basnet and Vamsaraj Pande reduced the small principalities of Dhor, Bhirkot, Gulmi and Payyu. They were ensured supplies by the Brahmans in exchange for promises of the confirmation of their freehold land-grants. However, Tanahu, Lamjung, Kaski and others put up a combined resistance. As a result the Gorkhali army retreated after suffering heavy losses. The Gorkhali move was 'more than a punitive expedition'

but 'by no means a concerted effort at conquest'.<sup>9</sup> Thus, though the possibility of an outright conquest of the western principalities had been mooted before, all that Prithvinarayan desired at this juncture was to establish his lordship over them.

Prithvinarayan wrote to the king of Jajarkot in 1769 that 'arrangements were being made for sending troops to the east'. With a request for reports of Baisi-Chaubisi, the king was assured that if conquered, Jajarkot would have to pay salami of only Rs 701 and in lieu, could enjoy all other taxes and revenues.<sup>10</sup> Gorkha did not send an army to the west because of the difficult terrain. The Chaubisi might have chosen to take advantage of this defensive strength which, as Stiller says, they could forfeit if they invaded Gorkha. Besides, the traditional rivalries between the Chaubisi states were a deterrent against any such move.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, what Prithvinarayan wanted was swift action in the east. The eastern boundary of the new kingdom of Nepal had extended up to the Dudhkosi. When Bhadgau was invaded in 1769, the army was said to have been composed of the Kirats, Kambojas (Khambus?) and Khasas.<sup>12</sup> In an attempt to blockade the valley, Dolakha in the east had already been subdued. Baburam Acharya feels that the Kirat settlements in the 'Wallo Kirat' (Near Kirat) were also under Gorkhali occupation then. Unfortunately, on this point, the sources fail to satisfy us.

The newly gained territories of Gorkha witnessed rebellions from time to time. We have noted earlier how the 'Bhotiyas' of Bigu in Dolakha remained recalcitrant till they were eventually subdued. The 'Bhotiyas' had risen under one Bire Dhami after he was released by Lachhiman Thapa in 1762.<sup>13</sup> Though Dolakha proved its loyalty by capturing the fugitive officers of Makwanpur when they came in 1762,<sup>14</sup> Dhulikhel had risen eight months before the fall of Bhadgau.

*Bhasha Vamsavali* records that when Dhulikhel was recaptured by Dalajit Shah in 1763, the people put up a tough resistance at neighbouring Chaukot under Namsingh Rai and Mahendrasingh Rai. The Gorkhalis lost 332 men in their attempt to take the place that was being defended 'with the help of only fifty houses'.

Trouble that could be detrimental to the interests of Gorkha was brewing in Eastern Nepal. Kamadatta had been murdered by Buddhikarna with help from Sikkim. The uncle of the deceased Sena

ruler then solicited the help of the Company against the dewan (1770). Ducarel, the first English Collector of Purnea, was in favour of lending support. He complained that Buddhikarna was plundering the Company's frontiers and harassing its subjects. Moreover, he argued that because Morang was a fertile country, a strong and peaceful rule there could attract Company tenants in the bordering regions, and as a consequence of their settling there the Company's revenue could be augmented. On the other hand, if Morang remained disturbed, the bordering areas of the Company would attract plunderers from across the border. So, he felt that the best method was to intervene in the affairs of the Sena kingdom and extend the Company's influence over Morang.<sup>15</sup> Years before, Reza Khan, the *naib nazim* of the Company, had suggested a similar course of action in order to stretch the Company's boundary north of Purnea to its 'natural frontier' in the hills.<sup>16</sup> The English were interested in Morang, fertile and rich in forest wealth, with its supply of ship timber.<sup>17</sup> However, the Select Committee did not consider it imperative to intervene.

Prithvinarayan's option for swift action in the east was provoked by a new development. The British, it seemed, were not the only ones who could deprive Gorkha of the fertile plains of Morang. The year that Prithvinarayan took Kathmandu and Patan had seen the accession of bSod Nams Lhan Grub (Sonam Lhendup), popularly called Deb Zhidar, as the Deb Raja of Bhutan. Getting rid of priestly control he had made himself independent. With a view to consolidating his position, he strengthened his connection with the Panchen (Tashi) Lama of Tibet and the new ruler of Nepal.<sup>18</sup>

Though Bhutan had initially wanted to occupy the Dooars, the realisation that a permanent hold was not possible without political hegemony over Koch Bihar made Bhutan decide to merely pressurise the latter. Bhutan had been making and unmaking the kings of Koch Bihar for a while. Keeping up this policy, Zhidar descended on the plains of Buxa in 1770, imprisoned Dhirajandranarayan, the ruler of Koch Bihar, and hoisted his own protégé, Rajendranarayan, on the throne. In his conquering spree Zhidar also invaded Sikkim. Sikkim history relates, 'In the Chag-tag [Iron Tiger] year, CE 1770, a vast invading force came as far as the eastern bank of the river Tista, and their main bodies took possession of those portions of Sikkim, while the scouts and advanced patrols and skirmishing parties came up as



far as Mangbro and Barphug in Sikkim.' A body of Zhidar's army crossed the Tista and invaded Vijaypur. Invited to participate in the campaign, his protégé, the king of Koch Bihar, joined in with a contingent under Raikat Ramnarayan.

The Bhutanese invasion of Vijaypur does find mention in Bhutanese accounts, but not in any Nepali source. There is not a single extant document in the name of Karna Sena. This was because Buddhikarna wielded power in Vijaypur till 1773 when Chaudandi, the middle Sena principality, was annexed by Gorkha.

As described earlier, Bhutan had sent representatives in response to Kamadatta's invitation at the time of his accession. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the Bhutanese army, instigated either by relatives of the murdered Kamadatta or other enemies of the dewan, invaded Vijaypur to punish Buddhikarna.

Buddhikarna himself had strained relations with a few of his own fellow Kirats in the latter part of 1769. A letter from his younger brother to Samo Raya and Ahom Raya appealed for 'the return of those who had taken refuge in Sikkim'. This appeal, made in the latter part of 1769, asked for a favourable response 'if they did not want to destroy their country, but wanted its peace and prosperity'.<sup>19</sup> Buddhikarna's *jagir* grant to Funma Raya at Letang in Chaubis Thum is dated as early as 1771.<sup>20</sup>

The Bhutanese incursion was only a temporary affair and there was no prominent interruption in Buddhikarna's rule. From the banks of the Tista the Bhutanese might have sallied forth in bands over the surrounding countries of Sikkim and Vijaypur; not, however, to conquer territories. In a conversation that George Bogle had with Tashi Lama at Tashilumpo in 1775, the latter had said, 'I have already written to Sing Pertab (Simhapratap, the son and successor of Prithvinarayan) telling him that his father treacherously and unjustly made himself master of Bijapur (Vijaypur)...I hope he will restore it to Deb Rajah, its rightful possessor.'<sup>21</sup> However, Bhutan could have occupied Vijaypur for some time, though it was never 'the rightful possessor'. Bhutan's withdrawal was not caused by Prithvinarayan as held by one author.<sup>22</sup> Bhutan was then thwarted by Sikkim and the British.

The advance party of the Bhutanese army that had penetrated deeper into Sikkim found itself 'surrounded by lamas and laymen'

and was forced to withdraw. Bhutan negotiated a treaty with Sikkim at Pob-chu near the Rhenock hill spur, and 'Sikkimites obtained possession up to that place, which originally belonged to Bhutan'. The area was actually annexed by Bhutan from Sikkim in 1706.

At this juncture the English Company, keen to revive trade between Bengal and Tibet, then totally suspended by the Gorkha conquests, was in search of new routes to Tibet. In 1771, the Court of Directors suggested an exploration of Assam and Bhutan for an alternative to the Nepal route. The Collector of Rangpur was instructed to examine the prospects of Bhutan as a market for British goods.<sup>23</sup> By 1770, the opening of Tibet had become a fixed British aim. Warren Hastings, who became Governor of Bengal in 1772, was the first to try and execute the policy more seriously. He found a good opportunity to extend British influence to the north-east when Bhutan invaded Koch Bihar in 1772 and Nazir Khagendranarayan solicited British help on behalf of the minor son of the Koch Bihar ruler. Since the Bhutanese had reached dangerously close to the British district of Rangpur, the appeal found a quick response. In 1773, a section of the British army inflicted a series of defeats on the Bhutanese.

For a cautious man like Prithvinarayan, whose letters show a pretty good network of border intelligence in different quarters, these developments were alarming. The British were closer to Morang from more than one direction. Thus Prithvinarayan's chief concern was not to let the fertile Tarai slip, since it was vital from both strategic as well as economic viewpoints. The disruption in the Tibet trade had negated the anticipated lucrative prospects. Meanwhile, the kingdom under Gorkha had expanded and with it the requirements for its consolidation also increased. Prithvinarayan understood the value of land for people who had a predominantly agricultural and subsistence economy. Land was the only source of stable income, and the most valued possession. Thus, in such growth lay the necessity for more land and hence more conquests.

It was Kirkpatrick who observed, 'Whatever his conduct as a conqueror, or however severe his nature, may have been, he was not inattentive to the means of conciliating those on whose support he principally depended.'<sup>24</sup> Prithvinarayan's policy throughout his conquests was to confirm the existing land grants and other privileges of those high castes who assisted the Gorkhali advances by defection.

In most cases fresh grants were assigned as *birta* and in some cases exemptions made in the payment of the *kusahibisahi* tax, which was collected from *birta*-owning Brahmans when their grants were confirmed.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, lands had to be granted to members of the court and distinguished military commanders.<sup>26</sup>

*Jagir* grants to military personnel and government employees were necessitated by a preponderantly non-monetised economy. The mode of meeting the expenses of military establishments was also partly by assigning *jagirs*. Prithvinarayan realised his dependence on his soldiers and thus made land arrangements for them so that they could relax whether at home or in the front.<sup>27</sup> The soldiers too preferred *jagir* to cash payment. The *jamadar* who held three *kaiths* (khets)\* each yielding him sixty rupees as net income and further receiving two hundred and eight rupees yearly from the treasury, thought himself better off 'when he belonged to private company', because, not receiving any part of his salary in cash, he had then 'enjoyed sometimes ten, and sometimes twelve tolerably productive *Kaiths*'.<sup>28</sup>

The circle was really vicious. The need for more land to assign as *jagirs* resulted in further conquest, and new conquests made the expansion of the army necessary. On the basis of Kirkpatrick, Hamilton and some contemporary records, Stiller's estimates of the minimum and maximum increases in the number of soldiers show rapid growth in the standing army. In 1769, its estimated strength was only 1200, but by 1775 it had risen to 2600-3400.

Prithvinarayan, realizing the value of the fertile eastern Tarai, wrote in an October 1774 letter, 'It is no use giving up revenue-yielding better land and retaining the land of inferior quality...Do not give up the plains (Madhes).'<sup>29</sup> Hence, others had to be forestalled.

The English company, a powerful competitor, was in an advantageous position because Karna Sena regarded it as a sort of paramount power, 'the Sardar of all the Rajahs' and had sought its intervention against Gorkha. He had not only implored Kinloch to make a second attempt on behalf of Jayaprakash, but, in January 1772, met one Francis Peacock and gave him permission to explore his country for timber. The British could take whatever timber, el-

\* Cultivable or irrigated land in the hills on which paddy and wheat can be grown is known as khet. It is equal to 25 ropanis (or 100 muris), a ropani of land in the hills equals to 5,476 sq. ft. or 0.13 acres.



ephants and spices they required. Moreover, Karna Sena promised to ask the zamindars of every pargana to help the British with labourers and boatmen.<sup>30</sup> All that he asked for in exchange was strong action against Gorkha. Similarly, British help was also sought by Koch Bihar, with whom the Newar Rajas and the Senas of Makwanpur had marital relations. Thus, the British could take advantage of the situation by placing themselves at the service of either of the rivals. They did so by helping Koch Bihar against Bhutan.

Now Prithvinarayan's immediate object was to cross the Dudhkosi and occupy Majh Kirat. The Dudhkosi flows west and meets the Sunkosi to the north of the Mahabharat hills and then flows east as the Sunkosi to meet the Arun, on the eastern boundary of Majh Kirat. The confluence is in the north-east of Chaudandi, at the centre of the middle Sena principality, which was then under Karna Sena. Gorkhali preparations to cross the Dudhkosi were made in early 1772 when Karna Sena was facing trouble from Vijaypur as well. In his letter to Peacock, Karna Sena talks about the ill-conduct of the people of the East 'who had seized 10 or 15 villages' belonging to him and had 'set up new landmarks'.<sup>31</sup> This situation is reflected in the letter of one Jayarudra Upadhyaya, a Brahman Subba of Chaudandi. In it he demands from a revenue collection functionary, Saun Raya, an explanation for leaving Bodhe pargana for Vijaypur without permission. He complained that some tahsildar was collecting revenue at Bodhe on behalf of Budhikarna. Saun was asked to return immediately to Bodhe to find out Buddhikarna's intentions from his men, and also to collect revenue with the help of soldiers. Chamu Thapa accompanied by soldiers was sent with a mohar (order) to establish the claim of Chaudandi.<sup>32</sup> Karna Sena also reported to the English that the agents of the Chaubisi princes had approached him requesting the Company's intervention.

The detailed *Bhasa Vamsavali* mentions the conquest of the east in one line only. 'Kazi Abhimansingh Basnyat, Ramakrishna Kuvar,' it says, 'then returned after conquering Vijaypur, Chainpur, Chaudandi.' Ramakrishna Kuvar, deputed for the invasion of Kirat, enjoyed the confidence of Prithvinarayan.<sup>33</sup> The king instructed Amarsimha Thapa, Sibe Khatri, Ranasur Bishta and Dalapati Khawas to obey the orders of Ramakrishna and sent them ten pitchers of gunpowder and three thousand pellets<sup>34</sup> for the Kirat conquest.

But more than this military preparation, Gorkha relied on its old stratagem of winning over to its side the Brahmans and Chhetris. Some of these people had migrated from regions as far as the Baisi-Chaubisi and Magrat to the Nepal Valley and eastward to the near and middle Kirat. The names of Parasuram Thapa, Ramakrishna Thapa, and Chamu Thapa as well as those of many Brahmans appear as officers of the Sena kingdoms. Such officers were potential defectors while the Brahman-Chhetri settlements could be the veritable Trojan horse for Gorkha. If Chhetris occupied high civil and military posts, Brahmans formed a wealthy class because they were the chief beneficiaries of land-grants in various principalities. They advanced loans to Prithvinarayan<sup>35</sup> and helped him with army supplies. Their role immediately before the conquest of the valley is also a point to bear in mind. In order to foment dissensions in the valley alone, 'he had about 2000 Brahmans in his service'.<sup>36</sup> A similar strategy was used in the conquest of Kirat.

The high castes, particularly in the east, could not have reconciled themselves with the political authority wielded by the Kirats. The latter were often denigrated as *mlechchhas*, because their customs did not conform with Hindu mores. But for a few exceptions, the Kirats in general did not subscribe to the Brahmanical Hindu religion. They were 'beef-eating monsters' even to the founder of Vijaypur. Bangya Basnet was specially deputed to win over the high castes to the Gorkha side.

Swarupsingh Karki, a Chhetri employed under Karna Sena, probably had such an inhibition and thus was not on friendly terms with the Kirat minister. He took asylum under Prithvinarayan after the capture of Kathmandu and Patan. Similarly, a wealthy Brahman of Majh Kirat, Harinanda Upadhyaya Pokhrel, clandestinely offered his services to Gorkha. Harinanda's descendants trace their origin from one Kasidas, who is said to have migrated from Kanauj in India to Dullu in Western Nepal.<sup>37</sup>

After a few generations the Pokhrels moved eastward and came to Makwanpur and found employment as priests. The Senas had assigned them many *birtas*,<sup>38</sup> the most famous being at Kharpa. Thus the family came to be known as 'the Pokhrels of Kharpa'. They realised that Gorkha would swallow Sena kingdoms before long, and in order to safeguard and augment their interests, set aside all moral inhibitions.

From Kharpa, situated on the eastern bank of the Dudhkosi, Harinanda not only helped the Gorkhals to cross the river (August 1772) but also advanced a loan of 3585 Patna rupees to Ramakrishna for payment to his soldiers. 'I shall not only have the *birta* land granted to you by the Makwani king confirmed,' Ramakrishna promised, 'but shall have additional land required by you granted. Harinanda Padhya, have the rest of the Kirat conquered, we will look after you.'<sup>39</sup> In return Harinanda promised Prithvinarayan his help in the occupation of Chaudandi. This scion of the family of the Sena priests sent a clod of its earth to Prithvinarayan as symbol of the surrender of Chaudandi.

The Brahmans and Chhetris welcomed the Gorkhali entry to Majh Kirat. Karna Sena took no step for the safeguard of the hills; he was concerned more with his land in the Tarai. The Khambus (Rais or Kiratis) under Chatin Raya of Rawakholas and Atal Raya of Penakhola offered resistance in vain. The Gorkhals advanced up to Chisankhu and Rewaghat, halted at Halesi where the soldiers were paid, and then moved to Majhuwa, Kulum and Dingla, inflicting heavy casualty on all those who resisted. This was reported to Prithvinarayan and he sent a further supply of arms and ammunition.<sup>40</sup> The quantity of ammunition supplied gives an indication of the stiff opposition offered by the Kirata. A few days later the king received communication about the attack on Kirat, presumably the central part of Majh Kirat, where four to five hundred Kiratis were killed.<sup>41</sup>

Harinanda's elder brother, Trilochan Upadhya, priest of the Sena ruler, also betrayed his king and rendered similar service to Gorkha in its attempt to capture the Tarai or Morang. Prithvinarayan told him, 'It is only in view of your services that we have attempted the task in the east. You are there.' With such confidence Prithvinarayan requested Trilochan to do everything by which the work could be completed. He was promised the confirmation of 'all his *birta* in the Kirat country' and exemptions from all kinds of taxes. He was told, 'You are the priest of the Kirat land; this priesthood will be yours even after the conquest. Get it conquered.'<sup>42</sup> Trilochan's price was some lands of his choice as *birta*. He made it known through Bangya Basnet. Only five days later the king wrote that the land for which the request was made by him was granted with all tax exemptions. With the royal order to this effect went instructions to help the army



to cross rivers at points where the enemy would not know. 'If the news reached the other side, this attempt would also end in futility,' Prithvinarayan cautioned him.<sup>43</sup>

It is not known whether Karna Sena knew about his priest's role, but he placed great reliance on the British. If the Company agreed to help him, he himself would send thirty thousand archers, about fifteen hundred horses and soldiers and would furnish the necessary information about the Gorkhalis. He wanted the Company to back the main column of his archers by its forces and artillery, and added, 'Nypaul is so fine a country that it will please both the sepoy and the Company.' The intervention was being sought in favour of the cousin of Jayaprakash and to pressurise Vijaypur to give up the villages it had seized.<sup>44</sup> The British did not respond. Warren Hastings was in need of money and could not afford a costly adventure of doubtful results. Further, his policy, as he formulated, was to complete the outline of the company's dominions; it was of self-defence, and not in favour of 'remote projects of conquest'. Karna Sena might have cherished the desire to occupy Nepal with British help, but negotiations had already been opened between Gorkha and the Company.

With the fall of Chaudandi in mind, Prithvinarayan wrote to Warren Hastings on May 27, 1773, about his desire to cultivate cordial relation with the Governor. His intention was to forestall the Company's intervention during the Gorkhali attack on Vijaypur. Describing Kamadatta as his brother and Buddhikarna as the treacherous dewan who had 'usurped the countries of Amirpur (Chaudandi) and Bijapur' (Vijaypur), he informed the Governor that he proposed 'to send a force to punish the dewan, who it is suspected might take refuge in Purnea, which is a neighbouring district'. Prithvinarayan, therefore, requested the Governor to write a letter to the Chief of Purnea asking him not to give Buddhikarna any help. There was an inducement. If successful in his 'attempt to punish the dewan and recover the countries', Prithvinarayan would send the Governor 'merchandise and curiosities'.<sup>45</sup>

An amicable settlement could be reached between the two. Hastings needed the help of Gorkha to prevent the depredations committed by the Sannyasis every year in Bengal. Described in British records as 'lawless banditti', the Sannyasis or mendicants, called Nagas, forced contributions in the name of charity. They were held

in high esteem by the villagers and came as far as Dinajpur and the Dooars every year. They once had tried to break the economic blockade of the Nepal Valley by helping its kings. They put up stiff resistance to the British, and when pursued, took refuge in the Nepal Tarai.<sup>46</sup> Warren Hastings' reply on 30 October 1773 was that 'the Raja's messengers saw him just at the time of his leaving Benares', and though he had asked them to meet him at Patna they never did. Hastings, therefore, requested Prithvinarayan 'to send trustworthy representatives'. On their arrival action could be taken according to his letter, and also 'to prevent the depredations committed every year in Bengal by Sannyasis who came from his country'.<sup>47</sup>

Since the British decided to appease the new ruler of Nepal, Karna Sena's appeals went unheeded. The Gorkhali advance in the east was facilitated by the neutral British stance. Whatever opposition the Gorkhals faced came from the Kirats under their tribal chiefs in the hills. As the regular military force of the Sena rulers consisted of 'the Rajputs and Khas, who generally resided near the person of the Raja', Trilochan might have played a significant role in neutralising or winning them over to the Gorkha side. Chaudandi was taken without much bloodshed. After the fall of Chaudandi, some of the Kirats took refuge either in the hills or Sikkim or India. In a July 1773 letter Prithvinarayan assured them, 'Though you did to us what you should not have done at the time of our conquest of this land, we guarantee the safety of your lives and properties.' He further implored them to return, saying, 'You were the god subjects of Makuwani king yesterday, but today he is not your king. We have established our rule in this kingdom...Come back with your people.'<sup>48</sup>

The greater part of Majh Kirat was subdued by the middle of 1773. The Gorkha king wrote to Warren Hastings (May 1773) when a large part of Majh Kirat had already been reduced and preparations were afoot for an advance towards Vijaypur and Pallo Kirat, about his intention to punish the 'treacherous Dewan', Buddhikarna. The Kirats of the hills offered resistance, but many factors worked against them. Though there is no contemporary source to corroborate it, a document,<sup>49</sup> copied probably in 1846, does mention that Visveswar Jaisi Aryal, a Brahman, had been to Chaudandi and the Kirat land where he spent two years preparing the way for the Gorkha conquest. However the nature of his accomplishments is only a matter of con-  
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ture. Given the characteristics of a rule in which revenue collection was the only government function, and considering the selfish interests that the land-owning class had, the Sena kingdom had enough weaknesses to cause its end with a minimal amount of outside pressure. Besides the support that Gorkha won from the Brahman-Chhetri group, the most potent cause of the Kirat failure was the these freedom-loving people into a number of tribal *thums* that were unable to offer a united opposition in the absence of a central leadership. Moreover, in the Sena army 'the Rajputs had fire-arms' and the Kirats were 'chiefly armed with swords and bows, their arrows being poisoned'.<sup>50</sup> This is confirmed by other sources. The use of firearms by the Gorkhals<sup>51</sup> is attested to by Prithvinarayan's documents; on the other hand, an inscription of a Gorkhali commander who fought in the east describes the Kirats as 'Bhilla' using poisoned weapons.<sup>52</sup>

Karna Sena was accepted at Vijaypur as its *de jure* ruler, but the actual power was in the hands of Buddhikarna, the 'Rajabhara Samartha'. However, his power seemed to be confined only to Vijaypur and not over his fellow Kirats in the hills. A chronicle of the Sikkim rulers in the Limbu language mentions the chiefs (Hang) of Kirat thus: Buddhikarna Rai of Morang-Vijaypur, Jamun Rai of Chaubis Thum, Fung Rai of Pachthar, Jang Rai of Athrai, Athang Rai of Phedap, Mongpahang Rai of Yangrup, Subhavanta Rai of Tamar, Rainasingh Rai of Mewa, Srideva Rai of Maiwa, Asadeva Rai of Chhathar, Harshamukhi Rai of Chainpur and Sunuhang Rai of Arun. Prithvinarayan is described as Pene Hang.<sup>53</sup>

Abhimansingh Basnet, who was stationed with his army in the lowland of 'Ambarpur' (Amirpur or Chaudandi), appealed to Harinanda again, in January 1774. The letter is interesting because of its details. It says that Harinanda not only helped the Gorkhali army to cross the Dudhkosi, but had also advanced loans, first of 3585 Patna rupees and then 7466, to pay the soldiers. Acknowledging all this the letter records his service 'in winning over the Parbate *umra* (nobles)', or leading Brahmans and Chhetris, 'to our side by breaking them from the Kiratis'. The promise of an extensive tax-free *birta* in the low-lands of Majh Kirat and the post of Chaudhari (tax collector) accompanied a request, 'Keep on your work for the establishment of our sovereignty over the hills and plains of Vijaypur in the east, being ruled by Dewan Buddhikarna ... We will have you taken care of.'<sup>54</sup>



Buddhikarna either had no resource to oppose the Gorkhalis or else he realised its futility in view of the defection of 'the Parbates' as witnessed in Chaudandi. He fled from Vijaypur after Abhimansingh entered Chaudandi. In his reply, dated January 4, 1774, to the Governor's letter of October 1773, Prithvinarayan informs that Buddhikarna 'has now fled from Bijapur'. There were misgivings about the British course of action regarding Vijaypur and this impelled Prithvinarayan to say that he would occupy the place if the Governor 'assisted' him. He was even ready to pay whatever revenue was fixed, and thought of sending Abhimansingh to Calcutta to negotiate the deal. Realising the value of the Gangetic plain in the south, he now also cast his eyes upon Bettia. In reply to the request to prevent the Sannyasi menace the king expressed his inability to stop them from crossing the Gandak as it was outside his jurisdiction. 'It has lately been included in Bettia,' he says, and goes on to show his willingness 'to extend (his) possession in that direction if the Governor assists'. 'In that case,' the Governor was assured, 'the Sannyasis will never be able to cross the river.' He also cited how at the instance of Vansittart he had once 'severally punished the Sannyasis for plundering the English factory'.<sup>55</sup> The British could not have permitted the Gorkhalis to carry out these ventures in Bettia but they did nothing to stop the execution of the plan to take Vijaypur. The letter was only to keep the British reassured and in a state of inaction when he made his move towards Vijaypur.

Karna Sena died in 1774 about 'eighteen months after his expulsion' from Chaudandi.<sup>56</sup> According to a Nepali source, Karna Sena had fled to Rampur in the British territory to solicit help; in exchange he was ready to allow the British to establish a *kothi*, or factory, at Vijaypur, and also 'to allow the Company to take ten annas and to remain satisfied with six annas for himself' from the revenue of his kingdom. But he died before a reply came from Calcutta.<sup>57</sup> Chemjong, without quoting any source, gives the impression that he was killed by unknown assailants at Purnea. As his infant son could be a source of future trouble, he was, according to Hamilton, inoculated with poison by a hired Brahman under the pretext of being vaccinated for small pox. A Nepali source only makes a furtive comment that when Dinanath went to Calcutta to negotiate with the British, the little Makwani prince was there with a dewan, Bhuvanewar Upadhyaya,

to solicit British help, 'but by the prowess of our Sri S. Sarkar (Prithvinarayan) Makwani saheb caught small-pox and died'.<sup>58</sup>

Trilochan had been assigned the task of making it possible for the army to cross the rivers stealthily, for 'once we reach the other side, and will depend on our strength'. In carrying arms and others supplies to the army, *jhara*, or forced labour, was used and in some cases land was also granted to the porters as *kipat*. However, here the word '*kipat*' was a misnomer.<sup>59</sup> Tamangs (Murmis), Sunuwars and Thamis acted as porters. In pursuance of a policy to create a rift in the Kirat camp, a letter was sent to Jang Raya, Fung Raya, Jamun Raya and 'other Limbu Rayas'. These three names occur in the Limbu genealogy of Sikkim as those of the chiefs of Athrai, Pachthar and Chaubis Thum respectively. Prithvinarayan told them that his prowess had made him master of their country and assured them and their families of the protection of their lives and property. But this assurance was not applicable to the side of 'other nine lakh Rais'. He instructed them 'to do away with other chiefs'.<sup>60</sup>

Abhimansingh was not sent to Calcutta to negotiate with the Governor. His services as a commander were more valuable. Since Buddhikarna had already left the place and taken refuge in British territory, there probably was almost no resistance when Abhimansingh advanced eastward from Chaudandi and took Vijaypur (c. June-July 1774). The difficult terrain in the hills had scattered pockets that offered resistance, though not unitedly. This is made clear by a Limbu manuscript collected by Hodgson in 1840. The Kirats under two Khambu chiefs, Waling Hang and Uling Hang, had fought against the Gorkhalis on the banks of the Tamakosi in the Near Kirat and continued their fight for seven years. Such recalcitrant pockets existed in the already conquered Kirat when the Gorkhalis moved eastward. As 'no help came from the Limbu Kirats living beyond the Arun', many chiefs left for 'Muglan' (India). The account adds, 'Chautariya Agamsingh Rai also left for India.'<sup>61</sup> Similarly, the manuscript describes a resistance under Jaikarna Rai when the Gorkhalis crossed the Arun. Raghu Rana, a Magar officer in the Gorkhali camp, is described as having fought against a Kirat warrior, Kangsore. Both of them were killed and, according to an oral tradition cited by Chemjong, a truce was made between Abhimansingh and the Limbus stipulating that the Kirats would acknowledge the Gorkha king

as their king and themselves as belonging to the Gorkha family.<sup>62</sup>

Prithvinarayan's letters reveal the tough fights that the Kirats gave. Describing the completion of the conquest of Majh Kirat, which he called Wallo Kirat, he wrote to a religious preceptor, Yogi Bhagavantanath, 'We have accomplished the task of Kirat by your blessing...Now the frontier (in the east) has extended to Arun. About one thousand enemies were killed, four hundred were drowned and about fourteen hundred women and children have been made captive. Wallo Kirat has been conquered.'<sup>63</sup> The letter also mentions a fight between Kaski and Lamjung in the west. Such quarrels left the Gorkhalis undisturbed to complete their conquest in the east.

Warren Hastings made a belated claim that both Amirpur and Vijaypur were 'parts of the province of Bengal'. A summary of the communication to 'Prithvinarayan, the Ruler of Nepal' dated August 10, 1774, reads, 'Last year a letter was received from him communicating his intention to seize the murderer of the Raja of Morang.\* A reply to that letter was handed over to his wakil. It now transpires that his troops have occupied Bijapur and Amirpur, both of which are parts of the province of Bengal. As it is desirable to preserve friendly relation between him and the Company, it is hoped that he will remove his troops from those places.' The British claim was undoubtedly wrong. Chaudandi and Vijaypur never formed parts of Bengal. Prithvinarayan informed the Governor through an agent about the occupation of both kingdoms on 13 October 1774. He also made a request for a *sanad* under the Governor's seal and signature and the payment of *nazrana*. Warren Hastings had probably been influenced by Buddhikarana who had gone to Calcutta to solicit British assistance. On November 28 Prithvinarayan replied to Warren Hastings, who had by then become Governor-General, that he was prepared 'to pay to the Company the revenues of Bijapur' in the same manner as he 'paid that of other villages like Makwanpur'. He hoped that 'the Company will not be the loser' and that 'the Governor General will not be prejudiced against him by the misstatement of his enemies'. An agent went to Dinajpur and Dinanath was sent to Calcutta to negotiate with the British.<sup>64</sup> Dinanath succeeded in his mission and the matter was finally settled in favour of Nepal. The threat posed

\* Buddhikarna.



by the Marathas tied the hands of the British. Later, they recognised the authority of Nepal over Makwanpur. A further realisation dawned when Dinanath, on the request of Mrs Hastings, could send a contingent of the Gorkhali army to help the British at the time of the Chait Singh affair.<sup>65</sup>

Prithvinarayan's move to Morang in the east was for the possession of the revenue-yielding plains. However, this did not mean that the march to the hills was only to satisfy a need for action. The motive, as will be seen, was deeper and primarily economic. Since Sikkim claimed overlordship in the eastern and northern part of Far Kirat, or Limbuan, the Gorkha policy of expansion was destined to cause disputes with that country. In his report to his commanders on 25 August 1774 after keenly watching developments in Kaski, Lamjung and Palpa, Prithvinarayan said that 'at a place which is after four days' walk from our border the son of the Sikkim dewan has come to confer with our officers'. He added, 'It does not appear that there is any bad intention against us.'<sup>66</sup>

The letter claimed the Kankai in the plains and Tamar and Sabha in the hills as the eastern boundaries of the Gorkhalis. However, there are indications that actual control was established only up to Harichand Garhi because after the initial claim it adds 'if the Kiratis agree that the Kankai is 15 kos (thirty miles) to the east of Harichand Garhi'. Till a much later date Sikkim kept claiming Kankai as its western boundary though sources clearly state that the land between the Kankai and the Tista in the plains known as Morang, belonged to Vijaypur. The course of the river helps to dispel the confusion. The Kankai flows in a south-easterly direction from the Singalila Range, which divides Limbuan from Darjeeling, before it takes a sharp bend towards the west and flows somewhat constantly southward to the plains. The references made by Sikkim were to the upper reaches of the river, that is, it lay claim upon the northern part of Ilam, parts of Pachthar and Taplejung.

As indicated by the letter, negotiations were opened with the Kirats, for the actual control of the land between the Bakra and the Kankai.<sup>67</sup> Claiming the Kankai as the eastern border the king wrote to Yogi Bhagavantnath, 'Men could not be slain, many fled to Sikkim. About 85 of those hiding in the bushes and forests were killed. We are about to make a treaty with Sikkim, and if it is made, those who

have taken refuge there will be extradited to us. If the treaty is not made we shall have to fight with Sikkim. If it invades we shall defeat it by your blessings.'<sup>68</sup>

Any possible intervention from outside made diplomatic activities imminent. Emissaries were thus sent to different quarters, but probably less to parley than to espy: Viswamitra Padhya and Gangananda Acharya were sent to Sikkim, where they were probably killed along with their two associates, Brihaspati Pandit went to Purnea, Kiritamali to Patna, Baikuntha Padhya to Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah of Oudh, Dinanath Padhya to Calcutta, and Lalgiri, a *gosain* trader 'having trade establishments at Lhasa and Benares' to Tibet. Similar missions, by the good officers of the Yogi, were used to confer with Jumla, Jajarkot and Kaski. Prithvinarayan was satisfied and confidently claimed that even if the other Chaubisi states 'try their best to attack us cannot simply do so because of their incapability'.<sup>69</sup>

Compared to Near or Middle Kirat the far east did not have large Brahman-Chhetri settlements. A few places had distinct Indo-Aryan names. However, these were either given by outsiders to designate the settlements of five clans (Pach-thar), eight Rai clans (Athrai) and so on or else were probably due to the influence of the Maithili language<sup>70</sup> used by the Senas.

The Gorkhals under Abhimansingh reached the Tamar River by September 1774. The Kirat chiefs, to whom Prithvinarayan had written earlier, bought peace as is indicated by another letter written to them at the time, 'You are the good subjects of that land. You recognised me as your king and neither rose against the king then nor have you done so now. Having understood this I have accepted you as my own and accordingly officers have been instructed...Look after the land properly with the consent of officers there.'<sup>71</sup> He confirmed the rights of the chiefs and wanted them to span a bridge over the Tamar. The required 'consent' of the Gorkhali officers was sure to impinge upon the autonomy enjoyed so far by the Kirats.

The extension of the Gorkha conquest to the east by September 1774 can be precisely demarcated. Of the different zones into which Nepal is now divided for administrative purposes, the hill districts of Taplejung, Pachthar and Ilam in Mechi zone that touch the boundaries of Sikkim and Darjeeling lay outside it. The eastern part of Jhapa district in Morang or the land to the east of the Kankai in the flat land

which touches the Mechi in the Siliguri sub- Darjeeling and the Purnea district of Bihar was also not a part of it. The Kirats who had accepted Gorkha rule had been asked 'to do away with other chiefs' and were told that the terms offered to them 'did not apply to the nine lakh Kirat of the other side', the other side being Limbuan.

The Kirat chiefs under Gorkha seem to have obeyed the king's order and spanned a bridge over the Tamar. In October, the Gorkhals crossed the river. Some of the chiefs surrendered. Abhimansingh reported to his king about the voluntary submission of the *Subbas* of Sringya. For the consolidation of new conquests, Chaudandi had been fortified and the army marched from Kurilya in a three-pronged attack. It is not known what opposition the Gorkhals faced, but they moved fast.

The lofty 'denuded peak' Falut of the Lepchas, on the north-western tip of Darjeeling, is where its border meets with those of Sikkim and Nepal. From there the Singalila range runs northwards forming the boundary between Nepal and Sikkim and southwards between Nepal and Darjeeling. A little above Falut, over the same range, there is a pass called Islimba in Pachthar on the Nepal side; a little further up joining Sikkim and Nepal is the Choyabhanjyang\* pass, to the west of which is a place called Chyangthapu.

In a letter dated 5 October 1774 Abhimansingh, the Gorkhali commander, reported his advance up to Islimba and Chayangthapu. The report fetched the royal order that the places were not to be evacuated. It laid down the main object as 'the occupation of the land to the east of the Kankai and west of the Tista' in the plains for it would not serve any purpose if the 'inferior land' was retained and 'revenue-yielding superior land was left to the others'. The instruction was explicit, 'If Sikkim remains quiet even after the occupation of Chyangthapu and Islimba, if it does not break the truce and come to fight, do cross the Kankai very cautiously. But if Sikkim is offended by our occupation of Chyangthapu and Islimba and breaks the peace, don't evacuate the plains. You must quickly advance up to the Tista which forms of the border of Hindupati.'<sup>72</sup> The commander followed the order, and by the end of 1774 the Gorkhals crossed not only the Kankai but also the Mechi in their drive towards the Tista. It is made

\* *bhanjyang* in Nepali means 'a pass'.



evident by Abhimansingh's confirmation of the priesthood of the Dantakali temple and some land in *mauja* Haskhowa in *tappa* Bonigau at Damabadi in the name of Lokeshwar Pandit.<sup>73</sup> There is a place called Haskhowa on the east of the Mechi on the way from Naxalbari to Siliguri in the Tarai of Darjeeling district. An old chronicle records the date of the fall of Chaudandi, Chainpur and Vijaypur as July-August 1774, and that of Ilam as October 1774. It adds that Ilam surrendered without a fight.<sup>74</sup>

The truce alluded to in the letter was the one which Gorkha probably made with Sikkim in August 1774. Though the hills and plains of Eastern Nepal fell into the hands of the Gorkhalis, there was a snag—Buddhikarna, who had taken shelter in the British territory, was canvassing for support. Prithvinarayan, infatuated by the reported superior breed of the fugitive dewan's elephant, wanted it to be stolen by bribing its *mahout*. His instructions about the dewan himself was clear, 'If Buddhikarna could be captured there, the very root of the trouble would be removed. If possible, depute some soldiers, promise them ten to twelve hundred (rupees) and other rewards and have him killed...Have it done by all means.' Buddhikarna was killed in 1777,<sup>75</sup> two years after the death of Prithvinarayan.<sup>76</sup>

To his commanders the instructions given were not to wage a war of offence against Sikkim. Action was called for only if Sikkim moved first. This policy finds expression in the letter to Yogi Bhagavantnath also. The letter to Abhimansingh and others in October 1774 was more clear, 'Do not go beyond Islimba and Chyangthapu to occupy territory. In case of Sikkimese attack, choose a vantage point to give battle and defeat them. If you go to the old territory of Sikkim, the relation with Lhasa may turn bad. Therefore, don't advance to the north, and see that not even four-finger breadth of the Lhasa territory is encroached upon. You must not give trouble to the people there, and also you must not go to the old territory of Sikkim.'<sup>77</sup> A similar assurance had been sent to Tibet. Much perturbed by the Gorkha subjugation of 'Murang' and 'Bijapur', which disrupted the trade between Bengal and Tibet, the Panchen or Tashi Lama met George Bogle, Warren Hastings' emissary to Tashilumpo on 23 December 1774. Bogle had been sent in an attempt to open up Tibet, and he was told that Prithvinarayan 'had promised again and again to him and to the Government at Lhasa, that he would never encroach a

finger's breadth on their territories, but now he had attacked Demo Jong's (Denzong or Sikkim) country, which was subject to Lhasa'.<sup>78</sup> Bogle informs that 'the Debo', who had played chess with him 'was gone with forces to oblige the Gorkha Rajah either to quit Demo Jong's country, or to fight with him'. He gives the impression that the Lama, the real power in Tibet at the time, was much concerned and was always inquiring after the Gorkha Rajah. A few days before, on 6 December, the Lama had informed Bogle that the Gorkhali 'forces are employed in attacking Demo Jong, whose country is in the neighbourhood of Bengal. They have surrounded it; the Gorkha Rajah has trained sepoy after the English manner, and given them muskets'. The Lama also corrected Bogle's misinformation that the Gorkhas were on the borders of Tibet by saying, 'They must have meant Demo Jong's dominions, which are subject to Lhasa.'<sup>79</sup> A few days later, on 11 January 1775, Prithvinarayan died.<sup>80</sup>

After receiving the news of Prithvinarayan's death, a letter was sent by Tashi Lama to Pratapsimha Shah (1775-77) asking him to relinquish Morang and Vijaypur conquered by his father, the lands which, however, the Lama erroneously thought to have belonged to Bhutan. *The History of Sikkim* describes Bogle's 'Debo' or Deb Patza, sent to Nepal by Lhasa, as Depon Petsal, and the Nepali document had Dheba Pachhal. The Sikkim account throws much light on these events regarding which the extant Nepali sources do not say much. In view of Prithvinarayan's instructions that Tibet should not be offended, it seems true that when Depon Petsal approached the Nepal frontier, the Gorkhas who 'intended invading Sikkim...could not send the invading force'. But that Prithvinarayan did not advocate a totally pacific policy towards Tibet is made clear by other sources.

Tibetan trade was the primary consideration of Gorkha, and the principal reason for its conquest of Nepal. But as Bogle remarked, 'although the wealth of Nepal furnished the Gorkha Rajah with the means by which he rose, he neglected to cherish the source from when it flowed. Mistrustful of subjects disaffected to his government, he entertained a number of troops on regular pay'. The army was not only expanded and equipped with firearms, but artillery was formed. 'The ordinary revenue of countries where a standing army had hitherto been unknown was unequal to these extraordinary expenses,' he continues, 'and the Gorkha Rajah, among other expedients, had

recourse to imposing high duties on trade in order to defray them.' Such a policy forced merchants to quit the country. The Gosains, 'who had formerly very extensive establishments in Nepal...were driven out of the kingdom'. Only two Kashmiri houses remained 'and the Rajah, afraid also of their abandoning him, obliges them to give security for the return of such agents as they have occasion to send beyond the boundaries of his dominions'. The expulsion of the merchants was in accordance with the views that the king had expressed in his *Divya Upadesh*. One of the Kashmiris allowed to remain was probably Sadullaji Mojami as shown by a document (1765) which confirms his ownership of the land and house in Nepal, and requires 'the payment of the same amount as *salami* as other merchants would have to pay on our actual occupation of Nepal'.<sup>81</sup>

The disruption in trade and the consequent loss of revenue aggravated financial constraints already made acute by the requirements of an expanding army and an enlarged kingdom. Thus, total control over the Tibetan trade was felt necessary. If Tibet was suffering due to the closure of Kathmandu roads it had access to the south through other directions, and in this lay the significance of Sikkim. Prithvinarayan's mercenary outlook desired the establishment of a political hegemony over the hills of Kirat and Sikkim so that all the doors to Tibet could be closed and the transit trade fully controlled. If possible, a sphere of influence had to be extended over Tibet itself.

Bogle feared that Gorkha would even try to conquer 'Pari-jong', or Bhutan, and 'that having assumed the title of King of the Hills (Parbat-kai-Badshah), he (Prithvinarayan) wished to be one in reality'.<sup>82</sup> The British envoy tried to impress upon the Lama the necessity of a connection between Tibet and Bengal for the overcoming of such an eventuality.

Gorkha, on its part, did not view the British power with equanimity. Company troops in support of Koch Bihar had defeated Bhutan in 1772. This occurred not only in the plains but also in the hills as far as Dalimkot (Kalimpong), close to the Tista which then formed the Sikkim-Bhutan border in the hills. Though the British had withdrawn from the area after the Anglo-Bhutan treaty of 1774, their threat of impinging the Gorkhals remained. The British had to be forestalled, because in 1777 Pratapsimha Shah wanted Abhimansingh to take Someswar-Kabilaspur in the plains of Chitaur as swiftly as



possible in order to 'overtake the Firangis', or Englishmen.<sup>83</sup>

Nearest to Lhasa, the places of the region that Gorkha wanted to control most were the northern part of Taplejung in Pallo Kirat and Sikkim. Prithvinarayan had even thought of the possibility of a war with Tibet for the realisation of this purpose. When Bogle met Tashi Lama on 19 January 1775, barely a week after the death of Prithvinarayan, the Lama told him about the letter just received from Kathmandu. Sent not only to him but also to the Dalai Lama and other ministers, the letter stated that Prithvinarayan had no wish to quarrel with the Tibetans, 'but if they had mind for war...he was well prepared'. He wanted them to know 'that he was a Rajput', and made clear as to what his preferences were. He wanted to establish factories at Kuti, Kerong and other places upon the borders of Tibet and Nepal, 'where the merchants of Tibet might purchase the commodities of his country and those of Bengal'. He would allow the transportation of 'the common articles of commerce' but 'no glasses or other curiosities' the import of which he wanted Tibet to prohibit. Furthermore, Prithvinarayan wanted Tibet to have no connection with 'Fringies or Moghuls' (the British and the Indians), they were never to be admitted into Tibet. Lastly, he wanted Tibet to circulate the coins minted by him, of which he had already sent 2000 rupees before.<sup>84</sup> The letter was probably taken to Tibet by a *gosain*, 'Bhimgiri's disciple Lalgiri', who, the king had once told his preceptor, had 'trade establishments (*kothi*) in Lhasa, Kasi (Benares), and had land, house and *kothi* here (in Kathmandu) too'.<sup>85</sup>

On the basis of both what Bogle wrote and the Sikkim chronicle states it may be accepted that Tibet had taken some steps to pre-empt the Gorkhali move against Sikkim, perhaps when Limbuan was being seized. According to Tashi Lama, an 18,000-strong army had been sent under Depon Petsal.<sup>86</sup> However they had returned 'as they were unable to proceed on account of the great quantities of snow which rendered the road impassable'. However, the Tibetan government was angry with Depon. Depon told Bogle when they met a few days after his return in April 1775 that he was 'expecting soon to be again sent towards Nepal'.<sup>87</sup> Depon might have retreated on his own when he heard about the Gorkha king's death. Tashi Lama also 'received a letter from the commander of the Gorkha troops mentioning that he intended to desist from war on account of his master's death,

and proposing a truce for three years'.<sup>88</sup>

Though the Sikkim sources describe the help given by Sikkim to the Kirats in 1774, there is reason to doubt its veracity. The account presented is almost the same as that of the event which took place at a later time. There is also no other source to support the account. What seems probable is that some sort of an agreement was made after the death of Prithvinarayan.

However, there is serious discrepancy between the Nepali and Sikkim sources about a treaty in 1775. The Nepali source refers to a treaty (*dharmapatra*) between Nepal and Tibet written in Newari, made on 'Newari samvat 895\* Sraavan Sukla 13 Wednesday' at Khasha. Sikkim history dates it 'the 13th day of 6th month of the Shing-lug (Wood Sheep) year of CE 1775'. When Bogle met Tashi Lama on 26th January 1775, 'it was the first day of the Tibet year'. Even a rough calculation indicates that both refer to a treaty made in July-August, 1775. The Tibetan source claims Walung as the place where the treaty was signed.<sup>89</sup>

The Nepal-Tibet treaty was purely a commercial one concerned mostly with problems arising out of debased metal coins of indefinite value, and the rise in the price of silver and gold in Nepal. Tibet agreed to use only the coins minted in Nepal. There was also an agreement that no trader, whatever his place of origin, should be allowed to bring silver and gold except through the passes of Kuti and Kerong. Both promised to respect each other's borders.<sup>90</sup> However, nothing was said regarding the Nepal-Sikkim frontiers.

Though no Nepali version of any treaty made between Sikkim and Nepal in 1775 has come to light, the royal historians of Sikkim assert that 'an old copy of this treaty is still extant'. The Nepali text of the Nepal-Tibet treaty also names its Sikkimese signatories.

According to the Sikkim source, the Gorkhalis first demanded compensation for the slaughter of four Brahmans—most likely being Vivsmitra Padhya and Gangananda Acharya mentioned in Prithvinarayan's letter<sup>91</sup> as the two envoys deputed to Sikkim. On behalf of Sikkim an amount of Rs 4,000 was paid by Tibet as blood money. The chronicle adds that 'the Gorkha undertook to refrain from future raids'. Not very clear is how the blame for 'the present

\* The Nepal or the Newar era started from 20 October, 879, a Thursday.



rupture' could have been put on Bhutan with whom the Gorkhalis promised not to have connections 'in the matter of armed assistance'.

The Sikkim source also states that the boundary was fixed between Nepal and Sikkim. However, this demarcation would now make the recent Gorkha conquests in both Kirat and Morang into parts of Sikkim. But the area was never evacuated by the Gorkhalis. In view of this, what can be safely presumed is that Tibet paid blood money for Sikkim but the Sikkimese request for redrawing the boundary was never conceded to Sikkim had, according to the chronicle, gone with various documents as 'evidence of its former possessions...with the histories as to how they came to be obtained and with petition to the Tibetan government', praying that it should not be allowed to suffer any loss of territory. However, Sikkimese claims over Limbuan and Morang seem to have been unjustifiable.

The annexations of Chaudandi, Vijaypur and Limbuan were significant and the Gorkhalis did not harass Sikkim for many years. Pratapsimha wrote to Abhimansingh, saying that his conquests of Saptari and Vijaypur meant the occupation of an area which would give an annual revenue of Rs 175,000. These triumphs provided the resources for further conquests. The occupation of northern Far Kirat brought under their control the Walangchung pass leading to Tibet. The whole region surrounded by Tibet, Sikkim, Bhutan and the British dominion in Bengal had great strategic importance. From a social viewpoint it brought different tribes of Mongoloid and Tibetan origin under the control of the new kingdom of Nepal. The conquest of Eastern Nepal was a great achievement indeed and Abhimansingh commemorates this in an inscription at Kathmandu which describes him as the victor of 'nine lakh Kirat'.<sup>92</sup>

The extension of Nepal during the reign of Prithvinarayan was not even half of what was achieved later by his successors. Chitaur in the plains was annexed in 1777. In the same year Pratapsimha died after a short reign. Then followed the long period of regency of his widow, Rajendralakshmi, and then of his younger brother, Bahadur Shah, while Ranabhadur Shah was still a minor (r. 1777-1799). The further expansion of Nepal continued, particularly under the leadership of Bahadur Shah, who acted as Regent from 1786 to 1795. However, the period was one of confusion because of power struggles and palace intrigues which, after 1777, was to remain a marked fea-

ture of the political culture of Nepal.

When the Gorkhals resumed their career of conquest they turned both west and east. Tanahu, Palpa, Kaski and Lamjung envied the rise of Gorkha and their subjugation became essential. Besides the unscrupulous intrigues of jealous disputants for the throne, the pacific policy of Rajendralakshmi was responsible for the suspension of military expeditions for six years during her regency. Despite this, some important military gains were made. Thus, the western frontier of Nepal was extended to the Kai-Gandaki. This occurred after the reduction of Kaski and Lamjung, ruled by the collaterals of the founder of Gorkha. Baburam Acharya remarks, 'This victory was not because the Regent willed it, but it was more an outcome of the reaction to the challenge from her enemies outside.'<sup>93</sup> Yet, even if she had not willed a recourse to war; the rationale of a *kriegstaat* in quest of more land for the growing war machinery would have negated her pacifism. Her death in 1785 and the rise of Bahadur Shah, Prithvinarayan's younger son, as Regent, once again set the machine of war in motion, and consequently soon doubled the size of Nepal. In the west, the Gorkhals under the command of Damodar Pande gained a series of victories. Gulmi, Argha, Khanchi, Parbat (Malebum), Musikot, Galkot and Pyuthan fell one by one and by 1787 the frontiers of the new Nepal touched the border of Jajarkot, which was already a vassal of Gorkha. The rulers of Salyan bought peace by recognising Gorkhali overlordship, and so did Angyal Dorje, the king of Mustang in 1789.<sup>94</sup>

This victory was followed by the conquests of Dailekh, Doti, Achchham and Jumla. By 1789, all the Chaubisi and Baisi states, except Palpa, were subjugated. Their frontiers now extended to the Mahakali river, the present western border of Nepal. In 1790, the Gorkhals under Amarsimha Thapa gained more victories in the west. Kasau was conquered in 1790. The westward drive continued after the fall of the Regent and the assumption of power by Ranabahadur and even during the regnal period of Girvanayuddha Vikram (1799-1816), particularly under the leadership of Mukhtiyar (Premier) Bhimsen Thapa. The Gorkhals conquered Garhwal and reached Kangra across the Yamuna by 1808. Meanwhile, Palpa, which had remained independent, was reduced in 1805. The western frontier now extended up to the Satlaj. Most of these areas were brought under the direct control of Kathmandu. However, with a few strong



principalities, subsidiary alliances were made. Such states were granted some measure of autonomy.

In the east, the promise given to Sikkim in 1775 remained operative for thirteen years. The Sikkim chronicle says that immediately after the treaty was signed and the Tibetan agents had returned, the Gorkhalis 'again poured down two forces by the two passes of Tobjong (Taplejung) above, and Ilam below'. But the places, as seen earlier, had already been occupied by October 1774.

Risley's account that the Gorkhas were driven out of Ilam and that the Sikkimese penetrated as far as Chainpur in 1787 does not appear to be correct. Following him, Chemjong had reconstructed an account of the battle of Chainpur in 1776, and others have quoted him.<sup>95</sup> However, the sources on which the account is based relate to events and persons of a later date. Chemjong quotes three documents of the period between 1782 and 1784. One confirms the privileges of the Kirat chiefs, the second gives information about the distribution of weapons among them, and the third indicates Kirats having reported to the king about preparations being made by Sikkim. Chemjong suggests that the Limbus had joined the Gorkhali army. Stiller comments that 'it was this opening of recruitment to the men of the fighting castes throughout Greater Nepal that permitted the development of the Gorkhali army, without which the expansion of Gorkha and the unification of Nepal would never have been possible'.<sup>96</sup> It is doubtful whether the Limbus were recruited in the regular army. Documents are vague regarding this, but apparently the Limbus rebelled later when attempts were made to conscript them. Moreover, the definite policy laid down by Prithvinarayan was to recruit only the Khasas, Thakuris, Magars and Gurungs.<sup>97</sup> The regular army was officered by Chhetris. In 1791 some Kirats fought on the side of the Gorkhalis but they were not regulars. This was also the case when Nepal faced a greater crisis in 1814. The Kirats then enlisted were not regulars either, 'they received no pay', but were 'allowed to keep all they might obtain, specie excepted, by plunder'.<sup>98</sup>

There is no evidence of a Gorkhali invasion of Sikkim between 1775 and 1788. The invasion in 1788 was not an event isolated in itself, but closely connected with Nepal's Tibetan policy. The relationship between Nepal and Tibet had deteriorated due to various reasons. First, there was the problem of the debased coinage. The

*Mahendramalli* minted in Nepal for circulation in Tibet had been debased during the rule of the last Malla, causing a decrease of nearly one half of their face value. Prithvinarayan had inherited the problem, hence his *Divya Upadesh* laid down that the mint should be kept pure.<sup>99</sup> The Nepal version states that the king's envoys tried to convince the Tibetans and 'pleaded the difficulty in withdrawing all of the debased coins from circulation'. They insisted that no separate exchange rates between *Mahendramalli* and Gorkha coins should be fixed. As the new coins were roughly the same size and weight, the Tibetans wanted Prithvinarayan's coins to be circulated at par with the old coins. In their insistence Stiller saw the love of 'the sluggish, lamaistic society of Tibet' for the *status quo*.<sup>100</sup> Camman assigns a plausible reason. The scarcity of the *Mahendramalli* coins had actually increased their value in relation to the only other medium of exchange, silver ingots and purses of gold dust.<sup>101</sup> The Tibetan version is that their government had sent Prithvinarayan presents and a letter in 1770 explaining the background of the trade previously existing between Tibet and Nepal, and asking him to allow it to continue. They apprised him of the problem of the debased currency and requested him to prevent bad coins from being sent to Tibet. The version given in the biography of the eighth Dalai Lama is similar to Bogle's report that the Tibetans were willing to accept Prithvinarayan's coins provided that he take back all the Nepalese money which was then in circulation. The Gorkha king's reply to this matter and his suggestion that pilgrims be allowed to move freely between the two countries were courteous though non-committal.<sup>102</sup> The old specie continued to pass, 'but the channel by which it was introduced having been long stopped up', it had 'risen greatly above its former value, as well in proportion to the talents of silver as to the gold dust'.<sup>103</sup> It was to solve this problem in a way advantageous to Gorkha that the Nepal-Tibet treaty had been made in 1775.

Nepal's ambition to monopolise the Tibetan trade by controlling all the passes had led to the Gorkhali conquest of the upper hill region of Limbuan, considered 'inferior' to the 'revenue-yielding superior plains'. The treaty with Tibet in 1775 had stipulated that Tibet would trade only through the Nepal routes. However, in 1784, Tibet opened trade route through the Chumbi valley leading to Sikkim. The logical conclusion of Nepal's Tibet policy was to stop this cir-

cumvention by conquering Sikkim itself.

Nepal found an excuse in the controversy over the Panchen Lama's personal property to wreak vengeance on Tibet. The Lama's property was being claimed by his two brothers. One of them, Chosdup Gyatse, known as Shamar Trulku, the head of the Karma-pa sect, sought Nepalese help to claim his property. On this pretext the Gorkhals invaded Tibet and occupied Nyanang, Rongshar and Kirong. By the summer of Earth-ape year (1788) they marched to Dzonka and Shekar along different routes leading to Shigatse.

The Sikkim chronicle is more accurate when it relates that in 'Sa-tel', or 1788, the Gorkhals invaded Sikkim.\* However, it was not really 'nine years after the last rupture' as claimed. This mistake was probably due to a wrong calculation of date in the twelve-year cyclical method of Tibetan reckoning. A conquest of hilly Sikkim was not for the sake of conquest *per se*. It was to be a corollary to Nepal's rupture with Tibet in 1788. The date of 'the last rupture' given in the Sikkim chronicle is 'the tenth day of the first month of the Chag-ji' (that is, Iron Hen year), or 1780. It was in all probability the misrepresentation of Sa-ji (Earth Hen year), or 1789. The latter would then mean either late February or March 1789 which, as will be seen, is fully confirmed by Hamilton. The confusion in the Sikkim chronicle is removed when we recognise the total resemblance of the descriptions of events both of 1779-80 and 1789.

A two-pronged attack on Sikkim took place in 1788. Purna Ale, a Magar commander of the Gorkhali force, came from Ilam, probably after crossing Choyabhanjyang. Then he advanced up to Reling and Karmi, now in Darjeeling, and Chyakhung in Sikkim. Another force moved from Vijaypur. According to the Sikkim source, the name of the commander of 'another Gorkha force from Bijaypur' is Johar Singh. Markham called him 'the Subah of Morang'.<sup>104</sup> Hamilton called him 'Tiurar Singh, Subah of Morang, and Risley said he was 'general Jor Singh'.†

Advancing stealthily on the Singalila route, Johan Singh crossed

\* 'From a letter addressed by Mr Pagan to Colonel Ross, in the month of September, (probably of 1788, for there is no date in the letter) the Gorkhalese invaded Sikkim.' Hamilton, p. 120.

† He was probably Jahar Singh, the son of the renowned Gorkhali commander, Kehar Singh Basnet.

the Khaletchu (the Tibetan name for Kulhait), an affluent of the Great Rangit to the north of Darjeeling. Proceeding quickly on its banks, he made a surprise attack on the palace of Rabdantse and captured it. Rabdantse was the capital of Sikkim, situated at the same level, about three hundred feet below the famous monastery of Pemiongchi. Tenzing Namgyal and his family 'had scarcely any time to dress' before they took flight, the Sikkim chronicle adds. According to Hamilton, Rabdantse was taken 'shortly previous to the 28th October, 1788, as in a letter from Mr Pagan of that date he had just received accounts of the entire Conquest of Sikkim by the Gorkhalese', a report which 'considerably magnified the extent of their victory'.<sup>105</sup>

The Sikkim account is mistaken when it says that another army 'more numerous and powerful, under one Damodar Pande subsequently reinforced the Gorkhas'. Damodar Pande, one of Nepal's distinguished generals, was in charge of the western part of the country. The mistake made by the chronicle was because he was in overall command of the Gorkhali army when the Chinese intervened on behalf of Tibet immediately after. The Gorkhalis 'spread all over the country', the account continues, 'prying into every creed and corner of Sikkim, they sent parties to pry and prowl about all the valleys of the river Tista and its tributaries...they proceeded to take possession of every Jong (fort) and monastery which they stripped of their properties and administrative powers'.\*

Bhutan had sent some financial help to the Sikkim king who had taken shelter near its border. The Gorkhali army of '6000 men, of whom 2000 were regulars' met no opposition till it reached Rabdantse. However, despite the opposition met there the army laid siege to Rabdantse. Though the Sikkimese account says that Bhutan helped only by sending food and money, Hamilton<sup>106</sup> states that it was with the help of Bhutan that Sikkim forced the Gorkhalis to lift the siege. However, the Bhutanese retired soon because they were 'allowed no pay, and the country was too poor to admit of plunder'. 'By a letter of Pagan,' Hamilton adds, 'this would appear to have happened be-

\* Describing his visit to Pemiongchi, 'once the capital of Sikkim', in January 1849, Hooker noted that 'the Gorkhas plundered Tassiding, Pemiongchi, Changchelling, and all the other temples and convents to the west' of the Tista. It was then, he says, the famous history of Sikkim, compiled by the lamas of Pemiongchi, and kept at this temple, was destroyed, *Himalayan Journals*, I, pp. 309-10.



fore the 29th March, 1789', a date close to 'the tenth day of the first month'\* of the year Sa-ji (Earth Hen), 1789, and not Chag-ji (Iron Hen, or 1780), is accepted. On the return of the Bhutanese 'the greater part of the people of Sikkim submitted to the Gorkhalis'.

The Sikkimese, however, continued to resist the Gorkhalis under the leadership of a Lepcha commander, Chogthup (Chhothup)† popularly known as Satrajit for the seventeen (*satra*) victories (*jit*) he is said to have won over them. The sobriquet is reminiscent of the name Strajit of the Mughal *thandar* of Pandu in Assam who was defeated by the Ahoms c. 1636.<sup>107</sup> The son of an old Lepcha minister Karwang, Chogthup could have defeated the Gorkhalis in skirmishes here and there after retiring to a stronghold situated between the two branches of the Tista. 'This place,' observed Hamilton in 1802-03, 'called Gandhauk (Gangtok), has annexed to it a territory of considerable extent and affords the Rajah a revenue of about 7000 rupees a year, which is all that he possesses.'<sup>108</sup> While Chogthup led troops and annoyed the Gorkhalis, his brother Namgyal ('Nam-si' or 'Lamjit of the Bengalese', Hamilton) defended the new capital and looked after the administration. The king was absent from 1789 when he went to Lhasa seeking help, and he died there in 1793. Tibet did not give any significant help. The Sikkim chronicle blames Chogthup and Zomgyal, his younger brother, for misleading Tibet with a story about the successful expulsion of the Gorkhalis from Sikkim just before a Tibetan force could be dispatched.

A column of the Gorkhalis had penetrated as far as Chongtong‡ (Chungthang). Its commander was probably Subedar Jayanta Khatri ('Genti Khatree' of English documents and 'Jang Khater' of the Sikkim chronicle). The first-hand observations of Hamilton, often confirmed by other contemporary documents, give a clear picture of the administration of the region conquered up to the Tista. The far eastern part of Kirat was formed into a district, and the Subba resided at its headquarters in Chainpur. The subdued parts of Sikkim were placed with certain changes under his military jurisdiction.

\* The Tibetan Lhosar, or New Year's Day, usually falls in the second half of February or early March.

† Hamilton gives the name as 'Yuk-su-thuck'. Yuk appears to be a title used by many of his Karwang family. Su-thuck, therefore, is nothing but Chogthup.

‡ Now Chongtong or Chungthung, a tea garden in Darjeeling.

The Gorkhals in Sikkim were stationed at Darjeeling and Nagari\* (called Sam-dung by Hamilton, but shown as a different place to the west of Nagari in an old map). Hamilton wrote that beyond Nagari and Sa-tang (Sitong) 'one day's journey' away was Darjeeling, 'on the other side of the high mountains, which would appear to be the chief fortress of the country, as it is there that the Gorkhalese troops are mostly stationed'.<sup>109</sup> 'From thence to Sikkim,' he says, 'is six days' journey.' Sikkim probably stood for Gangtok.

Besides Darjeeling the other important Gorkha military stronghold was Nagari, the headquarters of Jayanta Khatri, a place on a hill at the source of the 'Balakongyar' or Balasan. In old documents, it is mentioned with Nagarkot as an important pass between Bhutan and Nepal. The pass of Nagarkot led from Morang into the hills. Nagari was to become the eastern site of the Anglo-Nepal war in 1815.

The Lepcha inhabitants of the subjugated part of Sikkim did not reconcile with Gorkhali rule. They were so troublesome that the Gorkhals judged it prudent to give them or else allow them to retain their own governor or collector. The Lepcha 'Yu-kang-ta, called Angriya Gabur by the Bengalese, a nephew' of Chogthup, according to Hamilton, was Yug Konga, a younger brother of the gallant Lepcha commander. The name occurs as Ekunda or Yekunda in contemporary Nepali records.

The revenue of the lowland Tarai was collected by *chaudhuris*. This consisted of portions of agricultural produce and customs collected at border passes. Chainpur had a considerable trade with Tibet through that part of the land near the Arun. Otherwise, the land tenure was 'very trifling, the whole almost being held by military tenure'.<sup>110</sup> In 1808, Hamilton found the whole civil government of the occupied Sikkim under Yug Konga, who had agreed to pay annually a fixed sum as tribute. 'The Subah of Chayenpore was,' Hamilton says, 'in military authority over him', or Yug Konga, and there were Gorkhalese troops at Sikkim (Rabdantse?) and Darjeeling, the two chief places in the district.<sup>111</sup> Confirming this, the Nepali account on a copper plate grant by Nepal to Konga or 'Ekunda Kazi' empowered him to collect revenue in the land east of Mechi.

\* Also spelt Nagri. The name is said to have been derived from Lepcha words *nak*=straight and *gri*=high stockade. Nagri is now a sprawling tea state in Darjeeling.

The grant authorised the Lepcha collector to 'keep six annas out of sixteen collected as his commission and deposit ten annas at the Ilam camp'<sup>112</sup> under Chainpur. In the summary of the voluminous correspondence regarding disputes over the boundaries between Nepal and Sikkim during 1833 and 1837, prepared by Captain R.B. Pemberton, 'Eklatuf Subha' (Yug Lhathup, the son of Yug Konga) is found deposing for Nepal, saying that he was 'formerly the *tahsildar* in hills for the part lying between the Rivers Konki (Kankai) and Mechee, the collections were paid at Chayenpore' and 'Ekonda Kajee was Zamindar and paid 10 annas in the Rupee to Jayanta Khatri for the troops'.<sup>113</sup> There are also accounts of the deposition of a Lepcha ('when he was six years old the Gorkhas took possession of Sikkim') and his octogenarian father, 'Jungmo', who had collected the revenue from the ryots on behalf of the Lepcha administrator and paid the revenue to 'Jynteah Kuttri of Nagree'. Another Lepcha witness had seen, when he was young, 'Jungmo bring paddy as tribute to Jynteah Kuttri of Nagree'.<sup>114</sup>

Although the Lepcha collector's residence at Nagari is described as 'a very large building, with several stories, and it was represented to Mr. Monro as a fort of some strength', Hamilton still doubted both accounts because he had learnt that it was 'roofed only with thatch'.<sup>115</sup> The administration was run with the consent of the Gorkhali officer. As a British document of 1846 relates, the orders passed then 'invariably had the joint seal of the Sikkim Rajah's Dewan and the Gorkha Subah at Nagree'.<sup>116</sup>

The Gorkhali hold over the whole eastern region was shaken in 1791. In the 1788 spree of conquests Nepal had imposed a treaty on Tibet (2 June 1789) wanting it to 'circulate the coins minted by the Gorkhali king' at the exchange rate of 'one Gorkhali *mohar* to two *mohars* already in circulation'. Tibet was also required to pay an indemnity of Rs 50,001.<sup>117</sup>

In 1791, Nepal renewed its war with Tibet, the non-payment of the stipulated amount of indemnity serving as the *casus belli* this time. The Gorkhals advanced to take Shigatse and plundered the rich monastery of Tashilumpo. On the strength of promises of friendship offered by the British emissaries, Bogle and then Turner, Tibet had previously appealed to the British. However, Lord Cornwallis could not intervene for various reasons.<sup>118</sup> Tibet then turned to China,



and Chien Lung, the Manchu Emperor, sent a vast army to drive the Gorkhalis out.

It was feared that the Gorkha army might invade Tibet through Sikkim, thus Chogthup (Satrajit) was sent to the most assailable places on the frontiers. The Chinese Amban in Tibet required 'the most zealous co-operation and active service' of Sikkim and promised Chogthup that in exchange for his satisfactory services he would get suitable recognition and 'the grant of buttons and peacock feathers with rewards and titles'.<sup>119</sup> The Chinese circulated an order which said, 'As we intend to proceed to the Gorkha Raj and lay it in ruins, so you the Sikkimites and Tsongs (Limbus) must also render every assistance to the best of your abilities. You will have to come to the Gorkha country to join the troops under the Tunghangs. Vast tracts of territories will be conquered, and foes shall be slain in countless numbers, and their countries ravaged. You will retain possession of as much land as you have conquered...small though your forces be, you must do your utmost for your future good and peace'. A small Tibetan force from Shekar Dzong in Tibet 'drove the Gorkhalis out of it', says a Tibetan scholar.<sup>120</sup> Eastern Nepal and Sikkim were in great turmoil from 1791 till Nepal made peace with China the following year.

The fragility of the unification of Nepal was proved when the news of the Chinese advance caused the Kirat to revolt against the Gorkhalis. According to the Sikkim account the Chinese officer wrote to Chogthup as well as to the Tsongs (Limbus), Ashadeva, Dzarshamookhs, and Shonahang,\* saying that though the Tsong had reported to him about their advance and the encounter with the Gorkhalis, they had been compelled to retreat when their ammunition was exhausted. 'To the Tsong force (Limbus, Jimdars, Magar), he sent a supply, 100 measures of gunpowder, and 500 of lead'. The magnitude of the rebellion is described in Nepali documents and this tallies with the Sikkimese accounts.

Risley's account deals with the expulsion of the Gorkhalis and the Sikkimese penetration as far as Chainpur in 1787. Chemjong's account mentions the people involved in the Chainpur battle in 1776. However, all this actually relates to the events and personages of

\* The Limbu chronicle, cited above, lists the names of a few important Kirat chiefs or Hangs. It includes Ashadeva Rai as the Chief of Chhathar, Harshamukhi Rai of Chainpur and Sunuhang Rai of the Arun.



1791-92.

Ranbahadur Shah, the king of Nepal, in his letters of 1792 to the feudatory kings of Jajarkot and other places, informed them about the Chinese and Tibetan advance up to Sikkim, Chainpur and Vijaypur. He further added that they had incited the Lepchas and Limbus to revolt by paying them. They had 'taken Chainpur and a few other places' with a force of five to seven thousand.<sup>121</sup> The Chinese manoeuvre to take Chainpur, which lay twenty-six miles south of Ritak on the road to Shigatse, was to close the Tibetan approach. The Bhutea or Tibetan leader, whose name is given as Depchang Rinzing by Chemjong (in 1776) was really Deba Tsang Rinzing. However, the real fighting was done by the Sikkimese under Chogthup. The Tibetans crossed the Arun in the north, and Chogthup is reported to have killed two Tsong chiefs on the Gorkha side.

According to Nepali sources, Purnananda Upadhyaya, the Subba of Vijaypur, fought with two companies of soldiers, and 'about five hundred of the enemies including seven Tibetan *sardars*' were killed in the fort of Siddhipur. King Ranabahadur wrote to Jajarkot, 'the news of the total casualty figure have not reached so far...but this time also two of the kazis named Karwang have been killed and also other high ranking officers who have not yet been identified.'<sup>122</sup> Some of the brothers of Chogthup—he had seventeen—might have been killed, though he himself was not. The most important casualty was 'Deba Tsang Rinzing...leader of the Bhutea force'. The Sikkim source throws light on this loss which 'disheartened the men so much that they got dispersed and scattered'.

The Sikkimese army failed and the rebellion in Kirat was suppressed with severity. A bilingual Sanskrit-Nepali inscription at Chainpur claims that the descendants of 'Bakhatvarsimha Basnet, the youngest son of Keharsimha Basnet, who...in the year 1848 samvat [1791] had suppressed the rebellion of Pallo Kirat in the east, who with the company of his soldiers fought and defeated the enemies at Siddhipur',<sup>123</sup> had made a reservoir there to meet the scarcity of water. When the harshness proved to be counter-productive, Nepal began to follow a somewhat conciliatory policy towards Kirat Rais and Limbus. Punishments had resulted in emigrations and the depopulation of villages. Chemjong quotes a Limbu manuscript to show that severe punishments meted out to some chiefs caused the

emigration of thirty-two thousand Limbus in three groups, one to Sikkim, and the other two to Bhutan and Assam.<sup>124</sup>

The policy of appeasement began as early as 1794. A royal order of the year to one Sambahang Namhang Rai reads thus, 'Your people rose against us when the Chinese came and were killed and injured. For the rebellion, you have been punished and forgiven... We confirm your ownership of your ancestral land.'<sup>125</sup> An order of 1794 to Nabha Rai says, 'We had confirmed your possession of your ancestral land in past also. Meanwhile you rioted and plundered and did what you should not have done under the pressure of the Sikkim Bhutias. Yet we forgive you and order you to come back and settle down in your land.'<sup>126</sup> An order of 1804 confirming the Subba-ship of Phedap to Asahang records that his ancestors had held the post since the time of Makwanis.<sup>127</sup> The name of Asahang occurs as that of a chief to whom an appeal had been made by the Chinese. As late as 1827 the Kirats like Igumba Rai, Yochhupya Rai and Gunajit Rai were being asked by Nepal to come back and settle down in the lands enjoyed by their forefathers. They are recorded to have left the country 'at the time of invasion' and were being forgiven for 'all the blood-shed of the past'.<sup>128</sup>

The Chinese only incited the Kirats and made no moves in the east. The main force was that of Sikkim itself. The Tibetan indifference to Sikkim became clear after the war when the treaty was made. Regarding the main operations between China and Nepal, it suffices to say that accounts vary according to which side has the telling of it. The Chinese faced hard resistance but they had vastly superior numbers and, when in September 1792, they were only a few miles away from Kathmandu, Nepal sued for peace.

Tibet received assurance that the Tashilumpo property would be restored and an agreement was made for demarcating the Nepal-Tibet boundary. Sikkim was not represented at the negotiations, and Tibet refused to listen to its pleas 'on the ground that though Bhutan had helped Tibet, the Sikkimese had not'.<sup>129</sup> The Nepal-Sikkim boundary was drawn further back to the left bank of the Tista. This, according to Sikkim history, was due to the absence of Sikkim, the indifference of Tibet and misrepresentations made by Nepal. The Chinese general merely assured Sikkim that 'it had been arranged and settled that his original territories would be restored to him' but

that 'the details had not been entered into'. Sikkim made two representations to Tibet (the copies of which were reported to be extant) that in spite of the assurances of the restoration of the original boundaries of Sikkim, 'the Gorkhas' has 'again sent raiding parties into Sikkim' and not fixed boundary anew as ordered'. As a matter of fact, Sikkim not only lost most of its territory to Nepal, but Tibet also pushed down its boundary up to the Chola-Jelep range.

The boundary of Nepal in the east remained extended up to the Tista both in the hills and the plains. 'For some years,' Risley says, 'Pemiongchi and all the south Tista tract paid rent to Nepal, until in 1815 the Nepalese were compelled by the British Government.'<sup>130</sup> The infant Sikkim ruler,\* after his return from Tibet, remained the ruler only of a small tract to the east of the Tista with his capital at Gangtok. Thus, in the first decade of the nineteenth century, an area much larger than the present kingdom emerged as Nepal. This larger area, often referred to as 'Greater Nepal', extended for thirteen hundred miles from the Satlaj in the west to the Tista in the east.

Nepal's ambition to establish any sort of political or economic hegemony over Tibet was checked in 1792. On the contrary, Nepal's action greatly augmented Chinese power in Tibet. It was a decisive blow to the policy so earnestly followed by Prithvinarayan; and at the same time it was a blow to the policy of the British, pursued with equal eagerness since Warren Hastings' governorship. The English Company, when approached both by Nepal and Tibet, had tried to mediate by sending Colonel Kirkpatrick in 1792, but the move came too late. The commercial treaty made that year between Nepal and the Company was the only access for Indian traders and British goods to Tibet. When Abdul Kari Khan, a merchant sent by the Company to examine the prospect of trade with Tibet through Nepal, came to the conclusion that it was bright, John Shore, the Governor, wondered whether it would have been better for the Company if the Chinese had occupied the whole of Nepal in 1792 and driven out the Gorkhals since they had previously ousted the Newar Rajas. The Company took advantage of the political change resulting from the exile of Ranabahadur Shah in Benares, and induced the rulers of Nepal to accept a British Resident at Kathmandu. The Treaty of 1801

\* gTsong-Phud rNam-rGyal (Chhugpu Namgyal), r. 1793-1861.



was not welcome to many in Nepal and was regarded as an imposition. Captain Knox, therefore, achieved nothing during his stay at Kathmandu from 1801 to 1803. On the contrary Anglo-Nepal relations became strained and the treaty of 1801 was dissolved. Lord Wellesley hoped that the Company could in future avoid having anything to do with Nepal.<sup>131</sup>

Checked in the north by China, the directions in which Nepal could expand were the west, south and east. Having reached the Satlaj in the west it could not go beyond because of the rise of the Sikh power under Ranjit Singh. In the south the dominions of Nepal and the British were coterminous along the plains to an extent of thirteen hundred miles, and quarrels concerning boundaries were inevitable. There were charges and counter-charges of encroachments. Not only was the border between the two dominions ill-defined, but in some cases the hill rajas, ousted by the Gorkhals, and though not the proprietors of their lowland tracts regarded themselves as tenants of the Nawabs of Bengal and Oudh. But the Tarai was of vital importance for Nepal as its revenue formed the major share of land income. Without going into the merits of the case presented by both,<sup>132</sup> it would suffice to note here that Bhimsen Thapa, who had risen as the Prime Minister and wielded *de facto* power, was trying to combine different Indian rulers by sending envoys to them.<sup>133</sup> Hence Lord Hastings' 'policy was motivated principally by a sincere fear that unless the British acted first, the native states would combine and drive the Company from India. Only paramountcy could preempt destruction. This way of thinking made it impossible for Hastings to treat the Nepalese encroachments as mere isolated border incidents'.<sup>134</sup> Thus the Marquis of Hastings declared war on Nepal in 1814.

Sikkim in the east, much truncated in size and left in the lurch by Tibet, had to fend for itself. After some friendly communication with the British the Sikkim court applied to the British for 'a force to help it in driving out the Gorkhas'. War between the British and Nepal was imminent. Probably with knowledge of the Sikkimese appeal to the British, Nepal in 1813 asked China 'for military aid against the Sikkimese, who...were proving contumacious'.<sup>135</sup> Nepal's action, in view of the war of 1791-92, was to find out the reaction of China in case of a fresh invasion of Sikkim. But China itself was much perturbed by the expansion of the British empire in India. The Sikkim

chronicle refers to four letters sent then by China. One of them told Sikkim that a Tibetan force had always been stationed at Phari. It was now being thought desirable to station troops both at Phari and Gyantse, 'with no other innovations or alterations in view, but the convenience of making enquiries into the movement of Ferangis', and Sikkim was 'not to entertain any fears on that score'.

At the juncture, in its search for trade routes to Tibet, the Company was thinking about the option that Sikkim could offer because of the matrimonial and religious affinities it had with Tibet and that it could also be a bulwark against the possible Nepal-Bhutan alliance against the British.<sup>136</sup> Accordingly, Captain Barre Latter of the Rangpur Local Battalion, stationed at Titaliya to the south of Siliguri, was instructed to establish contact with Sikkim.<sup>137</sup> Latter succeeded in his endeavour. The Sikkim ruler, according to the chronicle, even sent the Chinese Amban's letters to the 'official Head Sahib of the Ferangis'.

When war broke out between Nepal and the Company, the king of Nepal, Girvanayuddha, appealed to Tibet for help. No material help came, but Tibet offered prayers for Nepal's success in the war.<sup>138</sup> Sikkim, a sufferer at Nepalese hands, was completely at variance in its attitude. It was not only Sikkim that solicited British help. Sikkim history claims that 'the Khambu chiefs, yakhas and Ashogrambus having also entreated (the British) government for help, the Government at last sent a large force against the Gorkhas'. The British tried to incite rebellion among the Baisi-Chaubisi states; Captain Barre Latter, who was in command on the frontier east of the Kosi, was instructed to contact all the Kirats 'who it was anticipated would rush to aid the cause of their legitimate chief and the Company.' Many of Nepal's feudatories became restive specially when the ruler of Palpa was brutally put to death after his subjugation by Gorkha. A scholar of Nepal thinks that 'the disloyalty shown by a few feudatories' was a factor contributing to the cause of Nepal's defeat<sup>139</sup> in 1815.

Though the Sikkim account refers to the Kirat chiefs' entreaty to the British, there was probably only a feeble stirring in Eastern Nepal in support of the Company compared to what had happened during the Sino-Nepal war in 1792. The attempts of the surviving Sena pretenders to the throne of Makwanpur, Chaudandi and Vijaypur to raise a force of the Kirats failed miserably. Most of the other exiled hill

chiefs also remained ineffectual. Scott, the Magistrate of Rangpur, negotiated with Sikkim but failed to win over the Kirats.<sup>140</sup> The policy of conciliation that Nepal had followed towards the Kirats after the war of 1792 seems to have paid dividends.

Sikkim joined the British and requested gunpowder and flints. The joint move of the Company and Sikkim was to dislodge Jayanta Khatri from Nagari. A letter from Sarovarsingh Rana to Bhimsen Thapa, written before the war, informs that 'so far negotiations with the Firangis in the south have failed. There is a possibility of war...In case a war broke out in the plains there would be much trouble in the east. Subedar Jayanta writes that the Gangtokians (people at Gangtok) seem bent upon creating trouble even at this stage'.<sup>141</sup> A royal order to a Subba Balabhadra admonishes him for his failure to go to Karfok near Ilam on the plea that he could not enlist soldiers. In many places there was no strong regular force and that the newly conquered parts in the east showed some signs of restiveness is made evident by the order. It adds, 'Jayanta Khatri has written from Nagri that despite our orders none has gone to Karfok. He says that the Lepchas (Sikkim) have become restive and any delay on your part may cause irreparable damage.'<sup>142</sup>

Nagari withstood the joint assault of the British and the Sikkimese. According to the Sikkim account, 'by means of stratagem the Gorkhas were dislodged'. A letter from Gajendra Karki and the Lepcha chief Ekunda (Konga) from Nagari indicates that about six thousand *ryots* had revolted and the disruption in movement was caused by the destruction of bridges.<sup>143</sup> But Jayanta Khatri and his men were never dislodged. One of the terms\* of the Sugauli treaty signed by the British and Nepal after the war clearly indicates this.

When the war ended with the capitulation of Nepal, the Sikkim ruler thanked the British and requested 'that the boundary between Sikkim and the Gorkha territory be laid at Timar Chorten (the Tamar river), if possible, but the best would be 'the Arun river, and the least of all Milighu, Dhankote as middle, Shadijong, down to the Kannika Tarai...All the country east of these are Sikkim territory, and I pray',

\* Article 3, clause 5, which gave all the territories within the hills eastward of the Mechi 'including the fort and lands of Nagree and the Pass of Nagarcote leading from Morang into the hills' also enjoined that 'the aforesaid territory shall be evacuated by the Gorkha troops within forty days'.



he implored, that 'these may be restored to Sikkim'. In other words, Sikkim claimed not only the territory east of the Singalila range but also a large part of Eastern Nepal. The Sikkimese are said to have even crossed the Mechi and 'occupied the abandoned Gorkha posts at Illam and Phae'.<sup>144</sup> However this claim is undoubtedly an exaggeration, because neither Nagari nor Ilam had been abandoned by the Gorkhalis.

The British felt that the richest part of Nepal, and the part which furnished it with the sinews of war, was the lush Tarai, hence its cessation was made the first condition of the truce. By the treaty of Sugauli, accepted on March 4, 1816,<sup>145</sup> Nepal ceded most of the Tarai it possessed. In accordance with the British policy 'to restore the ancient chiefs in all cases in which special reasons did not exist against it', the annexed hill states west of the Mahakali river, except Kumaon were restored. All the territories within the hills eastward of the river Mechi, 'including the lands of Nagree and the Pass of Nagarcote leading from Morung into the hills, together with the territory lying between that pass and Nagree' were ceded to the Company 'in perpetuity'. The treaty laid down that 'the aforesaid territory shall be evacuated by the Gorkha troops within forty days'. Jayanta Khatri had to move out of Nagari; he went to Ilam.

Sikkim was given its old hill territories east of the Mechi River. The size of Nepal was reduced but Sikkim did not get all that it had asked for. The territory lying between the Mechi and the Tista\* was restored to Sikkim by a separate treaty signed at Titalia between Sikkim and the Company on February 10, 1817. The treaty also stipulated that Sikkim would submit to the arbitration of the Company on any dispute with Nepal and other neighbouring countries.<sup>146</sup> The treaty thus established complete British influence over Sikkim. For the first time the British acquired the right to trade up to the Tibetan frontier. But the more significant effect was the decision 'to shut out the Nepalese from any ambitious views of aggrandisement to the east, and to circumscribe their territory on three sides while on the fourth, the stupendous range of the Heemalaya and the Chinese frontier present an effectual barrier'.<sup>147</sup> Prithvinarayan had compared Nepal

\* The territory which now forms Darjeeling, Kurseong and Siliguri sub-divisions of Darjeeling district.

with a 'tuber between two boulders', and both in 1792 and 1816, the two boulder proved adamant enough to be unyielding to the tuber's zeal to expand.

Yet in view of the dynamics of Gorkhali expansion it would be illogical to presume that Nepal could give up scheming for further conquests. Nepal still hoped to drive towards the east. A conglomeration of kingdoms lay there and Nepal could consider itself strong enough at least to conquer them. Nepali documents of the period show that Nepal kept itself well informed about the developments in almost all the states in the Indian sub-continent. In 1798-99, for example, it knew about Napoleon's discomfiture in Egypt, Tipu's defeat in Mysore, and developments in Lahore and other courts. It always kept a watchful eye on the British and, at the height of its expansionist career, it had agents working stealthily for the conquest of Assam,<sup>148</sup> not yet conquered by the British then. Nepal also did not give up the hope of occupying Sikkim and Bhutan.

Nepal was presented with an opportunity to exploit the internal feuds in Sikkim and serve its designs once more immediately after the treaty of Titalia. Sikkim suffered from chronic internal feuds. The rebellion of the Limbus or 'the *paharis* or Tsong community' in the middle of the eighteenth century had been put down by 'Satrajit' Chogthup's father, Karwang, the Lepcha minister. The rebellion was the result of the Limbu chiefs being deprived of their traditional privileges. The Sikkim chronicle talks about their fastidiousness 'about certain customs recognising their privileges and status'. The rebel chiefs had been given their privileges and 'for a while the land enjoyed peace'.

More serious in nature was the recurrent conflicts between the Lepchas and Bhuteas. When the powerful Bhutea or Tibetan minister Tamding had refused to recognise the posthumous infant of Gyurmed and captured power, he was opposed by the Lepcha faction under Karwang. The 'Mangsher Duma' had apportioned powers to the Lepchas and Bhuteas and established peace. But the amity was not destined to last for ever. The Bhutea camp, jealous of the achievements and the rising power of the Lepcha Karwang family, procured the murder of Bolod, a scion of the family, under the king's instructions in 1826. The Lepcha chiefs 'left Sikkim taking with them about eight hundred houses of Lepcha subjects' and went to Ilam

seeking Nepalese help. Thus began the 'Kotapa insurrection', which was again to cost Sikkim dearly.

The Kotapa insurrection was not a brief affair. Jayanta Khatri, who had by then retired to Ilam, wrote in 1826 about the 'slaughter of Limbus, Lepchas and other old subjects by Bhuteas in Sikkim and a delegation of five' that went to meet him seeking help. The British had withdrawn to the plains in turmoil and were stationed at Phasidewa with two cannons, the Lepchas were insisting that it was the time to take action in Sikkim.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, a border dispute arose between Sikkim and Nepal, and Sikkim referred the matter, in accordance with the treaty of Titalia, to the Company: the two issues were intricately related.

It was to investigate this dispute that Lord William Bentinck deputed Captain G.W. Lloyd and G.W. Grant in 1828. They penetrated into the hills and came up to 'the old Gorkha station of Dorjiling' where Lloyd spent six days in February 1829. They were charmed by the site and recommended to the Governor-General that Darjeeling would make an ideal health resort for European soldiers. Accordingly, in 1829 they were instructed to visit Sikkim once more, accompanied by a surveyor, Captain Herbert, to examine the full possibilities offered by the place. They remained at Darjeeling, then deserted by the Lepchas, for some time. Their findings suggested to the government that the place would not only make an ideal health resort but that its possession would confer 'considerable political benefits' on the Company. The British then decided to carry the measure into effect.<sup>150</sup>

When the Englishmen decided to visit Sikkim (1831) to talk about the Kotapas and 'not to take any portion' of their land, the king agreed because he wanted the restoration of the 'original boundary', claiming that the Yakha and Khambu tribes or Kirats were under him. His complaint was that 'the Magar named Dzin Khatri' or Jayanta Khatri had induced the rebel Lepchas to follow him to Ilam, and the Lepchas had made Nagari their stronghold.

A letter of 1833 from Ilam supplements the information about the united fight that the Lepchas gave the Bhuteas. There was also a rumour that all the Lepchas would leave for 'Dharma's country' (Bhutan).<sup>151</sup> The inducement sent by Sikkim to the Lepchas in Ilam proved only a ruse to capture them.<sup>152</sup> If Sikkim appealed to China

and Tibet to open negotiations with Nepal for the extradition of the Lepcha rebels, then the rebels sought British support. Sikkim lamented that 'the Kotapa rebels, who claimed Darjeeling as their patrimonial land', had made a voluntary gift of it 'to the British in the hope of gaining their sympathy'.

The British regarded the Lepcha insurrection and their asylum in Nepal as 'a matter of indifference to the British Government',<sup>153</sup> and called the Lepchas 'Rebels headed by a Traitor'.<sup>154</sup> They were going to intervene only if a dispute arose between Nepal and Sikkim.

Along with the border investigations between Sikkim and Nepal the British officers, however, continued to pursue the subject of obtaining Darjeeling from Sikkim ostensibly for the purpose of making it a health resort for the Europeans. In actuality they realised that it was an ideal place to keep an eye on Sikkim and Nepal with a hope that if a road was built there, the people of Sikkim would open traffic not only with Darjeeling but also 'between Bengal and Chinese Tartary'.<sup>155</sup>

Sikkim's cession of Darjeeling to the British in 1835 and the establishment of a strong British station there acted as an impediment to Nepal's desire to march eastward after 1816. Sikkim was unhappy because the British had failed to fulfil the conditions in exchange which led to further trouble and the subsequent annexation of more Sikkimese territory in the hills and plains (modern Siliguri). Thus the British further consolidated their position in 1850. Darjeeling not only served a strategic purpose, but the Lepchas, who had taken refuge in Nepal, returned to live there under British protection.<sup>156</sup> Sikkim then sent a mission to the Nepal Darbar for some unknown reason. The Government of India instructed Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, to 'watch the course of this correspondence with Nepal',<sup>157</sup> since it had not given up the desire to expand and its army was becoming restive.

A mission from Nepal went to 'the land of Dharma (Bhutan) through the Sikkim road of Nangelucha, Darjeeling, Simpali, Tista and the plains of Dalimkot'. Its report contains information about happenings in Sikkim, the beginning of the British settlement in Darjeeling, and the Lepcha acceptance of employment under the British. It then goes on to narrate the displeasure of Ilam Singh, a Limbu minister of Sikkim at this, and the discord between Bhutan



and the Englishmen who had gone there to hunt with their women-folk.<sup>158</sup> The British were equally watchful. Lloyd, on special duty in the North-east Frontier, reported 'the intelligence obtained relating to the movements of a Nepal mission composed of two native officers and twenty sepoy, who have proceeded via Nagra Guree and the Morung into Botan'. The government instructed him to be 'watchful and diligent in observing these intrigues and seeking information' but not to make 'such proceedings ground of any overt act' as 'the government must decide when and how to deal with the missionaries of a state like Nepal, and the manner in which to notice the conduct of the Court in sending them'.<sup>159</sup>

The ostensible object of these missions was to organise a league of Himalayan states against the British. When the emissaries from Nepal returned to Kathmandu, in late July 1839, Hodgson, the British Resident at Kathmandu, reported that when stopped at the frontier of Bhutan by the 'Subba' where the purpose of the mission was asked, he was told that 'the Nepal Raja had heard with concern of the insurrection against the old Deb (the Deb Raja of Bhutan); that this rebellion was instigated by the Company; that Nepal was ready to assist the old Deb with soldiers or small arms or cannon; and that the Deb had only to point out how the assistance could be best rendered and a league offensive and defensive be formed against the arts and power of the Company'. The Bhutanese frontier officer was instructed to tell the Nepal mission 'that cannons were the chief want of the Deb and that if Nepal could not supply cannons the next best thing would be artifices to cast and make them in Deb Dharma (Bhutan)'. Nepal proposed a fresh mission 'with a few pieces of artillery if Tibet permitted their transport through its territory because 'the interposition of Sikkim' rendered the command of the Sikkim route to Bhutan impossible. Nepal had thought of cajoling 'the Tibetan authorities by an offer of its troops to assist in their affairs also and to help to put down an insurrection that had recently broken out in the province of Poonie(?)'.<sup>160</sup> Nepal's real motive behind the armed assistance lent to Bhutan was to conquer it, and probably Sikkim on the way. In his letter to the Government of India in September 1839, Hodgson reported 'that this (Nepal) Durbar a few days back and in the midst of protracted discussions with me suddenly sent to request passage for its troops through Sikkim for the conquest of Bhootan'. On inquiring

'if the Durbar had received any injury from Bhootan', the reply given to Hodgson was, 'none whatever' though 'it was the custom of Gorkha nation'. When the Resident pointed out that Sikkim was an independent State and she would 'never consent to yield you passage for such a purpose', the reply was, 'we care not a fig for Sikkim's consent: we want only your'. He thus noted that 'the present application taken in connexion with the former one would seem to indicate the Nepal's desire of extending herself to eastward as an ever-present urgent motive with her, that she is prepared to defy the wrath of China for its gratification'.<sup>161</sup>

When Brian H. Hodgson was sent to Nepal as the Assistant Resident in 1824, a British civil servant William B. Bayley, the then Acting Governor-General of India and also Chairman of the Court of Directors, had said that 'Nepal is in every sense peculiar, and in present quiet times you can learn little there. But we have had one fierce struggle with Nepal, and we shall yet have another. When that event occurs there will be very special need for local experience...Go...and master the subjects in all its phases'. Hodgson later said, 'I did as I was advised' and thus gained 'supreme knowledge of Nepalese affairs'.<sup>162</sup> He intervened frequently in Nepalese politics that were marked by a struggle for supremacy between two major families of the nobility, the Thapas and the Pandes. The Thapas, responsible for concluding the peace in 1816, were identified with a moderate, though not entirely pacific, foreign policy. Bhimsen Thapa had obtained a retrocession of a part of the eastern Tarai from the Company and this tract in 1837 was 'the mine from which Nepal drew its chief net main resources'.<sup>163</sup> In 1816, Nepal had told the British that it would never consent to give up the Tarai. 'Take the terai and you will leave us without the means of subsistence',... 'for the hills without it are worth nothing'.<sup>164</sup> A large tract of the plains still remained under the British and the attitude of Nepal to the treaty of Sugauli remained one of sullen acquiescence. The Pandes, vehemently anti-British, sought a resumption of the wars of conquest to the south. Bhimsen Thapa maintained the ascendancy of his family and held office till 1837, trying to satiate the bellicosity of the Pandes, without being excessively provocative to the British. Rajendravikram Shah (1816-1846) did seldom rule and, as a result, there were continual plots and counter-plots within the ruling family. These conflicts became interlocked

with the feud between the Thapas and the Pandes.

The ascendancy of the Thapa came to an end in 1837 when Bhimsen was toppled from power, 'seized, ironed and thrown into prison' where he was compelled to commit suicide two years later. With the rise of the war party of Pandes, Lord Auckland felt that, perhaps, a war with Nepal could not be staved off. In April 1840, many Gorkhali soldiers suddenly appeared at the great fair held in Ramnagar forest, eight miles within India. They forcibly levied market dues and told the inhabitants of ninety-one villages that the land, about 200 sq. miles in size, belonged to Nepal.<sup>165</sup> On 21 June, 1840 the six thousand strong army rose in revolt at a general parade at Kathmandu. There was an attempt to detain the Resident and the troops marched to the Residency. The king conveyed a message to his soldiers on 23 June, 'The British Government is powerful, abounding in wealth and in all other resources for war. I have kept well with the English so long, because I am unable to cope with them. Besides I am bound by a treaty of amity, and have now no excuse to break it; nor have I money to support a war. Troops I have, and arms and ammunition in plenty, but no money...I want treasure to fight the English. Take lower pay for a year or two, and when I have some money in hand, then I will throw off the mask and indulge you with war.' The reply given by the troops is quite revealing. They said, 'True, the English Government is great; but care the wild dogs of Nepal [Buansu (wolves)] how large is the herd they attack? They are sure to get their bellies filled. You want no money for making war; for the war shall support itself. We will plunder Lucknow and Patna...We will soon make the Ganges your boundary. Or if the English, as they say, are your friends and want peace, why do they keep possession of half of your dominions (Kumaon)? Let them restore Kumaon and Sikkim. These are yours, demand them back; and if they refuse, drive out the Resident and let us have war'.<sup>166</sup> Hostile preparations were made, arsenals became active; in the mutiny only the troops in and around the capital were engaged, but 'a census of the population fit to carry arms, i.e. between the ages of twelve and sixty, was made, and produced a return of four hundred thousand souls'. However, the actual increase then amounted only to nineteen thousand men.<sup>167</sup>

The trouble died down for the time being, and Hodgson demanded that the Nepal darbar comply with his requirements that Nepal should

relinquish the lands encroached, put a stop to all the secret intercourse with the allies of the British government, including Lahore, and atone for the unprotected state in which the Residency was left during the mutiny of 21st June.<sup>168</sup> But the situation demanded a permanent solution. First, either Nepal had to be subjugated or else its government had to be made subservient enough to serve the colonial interests of Britain, and such government the British must do anything to prop up. Secondly, a full understanding of the nature of the state of Nepal demanded that there must be some outlet for the warlike people of the country. The important consequences that this led to are discussed in the next chapter.

Auckland informed Hodgson that there would be no hesitation regarding the movement of troops to the Nepal frontier.<sup>169</sup> He also asked the Resident to advise him whether the object of the anticipated war with Nepal should be 'the entire subjugation of the country, or the raising up of another Gorkha Government or administration'.<sup>170</sup>

Because of its entanglement in Afghanistan, the British government could spare no troops for Nepal, hence it was deemed necessary to change the ministry by diplomacy.<sup>171</sup> However, a day before the British government wrote to the Resident, he had already secured the desired change at Kathmandu. The Pande ministry was dismissed and a coalition ministry was formed on 3 November. Those persons who had 'disturbed the good understanding existing between the two governments' were dismissed.<sup>172</sup> Eventually, the palace intrigues culminated in a bloody slaughter in 1846 called the 'Kot massacre'. Thus, Jang Bahadur, nephew of Bhimsen Thapa and commander of a quarter of the armed forces, established his own predominance. The Rana regime that lasted till 1950 served its own purpose by playing second fiddle to British imperialism. For services rendered to the British during the Indian Revolt of 1857 the districts lying between Nepal and Oudh, which were ceded to the British in 1816, were restored to Nepal.<sup>173</sup> Thus, the kingdom assumed its present shape.

Except the war with Tibet during 1854-56, Nepal has never fought its own war since the treaty of Sugauli. The conquests of Gorkha came to a virtual end in 1816. But, as noted earlier, there were strong forces at work in Nepal which would not have allowed its army to remain idle for long and evidence establishes that Nepal's desire to



extend eastward after 1816 lingered on for decades. However, other equally potent factors, both within and without, combined together finally to put a stop to the further expansion of Nepal. And in the course of these developments we find the emergence of a new country covering a physical radius that possessed diversities of various kinds.

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