

NEPALI POLITICS AND THE RISE
OF JANG BAHUDUR RANA, 1830-1857

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the political history of Nepal from 1830, covering the decline and fall of Bhimsen Thapa, the factional struggles which ended with Jang Bahadur Kunwar (later Rana)'s emergence as premier in 1846, and Jang's final securing of his own position when he assumed the joint roles of prime minister and *maharaja* in 1857. The relationship between king, political elite (*bharadari*), army and peasantry is analysed, with special prominence given to the religious aspects of Hindu kingship, and also to the role of prominent Chetri families and of the Brahman Mishras, Pandes and Paudyals who provided the *rajgurus* (royal preceptors). Special attention is also paid to the role of the British Residency in internal politics and to rank-and-file protest in the army, which although largely manipulated by elite patrons showed signs of potential autonomy. Jang's assumption of power is discussed in detail, emphasising the importance of his alliance with *guru* Vijay Raj Pande. The main features of the new regime are outlined, including the relationship between *maharaja* and monarch (*maharajadhiraj*), the composition of the new *bharadari* and Jang's dependence on it and on the army, changes to the administrative system, the significance of the *Muluki Ain* (Law Code) of 1854, land revenue policy and relations with the British. Jang's policies were partly the natural continuation of lines already emerging, but he nevertheless made significant changes leading to a more centralised administration, the growth of a sense of national identity, and the shift towards *de facto* private ownership of land which continued under his successors. Nepal remained essentially in the tradition of Hindu kingship, but with the secular functions of the king transferred to the *maharaja*. Jang's

regime was 'autocratic' but he acknowledged in principle an obligation to the governed, and had in practice to conciliate key sectors of the public, limitations which correspond to those recognised in classical Hindu political theory. Appendices give details of Jang's family history and translations of letters written by him from Paris in 1850.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DO	Demi-official
FP	Foreign Political Proceeding/Consultation
FS	Foreign Secret Proceeding/Consultation
HP	Hodgson Papers
IOL(R)	India Office Library (and Records)
JA	<i>Jangi Adda</i>
KKA	Krishna Kant Adhikari
KKK	<i>Kamyandari Kitabkhana</i>
KM	<i>The Kot Massacre</i>
NAI	National Archives of India
NAN	National Archives of Nepal
NR	Nepal Residency Records
RAS	Royal Asiatic Society
VS	Vikram Sambat

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CHAPTER ONE

KING AND STATE IN PRE-RANA NEPALThe Kingdom of Nepal

The integration of the former 'Princely States' into independent India and Pakistan extinguished Hindu monarchy as a living political form throughout almost all of South Asia. One sole exemplar survived, however, in the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal, which had never been brought into the British Indian empire. The country today is still officially styled a Hindu kingdom, and the present king is the tenth-generation descendant of Prithvi Narayan Shah, whose conquest of the Kathmandu Valley in 1769 marked the beginning of Nepal's history as a unified state. Nowadays, as in Prithvi's time, it is in the royal palace that power principally resides. Over much of the intervening period effective power was held by a minister ruling in the king's name. Jang Bahadur Kunwar (later Rana) attained this post in 1846 and succeeded in making it the hereditary possession of his family. From 1857 onwards Jang and his successors combined the titles of Maharaja and Prime Minister, and the Rana family continued to rule the country until the 'revolution' of 1950/51 put the reins back into the hands of the Shah dynasty. Throughout the Rana ascendancy the royal family nevertheless retained their formal superiority, keeping the title of Maharajadhiraj in an arrangement paralleled in a number of Hindu states, most notably in the Maratha *svarajya* and in Vijaynagar. The purpose of this study is to examine Nepali politics in the crucial years leading up to and following Jang Bahadur's assumption of power, looking at the relationship between the constituent elements of the state in comparison with the pattern elsewhere in the subcontinent and with the model of Hindu polity

found in the canonical texts. The principal focus will be on kingship itself, and on the problem of maintaining central control over an extended territory. The present chapter will outline the structure of the state as it had evolved by 1830 and consider the chief actors on the political stage. Chapters Two to Five will present a detailed, chronological account of events from 1830 to 1847, when the deposition of King Rajendra marked the consolidation of Jang's power, and Chapter Six will look more thematically at the nature of the new regime, as well as covering the principal political events down to 1857. The concluding chapter returns to some of the general issues raised in the first, seeing how the characteristics of Nepal as a Hindu monarchy were continued or modified under Jang's predominance.

The idea that Nepal is to some extent a microcosm of the whole subcontinent was encapsulated at the beginning of this century in Sylvain Levi's famous dictum, 'Le Népal est l'Inde qui se fait'.¹ The progressive Hinduisation of an ethnically and culturally diverse population by the dominant Indo-Nepalese, and the conflicting trends towards amalgamation and disintegration of smaller political units within the Himalayan foothills can both aid our understanding of what happened on a larger scale throughout South Asia generally. There is the crucial distinguishing feature in the Nepali case that unity - and independence - have been maintained throughout the modern period, but this in itself raises the interesting issue of how far a different outcome resulted from the geographical factors of smaller size and peripheral location, and how far from superior political skill. Recent work on South Asian political systems has tended to downgrade the notion of a

strong centre imposing its will on local interests and suggest instead a model of ritual authority more or less voluntarily accepted or of empire itself emerging from the shifting pattern of alliances between local lords of the land.² It is not impossible to detect traces of both these patterns within the Nepali microcosm, but we have to reckon with central control which proved itself solid and durable, and it will be seen that some of the more traditional ways of looking at Indian empires fit the Nepali data better than those for which they were originally devised. This emerges particularly strongly in the question of land ownership which will be taken up shortly.

Despite such potentially illuminating parallels and contrasts, Nepali history has tended to remain a relatively isolated study, not forming part of the main current of South Asian historiography, although anthropologists adopting an historical perspective have made useful attempts to fit Nepal into the wider framework of Hindu polity, most significant being the work of Richard Burghart on the relationship between Hindu ascetics and the state, and that of Andras Höfer on the codification of the caste hierarchy in the 1854 Legal Code.³ Amongst historians in the stricter sense considerable attention has been given to Nepal's relations with British India and with China and Tibet, whilst scholars writing in Nepali have concentrated on straightforward narrative history and on the publication of indigenous material to supplement the British records which remain the most important source for political events after the establishment of the British Residency in 1816.⁴ For economic life, and in particular the land tenure system, there is the indispensable work of Mahesh Chandra Regmi, based almost entirely on

Nepal government records. Ludwig Stiller's studies of the unification process and of the twenty years following the 1814-16 war with British India, highlight the inter-relationship between land, army and royal authority which will be developed further here, whilst his publication of many of the key British documents for the period 1840-1847 has greatly eased the task of future historians. Valuable work on the institutions of Nepal under Jang Bahadur has been produced by Kumar and Adhikari, whilst Edwards has highlighted the existence of both 'traditional' and 'modern' elements in the Rana bureaucracy. Jain has analysed Jang's rise and early years in a book which is marred by eccentric and dogmatic judgments, but which does have the merit of trying to look critically at the sources. The analysis offered below relies on all of these writers, whilst seeking to provide a fuller account of the factional politics of the 1830s and to fit Nepali developments into a wider South Asian pattern.⁵

With the exception of the relatively small area which was to be ceded to her in 1860 in return for assistance in suppressing the Sepoy Revolt, Nepal's borders in 1830 were as they remain today. Stretching for some 520 miles along the southern flank of the Himalayas, the kingdom descends in uneven steps from the snow-covered peaks to the Gangetic plain. The northern border in its eastern section actually follows the crest line, whilst further west it runs slightly to the north of the main Himalayan range, taking in the southern fringe of the arid Tibetan plateau. South of the mountains are 'the hills' (*pahad*), a confusion of interrupted ridges and spurs which are the cultural and political as well as the geographic heart of the country. The limit of

this region is marked by the Mahabharat range, beyond which lie the valleys of the 'inner Tarai', and then the low Siwalik or Chure hills, last barrier before the plains. Nepali territory generally extends into the low country a depth of between ten and thirty miles. Until two decades ago the prevalence of a particularly virulent form of malaria rendered this region — the Tarai proper — uninhabitable through much of the year to all but the local tribesmen who had acquired some degree of immunity. However, where the jungle had been cleared the land was worked during the cold season, generally by peasants brought in from India, and the fertile soil made the region vital to the Nepali economy as it still is today.

Virtually the whole of Nepal falls within the catchment area of three great river systems — the Karnali in the west, the Gandaki in the centre, and the Kosi in the east, each with its many different branches and tributaries. From their sources in Tibet they flow through deep gorges across the line of the Himalays, then traverse the hills and plain to merge eventually with the Ganges. Within the hills they shape the agricultural pattern, the valley floors providing good rice-growing land, whilst the slopes above must be used for 'dry' crops such as maize.

Until the British managed to open an alternative route through Sikkim towards the end of the last century, the passes through the Himalayas formed by the Trisuli (a branch of the Gandaki) and the Sunkosi rivers were major routes for trade between India and Tibet. Situated in the hills between the Gandaki and Kosi basins, the Nepal Valley, which gave its name to the whole country and which contains the capital, Kathmandu, was a natural halting point for traders travelling between the plains and one or other of the passes. This commercial importance,

together with the valley's great fertility, enabled its Newar inhabitants to develop a complex urban civilisation. Outside the valley, however, the area of their control was limited, both because the difficulties of communication in the hills naturally favoured local autonomy, and because from the fifteenth century onwards the Newars were themselves divided, Kathmandu and the neighbouring towns of Patan and Bhaktapur each forming the capital of its own little kingdom.

Within the hills unification of substantial parts of Nepal had been achieved twice before Prithvi Narayan Shah: in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the 'Malla Empire' had covered the Karnali basin and large areas of south-western Tibet, whilst the Sen kingdom established in the early sixteenth century briefly united the southern hills from Palpa eastwards.⁶ By the eighteenth century, however, this unity had long been lost. The *baisi* (twenty-two) kingdoms of the Karnali region continued to recognise the formal precedence of the king of Jumla, in whose territory the Mallas had had their capital, but were in practice completely independent. The Gandaki basin was divided amongst the *caubisi* (twenty-four) states, and it was by separation from one of these, Lamjung, that Prithvi Narayan's ancestral kingdom of Gorkha had been founded in 1559. South and east of the Kathmandu Valley were the kingdoms of Makwanpur, Bijaypur and Chaudandi, ruled by branches of the Sen family, whilst much of the hills was controlled by non-Hinduised Kiranti tribesmen.

Prithvi Narayan came to the throne of Gorkha in 1743 and embarked the following year on the first of the military campaigns which were to lead to the conquest of the Kathmandu Valley twenty-four years later. The emergence of a united Nepal thus took place at a time when Mughal

successor states were being consolidated in India proper, most notably by erstwhile Mughal viceroys and by Sikhs and Marathas.⁷ Nepal had always been beyond the periphery of even the most tenuous Mughal control, but the example of what others were achieving as that control loosened must have impressed Prithvi. He received no military backing from Mughal sources or indeed from anywhere outside the hills, and this total reliance on the resources of his own region set him apart from a ruler such as Martanda Varma, first king of united Travancore, who also fought his way to supremacy over his fellow chieftains but who had obtained initial support from the Viceroy of the Carnatic and later employed mercenaries from the east coast.⁸ Prithvi did, however, follow the pattern of applying updated military technology to local conflicts, obtaining firearms on a journey to Banaras.⁹ It is also significant that, as will be seen below, he, and possibly even his predecessors on the Gorkha throne, regarded the Mughal emperor as a potential source of legitimisation.

In Nepal's case, the conquest of the Valley was only the beginning of a period of rapid Gorkha expansion, which carried the borders of the new kingdom to the Tista in the east and the Satlej in the west. The ultimate prize of control of the Himalayan chain as far as Kashmir might well have been attained had not an aggressive policy towards Tibet over terms of trade and control of the border passes provoked a punitive Chinese invasion of Nepal in 1792. Hostilities were concluded on terms which involved nominal Nepali submission but imposed no hardship on them other than the surrender of their recent Tibetan gains. However, the withdrawal of forces from the far west in the face of the emergency halted the momentum of expansion, and when the advance was resumed in the 1800s their

path was blocked by Ranjit Singh's kingdom of the Panjab. A further blow followed in 1814, when Nepal became involved with the British over rival claims to the Tarai. Terms imposed after her defeat in 1816 deprived her of Kumaon, Garhwal and the section of Sikkim she had previously occupied, between them comprising about one-third of her pre-war territory.

Even within Nepal's restricted boundaries the population was a complex amalgam of highly diverse elements. The *Muluki Ain* (Legal Code) of 1854 attempted to arrange all the different groups in one country-wide hierarchy, and this structure, which corresponds in broad outline with social reality even today, is set out in simplified form in Table I (on following page).

In pre-unification Gorkha, as in the other former statelets of the Karnali and Gandaki basins, two principal elements could be identified: the Parbatiyas, or 'Indo-Nepalese', divided into castes and speaking the Indo-Aryan language known in the nineteenth century as *khas kura* ('the language of the Khas') or Parbatiya, and today as Nepali;¹⁰ and Magar and Gurung tribesmen, only partially Hinduised and speaking Tibeto-Burman languages. The main divisions within the Indo-Nepalese caste system, as it had evolved in the eighteenth century were: Brahmans who claimed to have come originally from the old imperial city of Kanyakubja (modern Kanauj) on the Ganges; Thakuris, who included the ruling dynasty of Gorkha and of the other hill principalities and who proclaimed themselves the descendants of Rajput refugees from Muslim invaders on the plains; Khas, who were in the main a continuation of the people of that name who had lived in the Himalayas since ancient times, and finally a number of occupational, untouchable castes.¹¹ The Indo-Nepalese had brought the

TABLE 1 : THE CASTE HIERARCHY IN THE MULUKI AIN

* = the position (status of the caste within the group is not precisely determined)

E = ethnic group

1. Caste group of the "Wearers of the holy cord" (*tagadhari*)
 - Upadhyaya Brahman
 - Rajput (Thakuri) ("warrior")
 - Jaisi Brahman
 - Chetri (Ksatri) ("warrior")
 - Dew Bhaju (Newar Brahmans) E
 - Indian Brahman
 - Ascetic sects (Bannyasi, etc.)
 - "lower" Jaisi
 - Various Newar castes *E

2. Caste group of the "Non-enslavable Alcohol-drinkers" (*namasinya matwali*)
 - Magar *E
 - Gurung *E
 - Sunuwar *E
 - Some other Newar castes *E

3. Caste group of the "Enslavable Alcohol-drinkers" (*masinya matwali*)
 - Bhote *E ("Tibetanids" and some "Tibetanoids")
 - Cepang *E
 - Kumal * (potters)
 - Hayu *E
 - Tharu *E
 - Gharti * (descendants of freed slaves)

4. Impure, but "touchable" castes (*pani nacalnya choi chito halmunaparnya*)
 - Kasai (Newar butchers) E
 - Kusle (Newar musicians) E
 - Hindu Dhobi (Newar washermen) E
 - Kulu (Newar tanners) E
 - Musulman *
 - Mlecch * (European)

5. Untouchable castes (*pani nacalnya choi chito halmuparnya*)
 - Kami (blacksmiths)) of equal status
 - Sarki (tanners, shoemakers)
 - Kadara (stemming from unions between Kami and Sarki)
 - Damai (tailors and musicians)
 - Gaine (minstrels)
 - Badi (musicians)
 - Pore (Newar skimmers and fishermen) E
 - Cyame (Newar scavengers) E

Magars and Gurungs within the caste framework by granting them a position below the twice-born Khas but above the impure castes, corresponding with the category of *sat* Sudra found in some parts of India. Classed together with these were also castes of Khas origin whose ancestors had not been granted, or who had lost, the right to wear the sacred cord.¹²

Within this whole structure the Khas, who since Jang Bahadur's time have been officially known as Chetris (i.e. *ksatriyas*), were the key element. The original Khas tribesmen are believed to have been a branch of the Aryan migration into the subcontinent distinct from the Vedic Aryans but subsequently Hinduised. From Kumaon and Garhwal they moved east into Nepal, where they were the founders of the 'Malla Empire'. It was probably this strong political position which enabled them to secure integration with Brahmin and Rajput newcomers on more favourable terms than their fellows who remained in Kumaon, where the caste structure is broadly similar to that of Nepal.¹³ Though both hierarchies show a clear opposition between high-status immigrant and low-status Khas, the degree of subordination is much less in Nepal than in India. Intermarriage between immigrant and Khas in Kumaon is infrequent and frowned upon, whereas in Nepal it has been tolerated for as far back as we have any knowledge, subject only to the normal rule of hypergamy. The offspring of unions between Brahman men and Chetris women, or between either Brahmin or Chetri males and Magar or Gurung females, are themselves regarded as Chetris. Before the eighteenth century some Magars may have been accepted into the Khas ranks on the strength of cultural assimilation alone; this process would have been a replication of that by which the original Khas had been granted the right to wear the sacred

cord by the *baisi* and *caubisi* rulers. Finally, of course, it may be assumed that, while immigration from India during the medieval period did take place, many Brahman and Thakuri must have been basically of Khas extraction.

The unification of Nepal brought a number of new ethnic groups under Gorkha rule, in particular the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley and the Kiranti (Limbus and Rai) of the eastern hills. The Newars possessed an elaborate caste structure of their own and these different castes were incorporated into the Indo-Nepalese scheme at different levels. The Kiranti came to be accepted into the same general category as the Magars and Gurungs — pure, but not twice-born — though the question of their status may not have been consciously considered at first: unlike the western tribes they were not intimately associated with the Nepal state, having submitted to Prithvi Narayan in return for considerable internal autonomy, in particular the retention of their *kipat* system of communal tenure. Neither Newars nor Kirantis were admitted into the army in pre-Rana times — indeed the ban on Newar recruitment was not to be rescinded until the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1951. A number of Newars held administrative posts during the nineteenth century and the role of a few such individuals was to be very important under Jang Bahadur. Newars also provided almost the entire commercial class. Nevertheless their position remained very much that of a conquered people.

The political structure of unified Nepal was essentially that of Gorkha translated to Kathmandu, though Prithvi Narayan was careful to present himself as continuing the principal ritual functions of his Newar predecessors on his new throne. Gorkha forces had entered Kathmandu

whilst the inhabitants were celebrating the festival of Indra Jatra, during which the king received *tilak* from the Kumari Devi, or 'Living Goddess', who was regarded as the earthly embodiment of Taleju, the *istadevata* of the Newar monarchs. Prithvi Narayan at once ascended the platform erected for the ceremony and received the Kumari's recognition, whilst the defeated ruler, Jay Prakash Mølla, was in flight to the neighbouring city of Patan.¹⁴ Thereafter the authority of Prithvi and his successors rested on Hindu notions of monarchy as they had evolved in both the Indo-Nepalese and the Newar traditions, as well as on the prestige which military conquest had conferred upon the dynasty, and upon the crucial fact that land was entirely within the king's gift. These factors are to some extent interlocking, especially the second and third, but for ease of analysis these religious, military and economic aspects of royal power will be examined in turn.

Kingship as a Religious Institution

Much ink has flowed on the question of the religious nature of Hindu monarchy, in particular since Louis Dumont advanced his thesis that the spiritual predominance of the Brahman resulted in the 'secularising' of royal power.¹⁵ Dumont's view has been heavily criticised in subsequent anthropological and Indological writings, and there has been a renewed emphasis on the 'magico-religious' aspect of kingship; in this process critics have sometimes overlooked the fact that Dumont himself did not deny that this aspect continued to play an important role. Differences of emphasis are possible because, as Ronald Inden has pointed out, Indian kingship is neither fully divine (as in Japan or ancient Egypt),

nor fully immanent (as in China or medieval Europe), but a mixture of the two, a situation mirrored by the symbolic, cyclical alternation between the two states found in royal rituals and particularly the installation ceremony as described in early medieval texts.¹⁶ The form of the ceremony used by the Shah dynasty in Nepal — most recently for King Birendra's coronation in 1975 — is essentially that laid down in the eighth-century *Visnudharmottara*, the text on which Inden's analysis principally relies; it is interesting that he ascribes its compilation to Brahmans associated with the Kashmiri Karkota dynasty, which ruled briefly from Kanyakubja, claimed as their original home by Nepali Brahmans.

Whilst it may be debated how far ordinary Nepalis in the period we are considering thought consciously of their king as rainmaker, guarantor of the cosmic order, bride of the earth and so on, as Vedic texts and the mixed Vedic-Puranic royal rituals suggested him to be, belief in the divine or quasi-divine nature of the king's person remains strong among many of his subjects even today. It is a commonplace of the tourist handbooks that he is an *avatar* of Visnu, and this belief, expounded in *Manusmriti* and attested for many parts of India since the early centuries of the Christian era, is known to date back in the Newar royal tradition to at least the reign of Jayasthiti Malla in the fourteenth century.¹⁷

On the Gorkha side the seventeenth-century King Rama Shah is referred to as *visnuko ans* ('a portion of Vishnu') in a nineteenth-century *vamsavali* (chronicle) which doubtless represents an older tradition,¹⁸ and the title 'Narnarayan' ('the human Narayan') was included in the Gorkha king's *prasasti*. It has been argued by Gerald Toffin that the Newar king was not a full *avatar* in the sense the Krishna had been, or that the Khmer

rulers of South-east Asia were believed to be by their subjects.¹⁹

This is perhaps also the case with the Shah kings of unified Nepal, as is arguably attested by the very expression *visnuko ams*. However a petition from a courtier to King Rajendra, probably dating from the 1830s, could assert without qualification, 'Your Majesty is an *avatar* of God'.²⁰ The term was in any case one which came readily to mind in royal contexts throughout Hindu India; indeed in Darbhanga district, immediately south of the Nepal border, a Maithili bard celebrating famine relief efforts by the British government in 1873/4 could even describe the 'Company' as having 'become an *avatar* of part of the deity'.²¹ Popular belief in Nepal continues today to see the king as something more than human. Clear evidence of this is provided by the widespread conviction that just seeing the king wipes out the beholder's sins of that day.²² Another demonstration is provided by the peasant farmers of Janakpur district (in the Nepal Tarai) asserting that the king shines with one half of the fiery energy of the sun (identified with the supreme soul), while Brahmins and ascetics embody a much lesser proportion of divine energy.²³

It must be admitted, however, that the king is at the same time dependent on the Brahmins for the assumption of his superhuman status, since Brahmin priests must officiate at his installation ceremony and at other royal rituals. Additionally, consistent with the practice of the hill principalities which had been amalgamated to form the new kingdom, Prithvi Narayan and his successors followed the classical Hindu pattern of reinforcing their legitimacy through extensive lands grants to Brahmins.

In Vedic times the most essential feature of king-Brahman interdependence had been what Heesterman terms 'the marriage-like bond between the king and...his purohita'.²⁴ The purohit's role continued to be emphasised in the *Arthasastra* and the *dharmasastra* texts, but his importance was waning by the medieval period. In Gorkha and subsequently in unified Nepal, much greater importance attached to the post of *rajguru*. The *guru's* relationship to the king was formally established by the latter's receiving from him either the *gayatri mantra*, a specific verse of the *Rigveda* which was given to every twice-born boy when invested with the sacred cord at his *upanayan*, or alternatively a *diksa mantra*, which was in principle conferable at any time. Before 1800 the functions of *gayatri* and *diksa guru* were sometimes combined by a single individual, but largely because of the very considerable secular influence which went with the posts, care was afterwards taken to ensure that they went to members of two different families. After the establishment of the Rana regime both roles were entrusted to a single family — the Pandes — but by now the king himself had lost effective power, so there was no longer the same need to balance one *guru* family against another.²⁵

The importance of the *rajguru* has to be understood against the background of the heightened emphasis given to the *guru-sisya* relationship in sectarian Hinduism, and in particular in the tantric tradition which had long been of great influence in Nepal. The expression *diksa* ('initiation') frequently occurs in Vedic texts, but later came to refer pre-eminently to tantric initiation.²⁶ In no other Hindu state does the institution of *rajguru* seem to have played the critical role it often did in Nepal, with the possible exception of the Chola monarchy in South India.

inscriptions show that the *gurus* there wielded great influence in religious matters, but it is less clear how important they were in the secular sphere.²⁷ It is worth noting, however, that in Bengal and elsewhere, the role of the *purohit* as royal adviser seems to have been superseded by a *dharmadhyaksa* or *dharmadhikaranika*,²⁸ and that these can probably be equated with the Nepali *dharmadhikar* ('righteousness officer' or 'enforcer of morals'), who was normally drawn from a family which also provided *rajgurus*. By the mid-nineteenth century the *dharmadhikar* was responsible for supervising the expiation of offences against caste, but he had earlier enjoyed a wide jurisdiction over criminal cases generally.²⁹

While the relationship with Brahmans was the key religious buttress to the king's position, non-Brahman elements played a supporting role. The Newar kings of Kathmandu had been closely associated with the goddess Taleju, in whose cult non-Brahmans officiated. As we have already seen, Prithvi Narayan continued the custom of receiving *tilak* — and thus reconfirmation of his royal power, from the *Kumari Devi*, the human Taleju. The Shah kings did not take over all the other aspects of their predecessors' special relationship with Taleju, but they had their own personal deity (*istadevata*) in Gorakhnath (from whom 'Gorkha' derives) and patronised Gorakhnath's devotees, the Kanphata Yogis. Members of this sect had long been closely associated with many of the ruling families in central and western Nepal.³⁰

Although both actual practice in certain parts of India and also a number of *dharmasastra* texts suggest that *ksatriya* status was not essential for a Hindu king, it was none the less certainly to be preferred. Kings whose *sudra* ancestry was beyond doubt might seek to remedy the

situation through the *hiranya garbha* ('golden womb') ceremony, in which, with Brahmanical assistance, they underwent symbolical rebirth as members of the *ksatriya varna*. Martanda Varma of Trevancore was one who took this course.³¹ The Shah dynasty, on the other hand, had no such difficulties, since, in common with the ruling families of many of the hill states incorporated into the new kingdom, they had long claimed descent from Rajput refugees fleeing into the Himalayas to escape the Muslim invader. There is no reason to doubt that some refugees *did* enter the hills in this way, and it has been plausibly suggested that the break-up of the 'Malla Empire' was triggered by their arrival.³² However, the pedigrees advanced by the numerous hill chieftains have rightly attracted considerable scepticism: in many cases they will have been fabrications by court bards to flatter rulers of simple Khas extraction. The specific claim of the Shah dynasty, who see themselves as the descendants of a fourteenth-century prince of Mewar, the premier Rajput state, has been carefully analysed by Leelanteswar Baral, and shown to be almost certainly false.³³ From the point of view of the position of the monarchy in the nineteenth century, however, this is really irrelevant: what is important is that the claim was generally accepted in Nepal and also by the Gorakhpur Rajputs with whom the Nepali royal family inter-married. According to the famous story related by Brian Hodgson, the Shah family's pretensions were rejected by the Mewar court itself when an envoy from a seventeenth-century king of Gorkha had to confess that he himself had a Brahman name although he was of the *ksatriya* order, and thus revealed that caste matters were not regulated in the hills as in the plains.²⁴ Hodgson also stressed frequently in his correspondence that

the marriage of King Rana Bahadur to a Brahman girl at the end of the eighteenth century had left an indelible stain on the Shah escutcheon as far as the more *pakka* Indian Rajputs were concerned.³⁵ Direct evidence of the Mewar attitude in the nineteenth century suggests rather that even if they were worried about the dynasty's subsequent behaviour, they were inclined to accept that the two families were connected. A letter from the Udaypur ruler to King Rajendra of Nepal in 1838 referred to him as a member of his own family.³⁶ In 1861 Prince Birendra, son of Rajendra by his junior queen, applied to Maharana Sarup Singh to be allowed to visit Udaypur and be given maintenance at his court. Birendra, who had been in exile in India with his mother and brother since 1846, described the Maharana as his 'paternal uncle'. In a letter to the Governor-General's Agent for Rajputana, through whom the correspondence was being conducted, Sarup Singh expressed willingness to invite the prince 'as the boy is a relative of his'.³⁷ The project fell through only because of the death of the Maharana shortly afterwards.³⁸

In addition to emphasising their status as *ksatriyas* by descent, the Nepali kings also sought to play the *ksatriya* role as champions of *dharmā*.³⁹ In the *Dībya Upades*, the political testament which he dictated shortly before his death, Prithvi Narayan stressed his view of Nepal as *asaḷ Hindustan* — a real Hindustan, in contrast to India proper which had fallen under Muslim domination.⁴⁰ Long after the Mughal power had crumbled into dust, official Nepali documents continued to refer to India as *Mughlana* — the land the Mughals had polluted. Internally, whilst the non-Hinduised elements of the population were by and large left free to continue their existing customs, efforts were made to prohibit cow slaughter and more

generally to curb practices particularly repugnant to orthodox Hinduism. Caste regulations, particularly in regard to commensality and sexual relations, were enforced as strictly as possible; after the establishment of the Rana regime these rules were incorporated in the *Muluki Ain* ('National Code') of 1854.

Yet despite the assertively Hindu nature of the monarchy, reinforcement for the king's legitimacy could sometimes actually be sought from the *mleccha* power to the south. The *prasasti* (formal titles) of the Shah kings contained the Persian words *bahadur samser jang* ('brave with the sword in war'), granted to Prithvi Narayan Shah by the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam II, or by a local north Indian ruler claiming to act in the emperor's name. In his 1770 letter soliciting this title, Prithvi described himself as 'the *zamindar* of Gorkha', and applied for appointment as a Mughal *jagirdar*.⁴¹ A nineteenth-century chronicle claims that as far back as the seventeenth century, envoys of King Rama Shah of Gorkha had, on the Rana of Udaypur's advice, sought authority from an earlier emperor for an alteration in the *prasasti*, which was at that time purely Sanskritic.⁴² In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Rana Maharajas' ready acceptance of British titles might be regarded as a continuation and extension of this tradition.

The Military Factor

Even where all other factors making for legitimacy are missing, capacity as a military leader may be sufficient to secure the allegiance of one's followers. This was especially true of Prithvi Narayan's situation when he was still only the ruler of one amongst fifty hill

principalities. The social and political structure was similar throughout the *baisi* and *caubisi* kingdoms, so that individuals would as willingly work for one ruler as another. Ludwig Stiller sees the secret of Prithvi's success in a greater degree of concern for the people that he, and to some extent his predecessors at Gorkha, evinced in comparison with the Rajput rulers of other hill states.⁴³ This may well be true, but it was specifically Prithvi's military abilities and the fact that he was successful which bound his followers to him. Other members of his family were also effective commanders, notably his second son Bahadur Shah, but this was not the case with his successors on the throne. Either the simple fact of their being minors at the time of accession or their lack of aptitude resulted in command of the army in the field always going to someone other than the king himself. Prithvi's own exploits had been sufficient to allow his direct descendants a kind of reflected glory, and this is part of the reason for the general loyalty of the army during the years of internal crisis which are the main focus of this study. But the fact that it was the family rather than the individual who attracted the army's traditional loyalty, made it easier for them to accept the transfer of the throne from King Rajendra to King Surendra engineered by Jang Bahadur in 1846-7.

The senior officers of the army were drawn from the king's own Rajput relatives and from a number of Khas families, most of whom had been associated with the Shah dynasty through several generations. The composition of this elite will be examined more closely below, but here it is important to note that although a particular commander might well enjoy patron-client ties with soldiers under him, as well as influence

over them on the strength of his personal qualities, the way in which the army was recruited and paid worked to strengthen the direct link between soldier and monarch. Up until the end of the eighteenth century, a large proportion of Nepal's military force was made up of irregulars raised and maintained by officers known as *umraos*, who were generally Rajputs. Under Prithvi Narayan's grandson, Rana Bahadur, however, this system was discontinued and the troops raised and paid centrally, as was already the case with the regular battalions.⁴⁴ A small number of local battalions continued to be maintained in the hills, under officers of varying ranks, but they were of minimal importance in the overall balance. The political importance of the regular army was enhanced after the Anglo-Gorkha war when it was largely concentrated at the capital. Direct control by the king — or his representative — was thus facilitated. Since payment of the military from the most senior officer to private individual was predominantly by assignment of land revenue, this whole aspect of royal power can best be further considered in the context of land assignment generally.

Land and Central Control

The confident assertion by early European observers that the South Asian ruler was the owner of the soil is now generally seen as a gross over-simplification, stemming both from preconceptions of 'oriental despotism' and from the assumption that there had to be an 'owner' in the Western sense and that therefore if neither the *jagirdar* nor the cultivator fitted the bill, the king was logically bound to do so.⁴⁵ In fact the indigenous concept of property in land, as it had developed by the early

medieval period, was one of concurrent rights held by a number of parties, rather than exclusive ownership by one individual, the situation thus resembling that seen by Bloch in feudal Europe.⁴⁶ Although the Muslim invasions brought certain changes in the concept of land rights, the picture painted by Habib for the Mughal period is basically the same.⁴⁷ Against this background, the frequent insistence by Mahesh Chandra Regmi, the foremost authority on Nepali land tenure, on the doctrine of state ownership is initially a little disquieting. However, there is evidence to show that the balance of rights between king, cultivator and intermediary in Nepal was indeed more firmly tilted in the royal favour in Nepal than elsewhere in South Asia. The *jagir* grant to an ordinary soldier, for example, was not only a transfer of the revenue right but also entitled the beneficiary to dispossess the cultivator unless the latter's tenure was in a special protected category.⁴⁸ Stress on the king's predominant right had in any case long been one important strand in the Hindu tradition, and the speed and completeness of the Gorkha conquest doubtless reinforced the notion in the Himalayan context.

Conscious awareness of the king's proprietorship as a distinguishing feature of the Nepali system is shown in *Jang Bahadurko Belait Yatra*, an account of Jang Bahadur's 1850 visit to Britain written by a member of his party:

The sovereign cannot confiscate anybody's property, punish anyone, resort to violence or insult, nor hand out and cancel appointments at his own pleasure, as if he were absolute master of his own resources. His wealth in fact comes from the earnings from agriculture of the nobility, the military and the common people, who give up one half as the king's share.⁴⁹

Notwithstanding the inaccuracy over the percentage of British national income taken in taxation (the figure is in fact the proportion of the crop traditionally claimed by the ruler in the hills), the author is correct in making an implicit contrast with the state 'ownership' of land in Nepal. In a slightly earlier Nepali account of Britain, the *Inglisrajyaprabandhavamsavali*, it is stated explicitly that land in Britain was mostly held by individual members of the aristocracy as *bunyadi birta*.⁵⁰ *Bunyadi* means real, or absolute, and *birta* is the name of one type of Nepali land tenure under which, contrary to the usual practice, the king did grant outright possession.

Birta grants were intended especially for Brahmans and ascetics, gifts to whom had to be unconditional for the royal giver to earn full merit for his action.⁵¹ Grants of this type had long been a feature of Hindu royal practice, and it has been argued that it was a major cause of the 'feudalisation' of North India which developed during the early centuries AD.⁵² Land could also be gifted for the support of a temple or shrine, tenure of this type being known in Nepal as *guthi* but virtually equivalent to *birta* in its effect on the landholding structure. In addition to grants for religious purposes, *birta* could also be bestowed on favoured courtiers, particularly to military commanders who had rendered exceptionally valuable service. Prithvi Narayan not only made grants of this sort to his own followers, but also frequently confirmed the *birta* rights granted by rulers of the pre-unification states. This was especially important for the Newar inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley towns, who were allowed to retain their *sona birta* or *lhumbu* lands, regarded as their own property in contrast to the royal domain of the

former Newar sovereigns. Land in this last category was subject to taxation, but was not assignable as *jagir* to state employees. This exemption also applied to the *kipat* lands held communally by the Kirantis, and Brian Hodgson, British Resident at Kathmandu during the 1830s, classed these together with *birta* as private land, opposing them jointly to the *sarkari* (government) lands which were assignable and which he believed comprised three-quarters of the total agricultural land in the Valley and nine-tenths in the hills.⁵³

On *sarkari* land — the term is a useful one, though was probably Hodgson's own rather than one actually used by the Nepali revenue administrators — the king's subjects held land purely on sufferance, either as tenants in return for rent, or as *jagirdars* to whom the revenue from a particular area or areas was assigned for as long as their appointments lasted. *Jagirs* were the normal method of remuneration both for the key figures in the administration and for rank-and-file soldiers. There is a distinction, though, in that whereas more senior personnel were in effect local rulers, collecting taxes of all kinds and exercising criminal jurisdiction, the ordinary soldiers, if not cultivating his *jagir* himself, was entitled only to a share of the main rice crop and, in some circumstances, to a levy on the other produce.⁵⁴ On land not assigned to *jagirdars* the cultivators had to pay their rent, whether in kind or (as became more common as the nineteenth century progressed) in cash, to the state. Collection from land in this category was carried out either directly by an official of the central government or by tax-farmers.

The entire system, similar in many ways to that of Mughal India, involved a high degree of administrative decentralisation, since a

jagirdar or tax-farmer would have wide powers over the inhabitants of the lands granted to him. The building up of a strong central bureaucracy was a task which had to wait till the establishment of the Rana regime. Nevertheless the pre-Rana system was designed in such a way that overall central control could readily be maintained. Every *jagirdar* or tax-farmer was liable to have his appointment or contract cancelled, and thus his land rights terminated, at the annual review of appointments (*pajani*), a vivid symbol of the universal dependence on royal patronage. The *pajani* system applied to the entire army, and since the bulk of this was concentrated at Kathmandu it was possible for the king, if he chose, to conduct it in person. Those individuals who were not confirmed in their positions for the ensuing year were known as 'off-roll' (*dhakre*), and the British Residency calculated in 1837 that there were enough trained *dhakres* available to triple the standing army of about 18,000, if the resources were made available to pay for them.⁵⁵

Colonel Kirkpatrick, who visited Nepal in 1793 and later produced the Western world's first book-length account of the country, wrote that *umraos* (see above p.30) retained in service had their land assignments changed frequently so that they would not build up a potentially dangerous power base.⁵⁶ This would have involved great administrative difficulties if applied to all *jagirdars*, but even after the *umrao* system was ended it seems to have been continued for the more senior appointees; the practice was a standard Mughal one which had also been adopted in Hindu states on the plains.⁵⁷ A different method of securing the same result was to grant the *jagirdar* a large number of small plots in different parts of the country. This system is most fully illustrated by the record of revenue

assignments for 1852/3, six years after Jang Bahadur came to power, but was clearly established well before then: during Hodgson's time in Kathmandu soldiers belonging to the *kampu*, the regiments stationed at the capital, would typically be assigned fields in three different locations.⁵⁸ Such an arrangement complicated the *jagirdar's* task in realising the proceeds from his land, but a number of mechanisms were available to cope with this problem. Senior *jagirdars* with large areas under their control could employ local agents, whilst ordinary soldiers might arrange with a suitably located colleague for them to superintend each other's plots, or they could rely on the regimental accountants to collect the rent for them.⁵⁹ There also emerged a class of brokers who bought the *jagirdars' tirjas* (the certificates entitling them to the rent from specified lands) at a discount.⁶⁰

In contrast to the situation with a *jagir*, a permanent relationship to a particular locality could result where a senior Gorkha officer had been made a *birta* grant which passed to his descendants, or where a conquered hill chieftain had been allowed to retain his ancestral position in return for a block tribute payment. An example of the former category was the grant in about 1772 of the revenues of Dhulikhel, a town just beyond the eastern rim of the Kathmandu Valley, to Ram Krishna Kunwar, the great-grandfather of Jang Bahadur.⁶¹ This land appears to have remained in the family until Jang Bahadur became the master of all of Nepal, and the Kunwars were virtually the squires of Dhulikhel. The connection is attested by documents in which members of the family intercede with the king on the inhabitants' behalf, and by the institution in the town of a festival in honour of Jang's father, Bal Narsingh Kunwar

(this festival is probably the one which is still held today but now known as the 'Bhagwati Jatra').⁶² The relationship with the family is remembered in Dhulikhel itself, albeit in distorted fashion, in the form of the local belief that the town was the *maite ghar* (woman's paternal home) of Jang's mother, and that Jang's own glorious future was presaged when he was discovered asleep in nearby fields with a king cobra standing guard over him.⁶³ Dhulikhel, however, was not sufficiently large a fief to present any threat to the central government, especially with the bulk of the Gorkha army stationed at Kathmandu, only twenty-five miles away.

The erstwhile independent hill rajas might have posed a more serious threat, but the central government was always careful to maintain its right of regulation, replacing one ruler with another where necessary.⁶⁴ The largest of them, Palpa, was absorbed within the Nepali polity early in the nineteenth century, and none of the others subsequently tried to assert their independence even after Nepal's decisive defeat in the 1814-16 war. Often surrounded by directly administered areas, and aware of the size and solidarity of the Gorkha army, they had little choice but to remain loyal.

It was strong support from outside Nepali territory that any bid for local separatism really required to become effective in the face of the forces working in favour of the centre. During the 1814-16 war this was supplied, and British success in the critical campaigns in Kumaon and Gadhwal was in turn assisted by discontent amongst chieftains and people alike with the recently imposed Gorkhali supremacy. The war itself had been opposed by the commanders of the forces in the west, and in 1815

there appeared the possibility that one of these, Bam Shah, might be set up as sovereign of Doti, in the far west of Nepal's present-day territory, if his attempts to persuade Kathmandu to accept a settlement should be unsuccessful. However, after their chastening experience of mountain warfare, the British were reluctant to enter such an open-ended commitment, whilst Bam Shah himself regarded the project only as a last resort and soon abandoned the idea.⁶⁵ What the East India Company wanted from Nepal after the war was a clearly demarcated border and a reasonable degree of confidence that the Nepalis would not violate it. Given a central government prepared to meet those conditions, as Kathmandu always was except for a brief period of acute internal instability at the end of the 1830s, they had no wish to encourage separatism.

The 'Bearers of the Burden'

Although the nature of Hindu kingship, the structure of the Nepali state and the attitude of British India combined to place the king in a position of great potential strength, he nevertheless had to reckon with the views of his principal followers. In pre-unification Gorkha a number of families had come to constitute an hereditary elite around the Shah dynasty, and this structure persisted after the transfer of the court to Kathmandu. These were conventionally said to number thirty-six, although no complete list has been preserved, and within the group special prominence belonged in theory to six particular families, supposed to have assisted Prithvi Narayan's ancestor, Drabya Shah, take control of Gorkha in 1559.⁶⁶ Both the wider and the narrower group were referred to as *tharghar* ('the houses with the names', or 'the names in the household').

Those actually holding office under the king were known as *bharadars* (literally, 'bearers of the burden'), and in the nineteenth century, if not before, this expression came to denote the elite as a whole, both those currently in office and those out of public employment (*dhakre*). The *bharadari* in this wider sense was reinforced by a number of families from the former *baisi* and *caubisi* kingdoms, whose language, culture and social structure were similar to those of Gorkha.⁶⁷ At the same time, the term *tharghar*, though never completely losing its fuller meaning, began more usually to refer to members of the inner group of six in their capacity as land survey officials, which they retained while no longer enjoying any political predominance. *Bharadar*, and the collective noun *bharadari*, will therefore be used throughout this study to refer to members of the political elite, though it should be remembered that the expression may bear a narrower meaning in some of the original sources.

Whilst in Kathmandu in 1793 on an abortive mission to establish closer political and commercial links with Nepal, Kirkpatrick was struck by the importance of the *bharadari*, and stressed that this rested on their family connection with the ruling dynasty rather than on the wealth or number of supporters that they possessed as individuals. His description of their role is a perceptive one which helps understand much of the country's later history:

...the leading members of this body, whether actually employed or not, appear to possess such a high authority in the state, as renders it nearly impossible for the executive government, in whatever hands that may be, to pursue any measures of an important nature, in opposition to their advice. I have even been assured that the throne of the Prince himself would be no longer secure, should the principal Thurgurs concur in

thinking that his general conduct tended to endanger the sovereignty, which they profess themselves bound, as far as rests with them, to transmit unimpaired to the distant posterity of its founder, and the interests of which they do not allow to be determined by the partial views, or temporary policy of the temporary ruling individual.⁶³

Under the traditional system at Gorkha, as throughout the *caubisi* and *baisi*, the most important *bharadar*, effectively a chief minister, had been the *cauntara*, who was a close relative of the king. After unification this post declined in importance, while the word itself came to be used in a wider sense as a kind of surname for collateral members of the royal family. These retained their status as *bharadars* even when not holding any specific administrative responsibility. Their Thakuri caste and relationship with the king entitled them in their own eyes to special consideration and their resentment at subordination to those they considered their inferiors was an important factor in nineteenth-century politics.

Object of this resentment and the largest element in the *bharadari* were the Khas, who provided the bulk of army officers.⁶⁹ The families and individuals most important in 1830 will be treated in detail in the next chapter, but some general points are relevant here. Khas family names appear usually to derive either from titles of functionaries associated with the medieval Malla Empire, or from place names in western Nepal.⁷⁰ All those bearing a particular name are commonly spoken of as belonging to a particular *thar*, and that word is therefore often rendered into English as 'clan'. Strictly, however, this is inaccurate, since the unit of (putative) common descent is rather the *kul* ('lineage'), a number of which make up a particular *that*. All members of a *kul* are bound together by the worship of a patron deity (*kuldevata*).⁷¹ Jang Bahadur,

for example, belonged to the Khandka *kul* of the Kunwar *thar*.⁷² Whilst members of a single *kul* would be aware of the fact and retain some residual sense of solidarity, individual families within it could be political rivals, The same applied *a fortiori* to the 'members' of a *thar*, who shared nothing but a common name. With a particularly common *thar*, failure to remember these fundamentals can cause confusion: writers referring to the family of Bhimsen Thapa, effective ruler of Nepal from 1806 to 1837, are not always aware that another family within his Bhagale Thapa *kul* was also politically important, or that the name was borne by many Khas, and also by Magars, with no connection to Bhimsen at all.

The more prominent lineages often possessed origin legends and a genealogy going back to their founder. Those of Prithvi Narayan's minister Kalu Pande and of Bhimsen Thapa claimed Brahman ancestry, and at least in the first case the claim may well have been correct.⁷³ By far the best known is that of Jang Bahadur, who, like the Shah dynasty, claimed descent from the Rana family of Mewar. The story was clearly elaborated after he came to power in 1846, but the lineaments may well have existed beforehand.⁷⁴ With a general presumption that the older a family's connection with the Gorkha throne the greater consideration it deserved, the temptation to manufacture a useful past was clear, and the *vamsavali* material on the early history of Gorkha has to be regarded with caution for this reason.⁷⁵

Jealous of their own standing and constant rivals for power, the different Khas families struggled as families, or even as individuals, not as a caste. Not that the Chetris, as the prominent families must have styled themselves long before the change of name was given legal

force by Jang Bahadur, were unaware of their caste status, but as they formed a clear majority of the political elite they had no need to assert themselves as a group.⁷⁶

A number of *bharadars* are specifically identified as Magars in a list of prominent personalities at the Nepali Court prepared by the British Residency in 1816.⁷⁷ One of those mentioned, Abhiman Singh Rana, is frequently identified as such in Nepali sources, so there can be no doubt that the Residency was accurately reporting local information. However, a Residency Report of the 1830s asserts that although Magars and Gurungs then made up about half of the privates and non-commissioned officers, they were not found among the officers (meaning probably the rank of subedar and upwards).⁷⁸ The explanation is probably that men such as Abhiman Singh belonged to families which had been granted the right to wear the sacred thread before the caste line hardened, but retained their Magar name and were commonly still regarded as such. This hypothesis is supported by Kirkpatrick's reference to the *tharghars* including families from 'the Khus *and* Mangur tribes of the Chetree class' (italics supplied); the Rana family included amongst the six senior *tharghars* were presumably 'Magars' of this category.⁷⁹ A similar explanation must apply to the occasional 'Gurung' found amongst the *bharadari*, the most prominent being Kaji Nar Singh Gurung, a leading figure at the turn of the century. Such individuals can be classed with the Khas for practical purposes, but their ethnicity may have strengthened their personal hold on the Magar and Gurung troops under them.

The Brahman section of the *bharadari* was considerably smaller. If the traditional account is to be trusted, hill Brahmans had in earlier times played a significant military role, since two of them, Ganesh Pande and Bhagirath Pant, minister and general respectively to Drabya Shah, fought in the battles which established Gorkha as an independent kingdom in the sixteenth century.⁸⁰ Prithvi Narayan Shah two centuries later had at least one prominent Brahman officer in his army, *viz.*, Sardar Kalu Pande, a descendant of Ganesh. However, a passage in Prithvi's *Divya Upades* suggests that by this time fighting was not thought appropriate work for Brahmans, whilst in the nineteenth century Hodgson noted Nepali Brahmans' lack of enthusiasm for it in comparison with their counterparts on the plains.⁸¹ Given the militarised nature of Nepali government this virtually ensured that the highest positions would be in non-Brahman hands. However, the *rajguru* and *purohit* families were very much part of the elite, wielding considerable influence both because of their special relationship to the king, and, in the case of the two *guru* families with strong plains connections, because of their expertise as intermediaries with the British. The *gurus* were by far the most important Brahman element, but at a lower level of influence other Brahman specialists also found a position in the *bharadari*. Kulananda and Hira Lal Jha, probably father and son, were representatives of this category in post-war Nepal, enjoying political consideration as revenue-farmers of the Tarai, of which they were themselves natives.⁸²

As with the Khas, it is misleading to talk of a 'Brahman party',⁸³ since they pursued family or individual interests rather than caste ones. This is particularly true of the *guru* families, who were bitter rivals of one another and who often aligned with different Khas factions.

The normal lack of a strong personality on the throne after Prithvi Narayan ensured that factionalism among the *bharadari* was given extended scope. The accession of Rana Bahadur Shah as a minor in 1777 produced a struggle for power between his uncle, Bahadur Shah, and his mother, Rajendra Laksmi, in which Prithvi Narayan's old commanders generally supported the former and the queen, like her husband Pratap Shah before her, relied more on newer, non-Gorkha adherents.⁸⁴ The issue was decided in Bahadur Shah's favour by the queen's death in 1785, but he was weakened by the failure of his forward policy towards Tibet and by his promotion of an alliance with the British, whom Nepal had tried to keep at arm's length since the Company's ill-conceived intervention in favour of the last Newar king of Kathmandu in 1767. Shortly after the British envoy, Colonel Kirkpartick, had left Kathmandu, Bahadur Shah was dismissed and imprisoned by his nephew. Rana Bahadur did not, however, remain long in charge of the government. In 1799, five years after taking power into his own hands, he abdicated in favour of Girvana Yuddha, his two-year-old son by a hypogamous (and thus, under Hindu law, irregular) marriage with a Brahman widow. His intention in renouncing the throne was to devote himself to prayers and offerings for the mother, who had contracted smallpox, and also to ensure that the boy should not be set aside despite the circumstances of his birth. Rana Bahadur was successful in the latter aim, managing to have almost all the *bharadars* subscribe to a document recognising his son as king, but when his Brahman wife died shortly afterwards, he instituted violent reprisals against the Brahmans and the temples of the gods, who he thought had betrayed him, and he also attempted to re-assert control of the government. He was

resisted by his son's ministers, although these were men he had himself originally selected, and was compelled to withdraw in 1800 to Banaras in East India Company territory. In a tortuous series of negotiations and intrigues he and his advisers managed to out-manoeuve both the British and his Nepali opponents: the 1801 Commercial Treaty, which the latter parties had concluded and which provided for the exclusion of Rana Bahadur from power, proved unworkable because of dissension within the government at Kathmandu. The British Resident appointed under the agreement withdrew after only a few months, and the ex-king was able to return home in triumph in 1804. For two years he held no formal position in the administration, and the *cauntaras* and *kajis* ruled in the name of his infant son. In February 1806, however, Rana Bahadur was appointed *mukhtiyar* ('manager' or 'executive')⁸⁵ to the king. Less than a month later he was assassinated by his half-brother, Sher Bahadur.

At this point one of Rana Bahadur's closest confidants, the Khas *bharadar* Bhimsen Thapa, then around thirty years old, took charge of the situation, and executed many of his political opponents on grounds of their real or supposed involvement in the assassination plot. Tripura Sundari, youngest of Rana Bahadur's five consorts, and probably a relative of Bhimsen's, was declared Queen Regent.⁸⁶ It is not certain whether Bhimsen himself was appointed *mukhtiyar* at once, which would have been formal recognition of his *de facto* predominance over the other *bharadars*, but such recognition was afforded at the latest in 1811 when he became the first Nepali to acquire the title of *janaral* (i.e. general).⁸⁷ Three years later Bhimsen led Nepal into the disastrous war with the British, yet his power, after seeming to totter for a short while, survived

intact. The death of King Girvana Yuddha a few months after the conclusion of peace meant that Bhimsen was once again minister for an infant king, the two-year-old Rajendra Bikram Shah. His position rested on backing from the Queen Regent, on support (or at least acquiescence) from leading *bharadars*, many of whom were linked in marriage with his family, and on his popularity with the army. With the death of Lalit Tripura in 1832, Bhimsen's supremacy came under increasing challenge, leading to his fall and to the period of frantic political struggle which was to issue in Jang Bahadur's emergence, and which forms the subject of the greater part of this study.

State, Caste and Nation

It is possible to paint a picture of the political process in South Asia which has no room for the concept of nation-state as a source of legitimacy and focus of loyalty. Kingdoms and empires are then seen only as temporary patterns in a constantly shifting mosaic of lesser units, and alliances and rivalries among the latter are conducted without respect for the boundaries. There does exist an ideal order contrasted with the everyday political struggle, but it is a universal one, transcending individual states, and visualised in the classical Hindu tradition as the establishment of *varnasrama* under a *cakravartin* (world emperor), or in the Muslim tradition as the undivided *milat-i-islam*. There is a clear parallel with the medieval European concept of Christendom, contrasted with the later European order of territorial nation-states. This is a model implicit in much work on the region, but elaborated in a particularly sophisticated form in Wink's recent study of the Maratha *svarajya*.⁸⁸ It is a picture which can to some extent be applied to Nepal.

The full reality, however, is more complex, and South Asian history also encompasses something nearer to nationalism in the modern European sense. Wink allows this for the Marathas, perhaps somewhat reluctantly, to account for facts such as the doctrine of *maharashtra dharma* promulgated by Sivaji's *guru*, Ramdas.⁸⁹ The reference by British observers to a Maratha national spirit are paralleled by comments on a similar spirit in Nepal. It is in fact arguable that, more than other units in South Asia in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, Nepal was a nation-state in embryo, with a distinct identity rooted in territorial and cultural factors. The development of this identity through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been explored by Burghart⁹⁰ and will be looked at in more detail in the final sections of this study. For the moment, however, it will suffice to identify two factors operating from a very early date.

The first of these is the conception held by the political elite of the state which Prithvi Narayan had created as an entity to be protected and preserved independently of allegiance to any individual. This is the conception seen very clearly in the passage from Kirkpatrick quoted on p.38. When talking of the kingdom in this sense, the Nepali word used was not *rajya*, but *dhunga*, literally meaning 'stone'. Mahesh Regmi has pointed out that the use of this word, common from Prithvi's time onwards, signifies a contrast with the pre-unification system, in which the concept of the state, as opposed to the personal bond between king and follower, had not yet emerged.⁹¹ This connotation is well brought out by Rana Bahadur's use of the expression just before he was cut down by his half-brother, Sher Bahadur. Accusing Sher of having acted against

him during his (Rana Bahadur's) exile in Banaras, he told him that although he had forgiven him for his offence against him personally, he still had to answer those present for his crimes against the *dhumga*.⁹²

The second factor lies in a sense of Parbatiya identity anchored around the Khas, whose central position in the Parbatiya caste structure has already been described and who had given their name to the language (*khaskura*) spoken by all Parbatiyas. This basic reality was not altered by the Khas themselves progressively rejecting their old name in favour of 'Chetri', nor by the disdain which Brahman or Thakuri might at times express. In particular, solidarity between hill Brahman and Chetri was enhanced by the fact of many Chetri lineages claiming Brahman ancestry. The hill Brahmins were looked down upon by their counterparts in the plains, who to this day will often refuse to allow them the title *brahman* but refer to them instead only by the Nepali form *bahun*. Within the hills, however, it was the plainsman who was the inferior, as was made clear by the lower ranking of Tarai Brahmins in the hierarchy enshrined in the 1854 *Muluki Ain*. In this respect the *Ain* was faithfully reflecting a well-established view: the Shah dynasty had accepted the Misra family of Banaras as hereditary *gurus* in the seventeenth century, but never admitted them to commensality as they did their *purohits*, the hill Aryals.⁹³ Whilst many groups in the hills sought to raise their status by claiming plains origin in the distant past, it was also necessary to be fully 'naturalised' in the new environment.

Other ethnic groups in the hills were excluded from the Parbatiya identity, whilst the impure Parbatiya castes could not share it in the full sense. The whole history of the system had, however, been one of

the acculturation and integration of tribal groups into the overall hierarchy, and although by the time of unification the situation was less fluid than it had been earlier, some flexibility remained. And all who lived in the hills were, if not Parbatiyas, at least 'Pahadis' ('hillmen'), with a shared sense of separateness from the plains. As the nineteenth century progressed, groups such as the Rai and Limbu were to start on the path along which Magar and Gurung had already gone.

More radically excluded from the nation in embryo were two non-tribal groups — the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley and the people of the Tarai. The position of both, especially the latter, remains problematic today.⁹⁴ In the Newar case there is a special irony, given that 'Nepal' is itself a Newari word, deriving indeed from the same root as 'Newar'. Throughout the period this study deals with, the word was used only in its original sense referring to the Kathmandu Valley: the Parbatiya elite spoke of ruling Nepal whilst identifying themselves as Gorkhalis.⁹⁵ With the Tarai, the problem was of course that the area was geographically and culturally part of the North Indian plain. The boundary between Nepal and East India Company was purely arbitrary.

Despite these difficulties, the hill base was sufficiently large to allow the overall process to continue, and, paradoxically, it was assisted in the long run by Nepal's defeat at the hands of British India. The ending of Gorkha expansion and the loss of Gadhwal and Kumaon was a devastating psychological blow, and competition amongst the elite for land assignments may have been intensified now that the supply of land was finite. However, the British decision to restore to Nepal the eastern Tarai, originally annexed under the Treaty of Segauli, ensured

that the country was not economically crippled.⁹⁶ A western border on the Mahakali aided integration, because it excluded areas where the position of the Khas was much more depressed *vis-à-vis* immigrants from the plains than in Nepal proper.⁹⁷ And although the slogan of *ganga samd̄h* ('the frontier on the Ganges') would long retain an emotional appeal, the restriction of Nepal territory on the plains to the Tarai allowed the 'Pahadi' domination to remain unchallenged. A slow consolidation was possible, and this was the backcloth to the more dramatic political events of the 1830s and 1840s.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Sylvain Levi, *Le Népal*, Vol.1 (Paris: Ernest Leroux 1905), p.28.
2. For examples of these two approaches, applied respectively to the Chola empire and the Maratha state, see Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press 1980), and A. Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India. Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-century Maratha Svarajya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986).
3. Richard Burghart, 'The History of Janakpurdham: A Study of Hindu Ascetism and the State', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London 1978, and 'For a sociology of Indias: an intracultural approach to the study of "Hindu society"', in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.) 17, 2 (1983), pp.275-99; Andras Höfer, *The Caste Hierarchy and the State in Nepal: A Study of the Muluki Ain of 1854* (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner 1979).
4. The best overall survey of the history of Nepal's foreign relations is Leo E. Rose, *Nepal. Strategy for Survival* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1971). For a detailed account of relations with the British in the period of this study, see Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations 1816-77* (Delhi: S. Chand and Co. 1968), supplemented by Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations in the Nineteenth Century* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhpadhyay 1973). For the Tibetan side, see P.R. Uprety, *Nepal-Tibet Relations 1850-1930* (Kathmandu: Puga Nara 1980). In Nepali, particularly significant work has been done by Baburam Acharya, Yogi Naraharinath, Triratna Manandhar (who has also published in English), and the Samshoddhan Mandal scholars.
5. M.C. Regmi, *Land Ownership in Nepal* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1976), and *Thatched Huts and Stucco Palaces* (New Delhi: Vikas 1979), plus earlier works in the bibliography; Ludwig Stiller, *The Rise of the House of Gorkha* (Kathmandu: Patna Jesuit Society 1973), *The Silent Cry: the People of Nepal 1816 to 1837* (Kathmandu: Sahyogi Press 1976), and *The Kot Massacre* (Kathmandu: CNAS 1981); Satish Kumar, *Rana Polity in Nepal* (London: Asia Publishing House 1967); Krishna Kant Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur*, Vol.1 (Kathmandu: 'Buku' 1983); Dan Edwards 'Patrimonial and Bureaucratic Administration in Nepal. Historical Change and Weberian Theory', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Chicago 1977; M.S. Jain, *The Emergence of a New Aristocracy in Nepal* (Agra: Sri Ram Mehra 1972).
6. On the 'Malla Empire' see G. Tucci, *Preliminary Report of Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal* (Rome: ISMEO 1956), and Prayag Raj Sharma, *Preliminary Report on the Art and Architecture of the Karnali Basin, Western Nepal* (Paris: CNRS 1972); and on the Sen kingdom Ludwig Stiller, *Prithvi Narayan in the Light of Dibya Upadesh* (Kathmandu: the author 1968, and *Rise of the House of Gorkha*, *op.cit.*, pp.36-41.

7. On this process, see, for example, Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court* (2nd edn.) (New Delhi: People's Publishing House 1972), and Wink, *Land and Sovereignty*, *op.cit.*
8. K.M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Dutch* (Bombay: D.B. Taparevala 1931), pp.60-72.
9. *Bhasa Vamsavali*, iii, 75, cited in Stiller, *House of Gorkha*, *op.cit.*, p.89.
10. The language is also known as Gurkhali or Gorkhali; for a discussion of the use and connotation of the different labels, see R. Burghart, 'The Formation of the Concept of Nation-State in Nepal', in *Journal of Asian Studies*, XLIV, 1 (November 1984), pp.101-25.
11. John Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur in Europe* (Kathmandu: Sahayogi Press 1983), pp.68-9, and references.
12. For a more extended presentation of the system, see Höfer, *op.cit.*
13. John T. Hitchcock, 'An Additional Perspective on the Nepali Caste System', in James T. Fisher (ed.), *Himalayan Anthropology* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton 1979), pp.111-9.
14. Ludwig Stiller, *House of Gorkha*, *op.cit.*, p.130.
15. Louis Dumont, 'The Conception of Kingship in Ancient India', in *Religion/Politics and History in India* (Paris: Mouton 1970), pp.62-88.
16. Ronald Inden, 'Ritual, Authority and Cyclic Time in the Hindu Kingship', in J.F. Richards (ed.), *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1978), pp.28-9 and 39-40.
17. *Manusmriti*, vii, 5, 4; Gerard Toffin, 'Newar Kingship', unpublished paper read at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, June 1984.
18. 'Nepal Desko Itihas' (Hem Raj Pande's *vamsavali*), in *Ancient Nepal*, No.28, July 1974, p.5. This is one of several surviving versions of the *Gorkha Vamsavali*, the origin of which is discussed in Baburam Acarya, *Sri Panc Badamaharajadhiraj Prithvi Narayan Sahko Saksipta Jivani*, Vol.1, (Kathmandu: Sri Panc Maharajadhirajko Pres Sacivalaya 2024 VS [1967/8]), pp.36-8, and Dinesh Raj Pant, *Gorkhako Itihas*, Part 1 (Kathmandu: the author 2041 VS [1985]), pp.31-46. An English translation of another version is among the Hodgson Papers in the India Office Library, London, and has been published in Bikrama Jit Hasrat (ed.), *History of Nepal as Told by Her own and Contemporary Chroniclers* V.V. Research Institute, Hoshiarpur 1970, pp.101-67.
19. Toffin, *op.cit.*
20. Undated *arji* of Bal Narsingh Kunwar to King Rajendra, published in Chittaranjan Nepali, *Sri Panc Rana Bahadur Sah* (Kathmandu: Srimati Meri Rajbhandari 2020 VS [1963/4]), pp.141-7.

21. '*Daiva ams abatarala kampani*', Phaturi Lal, *Kavitta Akali* ('Song of the Famine'), stanza 28, published in Grierson, *Introduction to the Maithili Language of North Bihar*, Part II (Calcutta: Asiatic Society 1882), p.26. The editor stresses that the poem was not composed for presentation to any British official so that the language employed cannot be put down to mere flattery.
22. In Kathmandu in 1983 an educated Nepal friend jokingly told me that her sins for the day had been cancelled out by seeing King Birendra on his way to a wedding reception. Cf. Margaret Sinclair Stevenson's remarks (on the Indian situation generally): 'Merit is...acquired... by *looking at sacred people*, such as Brahmans, true ascetics, Ruling Chiefs, and still more by gazing at the face of the King-Emperor' (*The Rites of the Twice-Born*, London 1920, p.366, emphasis in original); quoted in David Gellner's review of Clifford Geertz's *Nagara*, in *South Asia Research*, Vol.3, No.2 (November 1983), p.139.
23. Richard Burghart, 'The History of Janakpurdham', *op.cit.*, p.28. Although the Tarai is outside the geographical heartland of Nepal culture, the Mithila region, in which Janakpur is situated, has long had close contacts with the Nepali court, where Maithil Brahmans were frequently employed, especially under the Newar monarchy.
24. J.C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration* (The Hague: Mouton 1957), p.226.
25. J.F. Whelpton, 'Priests and Politics: the Role of the Rajgurus in Nepal', unpublished paper read at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, February 1984.
26. Sanjukta Gupta *et al.*, *Hindu Tantrism* (Leiden: Brill 1979), pp.71-2. On the connection between tantrism and Hindu monarchy, see also Sanjukta Gupta and Richard Gombrich, 'Kings, Power and the Goddess', in *South Asia Research*, Vol.6, No.2 (November 1986), pp.123-38.
27. Nilakanta Shastri, *The Colas*, Vol.II (Part 1) (University of Madras 1937), pp.221-2. The author sees the Chola *rajguru* in the context of South Indian Saivism. Ramila Thapar claims that in the Chola kingdom the *guru* 'became a confidant and confessor in addition to being the adviser in all matters temporal and sacred', *History of India*, Vol.1 (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1966), p.200, but this is perhaps going beyond the available evidence.
28. P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, Vol.III (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute 1946), p.126. According to the Nepali economic historian M.C. Regmi, the actual term *dharmadhikar* also occurs in Indian contexts, but refers to a caste rather than a state official, *Regmi Research Series*, 11, 9 (September 1979), pp.136-8.

29. K.K. Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur* (Kathmandu: 'Buku' 1983), pp.305-7. Regmi (*loc.cit.*) see an analogy to the nineteenth-century division of jurisdiction between *dharmadhikar* and the Nepalese courts in the Islamic dual systems of 'shar' (canon law) and secular law.
30. The royal relationship with Taleju is analysed in detail in Toffin, *op.cit.* On the role of the Kanphatas in Nepal, see Gunter Unbescheid, *Kanphata. Untersuchungen zu Kult, Mythologie und Geschichte Sivaitischer Tantriker in Nepal* (Wiesbaden: Franz Stein Verlag 1980).
31. Susan Bayly, 'Hindu Kingship and the Origin of Community: Religion, State and Society in Kerala, 1750-1850', in *Modern Asian Studies*, 18, 2 (1984), p.186.
32. Tucci, *Preliminary Report, op.cit.*, p.130.
33. Leelanteswar Baral, 'Life and Writings of Prithvi Narayan Shah', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London 1964, Chapter III.
34. Brian Hodgson, 'The Military Tribes of Nepal', in *Essays in the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet* (New Delhi: Manjushri 1972, reprint of 1874 edition), p.38.
35. For example, Hodgson to Government, 14 January 1839, FS 6 February 1839, No.53.
36. Baral, *op.cit.*, p.114. The letter is published in S. Sen and U. Mishra (eds.), *Sanskrit Documents* (Allahabad: Ganganatha Jha Research Institute 1951), p.49.
37. Khareeta received 6 July 1861, FP(B), September 1861, No.25.
38. Agent Rajputana to Government, 19 April 1862, UP State Archives (Allahabad), Dept.XXXII, File No.6.
39. See the discussion in Chapter 6, 'Sanskritization and Unity', of Stiller, *The Silent Cry, op.cit.*
40. Prithvi Narayan Shah, *Dibya Upades* ('Divine Counsel'), published in Balkrishna Pokhrel (ed.), *Panc Say Varsa* (Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan 2031 VS [1974/5]), p.180.
41. D.R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay 1975), Vol.1, pp.221-4. The phrase was removed from the *prasasti* by King Mahendra in 1962 (Suryavikram Gyavali, *Itihaska Kura* (Kathmandu: Nepal Rajakiya Pragyapratisthan 2034 VS [1977/8]), p.13.
42. Hasrat, *op.cit.*, p.114. For a sceptical appraisal of the story, see Dinesh Raj Pant, *Gorkhako Itihas, op.cit.*, pp.85-8.
43. Stiller, *House of Gorkha, op.cit.*, pp.91-7.

44. William Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* (London: William Bulmer and Co. 1811), pp.55-6; Francis Buchanan Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co.1819), pp.110-12; H.A. Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal* (London: W.H. Allen and Co. 1880), Vol.1, pp.175-6.
45. Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian Structure of Moghul India (1556-1707)* (London: Asia Publishing House 1962), pp.112-3; Ainslie T. Embrose, 'Landholding in India and British Institutions', in R.E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History* (London: University of Wisconsin Press 1969), pp.42-4.
46. Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, p.116, quoted in R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism* (2nd edn.) (Delhi: Macmillan 1980), pp.124-5.
47. Habib, *op.cit.*, pp.117-8.
48. Hodgson Papers, Vol.7, f.24. The proportion of protected tenants does, however, seem to have been quite high, since Hodgson states that soldiers of the Kampu (Kathmandu garrison) were free to make their own terms with the cultivator only on about a quarter of their assigned land (*ibid.*, f.26).
49. Translated in Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur, op.cit.*, p.178.
50. *Inglisrajyaprabandha Vamsavali* ('Chronicle of the Institutions of the English State'), Bir Library MS.3/84 (National Archives of Nepal), p.13.
51. The operation of the *birta* system for ascetics and its significance is discussed in detail in Burghart, *op.cit.*
52. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism, op.cit.*
53. Hodgson Papers, Vol.13, ff.140-2 and Vol.7, f.24. Although Hodgson refers specifically only to the *lhumbu* and *kipat* categories of non-sarkari land, his estimate of the total proportion most likely included other types of *birta* land also.
54. Hodgson Papers, Vol.7, ff.25-6.
55. A. Campbell, 'Sketch of Relations with Nepal', in Hasrat, *op.cit.*, p.225. *Dhakre* means 'basket-carrier', a choice of term nearly illustrating the contrast between dependence on one's own physical labour for a living and entitlement to a share of the king's revenue. For the ordinary soldier, the contrast was literally applicable: half the plots assigned to serving soldiers were cultivated by *dhakres*, Hodgson Papers, Vol.7, f.43.
56. Kirkpatrick, *Account of Nepaul, op.cit.*, p.55.

57. For Rajput adoption of this Mughal precedent, see Norman P. Ziegler, 'Some Notes of Rajput Loyalties during the Moghul Period', in Richards, *op.cit.*, p.227.
58. Revenue Assignments for 1909 VS (1852/3), Register 2 (Main Series), Jangi Adda Archive, Kathmandu; Hodgson Papers, *loc.cit.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. M.C. Regmi, *Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal* (Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar 1978), pp.489-90.
61. Prithvi Narayan Shah to Ram Krishna Kunwar, Aswin Badi 5 (year unspecified), translated in *Regmi Research Series 4, 5* (May 1972), pp.64-9. The local inhabitants were allowed to keep their *birta* rights to non-irrigated land (*pakho*) while forfeiting the more valuable *khet* (irrigated) areas (Order of King Surendra to the Newar Cultivators of Dhulikhel, Paush Badi 8, 1931 VS (31 December 1874), published in *Mecidekhi Mahakali*, Vol.1 (Kathmandu: Sri Pancko Sarkar Sancar Mantralaya 2031VS (1974/5)), p.500).
62. Ram Krishna himself had supported the Dhulikhel Newars' petition to be allowed to retain their *pakhò* lands, and two generations later Bal Narsing secured reconfirmation of their title when they had come under threat of confiscation (*Regmi Research Series 10, 1* (January 1978), pp.8-9). The equation of the 'Balnar Sing Jatra' with the modern 'Bhagwati Jatra' is made in *Mecidekhi Mahakali*, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.499, though the material presented in *Regmi Research Series, loc.cit.*, provides grounds for supposing that the 'Srikrishna Jatra', for which Bal Narsingh arranged financial provision in 1834, was later renamed after him.
63. Interview with Khoju Shrestha, Dhulikhel, October 1983. Jang's mother was in fact the daughter of Nain Singh Thapa, whose home will have been either in Kathmandu or in Gorkha district. Other versions of the cobra anecdote place the incident elsewhere. Rishikesh Shaha associates it with Jang's alleged sojourn amongst the Tharus of the Tarai (see his introduction to Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur in Europe, op.cit.*, p.8). The king cobra is a symbol of royal authority, since the great serpent Sesh forms the couch of Vishnu.
64. Stiller, *House of Gorkha, op.cit.*, pp.259-61.
65. Edward Atkinson, *Himalayan Gazetteer* (Delhi: Cosmo Publications 1973 - reprint of 1882 edition), Vol.II, Part II, pp.673-4.
66. Kirkpatrick, *op.cit.*, p.24; Hamilton, *op.cit.*, p.110; Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur, op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.114.
67. Leo R. Rose and John T. Scholz, *Nepal: Profile of a Himalayan Kingdom* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press 1930), p.21.

68. Kirkpatrick, *loc.cit.*
69. Stiller, *House of Gorkha, op.cit.*, p.275, argues that royal respect for them stemmed from their hold on the loyalty of the ordinary soldiers. There is something in this but it perhaps underestimates the direct link between soldier and monarch.
70. Surya Mani Adhikari, 'Origin of Family Surnames in Pahadi Caste Groups of Nepal', *Voice of History*, IV-VI (1978-80), pp.27-31.
71. Khem Bahadur Bista, *Le Culte du Kuldevata au Népal en particulier chez certains Ksetri de la vallée de Kathmandu* (Paris: Editions Nove (CNRS) 1972).
72. Baral, *op.cit.*, p.111. A full discussion of the origin and history of Jang's family is given below, Appendix 1.
73. Bhim Bahadur Pande Kshatri, *Rastra Bhaktiko Jhalak* (Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar 2034 VS (1977/8)), p.7; *Thapa Vamsavali*, published in *Itihas Prakas 1* (2023 VS (1955/6)), pp.119-21.
74. See below, Appendix 1, p:417.
75. Dinesh Raj Pant, *Gorkhako Itihas, op.cit.*, p.33.
76. Khas/Chetris formed about 60 per cent of the *bharadari* in the mid-nineteenth century (see Table III in Chapter Six, below, p.330), although only accounting for about a third of the population in pre-unification Gorkha (Hamilton, *Account of Nepaul, op.cit.*, p.244).
77. 'List of Officers of the Nipaulese Government and of the Baradars and Sirdars composing the State of Nipaule', forwarded to Calcutta, 16 June 1816, NR/5/35.
78. Hodgson Papers, Vol.6, ff.175-6.
79. Kirkpatrick, *op.cit.*, p.123.
80. Pande Ksatri, *op.cit.*, p.5.
81. Brian Hodgson, 'The military Tribes of Nepal', in *Essays in the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet* (London: Trubner 1874), Part II, p.39.
82. Although a number of Jha Brahmans had been assimilated into the Newar community in the medieval period (cf. above, n.20), Hira Lal Jha's possession of an estate in British India (below, p.292), makes it virtually certain that his family remained based in their ancestral home of Mithila.
83. W.W. Hunter, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson* (London: John Murray 1896), p.153.

84. Rishikesh Shaha, 'Periscope on pre-Rana Period Politics in Nepal', in *Essays in the Practice of Government in Nepal* (New Delhi: Manohar 1982), pp.35-6. Baburan Acharya, *Nepalko Samskrupta Vrttanta* (Kathmandu: Pramod Shamsher and Narbikram 'Pyasi' 2022 VS [1965/6]), pp.70-1, describes a 'non-Gorkhali clique' around Pratag Singh.
85. *Mukhtiyar* can normally be translated as 'premier', but the actual powers that went with the title varied from case to case, being set out in each individual's letter of appointment. A document in the Nepal Foreign Ministry, as reported by Triratna Manandhar (personal communication), applies the title to Krishna Ram Paudyal, who was at the time (Kartik Sudi 13, 1895, i.e. 31 October 1838), responsible only for the management of relations with the British Residency (cf. FS: 21 November 1838, No.160, and 28 November 1838, No.41).
86. The British Residency list of 1816 (above, n.74) states that Lalit Tripura was a Rajput from Banaras. However, Brian Hodgson later described her as 'the daughter of a Thapa jemadar', and Balchandra Sharma, *Nepalko Aitihāsik Ruprekha* (Varanasi 2039 VS [1982/3]), p.247, also believes she was a Thapa. Both the 1816 list and Baburam Acharya, 'General Bhimsen Thapa and the Samar Jung Company' (translated), in *Regmi Research Series* 4, 9 (September 1972), pp.161-7, maintain that the marriage took place only about a month before Rana Bahadur's assassination, but this is contradicted by the discovery of a coin bearing her name issued in 1804/5 (C.V. Valdetaro, personal communication).
87. Stiller, *Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, p.93.
88. Wink, *Land and Sovereignty*, *op.cit.*
89. *Ibid.*, p.48.
90. Burghart, 'Nation-State', *op.cit.*
91. M.C. Regmi, 'Preliminary Notes on the Nature of the Gorkhali State and Administration', *Regmi Research Series* 10, 11 (November 1978), pp.171-4.
92. Undated *arji* of Bal Narsingh Kunwar to King Rajendra, published in Chittaranjan Nepali, *Rana Bahadur Shah*, *op.cit.*, pp.141-7.
93. Baburam Acharya, *Sri Pac Badamaharajadhiraj Prithvi Narayan Shahko Samskrupta Jivani*, Vol.1 (Kathmandu: Sri Panch Maharajadhirajka Pres Sacivalaya 2024 VS [1967/8]), p.50.
94. See F.H. Gaige, *Regionalism and National Unity in Nepal* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1975), and David Gellner, 'Language, Caste, Religion and Territory - Newar Identity Ancient and Modern', *European Journal of Sociology*, XXVII (1936), pp.102-48.

95. Until 1967 this perception was still reflected in the words of the National Anthem: 'May we Gorkhalis always maintain the Lord's command over Nepal'. 'Nepali' has now been substituted for 'Gorkhali', Gellner, *op.cit.*, p.125.
96. For a perceptive analysis of the negotiations leading to the restoration of the Tarai, see Stiller, *Silent Cry, op.cit.*, pp.217-27.
97. Cf. above, p.19.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FALL OF BHIMSEN THAPA: 1830-1838Introduction

Through the 1830s the forces ranged against Bhimsen in the royal family and the *bharadari* grew in strength culminating in his arrest in the summer of 1837. Within a few months he was released and at one point seemed to have a chance of regaining at least part of his former power. By mid-1838, however, it was clear that there was to be no real recovery, and the focus of attention was thereafter upon Bhimsen's old enemy, Ranjang Pande. An emotionally committed observer of the unfolding struggle, and to a degree a participant, was Brian Houghton Hodgson, the British Resident. The Residency was not the real source of political developments, but it was inevitably seen as a potential ally by discontented factions. The involvement of an external power in internal dissension had long been a feature of political life in South Asia, and was all the more present as a possibility in Nepali minds because Prithvi Narayan's conquests had relied to a considerable extent on winning over elements within the political units he aimed to absorb. Seeking British aid could none the less be a two-edged sword, for suspicion of them as a common enemy could unite sentiment against a faction backed by them, as had happened both after Kirkpatrick's visit to Kathmandu in 1793 and after Damodar Pande and his colleagues reached agreement with them in 1801. This counter-effect was to become very evident as British involvement grew more open and explicit. Up to the end of the thirties, however, the British were avowedly pursuing a policy of non-interference and both the direct effect of Hodgson's actions and the reaction to them were limited. Their main significance is that they

provide a useful window through which the historian can observe the Nepali political system functioning. In the post-war years that system seemed to possess a stability amounting almost to rigidity, but Bhimsen's fall was to illustrate that it depended on an equilibrium which could easily be disturbed.

The Political Stage in 1830

Whilst Bhimsen Thapa was beyond question the most powerful individual in Nepal, he depended for his position on his ability to conciliate other actors. Foremost amongst these was the Queen Regent, Lalit Tripura Sundari, who held possession of the royal seal which had to be affixed to all decrees (*lal mohars*). A famous verse of the *Sukranitisastra*, a treatise on political science probably composed in a Maratha state during the first half of the nineteenth century, declares that 'the document signed and sealed by the king is the king and not the king himself',¹ and this principle applied very clearly in Nepal; the standard procedure in 1816, probably retained throughout the Regency, was for 200-300 blank sheets of paper to be stamped with the seal in advance and then filled out with whatever Bhimsen wanted.² As was seen in the previous chapter, Lalit Tripura may well have been a relative of Bhimsen's; in any case, as a child-widow when appointed Regent in 1806 she must have been greatly under his influence, and in later years she was rumoured to have become his lover.

Central as the link to Tripura certainly was, Ludwig Stiller has rightly pointed out that it did not give Bhimsen completely unfettered power and that he relied also on his ability to balance conflicting

interests within the *bharadari*.³ It was therefore something of an exaggeration when the Resident, Brian Hodgson, wrote that Bhimsen and his family 'monopolised all the loaves and fishes' to the exclusion of 'ancient families...who, by the constitution of this state, are entitled to share its counsels and exercise its highest offices'.⁴ It is true that the minister and his relatives were the highest-paid *jagirdars*, but important positions were also held by members of other families, in particular by men who had themselves, like Bhimsen, accompanied ex-King Rana Bahadur during his exile in Banaras, or whose close relatives had done so. Prominent in this category was Dalbhanjan Pande, who was continuously in office as a *kaji* (a post ranking below *cauntara* in the traditional hierarchy) from 1816, if not earlier, until after Bhimsen's fall.⁵ Dalbhanjan's uncle, Ranajit, who died some years before 1830, had remained in Kathmandu during the crucial years 1800-1804, but had joined the faction working for Rana Bahadur's return and subsequently become a close collaborator of Bhimsen's and been designated *mil* (principal) *kaji*.⁶ Ranajit's son, Birkeshar, was normally employed as a captain or *kaji* and two of his sons had married daughters of Bhimsen, as had one of their cousins. Even before Bhimsen rose to prominence, Birkeshar's sister had already been married to his brother, Nain Singh Thapa.⁷ The members of this branch of the Pandes, known as 'Gora' ('fair') Pandes because of their descent from Ranajit's light-complexioned father, Tularam, formed an important buttress to Bhimsen's position.

Bhimsen's relations with the 'Kala' ('black') Pandes, distant cousins of his 'Gora' allies, were much less happy. These were the sons and grandsons of Damodar Pande, staunchest of Rana Bahadur's

opponents in the government which ruled Nepal during his exile, who had been executed and his lands confiscated when the ex-king, with Bhimsen at his side, regained power. The Kala Pandes' hunger for revenge against Bhimsen was to become a crucial factor in Nepali politics in the mid-thirties, yet before then they had not been languishing in obscure penury, as Hodgson's highly-coloured reports often suggest.⁸ Their leader, Ranjang Pande, appears to have served continuously in the army through the post-war period with a possible gap in 1830-1831, and his brothers Karbir and Ranadal were also frequently employed. However, according to the Nepali historian Baburam Acharya (writing, as he frequently did, without citing any source), Bhimsen himself was reluctant to give Ranjang any post at all, but was persuaded to do so by his own brother, Ranbir Singh Thapa.⁹

Another favoured family was the Basnets, in particular the sons and nephews of Kirtiman Singh Basnet whose patronage in 1799 may have obtained for Bhimsen his original appointment to Rana Bahadur's personal staff.¹⁰ Kirtiman Singh was one of the ministers who opposed the ex-king's attempt to reassert political control in 1799-1800, but he was himself assassinated shortly after Rana Bahadur reached Banaras. Subsequently, Kirtiman's brother, Bhaktawar, who was also prominent in the Kathmandu government, became a supporter of Rana Bahadur's return. In later years one son, Kulman Singh, was continuously appointed as a *kaji*, whilst another, Prasad Singh, was also always in office. Here, too, there was a marriage connection, though not a recent one: Kirtiman and Bhaktawar were Bhimsen's third cousins once removed.¹¹ However, the fact that Bhimsen addressed Bhaktawar in a letter from Banaras as *kancha*

baba ('youngest paternal uncle'),¹² suggests a closer relationship, and it is perhaps possible that Bhimsen's father had become a brother of Bhaktawar by adoption.

Also of major importance in 1830 was a branch of the Thapas only distantly related to Bhimsen: the common ancestor was eleven generations back according to the Thapa *vamsavali*.¹³ The best known of these is Amar Singh Thapa who led Nepal's armies to the Satlej, but was later defeated (though not dishonourably) by the British forces under Ochterloney in the first campaign of the Anglo-Gorkha war. Amar Singh, who died in 1816, was politically opposed to Bhimsen, and had argued strenuously against his hard-line policy towards the British which had led to the war. None the less, Amar Singh's sons all served in high positions throughout Bhimsen's post-war years of power, and the eldest, Ranadhoj, was particularly prominent.

Less influential than any of the above, but intimately associated with Bhimsen was the Kunwar family to which Jang Bahadur belonged. Jang's father, Bal Narsingh, had at the age of seventeen been one of the party which accompanied Rana Bahadur to Banaras. Like Bhimsen himself, he may have owed his position to the patronage of Kaji Kirtiman Singh Basnet, since both his father and grandfather had been closely associated in military campaigns with Kirtiman Singh's uncle, Abhiman Singh Basnet. There is also a remote possibility that there was a long-standing friendship between Balnar and Bhimsen's families, since the Kunwar origin legend has the first of their ancestors to enter the hills marry the daughter of a 'Baghale Kshetri', and it was to the Bagale Thapa *kuḷ* that Bhimsen's family belonged;¹⁴ Balnar might therefore have joined the Banaras party

on Bhimsen's recommendation. In any case, the connection between the two was strengthened in 1806 when Balnar cut down Rana Bahadur's assassin at the scene of his crime. He was rewarded with a kajiship (he had previously held the lower position of *sardar*), which may have been made hereditary in his family.¹⁵ One source claims that his brothers were made *kajis* at the same time, and Stiller's survey of senior posts from 1816 shows both Balnar and his brother Revant continuously in office in that grade.¹⁶ Balnar married Ganesh Kumari, daughter of Bhimsen's brother Nain Singh and of the 'Gora' Pande girl, already mentioned.

All the families so far discussed were, like Bhimsen's own, Khas (Chetri). However, among the party at Banaras had also been the *cauntara* (royal collateral) Pran Shah. Described in a British report of 1816 as 'a great favourite of Bhimsen's', he continuously held the *post* of principal *cauntara* (as against merely bearing the word as an honorary title) until his death in 1827 when his place was taken by his son, Fateh Jang. Other members of the *cauntara* family, notably Pran's brother, Pushkar, were employed in various ranks in the army, and normally posted to the far west.¹⁷ Good as the personal relationship between Bhimsen and Pran Shah may have been, the *cauntaras* in general naturally resented their subordination to a Khas minister, since they were themselves Thakuris, and it was safest to keep them at a distance.

Another important factor Bhimsen had to reckon with was the Brahman *rajgurus*, whose role was briefly discussed in the previous chapter. The term *rajguru* strictly speaking denoted one who had become either *gayatri* or *diksa guru* to the king or a close relative, but it was also used to refer to any male member of a family from which the *guru* in the

narrower sense actually came, or, more specifically, to refer to the senior member of such a family; it is this second sense which the expression 'the Rajguru' in British sources normally carried. In 1830, however, two different families, the Paudyals and the Mishras, were involved.

The Paudyals were hill Brahmans, originally from the former statelet of Tanahu,¹⁸ west of Gorkha, but had lived at times in India. There one of them had assisted in finding a bride for Prithvi Narayan, and they were thus brought into association with the Nepali royal court. As *diksa guru* to Prithvi Narayan's son and successor, the unmilitary Pratap Shah, Brajnath Paudel was an opponent of the king's brother Bahadur Shah, and of the older Gorkha commanders who supported him. He was consequently expelled from the country when Bahadur Shah took joint charge of the country on Pratap's death in 1777.¹⁹ Brajnath's eldest son, Rangnath, was brought up in India, but when Rana Bahadur reached Banaras in 1800, Rangnath offered his services to him, assisted in negotiations with the British, and finally returned with him to Kathmandu. The alliance was a natural one, given that Damodar Pande, Rana Bahadur's strongest opponent amongst the *bharadari*, had been a supporter of Bahadur Shah.²⁰ Rangnath became personal *guru* to the Queen Regent, Lalit Tripura, and later to King Rajendra's senior Rani. Rangnath's eldest son, Jivnath, became Rajendra's own *gayatri guru*. Rangnath also had three younger brothers, the eldest of whom, Krishna Ram (known as '*mahila* ('second senior') *guru*') was particularly influential and who, like Rangnath, had negotiated with the British before the 1814-1816 war.

The other family, the Mishras, were Banaras Brahmans who had been hereditary *gurus* to the Gorkha royal family since the early seventeenth century, but whose members were away from Kathmandu for much of Bhimsen's time in power. Gajraj Mishra had been involved in the 1801-1804 negotiations, but had sided against Rana Bahadur and in favour of Damodar Pande and alliance with the British. He withdrew to India when Rana Bahadur was about to resume power, but was recalled to the Nepali darbar in the closing stages of the 1814-1816 war, when his services were required in peace negotiations. After a year in Kathmandu, during which he vied with Rangnath for influence and both considered attempting to oust Bhimsen, he died in India in 1817 while on a complimentary mission to the Governor-General.²¹ Mishra involvement in Nepali affairs seems then to have ceased for a number of years, since a list of *bharadars* for 1824 makes no mention of the family.²² In October 1835, however, the name of Gajraj's cousin, Krishna Ram Mishra, occurs amongst the counter-signatures to an important *lal mohar*.²³ He appears to have been appointed *diksa guru* to King Rajendra at about this time, and from then until 1840 he was frequently to be a close political adviser to the king, and to act as an ally of the Kala Pande leader, Ranjang, to whom he was also personal *guru*.²⁴ The *guru-sisya* relationship between Mishras and Kala Pandes may well have been long-standing; in any case, Gajraj Mishra had been together with Damodar Pande amongst the supporters of Bahadur Shah in the last decades of the previous century.

Members of both guru families had much in common: they were civilians not soldiers, while they were orientated towards the Indian plains and their outlook thus differed from that of many Nepali

notables who knew only their own mountains. Their Indian connections also made them ready collaborators with the British on certain occasions — sometimes from conviction, sometimes from the wish for a comfortable retirement at Banaras under East India Company patronage.

The final element in the political equation which Bhimsen had to balance was the army, which under his stewardship had increased in 1831 to 15,000 from the 1816 total of 10,000. Further increases were made during the political struggles of the 1830s, so that by the time of Bhimsen's fall the standing army numbered around 18,000.²⁵ This was in excess of what the country could readily afford, but it would have been politically dangerous to restrict the opportunities for military employment. Expansion of the army was a means of averting discontent, and it also gave Bhimsen wide opportunities for the exercise of patronage: after the war he raised the proportion of the army kept at Kathmandu — these regiments were collectively styled the *kampu* — so as to be able to carry out personally as much as possible of the military *pajani* (annual reappointment or dismissal of serving soldiers and enlistment of fresh troops).²⁶ Another large concentration of troops was at Palpa in the central hills, where the governor was always a close relative of Bhimsen's. Such measures undoubtedly earned him popularity amongst the army, but Hodgson was certainly right to maintain that its loyalty was to the sovereign rather than to the general: he repeatedly stressed this point in correspondence during the 1830s and, in an 1839 report, would be able to cite as confirmation of his opinion his own witnessing of Bhimsen, after his arrest in 1837, 'guarded with every sign of hearty acquiescence' by 'a battalion of his own previously personal troops'.²⁷ Successful

management of the army might help Bhimsen maintain royal acquiescence, but it could not take the place of the latter.

The Campaign against Bhimsen and the Emergence of Ranjang (1837-1838)

Bhimsen Thapa's 'decline and fall' is usually reckoned as starting from the death of Queen Regent Lalit Tripura Sundari on 25 March 1832.²⁸ Even before this, jealousies within his own family would have given him some cause for anxiety: his brothers, Ranbir, who was employed within the royal palace, and Bhaktawar Singh, Governor of Palpa, had been disaffected for some time.²⁹ The queen's death, however, opened up opportunities for all who harboured resentment against Bhimsen, whether inside or outside his family. The crucial question was now whether King Rajendra, who had technically come of age on his eighteenth birthday the previous year, would now want to take back into his own hands some or all of the authority which his minister had for so long exercised. Rajendra himself, a timid and indecisive man, and perhaps, as some alleged, deliberately brought up by Bhimsen to be so, was uncertain whether and how far to advance, but several of those around him wished ardently for him to take action. Foremost among them was his Senior Rani, Samrajya Lakshmi Devi, daughter of a Gorakhpur *zamindar*. A year or so younger than the king, she and the Junior Rani, Rajyalakshmi Devi, had both been married to him on a single day in 1824.³⁰ She considered Bhimsen's power a derogation from the royal family's proper dignity and she appears to have believed the story that Bhimsen had murdered Rajendra's parents in 1816 to ensure that the throne again passed to a minor; both deaths were in fact almost certainly natural.³¹

Immediately following Lalit Tripura's death Samrajya took possession of the royal seal, and probably aimed to oust Bhimsen with the aid of his brother Ranbir who coveted the post of *mukhtiyar* himself.³² Bhimsen was able to thwart this move, presumably as Rajendra would not back up his wife, and Ranbir had to retire from Kathmandu for some time. The struggle against Bhimsen was to become a longer-term matter of palace intrigue rather than a quick coup. It was soon joined by *cauntara* Pushkar Shah and the *mahila guru*, Krishna Ram Paudyal – the main 'players of the royal game' as Hodgson was to describe them in December 1833.³³ Rangnath Paudyal and the two younger brothers were also involved. Pushkar Shah had been called to Kathmandu from his posting in Doti (far western Nepal) after Lalit Tripura's death, allegedly because King Rajendra himself wanted him as a counter to Bhimsen;³⁴ but it was probably Samrajya who prompted the move, especially since Pushkar had connections with her parents' family.³⁵ Rangnath also had a special link with the queen as her personal *guru*. Nevertheless there was a division between Samrajya, who still wanted to move swiftly against Bhimsen, and the others, who favoured a more cautious strategy, taking no dramatic steps themselves but hoping to gain advantage from the increasing dissension within the Thapa family. They hoped in particular to weaken Bhimsen by pushing forward Ranbir, who the British Resident described in October 1833 as the only man in Kathmandu daring openly to oppose Bhimsen.³⁶

Attempting to interpret this struggle was Brian Hodgson, who had taken over as Resident from Herbert Maddock in December 1832, having

previously served in Kathmandu in a subordinate capacity in 1820-1822, and from 1824 onwards. Relations between Nepal and British India had been peaceful since the end of the war when the Nepalis were forced to accept the Residency as part of the terms of settlement. But though Nepal under Bhimsen's administration had scrupulously observed the treaty, she had sought also to preserve as much as possible of the isolationist policy which from the days of Prithvi Narayan Shah she had regarded as essential for the maintenance of her independence. Hodgson was concerned at her failure to remove tariffs and other barriers to large-scale trade with India, at her growing military strength and at a general atmosphere of hostility towards the 'Firingis' which still prevailed. He is unlikely to have been familiar with the poetry of Yadunath Pokhrel, but a poem written by the latter in praise of Bhimsen in the 1820s gives a good idea of the ruling sentiments, with its picture of the English quivering in fear at the sight of Nepal's military preparations.³⁷ He was torn, however, between his recognition that Bhimsen had the ability to keep hotter heads in check, and a belief that he deliberately preserved his countrymen's prejudices so that he himself could pose to both Nepalis and British as an indispensable bulwark against the other side. On the more pessimistic reading of Bhimsen's policy, to which Hodgson was to become increasingly inclined, he went on to reason that Bhimsen, if under extreme political pressure, might himself unleash the forces which he had previously fostered but kept under control, or that in any case, his less able successors would be unable to restrain the military machine as effectively as he himself had done.

Hodgson's concerns were very much personal ones. In the time of Warren Hastings, the East India Company had entertained visions of lucrative trade through Nepal into Tibet, exporting English broadcloth and metals into Tibet in return for wood, gold, musk and borax. It was this prospect which had led the Company to despatch Captain Kinloch's woefully inadequate force into the hills in an effort to support the last Newar king of Kathmandu against the Gorkhas, who it was feared, would ruin any prospects for commerce. Similar motivation lay behind the 1791 commerce treaty, and, to a lesser extent, also behind Lord Wellesley's unsuccessful attempt to take advantage of the quarrel between Rana Bahadur and his opponents. By the outbreak of the Anglo-Gorkha war, however, trade had become much less of a consideration, both because it was now realised that the Kathmandu route was less important economically than had earlier been supposed, and because with opium and cotton exports now financing the China purchases and with the Company's monopoly status under challenge, its enthusiasm for promoting trans-Himalayan trade was now inevitably reduced.³⁸ In contrast to Calcutta, Hodgson argued that the Kathmandu-Lhasa-Peking route could be used to supply China direct with Canadian furs and English cotton goods now being marketed there by the Russians, as well as remaining convinced that there was a large market in Tibet for English woollen goods.³⁹ Both his enthusiasm over this prospect and his apprehensions over possible Nepali military adventures were generally regarded with little interest by the Governor-General, but they coloured his reports from Kathmandu and fuelled his enthusiasm for an activist role in Nepali politics.

Hodgson's ability to evaluate the political scene was, of course, dependent on the structure of the Residency itself and on its range of contacts with the Nepalis. The Residency had a normal complement of three senior European staff - the Resident, his assistant, and a surgeon. After 1831 the small secretariat serving them consisted of the 'English Office', with a Head Writer and Under-writer (usually both Indian), supported by a *daftri* (clerical assistant) and four peons, and the 'Persian office' with a Head and Assistant Munshi (secretary/interpreter), who were always Indian, together with a locally-employed Devanagri writer. The Head Munshi was the key member of the secretariat both because Persian was the language of formal written communication between the Nepali and Indian governments, and because he could be sent to the Darbar on the Resident's behalf. More often than not, however, it was the Nepalis who came to the Residency. The most regular messenger was the Darbar's own Head Munshi, a post held throughout 1830-1846 by the Newar Lakshmi Das, who may have been recruited into Rana Bahadur's service in Banaras and have enjoyed a special friendship with Bal Narsingh Kunwar.⁴⁰ Das conducted business either with his opposite number, or directly with the Resident himself, though on certain occasions he might be accompanied, or replaced by one or more *bharadars*. While Bhimsen was fully in control he tried as far as possible to keep a monopoly of contact with the Residency, and any *bharadar* used as an intermediary would be, like Lakshmi Das himself, a trusted adherent; this was the role in which Bal Narsingh came to the Residency's notice. Subsequently the range of representatives widened, varying with the state of parties within the Darbar. In addition to

such day-to-day contacts, the Resident himself during Bhimsen's heyday made two ceremonial visits to the Darbar each year, and two were made by the minister in return. Again the pattern changed as the political situation became more fluid, and the Resident was in later years to be summoned more frequently to the Darbar to meet the king himself.⁴¹

In addition to these official contacts there were the informal ones. When the Residency was first established, Bhimsen took care to isolate its employees from the local population. These precautions were, however, gradually relaxed from the late twenties onwards,⁴² and since the Resident had an escort of over one hundred Indian troops, as well as numerous servants and camp-followers, possible channels of communication were plentiful. It thus became easier for Bhimsen's opponents to send covert messages to the Residency and for the Resident to collect sensitive information. As Acting Resident in 1831 he was already 'regularly maintaining a secret intercourse with a member of the Raja's household',⁴³ and throughout the 1830s a number of his letters to government consisted almost entirely of translations of 'secret intelligence' received; these are always clearly marked as such in the letters themselves by the use of quotation marks, but most modern writers on the period fail to distinguish between such passages and those when Hodgson was writing in his own person. As he was aware that the Nepalis might be doing some spying on their own account, Hodgson sometimes wrote and despatched particularly sensitive letters without letting his own clerical staff see them, and as a general rule he did not name his informants in correspondence with Calcutta; none the less, a despatch of December 1833

clearly implied that someone in the section of the Darbar handling confidential Persian correspondence was providing information, while in 1840 he named the brother-in-law of the head of that department as a contact.⁴⁴ In 1839 he gave the name of Moti Singh, a *jemadar* in Rangnath Paudyal's personal escort.⁴⁵ Overall, Hodgson was able to obtain a great deal of information, and in negotiations in the years 1837-1840 was sometimes able to disconcert the Nepali side with revelations of what he knew. However there must have been a danger that some of his sources deliberately planted a biased version of events.

Attempts to make the Residency more than just an observer of the political scene had in fact been made just after it was established, at a time when Bhimsen Thapa's position was under some challenge in the aftermath of the war and he was not yet able to assert an exclusive right of communication with the British. Shortly after King Girvana Yuddha's death in November 1816, Gajraj Mishra had unsuccessfully sought Resident Gardner's backing for what he claimed was the wish of the widow for her son, the three-year-old Rajendra, to be entrusted to his (Mishra's) protection rather than that of Rangnath Paudyal, who was allegedly being supported by Queen Regent Lalit Tripura Sundari.⁴⁶ The following March Lalit Tripura herself and Rangnath (who was her personal guru) sent a message to the Residency suggesting obliquely that she wished to oust Bhimsen in favour of Rangnath. The Resident reported to Calcutta that he would give a clear refusal if a direct request was made, but in the event no further approach seems to have been made.⁴⁷ Such abortive overtures might not be a very promising precedent, but sixteen

years later Bhimsen's opponents were to make strenuous attempts to enlist Brian Hodgson. They did not succeed in establishing any formal alliance, but the cumulative efforts do appear to have influenced Hodgson's attitude towards Bhimsen and also to some extent his actions.

Before 1832 Hodgson shared the view of Edward Gardner, first Resident at Kathmandu, that Bhimsen's predominance was a factor in favour of peace rather than the reverse, and that Nepal's isolationist and hostile attitudes would break down naturally over time.⁴⁸ Reporting Lalit Tripura's death to Calcutta in April 1832, Resident Maddock, who had only been in the country a month and must have relied wholly on Hodgson's views, forecast that Bhimsen's position might now be weakened, and commented that the British could not count on enjoying much longer 'the good effects produced by [Bhimsen's] influence on the foreign relations and internal Government of Nepal'. The same tone was maintained in Maddock's final letter to Calcutta, written as he prepared to hand over to Hodgson after a brief eight months' tenure, and there is no reason to suppose that Hodgson did not still endorse this view.⁴⁹

In the following January, however, the first indirect approach to the Residency was made by Queen Samrajya,⁵⁰ and in February Hodgson wrote an analysis of the political situation which, while still admitting that Bhimsen's 'talent and energy constitute our best stay', painted him as a usurper of his sovereign's rights and suggested that the accusation against him of murdering Rajendra's parents was well founded.⁵¹ The immediate stimulus for the letter had been a visit from Bhimsen's nephew and Jang Bahadur's uncle, Mathbar Singh Thapa, to request that the

Residency's munshi should always see Bhimsen at the Darbar rather than trouble the king himself. None the less, Hodgson was clearly echoing the 'royal party's' propaganda.

In June 1833 Hodgson initiated a series of small-scale negotiations with Bhimsen over various restrictions affecting the Residency, in particular the searching of the Resident's baggage in transit and the obstacles placed in the way of Indian merchants at Kathmandu when they wished to invoke their right as British subjects to seek Residency assistance. In informing Calcutta of these, Hodgson also reported a long conversation with 'one who knows [Bhimsen] as well as he hates him' and who alleged that, beset with political difficulties and realising he could not safely resign lest he be brought to account for his earlier crimes, Bhimsen was considering war as the only way out. Towards the end of the negotiations themselves, when the major point of free access to the Residency for the merchants had already been conceded, a delegation consisting of Bal Narsingh Kunwar and 'Krishna Ram, the Raj Purohit', arrived to carry forward discussions; the former was well known as an adherent of Bhimsen's, while the latter was a 'royalist'. The arrival of such a combination illustrated that the king had been steeled to insist on Bhimsen's no longer monopolising the conduct of foreign affairs. The interview passed off successfully, but at the end of it the Raj Purohit ('royal priest') drew Hodgson aside and whispered in his ear. Hodgson did not report what was actually said, but interpreted the incident as an attempt to create the impression that he himself was siding with the king against Bhimsen. He consequently called back the

court scribes who had accompanied the delegation and instructed them to tell the minister that he disapproved of the Raj Purohit's action.⁵² Since Hodgson later referred to Rangnath Paudyal's having tried to trick him into partisanship,⁵³ it seems that the 'Purohit' was an accomplice of the Paudyals, and he is possibly to be identified with Krishna Ram Paudyal, if it is assumed that 'Purohit' is simply a mistake on Hodgson's part for 'Guru'. It is, however, known that the main *purohit* family, the Aryals, were regarded as pro-British, at least in 1840.⁵⁴

Although Hodgson rejected such crude overtures, and was eager to emphasise to Calcutta that he had done so, his sentiments continued to swing against Bhimsen, and in a private letter to the Governor-General the following month he announced that 'at the bottom of Bhimsen's profound character I have at last discerned as I conceive, an intense hatred of us'. He now believed that Bhimsen would not actually resort to violence against the king to protect his position, but was sure the minister had earlier contemplated doing so, both because this had been 'the talk of the city' and because Rajendra when ill the previous year had allegedly declined to be treated by the Court Physician on the grounds that this man had poisoned his parents on Bhimsen's instructions in 1816.⁵⁵

Two months later, however, in a demi-official letter to the Foreign Secretary, Hodgson was taking a completely contrary line, declaring that all was well 'and so it may possibly continue to be *provided* we can but keep Bhim Sen at the helm' (emphasis in the original). The stimulus

for this change of heart had been a conversation with the minister at the Darbar the previous evening. In general conversation one of Hodgson's European subordinates had praised the bravery and patriotism of Amar Singh Thapa, the principal Nepali commander in the west during the 1814-1816 war and a political opponent of Bhimsen's (see p.63 above). He had referred specifically to an intercepted letter of Amar Singh's, published in Prinsep's history of the war. This had led Bhimsen, when later talking to Hodgson out of the others' hearing, to say that he hoped the Resident did not believe those other parts of the intercepted correspondence in which Amar Singh and his colleagues had put the whole blame for the war on Bhimsen personally. Hodgson made a suitably soothing reply and Bhimsen went on to say how difficult a job he had found it to make his restless countrymen preserve the peace since 1816, and that some of those around the king were now trying to make him into 'your enemy and mine'. He promised that if he should ever find that his own advice was rejected and Nepal made ready for war against the British, he would give the Resident three or four months' advance warning of the attack. Although Hodgson had himself in earlier letters denounced Bhimsen's tactic of trying to convince the British he was personally indispensable to the maintenance of peace, this direct and unsolicited approach by the minister had an overwhelming effect. Hodgson's letter went on to praise 'the perfectly satisfactory manner in which every object of the alliance with Nepal has been accomplished under the interally vigorous and just and externally pacific administration of Bhim Sen', and concluded:

We shall probably see that to afford every reasonable countenance and support to Bhim Sen, in the possible event of his soliciting it, would be a measure as consonant to justice and to the interests of the Maharaja of Nepal as to policy and our own interests.⁵⁶

This sudden change of attitude well illustrates how justified was Lord Auckland's later comment: 'Mr. Hodgson writes so strongly from slight impressions that I have always looked at his communications with slight reserve'.⁵⁷ The Resident's judgment was now swayed by the minister's comments just as it had been by those of his opponents. But as well as Hodgson's general impressionability, there is perhaps also evidence here, as elsewhere in his correspondence, of an obsessive fascination with Bhimsen's personality, oscillating between repulsion and attraction.

Whatever the reason behind Hodgson's sudden conversion, it was not to be a lasting one. By mid-October he was writing that the king planned to learn from Bhimsen for another year or so, and then take over from him, and that the change would be to everyone's advantage including that of the British.⁵⁸ At the *pajani* Bhimsen was indeed confirmed in office, though only after a delay of three weeks caused by dissension within his own family. Within a few days of the reappointment Hodgson was again writing angrily to Calcutta denouncing him for feeding the king a distorted version of recent events in Gwalior and wondering whether it would be advisable to press for direct access to the king to counteract the anti-British propaganda he was receiving.⁵⁹

The belief that great things could be achieved if one could only establish regular and direct communication with the king was to be an abiding conviction of Hodgson's for several years to come. He was influenced in the first place by the favourable accounts of Rajendra's character brought to him by the 'king's men', among whom Rangnath and Krishna Ram Paudyal were in 1833 and early 1834 the Resident's main contacts, but his thinking was also based on the theory that the sovereign as such had a vested interest in peace and stability, whereas any military leader must always pander to the army's warlike and xenophobic prejudices in order to retain its support.

Hodgson had initial doubts on whether actually to press for access because he now again feared that Bhimsen might resort to violence if he felt he was being pushed into a corner.⁶⁰ In January 1834, however, he decided that it was after all safe to act and in a series of discussions with Nepali representatives, asked that his munshi should be admitted directly into the king's presence rather than having to deliver his messages to the minister. By the end of the month he believed that Rangnath's influence at court would be sufficient to carry the point.⁶¹ Subsequently, however, Rangnath told him forcefully that Bhimsen was still successfully maintaining the illusion that he alone was able to 'manage' the British, and that until the Resident took a firm line with him no progress could be made. Hodgson did not know at this stage that a letter was already on the way from Calcutta ordering him not to press the issue further and warning him to stay neutral between factions. Consequently he summoned the *khajanci* (treasurer) Umakant

Upadhyaya, a trusted lieutenant and representative of Bhimsen's, and spoke much more strongly to him than he had done hitherto. He asked why the king was still regarded as a minor where relations with the British were concerned, when he was now directly involved in other affairs of state. He hinted that the British, who had occupied the entire Tarai at the end of the war and then returned most of it, might revoke the 'gift' if Nepal continued hostile behaviour such as needlessly expanding her army and charging high tariffs on Indian goods in violation of the 1792 treaty.⁶² Hodgson had explicitly told Rangnath in January that he could not take sides in the internal power struggle and had informed Calcutta in January that Rangnath understood this was so. Yet by now virtually allowing Rangnath to direct his negotiating tactics he was giving the Brahman a very different signal.

After he had received his government's orders Hodgson could not apply further pressure, but, whether or not as a result of the treatment Umakant had received, Bhimsen decided a more conciliatory line was now called for. By May Hodgson was reporting that all he had asked for in January had been 'gradually and *voluntarily* conceded' (emphasis in original).⁶³

Two months later, without himself taking any initiative and thereby risking a further rebuke from Calcutta, Hodgson was presented with an opportunity to reopen the trade issue. A Nepali revenue contractor who was selling timber across the border into India had complained to Kathmandu that the Collector of Morsibad was levying a 10 per cent duty rather than the traditional 2½ per cent and Hodgson was asked by the Nepali

authorities to provide an explanation. By July he had ascertained that the increase was purely the result of an accidental omission from a schedule of goods carrying the reduced rate; the British had maintained the concessionary rate for Nepali imports ever since 1792 when both Nepal and British India had agreed not to levy more than 2½ per cent on each others' goods. By complaining about this increase on a single item, the Nepalis opened themselves to the counter-question of why they themselves had never implemented the treaty but continued to impose a high tariff on *all* Indian goods. Hodgson pressed the point over the next two months, and though he now had theoretical access to the king the latter left the negotiations in Bhimsen's hands. The minister did not refuse outright to recognise the treaty, but kept raising various reasons why it was difficult for the Nepalis to implement it at once, ranging from a loss of face that it would entail for the king to alleged objections from one of the gurus. In September Hodgson appealed to Calcutta to strengthen his hand with a memorandum direct from the Foreign Secretary to the king, so that Bhimsen should not think Hodgson was exceeding his instructions. He made it clear that he saw the trade issue not just on its own merits but as a tool for weakening Bhimsen's political position.⁶⁴ In reply he was told bluntly that 'it is of no concern to the British Government whether the Raja rules the minister or the minister rules the Raja', and that he should simply allow the Nepalis to say freely whether they wished to regard the treaty as valid or not.⁶⁵ Presented with this choice Bhimsen affirmed in November that Nepal no longer recognised the treaty. Yet despite this, on 1 December a proposal was submitted by Nepal for a new agreement

embodying duties above the 1792 rates but equal to only half of what Nepal herself was now levying. Calcutta was so surprised by this change of tone that Hodgson was at first suspected of ignoring instructions and applying undue pressure, but the Governor-General later accepted that there had been a genuine change of heart, and negotiation on details began early in 1835.⁶⁶

The conciliatory Nepali move may have simply been motivated by fear that the British would now put up all duties on their side to 10 per cent, but may also have resulted from internal political manoeuvring. Towards the end of 1834 a new approach was made to Hodgson by the 'king's men'. The Paudyal brothers seem to have receded temporarily into the background, and a 'Jit Man Singh' sought a secret meeting with Hodgson.⁶⁷ This was presumably Jit Man Singh Basnet, son of the assassinated Kirtiman Singh Basnet who thirty years earlier had obtained for Bhimsen his initial appointment to Ran Bahadur's entourage (see p.62 above). Jitman had himself probably been appointed a Kaji for the first time that year,⁶⁸ whilst his cousins, Kulman and Prasad Singh had been in prominent positions since the 1820s. The approach was rebuffed, since Hodgson was avoiding any outright alliance with Bhimsen's opponents, but the episode is significant as the first sign of open disaffection amongst Bhimsen's principal Khas allies; hitherto, only Brahmans and *cauntaras* seem to have been involved. Hodgson's letter reporting the incident refers to the 'Raja's party' as now being weak, and some unrest in the army connected with quarrels within the Thapa family may have heightened the opposition's fear of possible violence. However, the 1 December proposal for the new trade agreement was brought

to Hodgson by the *cauntara* Fateh Jang, son of Bhimsen's old ally Pran Shah, but himself probably now sympathetic to his uncle Pushkar Shah, a leading opponent of Bhimsen's.⁶⁹ It is therefore possible that the king had been persuaded to bypass Bhimsen and make a proposal direct to the Resident as an indirect method of reducing the minister's influence. Since, however, all proposals brought by anyone to the Residency were theoretically in the king's name, and he himself could not or would not come forward personally, it is difficult to attribute responsibility for different initiatives with certainty.

In November what could be seen as an open move against Bhimsen *was* made, but by a man who as yet had little standing. Ranjang Pande, son of Bhimsen's old adversary Damodar, had returned to Kathmandu during the monsoon, seemingly after a long absence; he had not actually been in some kind of private retreat, as Residency reports sometimes imply, but almost certainly serving with an army unit in the hills. His anti-Bhimsen sentiments were well known, but he was not at first taken very seriously: the Assistant Resident Archibald Campbell described three years later how he was 'hoted in the streets and pronounced a madman by all the descent [*sic*] and prudently selfish men of the place'.⁷⁰ Towards the end of the year, however, he petitioned the king for restitution of his father's property and honours, which had been forfeited on his execution in 1804. Although the petition was not actually granted, the king received him kindly and from then on Ranjang was an important ally of those already working against Bhimsen, and in particular of Senior Queen Samrajya Lakshmi Devi.⁷¹

Whether as a consequence of the Ranjang incident or not, Bhimsen's attitude towards the Residency now became increasingly conciliatory. There were various signs of courtesy towards Hodgson, such as the construction for him of a bungalow in the hills above the Valley, and an invitation to accompany Bhimsen's nephew and staunch supporter in internal family quarrels, Mathbar Singh, on a hunting expedition in the Tarai. In March 1835 a draft of the new commercial treaty was agreed in Kathmandu and forwarded to Calcutta for approval; although the agreement was vetoed by the Customs Department because it introduced complications in a structure they were trying to simplify, this was hardly Bhimsen's fault.⁷² Then in early May a formal request was made to the Residency for Mathbar Singh to be allowed to visit Europe 'in order to gratify his own curiosity and that of the Darbar respecting the reported wonders of the Western world'.⁷³ Hodgson enthusiastically recommended his government to grant the request, seeing it as an opportunity to win Nepali confidence and break down the isolationist mentality. He must have been aware that Bhimsen probably intended the exercise to reconcile the British to the continued domination of the Thapa family in Nepal, this being precisely the motive which Archibald Campbell suggested in his diary entry recording Bhimsen's informal broaching of the idea at the end of April. He will also have known, as this is noted in the same source, that Bhimsen was currently believed to be pressing the king to abdicate in favour of his six-year-old son.⁷⁴ Yet despite all the earlier rhetoric about 'usurpation of sovereignty', Hodgson now seemed to view the continuation of Thapa power with equanimity and described Mathbar as Bhimsen's 'probable successor in the Ministry'.⁷⁵

Once again, reservations were soon to return. After the proposed visit had been sanctioned by the Governor-General, the Resident began to be worried by rumours in Kathmandu that the mission was intended to extract some specific concession — possibly an extreme demand such as the return of Kumaon or the removal of the Residency, or alternatively, some lesser *quid pro quo* in return for a departure from Nepal's isolationist stance. Hodgson suggested that in the second case it might be worthwhile considering returning to Nepal the remainder of the Tarai, should she show good faith after Mathbar's return.⁷⁶ Even whilst still relatively well disposed to the Thapas Hodgson was unhappy at the idea of any substantial negotiations taking place *during* Mathbar's trip and this attitude was reinforced by the quarrels within the Darbar shortly before his scheduled departure. Senior Queen Samrajya Laksmi Devi and other opponents of Bhimsen had allegedly been resisting a demand that Mathbar should be granted plenary negotiating powers, and insisting that he should do no more than hand over complimentary letters from the king to the Governor-General, the President of the Board of Control and William IV.⁷⁷ The drafts of these letters were shown to Hodgson before the mission set off and he insisted on their amendment to remove hints that some favour was expected, telling Bhimsen that there had better be no mission at all rather than one not confined strictly to complimentary purposes. At this point the minister and his nephew decided that there was no point in going further than Calcutta.⁷⁸ The project thus turned simply into a formal embassy to the Governor-General, and although Mathbar and his escorting regiment were given a splendid reception, his

hosts, in accordance with Hodgson's wishes, discussed no substantive matters with him. The result was seen as a major blow to Thapa prestige.

Hodgson's action, while not tantamount to pushing a man overboard, had been a distinct refusal to throw him a lifeline. He had been determined not to do anything that could be interpreted as political countenance for the Thapas, even though realising that Mathbar and Bhimsen might have been willing to make concessions in return.⁷⁹ This determination, however, was evidently weaker in the spring of 1835 than it was to become as the year progressed. Partly, of course, Hodgson's attitude changed because the mission was revealed to have other objects than fact-finding and confidence-building. However, it perhaps also reflected the success of Bhimsen's opponents in convincing the Residency that the king saw any negotiations between Mathbar and the British as against his interests.

After Mathbar's return in March 1836 a renewed chill settled on Bhimsen's relations with the Residency whilst the internal political struggle continued. In October Ranjang Pande accused Mathbar Singh of cohabitation with his elder brother's widow.⁸⁰ It had, in fact, long been a general custom amongst many Nepal communities, including the Khas, for a woman who did not commit sati to be taken as a concubine by her brother-in-law. However, in July 1836 a *lal mohar* had prohibited the practice on pain of draconian penalties - castration in the case of most castes, including the Khas, though punishments of this type could probably be waived in practice.⁸¹ The Rajgurus whose advice on legislation of this type must have been crucial, were opposed to Bhimsen

and the measure may have been introduced at this time specifically to embarrass Mathbar. However, though the opposition were strong enough to bring the prosecution, they were not in a position to carry it to a conclusion. The enquiry was dropped, but Mathbar left Kathmandu for his home near Gorkha, and was shortly afterwards appointed governor of that district. Ranjang was assigned the command of troops in eastern Nepal which Mathbar had hitherto held, but Bhimsen himself was confirmed in office despite some expectation that he would be ousted.⁸²

At this critical juncture the Darbar submitted a request to Hodgson that Rajguru Ram Krishna Mishra be allowed to succeed to the Banaras *jagir* granted in 1792 to his cousin Gajraj in recognition of his services in negotiating the commercial treaty of that year. On Gajraj's death in 1817 the *jagir* had been continued in turn to his two widows, the second of whom had recently died. In recommending Calcutta to grant the request, Hodgson emphasised the traditional friendship of the Mishra family for the British government and the opportuneness in the present political circumstances of favouring a man than whom the king had now 'no more sincere and valuable adviser'.⁸³ Krishna Ram Mishra had probably come up to Kathmandu from Banaras in 1834 or 1835, possibly on the request of his *sisya* Ranjang Pande, and in November 1835 his signature followed that of two *cauntaras* and preceded Rangnath Paudyal's in the list of witnesses of a *lal mohar* renewing Bhimsen's powers and granting him the title of 'Commander-in-Chief'.⁸⁴ The list is probably in order of precedence and suggests that he rather than Rangnath was now the principle *guru*, which would explain why Hodgson from now on uses the title of 'Rajguru' to refer to him alone. This did not mean that

Rangnath was completely out of favour, for he was currently on the king's behalf attempting to reduce the size of inflated *jagirs*,⁸⁵ and although rivalry between the guru families was long standing, the two were probably working together up until Bhimsen's fall.

Another significant development in 1836 was the appointment as a colonel of Prasad Singh Basnet who had served as a *kaji* before 1820, but subsequently served in the lower rank of captain.⁸⁶ The title of colonel had until this year been reserved for Bhimsen's blood relatives. Prasad's 1836 salary of 18,000 rupees was greater than that enjoyed by any other *bharadars* except for the *cauntaras*, who were, of course, of royal blood, and for members of Bhimsen's own family.⁸⁷ As Prasad's cousin Jitman had been involved in intrigue against the minister in 1834 (see above, p.83), the colonelcy may have been seen by Bhimsen as necessary to conciliate a potentially dangerous adversary.

At the *pajani* early in 1837 Bhimsen himself was yet again confirmed in office, but the king acted against his supporters and rewarded his enemies. Mathbar Singh Thapa and Balnar Singh Kunwar were amongst several who lost their posts, while a number of important offices went to relatives of Ranjang Pande. Bhimsen managed to cling to power for a few more months. Resident Hodgson's letters for Calcutta complained of his intransigence on a range of minor matters, and developed the theme that all the consideration Bhimsen had appear to show to the British in 1834-1835 was simply a ruse to try to gain their support in his struggle for political survival. He suggested that the raising of two new regiments from the proceeds of Rangnath's economy drive was a sinister development.⁸⁸ During April he was anxious that Bhimsen might yet

succeed in retaining power indefinitely, but the following month he reported enthusiastically that a change was anticipated: Rangnath was aiming to be appointed in his place and to manage the troops, who might be unhappy with a Brahman retrencher as their commander, by making Ranjang Pande his 'war minister'.⁸⁹ He stressed that neither the opposition nor Bhimsen was seeking to involve the Residency, and said somewhat disingenuously that Rangnath had retired into privacy after his abortive approach to Gardiner in 1817: in fact, Rangnath had solicited Hodgson's own support in 1833-1834.⁹⁰

Over the next two months investigation of Bhimsen's conduct of various branches of the administration - notably the mint and the law courts - went ahead, but in a long commentary on the situation written for Lord Auckland in June, Hodgson again seemed unsure that Bhimsen would actually be dismissed: he wrote of the possible need for a 'reckoning' with Nepal 'if the change come not soon or come without improvement', and for a letter from the Governor-General, hinting it was time for the king to take full control, to be sent to him, 'if the change seem to tremble in the balance'.⁹¹ Just after this Krishna Ram Mishra urged the Resident not to blame the king for foreign policy moves just because he was now taking direct charge of the internal side of the administration. Mishra was apparently anxious over developments such as the reopening of a border dispute with Sikkim which the British had already adjudicated; Hodgson had in fact anyway interpreted that as an attempt by Bhimsen to start a diversionary foreign quarrel and had asked Calcutta not to make any move on the issue until the political situation cleared.⁹² Hodgson assured Mishra he would not put the blame in the

wrong place, but made his own delicate attempt to assist a trembling change:

I...hinted to him that should matters continue on their present footing *after* the Punjuni my Government will not probably enquire too nicely with whom in reality originate proceedings professing to carry the name and authority of the Darbar.⁹³ (Emphasis in original.)

In early July a new *pajani* did indeed get under way. It did not affect Bhimsen directly, but the king personally reviewed the appointment of all officers in the army, thus taking into his own hand the patronage which Bhimsen had previously exercised.⁹⁴ His prestige was further reduced by an order attending the direct attendance on their senior officers by army personnel. Bhimsen's final dismissal now seemed very near, but the manner in which it actually came was totally unexpected. On 24 July the seven-month-old son of Queen Samrajya died after taking medicine prescribed by one of the court physicians. It was claimed that the death was murder carried out on instructions from Bhimsen and his relatives, all of whom - including even his estranged brother Ranbir - were immediately seized and imprisoned. Ranjang Pande who had helped make the actual arrests was at once nominated as minister.

Whether the child's death was murder and whether Bhimsen was really involved cannot be known for certain. Hodgson was initially convinced that the story was true, but, like King Rajendra himself, he doubted whether it could be proved. The story he was told, presumably in the first instance by Krishna Ram Mishra, was that the physician had aimed to kill Samrajya, the most virulent of Bhimsen's opponents, and had initially requested her to take the medicine herself so that the sick

child should get the benefit of it through her milk. On her refusal to do this he gave it direct to the child, when the medicine was noticed to be of an unusual colour. Under initial interrogation he had admitted that the preparation did contain poisonous ingredients but claimed he had administered it in mistake for another potion he also had with him. It was only under torture that he confessed the Thapas had ordered him to kill the queen.⁹⁵

Hodgson was informed unofficially of what had happened by a message from Krishna Ram Mishra on the evening of the 27th. He attempted to let Mishra know that he did not want the matter officially referred to him but - the guru himself claimed - the message reached him too late for him to be able to prevent Hodgson being called to the Darbar. On his arrival all other *bharadars* were asked to withdraw and he found himself alone with the king, Ranjang Pande, Rangnath Paudyal, Fateh Jang, Dalbhanjan Pande and Mishra. Despite Ranjang's theoretical new status as minister it was Rangnath, apart from the king himself, who did most of the talking. Both Brahman and monarch evidently wanted Hodgson to recommend a course of action. He replied in general terms on the need for thorough investigation and for 'justice tempered with mercy', but he also hinted, without fully committing himself, that the British government might be prepared to take the prisoners into custody in India.⁹⁶

Believing it was dangerous to keep the Thapas in Nepal, even in prison, but that a new round of political bloodshed should be avoided, Hodgson had already written to the Foreign Secretary asking whether such an offer should be made.⁹⁷ The Indian government were to reply that they could keep the prisoners in custody - as against offering asylum - only if the

king was satisfied with the proofs of their guilt. The offer was not taken up.

In the aftermath of Bhimsen's arrest the two senior *rajgurus*, Krishna Ram Mishra and Rangnath Paudyal, emerged as the mainstay of competing factions. Mishra supported Ranjang Pande's claim to the premiership, whilst Rangnath, who had been in line for the job before the dramatic events of 24 July, was backed both by Senior Queen Samrajya and by the Junior Queen.⁹⁸ Samrajya's desertion of Ranjang is surprising considering their close association in working against Bhimsen in the past, and the partnership they were to form again, but it must be remembered that Rangnath was her own *guru* as well as being blessed, according to Hodgson, 'with a tongue fitted to draw womens' hearts out of their bosoms'.⁹⁹ Samrajya was brought to share the general feeling of much of the *bharadari* that it was unwise for someone as untried as Ranjang to attain the premiership so precipitately. With the queen's support Rangnath soon had the better of it: although he had been nominated as premier, Ranjang was probably never actually invested, whilst Rangnath, who was not even nominated for the post until December, was from the start recognised as the leading *bharadar*.

Hodgson had since before the crisis regarded Mishra as especially reliable and trustworthy, as in some way above the factional struggles and merely trying to serve the king's best interests: hence his surprising description of him in June as 'wholly unconnected with politics'.¹⁰⁰ In the days following Bhimsen's arrest he told Calcutta that the guru was the only person he could safely speak with.¹⁰¹ It might be true that Mishra, as he himself claimed, had been offered the premiership by

the king and had declined, but this did not in fact make him non-partisan, and Hodgson himself virtually became a fellow partisan once he realised that Rangnath was not only trying to establish a Bhimsen-like monopoly of relations with the Residency, but also to secure Bhimsen's release from prison as a counter-weight to the Pandes. Hodgson was of course concerned to block anyone who might thwart his wishes for direct dealing with the king, and he was astute enough to realise that Ranjang Pande, once in power, might try to do the same as Rangnath was now attempting. But by, for instance, using Mishra as a channel through which 'to denounce Rangnath's impudence', the Resident was, in the circumstances of August 1837, doing Ranjang's and Mishra's work for them.¹⁰²

On 1 September, Hodgson had an opportunity to impress his views on King Rajendra in person, when Mishra called him back for an audience at the palace from the hill bungalow where he had gone to recover from a severe bout of illness. At Hodgson's own request Mishra himself attended the interview, but no fourth person was present. Rajendra said that he was being urged by some of his advisers to release the Thapas, but himself thought this would be unsafe and wanted the Resident's advice. Hodgson recommended that they should remain in prison. The king went on to ask about the intentions behind Mathbar Singh's Calcutta mission. Hodgson now felt sure that Rajendra had obtained information from former Thapa adherents which confirmed his own view of Bhimsen's ulterior motives at that time. He all but directly told the king that there *had* been a Thapa plot against him and that, as the British had thwarted it, they were now owed some consideration in return. He was finally asked for

general advice and told Rajendra he should retain overall direction of the administration in his own hands and should deal directly with the Residency.¹⁰³

This interview for a few days seemed to tilt the balance against Rangnath and in favour of Mishra, and Hodgson hoped that the latter would be appointed as the regular liaison between the king and the Residency. However, by late September, to the disgust of both Mishra and the Resident, the pendulum had swung right back the other way. Hodgson now feared the king had 'no character or a bad one' and that he was under the bad influence of Samrajya and Rangnath, and of a 'Paramhans' (ascetic) who was beguiling him with tales of an anti-British alliance forming on the plains. The Residency had been totally unable to get any of its routine business attended to, and Hodgson asked the Governor-General to write directly to the king demanding improvement and hinting at possible punishment if it was not forthcoming.¹⁰⁴ Ten days later the Resident thought he saw signs of improvement, and he even suggested that his severe illness had made the tone of his earlier letter unduly pessimistic, but when Krishna Ram Mishra was sent by the king to solicit British permission for the Nepali annexation of Sikkim and Bhutan, Hodgson despaired again.¹⁰⁵ In mid-November he wrote that Rajendra might conceivably be allowing each party to have its head in turn until he was ready to assert full control himself, but that he was more probably simply deluded with dreams of repeating his ancestors' conquests.¹⁰⁶ After this relations would continue to have their ups and downs, but Hodgson's hopes in King Rajendra were now effectively ended.

On 5 December, Hodgson left Kathmandu to seek medical treatment in Calcutta, a few days after delivering a mild and friendly letter from the Governor-General to Rajendra. Neither Lord Auckland nor the members of his council had thought the situation called for the hard language Hodgson had demanded in September.¹⁰⁷ The day after the Resident's departure Bhimsen and the other Thapas were released and Rangnath nominated as premier with all Bhimsen's former powers and command of one of his former personal regiments. Hodgson's faith in Mishra and Ranjang had survived his disillusionment with the king, and Assistant Resident Campbell, who faithfully reflected his superior's views on Nepali politics, was indignant at this apparent end to Ranjang's hopes.¹⁰⁸ In the event, however, even though Bhimsen was received publicly by the king and his confiscated property partly restored, Ranjang and Mishra retained some standing at court, the king clearly trying to maintain a balance between factions.¹⁰⁹ In January several of Ranjang's relations were given senior positions, while the Thapas were trying to strengthen their hand with fruitless appeals to Campbell for support.¹¹⁰

A crucial element in Rangnath Paudyal's success so far had been his retention of Samrajya's support, even after he had begun pressing for the release of the alleged murderer of her child. Besides his own personal influence, he had been assisted by Samrajya's father, Prabhu Shah, whom Jang Bahadur's uncle, Balram, may have bribed on Bhimsen's behalf.¹¹¹ Early in 1838, however, the queen reverted to her earlier sentiments and began strongly supporting Ranjang once more. In February she left the royal palace to take up residence at Pashupatinath (Nepal's principal Hindu temple, three miles east of Kathmandu). This was probably a means

of putting pressure on her husband to favour Ranjang — she employed similar tactics on several other occasions — although Hodgson, on his return from Calcutta, was inclined to believe she genuinely felt herself in danger from the Junior Queen, Lakshmi Devi, and Bhimsen, whose reappointment as premier Lakshmi was now advocating.¹¹²

The political situation continued unstable with Rangnath facing increasing difficulties. As many had anticipated, he had trouble in managing the army, both as a Brahman and because of the pay-cuts he was having to impose. Insubordination amongst the regiments increased — allegedly instigated by Bhimsen — and Ranjang, offered the premiership if he would carry the economy measures through, refused to accept on these conditions. Rangnath's embarrassment was heightened when two lakhs of rupees — proceeds of the many bribes he had been taking — were seized on the road whilst he was having them secretly conveyed to Banaras. The day-to-day business of the Residency was, however, being carried forward, the king conducting a certain amount himself and also using the services of the *cauntara* Fateh Jang and Guru Prasad.¹¹³

Hodgson was perplexed by a flurry of Nepali diplomatic activity now under way, involving both states outside India and British dependent allies within it. In March Bhimsen's nephew, Mathbar Singh, had set off on a journey to Lahore — it was unclear whether as an official Nepali envoy or not — without applying for a passport at the Residency. Meanwhile, envoys who had reached Lahore earlier were sending back stories of Ranjit Singh, the Panjab ruler, expressing support for the Thapas. These may well have been fabrications, but the news greatly boosted Bhimsen's confidence, whilst Hodgson thought that King Rajendra had become distinctly

uneasy. As Mathbar Singh's brother-in-law, Bal Narsingh Kunwar, was doubtless kept in close touch with all these developments, and it was probably now, if not in the immediate aftermath of Bhimsen's release, that both he and Jang Bahadur regained official appointments: the father's signature is amongst those of *bharadars* attesting a royal decree at the beginning of May, whilst the son is referred to as a *kumbhedan* (lieutenant) in a document dated 5 March.¹¹⁴ In April, Bhimsen again made a bid for British support, telling the Residency that he was the East India Company's sole friend in Nepal and that plans were being made for war with the British, if envoys now in China, the Panjab and Burma brought back encouraging replies.¹¹⁵ On his return to Nepal in March Hodgson had still been sympathetic to Mishra and Ranjang Pande. He now first began to suspect that they might be engaged in hostile activity, but in early May he decided that Bhimsen and Rangnath, and not, as they implied, Ranjang's party, had been responsible for all the embassies, perhaps as a tactic to embarrass the king, or to create the impression that Bhimsen enjoyed powerful support abroad.¹¹⁶ The latter was, of course, certainly the case with some of the dealings with Lahore.

In June, however, Hodgson changed his mind again and decided he was in need of different allies. He was told by Rangnath that the king intended to restore his ancestors' lands to Ranjang Pande — at the expense of the present occupiers — and would also make Ranjang premier if he agreed to go to war. Rangnath, still nominally premier himself, promised Hodgson that he would provide information if he could be guaranteed a comfortable retirement in Banaras. Hodgson was inclined to trust him, but was also sounding out as a perhaps more reliable collaborator,

Rangnath's brother Krishna Ram Paudyal, alias the *mahila guru*.¹¹⁷ All four Paudyal brothers had been described by Hodgson in 1833 as 'shrewd' and 'men of the world who have been ours, aforesaid, *for a consideration* [emphasis in original], and are ready to be again on like terms'.¹¹⁸ Krishna Ram Paudyal was thus something of a contrast to Krishna Ram Mishra, whom Hodgson characterised in 1837 as 'a jewel of a man - simplehearted as a villager', and later, less charitably, as 'untalented and ignorant of affairs'.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, it was the *mahila guru* who was to succeed to Mishra's old place, becoming Hodgson's closest confidant and collaborator over the next four years.

The Resident's change of allegiance corresponded to a shift in the focus of factional politics. Until mid-1838 these had largely revolved around Bhimsen Thapa, the key question being first whether he could be brought down, and then whether he might regain power. From now on it would increasingly be Ranjang Pande who occupied the pivotal position. His actual power would never be as great as Bhimsen's, but opposition to him would be the platform around which much of the *bharadari* could unite, as opposition to Bhimsen had been before.

Bhimsen's Fall in Retrospect

In his study of Nepal under Bhimsen, Stiller has emphasised a failure to solve fundamental problems at two levels. First, the maintenance of an army much larger than the country now needed put an excessive strain on the peasant economy, and second, the limited availability of *jagirs* and the consequent slow promotion rate within the *bharadari* led

inevitably to increasing tensions between its members.¹²⁰ Stiller implicitly endorses Hodgson's view that after the Treaty of Sagauli Nepal needed to reduce emphasis on the military and concentrate on the promotion of trade and commerce. As far as factionalism among the *bharadari* is concerned, his analysis was anticipated by Hodgson's successor as Resident, Henry Lawrence, who summed up the situation in 1844:

The country is small and poor, and there are many and hungry chiefs, squabbling for power and pelf, it is therefore their destiny to quarrel.¹²¹

These factors were indeed vitally important, but they formed the essential background against which any Nepali regime had to operate, and cannot therefore provide the explanation for the fall of a particular, dominant figure. In 1846 Jang Bahadur was to emerge as the new Bhimsen and to establish political stability with his own family raised above the level of the other *bharadars*, despite the fact that Nepal remained a poor country and the army actually increased in size. Bhimsen's failure must therefore be seen as essentially a political one: he was unable in the new situation after the Queen Regent's death to manage tensions which had always been present, and, perhaps most fatally, failed to maintain the unity of his own family against outside contenders for power.

The coalition which operated against Bhimsen was essentially an ad hoc one, united by resentment against a man who so overshadowed the other *bharadars*. There were none the less, some elements of continuity in the alignments of the 1830s. The enmity between Bhimsen Thapa's family and the 'Kala' Pandes dated back to the events of 1800-1804. It may have

originated even earlier, if Leo Rose is correct in supposing that the families which then supported ex-King Rana Bahadur were essentially those which had backed him in his earlier struggle with his uncle, Bahadur Shah. However, although there is evidence for a close link between Bahadur and the 'Kala' Pandes, the position of Bhimsen's family in the earlier controversy is unknown.¹²² On the other hand, the 'Kala' Pande-Mishra axis, as has already been seen, certainly went right back to the 1770s. It is also possible that a similar link may have existed between the Basnets and the Paudyal *gurus*. Bhaktawar Basnet's decision to back Rana Bahadur's return from Banaras was probably influenced by an appeal from Rangnath Paudyal pointing out the *guru-cela* relationship between the families.¹²³ Jitman Singh Basnet's move against Bhimsen in 1834 (above, p.83) could in that case have been prompted by the Paudyal brothers. If there was such a connection, it was eventually to break down, for Jitman's cousin Prasad was later to combine with Ranjang Pande while the Paudyals remained opposed to him. It none the less seems safe to conclude that while patterns of alliance shifted constantly as the perceived balance of advantage changed, the *guru-cela* bond, like marriages, provided a partial brake on the kaleidoscope.

It is largely through Hodgson's eyes that we are able to follow the ins and outs of the struggle, but this should not tempt us to attribute more importance to his role than it actually warrants. His hands were in any case partly tied by his superiors' lack of enthusiasm for pressuring Nepal into changing her defence and trade policies. By refusing to support Bhimsen over the Calcutta embassy Hodgson hastened his fall, but it is unlikely he could have survived indefinitely short

of an explicit British guarantee of support that neither Hodgson nor anyone else in the Indian government would have been prepared to contemplate at this stage. His specific backing for Krishna Ram Mishra and Ranjang Pande during 1837 strengthened their hand, but again they would probably have succeeded in any case, and their influence did in fact continue to increase once he had abandoned them. In so far as Hodgson's activity had been effective, he had actually scored a clear 'own goal', and much of his time over the next three years was to be spent energetically opposing those he had previously regarded as his surest friends.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. *Sukra.*, II, 292, quoted in K.P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Policy* (Calcutta: Butterworth 1924), Part II, p.140. For the date of this text, see Lallanji Gopal, 'The Sukraniti - A Nineteenth-century Text', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XXV (1962), pp.524-56.
2. 'List of Officers of the Nepaulese Government', 16 June 1816, NR/5/35.
3. Stiller, *Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, pp.105-6.
4. Hodgson to Government, 18 February 1833, FS 5 March 1833, No.24 (published in part in W.W. Hunter, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson*, London: John Murray 1896, pp.131-6).
5. Stiller, *Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, Annex A, 'Pande' table.
6. D.R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.138, and 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.24 (1973), p.11, record his switch of allegiance to Rana Bahadur and his co-operation with Bhimsen in the immediate aftermath of Rana Bahadur's death respectively. The appointment as *mul kaji* is mentioned in Acharya, *Samksipta Vrittanta*, *op.cit.*, p.119.
7. Shamshe Bahadur Thapa, *Ranbir Singh Thapa* (Patan: Lalitpur Jagadamba Prakashan 2023 VS (1966/7)), p.96 (cited in Jain, *op.cit.*, p.6), lists Bhimsen's Pande sons-in-law as Udai Bahadur, Shamshe Bahadur and Dal Bahadur. The first two were sons of Birkeshe Pande and the third the son of his cousin Shatrubhanjan (B.B. Pande, *Rastrabhaktiko Jhalak*, *op.cit.*, pp.244 and 246).
8. Chittaranjan Nepali, *Janaral Bhimsen Thapa ra Tatkalin Nepal* (Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar 2035VS (1978/9)), p.24.
9. Baburam Acharya, 'Bhimsen Thapa ko Patan', *Pragati*, 2, 4 (?1955), pp.115-22 (translated in *Regmi Research Series*, 6, 11 (November 1974), pp.214-9).
10. Acharya, *Samksipta Vrittanta*, *op.cit.*, p.106.
11. Netra Bahadur Thapa, *A Short History of Nepal* (Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar 1981), Appendix E (genealogical table).
12. *Itihas Prakash*, 1 (2013 VS (1955)), p.18. D.R. Remgi, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.81, cites the phrase but does not offer any explanation.
13. *HP*, Vol.51, f.175. This document is similar, but not identical, to that published in *Itihas Prakash*, 1, pp.119-21.

14. The spelling 'Bhagale' is found both in Daniel Wright (ed.), *History of Nepal* (Kathmandu: Nepal Antiquated Book Publishers 1972), (reprint of 1872 edition), p.285, and Sri Ramlal, *Nepalasya Sisodiya Rana ki Vamsavali arthat Srimaharaja Jangbahadur ke Gharanaka*, 1879, p.26. Ramlal equates 'Bhagale' with the Indian caste name 'Baghel', the former presumably being an intermediate form between the latter and the *kul* name 'Bagale'. The derivation is, however, questioned by Jagdish Regmi, 'The Thapas', *Nepal Antiquary*, No.5 (1978), p.46.
15. He is listed as a *sardar* in a *lal mohar* of 1804 published in Nepali, *Rana Bahadur Shah*, *op.cit.*, pp.139-41. Ramlal, *op.cit.*, p.48, and Pudma Rana, *Life of Maharaja Sir Jung Bahadur* (Allahabad: Pioneer Press 1909), p.9, claim the new rank was hereditary.
16. Phalendra Rana, *Nepali Rana-Gharanako Samksipta Vamsavali* (Kathmandu: the author 2014 VS (1957/8)), p.17; Stiller, *Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, Appendix A, 'Kunwar' table.
17. Acharya, 'Bhimsen Thapako Patan', *op.cit.*, p.155.
18. *HP*, Vol.24, f.102.
19. Stiller, *House of Gorkha*, *op.cit.*, p.155.
20. Rose, *Strategy*, *op.cit.*, p.71.
21. Below, pp. 88-9, and Gardner to Government 28 August 1817, NR/5/39.
22. *HP*, Vol.74, ff.97-104.
23. *Lal mohar* of Kartik Badi 6, 1892 VS (13 October 1835), conferring title of 'Commander-in-Chief' on Bhimsen Thapa. Published in Nepali, *op.cit.*, pp.181-4.
24. He is listed as *diksa guru* in a Nepali document of 1843 (*HP*, Vol.52, f.171). Hodgson refers to him as 'recently' appointed 'Rajguru' in a letter of 26 November 1836 (NR/5/47), and as Ranjang's personal guru in one of 30 July 1837 (NR/5/48). Modern writers frequently confuse him with *mahila guru* Krishna Ram Paudyal (as in Jain, *New Aristocracy*, *op.cit.*, p.26, fn.72, and Stiller, *Kot Massacre*, *op.cit.*, p.35, n.5).
25. Campbell, 'Sketch of Relations with Nepal' (compiled 1837) in B.J. Hasrat, *History of Nepal as Told by its Own and Contemporary Chroniclers* (Hoshiarpur: V.V. Research Institute 1970), p.225.
26. Campbell to Government 10 December 1837: NR/5/48; cf. Tickell's 'Events in Nepal 1830-39' (FS 18 January 1841 No.74) in Hasrat, *op.cit.*, pp.299-30.

27. Report on Nepali Army (?early 1839) in *HP*, Vol.6, ff.175-6.
28. Maddock to Government 6 April 1832, NR/5/43.
29. Hodgson to Government, 9 November 1833, NR/5/44.
30. M.S. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.7, fn.10, citing the contemporary poem *Triratna Saundarya Gatha*, D. Bajracharya (ed.), (Kathmandu 2019 VS (1962/3)), pp.216-7.
31. King Girbana Yuddha died from smallpox in an epidemic in November 1816 (Gardner to Government, 20 November 1816, NR/5/37). The death of his widow, King Rajendra's mother, the following month was officially stated to have been from the same cause, but Resident Gardner received private information that she died from a miscarriage brought on by anxiety over recent events (Gardner to Government, 17 December 1816, NR/5/37).
32. Baburam Acharya, 'Bhimsen Thapako Patan', *op.cit.*, p.215.
33. Hodgson to Government 19 December 1833, NR/5/44.
34. Maddock to Government, 2 December 1832, NR/5/47.
35. Baburam Acharya, 'Bhimsen Thapako Patan', *op.cit.*, p.216. Acharya is, however, probably wrong to suggest that Pushkar himself was trying to secure the premiership, since no report of this reached the Residency.
36. Hodgson, demi-official of 20 October 1833, NR/5/44.
37. Published in Baburam Acharya (ed.), *Purana Kavi ra Kavita*, 3rd edition (Kathmandu: Sajha 2035 VS [1978/9]), pp.71-9. The editor's argument for a date in the mid-thirties (pp.65-6) is unconvincing in itself, and in any case controverted by the poem's reference to Edward Gardner (Resident from 1817 to 1829).
38. John Pemble, *The Invasion of Nepal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1971), pp.54-89.
39. Jahar Sen, *Indo-Nepal Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Calcutta: Firma KLM 1977), pp.30-1.
40. Interview with Nepal Man Singh, Kathmandu, 5 August 1983.
41. Details of Residency organisation and procedures taken from FP 29 March 1843, No.51, FS 5 March 1833, No.24, and Campbell's 'Sketch' in Hasrat, *op.cit.*, p.212, fn.
42. Maddock to Government, 9 August 1832, NR/5/43.
43. Hodgson to Government, 28 November 1831, NR/5/43.
44. Hodgson to Government 19 December 1833, NR/5/44, and 14 August 1840, FS 31 August 1840, No.82 (the latter published in *KM*, pp.25-6).

45. Hodgson to Government, 5 May 1839, NR/5/49.
46. Gardner to Government, 24 and 28 November 1816, NR/5/37.
47. Gardner to Government, 10 March 1817, NR/5/37.
48. Ramakant, *op.cit.*, pp.85-6.
49. Maddock to Government, 6 April 1832, NR/5/43, and 2 December 1832, NR/5/47.
50. Tickell, 'Events in Nepal', in Hasrat, *op.cit.*, p.291.
51. Hodgson to Government, 18 February 1833, FP 5 March 1833, No.24.
52. Hodgson to Government 13(?) June 1833, NR/5/44.
53. Hodgson to Government, 28 January 1834, NR/5/44.
54. Resident's Diary, 18 April-1 May 1840 (a section of this document is preserved under the title 'Nepaul Summary 1837-40', in a manuscript volume in the John Hopkins Collection, Cleveland Library, Ohio, and available on microfilm at the IOLR (pos.no.4218)).
55. Hodgson to Lord Bentinck, July 1833, NR/5/44.
56. Hodgson to Swinton, 4 September, NR/5/44.
57. Auckland to Roberts, 3 March 1840 (Private Book Vol.9, 52), quoted in Mojumdar, *Indo-Nepalese Relations, op.cit.*, p.171.
58. Hodgson, demi-official of 15 October 1833, NR/5/44.
59. Hodgson to Macnaghten, 18 November 1833, NR/5/44.
60. Hodgson to Government, 19 December 1833, NR/5/44.
61. Hodgson to Government, 28 January 1834, NR/5/44.
62. Government to Hodgson, 13 February 1834, and Hodgson to Government, 22 February 1834, NR/5/44.
63. Hodgson to Government, 10 May 1834, NR/5/44.
64. Hodgson to Government, 20 and 23 September 1834, FP 9 October 1834, Nos.17 and 18.
65. Government to Hodgson, 9 October 1834, FP 9 October 1834, No.19.
66. Ramakant, *op.cit.*, pp.120-2.

67. Hodgson to Macnaghten, 28 December 1834, Foreign Miscellaneous, Vol.154.
68. Stiller, *Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, Appendix A, 'Basnyat' Table.
69. Mojumdar, 'Indo-Nepalese Relations', *op.cit.*, p.87.
70. Campbell to Colvin, 8 December 1837, NR/5/48.
71. Tickell, 'Events in Nepal', in Hasrat, *op.cit.*, pp.294-5.
72. Hodgson to Government, 25 March 1835, NR/5/47 and Ramakant, *op.cit.*, p.125.
73. Hodgson to Government, 10 May 1835, NR/5/47.
74. Campbell, 'Memorandum on the Calcutta Mission', FP 24 April 1837, No.82.
75. Hodgson to Government, 10 May 1835, NR/5/47.
76. Hodgson to Government, 24 June 1835, NR/5/46.
77. Hodgson to Government, 8 and 14 November 1835, FP 23 November 1833, Nos.25 and 27.
78. Hodgson to Government, 29 December 1835, NR/5/46.
79. Hodgson to Government, 11 January 1836, NR/5/46.
80. Tickell, 'Events in Nepal', in Hasrat, *op.cit.*, p.296.
81. *Lal mohar* of Asadh Sudi 7 Roj 4, 1893 VS, published in Nepali, *op.cit.*, pp.153-4. The measure was cited by Hodgson (letter to Government, 41 July 1836, NR/5/47) as an example of the increasing enlightenment displayed by the Nepali legal system. He was presumably unaware of the theoretical penalty for infringement, and in the same letter observed that mutilation as a punishment was becoming increasingly rare in Nepal.
82. Hodgson to Government, 17 November 1836, NR/5/47, and Acharya, 'Bhimsen Thapako Patan', *op.cit.*, p.219. Tickell, however, states that Mathbar was only relieved of his command in early 1837 (Hasrat, *op.cit.*, p.297). Mathbar had been in military charge of Eastern Nepal since autumn 1834 (*ibid.*, p.294).
83. Hodgson to Government, 26 November 1836, NR/5/47.
84. See Note 22, above.
85. Acharya, 'Bhimsen Thapako Patan', *op.cit.*, p.218.

86. Stiller, *Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, Appendix A, 'Basnyat' Table.
87. List of *bharadars* compiled on Sunday, 11 Asad 1893 (24 July 1836), *HP*, Vol.53, f.91.
88. Hodgson to Macnaghten, 30 April 1837, NR/5/48.
89. Hodgson to Government, 24 April 1837, NR/5/48.
90. See above, pp.76-81.
91. Hodgson to Secretary to Governor-General, 24 June 1837, in Hunter, *op.cit.*, p.156.
92. Hodgson to Government, 15 June 1837, NR/5/48.
93. Hodgson to Government, 26 June 1837, NR/5/48.
94. Stiller, *Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, p.275.
95. Hodgson to Government, 29 July 1837, FP 14 August 1837, No.35.
96. *Ibid.*
97. Hodgson to Macnaghten, 28 July, NR/5/48. The request was repeated in subsequent public letters and conditionally acceded to in Government to Hodgson, 9 August 1837, FP 14 August 1837, No.36.
98. According to Tickell's 1841 narrative (Hasrat, *op.cit.*, p.298), 'Jung Chauntaria' (i.e., either Fateh Jang or Jyan Shah, an elderly member of another branch of the *cauntaras*) was the initial candidate of this group for premier. If this is true, - and Tickell was sometimes a little careless in his work - the *cauntara* quickly faded as a contender.
99. Hodgson to Macnaghten, 19 August 1837, NR/5/48.
100. Hodgson to Government, 26 June 1837, NR/5/48.
101. Hodgson to Government, 2 August 1837, FP 21 August 1837, No.39.
102. Hodgson to Government, 12 August 1837, FP 21 August 1837, No.41, and to Macnaghten, 19 August 1837, NR/5/48.
103. Hodgson to Government, 18 September 1837, FP 9 October 1837, No.45.
104. Hodgson to Government, 24 September 1837, FP 9 October 1837, No.46.
105. Hodgson to Government, 5 October 1837, FP 20 October 1837, No.89, and 12 October, NR/5/48.
106. Hodgson to Colvin, 18 October 1837, NR/5/48.

107. Governor-General's Minute of 3 October 1837, FP 9 October 1837.
The letter to Rajendra was sent from Calcutta on 9 October, giving Hodgson discretion whether and when to deliver it, which he decided to do at the end of November (Hodgson to Secretary to Governor-General, 30 November 1837, NR/5/48).
108. Campbell to Colvin, 7 December 1837, NR/5/48.
109. Campbell to Colvin, 16 December 1837, and Campbell to Government, 27 December, NR/5/48.
110. Campbell to Secretary to Governor-General, 31 January 1838, NR/5/48.
111. The charge against Balram Kunwar was not brought until 1839, but it was widely believed at the time of Bhimsen's release that the latter's supporters had bribed Prabhu (Campbell to Government, 24 January 1838, FP 14 February 1838, No.78).
112. Hodgson to Government, 10 March 1838, FS 26 July 1838, No.18.
113. Hodgson to Government, 24 April 1838, FS 16 May 1838, No.29.
114. *Lal mohar* of 10 Baisakh 1895 (4 May 1838), published in *Itihas Prakas*, 2, 2 (2013 VS (1956/7), p.166; and of 10 Phalgun sudi 1894 (5 March 1838), cited in Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p. 27.
115. Hodgson to Government, 28 April 1838, FS 16 May 1838, Nos.32 and 33.
116. Hodgson to Government, 8 May 1838, FS 16 May 1838, No.35.
117. Hodgson to Secretary to Governor-General, 14 June 1838, FSC, 11 July 1838, No.12.
118. Hodgson to Government, 2 December 1833, FP 19 December 1933, No.13.
119. Hodgson to Macnaghten, 19 August 1837, NR/5/48; *HP*, Vol.6, f.167 (a list of *bharadars*, probably compiled in early 1839).
120. Stiller, *Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*
121. Lawrence's Diary, 17-19 December 1844 (Eur.MSS F85, No.96, IOLR).
122. Ranjang's uncle Bamsraj was executed by Queen-Regent Rajendra Laksmi as a partisan of Bahadur Shah after the latter's second exile of India in around 1780 (Acharya, *Samskrupta Vrittanta*, *op.cit.*, p.91). Rose, *Strategy*, *op.cit.*, p.71) classes the Thapas (he does not distinguish between the two different families) amongst Bahadur Shah's opponents, but although Bhimsen's patron Kirtiman Basnet appears to have been in Rana Bahadur's confidence in 1799, there is no direct evidence for the Basnets' position in earlier years.
123. Rangnath to Bhaktawar Basnet, Asadh 5 Badi 1859 (20 June 1802), published in *Itihas Prakas*, 1 (2012 VS (1955)), p.20.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROAD TO THE 'BRITISH MINISTRY'Introduction

The years 1838 to 1840 saw a major crisis in Nepali politics which came close to involving the country in war with the British. The background to this was provided by the adverse position in which the British found themselves on several fronts, and in particular by their Afghan entanglement. Most important, however, was the tension within the *bharadari* as Ranjang Pande sought to strengthen his position with the king by offering the prospect of aggrandisement abroad and an increase in the royal share of the revenue. An encroachment on British territory in 1840 provoked the Company into a direct intervention in the internal struggle: backed by a military demonstration on the frontier, Hodgson insisted on the dismissal of Ranjang and his associates and the appointment of new ministers acceptable to himself. Hodgson's allies were initially only the Paudyal brothers, Krishna Ram and Rangnath but the group later expanded to include most of the leading *bharadars* whether former staunch Thapa adherents or those who had helped bring Bhimsen down. The pattern was complicated, however, by individuals switching between the two 'parties', a tactic most dexterously employed by Prasad Singh Basnet, whose family's role has not been properly recognised in accounts of this period.

The struggle was essentially one between factions of the *bharadari*, but as tension mounted the army was also to become involved. Actions by rank-and-file soldiers were largely controlled by the rival *bharadars*, and the autonomous element should not be exaggerated. None the less

there is evidence to suggest that the troops did see themselves as a group with interests potentially opposed to the *bharadars*. The mutiny in 1840 set a pattern which was to recur over the following years, with the army's role seeming about to become decisive, but never quite managing the transition. The historian can thus reasonably pay greatest attention to the manoeuvring within the elite, but has to recognise that there was another element within the state which the elite could never take completely for granted.

The *Bharadari* under Pressure

As he prepared to enter an alliance with the Paudyal brothers, the Resident did stop to consider whether the charges being made against the increasingly influential Ranjang might stem from resentment amongst other *bharadars* who stood to lose financially for his benefit.¹ However an interview with the king and Krishna Ram Mishra in early August, a few days before Rangnath's resignation from the premiership, convinced him that despite their denials they were planning to break with the British.²

By this time the situation in Nepal was causing considerable concern in Calcutta. Troop movements in the east of the country had alarmed the British military commander at Darjeeling, and the imminent possibility of war with Burma plus the approaching departure of the expeditionary force to Afghanistan heightened concern for British India's relatively unprotected border with Nepal. Lord Auckland consequently gave orders for a considerable strengthening of garrisons along the Ganges. News of these military preparations reached the Nepali authorities at the beginning of September — by courtesy of the Calcutta press³ — and the resultant

alarm led to the appointment as liaison with the Residency of *mahila guru* Krishna Ram Paudyal, whose pro-British orientation was publicly known.⁴ With his help Hodgson rapidly secured nominal agreement to withdraw Nepali envoys from various parts of India and to remedy the grievances of British subjects trading in Kathmandu. The *mahila guru's* influence on actual policy was, however, only intermittent, his opponents in the Darbar arguing that the Afghan preoccupations of the British precluded them taking any firm action against Nepal. To counter this the *guru* was eager for a robust line from Calcutta, which would buttress his own contention that the East India Company should not be provoked. Hodgson was thus provided with useful ammunition for his own frequent dispatches requesting stronger support. 'The Gooroo', he wrote to Calcutta in February 1839, 'says that his strength is mine and mine the Governor-General's: and that however wanton the Durbar's behaviour to him and to me, the Governor-General has only distinctly to support us in order to recall the vacillating young Rajah to the necessity of abiding by his recent pledges to us'.⁵

Since October 1838 Ranjang Pande had been joint minister with Pushkar Shah, the *cauntara* who had helped launch the anti-Bhimsen campaign in 1832, and who had just returned from leading the regular quinquennial embassy to Peking. Nevertheless, the Thapas were still politically active and their morale was boosted by the news that Mathbar Singh had managed at last to reach Lahore: his release from Ludhiana had been due to a local misunderstanding of orders from Calcutta, and was embarrassing to Hodgson since the Darbar received the news a fortnight before he did.⁶ The 'secret intelligence' received by Hodgson claimed that the Thapas were boasting of a success over the Resident and the British government,

and that the king had been pleased by a letter from Mathbar reporting Ranjit Singh was willing to negotiate an alliance with Nepal. Bhimsen was in consequence no longer supporting Krishna Ram Paudyal's attempt to improve relations with the British. The report added, however, that Krishna Ram and Rangnath Paudyal had now ended their political differences — they appear to have been at odds since before Bhimsen's dismissal — and that they consequently 'possess a strength which renders them wholly indifferent to Pandes, Thapas, Chauntarias or any other party of the state'.⁷

Following this reconciliation within the Paudyal *guru* family, there was to be in 1839 a drawing together of most of the principal *bharadars* in opposition to Ranjang Pande and his patron, Senior Queen Samrajya Laksmi. Although for much of the detail we have to rely on Hodgson's 'secret intelligence', which had a strong anti-Pande and pro-*guru* bias, there is no doubt that such a realignment did take place. At the root of this development was the government's desire to increase the resources at its command, an aim which, coupled with Ranjang's blind desire for vengeance against his opponents, directly threatened the economic interests of many of Nepal's most prominent families.

The government's own economic difficulties had been increasing since the early 1830s, when military preparations against the British were intensified and military expenditure accordingly rose.⁸ In March 1837, three months before Bhimsen's fall, the land revenue demand in the eastern Tarai (i.e. the districts of Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Saptari, Mahottari and Morang) was substantially raised, and assessments in the hills also reached record levels. The increases were made from an

already high base-line — amounting probably to more than 50 per cent of the peasant's gross produce in the hills and around a third in the Tarai — and the new rents struck even some of the intended beneficiaries as unworkable: *jagirdars* with lands in the western hills petitioned the king in October 1837 for a reduction to the 1825 level.⁹ In May 1838 Rangnath Paudyal (then *mukhtiyar*) had difficulty in finding suitable bidders for the revenue contracts for the Tarai districts, whilst in August 1839, King Rajendra, in a *kharita* to the Governor-General, referred to ryots abandoning their fields because of the previous year's harsh settlement.¹⁰

Coupled with the simple raising of rents went constant alteration in the means of collecting them. In 1830 the government had abandoned the use of *ijaradars* (contractors) as intermediaries between itself and the *caudharis* and other local revenue functionaries in the eastern Tarai in favour of direct arrangements with the latter.¹¹ By the late thirties, however, the *ijaradar* system seems to have been reintroduced, though with decisions taken on a year-to-year basis whether to give a single individual a contract for the entire region, or to appoint separate contractors for each district.¹² The *ijaradars* were in principal required to levy tax at the rates laid down by the central government, but must in practice have had a fairly free hand. Friction must often have arisen with *ijaradars* claiming they were unable to extract the higher amounts now being prescribed.

Notwithstanding what has been said about the importance of the centre in the Nepali polity, linkages between *ijaradars* with a local base and senior *bharadars* must have played a part in the process, and it is

possible that disarray in the revenue administration reflected the intensifying factional struggle in Kathmandu. Unfortunately knowledge of the individuals who took contracts is still very limited. One of them, Kulanand Jha, 'farmer-general' for the whole eastern Tarai on at least one occasion, was, however, an important *bharadar* in his own right, and worth some half a million rupees when he died in 1840.¹³ Probably more typical of the group was Girija Datt Mishra who became collector for his native Mahottari district in the 1830s under the patronage of the abbot of a local Vaisnavite monastery. He was subsequently imprisoned for withholding three years' revenue, but released later and reappointed in 1843 or earlier. Burghart, who recorded the story as told by Mishra's descendants, suggests both his rise and reinstatement might be linked to Thapa influence as 1843 saw the appointment as minister of Bhimsen's nephew Mathbar. This is unlikely, as a list of *bharadars* compiled early in 1843, when Mathbar was still in India, shows Mishra already back in his post.¹⁴ There must, none the less, have been many appointees who were in fact Thapa protégés, and others who owed allegiance to rival *bharadars*.

Given the possibility of Tarai peasants absconding across the border into India if Kathmandu's extortions went too far, the prospects of greatly increasing government revenue from that quarter were clearly limited. Retrenchment in expenditure was an obvious alternative and, as has already been seen, Rangnath had previously attempted to carry through salary reductions. An Order in June 1838 had cut the pay of non-military employees by 25 per cent.¹⁵ The army, however, was a more difficult proposition, and a determined effort to make reductions here was not undertaken until 1840.

At the end of 1838 a new source of possible relief for the treasury was found in the *birta* holdings of leading *bharadars*. Wishing to counteract the temporary kudos which the Thapas had gained from stories of Mathbar Singh's alleged success in the Panjab, Ranjang Pande made the spectacular gesture of resigning his own *birta* lands and calling upon his peers to do likewise. At the same time alarm was created by an announcement that the title of *all* rent-free land was to be examined.¹⁶ Two months later, in February 1839, an order was issued prohibiting the making of any new *birta* grants for the next ten years. According to Hodgson's sources, a general resumption of tax-free lands, including even those obtained by purchase, took place towards the end of the year. This cannot have been fully comprehensive, since the following summer the chiefs were again reported under pressure to give up lands obtained since 1803, but some grants must have been rescinded as a new administration had to restore them in the winter of 1840.¹⁷ In any case, it is undeniable that the apprehension of a general resumption contributed greatly to the heightening of political tension throughout 1839.

Whatever wider measures were taken, the central treasury certainly profited greatly from the proceeds of political prosecutions. By June 1840 it was alleged that confiscations had reached 48 lakhs, equivalent to Hodgson's figure for Nepal's total annual revenue in 1843.¹⁸ Bal Narsingh Kunwar was probably a victim of this process early in 1839, whilst his brother Balram was fined 25,000 rupees for allegedly bribing Rajendra's father-in-law to argue for Bhimsen's release from imprisonment in 1837.¹⁹ By June 1839, Hodgson's sources would be reporting that 'few or none of the Sardars who have held office in the last twenty-five

to thirty years consider themselves free from the daily hazard of extortion'.²⁰

The severity with which this campaign was waged varied with Ranjang's standing in the darbar power struggle. During the first three months of the year, the king had appeared unwilling to give Ranjang his full backing, despite Samrajya's once again withdrawing to Pashupatinath in protest. In April, however, Rajendra, apparently yielding to her pressure, ordered that he should be given precedence over Pushkar Shah, his fellow minister. The 'secret intelligence' report giving the Residency this information painted a lurid picture of the Senior Queen and Ranjang bent on vengeance against their opponents at home and on war abroad, and claimed that the Junior Queen was in fear for her own life and those of her children. The report concluded with a plea for British intervention:

A rash and violent woman striving at uncontrolled sway governs the Darbar, and all men of experience anticipate the worst that can happen, unless renewed dread of the Company [i.e. the East India Company] should speedily recall the Raja to safe counsels and more resolution in abiding by them.²¹

There may have been some exaggeration, but Ranjang's desire for revenge was real enough. He was now allegedly claiming that he could not accept confirmation as minister until 'pro-English' Thapa influence was completely removed.²² Bhimsen had been questioned again concerning the 1837 charge in February, and despite a seeming return to royal favour in March, he was placed under arrest in April.²³ On 18 May he was brought to trial, now accused not only of the murder of Samrajya's infant son, but also of procuring the deaths of King Girbana Yuddha and his widow in 1816. No verdict was actually pronounced — under Nepali

law a confession had in any case to be extracted before this could be done — but the king ordered him to be detained indefinitely.²⁴

Against this background, Hodgson became convinced that war was very likely and the *mahila guru* took an ever more important place in his scheme of things. In early May he first suggested the possibility of securing his loyalty with some financial reward.²⁵ In June he asked for the Governor-General's instructions on how to respond to the approaches now being made to the Residency,²⁶ and in 19 June he spelt out in detail his intention in case of war to use the *guru* to secure guides for the invading British forces, and organise the co-operation of disaffected *bharadars*.²⁷ In the same letter he requested sanction for 2,000 rupees already paid over to Krishna Ram and for payment of a further 3,000 if necessary. The money for the *guru* was agreed,²⁸ but instructions on the general question of contacts with the opposition were to avoid any collusion so long as Nepal and British India remained formally at peace.²⁹ Prinsep and other members of the Governor-General's Council were unhappy with this decision and, in a correspondence which continued into the autumn, they urged Lord Auckland to authorise Hodgson to form a 'British party' and to back this up with the threat of invasion if Nepal did not radically alter her policies. The Governor-General remained adamant, however, that an outright confrontation with Nepal could and should be avoided for the present.³⁰

Hodgson made it clear that he, too, thought creating a 'British party' premature, but that retaining the *mahila guru* was a different matter: he had already been useful in telling other discontented *bharadars* that they should not appeal to the Residency now, and,

should circumstances change in future, he would also be able to create a coalition with those *bharadars* very rapidly.³¹

The *bharadars* whom Hodgson believed he could rely on are identified in another 'secret intelligence' report, which he forwarded to Calcutta on 9 June, adding himself the understandable request that it 'be kept out of the hands of all office writers'.³² His informant claimed that Samrajya wished to drive Rajendra to abdication, or, failing that, start a war with the British in order to profit from the confusion. She had the backing of Ranjang Pande and his family, *guru* Krishna Ram Mishra and *cauntara* Kulchand Shah, but was opposed by Junior Queen Laksmi Devi. The Junior Queen now had the support of Pushkar Shah (Ranjang's co-minister), Fateh Jang Shah, Dalbhanjan and Bir Keshar Pande, Bal Narsingh Kunwar, Prasad Singh Basnet, the re-imprisoned Bhimsen Thapa, Bhimsen's brother Ranbir, and his nephew, Mathbar Singh, who was now in the Panjab. Also in this coalition were two members of the other important branch of the Thapa clan, Amar Singh Thapa's sons, Ranjor and Ramdas. The list was thus virtually a roll-call of all the 'elder statesmen' of the day and was not confined to those who had already suffered directly from measures instigated by Ranjang, since only the two Thapa families and Bal Narsingh fell in this category.

Especially interesting is the inclusion of Prasad Singh Basnet, whose personal position, so far as is known, was never under attack at any time in the period 1837-1840, and who was actually to become a close ally of Ranjang a few months later. His choice of sides may well have been influenced by an alliance with Bal Narsingh Kunwar which appears to have been an important factor in both families' political conduct over the next few years. As has already been seen, Basnets and Kunwars may have

been closely associated from the time that Bal Narsingh's grandfather, Ram Krishna Kunwar, campaigned with Prasad Singh's great-uncle, Abhiman Singh, in the early days of Gorkha expansion. According to strong oral tradition in Kathmandu, Bal Narsingh's son, Jang Bahadur, married an illegitimate daughter of Prasad Singh in addition to later seizing by force her legitimate half-sister, Siddhi Gajendra Laksmi.³³ Baburam Acharya dates the first of these events to spring 1839, and although the marriage is not mentioned in the biography of Jang by his son Pudma, there is good reason to accept Baburam's testimony; Pudma's silence could be explained by family embarrassment over anything connected with Bhim Jang, Jang's son by this marriage, who was allegedly killed by his father in a quarrel, whilst Bhim Jang's mother can be plausibly identified with the first entry in a list of Jang's wives compiled by Pudma himself many years before he wrote his book.³⁴ Acharya also claims that in return for agreeing to accept a girl whose caste status was slightly impaired, Jang was given a commission in his father-in-law's regiment. He is wrong in implying that Jang had not served in the army previously, but in early 1839 he had returned from a stay in Banaras, and may well have needed a highly-placed patron to help secure his reappointment.³⁵ The co-operation between the two families is not mentioned in any of the standard accounts of Jang's life, but certainly helps to make sense of ensuing developments.

The political situation continued unstable through the summer. King Rajendra showed signs of wishing to mend his fences with the British, and there was talk of Nepal offering her troops to assist the British in Afghanistan, but after news of Ranjit Singh's death reached Kathmandu,

the prospect of a more anti-British regime at Lahore made the Nepali Darbar less anxious to placate the Company.³⁶ Against this background the drama of Bhimsen Thapa's life was drawing to its close. In mid July, driven finally beyond endurance by the threat that his wife was to be paraded naked through the streets of Kathmandu, he attempted suicide with a *khukri* which had somehow been introduced into his cell: the wound proved fatal, but only after an interval of nine days. In response to a plea from Bhimsen at the end of May, Hodgson had sent him a message that any intervention on his part could not help and might possibly harm him.³⁷ Now, however, in a letter to the Governor-General's secretary, he wrote that his silence over the brutal treatment of Bhimsen and others was attracting adverse comment. He explained he felt his present instructions bound him to turn a deaf ear to the appeals of 'old personal friends like General Bhimsen' but would be glad to speak out if the Governor-General could authorise it, and he suggested such action might prove politically advantageous, as well as humane.³⁸ Before any reply could be received Bhimsen succumbed to his wound, and Hodgson closed his official report of this event with the oft-quoted tribute to 'the great and able statesman who for more than thirty years had ruled this kingdom with more than regal sway'.³⁹

Hodgson had never denied Bhimsen's great abilities, so his formal praise of them was but to be expected. His reference to him as a 'personal friend' is a little surprising, but there had, after all, always been a certain ambiguity in his feelings towards Bhimsen, whom he had known for twenty years. The news of the death was brought to him by Lakshmi Das and Karbir Khatri, and they claimed afterwards that

he wept on hearing it.⁴⁰ Thirteen years later, Orfeur Cavenagh, Jang Bahadur's escort on his European travels, wrote in *Rough Notes on the State of Nepal* that he had often heard it said Hodgson refused to speak out on Bhimsen's behalf when a single word from him could have saved the man.⁴¹ On seeing the book, Archibald Campbell, Hodgson's former assistant, asked his old superior for information on the point so that he could publicly refute the slur. In reply Hodgson referred to Campbell's own presence at 'that solemn debate where I made a last attempt to save the poor man'.⁴² This must, however, have been at a much earlier stage in the proceedings than the final trial, since Campbell had left Kathmandu to investigate the Sikkimese border dispute some months before Bhimsen's death. Hodgson now made no mention of the government orders which silenced him in the last few weeks, nor of his own decision in May that his intervention would be counter-productive. He perhaps felt a little ashamed that he could have done more than he did, especially as he had taken a very robust attitude to government instructions on some other occasions.

In the aftermath of Bhimsen's death negotiations between Residency and Darbar, in which *mahila guru* Krishna Ram Paudyal again played a leading role, led once more to Nepal formally conceding a range of British demands, but to no great improvement in practice. Out of calculation, a natural tendency to vacillation, or, most probably, a combination of the two, King Rajendra was unprepared to give consistent backing either to Ranjang and his allies or to the Paudyal *gurus* and the other principal *bharadars*. The economic squeeze on the *bharadari* as a whole continued, though, as has already been suggested, it is unlikely to have been as severe as Hodgson represents: at the beginning of December he

claimed that in addition to the forfeiture of all rent-free lands, including those acquired by purchase, they were being required to serve in public office for two to three years without pay, and that routes to India had had to be specially guarded to prevent them fleeing the country.⁴³ In these circumstances the Kunwars' position inevitably remained somewhat precarious, but no active measures were taken against them. Bal Narsingh's name occurs in the Residency correspondence in December in a complaint to Calcutta over the continuing failure of the Kathmandu courts to enforce the claims of British subjects: the Kaji had still not paid the money he owed his former gardener, despite a judgment given in the latter's favour three years previously. The court officials either simply made excuses or protested that Bal Narsingh would not appear before the court voluntarily and was too important a man to be coerced into doing so.⁴⁴ No doubt the latter claim was specious, but for it to be made with even slightest degree of plausibility Bal Narsingh must at least have retained some standing in public affairs. This was not sufficient, however, to prevent one of his nephews, a son of his youngest brother Balram Kunwar, from imprisonment at the end of the year. The young man was probably an adherent of Junior Queen Laksmi Devi, and his arrest part of a move against her by Samrajya.⁴⁵

The new year opened with rumours of a possible alliance between China and Russia against the British, and news of the outbreak of actual hostilities between Britain and China the previous autumn led to Ranjang's investment as *mukhtiyar* early in February.⁴⁶ This formal change did not bring him the complete control which he was seeking and which Samrajya was pressing for: Hodgson was probably right in assuming that the king

wanted to use him to implement an anti-British foreign policy but at the same time to deny him a complete predominance in domestic affairs. The appointment nevertheless precipitated an important realignment which affected the Kunwars' position, for towards the end of the month it became known that Prasad Singh Basnet and his two brothers, Buddhiman Singh and Kulman Singh, were now presenting themselves as allies of Ranjang.⁴⁷ It was at first widely believed that the change of allegiance was only pretended, but it later became apparent that, in Prasad Singh's own case at least, it was quite genuine.

February also saw Prasad Singh's son-in-law, Jang Bahadur, appointed to the rank of captain in the artillery. According to the family's own version of events, he earned this promotion when, whilst accompanying King Rajendra on a hunting trip, he succeeded in tying together the legs of a wild elephant that had just been surrounded. This feat was allegedly only the first of a series of acts of bravery which were to gain him further prestige over the coming months: they included resuing a mother and daughter from a burning house, and leaping from a roof onto the back of an elephant which had gone beserk and was rampaging through the streets of Kathmandu.⁴⁸ Whilst it would certainly be wrong to regard the many stories of Jang's exploits as pure fabrication, it is hard to believe that his promotion was not also connected with his father-in-law's political move, especially since he had probably been serving in a regiment under Prasad Singh since the previous autumn.⁴⁹

Crisis and Intervention

Anticipation of a clash with the British was now once again

increasing. Mathbar Singh, whom Ranjit Singh, in deference to British sensibilities had refused to meet, was now at Lahore and reported that the new ruler, Nau Nihal Singh, might be willing to join with Nepal.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, Rajendra had not abandoned hope of obtaining promises of support from China. In April Nepali forces actually took control of a number of villages in Ramnagar, claiming that the area had reverted to Nepal on the death without legitimate issue of the Ramnagar Raja, whose family had allegedly acquired it as dowry accompanying a Nepali bride. In June an army mutiny over proposed pay reductions almost turned into an attack on the Residency, because the soldiers were led to believe that the cuts had been urged on the Nepali government by the British. Hodgson's delivery in July and September of ultimata from the Governor-General secured total withdrawal from the disputed territory and full apology and compensation for damage done, but the British followed with a demand for the exclusion from the government of those responsible for hostile acts. This led to the dismissal of Ranjang Pande and his associates and the formation of what is opponents dubbed as the 'British ministry'. All these developments have been treated in detail, from the perspective of Indo-Nepali relations, by Ramakant, Mojumdar and Jain, whilst many of the key British documents have been published by Stiller.⁵¹ The present account will concentrate on two aspects of particular significance for understanding the dynamics of Nepali politics at this time: the crisis in the army and the precise nature of the coalition which Hodgson helped into power.

Brian Hodgson had estimated the total strength of the Nepal army in 1838 as between 17,000 and 18,000 men, though the detailed unit-by-unit

breakdown for January of the same year preserved in his own papers totals only 14,970.⁵² Military units were of two kinds - companies (*kampani*) of between 100 and 300 men which normally had no senior officers permanently assigned to them and were under the command of the district governors in the regions where they were stationed, and regiments or battalions (*paltan* - a corruption of the English 'platoon') which varied greatly in size, but on average had a strength of 600 men. Those regiments which were stationed at Kathmandu were known collectively as the *kampu* and it was this 'praetorian' force which counted from the political standpoint. The size of the *kampu* had risen during the latter years of Bhimsen's predominance, since, as was seen in the previous chapter, he had deliberately concentrated troops at the capital to keep appointments under his personal control. Following his fall from power in 1837, some 3,000 troops were moved back into the districts, reducing the Kathmandu garrison to 4,300, but at least three were brought back for the wedding of the heir apparent in May 1840.⁵³ These three units were again sent out in 1841 but were back by 1843 and the *kampu* was subsequently further expanded both by the raising of new regiments and by transfers in from the provinces (see Table next page). The attempt at dispersal in 1837 thus proved to be only a temporary reversal of a continuing upward trend.

In principle all regiments were liable for service anywhere in the country, but in practice certain units were retained continuously as part of the *kampu*. Foremost amongst these were the Sri Nath and Letar, which had been established by Bhimsen in the 1820s and kept under his personal command. Following a more recent British Indian model than

did the other regiments, the strength of each in 1838 was 1,100, including a complement of five captains instead of one. On Bhimsen's fall the king himself had initially become commandant of these, and their officers had all been drawn from among the *cauntaras* (royal collaterals).⁵⁴ Another unit with special status was the Hanuman Dal, which Rajendra had founded in 1836 to serve as his own personal guard *khas paltan*.⁵⁵ In addition, five other regiments were *kampu* throughout the period 1832-1846, and the figure rises to eight if the three units temporarily sent out in 1837 and 1841 are included also. Retention of particular units would not, of course, have been of great significance if the *pajani* had ensured a general changeover of personnel each year, as in principle it could, but in fact the rotation may not have been so thoroughgoing as is often supposed. Hodgson's evidence on this point is not entirely consistent, since he wrote in July 1840 that the personnel of the Sri Nath and Letar had not been changed for years, yet five months later claimed that the trouble in the summer had been caused by 420 members of those units recruited by the Kala Pandes, who would have had no influence on any *pajani* before 1837.⁵⁶ None the less, it is safe to conclude that many of the lower ranks served on year after year, especially as Hodgson also noted that even in the first *pajani* after the the 1840 mutiny there was a complete changeover only amongst the officers.⁵⁷ The soldiers of these two units, and to a lesser extent of the *kampu* as a whole, must thus have had a strong sense of corporate identity and of their own elite status. The surprising fact is not that the peasant farmers who made up the bulk of these units mutinied in 1840, but that they were normally so docile, and that even in 1840

their action was to a large extent the product merely of political manipulation by a faction among the *bharadari*.

Although the outbreak on the night of 21 June 1840 was politically inspired, there did lie behind it real and deep-felt grievances. The background was the attempt to extend to the army the retrenchment which had already been applied to civilians and to senior *bharadars* generally, but from which the soldiers had until 1840 largely been exempt. As a result of Ranganath Paudyal's 1836/1837 economy exercise, expenditure on the military had indeed been reduced by 14 lakhs, but new rates had not been imposed on the ordinary soldiers.⁵⁸ The new pay structure was nevertheless waiting on paper to be implemented. In addition to an actual reduction in pay of one-third to 60 rupees per year for the ordinary *kampu* private, the aim was to curtail the patronage in the hands of senior officers by substituting a single pay rate for each rank in place of the discrimination on an individual basis practised under Bhimsen. It was also planned to do away with the differential enjoyed by the *kampu* units. At the same time the assignments of *jagirs* to the troops was to be replaced by payment in cash:⁵⁹ the latter was a much less popular method than the traditional one, probably because the *jagirdar* or his agent was normally able to extract from the cultivator rather more than his theoretical entitlement.⁶⁰ All these projected changes fitted in with the overall design of strengthening the monarchy's central control both of the army and of the economic resources of the nation, but determined action to implement them was postponed until after Bhimsen Thapa's death. In the meantime such small changes as were made, plus the continued rumours of what was to come and repeated delays in the payment of money already earned, produced a sour atmosphere within the *kampu*.

The first real effort to carry through the reduction was made in August 1839 when the Naya Gorakh regiment was asked to serve at a rate of 40 rupees per annum; this was not only a massive reduction on the high rate prevailing at the end of Bhimsen's time, but also 20 rupees less than the amount prescribed in the 1836/1837 scale. The regiment, which at first reacted by piling its arms and leaving, was later coerced into acceptance, but Hodgson noted the general belief that any attempt to impose similar reductions on the whole army would provoke a mutiny.⁶¹ None the less in 1840 the king decided to press ahead, hoping that success would enable him to double the number of troops.⁶² It was felt that in view of threats of mass resignation and general unrest the cuts could not be so draconian as previously mooted, and so in April Ranjang was instructed to tell the troops that rates of 60 rupees per man for the *kampu* and 50 rupees for the remainder, were to be paid in cash, not as a land assignment.⁶³ This was much the same as what had been planned in 1836/1837, though, significantly, the *kampu* were to be allowed to retain their differential. When the *pajani* got under way in June the responsibility for actually carrying out these changes was thrust upon Ranjang's cousin, Kulraj Pande, as a condition of his appointment as head of the *Sadar Daphtar Khana*, the office which controlled the assignment of lands to the army.⁶⁴ Shortly afterwards the *pajani* was suspended because of the illness — real or feigned — of Ranjang himself. The mutiny followed a few days later.

Apart from the brief notice in the *vamsavali* account, we are dependent for our knowledge of the outbreak on Brian Hodgson, and it has been argued by M.S. Jain that the version of events he presents is severely distorted.⁶⁵ There are, in fact, ample grounds for distrusting Hodgson's

later account, in particular the 'private note' of which his biographer made use, but his contemporary description in official despatches to Calcutta, at which Jain actually directs his fire, is rather more reliable.⁶⁶ In this earlier version Hodgson is very careful to give the evidence for his statements and to distinguish certainties from speculation and rumour, and the sequence of verifiable events can thus be reliably established.

There had been protest meetings among the soldiers for a number of days, but open disobedience was triggered by a summons of the entire *kampu* to the parade-ground on the afternoon of 21 June. It was generally believed that a proclamation from the king announcing pay reductions was to be read to them, but rather than waiting to hear this, the troops immediately grounded arms and demanded that their grievances be met. These included not only apprehension about future reductions, but also, and, as Hodgson believed, even more importantly, fear that they might be deprived of arrears of pay owing to them at the moment: for the second year running the *pajani* had been delayed for many months past the end of the year for which the men had been enlisted, and if at this late stage they were now replaced by fresh troops, it was the latter who would be legally entitled to payment for the intervening period.

The demonstration, which involved all the troops of the *kampu* except for the Hamnuman Dal (or 'King's Own'), was at first non-violent. Early in the evening, however, a member of the Residency escort of Indian sepoys was wounded by a blow from a sheathed sword when he rashly attempted to remonstrate with a group of mutineers. An apology from the palace was soon forthcoming, but the troops were said to have refused to give the

culprit up for arrest. Hodgson was in any case not overly concerned with this incident, which he considered the sepoy had himself provoked, and, believing that the general situation was becoming graver, he sent a message to the king suggesting he disregard this relatively minor matter and concentrate all his energies on dealing with the mutiny as a whole. As the night wore on there was some talk amongst the troops of attacking the Residency, and the escort was ordered to defensive positions on the roof, but the mutineers in fact chose as their targets the houses of five leading *bharadars* - Rangnath Paudyal, Pushkar Shah (who lived only a few hundred yards away from the Residency), Kulraj Pande, Karbir Pande and Prasad Singh Basnet. Hodgson made clear in his official report that the attacks were violent, but not totally unrestrained: the women of the households were insulted but not assaulted, and furnishings thoroughly smashed but nothing of value actually stolen.⁶⁷ At around 2.00 am, King Rajendra went personally to the Tundikhel (parade-ground) in response to appeals from the troops, and he there announced that the army would continue to be paid 'according to the scale introduced by our grandfather [Rana Bahadur]' and that the troops' own appointments were reconfirmed.⁶⁸ The men now returned to their stations, and the mutiny, strictly defined, was over.

Negotiations with the troops continued, however, later on the 22nd, whilst the regiments were escorting Rajendra to Thankot, a small village on the route to India where Queen Ramrajya had moved to the previous day, allegedly with the intention to travel to Banaras. King, queen and army returned to the capital the same day, and meanwhile the king first bowed to the demand of the troops for the dismissal of Kulraj Pande from his position as head of the *Daphtar Khana*, and then, when they rejected his

choice of *cauntara* Guru Prasad Shah as replacement, agreed to nominate Ranjang's nephew, Jagat Bam Pande. Tension remained high for a few more days, with some of the chiefs who had suffered on the 21st demanding an enquiry and compensation and the king at one stage imitating his wife's favourite tactic by temporarily quitting Kathmandu. On 5 July the *kampu* troops, now fully paid up to date, left to spend their furlough at their various homes in the hills. Four days later Kulraj Pande was reappointed to the *Daphtar Khana*, again under instructions to implement pay reductions.⁶⁹ He was said to be intending also to carry out a thorough change of army personnel, but although he did recruit a number of fresh troops, a full-scale rotation did not take place until the end of the year at a time when Kulraj and other members of his family were being removed from the government in response to British pressure.⁷⁰ Pay cuts do appear to have been eventually brought in, though rates for the *kampu* at least probably remained above those laid down in the 1836/1837 scale. The change from *jagir* assignment to cash salaries remained unimplemented.⁷¹ Despite recurring rumours through the latter half of 1840 that fresh disturbances were imminent, no further mutiny occurred.

A major obstacle to the proper understanding of this whole episode has been created by Brian Hodgson's own change of mind on the question whether the threats which some of the troops at one point made against the Residency were the result of a pre-concerted plan. This is a possibility which he considered only to dismiss in his 3 July despatch:

Regarding the suggestion that the soldiers fully intended to attack the Residency on the night of the 21st, and would have done so, had I not make preparations to receive them — I doubt this. After comparing and tracing back numberless rumours, it is my opinion that, if such an intention existed, it was merely the reaction of a small group of Gorkha troops to the accidental clash with my *sipahi* which was abandoned when their companions refused to support them. In short, I acquit the Darbar of any direct knowledge or instigation of so infamous an act.⁷²

Hodgson did indeed go on to blame the palace for leaving the Residency unprotected when a detachment of the still loyal Hanuman Dal might easily have been despatched for the purpose, and he thought such conduct serious enough to delay making further representations on the Ramnagar encroachments until Calcutta should have time to consider the mutiny events also, but there is still a stark contrast between his attitude in 1840 and what he wrote in a despatch two years later:

In June 1840 a fictitious mutiny was got up among the troops (who were taught that the Resident had advised the wrongs of which the soldiery complained) in order that the assault they planned on the Residency might be covered by the pretence of their being unable to restrain troops in open revolt.⁷³

This new version of events was to reach full-blown form in a 'private note' which his biographer, Sir William Hunter, quoted extensively. In this document, Hodgson claimed that on the night before the mutiny (*viz.* 20/21 June) he had been summoned to the palace and detained in conversation by the king and senior queen until nearly dawn, and that the queen had then had the troops told that throughout that time he had been pressing them to reduce the army's pay. The enraged soldiers had then marched on the Residency, but had finally decided against violating it without written orders from the palace.

In presenting the story, Hunter claimed that only Hodgson's calm and affable manner with the queen and his cool courage in the face of the mutineers had saved him from Sir William Byrnes' fate at Kabul.⁷⁴

Hodgson's modification of his original analysis was to a certain extent the result of evidence subsequently uncovered. He clearly must have learned quite soon after the events that the troops believed he was involved in the plans for pay reductions, since in the autumn he unsuccessfully pressed the king to issue to them a formal denial of that accusation.⁷⁴ In addition he had been informed by mid-August that a few men of the Sri Nath Regiment had been privy to a prior plan for 'the plundering of the chiefs and *threatening* of the Residency' (italics supplied -- Hodgson is careful not to say explicitly that an actual *attack* was intended).⁷⁶ However, neither of these circumstances is sufficient to explain the change of view which stems rather from Hodgson's own mental state. In 1842 he was seeking to justify his entire record in the face of Lord Ellenborough's condemnation of the Residency's involvement in internal Nepali politics, and he naturally sought to highlight the extent of the difficulties he had had to confront in Kathmandu: it is perhaps understandable that he should have now begun to see as the major element in the events of 1 June 1840 an aspect which at the time he correctly recognised as relatively minor. With his later 'private note', distortion seems to have been carried further by an old man's defective memory. The claim he now made that the disturbances were breaking out when he left the palace at dawn on 21 June directly contradicts his July 1840 statement linking their start to a general parade ordered in the afternoon. One must also wonder whether he really was in the palace

that night, for he could have had no reason to omit such an important detail in his initial report to Calcutta. Hodgson may in fact have conflated the events of the mutiny with an entirely separate episode a month earlier, when contemporary evidence shows that he *had* spent most of a night at the palace with the king and queen, discussing amongst other matters her request for a passport to go to Banaras.⁷⁷ Regrettably the whole of Hunter's stirring account of the mutiny is thus suspect, and only the 1840 documents can safely be relied on.

It was all the more easy for Hodgson to convince himself that there had been a real plot against the Residency because he believed, with good evidence, that the 'anti-British party' was behind the violence. In addition, in the immediate aftermath of the mutiny he was provided with firm evidence of strong anti-British sentiments in at least one section of the army and in those trying to manipulate it. He was able to include in his July despatch the substance of notes said to have been sent by the king and queen to the troops on 23 June, and by the troops in reply two days later. The first note, actually written down by a scribe in the confidential correspondence section of the palace, ran as follows:

The English Government is mighty, abounding in wealth and in all other resources for war. I have remained friends with the English for so long because I could not cope with them. Besides, I am bound by a treaty of friendship and have no excuse now to break it. Nor have I money to support a war. Troops I have and arms and ammunition in plenty, but no money; and just now the marriages of my sons are costing me more than I know where to get. This is the reason why I have reduced your pay. I want treasure to fight the English. Take lower pay for a year or two, and when I have completed the marriages and got money in hand, I will throw off the mask and indulge you with a war. But now the English are my friends, and they

have done me no harm. Again the *Bharadars* [Chiefs] complain that you have plundered and insulted them. What answer must I make?⁷⁸

The army's reply was composed by the senior pay accountant of the Sir Nath, the regiment that took the principal part in the disturbances, being indeed, according to Hodgson's informants, the only one involved in actual violence.

True, the English Government is great; but care the *bwanses* [wild dogs] how large is the herd? They attack! They are sure to fill their bellies. You want no money for making war. The war shall support itself. We will plunder Lucknow or Patna; but first we must be rid of the Resident. He sees and foretells all. We must be able, unseen, to watch the moment of attack. It will soon come. It is come. Give the word and we will destroy the Resident, and then war will follow of course. You want no excuse for war. There is one ready made. Let us operate unseen, and we will soon make the Ganges your boundary. Or, if the English want peace and are your friends, as you say, why do they keep possession of half your dominions? Let them restore Kumaon and Sikkim. These are yours. Demand them back, and, if they are not given, drive out the Resident. You talk too of your Chiefs and their wrongs. Of what use are the Chiefs? We want none. We will be Chiefs and soldiers too. The Chiefs shall no longer do business with the Resident. The *Munsi* is enough and occasionally the Minister, but no others. In the Thapa's time [Bhim Sen] it was so. Let it be so again. Nor should Your Highness any more than the Chiefs do business with the Resident. Leave it to the *Munsi* and to Ranjung [the Minister]. So it used to be. So it must be again.⁷⁹

Jain has challenged the authenticity of these documents, and it is true that Hodgson was unable to procure exact copies of the originals.⁸⁰ None the less, in response to Calcutta's request for verification he did provide the names of the scribes and messengers involved and gave details of the channels through which he had obtained his original information. Hodgson also checked the report from his secret agent with several other sources, and it seems

unreasonable to doubt that notes on these lines were exchanged, even if the language has been exaggerated in transmission. At what level in the Darbar the message purporting to come from the king and queen originated is, of course, a different question.

Despite this undoubted anti-British backdrop, the real significance of the mutiny lay in domestic politics, as Hodgson himself made clear at the time. He saw it as a combination of a protest which the troops themselves had long been planning, and of a calculated manoeuvre by Samrajya and Ranjang. Left to itself, he argued, the army would have kept its protest peaceful, the actual acts of violence being instigated by Ranbam Thapa, Jagat Bam Pande and Dal Bahadur Pande, all of whom were known agents of Ranjang and the queen. The immediate aim of the plotters was to ingratiate themselves with the troops by standing forward at the appropriate moment as the champions of their interests. The longer-term objective was to pressure Rajendra into transferring power to Samrajya. In the event, Ranjang was certainly able to persuade the mutineers that he was on their side, for before attacking the houses of other chiefs, the men had gone first to his and left after cheering him for the assurances he provided. It was also rumoured that the outbreak had so alarmed the king that he had indeed been on the point of signing over power to the queen. Hodgson believed this interpretation of events was further confirmed by the refusal of the palace to set up a proper enquiry as demanded by some of the chiefs whose homes had been ransacked.

Hodgson's analysis can be accepted as fundamentally correct, though two difficulties have to be acknowledged. In the first place, the identification of the *agents provocateurs* rested primarily on the

testimony of soldiers who were adherents of Pushkar Shah's family. The Resident thus received the information through Pushkar, who was hardly a disinterested party: he had been at one time more or less an ally of Ranjang's, but had been politically opposed to him for the last few months.⁸¹ The second difficulty, on which Hodgson's own silence is surprising, is that whilst two of the mutineers' targets, Pushkar Shah and Rangnath Paudyal, were universally recognised as opponents of the Kala Pandes, the remaining three were in fact key members of the group: Kulraj and Karbir Pande were respectively Ranjang's cousin and brother, whilst Prasad Singh Basnet, Jang's father-in-law, had been ostensibly supporting the group since early in the war and had been virtually acting as manager of affairs for him at the start of the *pajani* in May.⁸² The whole weight of circumstantial evidence which Hodgson presents nevertheless prevents us from rejecting his reading of the situation: details such as the army's insistence on the appointment of Ranjang's nephew as their new paymaster, and Queen Samrajya's evident satisfaction with the army on 22 June are two among many. At the same time there were clearly complexities to the situation which Hodgson did not explicitly bring out. Possibly the mutineers went further than Ranjang's agents had intended; alternatively Kulraj, Karbir and Prasad Singh agreed in advance to act the role of victims in order to give the vandalism an air of spontaneity: the latter interpretation is perhaps supported by the fact already referred to, that nothing was actually stolen from the Chiefs' houses. Finally, there may at the time of the mutiny have been a temporary rift between Ranjang, who although nominal minister showed a continual tendency to prefer behind-the-scenes influence to public action, and members of

his group who accepted a more exposed role; Hodgson does in fact contrast the five victims of the 21st, men 'simple or greedy enough to take upon themselves...a part or the whole of the responsibility of affairs without exercising any real power', with those 'who have preferred to work invisibly and to lay the burden of affairs on other shoulders'.⁸³ If such a breach between allies *had* developed it was quickly healed in the case of Karbir and Kulraj, but the ambiguous attitude Prasad Singh was to display later in the year suggests that with him the affair still rankled.⁸⁴

Whilst some of the finer political detail must remain obscure, the mutiny episode can undoubtedly be seen as a protest movement taken over and directed for political purposes by members of the political elite. It was client-patron ties between the troops and the latter which determined the course of events. The men actually involved in violence were, it later transpired, members of a contingent brought into the army some months earlier by the Kala Pandes,⁸⁵ whilst it was the loyalty of individuals attached to Pushkar Shah's family which enabled the Resident to uncover so much of the background to the affair. If the army acted in violation of the most fundamental of client-patron relationships - that between subject and monarch - this was only because of the extreme situation which the heightened rivalry among the *bharadars* and within the royal family itself had created.

In summer 1839, Hodgson had identified an 'anti-Ranjang' - and thus potentially 'pro-British' - party comprising almost every major figure in the *bharadari* with the exception of Ranjang's own immediate clique (see above, p.119). In the months leading up to the mutiny,

a somewhat smaller group had come to be generally regarded as attached to the British interest. Apart from Hodgson's trusted agent *mahila guru* Krishna Ram Paudyal and his brother Rangnath, this consisted of the *cauntara* brothers, Fateh Jang and Guru Prasad, and the Gora Pandes, whose senior representative was Dalbhanjan Pande.⁸⁶ Also strongly opposed to Ranjang, but less strongly identified with the Residency, was *cauntara* Pushkar Shah, the uncle of Fateh and Guru Prasad. These were the men who were to be installed in office at the end of the year. Although they owed their eventual success largely to British pressure, all of them were major figures in the Darbar in their own right. It is significant, for instance, that Rangnath, Fateh and Dalbhanjan were amongst the five *bharadars* whom Rajendra had kept with him when he conferred with Hodgson immediately after Bhimsen's arrest in 1837, even though they were not then seen as the Resident's allies (see above, p.92). It is, moreover, nonsense to assert, as Jain does, that the group 'had no serious following among the nobility':⁸⁷ Bhimsen Thapa had previously associated them with his own mule precisely because they did have important influence.

Throughout 1840 Rajendra had made repeated efforts to associate members of this group with the Kala Pandes in the administration, beginning with an invitation in January to Fateh, Pushkar and Dalbhanjan to take office under Ranjang.⁸⁸ The king clearly saw 'divide and rule' advantages in bringing such antipathetic elements into the government, as well as the possibility of pushing forward one faction or the other as circumstances seemed to demand a more-or-less conciliatory approach to British India. From the royal point of view this was in principle a sound strategy, and not altogether dissimilar to that which Rajendra's

descendant, King Mahendra, was to employ so successfully in the 1950s and 1960s, but the instability of Rajendra's own temperament and the political tensions of the day were too strong. In any case, Ranjang's opponents declined the offer, being unwilling to accept responsibility without power. Although Fateh was prepared on at least one occasion to advise the king on appointments, he and the others generally continued wary of too close an involvement. In April, for instance, he, Dalbhanjan, Rangnath and Krishna Ram Paudyal all refused to help examine letters from the Resident, arguing that the task should be given to those responsible for the abuses which had led to the British complaints.⁸⁹

Whilst the Senior Queen and Ranjang had hoped that the mutiny episode would strengthen their position, its actual effect proved largely the opposite. An immediate result was Rajendra's decision to confirm a previously mooted arrangement assigning command of three regiments — the Purana Gorakh, Sri Bani and Devi Datt — to Dalbhanjan, Pushkar and Rangnath respectively.⁹⁰ In addition, the Pande position was undermined by some disarray within its own ranks: as has already been suggested above (p.139), the fact that three members of the faction were victims of attack during the disturbances may have been symptomatic of, or, alternatively, ^{have} led to, internal disruption, whilst the queen's support for the pro-Pande element in the elite Sri Nath and Letur regiments was weakened when these units were accused of beating Laksmipati, a Maithil ascetic who was a great favourite and political confidant of hers.⁹¹ After having, as Hodgson saw it, frequently feigned a kind of mental breakdown for political purposes, Ranjang himself became genuinely ill.⁹² His principal opponents,

however, continued to refuse royal invitations to take office alongside his brother Randal or cousin Kulraj.⁹³

Following the delivery of an ultimatum by Hodgson at the end of July, Nepali forces were withdrawn from the areas south of the foothills which they had occupied in April.⁹⁴ British pressure was none the less maintained, Calcutta formally instructing Hodgson on 27 August to present additional demands, including the surrender of the fort of Someswar on the ridge overlooking the evacuated area, compensation to a British tax-farmer wounded in the occupation, and also the settling of long-standing claims in the Kathmandu courts involving British subjects.⁹⁵ In demi-official correspondence Hodgson was asked for advice on the terms to be imposed on Nepal should the latest ultimatum be rejected and war ensue. He recommended the stationing of a British subsidiary force at Kathmandu requiring that the Resident be given a veto over appointments to the posts of minister and chief justice.⁹⁶

The Darbar's compliance with the British demands was eventually forthcoming in a form acceptable to Hodgson on 20 September.⁹⁷ Consequently his confidence that he could assemble a fifth column effective enough to give the British quick and easy victory in any war with Nepal did not have to be put to the test. His papers show, however, that during the critical negotiations plans to mobilise a 'British party' had been well laid. A list prepared in early September gives the names of *bharadars* who, in case of war, were expected to try to prevent the Darbar from resisting the British advance, and, if all else failed, to cross over into the 'Resident's camp' (presumably this would be on the border as he would have already had to quit Kathmandu) when British troops were about to enter the hills. Foremost amongst

these were, of course, the group which had been seen as Hodgson's allies throughout much of 1840, *viz.*, the Paudyal *rajguru* brothers Dalbhanjan and his 'Gora' Pandes and Fateh Jang and his family. Also included were the Junior Queen, the sons of Amar Singh Thapa (commander of Nepal's western forces in the war with the British), and a less prominent *chauntara*, Kaji Kalu Shahi. Especially interesting was the position taken up by Pushkar Shah and by Prasad Singh Basnet and Balnar Singh Kunwar, all of whom had indicated they might join the coalition, but were not considered totally committed.⁹⁸ Prasad Singh is the most surprising name, given his close identification both before and after with Ranjang Pande: clearly he was adept at trimming his sails to the prevailing wind in the fashion his son-in-law, Jang Bahadur, was also to adopt.

During September, Hodgson had suggested that if the dispute were settled without actually moving troops up to the hills, it would still be desirable to insist on the dismissal of Ranjang and the appointment of men acceptable to himself.⁹⁹ After the experiences of the last few months, Lord Auckland was now prepared to listen to suggestions for interference of this sort, even through his private correspondence shows he was not over-confident of its results.¹⁰⁰ Two *kharitas* (formal letters) from the Governor-General to King Rajendra were sent to Hodgson for delivery: they contained demands for the dismissal of the counsellors who had led the king astray.¹⁰¹ Fateh Jang Shah's appointment in place of Ranjang was already expected in Kathmandu at the beginning of October,¹⁰² more than three weeks before the first *kharita* was even written. Hodgson had therefore discounted this change in advance, and, backed up by the moving of a

British force close to the border, continued to press the issue until the king had agreed to the removal of all Ranjang's associates and the installation of a new set of ministers to back up Fateh Jang.

The course of these negotiations is described in detail in Hodgson's lengthy report of 4 January 1841.¹⁰³ Although he expressed dissatisfaction that the changes achieved were not as complete as he would have wished, he was now convinced that everything practical in current circumstances had been done. The new 'cabinet' installed comprised Fateh Jang Shah and his brother Guru Prasad, Rangnath and Krishna Ram Paudyal, Dalbhanjan Pande, Pushkar Shah and Kaji Kalu Shahi, all of whom except Pushkar had been on Hodgson's 'totally committed' list of potential fifth columnists, whilst Pushkar had at least rated as a 'possible'. There had also been a replacement of Kala Pande supporters by more acceptable men in a large range of posts, and instructions to retire to Banaras had been issued to *rajguru* Krishna Ram Misra, Hodgson's one-time close confidant and how his principal *bête noir*.

The attainment of these results had been a lengthy process because of a stubborn rearguard action mounted by Queen Samrajya and the Pandes themselves. Their hand appears to have been strengthened after the September crisis by the re-adherence of Prasad Singh Basnet, who joined them in petitioning in protest at Fateh Singh's investiture as minister on 1 November.¹⁰⁴ In mid-November Hodgson was able to forward to Calcutta the translation of an *arzi* (petition) which Prasad Singh had presented to Queen Samrajya on behalf of another Pande supporter, Ranbam Thapa: the document warned her of danger to herself and to the heir-apparent now that the Pandes had been removed from

office, asserted that the English would remain a danger until Nepal went to war against them, and claimed it now appeared 'that the Maharajah is ready to pay 4 to 6 annas per rupees of our revenues to the Company'.¹⁰⁵ Prasad's shift back from his tentative support for the Residency may have occurred because he was shrewd enough to realise that, despite the advance of Colonel Oliver's forces across the Ganges and Rajendra's consequent alarm, the British had in fact now completely ruled out the possibility of a campaign against Nepal that winter.¹⁰⁶

Particularly alarming to Hodgson was the Pandes' success in arousing feeling in the army against the new administration. Inflammatory petitions and placards were constantly appearing. One document submitted by the soldiers complained bitterly about the concessions which the Darbar had made to the 'vile Madhesiahs [people of the plain] whom greed of gain has brought here', *viz.*, the Indian merchants whose cause as British subjects Hodgson had constantly defended. A placard put up for the attention of the army on 20 December warned that the queen, though wise, was only a woman, and denounced the king himself as 'a hermaphrodite who will do nothing he ought and does all he ought not to do'.¹⁰⁷ In discussing his plans with Hodgson a few days previously, Fateh Jang had been confident that the army was still basically amenable to control by anyone given the king's authority to do so, but he stressed the need for a thorough *pajani* to disperse the troops to different parts of the kingdom.¹⁰⁸ Although the opinions of the general population as opposed to the army did not generally have to be taken into political consideration, there is evidence that the strength of feeling amongst them was sufficient to be

a possible danger: when Fateh told Hodgson that it would be unwise to insist on Jagat Bam Pande's name being included in the written list of 'bad councillors', which the Darbar was being asked to prepare, he gave as the reason Jagat's popularity with the people as well as with the palace.¹⁰⁹

The fact that Hodgson was able to succeed despite all these difficulties was due both to the effect of the British troop movements (even if the demands of the Afghan situation made these something of a bluff) and to his principal Nepali allies, together with less prominent adherents, constituting an important section of the *bharadari*. Even amongst the *bharadars*, however, the situation was more evenly balanced than some of Hodgson's more optimistic assurances to the Governor-General suggested. Notes which he himself compiled in autumn 1840, listing separately the 'Good, Bad and Indifferent Chiefs', show twenty-nine in the first category, but seventeen actually opposed to him and twenty-four remaining neutral.¹¹⁰ This interesting document prompts two observations about the nature of factions among the political elite. First, allegiances could change rapidly. This has already been seen in strong relief in the case of Prasad Singh Basnet, who joined Ranjang, became a half-committed supporter of the 'British party' as the crisis reached a head in early autumn, then swung back into line with Ranjang once more. His latest change of sides is reflected in his inclusion by Hodgson amongst the 'bad chiefs'. Among the 'good' chiefs', on the other hand, was included the name of Batak Nath Mishra, whose reported appointment as Crown Prince Surendra's *gayatri guru* in April had been regarded by Hodgson then as evidence of the ascendancy of the leading 'bad' chief, Ranjang Pande.¹¹¹ A

change in the opposite direction was made by Singh Bir Pande, classed as a neutral in the autumn, but classed among the 'good' when his appointment as Governor of Palpa in place of Ranjang's brother Randal was recorded by Hodgson at the beginning of January.¹¹² Singh Bir's case also serves to illustrate the second general point, namely that although families *tended* to operate as political units, there were frequent exceptions to the rule; Singh Bir had not adhered to the 'British party' earlier, even though he was the brother of one of its prominent members, Dalbhanjan Pande. Another, and more serious rift in the 'Gora Pandes' ranks was the firm support that Dalbhanjan and Singh Bir's cousin Dal Bahadur provided for Ranjang, even though this had previously put him on the opposite side to his father-in-law, Bhimsen Thapa: Dal Bahadur had been one of the instigators of the mutiny violence and his name was included in the 'blacklist' of dismissed advisers which the Darbar submitted to Hodgson.¹¹³ The Basnets were also divided, with Prasad Singh's brother Kulman and cousin Jitman in the 'pro-British' camp. Bal Narsingh Kunwar was regarded as a neutral (despite his inclusion on the 'half-committed' list in September 1840), but Bir Bhadra Kunwar, senior member of another branch of the family, was unambiguously a 'good chief', and his appointment in December as head of the *Daphtar Khana* in place of Kulraj Pande was a significant achievement for the 'British ministry'.

What was the rationale behind particular individuals' choice of sides? Auckland had argued in 1839 that *bharadars* were aligned for or against the British on grounds of tactical convenience rather than conviction,¹¹⁴ and by and large this view is correct. The *rajguru* families with their connections with the plains might be

thought natural allies of the Residency, as Hodgson himself sometimes argued, but although the Paudyals were consistent supporters of the Resident from mid-1838 onwards, Krishna Ram Mishra was not deterred from an anti-British line by the threat, eventually carried out in October 1840, that his *jagir* at Banaras would be confiscated.¹¹⁵

The *chauntaras* as a group might also be expected to lean towards the British on the grounds that the martial orientation of Nepali life over the previous half century had resulted in the predominance of Khas *bharadars* with support from the army, but Kulchand Shah — 'the blind chauntara' as Hodgson often referred to him — was aligned with the Kala Pandes against Fateh Jang Shah and his family.¹¹⁶

Once one or two key figures had taken up positions, the alignment of others might be determined by pre-existing feuds. This explained the broad pattern whereby a number of leading *bharadars* of the Bhimsen Thapa period gravitated towards the British in natural reaction to Ranjang's playing of the anti-British card. Reinforcing this general conflict between Ranjang and a part of the old establishment were a number of more particular rivalries. It is likely, for instance, that there existed an especially strong animus between the Kala and Gora Pandes, which lay behind the confiscation of half of Bir Kesar (Gora) Pande's property in February 1840 and the subsequent attempt to prosecute his brother Rangambhir for 'stopping [Ranjang's] throat' by witchcraft.¹¹⁷ The family splits already referred to, especially Dal Bahadur Pande's opposition to his Gora Pande cousins and his father-in-law's relatives, also probably resulted from long-standing jealousies and resentments. It would be wrong, however, to rule out the possibility that in some cases members of the same family

might join opposing sides as a concerted tactic to ensure they would have influential friends whatever the outcome.

The different factors that could determine a particular individual's course are well illustrated by the case of Jang Bahadur's father, Bal Narsingh Kunwar. Since both he and his brother, Balram, had suffered at the hands of Ranjang's *Janekhana* (tribunal of enquiry), there can have been little love lost between him and the Kala Pandes. On the other hand, he was also linked through Jang Bahadur's marriage with Prasad Singh Basnet who was a close ally of Ranjang's throughout most of 1840, a circumstance which made it difficult for him to declare unambiguously for the 'British party'. Additionally, as he was himself the target of legal action brought by an Indian creditor, his enthusiasm for Hodgson's zealous championing of the legal rights of British subjects in the Nepali courts will have been less than total; it is not surprising that the Indian merchant Kasinath should have accused Bal Narsingh of helping *rajguru* Ram Krishna Mishra obstruct his right to a fair trial.¹¹⁸

Bal Narsingh was further encouraged to adopt an *attentiste* attitude by the game which his brother-in-law, Mathbar Singh Thapa, had been playing in the North-West. Mathbar had been enjoying the favour of the *de facto* Sikh ruler, Nao Nihal Singh, who wanted to employ him in his army.¹¹⁹ However, in early 1840 he had begun making approaches to the British, having apparently only recently learnt of his uncle Bhimsen's death and hoping for British help in getting his children out of Kathmandu to the safety of India.¹²⁰ Hodgson believed he would make an invaluable tool in the case of war with Nepal, and was eager to encourage him to re-cross the Satlej and

live as a British pensioner. Yet at the same time Mathbar was continuing to correspond with the Nepal Darbar, holding out the prospect that if his credentials were renewed he could negotiate an anti-English alliance with the Sikhs, and preparations were made in Kathmandu to send Captain Karbir Khatri, a former protégé of Mathbar's brother Wazir Singh, to meet a Sikh representative at Banaras.¹²¹

Khatri actually informed Hodgson in advance of his own impending departure, claiming that he himself had accepted appointment as the Darbar's secret envoy only so that he could escape from Nepal, and that Mathbar Singh, likewise, was not really intriguing against the British but only trying to trick the Nepali authorities into releasing his children.¹²²

At the beginning of September, Mathbar Singh was ordered to go to Ludhiana by the Sikh Darbar — a step which he would in any case soon have taken voluntarily — and there insisted that the anti-British statements attributed to him at Lahore had been made purely for Nepali consumption in order to protect his family at home.¹²³

Almost certainly, however, Hodgson was correct in believing that both Mathbar and Karbir had in reality been keeping their options open and were prepared either to co-operate with the British, or, should it seem the more effective course, assist the Nepal Darbar to secure the long-sought-after Sikh alliance.¹²⁴

A similar conclusion was reached by Captain Clark, the Political Agent at Ludhiana, on the basis of his interviews with Mathbar.¹²⁵ The latter was subsequently sent to Ambala and later moved to Simla, whilst Karbir, who actually reached Banaras in November, was arrested and detained as a state prisoner. The policy which both men had been following was probably one which Bal Narsingh knew and approved of.

The crisis of 1840 was thus essentially a matter of complex manoeuvring for position within the *bharadari*. None the less, it had the potential of developing into something more. The question of how far there was a real threat to the security of British India, as against mere posturing for domestic political purposes, will be taken up in reviewing Hodgson's whole record in Nepal in the next chapter. For the student of the internal political process the interesting development is the way in which the lower ranks of the army enter the picture. Admittedly, their intervention was guided, and to some extent instigated, by their patrons amongst the *bharadari*, but they had demonstrated a capacity and willingness to act when confronted with what they saw as a threat to their basic interests. The army was never to develop into a power in its own right as the *khalsa* was doing at this time in the Panjab, but apprehension that it might do so was to be a feature of political life over the next few years.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. Hodgson to Government, 11 July 1838, FS 26 July 1838, No.10.
2. Hodgson to Secretary to Governor-General, 5 and 10 August 1838, FS 22 August 1838 No.27 and 29 August No.25; Rangnath's resignation covered only his responsibility for the hill area, while he retained the administration of the Tarai until the following spring (Hodgson to Government, 14 April 1839, FS 18 December 1838 No.115).
3. Hodgson to Government, 8 September 1838, FS 21 November 1838 No.152.
4. Hodgson to Government, 6 November 1838, FS 21 November 1838 No.160.
5. Hodgson to Torrens, 17 February 1839, FS 18 December 1839 No.87.
6. Hodgson to Torrens, 30 December 1838, NR/5/49.
7. Hodgson to Secretary to Governor-General, 28 December 1838, FS 9 January 1839 No.114.
8. M.C. Regmi, *A Study in Nepali Economic History 1768-1846* (New Delhi: Manjusri 1978), pp.172-3; Ramakant, *op.cit.*, pp.109-10.
9. Regmi, *loc.cit.*
10. Resident's Diary, May 1838; King Rajendra to Lord Auckland, 14 Sravan 1896 (8 August 1839), FS 26 December 1839 No.157.
11. Regmi, *op.cit.*, p.175.
12. The post of *subba* (i.e. revenue collector) for each district was put up for auction in 1838 (Residency Diary for May). In commenting on Rajendra's August 1839 khareeta (*v.supra*, n.10) Hodgson refers to a 'severe Khas settlement' failing the previous year, but adds that 'the whole Tarai is now let in farm again as heretofore'. In a revenue context 'khas' normally refers to direct collection by government officers (v. H.H. Wilson, *Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal 1968) reprint of 1855 edition, s.v.), but Hodgson seems to be using it to contrast the district-by-district approach (even though this involved competitive bidding) with the 'farmer-general' system. In July 1840 the Diary records a dispute in progress on whether Kulananda should be given the whole eastern Tarai or separate *subbas* placed in charge of each district.
13. Residency Diary, December 1838-January 1839. Kulananda Jha was acting as an *ijaradar* in Morang as early as 1816 (Regmi, *op.cit.*, p.160, n.40).
14. HP, Vol.52, ff.169-71.
15. Regmi, *op.cit.*, p.173.

16. Residency Diary, December 1838-January 1839.
17. *Ibid.*, 29 November-18 December 1839, 14-27 August 1840, 26 December 1840-10 January 1841.
18. *Ibid.*, 23 July 1840; below, p.377.
19. *Ibid.*, January 1839; Hodgson to Maddock, 1 March 1839, NR/5/49; Hodgson to Government, 25 February 1839, FS 18 December 1839 No.91. Hodgson's reference (Diary, 1-19 March) to 'real and pretended' extortion suggests the penalties may have been less severe than alleged.
20. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 9 June 1839, FS 26 December 1839 No.131.
21. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 14 April 1839, FS 18 December 1839 No.115.
22. Hodgson to Government, 5 May 1839, FS 18 December 1839 No.118.
23. Hodgson to Maddock, 1 March 1839 R/5/49, and Resident's Diary 14 April-7 May 1839.
24. Stillier, *Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, pp.282-4.
25. Hodgson to Maddock, 6 May 1839, NR/5/49.
26. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 11 June 1839, FS 4 September 1839 No.41.
27. Hodgson to Maddock, 19 June 1839, NR/5/49.
28. Henry Lawrence's Nepal Diary, 16-30 April 1845 (MSS Eur.F.85, No.96, IOL).
29. Secretary with Governor-General to Hodgson, 27 June 1839, FS 4 September 1839 No.42.
30. FS 18 December 1839 Nos.67-75 (extensive quotations are given in Mojumdar, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations*, *op.cit.*, pp.43-5).
31. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 22 July 1839, FS 26 December 1839 No.138.
32. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 9 June 1839, FS 26 December 1839 No.131.
33. Interview with Rishikesh Shaha, Kathmandu, 6 June 1983.

34. Acharya, 'Jang Bahadurko Prarambha', *Ruprekha*, No.10, p.44. Bhim Jang is said to have been killed when he objected to his half-brother, Ranbir, being placed on the roll of succession to the premiership in preference to himself (information from Puruswattam Shamsher J.B. Rana), or because he was discovered drinking alcohol (Pramode Shamsher, *Rana Nepal - an Insider's View* (Kathmandu: Mrs. R. Rana 1978), p.40. Pudma's list was drawn up in the 1870s and published in Kamal Dixit, 'Jang Patniharu', *Jang-Gita* (Lalitpur: Jagadamba Prakasan, 2040 VS (1983/4)), pp.139-47. The first and second wives are unnamed, but both described as 'Jeetha ['senior'] Maharani', and their dates of death are given as 1847 and 1850 respectively. Nanda Kumari Khatri, who certainly had this title and who married Jang in 1841 according to Acharya, must be the second, because her eldest son Jagat was only born in 1848 (Nay Raj Pant, 'Seto Baghko Aitihasik Pariksa', *Ruprekha*, No.157 (Jeth 2031 [May-June 1974]), p.14.) The first wife listed is therefore very likely Prasad Singh's daughter, especially as 1847 is the year given for her death in the oral tradition. Pudma's later dating of the marriage with Nanda Kumari to January 1839 (*Life of Jung Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, p.20) is thus a mistake, and his list omits entirely Jang's pre-1839 marriage(s); Acharya claims Jang had had two previous wives, of whom the first returned to her parents' home and the second died, whilst Pudma's own later account (*loc.cit.*) refers to one woman, a Thapa, who died whilst Jang was in Banaras.
35. Although Jang almost certainly did spend some time in Banaras after Bhimsen's fall, the detailed, and conflicting, accounts in Orfeur Cavenagh, *Rough Notes on the State of Nepal* (Calcutta: W. Palmer 1851) and in Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, are certainly unreliable and the attempt to reconcile them in Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, pp.75-6, is misguided. It is unlikely that he was ever instructed to arrest the king's uncle, Ranodyat Shah, who was then in Banaras, and if he had been deported by the British as he claimed, this would have figured prominently in the Residency records.
36. Hodgson to Maddock, 18 July 1839, NR/5/49, and Hodgson to Government, 22 July 1839, FS 26 December 1839 No.138.
37. Hodgson to Government, 30 May 1839, FS 26 December 1839 No.115.
38. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 22 July 1839, FS 26 December No.138.
39. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 30 July 1839, FS 18 December 1839 No.82.
40. Gyanmani Nepal, 'Jangbahadurko Bideshniti', *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, VIII, 2 (June 1981), p.178.
41. Orfeur Cavenagh, *Rough Notes*, *op.cit.*, p.222.

42. Hodgson to Campbell, 17 September 1852, Eng.Hist.MSS c.262, p.111 *et seq.*
43. Resident's Diary, 25 November-18 December 1839.
44. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 24 December 1839, FS 5 February 1840 No.46. The gardener was owed 6,158 rupees for planting a garden with imported fruit trees (*arji* of Huldass Mali to Hodgson, 16 November 1839, FS 5 February 1840, No.56).
45. Resident's Diary, 19-31 December 1839. See below, Chapter Four, pp.
46. *Ibid.*, 20-32 January and 5-18 February 1840; Rose, *Strategy*, *op.cit.*, p.100.
47. Resident's Diary, 20 February-5 March 1840.
48. Pudma Rana, *Life of Jung Bahadur Rana*, *op.cit.*, pp.20-1.
49. Acharya, 'Jang Bahadurko Prarambha', *op.cit.*, p.44.
50. Resident's Diary, 20-31 January 1840. Cf. H.R. Gupta, 'Sikh-Nepal Relations 1839-40', *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*, XXX, 2 (1954), pp.52-6.
51. Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, *op.cit.*, pp.169-88; Mojumdar, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations*, *op.cit.*, pp.46-50; Jain, *Emergence*, *op.cit.*, pp.21-6; Stiller, *Kot Massacre*, *op.cit.*, pp.1-30.
52. Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, p.159, citing FS 30 March 1844 No.32; *HP*, Vol.5, f.180. The discrepancy is probably due to the existence of various irregular forces not attached to a named company.
53. Diary for 18-26 January 1841. The Naya Gorakh was back in Kathmandu in August 1839 when it was the first regiment on which the imposition of pay reductions was attempted.
54. *HP*, Vol.6, f.171.
55. 'Events in Nepal, 1830-39', in Hasrat, *History of Nepal*, *op.cit.*, p.297, and Stiller, *The Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, p.268.
56. Resident's Diary, 5-18 July and 15 December 1840.
57. *Ibid.*, 18 January 1841. Under Jang Bahadur in the 1860s the annual changeover was around 5.5 per cent of the total strength (Hasrat, *op.cit.*, p.338).
58. Stiller, *Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, p.268; *HP*, Vol.9, f.117.

59. The scale proposed in 1836/7, with other details of the new structure, is given in *HP*, Vol.14, ff.174-5. The old rate was 80 rupees for the ordinary *kampu* regiments, and 100 for the Sri Nath and Letur (*HP*, Vol.14, ff.152-6).
60. Hodgson stressed that *jagirs* were strongly preferred to cash payment (Resident's Diary, 4-17 April 1840).
61. Resident's Diary, 1-14 August and 19 September-2 October 1840.
62. *Ibid.*, 20-31 January 1840.
63. *Ibid.*, 4-17 April 1840.
64. Resident's Diary, 5-18 June 1840.
65. Jain, *op.cit.*, pp.22-3.
66. Hodgson provided a detailed account of the mutiny in his despatch of 3 July 1840 (FS 20 July 1840 No.59), supplemented by further details in his letter of 14 August (FS 31 August 1840 No.82), and in various entries in the Resident's Diary. The despatches are published, in edited form, in Stiller, *Kot Massacre, op.cit.*, pp.14-23 and 25-6. His final version of the affair appeared in W.W. Hunter, *Hodgson, op.cit.*, pp.184-8.
67. FS 20 July 1840 No.59.
68. *Lal Mohar* of 6 Asad Badi 1897, *Ancient Nepal*. 25 (October 1973), p.7. The Nepali date corresponds to the period from sunrise on 21 June to sunrise on 22 June 1840, and the document must therefore have been issued during the night of the mutiny, though Hodgson implies that written confirmation of the king's assurances was only obtained after daybreak.
69. Resident's Diary, 5-18 July 1840.
70. *Ibid.*, 23 August 1840 and 18-26 January 1841.
71. A Residency account of the Nepal army in 1843 (FS 30 March 1844, cited in Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur, op.cit.*, p.189) gives the average annual pay as 72 rupees, i.e. half-way between the 90 rupees paid under Bhimsen and the 60 rupees which the government had tried to implement in June 1840.
72. FS 20 July 1840 No.59, *KM*, pp.14-23.
73. Hodgson to Government, 22 June 1842, FS 7 September 1842 No.88, *KM*, pp.146-52. As evidence for this claim he cites his despatch of 30 November 1840, but this cannot be traced in the records.
74. Hunter, *loc.cit.*

75. Rajendra to Hodgson, October 1840, and Hodgson to Government, 9 October 1840, FS 26 October 1840 Nos.128 and 132 (*KM*, pp.34-5).
76. Hodgson to Government, 14 August 1840, FS 31 August 1840 No.82, *KM*, p.25.
77. Hodgson to Government, 25 May 1840, FS 8 June 1840 No.125.
78. FS 20 July 1840 No.59.
79. *Ibid.*
80. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.23; Hodgson to Government, 14 August 1840, FS 31 August 1840 No.82.
81. Resident's Diary, 20 February-4 March 1840.
82. *Ibid.*, 20 May-3 June 1840.
83. FS 20 July 1840 No.59.
84. See below, pp.66.
85. Resident's Diary, 15 December 1840.
86. The Aryal *rajpurohit* family may also have been involved, although they were less prominent politically. Cf. Resident's Diary for 18 April-1 May, where Ranjang is said to have told Rajendra that the Resident would quit Nepal in despair if only the pro-British sons of Pran Shah (*vis.*, Fateh Jang and Guru Prasad), the Gora Pandes and the 'Aryal gurus' could be placed under arrest. However, Taranath Aryal, who was probably a member of this family, is classed as a 'neutral' in notes which Hodgson compiled in the autumn ('Lists of Good, Bad and Indifferent Chiefs (1840)', in Eng.Hist.MSS c.262, p.22).
87. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.30.
88. Resident's Diary, 4-17 January 1840.
89. *Ibid.*, 18 April-1 May 1840.
90. *Ibid.*, 5-18 July 1840.
91. *Ibid.*, 20 July 1840.
92. *Ibid.* Hodgson believed that Ranjang had hitherto pretended to be ill as a device to avoid responsibility. None the less, Hodgson's own description of his condition at the end of March perhaps suggests that it was not entirely a pretence: '[Ranjang] is dark and confused again and so little able to express himself that people say "Bhim Sen has got him by the throat"; i.e., Bhim Sen's ghost' (Diary, 22 March-3 April 1840). Ranjang had subsequently accused one of the Gora Pandes of bewitching him (Diary, 4-17 April).

93. Resident's Diary, 23 July-10 August.
94. Hodgson to Government, 31 July 1840, FS 17 August 1840 No.70, and Champaran Magistrate to Government, 12 August 1840, FS 24 August 1840, which gives the actual date of withdrawal as 11 August.
95. Government to Hodgson, 27 August 1840, Eng.Hist.MSS c.262, p.32ff.
96. Colvin to Hodgson, 28 August 1840, Eng.Hist.MSS c.262, p.39ff., and Hodgson to Colvin, 16 September 1840, *ibid.*, p.23ff.
97. Hodgson to Government, 21 September 1840, FS 5 October 1840 No.152.
98. September 1840 Notes, Eng.Hist.MSS c.262, p.21.
99. Hodgson to Colvin, 16 September 1840, *ibid.*, p.23ff.
100. Cf. Auckland's comments in a letter to Sir John Hobhouse of 20 November 1840: 'It seems most wise to allow Mr. Hodgson to play his game amidst the discussions of party and that we should endeavour to establish a friendly government rather than to crush the nation. We shall probably not succeed, but the contending parties may, for a time, occupy each other'. (Private Book Vol.13 (British Museum Add.MS 37702), p.99, quoted in Mojumdar, 'Indo-Nepalese Relations', *op.cit.*, p.191.)
101. Lord Auckland to King Rajendra, 26 October and 2 November 1840, FS 26 October 1840 No.134, and 2 November No.122 (Stiller, pp.45-7).
102. Resident's Diary, 1 October 1840.
103. FS 25 January 1840 No.121, *KM*, pp.61-77.
104. Resident's Diary, 1 November 1840.
105. Hodgson to Government, 24 November 1840, FS 21 December 1840 No.108. Ranjang had been reported some months earlier as threatening to offer just such an arrangement to the British if the queen and her allies pressed her too hard ('Secret Intelligence', 9 June 1839, FS 26 December 1839 No.131).
106. Cf. Colvin to Hodgson, 4 October 1840, Eng.Hist MSS c.262, p.42ff., and Government to Hodgson, 21 December 1840, FS 21 December 1840 No.109 (*KM*, pp.58-60).
107. FS 8 February 1841 No.123.
108. Hodgson to Government, 15 December 1840, FS 11 January 1841 No.223 (*KM*, pp.51-8).
109. Hodgson to Government, 4 January 1841, FS 25 January 1841 No.121 (*KM*, p.65).

110. Eng.Hist.MSS c.262, p.22. The list was probably compiled in late October or November, since Prasad Singh Basnet is shown in the anti-British grouping.
111. Resident's Diary, 4-17 April and 18 April-1 May 1840. The appointment was either not confirmed or subsequently revoked, since a year later a son of Rangnath held the position (*ibid.*, 27 March 1841).
112. Hodgson to Government, 4 January 1841, FS 25 January 1841 No.121.
113. *Ibid.*, App.1, and Hodgson to Government, 14 August 1840, FS 31 August 1841.
114. Governor-General to President-in-Council, 18 July 1839, FS 18 December 1839 No.68.
115. The confiscation was announced in the Governor-General's *kharita* to Rajendra of 26 October 1840, FS 26 October 1840 No.134 (*KM*, pp.45-6).
116. Kulchand Shah is described in a Nepali document of 1843 as 'one-eyed' (*kana*) rather than totally blind (*HP*, Vol.52, f.169).
117. Resident's Diary, 4-17 April 1840.
118. Kasinath's petition to Hodgson, 17 June 1842, FS 7 September 1842 No.86 (*KM*, pp.133-7).
119. Panjab Agent to Government, 18 May 1840, FS 1 June 1840 No.55. Ranjit Singh, in deference to British wishes, had not allowed Mathbar to appear publicly at his Darbar, but had continually requested the Panjab Agent to give permission for him to enter his army (Panjab Agent to Government, 17 March 1840, FS 27 April 1840 No.119). In spring 1840 it was believed in Kathmandu that Nao Nihal Singh wanted to appoint Mathbar head of an expanded Gurkha force, in order to be able to downgrade or replace his French officers, who might be unreliable in a clash with the British (Hodgson to Panjab Agent, 27 April 1840, FS 11 May 1840 No.90).
120. Hodgson to Panjab Agent, 11 March 1840, FS 27 April 1840 No.111.
121. Hodgson to Government ('Secret Intelligence'), 7 July 1840, FS 20 July 1840 No.61. Karbir's original connection with his deceased brother was mentioned by Mathbar in conversation with Captain Clark at Ludhiana (Clark to Hodgson, 19 September 1840, FS 26 October 1840 No.129). Karbir had remained a Thapa adherent and removed his family and property to Banaras on Bhimsen's fall.
122. Hodgson to Government, 10 August 1840, FS 31 August 1840 No.71. The Resident had already been informed of the plan by his intelligence network (Hodgson to Government, 7 July 1840, FS 20 July 1840 No.61).

123. Panjab Agent to Government, 10 September 1841, FS 26 October 1840 No.141. Earlier in the year the Sikhs had urged Mathbar to return to Ludhiana to obtain a passport so that they could then employ him without creating a problem with the British, but his expulsion now seems to have been part of a general dismissal of Nepali agents from Lahore carried out at the request of the British. (Panjab Agent to Government, 13 May 1840, FS 1 June 1840; and FS 23 November 1840 No.64, cited by K. Mojumdar, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations, op.cit.*, p.49).
124. Hodgson to Government, 31 October 1840, FS 16 November 1840 No.73.
125. Panjab Agent to Maddock, 23 November 1840, FS 21 December 1840 No.96.

CHAPTER FOUR

FROM THE 'BRITISH MINISTRY' TO
THE DEATH OF MATHBAR SINGH THAPAIntroduction

The close involvement of the Residency in Nepali politics was to last until 1842, when the new Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, ordered a strict policy of non-intervention. This did not cause any worsening of Anglo-Nepali relations, which were never to return to the nadir they had reached in 1840. Nor did the change mean that the British ceased to be a factor in the calculations of Nepali politicians: the possibility of intervention was still feared by some and actively sought by others. The withdrawal of support increased the tension between the Paudyal *guru* and *cauntara* sections of the ministry, proving eventually more fatal to the political fortunes of the former, even though they reacted with greater equanimity to the change than did their colleagues. In the short run the new British policy forced the *bharadari* as a whole back on its own resources, and they responded to the erratic and violent behaviour of the Crown Prince with the 'National Movement' of December 1842. This was a powerful demonstration of what they could achieve if only they remained united. However division among their ranks allowed Rajendra to escape from the restraints the Movement had sought to place on him and his son, and paved for the recall and appointment as minister of Bhimsen's nephew, Mathbar Singh Thapa. The dominance of a Khas minister, enjoying popularity with the army, was the pattern Nepal had been familiar with throughout the nineteenth century, and the British intervention had arguably delayed its re-emergence by the

support given to other elements in the state. However, Mathbar failed ultimately either to conciliate the remainder of the *bharadari* or to retain the support of the army, and, thus exposed, was assassinated in May 1845 on the joint orders of the king and queen.

The fatal shot was fired by his own nephew and erstwhile political collaborator, Jang Bahadur, who had begun to play a significant role after the death of his father in autumn 1842. Whether resulting from duress or from simple opportunism, his betrayal of his uncle was only the most dramatic of a series of tactical switches which the Kunwars, and even more their Basnet allies, had performed since Bhimsen's death. Such moves must have been typical of the adjustments which other, less well-documented families had to make, and they provided Jang with a schooling in the skills he would soon employ to make himself master of Nepal.

This chapter will follow events down to Mathbar's death, concentrating inevitably on the manoeuvring within the *bharadari*, but at the same time paying attention to the role of the army, which, as in the events of 1840, continued to hover on the brink of an autonomy never quite achieved.

Politics under the British Ministry

Even before Hodgson had to abandon his active support for Fateh Jang and his colleagues, they were never in sole and undisputed control of events in Kathmandu. None the less their position was strong enough to make them the most important of several factions jockeying for royal favour. They are often referred to in British sources as 'the Chauntara administration', but were, of course, an alliance between

one *cauntara* family, that of Fateh Jang Shah and his brother Guru Prasad, and the Paudyal *guru* family; the other members of the ministry were of considerably less importance, Dalbhanjan Pande being valued for his family influence but himself far from a dynamic figure. Dissension between the two principal families was later to become a problem, and rivalry between brothers was also a complicating factor. Krishna Ram Paudyal, for instance, was highly indignant when it was decided that Rangnath Paudyal's son, already *gayatri guru* to Surendra, should become *guru* to Surendra's younger brother also.¹ From January 1841 to summer 1842, however, they were largely able to maintain internal cohesion and this, together with British support, gained them considerable early success. Their most significant achievement was the great improvement in relations with India, but they also managed to reverse such steps as Ranjang Pande had taken towards weakening the economic privileges of the *bharadari* as a whole: in December 1840 Fateh Jang was able to restore a number of birta grants which had been rescinded by his predecessor.²

As was only to be expected, the ministry faced relentless hostility from the ousted Kala Pandes and their patron, Samrajya Laksmi. The latter directed a continuing campaign against them, with only brief intervals of reduced pressure, until her death in October 1841. The opposition's strength lay in the first place in Samrajya's personal hold over King Rajendra, demonstrated in February when her threat to go to Banaras herself if Krishna Ram Mishra was expelled led the king to follow her south to Hetauda. She was persuaded to return to the capital, and Mishra did finally leave Nepal, but the *guru* was recalled in May to act as her adviser again.³ Every scrap of information on

her relationship with the king was eagerly seized for its political significance, and in April she was 'confidently rumoured' to have allowed him to sleep with her again for the first time in three years.⁴ Sexual dependence may well have been a key factor in Samrajya's (and later Laksmi Devi's) influence over Rajendra, since in contrast to many other occupants of the throne, he never showed any interest in women other than his wives.⁵

Samrajya's position appeared to be further buttressed by continuing support for her in the army. The *pajani* of the *kampu* which was intended by Fateh Jang to clean out 'unreliable' elements, was not as complete as he would have liked, for in the key Sri Nath and Letar regiments only the officers had been changed.⁶ Furthermore, a special bond was established between the queen and the Hanuman Dal and Kali Baks regiments when she was at Hetauda in March.⁷ The ministers were able, however, to prevent any disturbance in the ranks, using tools such as the transfer of privates between regiments and the granting of extraordinary amounts of annual leave in the summer.⁸

In addition to Samrajya's personal persuasion and the latent threat of army unrest, Rajendra's failure to back his new ministers unambiguously and his continuing desire to maintain some bridges to the dismissed Pandes were also conditioned by foreign developments. British discomfiture in China and Afghanistan, and, until news of Zoraur Singh's defeat, the prospect that a Sikh victory in Ladakh might make the borders of Panjab and Nepal contiguous, all combined to renew the king's hankering for foreign support as a counterpoise to the British.⁹ At the same time, consideration of the domestic balance of power made the Pandes an attractive foil to the ministers.

Both groups were aware of the royal game and in mid-July both were reported consequently reluctant to take over at the autumn *pajani*. Hodgson's summary of the king's position is charged with moral indignation, but can readily be read in reverse as a tribute to Rajendra's political skills:

Both parties distrusted and despised the Maharajah, yet he kept the balance between them, and probably would continue to do so. He was averse to extremes, a deep time server, and cunning and timid in the highest degree. He had one eye on Calcutta and the other on Pekin, and was anxious to discover whether it would be more profitable to side with the English or Chinese.¹⁰

On more than one occasion during 1841 political tension rose to the point that Hodgson anticipated possible violence against the ministers. The Resident therefore appealed to Calcutta for an explicit declaration that Fateh and his colleagues were under the Governor-General's protection.¹¹ M.S. Jain and Ludwig Stiller have made much of the fact that Lord Auckland was unwilling to comply, and have stressed the gap between Hodgson's concept of his role in Kathmandu and the real intentions of his superiors.¹² However, whatever might conceivably have happened had the East India Company's bluff been called, the limited support which the Governor-General *did* provide to Hodgson was in the event sufficient to achieve the political result required. The Resident's recommendation in March that Colonel Oliver's force should remain on the frontier for several more months was supported by Calcutta, and the *khariṭa* which Lord Auckland addressed to Rajendra on 29 March took a strong line, emphasising that there could be no question of withdrawing the troops until a 'steady and consistent course of friendship' was shown, and referring to the

new ministers as 'men of distinguished loyalty and wisdom who appreciate the blessings of peace, and desire the permanence of harmony and friendship between this Government and the State of Nepal'.¹³

In a Kathmandu well accustomed to the politics of hint and nuance, this will undoubtedly have convinced Rajendra for a time at least that he would have to face a major crisis in his relations with the British if he moved from intermittent harassing of Fateh and his colleagues to direct action against them.

Although Rajendra during this period has been rightly seen as concerned primarily to play off ministers and Kala Pandes against one another, published analyses have generally neglected the importance of other groups in the *bharadari*. Amongst these, consideration can conveniently be given first to those 'good sardars' of Hodgson's 1840 lists who, though willing to co-operate with British policies, were not themselves part of the inner corps of the Residency's supporters. This group appears generally to have continued its backing for the principal ministers. Its two most prominent members were Kaji Ranjor Thapa, a former close collaborator of Bhimsen Thapa and himself the head of the other main Thapa family, and, secondly, the Magar Kaji Abhiman Singh Rana. The latter, in addition to his position as head of the treasury (*Kausi*), appears also to have had some supervisory role over the army as a whole, and was very popular with the rank and file.¹⁴ The group had lost a third influential figure when Bir Bhadra Kunwar, appointed head of the *Sadar Daphtar Khana* (Lands Assignment Office) at the turn of the year, had died in January 1841; his office had been taken over jointly by his sons.¹⁵

Bir Bhadra Kunwar's cousin, Bal Narsingh, was not generally his political ally, and, as has already been seen, he had earlier adopted a decidedly *attentiste* attitude towards Hodgson and his Nepali allies. None the less, both Bal Narsingh and Prasad Singh Basnet joined the 'good sardars' in falling in behind the ministers in the course of 1841: a Kala Pande-inspired placard, set up in July, included both men, along with Abhiman Rana, Ranjor Thapa and the ministers themselves, in a list of seventeen *bharadars* who were accused of agreeing to surrender the Tarai to the 'Feringhis' and to pay them large sums of money in return for being confirmed in power for five years.¹⁶ Bal Narsingh does not appear to have held any public office at this time, but he was among the counter-signatories of a decree of 26 September restoring the property of one of Bhimsen's relations.¹⁷ Prasad Singh Basnet, who had been turned out of office at the end of 1840 because of his support for the Kala Pandes, was in April 1841 assigned command of the Sri Mehra regiment and of Dhankuta district in the eastern hills.¹⁸ It is unclear whether his change of allegiance predated that appointment, but at the time of the July placard Hodgson could unequivocally categorise him as a 'friend of [the] present ministry'.¹⁹

In supporting the British-backed administration, Bal Narsingh Kunwar seems to have abandoned, or at least de-emphasised, the connection with his brother-in-law, Mathbar Singh Thapa, who was now living in exile as a British pensioner but still hoping to recover his position on the Nepali political stage. At the beginning of 1841 the prospects for a Thapa revival looked slender: although Fateh Jang had brought back into office many of Bhimsen's old adherents, this had been done

on grounds of ability alone and Bhimsen's own family in Nepal remained poverty-stricken outcastes.²⁰ Mathbar's main potential ally was Junior Queen Laksmi Devi, who had entrusted papers to his follower Karbir Khatri when he left Kathmandu on his Banaras mission the previous autumn.²¹ However, Laksmi Devi was herself in a weak position in 1841, as on her return from Hetauda in March, the Senior Queen, Samrajya, succeeded in persuading the king to expel her from the royal palace. The threat against her remained very real, and in April Ramrajya was talking of the need to get rid both of her and of her two sons, Ranendra and Birendra.²²

The position of the Thapas, as well as the political atmosphere generally, eased greatly in July when the Senior Queen's illness led her, for a while at least, to adopt a more conciliatory line. Hodgson, on Fateh Jang's suggestion, visited Samrajya and found her 'determined to ease her conscience for her past cruelties and to reconcile all domestic disputes'.²³ The possibility of a coalition between the present ministers and the Kala Pandes (something Rajendra had attempted unsuccessfully to achieve during much of 1840) was again mooted, while the queen promised that the Thapas would be restored to their caste.²⁴ Although the coalition talk came to nothing, the rehabilitation of the Thapas went ahead over the next three months. A first step was the restoration of the sacred thread to the *vaidyas* Ek Dev and Eksurya, who had been outcasted for allegedly administering poison on Bhimsen's behalf.²⁵ Even the Kala Pandes themselves now began to speak in favour of the Thapas, though Hodgson dismissed this as a stratagem to lure Mathbar Singh back to Kathmandu.²⁶ The formal decision to restore the Thapas to their

caste was made in mid-August, and at the end of the month permission was granted to hold the funeral rites which Bhimsen himself, as an outcaste, had been denied at the time of his death.²⁷

It soon became clear, however, that the change in Thapa fortunes was motivated by a shrewd political calculation on the part of Rajendra and Samrajya, as well as by the latter's desire to atone for past harshness. Although a British pensioner, Mathbar Singh was still prepared to play the anti-British card, reportedly writing to the Darbar to contrast its present humiliating dependence on the British with the sturdy independence maintained under Bhimsen.²⁸ That was an argument that Samrajya herself seemed willing now to accept, declaring that 'the Thappas alone knew how to manage the Feringis'.²⁹ The following month Hodgson reported that Rajendra was dallying with the idea of appointing a Thapa as minister, even though the probability remained that he would in the end reappoint Fateh and his colleagues.³⁰

The reappointment was eventually made on 9 November, but not before the delay had caused some anxiety both to the ministers and to the Resident.³¹ Two developments appear to have been critical in ending Rajendra's procrastination: the death on 6 October of Senior Queen Ramrajya Laksmi and the receipt of a letter from the Nepali *vakil* in Calcutta reporting the Secretary Maddock had asked to be informed within eighteen days whether the *pajani* had or had not taken place.³² In response to the latter, a letter was sent to Calcutta on 2 October promising that Fateh would be reconfirmed once the astrologers could fix an auspicious day for the *pajani*.

Rajendra now pressed again for the withdrawal of Oliver's force from the frontier. The ministers had in August been anxious that the troops be left in position, but they were now convinced that they themselves would now gain the political credit if a withdrawal was conceded, and so at the end of November Hodgson forwarded to Calcutta a *kharita* from the king formally requesting this, together with his own recommendation for compliance.³³ Before the Governor-General's reply of 27 December could be received in Kathmandu, news reached Nepal of the catastrophe which had overwhelmed the retreating Kabul garrison. A council meeting on 1 January decided to respond by offering military help to the British and this was formally communicated to the Residency on the 6th.³⁴ The ministers themselves evidently believed that this gesture on Rajendra's behalf was genuine since Guru Prasad Shah and Krishna Ram Paudyal, who delivered the message, appeared anxious that the king might be getting so close to the Resident that their own position might be jeopardised. None the less, Hodgson delayed the delivery of the Governor-General's *kharita* and the issuing of the final order for withdrawal until he could be more sure of the king's sincerity, and it was only on 16 February that Rajendra was told the British military threat against him had been finally withdrawn.³⁵

The Emergence of Surendra

Even before his mother's death in October 1841, Crown Prince Surendra had begun to exhibit the violent behaviour which was subsequently to increase in seriousness until it became the central issue in Nepali domestic politics. The earliest contemporarily

attested incident took place in May 1841, when he struck his father, and this was followed the next month by his drawing a sword on him. In reporting both events, Hodgson suggested that the prince, then only eleven years old, had been put up to such behaviour by one of his parents out of political calculation.³⁶ When during 1842 Surendra progressed to outright brutality against both *bharadars* and members of the general public, the Resident was still inclined to interpret his activity in a similar way, believing that he was being used as a tool by his father to unnerve both the ministers and the Resident.³⁷ It was certainly true that Rajendra did use the boy for that purpose, for British delay in avenging the Afghan humiliation, and alleged anti-British messages from both the Sikhs themselves and from Mathbar Singh offering himself again as the architect of a Gurkha-Sikh alliance, all combined with the continuing British embroilment in China to render the king restless again.³⁸ Hodgson did, however, allow that Surendra was going further than his father intended, and the description of his actions in the Resident's Diary, corroborated both by the *vamsavali* account and by Pudma Rana, leaves no doubt that a streak of sheer brutality in the boy's own nature was also responsible.³⁹ In April 1842, for instance, the boy wounded several *bharadars* and their sons with a knife, whilst in April one of his Ranis (a girl of nine years) died after he had kept her standing all day in a water tank at the palace.⁴⁰ Surendra, at any rate, amply deserved Sylvain Lévi's verdict on the successors of Prithvi Narayan generally: '[Ils] appartiennent plus à la pathologie qu'à l'histoire'.⁴¹

In his biography of Hodgson, William Hunter portrayed Surendra as adopted and pushed forward by the Kala Pandes in order to fill the gap left by the death of his mother, their erstwhile patroness.⁴² In this Hunter was a little more categorical than Hodgson had been at the time, for the latter had generally put forward the Pande connection only as a strong possibility.⁴³ None the less the theory is plausible enough, for they made natural political bedfellows, and it is not surprising that Kulraj Pande was the man who in August 1842 entertained Surendra by staging mock fights between 'Gorkhas' and 'British', in which the latter were satisfyingly defeated.⁴⁴ In addition to this probable royal alliance, the Pandes also benefited during 1842 from the news of British difficulties abroad. In July Jagat Bam Pande, Ranjang's cousin, was commissioned to head the quinquennial tribute to Peking, and the letters he carried appealed for Chinese help against the East India Company.⁴⁵ The Pandes continued to enjoy a high degree of consideration at court until a dramatic reversal of fortune in the autumn.

For the bulk of the *bharadari*, however, 1842 was marked throughout by an increasing level of insecurity. Surendra's violence, in so far as it was not purely random, was aimed both at the 'British ministers' and at the much larger group who had been prepared throughout 1841 to go along with them. It is as a particular target of the Crown Prince that Jang Bahadur first figures prominently in the Residency Records, being mentioned in the Diary entry for 17 April 1842:

Jang Bahadur, son of Kaja Balhar [*sic*] Singh, and a Chief of the highest character and promise, was made to leap down a well....He was not killed as was first reported but he was badly hurt.⁴⁶

According to the version of the event given by Pudma Rana, the well was partly filled by buffalo bones on which Bal Narsingh managed to have thirty or forty bales of hay placed before the leap was made. Jang nevertheless sustained an injury to his ankle which was to give him recurring trouble for the rest of his life.⁴⁷ The well episode was only one among many occasions on which Jang was compelled to risk his life in this way, and although some of the stories Pudma tells are doubtless exaggerated, their general reliability is corroborated by references in the Residency records to similar treatment meted out to other persons. On 27 April twenty ordinary members of the public also sustained injuries, four of them actually dying as a result, whilst forcing *bharadars* into water became such a common habit with the prince that 'Have you drunk of the well today?' was a regular conversational gambit when courtiers met.⁴⁸

Psychological pressure was maintained against the Residency, too. Shortly after the removal of the frontier force, the king had been greatly angered to learn of reports in the Indian press that Samrajya's death had been due to poisoning. At an interview with Hodgson he actually demanded that he tell the Governor-General there would be war unless the author of the libel were discovered and handed over to Nepal to be 'flay[ed]...alive and rub[bed] with salt and lemon till he die'.⁴⁹ This incident, however, swiftly changed from an Anglo-Nepali confrontation to one between father and son, for Surendra began abusing and then repeatedly striking Rajendra in Hodgson's presence. The affair ended with an eventual apology from the king to the Resident and a soothing *kharita* from the Governor-General, deploring the libel but concluding 'It is unworthy of a noble mind to be affected by the slanders of the base'.⁵⁰

In the meantime there had occurred another clash between Hodgson and Rajendra, which was to have much more profound consequences for the future of Indo-Nepalese relations and also for Hodgson personally. On 23 April, the king, accompanied by many *bharadars* and backed by a regiment of troops with loaded weapons, arrived before the Residency. He demanded that Hodgson surrender to him an Indian merchant, Kasinath Mull, who had been living for some time within the Residency Lines for medical treatment and had failed to appear before the *Kumari Cawk* as defendant in an action for debt. The suit had first been brought before the Kathmandu court in 1837, and had seemingly been disposed of in autumn 1840, when, after Residency intervention on the defendant's behalf, an earlier finding against Kasinath had been quashed. The plaintiff, after a long absence from Nepal, had now renewed the action and the Darbar maintained that Kasinath had in 1840 given an undertaking to submit the case for fresh judgment in such an eventuality. Hodgson, however, supported the merchant's contention that he had given no such undertaking, and in any case an agreement between Resident and Darbar in November 1839 had provided that suits such as this, in which both plaintiff and defendant were British subjects and the transactions at issue had taken place on British territory, should not be admitted to Nepali courts.⁵¹ Against this background, he refused to give up Kasinath, at one point throwing his arms around him and telling Rajendra, 'You take both of us or neither'.⁵² Surendra, who had accompanied his father to the Residency, angrily urged him to seize the merchant by force. Fortunately, calmer counsels eventually prevailed. After Rajendra had come away from the Residency, returned in force once more, and then come away again,

he eventually sent back Fateh Jang and Krishna Ram Paudyal to negotiate; the two had been with king throughout the day but had earlier been unable to do anything other than whisper words of encouragement to Hodgson. A compromise was now agreed under which Hodgson would refer the whole matter to the Governor-General, whilst in the meantime Kasinath voluntarily agreed to attend the court and the two ministers accepted responsibility for his personal safety. In the event he did suffer some ill treatment, but Fateh Jang's brother and fellow-minister, Guru Prasad, was able to save him from serious harm.⁵³

The episode was certainly a humiliating one, both for Hodgson and the ministers, and not surprisingly he asked Calcutta for the return of a British force to the frontier.⁵⁴ At the same time, however, Surendra's behaviour was reinforcing the pro-British sympathies of many *bharadars*, even though some may have been Kasinath's debtors and therefore inclined to support the Darbar's persecution of him. Consequently, Hodgson could claim in April that 'Already many scrupled not to say, and to hope, that Nipal would soon cease to be independent and would fall without a blow'.⁵⁵ Such sentiments were strengthened by fear of a resurgence of Kala Pande influence, especially as Sheobux, the plaintiff in the Kasinath case, was a protégé of Krishna Ram Mishra. In May, Hodgson's position was further buttressed by news of Pollock's victories in Afghanistan, and Rajendra commenced conciliatory approaches through Fateh Jang.⁵⁶ The ministers now no longer wanted an immediate British troop movement, but were content to rely on their own internal supporters as long as they were backed up by firm language from the government of India.⁵⁷

At this point, however, the situation was dramatically altered by the famous clash between Hodgson and Lord Ellenborough, who had taken over as Governor-General from Auckland in February, and was in Allahabad, away from his council, when the news from Kathmandu reached him. He considered that the Resident had gone to excessive lengths in the protection of Kasinath and instead of furnishing him with the stern rebuke to Rajendra he had requested he sent a letter even-handedly blaming both parties, and suggesting there must have been a misunderstanding.⁵⁸ Hodgson was instructed to hand over a translation of this letter to the premier. He believed that to do so would critically undermine the position of the 'British Ministry' by giving both them and the king the impression that the government of India was no longer prepared to give the ministers firm support. The latter might then be forced to protect themselves either by rash and precipitate action or by abandonment of their support for British interests.⁵⁹ Hodgson immediately, therefore, wrote back to the Foreign Secretary with an impassioned plea for reconsideration.

For God's sake, do not distrust your own old tried Resident whose every act heretofore you have applauded...for God's sake don't trust the Raja whose every act heretofore you have denounced...Remember that whatever has been achieved here with so much applause of the Governor-General in Council had been achieved by and through the Ministers and against the Raja, and that to show the least distrust of the former so that the latter may perceive it, may be the death warrant or signal of disgrace of one or more of those who good faith to us has been as conspicuous as the bad faith of the Raja.⁶⁰

The Secretary, who was Hodgson's own old superior in Kathmandu, was unable to dissuade Ellenborough and the original orders were confirmed.

In the meantime, however, Hodgson had become involved in intensive consultations with the ministers, striving both to calm their

impatience at the non-appearance of the firm response from the Governor-General which they wanted, and also to reconcile differences between the Paudyal *gurus* and the *cauntaras*.⁶¹ Hinting at, but never fully revealing, the contents of Ellenborough's 8 May letter, he agreed a plan of action with them under which his assistant, Captain Thomas Smith, left to brief the Governor-General in Allahabad, and he himself on 11 June sent the king through Fateh a note of his own, giving a suitably edited version of Ellenborough's sentiments.⁶² A little negotiation then finally enabled Hodgson to extract from Rajendra on 22 June a satisfactory letter to the Governor-General, apologising fully for the events of 23 April, whilst Kasinath himself was finally discharged and allowed to return to Banaras.⁶³

By this time, however, Ellenborough had decided on the basis of Hodgson's May despatches that the relationship between Resident and Nepali ministers was fundamentally wrong. He considered that since the ministers were evidently in constant fear for their own personal safety and unable to prevent outrages such as that of 23 April, their continuance in office could not guarantee British India any greater security than her own military strength already provided, whilst it detracted from her prestige if she was required to tailor the language of her diplomacy and the deployment of her armed forces to suit the ministers' political convenience.⁶⁴ On 21 June, after learning of Hodgson's deliberate disregard of his orders, Ellenborough despatched an angry letter announcing he would be relieved of his post at the earliest practical moment. Within twenty-four hours he relented, requesting Hodgson to keep the previous day's letter 'a profound secret'.⁶⁵ The second letter still implied, however, that

Hodgson would eventually be relieved, and after lengthy correspondence over the ensuing weeks, Ellenborough finally decided to allow him to remain in Kathmandu to carry out a policy of disengagement from his alliance with the ministers, on the understanding that he would quit his post at the end of 1843.⁶⁶

The issues between Resident and Governor-General generated great controversy at the time, with the senior members of the Indian Civil Service mostly firmly convinced that Hodgson had been in the right and had been shabbily treated.⁶⁷ Ellenborough's judgment that interference in Nepali internal politics was counter-productive was, however, echoed in the views of Sir Henry Lawrence, Hodgson's successor as Resident, and more recently has been championed strongly by M.S. Jain and, rather more temperately, by Ludwig Stiller.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Hodgson has not wanted able defenders, most notably his biographer Sir William Hunter, whose work has influenced so many others. As Stiller points out, it is difficult for Hodgson's apologists to fault in principle the arguments Ellenborough advances for a policy of non-interference, and in particular his point that 'depending for the continuance of friendly relations with the State of Nepal on a Cabinet formed on party principles places the Minister, supposed to be attached to British interests, in constant opposition to a Court party which becomes of consequence opposed to such interests'.⁶⁹ Despite Hodgson's success in gaining widespread support among the *bharadari* for his 'British Ministry', it would probably have been better for Anglo-Nepali relations if the East India Company had in 1840 confined itself to demanding a change of policy, and not concerned itself with the identity of the king's

counsellors. The error was not purely Hodgson's, however, and Jain pushes too far his thesis that Hodgson got into a false position by exceeding Auckland's instructions.⁷⁰ The Resident did indeed wish to extend his commitment to the minister personally much further than the then Governor-General had wanted, but once Auckland had agreed to insist on the dismissal of the Pandes, the state of politics in the Darbar made it unlikely that 'good' men would stand forward without explicit British backing: after the decision to challenge men as well as measures had been made, Hodgson's subsequent policy followed logically from it. A second point that must be conceded is that after the commitment had been made, political stability in Nepal might have been better served by sticking to it. After 1846, Hodgson and his apologists cited the Kot Massacre as proof that Ellenborough's 1842 decision had been a grave mistake.⁷¹ Over the longer term, though, Jang Bahadur, the man brought to power by the massacre, saw his interest in collaboration with the British and thereby could be said to have vindicated Ellenborough and Lawrence: the Nepali political system was to find its own equilibrium and geopolitical reality, not the manipulations of any Resident, would ensure that the new ruler co-operated with his southern neighbour.

The effects of Ellenborough's change of policy showed themselves slowly over the ensuing months. Though Karbir Sen, despatched by Rajendra on a complimentary mission to Ellenborough's camp the day before the fracas at the Residency, might conceivably have heard rumours, there is no evidence that either the Resident's Nepali allies or his opponents were aware at the time of the serious dissension within the British ranks. Hodgson himself made no announcement of

a change of policy to the ministers, but prepared to disengage slowly, along the lines which he had himself suggested in June when he replied to a letter from Lord Ellenborough denouncing any political partisanship.⁷²

From June onwards relations between king and Resident appeared perfectly amicable, but rumours of Rajendra's possible long-term intentions abounded. He was allegedly planning to abdicate in Surendra's favour and himself become his son's minister, then to go to war with the British, trusting that in the event of defeat he could save his dynasty and kingdom by surrendering his own person.⁷³ To encourage this move the Kala Pandes had allegedly put the astrologers up to announcing that Surendra was an *avatar* destined to destroy the Feringis.⁷⁴ The 'secret intelligencer' who provided Hodgson with the most detailed account of this development covered himself by adding that the whole plan was dependent on China being prepared to back Nepal and on the Company's embroilment in Afghanistan continuing. Neither of these conditions was to be fulfilled so the prediction was never put to the test.

There could be no doubt, however, that Surendra was being allowed to believe that his accession to the throne was imminent. By August all Nepalis were required to address him as Maharajadhiraj, a title hitherto restricted to the king himself, and Hodgson was formally requested to do the same.⁷⁵ In encouraging his son in these hopes, Rajendra appears partly to have been acting out of calculation, using him to harass the *bharadars* without having to act directly against them himself. It is also probable that he was to some extent genuinely in thrall to the boy, both because of the astrologers'

pronouncements and because of pledges made to the late Senior Queen.⁷⁶

A belief in the sacredness of Surendra's person was in any case certainly a factor in keeping the court generally so subservient to a thirteen-year-old delinquent.

The ministers were particularly alarmed by the re-emergence of the Pandes and their role as Surendra's advisers. At an interview with Hodgson in September they asked him to make an official protest against this development. The language in which the discussion was reported to the government of India was obscure even by Hodgsonian standards: he refused to make any direct intervention of the kind requested, but promised Fateh Jang that, assuming Rajendra neither abdicated nor changed his ministers, he 'should not seek to withhold from him the indirect support of my Government's auspices'. The Resident did however very clearly state that the failure of the ministers to guarantee completely trouble-free relations meant that the British no longer felt bound by the 'engagement' of January 1840. When Fateh Jang then suggested that in that case he would have to resign the premiership, Hodgson said that he had no wish to stop him doing so. There was a marked difference in the way Hodgson's message was received by Fateh and Guru Prasad, on the one hand, and by Rangnath and Krishna Ram Paudyal on the other; whilst the former were clearly dismayed, the *gurus* accepted the new situation with equanimity and urged their colleagues to do the same.⁷⁷ The *gurus'* attitude was partly to be explained, as Hodgson suggested, by Rangnath's age and wish for retirement in any case, and by Krishna Ram's sense of being above the humdrum political fray. But both men's relative sophistication and long experience of diplomacy and

court intrigue perhaps made them more at home than their younger *cauntara* colleagues in a world of 'indirect auspices'. This factor had been one of the reasons for tension between the two families even while they enjoyed full British support, and from now on there was to be a growing divergence between their political strategies.

In October the tenth day of Desai was marked by an ignominious struggle by Rajendra and Surendra over who should receive the *tika* first. Hodgson had to make a diplomatic retreat to the Residency bungalow at Karkani when the son invited him to receive formal news of the abdication plan and the king simultaneously sent an indirect message advising him to avoid the summons by feigning illness. A few days later Rajendra was actually expelled from the palace by Surendra. He was then heard complaining about his lot and suggesting he might have to follow Rana Bahadur's example of withdrawing to Benaras and then using that city as a base from which to regain power.⁷⁸

With the struggle between father and son at this critical stage a dramatic development occurred: the Kala Pandes were accused of responsibility for the story that Queen Samrajya's death the previous autumn had been due to poison. Rajendra personally led the investigation which culminated in the conviction of a number of minor agents but also of one of the leading members of the family, Kulraj Pande. According to Hodgson's information, Amir Singh Das, Kulraj's personal scribe, initially denied his authorship of incriminating documents, but then boldly admitted it and rounded on the king:

He told the Maharaja that Nepal had vowed in 1819 to Baji Rao (the ex-Peswa) to stand forth as the upholder and avenger of Hindu Put; and that he, the Maharaja, was a traitor to his country and to

all Hindus, and had broken all his own pledges to the Hindu states below, as well as to his only faithful Ministers, the Pandeys, who if supported, would have made the Ganges the border of Nipal during the recent troubles of the Company.⁷⁹

This defiant avowal of Pande principles 'made much impression', but Amir Singh was immediately sentenced to have his right hand cut off. An identical sentence was passed on Kulraj a week later, though in his case it may not actually have been carried out.⁸⁰

Naturally enough, Hodgson saw great potential gain for the British in this blow to the 'war party', coming on top of the failure of their prediction of British defeat in China and Afghanistan.⁸¹ Their guilt may have been real enough, but in view of their close association with Surendra, it is perhaps more than fortuitous that the accusation against them was made just when Rajendra was being pushed further than he wanted by his son. The king had in effect weakened Surendra's political position without the necessity of confronting him directly.

None the less, Surendra was still able to insist on exercising the key royal function of conducting the *pajani*, which commenced immediately after the completion of the trial.⁸² He did so in conjunction with the *cauntara* minister Guru Prasad Shah. This collaboration is not necessarily proof of any special connection between the two men, since the *bharadars* generally had now taken to attending the son rather than the father, being for the moment unwilling to take a stand against the former whilst the latter made no attempt to assert his own rights.⁸³ However, the lack of enthusiasm evinced shortly afterwards by Guru Prasad and Fateh Jang

when a movement against Surendra began in earnest suggests that the brothers might already have been contemplating some kind of accommodation with him. They probably felt this more possible now that their arch rivals, the Kala Pandes, were no longer in a position to exercise so much influence over the prince.

No list of 1842 *pajani* appointments has survived, but the Residency Diary records that Jang Bahadur was made a *kaji* and one of his brothers a captain. In Jang's case there is confirmation from Baburam Acharya who provides the additional information that he was given command of the Purana Gorakh regiment.⁸⁴ This was a *kampu* unit, and it is probably this appointment which Pudma Rana is really referring to when he states that Jang was appointed to the king's bodyguard in November 1841: the date must be an error for 1842, since the appointment is placed after the well-jump episode which belongs to that year (see above, p.173).⁸⁵ Jang's selection took place at around the time of the deaths of both his father and father-in-law, Prasad Singh Basnet.⁸⁶ It is possible that the title of *kaji* was in part an honorary one, granted because of a promise to Bal Narsingh that the rank would be hereditary in his family.⁸⁷ None the less, the appointment is probably better seen as marking a small but definite shift in the political balance within the *bharadari*, involving an increase of power for the Kunwar-Basnet alliance. This is so both because of Jang's own growing prominence in Darbar affairs from that time onwards, and because it was probably at this time that his father-in-law's brother, Kulman Singh Basnet, obtained the key position of head of the *Sadar Daphtar Khana* (Central Lands Assignment Office).⁸⁸ Both Jang's and Kulman's appointments could well have been the result

of their cultivating Surendra and/or Guru Prasad. The Residency Diary states that most of the appointments made at the *pajani* were of Surendra's own men and for all the harsh treatment Jang had received at the prince's hands he had apparently been a regular member of his escort and might well have been regarded as one of his adherents.⁸⁹

As for a possible connection with the *cauntaras*, Resident Lawrence, who arrived in Kathmandu at the end of 1843, was told that Jang had been their enthusiastic supporter while they were in power.⁹⁰

The 'National Movement'

Within a few days of Jang's appointment a sea-change swept through the *bharadari*. After months of grumbling but none the less submitting to Surendra's brutalities and Rajendra's toleration of them, it was decided to make a stand. The last straw was apparently the prince's order that all pregnant women and virgins of prominent families be brought to him so that 'he might examine their development and choose himself a wife'.⁹¹ The *bharadars* resolved to petition the king for an end to Surendra's excesses, and a clear decision on whether father or son was to occupy the throne. The formal leadership of the movement was provided by Fateh Jang and Guru Prasad, but Hodgson stressed that the *cauntaras* were very much acting under pressure from 'the civil and military classes' as a whole.⁹² This lack of enthusiasm contrasts with the two men's attitude in May, when a similar project had been mooted in the aftermath of the Kasinath incident and the atrocities against Jang Bahadur and others on 27 April. The *cauntaras* had then advocated involving the army and producing a written

declaration from the chiefs, whilst the *gurus* thought this too risky and wanted merely a verbal petition to the king from the *bharadari*, a view which Hodgson supported and joined with the *gurus* in urging on the *cauntaras*.⁹³ The project had been abandoned then in favour of relying on Hodgson's protest to the king in the Governor-General's name, and when it was revived the positions of the two sections of the ministry were reversed, the *cauntaras* hanging back and the *gurus* sharing the general eagerness of the *bharadari* as a whole. Fateh himself was as anxious as anyone else to have a clear-cut decision on the abdication issue, and was refusing to accept renomination as premier for the following year until this issue was settled, but they had reservations because of the wish of many of their fellow *bharadars* to grant a major political role to Queen Laxmi Devi as part of the settlement.⁹⁴ They had themselves been apparently content in May that the queen should head the proposed movement, but had probably envisaged that her subsequent role would not be a dominant one and that the ministry, with continued British backing, would remain the key factor in the political equation. Now that the continuance of the Resident's active role was in doubt, they were more apprehensive over the queen's future status, allegedly fearing that she might interfere with the legitimate succession to the throne, and that their personal positions might be jeopardised: they probably believed now that they could establish a working relationship with Surendra if his worst excesses could only be curbed, whilst they were afraid that the queen might look to other *bharadars* for guidance rather than to themselves. The *gurus*, on the other hand, could be much happier at the prospect of Laksmi's accession

to power, as Rangnath, who was probably her personal *guru*, had been the one who had persuaded her to back the ministers in May.⁹⁵

Under these circumstances, Fateh Jang and Guru Prasad delayed going ahead with the petition, thereby causing widespread indignation, and made another effort to obtain support from Hodgson.⁹⁶ British support would have strengthened their own hand in dealing with the king and prince, without the necessity of mobilising domestic political forces which they might not be able to keep under control. However, Hodgson had of course to decline categorically to intervene in any way, even though he permitted himself to observe in the Residency Diary that 'were he authorised to interfere as arbitrator by and by, he might perhaps prevent violence and bring about speedy and permanent good'.⁹⁷

At the end of November, a few days after Fateh's last attempt to enlist Hodgson's help, Surendra foolishly increased feeling against him in the army by ordering the arrest and dismissal of a guard detachment at the palace for failing to salute him when they came on duty, and then by attempting to dismiss the entire *kampu* after some troopers had been unable to find a captain and slave girl he wanted arrested. This order was greeted by the men with loud complaints and then with laughter.⁹⁸ A meeting between *bharadars* and soldiers followed, and on 28 November a petition was finally presented to Rajendra demanding among other things that Laksmi Devi, who was then out of fear of Surendra living in Banepa just beyond the rim of the Valley, should be recalled and granted her full rights as queen. It was also asked that Ram Krishna Misra, the Pandes' *guru* ally, should be expelled from the country once more.⁹⁹

When this failed to move Rajendra, a series of public meetings were held on the Tundikhel - the parade ground on the east side of Kathmandu. The participants were principally *bharadars* and army officers, but the latter were present as representatives of the army as a whole.¹⁰⁰ Whilst the first of these meetings was in progress, the king himself unexpectedly arrived, and received a vivid demonstration of how far disaffection had spread:

His Highness, by argument, entreaty, and even threat tried to persuade the Chiefs or the officers to accept the existing state of things, pledging himself that no further cruelties or insults to anyone should result from it. He was answered separately by both bodies, who boldly told him that they could not and would not any longer obey two masters and that he had broken his word too often to be further trusted. Numerous instances were assigned in which the Raja had allowed them to be punished by his son for obedience to his own express commands. Whilst for all the murders, maimings, beatings and insults perpetrated by his son he was told that he had evaded giving or authorising atonement or prevention in any single instance.

The debate was long and animated and had hundreds of auditors in its course from among the passers-by whose access was unmolested; and I hear that the Raja's equivocations and obstinacy at length elicited from the crowd loud murmurs of disapprobation, amid which His Highness in vain ordered the several components of the assembly to break up and disperse. None would sever themselves nor an individual of any one body. In the end His Highness departed with but one follower for the palace, where he and his son have each four *Sardars* assigned for attendance on them and to prevent the personal freedom of either father or son.¹⁰¹

At a similar meeting the following day both Rajendra and Surendra attended, the latter appearing frightened by the gathering but gaining courage to address it when encouraged by his father. He proposed that he would be content with the title of *Yuwaraj* ('Crown Prince') rather than *Maharajadhiraj* (king) for the present, but that his father should

abdicate in his favour next April if the astrologers could find an auspicious day, or, failing that, on his sixteenth birthday (October 1845). The meeting was prepared to accept an arrangement on these lines, and decided to have a written statement of it drawn up. However, as night was approaching, this task was finally postponed to the following day. Hodgson's informants overheard many expressions of discontent from onlookers surrounding the assembly: the *cauntaras* were criticised for leaning too much towards Rajendra's and Surendra's interests and for failing to involve the queen in the proposed agreement. Guru Prasad was singled out for particularly bitter attack. Hodgson's language in reporting these sentiments to the Government of India indicates that he himself shared them.¹⁰²

Proceedings at the next day's meeting (3 December), which neither Rajendra nor Surendra attended, appear to have accommodated these criticisms. The drafting of the petition was delegated to a committee of *bharadars* whose composition, Hodgson confidently reported to Calcutta, would ensure that the final document took due account of everyone's rights, including the queen's.¹⁰³ The committee reported back to the full assembly two days later, and after the king and prince, who this time tried again to intervene, had been sent away politely but firmly, the draft petition was adopted by the meeting.¹⁰⁴ The petition was presented to the king on the 7th - the intervening day being inauspicious - and accepted by him amidst the applause of crowds around the palace and general rejoicing throughout the city.¹⁰⁵ Immediately the king's signature had been placed on the document, a deputation was sent to escort the queen and her sons back into Kathmandu

from her refuge at Banepa. She made a triumphal entry into the city the following day.¹⁰⁶

The exact terms of the settlement that had been agreed were not discovered by the Resident, but it was said the government was to be conducted in general accordance with the laws of Drabya Shah, the founder of the kingdom of Gorkha.¹⁰⁷ Specific restraints were placed on the crown prince, including a ban on his possession of edged weapons, and action was to be taken against Krishna Ram Mishra (presumably banishment).¹⁰⁸ However, whatever the situation on paper, the queen did not in fact acquire the political powers which were supposed to form a key part of the new order; the *cauntaras* had apparently helped the king to resist this, with Guru Prasad once again making the running.¹⁰⁹ Joint assemblies of the *bharadari* and army were again held, the latter taking the strongest line: at one stage the soldiers were reportedly threatening deposition and they 'called the father a knave, and the son a madman, to the Maharaja's face'.¹¹⁰ Rajendra was now reported to have accepted two new documents - one placing more specific restraints on Surendra and the other giving the queen complete control for a limited period over foreign policy.¹¹¹ A *lal mohar* defining the queen's position was eventually issued in January, but the *cauntaras* again ensured that its terms were much less definitive than had originally been envisaged.¹¹² The key portion of the document ran as follows:

I direct...that all duties connected with the palace internally be conducted by you and that the Country and Government be managed by me with your advice and concurrence according to the suggestion of the Ministers. Should anyone come to me to complain of, or interfere with, this arrangement, let it not be

attended to, and it shall be immediately enquired into by the Ministers and Chiefs, and as they decide, the transgressor will be punished with your concurrence and advice, either by dismissal or any other punishment his crime deserves. In short, whatever you advise or suggest for the government and welfare of the kingdom or do in the Administration of the Palace shall not be opposed by me nor by anyone else. This order for the future government of the Kingdom according to its ancient laws, my Gurus, Ministers, Chiefs and soldiers will strictly adhere to. Should anyone disobey it, according to his caste and by your order, he shall be punished.¹¹³

In forwarding the translated document to Calcutta, Hodgson expressed a scepticism about its practical effect that was fully justified, for at the time he wrote Rajendra had already effectively nullified it by himself reappointing Fateh as *mukhtiyar*.¹¹⁴ The *lal mohar* announcing this appointment *did* contain one reference to the queen - Fateh was to present his selected candidates for public office both to Rajendra and to Laksmi Devi - but the comprehensive nature of the powers delegated, and the fact that it was still the king who issued the decree made nonsense of the queen's supposed superintendence of affairs. In addition it put the culminating touch to the separation of the *cauntaras* from the movement which they had nominally led, and that movement itself was now effectively at an end. The queen had been established as a contender for power but not given any real power of arbitration so that the uncertainty hitherto complained of was soon to be worse confounded, with three rival rulers instead of two, while the union of the *bharadars* had been broken.

Although the eventual results were not what had been hoped, the events of December 1842 none the less deserve close analysis for the light they shed on the limits of the power of the monarchy under the

Nepali political system. An obvious parallel with struggles between 'the nation' and royal tyranny in Europe presented itself to the Western, or Western-influenced, observer. This line of interpretation is a strong factor in Hodgson's reports, as his use of expressions such as 'the great national movement' in itself demonstrates, even though later on this enthusiasm was somewhat overshadowed by his disgust at the *cauntaras*' breaking of a hitherto united front. His description of events up to the end of the year was mirrored in the enthusiastic response of Lord Ellenborough, who authorised him:

on any fitting occasion to make known the feelings by which his Lordship has been impressed by their conduct and to intimate that qualities so similar to those which under circumstances of a somewhat similar character have been displayed by the people of England in their best times must tend to improve the good understanding between the two nations.¹¹⁵

A similar line was taken half a century later by Jang Bahadur's son, Pudma Rana, who wrote that the petition presented to the king 'which aimed at securing protection to life and property in Nepal, may be called the Nepalese Petition of Rights, after its famous prototype of Charles I's reign'.¹¹⁶ Pudma also stressed, however, that in 'the East' a much greater degree of oppression was needed before open resistance materialised.

Such parallels prompt a natural and healthy scepticism, but they are not wholly inappropriate. The idea that there were limits which the king could not transgress was not as alien to the Hindu political tradition as implied by the European stereotype of Eastern absolutism, a stereotype which Pudma Rana, writing to establish his family in Indian princely society at the turn of the century,¹¹⁷ dutifully endorsed.

In Nepal's particular case the concept of the state, as opposed to the personal bond between ruler and subject, was well understood, whilst the concept of the nation was at least present in embryo. First and foremost, however, the 'national movement' has to be understood as a project conceived and executed by the *bharadari*, with the other elements involved - the local functionaries of the Valley towns, the chief merchants, and, most importantly, the army¹¹⁸ very much in a supporting role. This is shown most clearly by the fact that the plan of action was first discussed amongst them as early as May 1842, and by the lack of any further disturbance amongst the army once the unity of the *bharadars* had been broken. That unity had in large measure been made possible by the eclipse of the Kala Pandes after Kulraj Pande's libel conviction in November; this was presumably a major factor in persuading the Paudyal brothers to back the movement so enthusiastically now after urging caution seven months earlier, though the non-availability of British support as an alternative to internal action was also an important consideration.

It can be surmised that the *gurus* played an important role in spurring the *bharadari* as a whole into action, but it is probable that the principal pressure came from the 'good sardars' outside the 'British ministry' but generally supporting it, whose significance was discussed at the start of this chapter. Two key figures in this group - Ranjor Thapa and Abhiman Singh Rana - were members of the committee which drafted the petition to the king, as was Ranjor's kinsman Bhopal Thapa. Another important member was Kulman Singh Basnet, whose political ally Jang Bahadur probably now was. Whatever their standing with Surendra

at the *pajani* the previous month they will have been enthusiastic participants in the move against him; this is presumably the reason why the king and prince had one of their agents give Jang a beating on the night of 30 November, just before the principal public meetings commenced.¹¹⁹ Both Kulman and Jang began now to appear as members of delegations sent to the Residency: the two conveyed official congratulations to Hodgson on British success in China and Afghanistan on 23 December, while Jang accompanied Guru Prasad and Ranjor Thapa on 8 January to announce the grant of political powers to Queen Laksmi Devi.¹²⁰

Although the army did not act independently of the *bharadari* during the crisis, it none the less played a crucial role by choosing to support the *bharadars* rather than the king and to resort to violence in so doing. When Jang Bahadur was attacked on royal orders by Captain Jamon Singh Khatri, it was the troops who rescued him and then went on to plunder Jamon's house; he had apparently been opposing the consensus the public meetings had reached.¹²¹ Subsequently, the day after the approval of the draft petition to the king, rank-and-file soldiers sacked the homes of four or five individuals who, like Jamon, were believed to be trying to block the 'national movement'. The victims then apparently promised to cease their opposition, but that night, on Rajendra's orders, got three hundred troops onto their own side and attempted through them to persuade the *kampu* as a whole to arrest the principal *bharadars* behind the petition project. The result was a conclusive demonstration of where the bulk of the *kampu's* feelings lay, for the *bharadars* concerned were easily able to thwart the plot and then had to protect the king's agents from the anger of the soldiers.¹²³

The willingness of the army to act in this way is paradoxical in view of its normal stance of loyalty to the throne, a stance which Hodgson had constantly emphasised in analyses on other occasions, and which had been a principal reason why both he and the Paudyal *gurus* had originally opposed the idea of a petition movement including the army.¹²⁴ Part of the explanation was that although it was the *bharadars* who had been the principal victims of Surendra's atrocities, the ordinary soldiers had also suffered on occasion; when Surendra had clashed with the *kampu* at the end of November (above, p.188) the troops complained that four hundred of them had 'died like dogs' on a journey to Hetaunda - presumably a reference to deaths from malaria when the prince had recently led a large force on an expedition to the south.¹²⁵ In addition, defiance of royal authority became easier when Surendra and Rajendra were acting in such an erratic fashion, and when the queen put herself forward as an alternative focus for allegiance. Perhaps most important will have been ties between the soldiers and particular members of the *bharadari*. These could be client-patron relationships of the kind that helped determine the course of events during the 1840 mutiny, but loyalty towards particular 'charismatic' figures amongst the *bharadars* may have played a role. It is likely that both Abhiman Singh Rana and Jang Bahadur were the focus for feelings of this sort: Abhiman's popularity with the troops is emphasised more than once by Hodgson, and may have been strengthened amongst the tribal element of the army because he was himself a Magar. Jang Bahadur will have been a popular figure both because of his daredevil reputation and, assuming the accuracy of tradition in this respect, because he had shown a tendency to support the lower ranks in

clashes with authority.¹²⁶ The strain of Magar ancestry evident in his features possibly meant that he, too, benefited from the 'Magar' factor. It is of course a possibility that the standing of both men *vis-à-vis* their fellow *bharadars* was enhanced by this support, in which case the importance of the army as a determinant of political developments will have been greater than this analysis has hitherto implied.

The action of the *bharadars* themselves, and of the army in supporting them, was facilitated by a shared conception of the *bharadari's* entitlement to due consideration from the throne. The ideology of the national movement was thus one of reassertion of perceived traditional values, rather than of a 'revolutionary' challenge to the existing order, though it has of course to be admitted that the dividing line between the two can be a fine one, as the seventeenth-century English parallel invoked by early commentators itself suggests. The traditional rights of the *bharadari* now exercised had been perceptively delineated fifty years previously by Kirkpatrick in the passage discussed in Chapter One (above, p.38). For the Nepalis themselves they were in the main an implicitly recognised set of conventions, but were probably also seen as grounded in certain documents. The settlement reached in December 1842 was supposedly based on 'the laws of Drabya Shah'. No texts ascribed to this ruler have survived, but possibly Hodgson's informant had in mind the edicts (*tithi*) said to have been promulgated by Drabya's grandson, Rama Shah.¹²⁷ The eleventh edict gives a right of remonstrance to the original six *tharghar*, whose ancestors supposedly helped Drabya Shah to seize control of Gorkha in 1559:

To you of the *Pande, Panth, Arjyal, Khanal, Rana* and *Bohora thars* is given the title of Six *thar*, for the following reason: If a *cautariya, kaji, or sardar* etc., should enter into an unjust or unlawful act in order to destroy the throne or impair justice, then it is laid down that the Six *thar* should come [forward] to explain the details to the king without bias or compassion. This order is given to you, your descendants, and their descendants, by us, our descendants, and their descendants, for as long as you remain faithful to the throne.¹²⁸

Whilst these six families no longer had special importance, the *thargars* in the wider sense - the principal *bharadar* families - regarded themselves as inheriting their role as guardians of the state.

A final point to be noted about the whole series of events in December and January is their underlining of the overwhelming predominance of the centre in the Nepali political equation. The whole drama was played out at Kathmandu with no contribution of any consequence from the outlying districts. The leaders of the movement did indeed consider the possibility that the *dhakres* - the off-roll men, who will have been dispersed at their homes in the hills - might be unhappy at what had happened, but they believed they could be readily conciliated.¹²⁹ In the event, the Kala Pandes did attempt to excite a reaction amongst the *dhakres* and in the eastern districts of the kingdom, but without success.¹³⁰ Even if they had found some sympathisers in these quarters, there was no possibility of any effective challenge to the force, both military and political, concentrated at the capital.

Mathbar Singh Thapa

The inconclusive ending of the 'national movement' had produced

a situation which satisfied the *cauntaras*, but not the king nor the queen and the *bharadars* who had been pushing her forward. Both the latter parties were ready to reach for a fresh piece to place on the chess-board and the natural candidate for the role was Jang Bahadur's uncle, Mathbar Singh Thapa, who had been in India since 1838. Up till winter 1842 he had continued to live at Ludhiana or Simla, receiving a British pension of 1,000 rupees per month. As was seen in the previous chapter, he had presented himself to the British as their willing collaborator, whilst telling a very different story in his letters to Rajendra. He admitted this double-game quite freely, expecting the British to understand that whilst his children remained in Nepal he needed to keep on as friendly terms as possible with the Darbar. Hodgson was quite prepared to tolerate this, but Lord Ellenborough was less sanguine, and in April 1842 asked the Resident whether it would be feasible to request Rajendra to recall Mathbar to Nepal or at least to transfer him to Banaras or Patna so that he could negotiate his own return more easily.¹³¹ Hodgson was unenthusiastic, and in any case the Governor-General soon decided that the move would be inopportune, presumably because of the crisis in Anglo-Nepali relations brought about by the Kasinath incident.¹³² During the summer, however, Mathbar's own friends in Nepal themselves suggested he should move closer to home, and he wrote to Hodgson that he was inclined to accept the invitation but wanted his advice first. The Resident still believed that Mathbar's actual return would be undesirable at that moment, but he was convinced that he would not actually cross the Nepali border unless under a British guarantee, and

he recommended to the Governor-General that, as both Mathbar himself and the Nepal Darbar now claimed to want him to return, the British should put matters to the test by telling him he was at liberty to go.¹³³ In the event, Mathbar left for Gorakhpur in December, his journey having commenced before news of the 'national movement' could reach him.¹³⁴

Mathbar will have received up-to-date information on developments in Kathmandu from his sons and nephew, who had escaped from Nepal shortly before his arrival at Gorakhpur.¹³⁵ He had, however, to wait until early February for contact with a senior *bharadar*, this being *rajguru* Rangnath Paudyal who had travelled to Allahabad to meet him.¹³⁶ Rangnath had told the queen that he wanted to sound out Mathbar on her behalf, but his real motive seems to have been to find a pretext for journeying to Banaras, probably with the intention of retiring there permanently.¹³⁷ In any case he was not really in a position to negotiate on Daksmi Devi's behalf as he no longer retained her complete confidence: like Rangnath's own brother, Krishna Ram ('Majhila Guru'), she considered he ought to have remained at her side in Kathmandu in the current critical situation, and she also suspected him of trying to reach an accommodation of his own with the *cauntaras*.¹³⁸ In the event nothing concrete appears to have transpired at his meeting with Mathbar, and his departure from Kathmandu is significant rather for marking the start of a decline in Paudyal family influence at Kathmandu: five of his relatives still held high office, but their position was to weaken rapidly with the head of the family's withdrawal from the scene.¹³⁹

A few days after Rangnath's departure, Captain Aibaran Basnet left Kathmandu to invite Mathbar officially to return.¹⁴⁰ The king and queen were at first believed to be equally enthusiastic to secure this, but Hodgson's informants were soon telling him that Laksmi Devi thought the invitation premature. Although Mathbar had throughout his exile claimed to be her own partisan, she was unsure both whether she could guarantee his safety at Kathmandu and whether she could trust his intentions. Brian Hodgson, who indubitably *was* a fervent supporter of Laksmi Devi, had since December been relaying advice to Mathbar, via Reade, the Gorakhpur magistrate. He now counselled Mathbar to refer both to the queen and to the Governor-General before accepting the invitation to return home.¹⁴¹ Accordingly when Mathbar met Aibaran Basnet he told him that he required papers from the queen and Surendra as well as from the king. As Laksmi Devi overcame her doubts, the necessary invitations were all provided by the end of the month. Despite this, Mathbar still hesitated: he had apparently received no definite advice in reply to his letter to the Governor-General, and he now sought Hodgson's opinion on whether it was safe for him to return. This the Resident felt unable to provide.¹⁴² Mathbar nevertheless finally decided that he would enter the lions' den, and, crossing the Tarai a few days before the malaria set in, he reached the Valley early in April.¹⁴³

In February 1844 Henry Lawrence was to claim in a letter to government that Mathbar Singh had returned to Nepal 'under some sort of pledge' from Hodgson.¹⁴⁴ In fact there had been no formal promise of support, and Hodgson, as has just been seen, had declined to accept

the responsibility of advising him directly to cross the Nepal frontier. In his message to Mathbar through Reade, however, he had continually stressed his friendly feelings towards him. 'Give him my love', ended one such letter in January, 'and say I will be ever mindful of his interests so far as circumstances permit'.¹⁴⁵ A fortnight later the tone was even more insistent:

Ere [Mathbar Singh] leaves you, make him understand *in private* that I am his sincere friend and have great hopes that his experience of the world will make him a valuable and useful man well disposed towards the British Government. Such are scant here and the Choutras have disappointed the Queen and country and me too....But all you need say - and try to *impress it* - is that *I* am his real friend, as he will better know by and by.¹⁴⁶
(Emphasis in original.)

Such assurances were all given in demi-official correspondence, which does not appear to have been copied to the Government of India. Furthermore, as Lawrence also points out, Hodgson was at pains to urge Mathbar to adhere to the queen and 'the nation', and not to allow himself to be used by the king even if the latter seemed to offer him more rapid preferment. At the same time, though, he warned him not to interfere with the succession to the throne: Rajendra and Surendra should be put under the queen's control as a temporary measure only.¹⁴⁷ Hodgson stressed to Reade that this detailed policy advice, in contrast to his more general protestations of friendship, should be passed on to Mathbar as Reade's own ideas, without any mention of Hodgson's name. He fully realised that he himself was personally distrusted by Mathbar, who blamed him both for trying to block his 1835 Calcutta mission and for failing to prevent Bhimsen's death in 1839.¹⁴⁸

It is uncertain precisely what effect all this had on Mathbar, and therefore on the course of Nepali politics over the next two years. According to Mathbar's own later remarks to Lawrence, he had indeed intended at one stage to throw his weight behind the queen, but he might have decided to adopt this strategy even without Hodgson's advice, and in any case he planned to go much further than the Resident would have wanted and actually to supplant Surendra as heir to the throne by Laksmi Devi's son, Ranendra.¹⁴⁹ During the nine months for which Hodgson remained in Nepal after Mathbar's return the two men met together privately on more than one occasion, but whatever the surface friendliness Hodgson was unable to win the confidence he wanted from the other. Mathbar's continuing resentment of him was made abundantly clear in many subsequent conversations with Lawrence, and also in the *vamsavali* account of Hodgson, which obviously reflects Mathbar's thinking and is very hostile to the Resident.¹⁵⁰ The *vamsavali*'s reference to Hodgson's dismissal 'for exceeding instructions' does, however, suggest that Mathbar was aware early on of the policy disagreement within the East India Company, and he was therefore able to retain the hope of support from the Company as a whole, and in particular from Resident Lawrence, despite his distrust of Lawrence's predecessor. It is therefore quite likely after all that he took very seriously the policy advice he received at Gorakhpur from Reade, assuming he did not realise that Hodgson was the source of this.

In addition to the British, Mathbar had also the constant advice of his friends in Kathmandu. Amongst these was his nephew Jang Bahadur, who may have been placed in charge of the *Kumari Cauk* (Audit

Department) at the beginning of the year.¹⁵¹ According to Pudma Rana's biography, Jang actually travelled down to India to meet Mathbar while he was still at Gorakhpur. This is unlikely, since Hodgson would certainly have recorded the departure of a man of Jang's rank, but nephew and uncle will certainly have corresponded at this period.¹⁵² Once Mathbar had reached Kathmandu, Jang became one of his close associates. On 19 April, only two days after Mathbar's arrival, he was accompanied on a visit to the British Residency by Jang and one of the Basnets.¹⁵³ They reported to Hodgson an initial triumph: despite earlier talk of the king insisting on Mathbar's giving up his plans for vengeance on the Pandes, the latter had confessed their crimes and were to be punished.¹⁵⁴ Proceedings against the Pandes and their allies continued over the next three months, with the first executions taking place at the end of April.¹⁵⁵ It is surprising that Rajendra should have been prepared to sanction this, since it arguably weakened his own scope for balancing one faction against another, but since the slander case had been brought against some members of the Pande family in autumn 1842, the king appears to have turned completely against them. The verdicts and recommendations for sentence were brought in by a court of *bharadars* and soldiers, but the king certainly had to consent for punishment to be meted out.

The purge covered not only actual members of the Kala Pande family, but also a number of others who had collaborated with them. Amongst the latter was Jang Bahadur's cousin Debi Bahadur, the eldest son of Balnar Singh's youngest brother, Balram Kunwar. According to a royal decree issued to Mathbar Singh Thapa and his relatives after

the sentences had been carried out, Debi Bahadur had been involved after Bhimsen's death in producing a false affidavit aimed at destroying the junior queen and at fomenting a quarrel between the senior queen and Rajendra.¹⁵⁶ This is very different from the version of Debi Bahadur's fate which is given in Pudma's biography, and presumably reflects the story Jang himself had chosen to tell. Pudma's version does not mention any connection between Debi and the Pandes, but claims that some time after Mathbar's appointment as premier, Jang's cousin was unjustly relieved of his commission in the army because the queen wanted to transfer it to the lover of one of her maids-of-honour. In retaliation, Debi rashly spoke out publicly of a liaison between Laksmi Devi and Gagan Singh Khawas, *dada* (tutor or guardian) to her son Ranendra. As a result he was sentenced to death at the queen's insistence, and when Jang asked Mathbar to intervene on his behalf, the premier pleaded the impossibility of defying royal orders, insisting that if the queen commanded it he himself would be obliged to kill Jang, or *vice versa*. The story ends dramatically with Jang assuring Debi Bahadur just before the axe fell that he would seek vengeance on his behalf, and repeating the same message to his widow as she ascended the funeral pyre.¹⁵⁷

M.S. Jain has argued that Pudma's story, which is intended to help justify Jang's later betrayal and murder of his uncle, is completely discredited by the evidence of the contemporary royal decree.¹⁵⁸ Certainly Pudma's chronology is at fault and details are distorted, but his account nevertheless contains elements of the truth. Debi is almost certainly to be identified with the 'son of

Bulram Kower' who, as noted in the Residency Diary, was imprisoned along with Gagan Singh in December 1839 'in connection with some infamous plot of the Senior Rani and Pandeys to ruin the Junior Queen and her children'.¹⁵⁹ In the same Diary entry, Hodgson recorded that the Senior Queen had falsely accused Laksmi of an illicit connection with Gagan - this is the first reference in any source to the allegation which was to play an increasingly critical role in Nepali politics. It thus appears likely that the document which Debi Bahadur supposedly helped the Pandes prepare dates from this time and that it was concerned in part with Laksmi's supposed relation with Gagan. Debi was most probably an original adherent of Laksmi Devi who went over to the Pandes, as the text of the 1843 decree, on one interpretation implies;¹⁶⁰ though he could conceivably have been attached to the Pande camp all along and been arrested in 1839 not as an accomplice of Gagan's but as a counter-move by Laksmi's supporters. It is also quite possible that in 1843 Jang did, as Pudma claims, unsuccessfully ask for his cousin's life to be spared. Whatever his personal feelings, however, Jang did not allow the incident to hinder him from collaborating with his uncle and profiting politically from his ascendancy.

From the time of his arrival in Kathmandu Mathbar Singh was at once the most influential *bharadar*, the man to whom everyone paid court.¹⁶¹ None the less, he did not actually take charge of the army and the civil administration until September, whilst the usual formalities of appointment as *mukhtiyar* were further delayed until late December.¹⁶² This is usually seen as the result of Rajendra and the *cauntaras* resisting pressure from the queen and her supporters

among the nobility for Mathbar's appointment. This is broadly correct, though a few days after Mathbar's return, the king had wanted to make him minister straight away and the queen had opposed this, arguing that the change should be left till the normal *pajani* season.¹⁶³ Clearly, the queen was initially uncertain whether Mathbar would be a reliable choice from her own point of view. The *cauntaras*, on the other hand, consistently tried to block him even though Fateh submitted his resignation in July. They encouraged Rajendra's hope that Jagat Bam Pande, who was on his way back from Peking, might bring promises of military support for Nepal and thus have a claim to the premiership himself.¹⁶⁴ Jagat Bam never in fact returned to Kathmandu: alarmed by the fate of other members of his family, he chose to go directly from Tibet down to British India. Meanwhile the *cauntaras* in early September were confronted with the queen, the crown prince and the *bharadars* all pressing for Mathbar's appointment, and attempted unsuccessfully to win the queen over to their side with a bribe of 50,000 rupees.¹⁶⁵ Rajendra, whose own proposal for the *cauntaras* and Mathbar to hold the ministry jointly had found no favour with queen or *bharadars*,¹⁶⁶ was thus influenced to procrastinate a little further before Mathbar took charge in mid-September.

Another complicating factor during the summer of 1843 will have been uncertainty over what the British reaction to the appointment of Mathbar might be. M.S. Jain's suggestion that Rajendra might have been unwilling to remove the 'British ministers' until Hodgson's departure from Nepal in December 1843 was, of course, made in ignorance of the fact that Mathbar's *de facto* appointment had been made three months

earlier.¹⁶⁷ None the less the *cauntaras* were certainly believed to have tried to persuade the king that their own dismissal would violate the understanding reached with the British in January 1841. When Rajendra personally informed Hodgson of Mathbar's appointment, he was relieved to be assured by the Resident once more that internal arrangements were entirely his own affair.¹⁶⁸

The prospect of Hodgson's departure became a topic of direct concern over the summer, as he sought to persuade Lord Ellenborough to allow him to remain one more year in Nepal. Hodgson's own efforts were reinforced by appeals from King Rajendra and leading *bharadars* for his retention, the king actually requesting him in July to forward a formal request to this effect to the Governor-General:

Mr. Hodgson has recently mentioned to me his intention to retire from the service and return to Europe in the coming cold season.

Since that day I have been perpetually reflecting upon Mr. Hodgson's perfect knowledge of the customs and institutions of my Kingdom and of the Parbattia language, and likewise upon his long and zealous, kind and patient labours in the late troubled times, whereby the designs of evil persons inimical to both governments were foiled and peace and true friendship with your State preserved.

The more I think upon these invaluable qualifications and exertions, the more am I pained at the idea of his departure. It is therefore my earnest request and hope for the benefit of my kingdom, that Mr. Hodgson may be persuaded by Your Lordship to remain a while longer with me. Let me constantly hear of Your Lordship's welfare, etc., etc.¹⁶⁹

The *khariṭa* could not be officially accepted, but Hodgson forwarded it informally to the Governor-General, explaining that the proposal to send it had been originally made by 'a minister who has already tendered his resignation' (i.e., presumably, Fateh Jang) but was now being carried forward by *bharadars* of all factions.¹⁷⁰ Krishna Ram

paudyal, who had been a political ally of the Resident for longer than any other politician in Kathmandu, was chosen by the Darbar to go down to India to repeat the same sentiments to the Governor-General.¹⁷¹ Ellenborough did not, however, relent, and on 30 November Major Henry Lawrence arrived to take charge of the Residency.¹⁷²

Stiller has written that though the striking support offered to Hodgson by the Nepalis might be submitted 'to a very cynical analysis... the feeling is strong that at this time everyone in Nepal was setting aside politics in an outpouring of affection for a man who had lived among them longer by far than any other European in the history of Nepal had done'.¹⁷³ It would be churlish to deny that there was an element of genuine affection in the tears shed by many *bharadars* when Hodgson did finally leave the country. Less personal considerations, however, also entered into it. Although Hodgson himself assured Ellenborough that the Nepalis genuinely believed his story that his impending departure was due to ill health,¹⁷⁴ there is no doubt that they realised there was rather more to it: shortly after his arrival, Resident Lawrence reported to government the belief of the king and many *bharadars* that 'the late Resident was removed from Nepal for saving the country from invasion...and that I had been sent as a sort of punishment to them and to Mr. Hodgson'.¹⁷⁵ In addition, despite the posture of studied neutrality which Hodgson had striven to adopt since the summer of 1842, particular individuals may not have given up hope that he might be pressed into alliance with them again. This will have conditioned the attitude of Fateh Jang, seemingly the main originator of the campaign on Hodgson's behalf, and also probably of

Krishna Ram Paudyal. Kaji Abhiman Singh, who was a particularly prominent member of delegations pressing the Resident to forward the *kharita* formally to Lord Ellenborough, appears from his role in the 'national movement' and from his later actions to have been a strong partisan of Laksmi Devi and he was probably aware of how well disposed Hodgson was towards her. As has already been seen, Mathbar Singh did not share this general enthusiasm for Hodgson, but he thought it politic to disguise his hostility, and when the Resident finally left Kathmandu on 5th December, he led the Kathmandu garrison to escort him a mile on his way.¹⁷⁶

During the three weeks following Hodgson's departure, the question of whether Mathbar would be confirmed in the position he had occupied *de facto* since September seemed to hang in the balance. Distrust of him among the chiefs was a major problem, whilst his failure to prevail upon Henry Lawrence to give Surendra a duplicate of the memorandum he had submitted to the king on being received at Darbar brought the prince's anger down upon him.¹⁷⁷ However, Surendra dropped his opposition on 24 December, whilst a meeting of leading *bharadars* also gave their approval and he was formally invested as *mukhtiyar* on 25 December.¹⁷⁸ Mathbar's position, as seen through the eyes of the new Resident, depended very much on an accommodation reached with the *cauntaras*, whose influence seems now to have recovered strongly; perhaps their position had, however, been rather stronger throughout 1843 than was allowed by Hodgson, whose annoyance with their conduct since the end of his 'alliance' with them may have led him to portray them as foolish and ineffective. Mathbar held discussions with Fateh

Jang during the last week of December, and it was agreed that the latter should receive the key provincial command of Palpa; the deal satisfied Fateh and his brother Guru Prasad, at least for the time being, but was regarded as a 'sell-out' by some of the younger *cauntaras*.¹⁷⁹

The incomplete nature of Mathbar's predominance was underlined by the fact that none of the four principal kajiships filled on 31 December went to his supporters, and that Jang Bahadur, described by Lawrence as his 'favourite nephew', was excluded from office.¹⁸⁰ Jang, who had most probably been serving as a *kaji* since late 1842, was reinstated shortly afterwards, only to be dismissed again in March, his place being taken by Karnabir Pande, nephew of 'Gora' Pande leader Dalbhanjan.¹⁸¹

During 1843, Mathbar had at times seemed to be drawing close to Surendra, but throughout most of 1844 he clearly followed the strategy recommended to him by Hodgson through Reade by throwing his weight behind the queen. He planned in fact to go much further than Hodgson would have wished, for he admitted to Henry Lawrence the following year that he had been conspiring with Abhiman Singh Rana and Gagan Singh to displace Surendra completely and put Laksmi Devi's son Ranendra on the throne.¹⁸² This decision will have given him additional allies within the Darbar, for Abhiman, whether or not actually in office during 1844, enjoyed considerable influence, whilst Gagan, whether or not the queen's lover, was undoubtedly her closest confidant. There was no longer, however, the almost complete unity amongst the *bharadari* which had seemed about to carry the queen to power a year previously, and it is also doubtful whether queen's closest allies really trusted Mathbar. The minister accordingly made repeated efforts to buttress his position by appealing to two possible sources of support - the army, and the British Resident.

There were reasonable grounds for him to expect assistance from the troops. He had been a popular commander under his uncle, Bhimsen, and had had a large share in establishing the privileged status of the *kampu* by persuading the Darbar that, in the interests of professionalism, the rank-and-file sepoy should not be rotated out except if actually unfit.¹⁸³ His reputation as a soldier had been enhanced by his time in India, for he had claimed on his return to Nepal that both the Sikhs and the British had offered him large amounts of money to enter their own military service.¹⁸⁴ He had demonstrated his ability to handle the Kathmandu troops in September 1843, when he had quelled a disturbance amongst soldiers mobbing the palace by single-handedly entering the group and killing the ringleader.¹⁸⁵ Once in full command of the army, he at once enhanced his popularity by paying out two lakhs of rupees as an advance on the money due to the troops from their *jagirs* in the Tarai.¹⁸⁶ This was a timely move, since the price of rice in the Kathmandu Valley had risen considerably above the usual level that year, and this will have caused hardship to soldiers dependent on bazar supplies until the harvest was in on their own *jagirs*.¹⁸⁷

During the crisis over army pay in 1840 reductions had eventually been brought in, though less sweeping than had originally been envisaged (see above, p.133). Discontent over this still existed, and in January Mathbar sought to exploit it by encouraging demonstrations by the troops and seeking their support for bringing Laksmi Devi to power. The response of the troops was not as wholehearted as he had expected - on one occasion they even protested that the king had always been kind to them.¹⁸⁸ As Lawrence pointed out, Mathbar was

attempting to use the army as a substitute for support from the *bharadars* generally, who were unwilling to give him full backing even though many were unhappy with the conduct of Rajendra and Surendra.¹⁸⁹ The Resident also argued that 'Bhim Sen Thapa managed the country for twenty years unsupported by [the *bharadars*] and only fell when the soldiery abandoned him'. To separate army and *bharadari* in this way is, however, to go too far. Patronage ties between soldiers and individual *bharadars* could play an important role, as was seen in the analysis of the 1840 mutiny, and the army's lack of enthusiasm in this new crisis was probably a direct consequence of feelings amongst the *bharadars*.

If Mathbar could secure only limited support from the army, Resident Lawrence was completely uncompliant. He was working under strict instructions to follow a policy of non-intervention, and even if his hands had been left free he would not have wished to give the backing Mathbar sought. In contrast to Hodgson, the new Resident saw Rajendra as reacting defensively against a plot by his own *bharadars* to transfer power to the queen and against what he genuinely, albeit mistakenly, regarded as aggressive moves by the British government.¹⁹⁰ Lawrence had no confidence in Laksmi Devi, whom Hodgson had regarded as the potential saviour of her country. 'Let the Rani be as virtuous as most ruling Ranis are to the contry^{or}', Lawrence wrote in early February, 'she must either as Regent fall into the hand of the Minister of the time being; or if possessing the masculine qualities and ability that would render her independent, it is but natural to expect that she would destroy her stepchildren and raise her own to the throne'.¹⁹¹

Mathbar himself could not be aware of Lawrence's real attitude, and both what had happened under Hodgson and the counsel he had received at Gorakhpur encouraged him to make repeated attempts to bring the Resident into action as his ally. His efforts were assisted by the fact that the Darbar Munshi, Laksmi Das, who had been a protégé of Bhimsen's, was dedicated to Mathbar's interests, as also appeared to be the case with other Nepalis attached to the Residency.¹⁹² The pressure was such that Lawrence regarded himself as virtually under siege. A particularly blatant approach was adopted in January when Mathbar sent a message that he was having to restrain the king from arresting the Assistant Resident, Thomas Smith, and that the British ought to warn the king that unless he kept proper order the army which had just reduced Gwalior would be sent against Nepal.¹⁹³ More usually, Mathbar openly talked with the Resident of his plans and difficulties and sought his advice. On such occasions Lawrence protested his neutrality, but answered factual questions and sought to dissuade Mathbar from any rash or violent action. At a conference at the Residency on 27 January, Mathbar, accompanied by Jang Bahadur, Kalu Shahi and Abhiman Rana, announced that the king had agreed to make over power to Laksmi Devi temporarily, the regency to end when he himself ceased to be 'imbecile' and his son 'vicious'. Lawrence pointed out the practical difficulties. What would be the queen's position should the king change his mind after a few days? And who was to judge when Rajendra's 'imbecility' was at an end? Mathbar declared that the decision would be his own as minister, and that the *bharadars* had agreed that the soldiers should plunder the house of anyone who broke the united front now achieved. Jang Bahadur added,

significantly, 'that the troops would be the judges'. Lawrence continued to find difficulties and warned that if the Heir Apparent were removed from power only to regain it, the queen herself would probably have to bear the worse consequences. He also advised strongly against allowing the army to interfere: 'once the soldiery took to themselves such power there would be holding them'. At the end, however, Lawrence said that if the king voluntarily accepted such an arrangement he himself could have no objection.¹⁹⁴ The following day Jang informed the Resident that the king was pleased with the line he had taken.¹⁹⁵

As already seen, the 'agreement' which Mathbar thought he had secured from monarch and *bharadari* proved illusory, and his situation became increasingly frustrating. On a visit to the Residency at the beginning of February he announced that he intended to demand a decision on who was to be master - king, queen or prince. If the situation were not resolved he would resign and thereby precipitate a military revolt. Lawrence had himself in December sent the king a message that the crown prince's position should be 'adjusted', but he refused to be involved any further, merely pointing out that Mathbar knew the state of the Darbar when he agreed to accept the ministry and that it would be highly irresponsible to resign now if he believed that disturbances would result.¹⁹⁶ Mathbar continued to talk frequently of resignation, but continued in office for another two-and-a-half months. During this time he was confronted with divisions within his own family. Sher Jang Thapa, Mathbar's nephew and Bhimsen's adopted son, returned to Nepal from Banaras and accused his

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uncle of wrongfully retaining Bhimsen's former property which had been confiscated in 1839 and then handed over to Mathbar in 1843.¹⁹⁷ Bhimsen's brother, Ranbir Singh, also increased his difficulties, telling Surendra that it was the minister's fault that his father still refused to relinquish the throne to him.¹⁹⁸ Under these cumulative pressures, Mathbar resigned in late spring, but for some time he continued exercising the functions of office, just as he had done for some months in 1843 prior to his formal appointment.¹⁹⁹

Through the summer Mathbar still hoped to win Lawrence's support, and, as the Resident believed, deliberately slowed down the processing of the Residency's business in order to achieve this.²⁰⁰ Mathbar himself continued to see Lawrence from time to time, but a key role in his strategy was played by the Darbar's Mir Munshi, Laksmi Das, who after the 'resignation' became the principal link between Residency and palace. Das was one of the few Newars in 'high profile' positions in the Nepali administration, and had originally secured his appointment under the patronage of Bhimsen Thapa. According to the tradition preserved by his descendants today, he was the grandson of a prominent member of the aristocracy in the Newar Kingdom of Patan, but his father had been brought up as a servant in the royal palace after the Gorkha conquest. He himself was sent to study Urdu and Persian as a young boy in Banaras, where he attracted Bhimsen's notice during King Ran Bahadur's exile. Das was also said to have formed a special bond with Bal Narsingh Kunwar, and before the latter's death in 1842 he is supposed to have placed his son, Jang Bahadur, under the *munsi* care.²⁰¹ It is unlikely that Das' personal links with Thapas and

Kunwars were quite as strong as his descendants claim, but he certainly seems to have been a supporter of Mathbar. At the beginning of June he told the Assistant Resident, Captain Smith, that 'there would never be peace and quiet in Nepal until the British Government interfered'. Reporting this incident in his Diary, Lawrence commented acerbically:

[Laksmi Das] has never spoken so plainly to me, but several times hinted at the necessity of my being severe (*sukht*) with the Maharaja; with an affectation of great sincerity and plain dealing the Moonshee (though a Newar) rivals the deepest of the Goorkhas in duplicity.²⁰²

It was no surprise when the following month the *munsi* explained the current delays in official business as the result of there being no minister, and claimed that nothing would go right until Mathbar was restored to power.²⁰³

In the fact of all this Lawrence stuck doggedly to the policy he had been instructed to adopt, and Mathbar's position remained unchanged until dramatic developments in the autumn. Despite the execution of the leading Kala Pandes the year before, Rajendra and Surendra had kept up some communication with other members of the family; in particular, the king had been in correspondence with Jagat Bam Pande, the envoy to China who had taken refuge in India rather than return to Kathmandu, whilst Krishna Ram Mishra was also consulted from time to time. In September, however, Pande hopes were once again destroyed when letters brought back by Jagat and claimed to be from the Ambans in Lhasa were denounced as forgeries. The documents had contained promises to make over gold mines to Nepal, and disappointment in this expectation appears to have turned the king violently against Jagat and his relatives. Several of them were interrogated at an assembly

of *bharadars* and - significantly - soldiers in the military cantonment, over which Rajendra and Surendra presided.²⁰⁴ Investigations continued until November, when the affair ended with the expulsion from the country of forty-four persons, many of them the sons of men who had been put to death in 1843.²⁰⁵

Mathbar, as Lawrence, believed would have preferred more drastic punishment, but the episode strengthened his hand considerably as he found himself united with king and prince in a common vendetta. In October he was pressed by Rajendra to resume the premiership. In an obvious attempt to manoeuvre Lawrence into at last coming out in his support, he told the Resident that he himself really wanted to retire to the plains and asked for advice on what to do.²⁰⁶ This took place against the background of rising political tension, for in addition to the Pande affairs, it was believed that the Paudyal *gurus* and *cauntaras*, who had been in Banaras and Palpa respectively, were about to return to the capital. Lawrence continued to complain of the attitude the contending factions took towards the Residency:

...since Bhimsen's decline and death there have been four parties aiming at the Ministry; the Pandeys, Goroos, Chountras and Thappas; all and each, except the Pandeys, desire an offensive and defensive alliance with the Resident, even though they know that such confederacy would be directly opposed to the national feeling; but nevertheless the three last have by all means set themselves to effect such an alliance, and the Pandeys have only been prevented doing so, and stood for power on the national feeling, because they believed the late Resident pledged against them.²⁰⁷

Lawrence added the perceptive comment that Mathbar Singh, despite his actual failure to recruit the British to his cause, 'has doubtless endeavoured to instil into all minds that I support him'; Mathbar's

propaganda at this time is reflected in the *vamsavali* claim that it was his request which caused the Governor-General to send Lawrence to Nepal in the first place.²⁰⁸

Shortly afterwards Mathbar accepted the intivation to become minister again, and the news was given to the Resident by Rajendra and Surendra when he was brought to witness a military parade on 18 October. Mathbar had had to accept office without explicit British backing, but he was nevertheless able in Lawrence's hearing to extract a promise from Rajendra that there would be an end to the system of two rulers 'after the Dassera', which was then in progress and due to end only three days later.²⁰⁹ Immediately on securing this pledge he announced it to the assembled troops.

It was probably at this point that Mathbar made the crucial decision to switch allegiance from Queen Laksmi Devi to Surendra. He may, as Oldfield suggests, have intended ever since his return to Nepal to secure Rajendra's abdication in favour of his son, but initially he had envisaged political power passing to the queen.²¹⁰ Two days after the end of Dasai, he outlined his current thinking to Lawrence, when the latter, having first confirmed that the king wished him to do so, accepted an invitation to visit the minister in his home. Mathbar complained that although Surendra had been allowed to take precedence in the Dasai ceremonies, Rajendra had not redeemed his 'one ruler' pledge. Caught between father and son, he believed a possible way out was a scheme similar to that recently seen in the Panjab, where Khanak Singh had been nominal ruler but actual power had been held by his son, Nao Nihal Singh. Would the British accept such

an arrangement, or, if they continued to hold aloof, would they be prepared to grant him asylum and a position as a revenue-farmer in their territory? Lawrence could only point out that the Panjab scheme had led rapidly to Khanak Singh's death, and that whilst Mathbar personally would always be allowed a refuge in India no promises of a *jamindari* could be made.²¹¹ In the same interview Mathbar boasted of the army's loyalty to him, and claimed that he could if he wished seize every *bharadar* in Kathmandu. In his report to Calcutta, Lawrence mentioned that he had heard many predicting 'another Lahore' in Nepal, and expressed his own belief that the struggle could end with the army taking charge and destroying both the king and his son.²¹²

Mathbar's abandonment of the queen's party was caused in the first instance by his belief that under her regency the real power would be in the hands of Gagan Singh and Abhiman Singh Rana, while he himself would have only the nominal position of minister.²¹³ Surendra, on the other hand, was wooing him with the promise of powers equal to those his uncle Bhimsen had held.²¹⁴ Another factor, and one probably not given due weight in studies of this period, was that feeling in the *bharadari* generally was now veering behind Surendra. It was, after all, a logical conclusion that, if Rajendra was not prepared to exercise control over his son, matters could not be made worse, and might well be improved, by placing responsibility as well as power in the latter's hands. Surendra reinforced such sentiments by telling the *bharadars* that if they did not now help gain what his father solemnly promised him, then when he eventually did gain power he would not honour the *sanads* conferring *jagirs* upon them.²¹⁵

In early November rumours spread that a hunting expedition to the Tarai being planned by Surendra was a cover for action against his father.²¹⁶ Rajendra countermanded the orders to two regiments to move south, but Mathbar assured Lawrence that if the prince took up the troops' standard and set out all would follow him.²¹⁷ In fact the two regiments left for the Tarai in advance of Surendra. With them went Dil Bikram Thapa, a cousin of Mathbar's, and also Jang Bahadur. Although a *dhakre* Jang had played a prominent role throughout the year as an assistant to his uncle, and Lawrence believed that some ulterior purpose of Mathbar's lay behind his departure now.²¹⁸ The Resident suspected that it was intended to allow a violation of British territory, so that Mathbar could then claim he would be able to prevent such incidents in future if the British gave him proper backing. The minister did indeed try to involve Lawrence once more, telling him that the prince intended to travel to Banaras, and requesting the Resident's 'order' on whether he himself should accompany the expedition to the Tarai or stay in Kathmandu. Lawrence told him that as Rajendra evidently intended to go south with his son, Mathbar as minister ought to stay at his side.²¹⁹ He was able to get Mathbar to promise to ensure the party stayed on the north side of the Churia hills, the last range before the plains.

Rajendra, Surendra, Mathbar and most of the *bharadars* and remaining troops left the capital on 4 December.²²⁰ At Hetaunda, after a furious quarrel with his father, the prince again proclaimed his intention to cross the frontier and make for Banaras. The army and *bharadars* followed him and at the village of Dhukuwas, which lay south

of the Churias but within the Nepal border, all pledged 'to make him Governor of all and call him *Maharajadhiraj* and taking an oath by touching the *Nishan* wrote an agreement that they should never obey another order except his'.²²¹ Later the same day (10 December) Rajendra came from Hetaunda to join his son, and issued a *lal mohar* which still left unclear the question of where real authority was to lie:

I have given the title of *Maharajadhiraj* to my son Sri Maharajadhiraj Surendra Bikram Shah. I retaining my throne and its authority, he (my son) will exercise authority over the Minister and the Chiefs and will carry on the Government. I retain the dignity and honours of the throne and the exercise of authority as was the practice of my ancestors. But he (my son) will refer to me, and receiving my orders, will issue them to the Minister and Chiefs and carry on the business of the state in the manner I have been accustomed to do.²²²

Despite this theoretical ambiguity it was evident that Surendra was, for the moment, in the ascendant, and his accession to power was publicly acclaimed. On 14 December he returned to Kathmandu amidst great celebrations, riding on an elephant at the head of the procession and attended by Mathbar and two of his cousins. Rajendra's elephant was in third place, following Bhimsen's *fakir* brother Ranbir, and the king was reported as 'looking sad, and...twisting his thumbs'.²²³

Mathbar was anxious to secure British recognition for the arrangement he believed he had achieved, and he pressed Lawrence hard for this, both in person and through Jang Bahadur, who on the 13th successfully urged the Resident to come out to Thankot on the edge of the Valley to greet the prince's procession. Lawrence, of course, refused to be drawn, telling them he could make no move until he had received instructions from the Government of India. In fact he was

sceptical over the permanence of the new dispensation, but believed it would make Mathbar the *de facto* ruler and that this would be advantageous for the British.²²⁴ At this stage he had not been shown Rajendra's actual *lal mohar* and he believed that Rajendra had formally conceded more than was the case. When a delegation of leading *bharadars* met the Resident on 18 December, they confirmed his impression by telling him that '[the king] had made over all authority to his son, reserving to himself the throne, the mint, and the direction of British and Chinese correspondence'.²²⁵ When this formula was reported to the Governor-General he regarded the proposed arrangement as totally unacceptable:

...it would appear from the statement contained in your letter that all the authority of the Government with plenary powers of sovereignty are to be vested in one party while the control of foreign affairs and negotiations is to appertain to another. This is a state of affairs which cannot, for obvious reasons, be permitted. The foreign relations of a State must be vested in the Government of that State, and we can only recognise as the party with whom our affairs are to be conducted, and our correspondence carried on, the *de facto* ruler of the country...a distinct avowal is required formally announcing who is the ruler of Nepal, since the Governor-General in Council cannot recognise the divided authority of two Rulers such as that which would virtually be created by the arrangement explained to you.²²⁶

Stiller claims it was this decision by the Governor-General which stymied the 'coup' attempted by Surendra and Mathbar.²²⁷ In fact it is doubtful whether Lawrence did demand a 'distinct avowal' from the Darbar of who was in charge, since before the government instructions to him had been written he had seen from the *lal mohar* that Rajendra had reserved ultimate sovereignty to himself. Even if the Resident *had* made such a demand, that might have tipped the scales in Surendra's

direction as likely as in his father's: for in proclaiming the necessity of 'one ruler' the Governor-General was repeating what Mathbar had been saying for months. It is true that by giving explicit backing to the minister the British could have enabled him to achieve the supplanting of Rajendra, but intervention of this kind had been ruled out long before Hardinge's orders of 28 December were issued. In fact the Residency succeeded in preserving its neutrality, and the explanation for Mathbar's seeming initial success and later failure must be sought in the internal Nepali political balance.

From the account which Mathbar gave the Residency Munshi the following day, it is clear that he directly ordered the army to follow Surendra from Hetauda to Banaras on 10 December, ignoring the pleas of King Rajendra, who even seized hold of his minister in an attempt to detain him.²²⁸ The bulk of the army was prepared to accept Mathbar's instructions, whether from personal loyalty or out of apprehension that the prince would indeed cross the frontier and provoke a crisis with British India; Mathbar seems to have been keen to keep the latter consideration to the forefront of the men's minds, for immediately after Surendra had set off he read out to them the memorandum of 1841 in which the *bharadars* had pledged themselves to the preservation of good relations with the East India Company.²²⁹ Three *bharadars* closely associated with the queen - Kajis Abhiman Singh Rana and Gagan Singh, and the more junior Kumedan (Lieutenant) Dal Mardān Thapa - none the less resisted the move, getting a number of *hudas* (NCOs) to urge the troops to remain with Rajendra. One of these dissidents actually lunged at Mathbar with a bayonet, but was overpowered in time.²³⁰ Sixteen

'mutineers' were arrested and later that day, after he had been proclaimed king, Surendra ordered their execution. Mathbar and Surendra were lucky that the split in the army had not been more serious, for in addition to loyalty to Rajendra as the reigning monarch they had had to overcome the popularity with the rank-and-file which Abhiman Singh had long enjoyed. In counteracting these influences Mathbar will have been helped by Jang Bahadur's support, for he, too, was a favourite with the men.²³¹

In the immediate aftermath of Surendra's triumphant return to Kathmandu, it seemed at first that Mathbar had not, after all, eliminated his opponents completely. Abhiman Singh remained prominent amongst those regularly in contact with the Residency, whilst Mathbar's attempt to gain complete control of the *pajani* was resisted, as Rajendra sought to keep military patronage in his own hands.²³² The minister was however reported to have secured appointments for several members of his own family, including Jang Bahadur.²³³ Within a few days opposition melted away entirely, and Mathbar was offered appointment as minister for life, which he accepted on 3 January, the actual investiture taking place at Pasupatinath on the 20th.²³⁴ As a further mark of distinction, the following month he received the title of *praim minister* (i.e., prime minister)²³⁵ - this same title was subsequently granted to Jang Bahadur (below p.280) and was to remain in use in Nepal until its replacement after the 1950/1 'revolution' by the Sanskrit equivalent, *pradhan mantri*. He was also presented by both Rajendra and Surendra with special medals listing his titles and guaranteeing his safety.

The trappings of power were paralleled by the substance. He was in full control of Nepal-British relations, being able to conclude a

final agreement of the Ramnagar border, and also to secure the appointment as *vakil* in Calcutta of Bam Bahadur, Jang Bahadur's brother.²³⁶ Everyone at Kathmandu was apparently acquiescent in, if not enthusiastic about, his supremacy, and the Paudyal *gurus*, who might have posed a threat had they entered the lists, chose to remain at Banaras.²³⁷ Others, too, decided that exile might be the wiser course: Abhiman Singh Rana, who had been appointed as a Nepali representative on the commission delineating the border, fled to India with his colleague Bhawani Singh Khatri, persuading Fateh Jang Chauntara, until then Governor of Palpa, to accompany them. The Palpa post was subsequently allocated to Til Bikram Thapa, one of Mathbar's cousins.²³⁸ It was allegedly discovered that the *cauntaras* had removed a large sum of money from the Palpa treasury before fleeing, and attempts were made to get the British to induce them to return.²³⁹

Realising the importance of preserving his position with the soldiers, Mathbar took three measures early in 1845 calculated to appeal to them. At Dhukuvas he had got Surendra's agreement in principle to rescind the limited pay reductions put through in 1840, and in January a new pay-scale was worked out, to take effect from the harvest the following autumn; although this development is reported in the *vamsavali* and ignored in the British sources there can be no doubt that it did take place since the author of the main rescension of the chronicle, Buddhiman Singh, was himself involved in the exercise.²⁴⁰ Secondly, Mathbar persuaded Rajendra to agree to the raising of three additional regiments; this was done partly by the transfer of men from existing regiments, but involved an increase in

six hundred in total strength, together with an increase in promotion opportunities.²⁴¹ Finally, a *lal mohar* in mid-January laid down that none of the existing *kampu* regiments were to be transferred to other stations; this was merely the ratification of what had become standard practice, but it will have come as a welcome reassurance to the men of the *kampu* that their privileged status was to be maintained.²⁴²

All was seeming^{ly} at Mathbar's feet, yet beneath the surface his position was far from secure. Surendra remained totally committed to him²⁴³ but the queen, whom he had first supported and then abandoned, was unreconciled, whilst Rajendra, too, mistrusted and feared him. The raising of the three new regiments was seen by the king as possibly aimed by Mathbar against himself.²⁴⁴ The army's support for the minister made the king reluctant to move against him, but in April Mathbar foolishly weakened his position by ordering the soldiers to work as ordinary labourers on the construction of a new barracks. Lawrence, who was ready to proffer advice although barred from partisanship, warned him against imposing what the army would see as a humiliation, but to no avail.²⁴⁵ On the evening of 17 May Mathbar was summoned to the royal palace, on the pretext that the queen was ill, and assassinated within her chamber. It was officially given out that the king himself had fired the gun, but information reaching the Resident suggested that Gagan Singh, Kulman Basnet and a third, lesser-known *bharadar*, Sardar Rabi Dhoj, had been the murderers. Before authorising these men to kill his minister, Rajendra had consulted with other influential members of the *bharadari*, including the *cauntaras* in exile in India, Mathbar's own uncle Ranbir Singh Thapa, and Narsingh Thapa, senior member of the other Thapa family.²⁴⁶

It was rumoured within hours of Mathbar's death that Jang Bahadur had been the man who actually pulled the trigger. In reporting to Calcutta a week later Lawrence accepted Jang's denial: 'Poor as is my opinion of his moral character, I do believe him guiltless of the act of which he is accused'.²⁴⁷ Some years later, however, once securely in power, Jang was to admit that he had indeed been the assassin.²⁴⁸ Despite M.S. Jain's elaborate attempts to argue the contrary, there is no plausible reason why Jang should have incriminated himself if he had not fired the gun and his involvement can be taken as proved.²⁴⁹

The fullest account of his participation in the conspiracy is that provided by his son, Pudma. This contains a number of contradictions and distortions, but one can accept the core of the story, *viz.*, that Gagan Singh suggested bring^{ing} him in as the instrument of the king's and queen's vengeance and that Kulman Singh Basnet was the intermediary who summoned him to the royal palace.²⁵⁰ These two men were the ones on whom Lawrence's informants had placed the main responsibility for the killing, and Kulman, brother of Jang's late father-in-law, had long been his political ally. The whole episode was a great embarrassment to Pudma, who sought to explain his father's conduct as resulting from the threat to his own life if he disobeyed an order from the king and queen, and also from anger against his uncle over the latter's failure to intervene in favour of Debi Singh Kunwar. It has already been seen that Debi Singh's execution had taken place not shortly before Mathbar's death, as Pudma strongly implies, but a full two years earlier.²⁵¹ In between the two events Jang had

co-operated closely and enthusiastically with his uncle, so Pudma's reference to this affair must be dismissed as special pleading, the source of which could of course have been Jang himself rather than conscious distortion by his biographer. However, Pudma also lists other events which created tension between uncle and nephew in the months leading up to the assassination, examination of one of which, together with material from the *vamsavali* and from the British records, may throw some light on the political situation.

In his first mention of any clash between Jang and Mathbar, Pudma reports the following interesting incident:

Some tenants of the crown lands applied to the Council [*viz.*, the *bharadari sabha*] for remission of revenue on the ground of the crops having been damaged by frost. The Prime Minister passed orders that the remission applied for could not be granted. Jung Bahadur, who was also a member of the Council, opposed the Premier, by declaring that the matter must be investigated into before any order should be passed. Upon this Mathbar grew crimson with rage and exclaimed "You are a mere stripling, how dare you speak so insolently in such an august assembly!" Jung Bahadur promptly replied, "I am not a child; it is the rest of the councillors that are acting childishly". The King and the Prince [i.e. Surendra] put an end to the altercation by declaring that Jung Bahadur was right and that enquiries should be made²⁵²

Although Pudma's implied chronology places this after the December 1844 expedition to the Tarai, it is very likely that it should be linked rather with the delegation of three hundred Tharus (the indigenous people of the Tarai) which visited Kathmandu in October 1844 to complain of alleged oppression by Hira Lal Jha, who held the revenue contract for the region.²⁵³ The final decision may have gone against the tenants - at any rate Hira Lal was publicly honoured the following

month - but during the debate some *bharadars* may have sought to attack Mathbar through Hira Lal, who was probably his protégé: in a letter written five years later Jang Bahadur was to describe him as a 'tiger' unleashed by Mathbar upon the peasantry, whilst Hira Lal was to have considerable difficulties with the new government in the months following Mathbar's death.²⁵⁴ It is inconceivable that Jang Bahadur should have spoken out against his uncle in November as boldly as Pudma depicts, but if the indignation over Mathbar's and Hira Lal's conduct which he expressed in 1850 was at all genuine, he must have strongly disapproved of his uncle's action.

The author of the *vamsavali* account, who was a contemporary of Jang's,²⁵⁵ agrees with Pudma in depicting a growing rift between uncle and nephew in the last months of Mathbar's life, but the selection of incidents is rather different. The *vamsavali* devotes the most space to a quarrel arising from attempted action against the *bharadars* who had participated in the 'national movement' at the end of 1842. According to the *vamsavali*, Mathbar was ordered by Surendra to bring all of them before him so that their punishment could be decided upon.²⁵⁶ The Residency Diary confirms that Mathbar did carry out an investigation on these lines, and that it took place in the week preceding his assassination. Lawrence's information was that Surendra was claimed to want some of them put to death - a detail about which the Resident was personally sceptical - but that the affair ended with the mere imposition of small fines varying according to the rank of the 'offenders' (this label will, of course, have covered virtually the entire *bharadari*, since the 'Petition of Right' presented to Rajendra

in December 1842 had been signed by almost everyone of any consequence present then in Kathmandu).²⁵⁷ The *vamsavali*, claims that Jang, who was himself a signatory, had convened a meeting of all those under threat, put himself forward as their spokesman, and then, despite Mathbar's opposition, appealed successfully to the court for clemency. As in the case of the tenants' appeal the previous autumn, Jang cannot have taken the lead in the way depicted, but he might, at least covertly, have expressed his sympathy with the bulk of the *bharadari* in the face of Mathbar's action.

Both Pudma and the *vamsavali* represent Jang as arguing in private with his uncle as well as opposing him publicly. In particular they describe an exchange between them over the need to obey royal commands whatever the circumstances: Pudma links this with the Debi Bahadur affair and the *vamsavali* with the attempted punishment of the 'National Movement' *bharadars*, but in both versions Mathbar is made to lay down the principle that a man must be prepared to kill even a close relative if ordered to do so by the king.²⁵⁸ It is highly suspicious that he should thus conveniently have provided the justification for his own assassination, and more likely that Jang kept up at least a pretence of cordiality with his uncle until the end. Certainly, both Jang and his brothers continued to enjoy Mathbar's patronage to at least the end of February. Following Jang's own appointment to office in late December, his brother Bam Bahadur was made *vakil* in Calcutta, and the captaincy that fell vacant as a result was awarded to a third brother.²⁵⁹ Later it was rumoured that Jang was in line for nomination as an envoy to China.²⁶⁰ What appears most likely is that Jang made

secret contact with his uncle's opponents, whether this was through a direct approach from Gagan Singh, as suggested in the *vamsavali*, or via Kulman Singh, as claimed by Pudma. He may indeed have nursed some resentment against Mathbar but his fundamental motive was almost certainly the wish to align himself with what he believed was to become the dominant force in Darbar politics. Even if he was given the order to fire the fatal shots only at the last moment, and accepted under duress, as Pudma claims, it is likely that he had been alerted some days earlier that a move was to be made against Mathbar.

In killing his uncle, Jang had destroyed a man whose general direction of Nepali policy followed lines derived from Bhimsen Thapa, and later to serve as a guide to Jang himself. Like the other two, Mathbar's aim was to concentrate full power within Nepal in his own hands. Externally, again like them, he was prepared in practice to seek an accommodation with British India, though for domestic political reasons he could choose sometimes to highlight this fact but at others to pose as strongly anti-British. M.S. Jain has rightly emphasised the reality of his foreign policy, and the fundamental misreading of it found in the works of some modern Nepali historians who see Mathbar as a feared opponent of the British and his assassination as a conspiracy in which the Residency was implicated.²⁶¹ The persistence of the misconception is perhaps a tribute to the effectiveness of the original propaganda.

In addition to seeing Mathbar as very much 'a man with whom we can do business', the British also came to regard him as a Nepali receptive to new ideas and not bound by the prejudices of many of his countrymen. Such a judgment was, of course, partly the result of the tendency to

see as a 'good' ruler anyone whose foreign policy largely matched one's own interests. Hodgson's and Lawrence's view of him as a man of large horizons was none the less not without foundation. He saw the advantages that could accrue from a knowledge of English and of European learning, remarking on a visit to the Government School in Patna in 1835 that he would like to place his two sons there for that purpose.²⁶² Ten years later Lawrence was particularly impressed by his reaction on hearing how a steam engine could transport 3,000 men at 20 mph: whilst all the other *bharadars* present exclaimed how useful it would be in war (probably just the impression that Lawrence had calculated they would get), Mathbar was heard to remark in Nepali to a companion, 'What an advantage it would be in a famine'.²⁶³ Finally, in the political sphere, Mathbar was ready to consider solutions to Nepal's constitutional problems drawn from both Sikh and British practice, even if he did not always fully appreciate their implications.

How far did intelligence and knowledge of the world translate into success as an administrator? Only a few days after Mathbar's death, and with experience of Nepal only under Mathbar's direction, Henry Lawrence opined that:

The Gurkhas...are the best masters I have seen in India. Neither in the Tarai, nor in the hills, have I witnessed or heard of a single act of oppression since I arrived here a year and a half ago; and a happier peasantry I have nowhere seen.²⁶⁴

Lawrence seems to have forgotten the delegation which came to Kathmandu some months previously to complain against Hira Lal Jha and whose arrival he had himself noted in the Residency Diary. Aside from this incident there is no direct evidence of agrarian discontent under Mathbar's

administration, but a document of November 1845 refers to hardship caused in the Tarai by a 25 per cent increase in revenue demand, and this additional levy may well have been instituted, or at any rate allowed to continue in force, after his assumption of the premiership in 1843.²⁶⁵ It is reasonable to assume that pressure on the revenue base was at a high level, given the increases in army pay that Mathbar put through, and also the lavish allocations of land that Mathbar himself received: in addition to an annual *jagir* of perhaps 15,000 rupees, Mathbar recovered the *birta* lands confiscated from him when Bhimsen Thapa fell, as well as new *birta* grants which could have been worth up to 110,000 rupees a year.²⁶⁶ The latter amount would represent around 10 per cent of the total revenue from the crucial eastern Tarai districts.²⁶⁷ The government in Kathmandu had thus every reason to encourage Hira Lal to extract the maximum amount possible from the peasantry.

In his 1850 letter Jang implied that Mathbar's fall was the result of divine anger over the sufferings of the people. At a more mundane level of analysis, however, it can be seen as caused by the growing resentment against him both in the royal family and amongst the *bharadars*. Henry Lawrence suggested, and later commentators have generally agreed, that he might have saved himself either by being more conciliatory, as Lawrence himself had urged, or by greater ruthlessness: 'He acted only by halves'.²⁶⁸ It is possible, as Lawrence also speculated, that the king may have intended violence against Mathbar all along, and that in prompting his return from India and raising him to the premiership he was only seeking to give him enough rope to hang himself.²⁶⁹ This is

debatable, but Lawrence was certainly right in pointing out that the king made his move only after Mathbar had made himself generally unpopular: his standing with the army had been undermined through his use of the soldiers as labourers, his opponents among the *bharadari* remained unreconciled, and it is possible that some of his own adherents were beginning to doubt his willingness to protect their interests.

1841-1845: Political Trends in Retrospect

The fundamental problem persisting throughout the period covered by this chapter was the incapability of King Rajendra either to take direct and effective control of the administration personally, or to trust anyone else to do so. Factionalism therefore continued to flourish unabated, both within the royal family itself and amongst the *bharadari*. Against this background, the 'time-serving' of which Henry Lawrence accused Jang Bahadur became vital to political survival. It is at first hard to detect any consistent pattern at all to the Byzantine turns of Darbar politics, but certain tendencies can in fact be singled out.

In the first place, these years saw the influence of the Paudyal *guru* family peak and then decline. This was largely because the change of British policy in 1842 reduced their scope for acting as political 'brokers' between the Resident and the court. The importance of the institution of rajguruship for religious legitimation of the political order was not removed, however, and the secular influence which might still go with it was to be demonstrated by the rise of Vijay Raj Pande, which will be examined in the next chapter.

Also persisting throughout this period was the 'national feeling' of distrust towards the British which Lawrence correctly saw as violated by the efforts of rival factions to secure the Resident's support. It was this sentiment which the 'Kala' Pandes appealed to, and its vitality was well represented by Amir Singh Das' outburst against the king at his trial in 1842. When combined with resentment against the *bharadars* as a class, as had briefly been the case with the mutineers of 1840, this was potentially a very powerful force. Just such a mixture of sentiments was to drive the Sikh army to its fatal clash with the British only a few months after Mathbar's assassination. The strength of the vertical ties between *bharadars* and soldiers, and the consciousness of Nepal's weakness relative to British India, were none the less sufficient to ensure that the Panjab scenario would not be enacted there.

Whilst the army was never to get completely out of hand, its loyalty to the crown, which was identified above all as a major force for stability, was subject in these years to an ever-increasing strain. It is significant that even though Mathbar had forfeited much of his own popularity with the troops by employing them as labourers, the king nevertheless felt that the minister must be assassinated in secret rather than openly arraigned, lest there be a military reaction in his support.²⁷⁰ The possibility that the army might turn against the present occupant of the throne was thus becoming ever more apparent.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Resident's Diary, 27 March 1841.
2. *Ibid.*, 26 December 1840.
3. *Ibid.*, 20 February-10 March 1841, Hodgson to Government, 18 and 22 May 1841, FS 31 May 1841, Nos.152 and 160.
4. *Ibid.*, 16 April 1841.
5. Memorandum on Calcutta Mission, FP 24 April 1837, No.82.
6. Resident's Diary, 18 January 1841.
7. *Ibid.*, 17 March 1841. The Hanuman Dal had not been involved in the disturbances of 1840, but as the monarch's personal regiment it was presumably especially sensitive to palace intrigue.
8. Resident's Diary, 30 March 1841, and Wheeler (ed.), *Diary of Events in Nipal 1841 to 1846* (Simla: Government Central Branch Press 1878), entry for 14 June. The latter source is a condensed version of the Residency Diary, the original of which is not extant for the period after April 1841. It is cited hereafter as *Diary of Events*.
9. Ramakant, *op.cit.*, p.192.
10. *Diary of Events*, 12 July 1841.
11. Hodgson to Government, 7 and 10 March, FS 22 March 1841, No.125, and 29 March 1841 No.36 (*KM*, pp.99 and 101-3).
12. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.28, fn.5; Stiller, *KM, op.cit.*, pp.58 and 101-4.
13. Hodgson to Government, 3 March 1841, FS 22 March 1841 (*KM*, pp.94-5); Auckland to Rajendra, 29 March 1841, FS 29 March 1841, No.44 (*ibid.*, pp.105-6).
14. Abhiman is described as 'in chief charge of the army' in a gloss by Hodgson on the translation of a pro-Pande placard set up in July 1841 (FS 16 August 1841, No.115, *KM*, pp.113-5). Although he had not been involved in the 1840 mutiny, his good standing with the troops had led to their choosing him to transmit their letter to Rajendra. (Hodgson to Government, 14 August 1840, FS 31 August 1840, *KM*, pp.25-6.)
15. Resident's Diary, 20 January 1841.
16. FS 16 August 1841, No.115, *KM*, pp.113-4.
17. *Lal mohar* of Sunday, 11 Aswin Sudi 1898 (26 September 1841), published in Shamsheer Bahadur Thapa, *Ranbir Singh Thapa* (Lalitpur: Jagadamba Prakasan 2023 (1966/7)), pp.163-4.

18. Resident's Diary, 26 April 1841.
19. FS 16 August 1841, No.115 (*KM*, pp.113-4).
20. Resident's Diary, 18 January 1841.
21. Hodgson to Government, 31 October 1840, FS 16 November 1840, No.73.
22. Resident's Diary, 16 March and 13 April 1841.
23. Hodgson to Government, 1 August 1841, FS 16 August 1841, No.115; *KM*, pp.112-3.
24. *Ibid.*, and *Diary of Events*, 25 July 1841.
25. 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.25 (October 1973), p.8.
26. *Diary of Events*, 3 August 1841.
27. *Ibid.*, and 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *loc.cit.*
28. *Diary of Events*, 1 September 1841.
29. *Ibid.*, 31 August 1841.
30. *Ibid.*, 26 September 1841. On the same day a decree was issued restoring family property to the son of Bhimsen's brother, Ranbir Singh Thapa (*lal mohar* of Sunday, 11 Aswin Sudi 1898, cited in fn.17, above).
31. Hodgson to Government, November, FS 27 December 1841, No.77 (cited in Ramakant *op.cit.*, p.193).
32. *Vakil* Lokraman Upadhyaya wrote on 23 September (8 Aswin Sudi 1898), the substance of his letter being reproduced in Kathmandu's reply of Dwitiya Aswin 2 Vadi (2 October), published in *Itihas Prakas*, Vol.1, 1 Baisakh 2012 (April 1955), p.96, cited by Mojumdar, 'Indo-Nepalese Relations (1837-77)', unpublished PhD thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University 1962, p.210.
33. Hodgson to Government, 14 August 1841, FS 23 August 1841, No.70, and Ramakant, *op.cit.*, pp.193-4.
34. *Diary of Events*, 1 and 6 January 1842; Hodgson to Government, 7 January, FS 24 January 1842, No.77.
35. Ramakant, *op.cit.*, p.195.
36. *Diary of Events*, 3 May and 23 June 1842. Hodgson believed that Rajendra was the instigator on the former occasion, and Samrajya on the latter.
37. Ramakant, *op.cit.*, pp.200-1.

38. *Ibid.*
39. See *Diary of Events*, May 1841 to December 1842, *passim*. Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, pp.23-4, fn.42, lists the dates of fourteen principal incidents. See also 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, 25 (October 1974), p.9.
40. *Diary of Events*, 1 April, 17 and 27 May.
41. Sylvain Lévi, *Le Népal* (Paris: Ernest Leroux 1905-8), Vol.1, p.24.
42. Hunter, *op.cit.*, p.201.
43. *Diary of Events*, 16-22 October 1842. Entries earlier in the year generally accused the king, not the Pandes, of manipulating the crown prince.
44. Nicholette, 'Events at the Court of Nepal 1840-51', in Hasrat, *op.cit.*, p.314; and *Diary of Events*, 9 August 1842.
45. Nicholette, *loc.cit.* and Ramakant, *op.cit.*, p.200.
46. *Diary of Events*, 27 April 1842.
47. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.31 (misdating the incident to 1841); for the alternative version given by Jang to Orfeur Cavenagh, see Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur in Europe*, *op.cit.*, pp.76-7.
48. *Diary of Events*, 27 April and 5 May 1842.
49. Nicholette, *op.cit.*, pp.313-4.
50. Ellenborough to Rajendra, 3 June 1842, FS 7 September 1842, No.74A, *KM*, pp.191-2 (extract).
51. A detailed account of this complex case is given in Casinath's own petition of 17 June 1842 (FS 7 September 1842, No.86), with further information in Hodgson's 29 April report to the Governor-General (FS 3 August 1842, No.66) and in his annotated translation of the negotiating brief provided by the Darbar to a representative sent to the Governor-General's camp (FS 7 September 1842, No.86). The first and third documents are reproduced in *KM*, pp.132-41.
52. Hodgson, 'Private Note', quoted in Hunter, *op.cit.*, p.209.
53. Hodgson to Government, 29 April 1842, FS 3 August 1842, No.66.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Diary of Events*, 27 April 1842. Cf. Ramakant, p.205.
56. Ramakant, *op.cit.*, p.205, citing FS 3 August 1842, No.89, and 7 September, No.89.

57. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 16 May 1842, FS 3 August 1842. This letter was despatched a few hours before Hodgson received Ellenborough's letter of 8 May and wrote the reply to Maddock quoted on p.
58. Secretary with Governor-General to Hodgson, 8 May 1842, FS August 1842, No.67, quoted in Hunter, *op.cit.*, p.211. Hodgson himself admitted that in 1840 Fateh might have secured the king's agreement to quashing the decision against Casinath by allowing him to believe that the case could still be reopened in Kathmandu later on. (Hodgson to Maddock (DO), 17 May 1842, FS 3 August 1842, No.89.)
59. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 31 May 1842, FS 3 August 1842, No.95.
60. Hodgson to Maddock (DO), 16 May 1842, FS 3 August 1842, No.88, *KM*, pp.143-4.
61. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 31 May 1842, and (DO) 17 May 1842, FS 3 August 1842, Nos.95 and 89.
62. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 5, 9 and 12 June 1842, FS 7 September 1842, Nos.77, 81 and 83.
63. Ellenborough to Secret Committee, 8 July 1842, Despatch No.21 of 1842, *KM*, pp.152-4; Ramakant, *op.cit.*, p.205.
64. Secretary with Governor-General to Hodgson, 5 June 1842, FS 7 September 1842, No.75, *KM*, pp.145-6.
65. Secretary with Governor-General to Hodgson, 21 June 1842, quoted (from Hodgson's private papers) in Hunter, *op.cit.*, p.212. This letter does not seem to have been formally cancelled, but was not entered in the Secret Consultations (*ibid.*, p.222). The dismissal was effectively countermanded by Maddock's demi-official of 22 June (published in Hunter, p.217).
66. Secretary with Governor-General to Hodgson, 8 August 1842, FS 19 October 1842, No.64, published in Hunter, pp.220-1; Ellenborough to Hodgson, 24 October 1842, FS 8 March 1843, No.87, *KM*, pp.164-5.
67. See the account of the whole episode in Hunter, pp.210-26, and (on the reopening of the argument when the time for Hodgson to leave actually came) pp.231-5.
68. Lawrence frequently expressed the belief that it was difficult to convince the Nepalis of his own neutrality after their experience of Hodgson's partisanship. See, for instance, his letter to Government of 6 February 1844, FS 16 March 1844, No.29 (*Kot Massacre*, pp.230-3).

69. Ellenborough to Secret Committee, 8 July 1842, *KM*, pp.152-4; Stiller, *KM*, p.145 (introductory comment to Ellenborough's letter of 5 June 1842).
70. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.28, fn.5.
71. In a marginal comment on the account of the Kot Massacre in the book by his former assistant, Thomas Smith (*Narrative of a Five-Years' Residence at Nepal from 1841 to 1845* (London: Colburn 1852, Vol.2), p.104) Hodgson wrote that 'These same doings... demonstrate the folly of Lord Ellenborough's prate about the subserviency of the Resident to the Ministers' (see the copy in the IOL).
72. Hodgson with Secretary with Governor-General, 22 June 1842, FS 7 September 1842, No.88 (*KM*, pp.146-52).
73. *Diary of Events*, 1 August 1842 and Hodgson to Government, 5 September 1842, FS 5 October 1842, No.83, *KM*, pp.160-6.
74. 'Secret Intelligence', under cover of Hodgson to Government, 2 September 1842, FS 14 September 1842, No.82.
75. Hodgson to Government, 5 September 1842, FS October 1842, No.83, *KM*, pp.160-1.
76. *Diary of Events*, 13 October 1842.
77. Hodgson to Government 11 September 1842, FS 5 October 1842, No.148, *KM*, pp.162-3.
78. *Diary of Events*, 13 and 16-22 October 1842.
79. *Ibid.*, 28-30 October 1842.
80. *Ibid.*, 7 November. The penalty had still not be inflicted when Hodgson write his report of 24 November (FS 21 December 1842, No.84, *KM*, pp.166-7).
81. Hodgson to Government, 31 October 1842, FS 30 November 1842, No.34.
82. *Diary of Events*, 7 November 1842.
83. *Ibid.*, 16-22 and 23-27 October 1842.
84. *Ibid.*, 9 November 1842, and Baburam Acharya, 'Jangbahadur Ranako Prarambha', *op.cit.*, p.44. Acharya did not see *Diary of Events*, and will have been writing on the basis of oral tradition in Kathmandu.
85. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.32.

86. Bal Narsingh's date of death is given by Pudma (*op.cit.*) as 24 December 1841, but this is again most probably an error for December 1842, the date given by Baburam; Prasad Singh Basnet presumably died before April 1843, since a list of *bharadars* compiled between January and April of that year describes his son Megambhir Singh as 'kaji in place of his father' (*bābuko khāyal kāji*, Hodgson Papers, Vol.52, f.69-71). The *terminus post quem* for both deaths is September 1841, when both men countersigned a decree restoring confiscated Thapa property (cited above, fn.17), and Baburam is thus incorrect (though perhaps by only a few months) in claiming Prasad died in early 1841.
87. See Above, Chapter Two, p. 64.
88. 'List of Chiefs in 1843', HP, Vol.52, ff.69-71. This document carries the Nepali date 1899, *viz.*, mid-April 1842 to mid-April 1843, and thus must have been compiled in the opening months of the Western Year (this is confirmed also by its reference to Mathbar Singh, who returned to Kathmandu in April, as in India). Most of the appointments listed will have been made at the 1842 *pajani*.
89. *Diary of Events*, 9 November 1842; Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, pp.28-32.
90. Lawrence to Government, 30 September 1844, FS 26 October 1844, No.33.
91. *Diary of Events*, 11-13 November 1842.
92. Hodgson to Government, 17 November 1842, FS 21 December 1842, No.82, *KM*, pp.165-6.
93. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 31 May 1842, FS 3 August 1842, No.95. The May project envisaged the queen setting herself at the head of the petitioners (*Diary of Events*, 15 May 1842).
94. Hodgson to Government, 24 November 1842, FS 21 December, No.84, *KM*, pp.166-7; *Diary of Events*, 1 December 1842.
95. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 31 May 1842, FS 3 August 1842, No.95.
96. Hodgson to Government, 17 and 24 November 1842, FS 21 December 1842, Nos.82 and 84.
97. *Diary of Events*, 16-17 November 1842.
98. *Ibid.*. 27 November 1842.
99. *Ibid.*, 28 November 1842.
100. Hodgson to Government, 2 December 1842, FS 4 January 1843, No.54, *KM* pp.167-9.
101. *Ibid.*

102. Hodgson to Government, 3 December 1842, FS 4 January 1843, No.55, *KM*, pp.169-70.
103. Hodgson to Government, 4 December 1842, FS 4 January 1843, No.56, *KM*, pp.170-1.
104. Hodgson to Government, 6 December 1842, FS 4 January 1843, No.58. *KM*, pp.171-2.
105. Hodgson to Government, 8 December 1842, FS 4 January 1843, No.60, *KM*, p.173.
106. *Diary of Events*, 8 December 1842.
107. Hodgson to Government, 8 December 1842, FS 4 January 1843, No.60.
108. *Diary of Events*, 8 December 1842.
109. *Ibid.*, 16-18 December 1842; Hodgson to Government, 10 January 1843, FS 27 February 1843, No.73, *KM*, pp.176-7.
110. *Diary of Events*, *loc cit.*
111. Hodgson to Government, 23 December 1842, FS 22 March 1843, No.72, *KM*, pp.174-6.
112. Hodgson to Government, 31 January 1843, FS 1 March 1843, No.55 *KM*, pp.181-2.
113. *Lal mohar* of Paush 1 Sudi 1899 (1 January 1843), FS 22 February 1843, *KM*, pp.177-8. Pudma Rana, who misdates the document to 5 January, gives a different text, involving a complete and unambiguous transfer of power to the queen (*op.cit.*, p.36). This may reflect an earlier draft which was blocked by the *cauntaras*, but there could also have been deliberate falsification to support Jang Bahadur's claim that the violent actions which brought him to power in 1846 were justified because he was following the orders of the queen as Regent.
114. *Lal mohar* of Paush 5 Sudi 1899 (5 January 1843), FS 22 February 1843, No.60, *KM*, pp.182-3.
115. Government to Hodgson, 17 January 1843, FS 15 February 1843, No.79.
116. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.35.
117. This explanation of the motivation behind the book was given by his great-great-grandson, Pradyumna Rana (interview, Allahabad, 27 November 1982).
118. Hodgson to Government, 6 December 1842, FS 4 January 1843, No.58, *KM*, pp.171-2.

119. *Diary of Events*, 1 December 1842.
120. Hodgson to Government, 23 December 1842 and 10 January 1843, FS 22 March 1843 and 22 February. No.73, *KM*, pp.174-7.
121. *Diary of Events*, 30 November 1842.
122. The sackings were carried out 'in return for low tricks, contrary to the general sentiment and endeavour' (*ibid.*, 6 December 1842).
123. *Ibid.*, 7 December 1842, and Hodgson to Government, 8 December 1842, FS 4 January 1843, No.60, *KM*, p.173.
124. Hodgson to Government, 31 May 1842, FS 3 August 1842, No.95.
125. *Diary of Events*, 27 November 1842. Surendra had left the capital in September, returning in November. Hetaunda is in the inner Tarai on the main route to the border, and the prince had threatened that he would cross into India without authorisation, thereby causing a crisis with the British, if his father did not abdicate (Ramakant, *op.cit.*, pp.214-5).
126. Ambika Prasad Upadhyaya, *Nepalko Itihas* (Banaras: Debi Prasad Upadhyaya 1986 VS (1929/30)), p.143.
127. The fullest extant version of the edicts, in the form of a numbered series, is that published by Yogi Naraharinath in *Itihas Prakas*, No.2, Part III (Kathmandu 2013 VS (1956/7), pp.419-26, and reproduced as an appendix to the 1965 reprint of the *Muluki Ain* ('National Code') promulgated under Jang Bahadur (*Sri Panc Surendra Bikram Shah Devka Sasankalma Baneko Muluki Ain*, (Kathmandu: Sri Pancko Sarkar, 2022 BS), pp.695-700), but the substance of many of them has also been incorporated into the text of the *vamsavali* accounts of Rama Shah. A transliteration and translation of the *Itihas Prakas* text was published by Theodore Riccardi, together with variants from two other versions, in *Kailas*, 5 (1977), 1, pp.29-65. The edicts were certainly in circulation in the 1840s, and confusion between Rama Shah and Drabya Shah could readily have occurred, given the divergences in *vamsavali* accounts of the early Gorkha rulers (cf. Dinesh Raj Pant, *Gorkhako Itihas* (Kathmandu: the author 2041 VS (1984-5) Part 1, p.34).
128. Riccardi, *op.cit.*, p.49. The translation given substantially follows his, but *gadiko sojho garamjyalsamma* has been understood as 'as long as [you] uphold the throne' rather than 'in order to preserve the throne'. The former is the more natural interpretation, and is supported by the wording of the *Gorkhavamsavali* version quoted in Riccardi's footnote.
129. *Diary of Events*, 5 December 1842.
130. *Ibid.*, 9-15 December 1842.

131. Secretary with Governor-General to Hodgson, 28 April 1842, FS 3 August 1842, No.73.
132. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 9 May 1842 and Secretary to Hodgson, 18 May 1842, FS 3 August 1842, Nos.85 and 86.
133. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 20 August 1842, FS 5 October 1842, No.142.
134. Hodgson to Reade (DO), 19 December 1842, NR/5/125, and Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 26 January 1842, FS 1 March 1843, No.55.
135. Hodgson to Reade (DO), 19 December 1842, NR/5/125.
136. Mathbar informed Hodgson that he was leaving Gorakhpur for Allahabad on 1 February (Hodgson to Reade (DO), 3 February 1843).
137. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 23 January 1843, FS 1 March 1843, No.53, *KM*, pp.178-80, and 23 and 24 January 1843, FS 1 March 1843, No.55.
138. *Ibid.*, and Hodgson to Reade, 31 January 1843, NR/5/125.
139. Three brothers - Krishna Ram, Narayan and Vishnu - are listed in the 1843 *bharadar* list (see above, fn.88) as *mantri* ('ministers'), whilst Rangnath's son, Jivnath, was *gayatri guru* to Rajendra, and Krishna Ram's son Janardan *dharmadhikar*.
140. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 6 February 1843, FS 1 March 1843, No.61, *KM*, pp.183-5. Aibaran's political affiliation is unknown. He had been a member of the drafting commission for the 'Petition of Right', and was perhaps regarded as a spokesman for the army as a whole. He was probably not a member of Kulman Singh's branch of the Basnets (into which Jang Bahadur had married), as he is not included in the list of *bharadars* of that family in the 1843 list (cf. see fn.88).
141. Hodgson to Reade (DO), 6 February 1843, NR/5/125.
142. Hodgson to Reade (DO), 28 March and 7 April 1843, NR/5/125.
143. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 20 April 1843, FS 17 May 1843, No.88, *KM*, pp.193-4.
144. Lawrence to Government, 6 February 1844, FS 16 March 1844, No.29, *KM*, pp.231-3. In his introductory comment on this document Stiller discounts Lawrence's view rather too strongly, presumably because he had not seen the Hodgson-Reade correspondence, which is preserved only in the Residency Records.
145. Hodgson to Reade (DO), 6 February 1843, NR/5/125.

146. Hodgson to Reade (DO), 31 January 1843, NR/5/125.
147. Hodgson to Reade (DO), February 1843 (letter undated, but bound between letters of 3 and 6 February), NR/5/125.
148. Hodgson to Reade, DO, 28 March 1843, NR/5/125/
149. Lawrence's Official Diary, Eur.MSS F.85, No.96 (IOLR), entry for 14 March 1845. This document is hereafter cited as 'Lawrence Diary'.
150. See 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.25 (October 1973), pp.6-7.
151. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.32, implies that he received this post at the beginning of 1842, but his chronology in this section appears to be a year behind the true one (cf. above, p.185).
152. *Ibid.*, p.37.
153. Hodgson to Secretary with Governor-General, 20 April 1843, FS 17 May 1843, No.88, *KM*, pp.193-4. This document actually states that Mathbar was accompanied by 'Kaji Jang Bahadur Basnyat', but this is probably a copyist's error for 'Kajis Jang Bahadur and Kulman Singh Basnyat'.
154. *Ibid.*, and *Diary of Events*, 2 April 1843.
155. *Diary of Events*, 1 May 1843.
156. Royal Decree to Mathbar Singh Thapa and others, published in *Itihas Prakas*, Vol.1, No.1 (2012 VS (1955)), pp.41-6. The document is undated, but was issued after the execution of Randal Pande, whose trial was concluded on 9 July (*Diary of Events*, 8-15 July 1843).
157. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, pp.49-52. Gagan's position as Ranendra's *dada* is not mentioned by Pudma, but is recorded in 'Sri Tin Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana' (MSS in the collection of Mohan Prasad Khanal), Vol.1, p.49, while he is also referred to as *dada* in the *vamsavali* account ('Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.25 (October 1973), p.15).
158. Jain, *op.cit.*, pp.50 and 60.
159. Resident's Diary, 20-31 December 1839.
160. I.e., if the words *hamra nau* (*viz.*, the junior queen) *ko hajurma rahanya* are taken as qualifying *Devi Bahadurya Kuvar* as well as the intervening names.
161. Hodgson to Government, 12 May 1843, FS 7 June 1843, No.98, *KM*, pp.196-7.

162. *Diary of Events*, 17-20 September 1843; Lawrence to Government, 25 December 1843, FS 6 January 1844, *KM*, p.221.
163. *Diary of Events*, 21 April 1843.
164. *Ibid.*, 6-23 July and 5-10 August 1843.
165. *Ibid.*, 8 September 1843.
166. *Ibid.*, 1-4 August 1843.
167. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.51, fn.68.
168. *Diary of Events*, 21 August-4 September 1843.
169. Rajendra to Ellenborough, July 1843, FS 19 August 1843, No.8, *KM*, p.203.
170. Hodgson to Ellenborough, 20 July 1843, FS 19 August 1843, No.7, *KM*, p.204.
171. Lawrence to Government, 15 December 1843, FS 20 January 1844, *KM*, pp/209-13. Krishna Ram was back in Nepal by October (Hodgson to Darbar, 23 October 1843, NR/5/125), but later withdrew to join Rangnath (Lawrence Diary, July 1844, refers to 'the gurus' as now at Banaras).
172. John Lawrence and Audrey Woodwiss (eds.), *The Journals of Honoria Lawrence: India Observed 1837-54* (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1980), p.130. The date of 29 October given in *Diary of Events* will be a copyist's error.
173. *KM*, p.204.
174. Hodgson to Ellenborough, 17 July 1843, FS 19 August 1843, No.6, *KM*, pp.202-3.
175. Lawrence to Government, 13 December 1843, FS 27 January 1844, No.49, *KM*, pp.207-8.
176. Lawrence to Government, 13 December 1843, FS 27 January 1844, No.49.
177. Lawrence Diary, 11-15 and 15-16 December 1843.
178. *Lal mohar* of 4 Paus Sudi 1900 (25 December 1843), FS 30 March 1844, No.36. This document appears to be a condensed translation of the original Nepali text, which is given in *Purnima* No.22 (Sravan-Asin 2026 VS (July-October 1969)), pp.140-1, and also, with some variations in 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.25 (October 1973), pp.10-11.

179. Lawrence Diary, 26 and 28-30 December 1843.
180. *Ibid.*, 31 December 1843.
181. The change was made on Caitra 7 Badi 1900 (11 March 1844), *Regmi Research Series*, 3, 1 (January 1971), cited in J. Marize, 'Les Rana et le pouvoir', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Rouen 1980, p.36; cf. Lawrence Diary, 15 March 1844.
182. Lawrence Diary, 14 March 1845.
183. *HP*, Vol.7, p.47.
184. *Lal mohar* to Mathbar Singh and others, cited above, fn.163; 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.25 (October 1973), p.9.
185. *Diary of Events*, 12 September 1843.
186. *Ibid.*, 17-20 September 1843.
187. The price of paddy normally reached a maximum during the summer months, then fell sharply with the harvest in September-October. In 1843 the summer maximum was abnormally high and the price went on rising until the end of October, presumably because the harvest had been delayed by unfavourable weather. The October 1843 price was 50 per cent above October 1842 (Hodgson Papers, Vol.7, ff.82-5).
188. Lawrence Diary, 30 January 1844.
189. Lawrence to Government, 23 January 1844, FS 17 February 1844, No.13, *KM*, pp.227-9.
190. Lawrence to Government, 15 December 1843, FS 20 January 1844, No.1, *KM*, pp.209-13.
191. Lawrence to Government, 6 February 1844, FS 16 March 1844, No.29, *KM*, pp.230-3.
192. *Ibid.*, and Lawrence Diary, 2-31 July 1844.
193. Lawrence Diary, 10-18 January 1844.
194. Memorandum of Conference at the Residency, 27 January 1844, FS 16 March 1844, No.30, *KM*, pp.233-5.
195. Lawrence Diary, 28 January 1844.
196. Memorandum of Conference at the Residency, 5 February 1844, FS 16 March 1844, No.31, *KM*, pp.235-6.
197. Lawrence Diary, 13 March 1844.
198. *Ibid.*, 30 April 1844.

199. The resignation took place in May according to Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.338.
200. Lawrence Diary, 6 July 1844.
201. Interview with Nepal Man Singh (grandson of Laksmi Das), Kathmandu, 5 August 1983. Sardar Bhim Bahadur Pande (*Tyas Bakhtko Nepal*, Nepal ra Esiyali Anusandhan Kendra, 2039 VS (1982/3), Vol.2, p.113), does not mention any meeting with Bhimsen at Banaras, but claims Laksmi left Nepal after a quarrel and was recruited after 1816 through 'Ilayachi Kothi' (the Nepal government cardamom depot at Patna).
202. Lawrence Diary, 2 June 1844.
203. *Ibid.*, 1-31 July 1844.
204. Lawrence to Government, 23 September 1844, FS 16 March 1844, No.32, *KM*, pp.238-40.
205. Lawrence to Government, 19 November 1844, FS 28 December 1844, No.108, *KM*, pp.248-50.
206. Lawrence to Government, 14 October 1844, FS 23 November 1844, No.110, *KM*, pp.240-1.
207. Lawrence Diary, 15 October 1844.
208. 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.25 (October 1973), p.7.
209. Lawrence to Government, 19 October 1844, FS 23 November 1844, No.112, *KM*, p.241-3. *Dasai* (Dassera), the autumn festival at which appointments were traditionally made for the coming year, ends on 10 Aswin Sudi, corresponding in 1844 to 21 October.
210. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, p.340.
211. Lawrence to Government, 24 October 1844, FS 23 November 1844, No.113, *KM*, pp.243-6.
212. *Ibid.*
213. Lawrence Diary, 14 March 1845.
214. *Ibid.*, 31 October 1844.
215. *Ibid.* The 'promise' to which Surendra referred may have been the granting to him of the title 'maharajadhiraj' in summer 1842, or the compromise proposed during the 'National Movement' later that year under which he would receive the throne on his sixteenth birthday, which (reckoning inclusively) fell in October 1844 (see above, p.190).

216. Lawrence to Government, 9 November 1844, FS 28 December 1844, No.105, *KM*, pp.246-7.
217. Lawrence to Government, 11 November 1844, FS 28 December 1844, No.106, *KM*, p.247.
218. Lawrence to Government, 19 November 1844, FS 28 December 1844, No.108, *KM*, pp.248-9.
219. Lawrence Diary, 1 December 1844.
220. Lawrence to Government, 4 December 1844, FS 28 December 1844, No.111, *KM*, p.254.
221. Munshi's Report to Resident, 11 December 1844, FS 28 December 1844, No.120, *KM*, pp.255-7.
222. *Lal mohar* to Surendra, 10 December 1844, FS 25 January 1845, No.118, *KM*, p.263.
223. Lawrence to Government, 16 December 1844, FS 25 January 1845, No.115, *KM*, p.257-9.
224. *Ibid.*
225. Lawrence to Government, 18 December 1844, FS 25 January 1845, No.116, *KM*, pp.259-60.
226. Government to Lawrence, 28 December 1844, FS 25 January 1845, No.117, *KM*, pp.163-4.
227. *KM*, p.218.
228. Munshi's Report to Resident (see above, note 221).
229. 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.25 (October 1973), p.13.
230. Munshi's Report, *op.cit.*
231. Cf. 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.25 (October 1973), p.14.
232. Lawrence Diary, 24 December 1844.
233. *Ibid.*
234. *Ibid.*, 29 December 1844; Lawrence to Government, 4 January 1845, FS 25 January 1845, No.121, and 29 January 1845, FS 21 February 1845, No.110, *KM*, pp.264-8.

235. *Lal mohar* of 4 Phalgun Badi 1904 (26 February 1845), cited in Triratna Manandhar, 'Jang Bahadur Kahile Praiministar Bane?', *Nepal Economist*, Vol.1, 4-5 (July-August 1983), p.14. Mathbar's full title, as given in a dedicatory inscription a few weeks later, was *sri praimministar yan aind kamyandar inciph janaral matbarsingh thapa kalabahadur* (inscription of Thursday, 5 Magh Sudi 1901 (date irregular - 13 March 1845?) published in *Purnima*, No.22 (Sravan-Asvin 2026 (July-October 1969))), pp.133-4. The *yan aind* is two alternative transliterations of the English 'and', whilst *kalabahadur* was probably an imitation of the title of the Sikh sardar Dyan Singh, who was prominent at the Lahore court during Mathbar's stay there.
236. Lawrence Diary, 15 January 1845; Lawrence to Government, 4 January 1845, FS 25 January 1845, No.121, *KM*, pp.264-5.
237. Lawrence to Government, 29 January 1845, FS 21 February 1845, No.10, *KM*, pp.265-8.
238. Lawrence Diary, March 1845.
239. *Ibid.*, 26 March and 28 April 1845.
240. 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.25 (October 1973), p.13.
241. Lawrence to Government, 29 January 1845, FS 21 February 1845, No.110, *KM*, pp.265-8. The reference to five new regiments in the *vansavali* (*op.cit.*, p.13) probably includes two existing regiments renamed by Mathbar.
242. 'Nepal Desko Itihas', p.14. The Resident referred to this as if it were a new measure in May (Lawrence Diary, 8-15 May 1845), but this is probably a misunderstanding.
243. Pudma Jang (*op.cit.*, p.43) claims that Surendra, too, turned against Mathbar, but there is no contemporary evidence to support this.
244. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.344.
245. Lawrence to Lord Auckland, 25 May 1845, quoted in J.L. Morison, *Lawrence of Lucknow* (London: Bell and Sons 1934), p.141.
246. Lawrence to Government, 24 May 1845, FS 13 June 1845, No.17, *KM*, pp.272-5.
247. *Ibid.* Pudma Jung (*op.cit.*, p.59) disingenuously quotes this remark, made in the belief that Jang was not the assassin, as 'proof' that his father's killing of Mathbar was justified by the circumstances!

248. Jang's involvement in the murder is implied in a letter to ex-King Rajendra sent by the *bharadars* in Kathmandu at Jang's behest on 12 May 1847 (FS 26 June 1847, No.194, *KM*, p.333). Jang later explained in detail to members of the British Residency how he had acted as marksman (Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.348; Oliphant, *op.cit.*, p.166; Nicholette, 'Events at the Court of Nepal, 1840-52', in Hasrat, *op.cit.*, p.319).
249. M.S. Jain, *Emergence, op.cit.*, pp.57-64.
250. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.54.
251. On Debi Bahadur's death, see above, pp.
252. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.43-4.
253. Lawrence Diary, 23 October and 13 November 1844.
254. Jang to Bam Bahadur, September (?) 1850, below, p.425; *Diary of Events*, 25 November 1845.
255. See above, p.226.
256. *Ancient Nepal*, No.25 (October 1973), p.14.
257. Lawrence Diary, 8-15 May 1845.
258. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.50; *Ancient Nepal, loc.cit.*, p.15.
259. Lawrence Diary, 2 February 1845.
260. *Ibid.*, 20 February 1845.
261. Jain, *op.cit.*, pp.63-4.
262. Campbell (Assistant Resident), to Government, 18 December 1835, FP 28 December 1835, No.46.
263. Lawrence Diary, 15 January 1845.
264. Lawrence to Lord Auckland, 25 May 1845 (see above, note 245).
265. 'Order to Subedar Badrinath Chhatkuli Regarding Complaints of People of Rautahat District', Marga Sudi 2, 1905 (1 December 1825), cited in M.C. Regmi, *Thatched Huts and Stucco Palaces* (New Delhi: Vikas 1978), pp.54-5 and 61.
266. Mathbar's *jagir* consisted of 2,200 *ropani* of rice-lands in the hills, plus other revenues of Rs.10,120; his new *birta* grants comprised 25,346 *bighas* in the Eastern Tarai, plus Rs.10,526 in cash from villages in the central hill region (Regmi, *op.cit.*, pp.37-8). It is not possible to give precise cash equivalents

266. (continued)

for land allocations, but 2,200 *ropanis* in the hills would have realised up to 2,200 rupees in the far west (since the maximum tax rate (*ibid.*, p.54) was 4 annas per *muri*, *viz.* one rupee per *ropani*), whilst land immediately adjacent to the Kathmandu Valley might have yielded between 4,000 and 8,800 rupees (using Regmi's estimate (p.57) for 1836/7 of 20-30 *pathis* of paddy taken in tax per *ropani*, and a paddy price in Kathmandu fluctuating in the early 1840s between 88 and 60 *manas* (*viz.*, 11 to 7½ *pathis*) per rupee (HP, Vol.7, ff.82-84). The 25,000 *bighas* in the Eastern Tarai would have provided an income of up to 100,000 rupees, even at the lower rates prevailing earlier in the century (the maximum had been 4 rupees per *bigha*, Regmi, *op.cit.*).

267. Eastern Tarai revenue in 1842/3 was Rs.10,98,958 (HP, Vol.13, f.150).

268. Lawrence to Government, 24 May 1845, FS: 13 June 1845, No.17, KM, pp.272-5.

269. Lawrence Diary, 16-31 May 1845.

270. Lawrence to Government, 18 May 1845, FS 13 June 1845, KM, pp.270-1

CHAPTER FIVE

JANG BAHADUR TAKES POWER: 1845-47Introduction

Sixteen months after Mathbar's death, the instability which had beset Nepal since the fall of Bhimsen Thapa climaxed in the massacre of many of the leading *bharadars* and the appointment^{of} Jang Bahadur as minister. Jang had come to power as the queen's partisan, but he then broke with her to back Crown Prince Surendra, whom in 1847 he installed on the throne in Rajendra's place. The deposition and the events leading up to it will be examined in this chapter for the light shed on the inter-relationship between the key components of the Nepal policy: throne, *bharadari* and army. Since it marked the inauguration of a century of Rana rule, this whole episode is of key importance in the modern history of Nepal. The question of responsibility for the massacre and the details of the manoeuvring before and after have therefore attracted considerable scholarly attention, but the conflicting stories circulated at the time and afterwards have ensured that the controversy has never been fully resolved. It is doubtful whether even a court of enquiry convened with full powers in 1847 would have been able to establish the truth with certainty, much less a twentieth-century historian. However an account will be presented here on the basis of a full survey of the previously available evidence and of new material recently brought to light.

Politics after Mathbar

Mathbar's death revived the hopes of contenders for power who had

been completely deprived of influence during his ascendancy. Prominent amongst those rejoining the fray were the *cauntara* brothers, Fateh Jang and Guru Prasad Shah, who had been in exile since the beginning of the year, and *rajguru* Rangnath Paudyal, who had spent most of the last two years in Banaras and whom the Resident thought the most likely to emerge as premier.¹ In fact the spoils went in the first instance to the most active participants in the plot against Mathbar, Gagan Singh and Kulman Singh Basnet being appointed as *kajis* whilst Jang Bahadur was made a general. All of these appointments were believed to have been the queen's, and she showed further favour to Jang's family by the bestowal of captaincies on four of his brothers. Not surprisingly, the junior *cauntaras* who were in Kathmandu at the time complained that all the profit from the assassination was going to one family.² Jang also began acting as *de facto* minister, though he informed the Resident through a personal messenger that he had declined the king's offer of the premiership and recommended Rajendra to appoint Fateh Jang instead.³ He did, however, explicitly accept overall charge of the army, with direct command of three regiments.⁴

Despite - or rather because of - this sudden rise to glory, Jang's position was a precarious one. He had been recruited into the plot against his uncle, and subsequently rewarded so handsomely, because his popularity with the army was expected to keep the soldiers content under the new regime. This did not alter the fact that real power rested with others: Gagan Singh, the queen's closest confidant, and, to a lesser extent, Abhiman Singh Rana, who returned from his exile in early June, were actually directing the administration.⁵ Whilst thus

in subordinate collaboration with Mathbar's enemies, Jang was also attempting to retain his standing with those who had been his uncle's allies: some of these had found it prudent to leave the country, but Karbir Khatri remained influential, and above all there was Prince Surendra, whom Mathbar had championed and whose adherent Jang was now claiming to be.⁶ Jang's assistance to Mathbar's sons to escape from Kathmandu, though conceivably also influenced by genuine concern for his cousins, must be seen as part of this political strategy.⁷ At the same time, he took pains to assure the Resident that he had not been involved in the murder, and, as has already been seen, these assurances were believed.⁸

A *lal mohar* issued at the end of May provided that the king was to issue commands to the prince, who would then pass them on to the queen, and that she would then give instructions to the ministers.⁹ In the event, Surendra appeared to lie low for a while whilst king and queen jockeyed for power. Laksmi Devi was eager to have her own men, Gagan Singh and Abhiman Rana, receive the title of general which had already been given to Jang, and she pressed to have the *pajani* started in August. Rajendra opposed this, preferring to wait until Fateh Jang Shah returned to Kathmandu.¹⁰ The *cauntara* finally arrived on 15 August, and it was subsequently reported that the king was backing him for premier, while Surendra and the queen supported Jang Bahadur and Gagan Singh respectively.¹¹ The queen's preference for Gagan makes it clear that her elevation of Jang in May had been motivated by the need to conciliate the army, not by any personal favour towards him.

The outcome of the argument between king and queen was the assignment of specified civil and military responsibilities to the three aspirants for the premiership and to Abhiman and Dalbhanjan Pande. Fateh was to be *mukhtiyar*, but the title did not carry with it any real authority over his colleagues. He received command of the Bajrabani, Sher and Singh Nath regiments, the supervision of foreign affairs and of the four principal law courts, and responsibility for the administration of western Nepal; the latter was to be exercised largely through his brother Guru Prasad, who was appointed Governor of Palpa. Gagan Singh was made a general, and assigned seven regiments: the Letar and Srinath (the largest and most privileged of the *kampu* units), the Kali Prasad (formerly the Hanuman Dal - the unit set up in 1836 as a royal bodyguard), the Ramdal (the artillery regiment), and the Mahindrada, Rajdal and Shamsherdal, three of the regiments which had been either set up or renamed under Mathbar. He also received charge of the arsenals and magazines at the capital. Abhiman Singh Rana, too, became a general, but was assigned only the Naya Gorakh and Sarvadhoj regiments, together with reappointment as head of the Treasury (*Kausi Tosakhana*) the post he had held when the 'British Ministry' had been formed five years earlier. He was also to have charge of the hills east of Kathmandu. Dalbhanjan Pande, Bhimsen's old colleague, who was now no longer regarded as a serious contender for power but included as an 'elder statesman', was allotted the Rana Priya Dal, also probably one of the regiments set up by Mathbar. Jang Bahadur retained the three units assigned to him in May, *viz.*, the Purana Gorakh, the Devidat and the Kalibaks. According to Lawrence's report he was also given 'the office

of Chief Judge, which he held under his uncle' - probably a confused reference to the post of Kaji of *Kumari Cauk*, an office responsible for auditing government accounts but also functioning as a court.¹² The Resident originally was given the impression that Jang was not regarded as a full member of the 'ministry', but it soon became clear that he was functioning as such.¹³

The allocation to Gagan of seven regiments - including those that had been the most politically sensitive - underlined his *de facto* superiority over the other ministers. Abhiman was probably second in terms of influence over the internal administration. It is surprising that he held only two regiments to Jang Bahadur's three, especially since, like Jang, he was a favourite of the army. The explanation probably lies in his own disinclination to push his claims too strongly, since in reporting the state of the Darbar a month before the formation of the ministry, Lawrence had contrasted Gagan and Jang Bahadur's eagerness for the dangerous office of premier with Abhiman's probable cautiousness.¹⁴ Perhaps more significant, however, will have been the unwillingness of the queen to let Abhiman secure a position strong enough to challenge Gagan Singh. Precisely because Jang was so much junior to Abhiman he could more safely be entrusted with military patronage. Not that Jang either could be totally trusted. Although the Purana Gorakh regiment, with which he had been associated in the past, might be strongly attached to her personally, the queen's interference in the *pajani* of his units in September suggests she was eager to ensure subordinate officers were loyal to her rather than their immediate commander.¹⁵

In the manoeuvring for position that accompanied the *pajani* Surendra put forward a proposal to recall and reconcile both Thapa and Pande exiles. This notion was particularly alarming to Gagan and the queen, the latter threatening to retire to Allahabad or Benaras if the Pandes were allowed back. Rajendra, too, was annoyed at his son's suggestion, and Surendra could do more than fulminate against Gagan Singh as the 'slave son of a slave chobdar'.¹⁶ In an attempt to conciliate her stepson, the queen suggested that those appointed at the main *pajani* should present their ceremonial gifts (*najar*), to him, though he was allowed no say in the selection of personnel, which was in the hands of herself and Rajendra jointly.

The *pajani* itself was marked by one very significant change: the removal from his post as *dharmadhikar* of Janardan Paudyal, the son of Krishna Ram Paudyal and nephew of Rangnath. Janardan thereby lost a post which as well as great prestige carried an income of 30-40,000 rupees per annum, contrasting with the 400 rupees that went with the kajiship now bestowed upon him.¹⁷ This blow to the Paudyals came only five months after Lawrence had reckoned Rangnath the man most likely to become premier following Mathbar's death. Rangnath had indeed travelled up to Kathmandu from Banaras with high hopes of regaining a key position in the Darbar. However, after his arrival in August he appears to have had no influence on the course of events: there is no mention of him in any of the accounts of the struggle leading up to the installation of the 'coalition' ministry in September.¹⁸ The decline in Paudyal fortunes which the *pajani* underlined might be linked with the Death of Krishna Ram in Banaras in April,¹⁹ but much more important must have been the fact

that the queen, whose *guru* Rangnath was, had lost confidence in him. His departure from Nepal at the end of 1842 had seemed to her like a desertion, and resentment on that score, coupled, no doubt, with Gagan's efforts to ensure he had no rival as her confidant, prevented him from re-establishing himself as a political force. It was an eclipse from which the family was never to recover.

Janardan's replacement, Vijay Raj Pande, belonged to a family which had supplied the *guru* to Prithvi Narayan Shah's father but had thereafter been overshadowed by both the Mishras and the Paudyals. Shortly after Rangnath and Bhimsen Thapa had returned to Nepal with ex-King Rana Bahadur, the last Pande to act as *dharmadhikar*, Bani Vilas, had been ousted in favour of the Paudyal brothers, and for some forty years no member of the family had been prominent in Nepali public life.²⁰ Vijay's own grandfather, Narayan Pande, had left the hills as early as 1753, after Prithvi Narayan had tricked him into entrapping the King of Tanahu, to whose family the Pandes had been *gurus* since before they became involved with the Gorkha dynasty.²¹ According to one account, Narayan's son, Vijay's father, had spent a short time in Kathmandu after Rana Bahadur's return, but otherwise the family had remained throughout in Banaras. Some time before 1843 Vijay himself had come up to Kathmandu and his expounding of the *puranas* at a temple just outside the Hanuman Dhoka palace had attracted royal attention and secured him employment as a court pandit.²² It is not clear whether the king or the queen was his principal patron, though later events suggest that it was more likely the latter.

Vijay's relations with other members of the *bharadari* are something of a mystery. The family tradition just cited claims that he had entered

the palace under the joint patronage of Rangnath Paudyal and of a man holding the rather obscure office of *jetha budha*.²³ It is likely that the claimed link with Rangnath, at least, is based on a confusion, as it is difficult to see why he should thus have assisted a member of a family who were hereditary rivals to his own. There is, however, a possibility that he was already an associate of Jang Bahadur's. According to the most widely known account - that of Pudma Rana - the partnership between the two men began after the appointment of Jang as premier in 1846, but, as will be seen below, the details Pudma gives are certainly inaccurate and the connection between the two could well have been a longstanding one.²⁴ This is supported by a story still told in Kathmandu, according to which Vijay knew Jang in his young gambling days and became his creditor.²⁵

At the time Vijay was appointed it was becoming clear that war was imminent between the British and the Sikhs. The prospect of becoming the only independent native state in India naturally caused grave alarm in Kathmandu. The old stock responses of having the *pandits* consult the scriptures to predict the outcome, and sending an appeal to Peking for assistance were both forthcoming. Our sources do not give the priests' conclusions, but the Celestial Government returned its usual dusty answer.²⁶ There remained the crucial problem of whether Nepal herself should intervene in the conflict. At the time the issue was under discussion the intelligence reaching the Residency was that 'many ministers', and also Prince Surendra, were for joining the Sikhs whereas the king and queen wished to preserve peace with the British.²⁷ In December Rajendra himself informed Lawrence that Nepal could make 5,000 troops available to support the British in the Panjab if a month's advance notice were given.²⁸

Pudma Rana's account claims that Fateh Jang, Abhiman and Dalbhanjan were all 'in favour of coming in on the Sikh side, and that it was contrary advice from Gagan and Jang Bahadur which swayed the king and queen against such rashness.²⁹ Given the previous pro-British orientation of all the allegedly pro-Sikh ministers, and also their reputation for caution, Pudma is almost certainly misrepresenting their attitude, and merely reflecting an attempt by Jang to discredit his predecessors with the British. It is possible, however, that the three counselled a policy of strict neutrality whilst Gagan and Jang Bahadur proposed the offer of assistance to the British. Furthermore Pudma's picture of Jang and Gagan working together as allies is consistent with contemporary sources, which show both men increasingly perceived as working in tandem in the queen's interest.

Jang's new alignment was dramatically highlighted in late October 1845, when placards were displayed in Kathmandu warning Surendra to beware of him and Gagan, and alleging that they had murdered Mathbar Singh at the queen's instigation. This allegation was almost certainly true, but it offended Rajendra as he had been claiming ever since the night of Mathbar's death that he himself had killed his minister. He ordered the removal of the placards, but they seem to have the desired effect on Surendra: the following month he first threatened to leave for Banaras and return at the head of an English army, and later gave out that he now knew who Mathbar's murderers were and would take revenge.³⁰ Nothing came of these fulminations, but the following February Rajendra felt it necessary to order the arrest of three persons who had repeated to Surendra the charge that Gagan and Jang had killed Mathbar, and had also told him that the two men were now plotting with

the queen to put one of her sons on the throne.³¹ In the midst of this tension within the royal family, the question of a possible reduction in the soldiers' pay to finance an expansion of the army was again raised. In stark contrast to earlier occasions, such talk did not lead to any unrest; in the same Diary entry recording the proposal, the Resident noted the presence for the *pajani* of 10,000 *dhakres* and a consequent rise in the price of rice, expressing his surprise at:

How peacefully these crowds of soldiers came and went: one set discharged, another enlisted, and a third disappointed; all with the same perfect peaceableness.³²

The men's docility might have had various explanations. The pay curb proposal was perhaps rapidly dropped, or, alternatively, since it was mooted just as the Panjab war was about to begin, no one wanted to be seen opposing a way of increasing the country's military strength at a time of possible peril. More likely, however, the men were quiet because no *bharadar* of any influence wished to rouse them. With the Pandes in exile Surendra had no real party behind him, Gagan and Jang between them held the direct patronage of the greater part of the *kampu*, and the other ministers will not have wanted to make a move whilst the king openly opposed those few malcontents trying to stir up opposition to the queen's faction.

In January 1846 Rajendra issued a *lal mohar* granting authority to the queen. The precise nature of the powers delegated is unknown, since the document has not survived and there is no mention of it in any contemporary source. It is referred to in a *lal mohar* of 1868, however, and the prominence there given to it suggests that it provided the main case for Jang Bahadur's claim that the queen had been put in complete

command of the state and that all his own actions in September 1846, which he maintained were performed on her orders, were therefore entirely lawful.³³ It is likely that the 1846 document was in fact ambiguously worded, leaving the usual doubt as to where ultimate authority actually lay.

Whatever the position on paper, the queen certainly appears to have remained the dominant influence in practice, though by the end of March Rajendra seemed fully reconciled with Surendra.³⁴ Within the ministry her favourite Gagan Singh had the strongest voice, but there was a clear split between him and Fateh Jang, with whom Abhiman Singh was now apparently aligned. Munshi Laksmi Das attempted to draw Lawrence's successor as Resident, I.R. Colvin, into expressing support for the queen - and thus for Gagan also - reminding him of the high opinion which Hodgson had held of her.³⁵ Although for most of the year political life in Kathmandu seemed peaceful enough, behind the scenes a struggle continued over the appointments to be made at the next *pajani*. In July, writing privately to Brian Hodgson in Darjeeling, Colvin reported that Gagan's allies were expected to win, and that Fateh Jang was declining in influence: there was even talk of his brother Guru Prasad being superseded as Governor of Palpa by Jang Bahadur, who was evidently still seen very much as Gagan's ally.³⁶ The following month tension rose, with Jang openly criticising Fateh in Darbar. Shortly before the end of August, however, Fateh and Gagan had a long private interview and were reported to have agreed that the present coalition arrangement would be renewed for the coming year, as the queen wanted.³⁷ Three weeks later, before the *pajani* actually got under way, this seeming harmony was shattered by the most dramatic episode in Nepal's modern history - the assassination of

Gagan Singh, the massacre of a large section of the *bharadari*, and Jang Bahadur's appointment by the queen as *mukhtiyar*.

The Kot Massacre

Gagan was killed by a shot fired through a window of his house while he was at prayer, at around 10.00 pm on the evening of 14 September. His assailant escaped, and his identity remains a matter of controversy. The 'official' version, promulgated after Jang Bahadur had gained control of the government, put the blame on Lal Jha, a Brahman who had been suspected of various crimes in the past but had always avoided conviction. Jha allegedly admitted his guilt in a death-bed confession early in 1847, and he claimed that he had been acting for Fateh Jang, Abhiman Singh Rana and other ministers. His account was supported by that of a supposed accomplice, Daddu Upadhyaya, who was interrogated on 4 February 1847 in the presence of the head *munsif* of the British Residency. After Surendra became king later that year, he told the Resident that Fateh in turn had been acting on instructions from King Rajendra. The conspiracy was said to have included all the ministers except Jang Bahadur, who was left out because of his recent identification with Gagan and the queen. Rajendra's motive was alarm at Gagan's position as an 'over-mighty' subject - essentially the same consideration which had led him to act against Mathbar - and also anger over his liaison with Laksmi Devi. The ministers, long resentful of Gagan's pre-eminence, were willing instruments of the royal vengeance.³⁸

Regardless of whether Gagan and the queen were in fact lovers, the above story is perfectly consistent with everything known about the state of feeling in the Darbar at the time. However, against it must be set

the widespread tradition in Nepal which claims that either Jang Bahadur himself, or his brother Badri Narsingh, acting on his instructions, was the murderer. According to one version, Badri had easy access to Gagan's house because he was the lover of Gagan's daughter, but this elaboration may have been invented on the basis of a later relationship between the two. The belief that Jang was behind the assassination is, of course, linked to the assumption that the consequent Kot massacre was pre-planned by him, and although such a view cannot be definitely disproved, it is scarcely consistent with the cautious *attentiste* role which Jang had hitherto played in Darbar affairs.

A new twist to this longstanding debate has been given by the discovery of a letter written by Queen Laksmi Devi to Rajendra eight months after the event. In this she implies strongly that Jang was indeed responsible for Gagan's death, but reveals also that some time before the assassination Lal Jha had actually informed the king and queen that the crime was being planned. He had alleged that Bir Keshar Pande, cousin of the minister Dalghanjan Pande, had discussed with 'Randhoj Dada' the possibility of murdering Gagan, exiling the queen to Tibet and blinding her two sons. The conversation had supposedly taken place in the private apartments of Prince Upendra, second son of the late Queen Samrajya, and Mathbar Singh's mother was also present.⁴⁰ This ties in at two points with the story that Jang Bahadur and Surendra gave the British: in their version Bir Kesar was one of the conspirators, while Upendra, who was young enough not to attract suspicion, was used by Rajendra as the channel to convey his instructions for the murder to Fateh Jang. Mathbar's mother is not mentioned in other accounts, but she would have had an obvious motive for joining in a plot against Gagan, as he was believed to have been the

key figure behind the murder of her son. Bir Keshar was her brother, so that the plot which Lal Jha denounced - whether real or a figment of his imagination - had the appearance of a bid for family revenge.

Finally, we have to consider the story preserved by the descendants of Ransher Shah, younger brother of Fateh Jang and Guru Prasad. According to this, Lal Jha was indeed the assassin, but was acting on orders from both Fateh Jang and Jang Bahadur, the two having jointly decided that morning to kill Gagan.⁴¹ Jang Bahadur would thus have been involved, but only as a collaborator of Fateh and possibly of the other ministers. This theory coincides neatly with the hypothesis put forward by Ludwig Stiller (apparently without any knowledge of the Shah family tradition) in 1981.⁴² It is also reconcilable with Laksmi Devi's May 1847 letter, for Lal Jha might deliberately have laid false information against Bir Keshar and his sister in order to cover himself and those for whom he was working. Whether the real originator of the conspiracy was Rajendra or (as Triratna Manandhar has argued) Fateh himself,⁴³ Jang Bahadur would have been brought in on the expectation that he could be induced to betray Gagan as he had his uncle Mathbar, and that his adhesion to the plot would ensure the continuing loyalty of the army. It is still just possible to argue that Jang was not involved at all, but this new alternative hypothesis seems now the more probable.

The news of Gagan's murder was brought to the queen in the nearby Hanuman Dhoka palace by his son, Wazir Singh. After a visit to the house, she went to the Kot, the arsenal and assembly hall by the palace and ordered Abhiman Singh Rana, whose own house was close by, to have the bugle sounded to summon all the civil and military officials. Whereas the other *bharadars* came mostly unarmed and with only a few followers,

Jang Bahadur brought his three regiments with him, as well as his six brothers. Pudma Rana claims that he acted thus out of fear that the assassins of Gagan Singh would try to strike at him next, because he too had been seen as an ally of the queen during the last few months.⁴⁴

Although, as has been seen, Jang himself was very likely party to the plot against Gagan, his fear may still have been quite genuine: he will have been uncertain whether he could trust his new-found friends, and also perhaps apprehensive lest the regiments that had been under Gagan's command should turn against the surviving ministers, himself included.

Because of what she had previously learnt from Lal Jha, the queen was convinced that Bir Keshar Pande was involved in the murder, and she ordered Abhiman Singh Rana to place him in irons. Abhiman complied, but when Laksmi Devi gave a further order to kill Bir Keshar he refused to obey, as the king would not confirm the instruction. This angered the queen, and she told the general that she held delegated powers to act however she pleased. Abhiman stood his ground. He was, from a legal standpoint, quite right to do so, for notwithstanding claims to the contrary, Rajendra had never made an unambiguous grant of regency powers to his wife: the fact that he had so far allowed the queen to take the lead in conducting the investigation did not detract from his own ultimate authority.

Fateh Jang had still not arrived at the Kot, despite the queen's having earlier sent Jang Bahadur's brother to summon him. The king now decided to go in search of Fateh himself, and so left the Kot. The queen meanwhile ordered all the *bharadars* to assemble in the large hall on the western side of the Kot and to remain in session until the murderer could be identified. She herself appears now to have retired to a first-floor room, above the hall where most of the *bharadars* were gathered.

Up to this point the account given in a document which the Resident, Major Thoresby, forwarded to Calcutta in March 1847, and which has been the main source for the foregoing paragraphs, is not controverted by other evidence.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, this is far from being the case with the critical events which followed, and it has to be explained why the 'Thoresby Report', as the document has been dubbed is more trustworthy than the alternatives. Best known among the latter are the accounts given by Pudma Rana in the biography of his father, and by Orfeur Cavenagh in the book he wrote after acting as Jang's guide on his 1850 European journey. These versions differ from each other, as well as from the Thoresby Report despite the fact that both authors must have relied mainly on what Jang himself had told them. M.S. Jain and Ludwig Stiller have argued that the Residency document, too, originated with Jung,⁴⁶ but this is unlikely. As will shortly be seen, the Thoresby Report does not explicitly state who fired the volley of shots which it claims began the violence, but the details presented make it easy to infer, as was first done by Thoresby himself, that Jang's own partisans were responsible.⁴⁷ The document is thus plainly inconsistent with Jang's own statement two days after the massacre to the Officiating Resident that the first blow had been struck by Fateh Jang Shah's son, Khadga.⁴⁸ Now, when the Thoresby Report was submitted in March 1847, Jang Bahadur's position was still far from secure as King Rajendra was in British territory and being urged by political exiles to act against him. Jang will therefore have been particularly anxious to convince the British of the legitimacy of his position, and would therefore surely have stuck to his original story. It follows that although the Thoresby Report may have been based partly on information obtained directly or indirectly from Jang, it must also

have drawn on other sources, and can thus be accepted as more impartial than either Pudma or Cavenagh's accounts.

There remains another, rather more fundamental difficulty. Despite many differences between them, the Report, Pudma and Cavenagh all agree in presenting Jang's actions at the Kot as a response to a perceived threat after the *bharadars* had assembled, and not as a plot which he had hatched beforehand. They also coincide in asserting that these actions were approved at the time by Queen Laksmi Devi, a contention which is also supported by the account in the Buddhiman Singh *vamsavali*.⁴⁹ This leaves intact Jang's defence that he had her authority for what he did. However, suspicion that the real truth may have been different has often been expressed, and has, of course, only been increased by the fact that Jang himself originated mutually contradictory accounts: in addition to the stories already mentioned, in 1856 he had it given out that the slaughter had actually been ordered in writing by King Rajendra.⁵⁰ Laksmi Devi's recently discovered May 1847 letter to her husband appears at first sight to provide damning confirmation that Jang acted entirely on his own initiative. The critical passage runs as follows:

On the night of Aswin Badi 9 (14 September) you and I installed ourselves at the Kot. [We asked] who had killed General Gagan Singh by firing a shot from the roof and for what [alleged] crime he had been killed. We declared that those in the conspiracy to murder him, as well as the actual assassin, must be identified and arrested. The search for the murderers began, but at the moment, Vijay Raj Pande and Jang Bahadur deceitfully submitted that all of them [i.e. they and the other *bharadars*] would sit in council together and would discover the murderer and that you and I should leave and take our rest. I then went inside the *kothari* while you set off for the palace. Meanwhile, Jang Bahadur surrounded the palace with his officers, NCOs and men of the regiments under his command, created confusion and killed the *bharadars*, then drove out their wives and children.⁵¹

Elsewhere in the letter, Laksmi Devi repeatedly emphasises that she gave no orders for violence to be used against anyone except Bir Keshar Pande, Mathbar Singh's mother and two others all of whom had been denounced by Lal Jha as involved in a plot against the queen's party. Laksmi Devi also claims that in the days immediately following the massacre Jang Bahadur had explained his action purely as self-defence and said nothing about orders from herself. It is not surprising, therefore, that Triratna Manandhar, the Nepali historian who discovered her letter in the Foreign Ministry archives, should have concluded his discussion with the suggestion that the standard accounts of the massacre would now have to be radically revised.⁵²

Some revision there undoubtedly must be, but a critical examination of the document shows that reliance on the Thoresby Report need not be abandoned as a consequence. In the first place, the *kothari* to which the queen said she retired is clearly to be identified with the chamber on the first floor of the Kot where the Residency Report, Pudma and Cavanagh all agree she remained as events reached their climax.⁵³

Contrary to Manandhar's apparent belief, Laksmi Devi does not claim that she quitted the scene entirely, only that she left the main hall where she had ordered the *bharadars* to remain at the moment her husband set off to summon Fateh Jang.

Secondly, and more fundamentally, Laksmi Devi was far from being an impartial witness and her assertions can only be regarded as authoritative if they concern points which must clearly have been within the knowledge of the recipient of the letter, Rajendra. Thus it must be accepted that Vijay Raj Pande and Jang Bahadur tendered joint advice to the royal couple before the king left the Kot, but the queen's denial of responsibility

for what subsequently happened carries very little weight. The Thoresby Report will therefore now be taken up again from the point at which the king left the scene entirely and the queen retired to the upper floor.

As he had announced, the king did indeed reach Fateh Jang's house and send him and his relatives off towards the Kot, but he did not return with them. Instead he rode to the Residency to seek an interview with Captain Ottley, who had been the sole European there since the Resident, Colvin, and Dr. Login had departed for India a day or two previously. Ottley, who was suffering from rheumatism, refused to come out to meet Rajendra at such an hour (it was now 2.00 am), but sent out Dabi Prasad, the Residency's *mir munsî*.⁵⁴ The king explained what had occurred, beginning his remarks with the ominous words, 'See things are turning out here as they have at Lahore, and the ministers are continually put to death'. He urged the *munsî* to return with him immediately to the Kot so that he would subsequently be able to give a first-hand report to the Resident. Dabi Prasad demurred on the pretext that his horse would take some time to be got ready and that the king would thus be delayed at a critical juncture. Rajendra then rode back with his attendants to the Kot, only to find the gutters in the street filled with the blood flowing from it. He was prevented from entering by 'the people about' - according to one tradition in Kathmandu it was Vijay Raj Pande who dissuaded him - and he retired to the nearby Hanuman Dhoka palace.

The sequence of events leading to the slaughter had been triggered by the arrival at the Kot of Fateh Jang Shah. Jang Bahadur met him in the courtyard and proposed that the way to revolve matters was for them to back the queen and have both Abhiman Singh and Bir Keshar Pande 'made

away with'. Fateh refused to take any action against Bir Keshar without a proper trial, and protested that Abhiman had done nothing whatsoever to merit such treatment. He argued that they should concentrate on a thorough search for Gagan's assassin. This last statement was highly disingenuous, given that both Fateh and Jang Bahadur, as well as the men whose fate they were discussing, had most probably been involved in the plot against Gagan; presumably Fateh was confident it would be possible to appease the queen by fixing the guilt on some minor member of the conspiracy. Fateh's particular anxiety to protect Abhiman is not surprising, given that the latter though once a partisan of the queen, was now generally regarded as Fateh's own ally. While Jang now went to the queen's room above the main hall, Fateh and his relatives proceeded to a small hall on the north side of the courtyard, where Abhiman was sitting. Abhiman was now seemingly informed of Jang's proposal, as he ordered his officers to put his troops in the courtyard on alert (he was presumably not accompanied by all his troops, but had brought a small detachment to the Kot). From one of the upper storey windows Jang Bahadur saw these troops loading their muskets and he informed the queen, who immediately descended to the main hall and demanded that the ministers reveal the name of Gagan's murderer. In her rage she attempted to strike Bir Keshar with her own sword, but Fateh, Jang, Abhiman and Dalbhanjan Pande restrained her. She then started to go back upstairs and the three men followed her to the foot of the wooden steps in a dark passage room at the end of the hall. As they waited for her to go through the trap-door so that they in turn could mount the ladder, shots were fired killing Fateh and Dalbhanjan outright and

wounding Abhiman. In his covering note to the Report, Thoresby suggested that one of Jang's brothers probably ordered the firing, in the belief that either Jang or they were in immediate danger. The Report does not state from which direction the fatal shots were fired, but it implies that Jang had remained on the upper storey ever since leaving Fateh, and Ganpat Sahai, one of the Residency clerks, actually asserted in a private letter written a month after the massacre that Jang and his brothers fired from the top of the stairs, on the queen's instructions.⁵⁶ Without being aware of Sahai's letter, the travel writer Peter Mayne has offered a very similar reconstruction, though supposing it was Jang alone who was with the queen and fired on the ministers from above;⁵⁷ this accords slightly better with the Thoresby document which gives the impression that the Kunwar brothers (apart from Jang himself) remained on the ground floor throughout. If, on the other hand, the shots were actually fired by Jang's people inside the hall, one may assume that on his way to join the queen after leaving Fateh, he had either warned them to be especially vigilant, or, as Ludwig Stiller, has suggested, given explicit instructions for the shooting of Abhiman and Fateh.⁵⁸ After his proposition to Fateh in the courtyard had been rejected, Jang will not have needed to await the sight of Abhiman's man loading before realising that his own position had become extremely perilous.

Staggering back out of the darkness surrounding the steps, Abhiman Singh Rana now tried to get through the hall to join his troops outside, 'exclaiming that Jang Bahadur had done this treacherous act'; had he actually seen Jang fire at him from the upper storey, or was he just drawing a natural conclusion from the information Fateh had given him earlier? In any case, before he could reach the door he was cut down by the sword of

Jang's brother, Krishna. Fateh's son, Khadga Bikram Shah, now attacked both Krishna and Bam Bahadur, the brother immediately junior to Jang. He then felled a sepoy before himself being killed by a shot. The Thoresby Report does not say who fired this, but according to Oldfield the marksman was Jang Bahadur in person; he had rushed down the steps when he had heard the initial firing, and arrived just in time to prevent Khadga renewing the attack on Bam Bahadur.⁵⁹ Some of Jang's men now burst into the hall and a general massacre ensued. The official list posted up in the centre of Kathmandu mentioned thirty individuals actually killed in the Kot (two others, Gagan Singh and Bhavani Singh Khatri, died respectively before and after the massacre), but this will have included only the more important victims.⁶⁰ Amongst them in addition to relatives of Fateh Jang Shah and Dalbhanjhan Pande were the brothers Ranjor, Nar Singh and Arjun Thapa, sons of Nepal's most prominent military commander in the 1814-16 war. Ranjor was the one non-minister included in Lal Jha's list of those involved in the conspiracy against Gagan Singh. Some of those in the hall were able to escape - allegedly with the assistance in some cases of Jang's brothers⁶¹ - but the families and retainers of all those slain were formally expelled from Kathmandu later that day. Virtually every first-rank political figure with the exception of Jang Bahadur himself was thus removed from the political stage. Shortly after daybreak, Jang's cousin, Jay Bahadur, and *mir munsî* Laksmi Das arrived at the Residency to tell Captain Ottley that official communication with him would henceforth be in Jang's hands, and later Ottley heard that Jang had received 'the orders of the Maharani as well as of the Maharaja to conduct all public business'.⁶² On the following day (16 September) Jang himself went to the Residency and explained that he had been appointed 'minister and commander-in-chief'.⁶³

It seems clear that the appointment was really the queen's and was confirmed by the king under duress, though the detailed account as presented in the Thoresby Report is open to some doubt. It is claimed that she gave Jang 'the grant of the wizarat and of the command of the sixteen regiments at the capital' whilst the slaughter at the Kot was still actually in progress. When Jang presented himself to the king in the morning, Rajendra demanded an explanation for the bloodshed and received the answer that 'all which had been done had been ordered by the Maharanee, to whom His Highness had made over the sovereign power'. Rajendra then had a furious argument with his wife, who told him that unless he placed her son Ranendra on the throne 'more calamities would ensue'. Declaring that he was leaving for Banaras, Rajendra rode towards Patan, the city situated three miles south of Kathmandu across the Bagmati River. He was accompanied by Sardar Bhawani Singh Khatri and Captain Karbir Khatri, both of whom had originally been associates of Mathbar Singh.⁶⁴ That night, however, the king was persuaded to return to Kathmandu by one of Jang Bahadur's brothers; before then Bhowani Singh had been killed by troops acting on the queen's orders after Karbir had reported to her that Bhowani had had a consultation with the king which he was not allowed to overhear. Jain has argued that the whole story of a quarrel between king and queen is a fabrication, since at this time Jang was not yet claiming that the massacre had taken place by the queen's orders: Jang told Ottley on the 26th that he had acted in self-defence when he and his brothers were attacked by the other *bharadars* and the king must have accepted this as he told Thoresby in December that he still did not know who was behind the massacre.⁶⁵ This is hardly

conclusive, since there is no reason why Jang should not have told one story to the king and another to the Resident, nor why Rajendra should have automatically believed what Jang said to him. However, in her May 1847 letter, the queen herself emphasises that Jang did not accuse her of responsibility for the death in the period immediately following the massacre,⁶⁶ and she could hardly have written thus to her husband if Jang had used the words to him on 15 September that the Thoresby Report puts in his mouth.

The detailed account of what took place within the royal palace on 15 September cannot thus be trusted, but it remains certain that there was tension between queen and king, and that the former, with Jang as her chief supporter, for the moment held the upper hand. This was certainly the impression gained by Ottley at the Residency, and he also reported rumours that Laksmi Devi was responsible for the massacre.⁶⁷ The refugees who subsequently reached Sagauli in British territory all supported the accusation against the queen, and they also expected the king to quit Kathmandu, either after abdicating or simply to build up a party of his own.⁶⁸

The queen and Jang initially had no difficulty in asserting their authority, as the troops who had lost their commanders accepted the new arrangement without demur. Jang himself told a British companion four years later that this was partly from fear of his own regiments, which were placed around the other units with their weapons primed when the army was assembled to hear the news, and partly because of the prospect of wholesale promotions with the elimination of so many senior officers at the Kot.⁶⁹ Troops were kept in position within the city for several days, whilst the expulsion of the families of the dead *bharadars* and the

confiscation of their property proceeded. Jang was empowered to carry out the *pajani* of the army which was now due, and he was thus able to consolidate his position further by removing anyone he could not trust.⁷⁰

About a week after the massacre there were some signs of a reaction against the new regime, though it was not effective. The king tried to reassert his authority with an order for the recall of those who had been expelled, but the fugitives were in fear of their lives and refused to return. On 23 September, Jang ordered those in hiding to leave the country within ten days.⁷¹ Refugees streamed across the Tarai into India, the total reaching as many as 6,000.⁷² Dissatisfaction among the troops came to the notice of the Residency on the 24th, but this, too, had no concrete results.⁷³ Most interestingly, there was also evidence of popular opposition, though it is uncertain how reliable this is. The source was the Darbar Munshi, Laksmi Das, who in an extraordinary interview with the Residency's Mir Munshi on 23 September, spoke of rumours of a wholesale resumption of land grants. If this occurred, he claimed, the whole population 'would be up', and his own people, the Newars, would suffer the most, and would rise at his command. He added that the victims at the Kot were friends of Britain and were killed for that reason. When the Mir Munshi showed a memorandum of the conversation to Ottley the next morning, the latter lectured him on the need to stay out of internal politics and made him burn the paper. In reporting the incident to Calcutta Ottley suggested that Laksmi Das was less likely to be genuinely seeking British support than testing out whether their public professions of non-interference were genuine.⁷⁴ It is in fact probable that Laksmi Das, who had previously always proved a reliable instrument of whoever controlled the Darbar, was acting as an 'agent

provateur' on behalf of Jang and the queen rather than genuinely trying to protect the interests of the Newar community as a whole. There is no reason to doubt, however, that there was considerable public disquiet: the confiscation of exiles' property might easily have produced alarm, whilst the extent of the violence which had occurred will also have created anxiety as to how far the victors might now be prepared to go.

The Bhandarkhal Affair

Discontent amongst people and army may have been a reality, but the dramatic change in the political situation which occurred in October owed nothing to this, being instead the result of Jang's decision to abandon the queen and emerge as the ally of Surendra. Jang thus duplicated the path followed by his uncle Mathbar Singh, and like him, must have calculated that he would have a better chance of concentrating real power in his own hands if nominally serving the prince rather than a woman as formidable as Laksmi Devi.⁷⁵

The rift between Jang and the queen began to develop soon after the Kot, for although he obeyed her instructions to keep Surendra and his brother Upendra under close watch, he prevaricated when she urged him to kill the two princes and secure the throne for her own son, Ranendra.⁷⁶ Jang's attitude emboldened Rajendra to make a stand, and on 15 October a *lal mohar* was issued authorising the minister to ban both Ranendra and his brother Birendra from entering Kathmandu and to kill the queen's servants if they helped the two with arms and ammunition.⁷⁷ The document was evidently not made public, for an entry in the Residency Diary the following day asserts that the queen was still fully in command.⁷⁸ On the 23rd, however, the Officiating Resident was summoned to the palace to

hear the king explain, in the presence of both Surendra and Jang, that he intended to go on pilgrimage to Banaras, taking all his family with him, excepting Surendra, whom he wished to be recognised as regent during his absence. He added significantly that 'family differences' made it impossible to refer to all of this in the *kharita* which he was about to send to the Governor-General.⁷⁹ Preparations for the departure went ahead, and a second *lal mohar* was issued authorising Surendra to assume the throne if his father should not return.⁸⁰

The queen must by now have realised that she was in danger of being decisively out-manoeuvred, and she sought to save the situation with the help of a group of close supporters. Chief amongst these was Kaji Bir Dhoj Basnet, who had not previously been prominent politically, but who had acted with Jang as the queen's agent in the expulsions of the previous month.⁸¹ Accounts of the 'conspiracy' differ, but the group allegedly aimed to do away with Rajendra, Surendra, Upendra and Jang himself. Bir Dhoj had been given a document from the queen promising him the premiership if he placed Ranendra on the throne, but Jang got to know of this and after he had laid the information before the king he was authorised to kill Bir Dhoj and his associates.⁹² Around a dozen persons were executed, and a larger number fled the city. The *bharadari* were then convened and sentence of banishment passed upon the queen, whilst in token of his services, the king granted Jang the lands held by Bhimsen Thapa and also the title of *praim ministar*.⁸³ The queen made preparations to leave for Banaras with her sons, and Rajendra, apparently against Jang's advice,⁸⁴ decided to carry out his original pilgrimage project and to accompany her. *Lal mohars* were issued authorising Surendra to act as regent, and pardoning and approving all Jang Bahadur's actions,⁸⁵ and finally on 23 November king and queen departed for the plains.

Bir Dhoj's conspiracy and its suppression is known in Nepali as the *Bhandarkhalparba* ('Bhandarkhal Affair') after the name of the palace within the Basantapur complex where the conspirators were allegedly waiting in ambush for Jang when he himself surprised them with an armed force. The details of the affair given in the Thoresby Report and in Pudma Jung's book have aroused considerable scepticism, some writers suggesting that there was no fully-worked-out conspiracy against Jang, merely a decision by him and the king to launch a pre-emptive strike against the queen's supporters.⁸⁶ It is, however, worth noting that even after Rajendra had again become opposed to Jang and was manoeuvring against him the following summer, he still accepted that his own and Surendra and Upendra's lives had been in real danger from Bir Dhoj and his associates.⁸⁷

Because Bir Dhoj and eight others involved were Basnets, the whole affair has often been seen as a Basnet family enterprise.⁸⁸ This is misleading for two reasons. First, the most prominent members of the 'queen's group', apart from Bir Dhoj himself, were Uzir Singh, the son of the assassinated General Gagan Singh, and Dalmardan Thapa.⁸⁹ Second, the Basnet participants were not the most prominent members of their *thar*: Sardar Bakht Singh Basnet, whose sons Bir Dhoj and Bir Keshar died and who himself fled the country, had indeed been one of the ninety-four *bharadars* who signed the 1841 pledge of friendship with the British, as had Sardar Dariyal Singh Basnet, father of another victim, but neither of them were of great political weight.⁹⁰ Neither they nor any of the other 'conspirators' appear in the Basnet genealogies published by Stiller or given in the Hodgson papers,⁹¹ and they are probably only distant relatives of the two most prominent Basnets at this time,

Kulman Singh and Jitman, respectively brother and cousin of the late Prasad Singh, Jang's father-in-law. Kulman and Jitman themselves were probably not connected in any way with the 'queen's party'. Whilst Kulman was amongst relatives of the conspirators who were arrested in the immediate aftermath of the bloodshed, he must have been cleared of complicity, as he and Jitman are amongst senior *bharadars* attesting a *lal mohar* issued nine days later, and in summer 1847 he was in command of troops sent against the refugee *bharadars*.⁹² The 'Basnet-Kunwar alliance' sealed with Jang's marriage in 1839 thus seems to have survived the upheavals of 1846, though now, of course, with the roles of junior and senior partner reversed.

A vital factor in Jang's successful move against the queen was the co-operation of Vijay Raj Pande, who is identified by the Thoresby Report and in later sources as the man who betrayed the 'conspiracy' to him. The fullest account of his role is that given by Pudma Jung, who claims that Vijay was promised appointment as *rajguru* as a reward for his co-operation both by the queen's party and then by Jang.⁹³ This story has been rejected by Jain on the grounds that he already held this office before 31 October, but the argument rests on the mistaken notion that the posts of *dharmadhikar* (which Vijay had held since October 1845) and *rajguru* automatically went together.⁹⁴ In fact, the *vamsavali* account shows that he was only appointed *rajguru* in November 1846.⁹⁵ Even so, Pudma's version is still not entirely trustworthy, as is immediately shown by his bizarre description of Vijay as merely a 'private tutor'. His assertion that the pandit was fully committed to the queen, and only switched sides when he mistakenly formed the impression from Jang's manner that his secret was already known, is highly questionable. Apart from

the general doubts on the reality of the 'conspiracy', there are reasons for suspecting that he and Jang had been working together from an earlier date and that he had only feigned support for the queen and Bir Dhoj. In the first place, Vijay's descendants claim today that he was from the first determined to protect Surendra, who had allegedly been committed to his care by his mother before her death in 1841. According to this version, at some time *before* the Kot Massacre he induced Jang and his brothers to sign a written oath (*dharmapatra*) that they would uphold Surendra's right as legitimate heir to the throne. The original *dharmapatra* was supposedly loaned by a member of the family to King Mahendra, but the king died in 1972 without returning it and the family have not asked the palace to make a search for it.⁹⁶ Without the retrieval of this document the Pande family story cannot be proved, but the case for Vijay's early connection with Jang is buttressed by Laksmi Devi's reference to the two working in collaboration at the Kot on the night of the massacre, by the story current in Kathmandu today of the two being friends in Jang's youth, and by another Pande family tradition according to which Vijay's dying words were 'The sin of Gagan Singh', suggesting that he, like Jang, was privy to the plot against the queen's favourite.⁹⁷ Whatever the truth in all this, it is incontrovertible that Vijay remained a key associate of Jang for the rest of his life, and it seems reasonable to accept that he did supply the minister with information which enabled him to convince the king of the danger from the queen's party.

Rajendra's Withdrawal and Deposition

Immediately after the Kot Massacre, Jang was able to place members of his family in the key administrative positions. His brothers Bam Bahadur, Badri Narsingh, and Krishna Bahadur took charge of the *Badakausi* (treasury), *Kumaricok* (audit office) and the key governorship of Palpa respectively, whilst his elder half-brother, Bhaktawar, became *karpardar* (controller of the royal household), His cousin Jay Bahadur was appointed to head the *Sadar Daphtarkhana*, or Central Lands Assignment Office. Jang's three remaining brothers, Ranoddip Singh, Jagat Shamsheer and Dhir Shamsheer, all received senior military appointments, as did his childhood friend Ran Mehar Adhikari, and his brother-in-law Sanak Singh Khatri, whose sister, Nanda Kumari, Jang had married in 1841. In November, two days before the king and queen departed for Banaras, Hemdal Thapa, whose son was to marry Jang's daughter, was made a *kaji*.⁹⁸ Hemdal's home was at Nava Buddha near Dhulikhel and he was probably an old family friend of the Kunwars, although he does not seem to have been related to either of the two prominent Thapa families.⁹⁹

A critical appointment already mentioned was that of Vijay Raj Pande as *rajguru*. The Pandes thereby attained a monopoly of the *rajguruship* which was to last until the downfall of the Rana regime over a century later. The path for this development was smoother because there was by this time probably no male member of either the Mishra or Paudyal *guru* families still in Kathmandu. The Mishras had been in eclipse since the final downfall of the Kala Pandes. Rangnath Paudyal, who had come up to Kathmandu in summer 1845 from Banaras, had probably returned there once it became clear that he would not be able to regain his former standing. His sons had also left Kathmandu before the Kot Massacre, while his

brothers Narayan and Visnu and the sons of Krishna Ram, Hodgson's old ally were among those expelled afterwards.¹⁰⁰ Krishna Ram Paudyal himself had died in 1843. The king's *purohit*, Vidyaranya Aryal, probably fled the country after Bhandarkhal, and although another member of his family seems to have assumed his functions, he will have lacked the standing to challenge Vijay's place as the king's spiritual adviser, with all the possibilities of secular influence which that position carried.¹⁰¹

In addition to relatives and close personal associates (Vijay can probably be included in this category), Jang also retained a number of *bharadars* who had previously held important posts, in particular individuals who had been closely allied with the Thapas. Karbir Khatri and Umakant Upadhyaya, as well as Jitman and Kulman Singh Basnet were among these. All four were to continue in favour for many years, whereas Hira Lal Jha, who had held revenue contracts for the eastern Tarai several times in the past few years, appears first as a trusted collaborator with the new regime and then as one of the emigrés most bitterly opposed to Jang. The reasons for this change of sides, which took place in April 1847, are not known. Hira Lal had, however, earlier differences with both Jang and Surendra: Jang probably opposed him in 1844 over complaints brought against him by cultivators, whilst several months before the Kot Massacre he had quarrelled with Surendra and had to leave Kathmandu.¹⁰² He had returned to the capital in mid-October, when his appointment to a lands assignment office and supervision of an arsenal was seen as evidence of the queen's supremacy. Nevertheless, the appointment was confirmed after Bhandarkhal, and Hira Lal was made a *kaji*.¹⁰³

Individuals like Hira Lal were probably wanted in the administration for their personal abilities and influence. In the case of the *cauntaras*, however, tradition demanded that one or more of these royal collaterals be closely associated with the government. As the family which had previously played this role, that of Fateh Jang and his brothers, were now dead or in exile, the solution found was to turn to Bir Bind Vikram Shah, the son of Rajendra's uncle Ranodyat. Bir Bind was a closer relative of the king than Fateh, and probably for that reason his name headed the *cauntara* section in the 1841 pledge to the British,¹⁰⁴ but he does not seem to have played any significant political role up to now and is unlikely to have enjoyed any real say despite his formal precedence.¹⁰⁵ His son, Samser Jang, later succeeded to his position but the family were eventually eclipsed after the reconciliation between Jang and Fateh Jang's youngest brother Ransher in the 1850s.¹⁰⁶

Aside from seeking to establish a *bharadari* which would be both personally loyal to him and ensure the minimum necessary degree of continuity, Jang had above all to maintain his hold over Surendra as regent. If a rumour reaching the Residency in November is correct, Jang was able to obtain a document from him promising to retain him as minister so long as he held the royal power.¹⁰⁷ Certainly Jang himself envisaged a lasting arrangement, for a written oath (*dharmapatra*) which he presented to Surendra in the first half of December committed him to lifelong (*ji samma*) allegiance to the regent so long as the latter did not conspire in any way with those expelled after the Kot and Bhandarkhal, but ended with a blunt warning that should Surendra combine with the refugees against him Jang would look to his own interests and cease protecting him from his enemies.¹⁰⁸ After the bloodshed which had so recently occurred, the note of menace in this was unmistakable.

Fear of action against him from India by the refugees, who were now to have King Rajendra to complain to, was an overriding concern, and it was probably to widen his political support at home that Jang put great stress on a programme to compensate Brahmans for land confiscated forty years previously. The episode is of great interest, highlighting the importance of Brahmans as the recipients of royal gifts.

The background to this measure was an order issued in March 1806, confiscating, or perhaps in theory merely imposing, taxation, on lands previously dedicated to a religious function as *guthi* or gifted to Brahmans as *birta*. It has been pointed out that this action, taken by Rana Bahadur as *mukhtiyar* for his son Girvana, was only the culmination of a trend which had been in operation since 1787, as the Kathmandu government sought to increase revenue, bringing land gifted by previous rulers back under the normal taxation structure. The 1806 decree had, however, been particularly dramatic in its effects, either because of outright dispossession or because individuals were now faced with a level of taxation on their holdings which made continued cultivation impractical.¹⁰⁹

On 15 November 1846, just one week before the royal party departed for Banaras, a *lal mohar* was issued in King Rajendra's name to Jay Bahadur Kunwar as head of the *Sadar Daphtar Khana*, ordering that land at present not under cultivation, both in the hills and in the Tarai, be given as compensation to those who had lost land in 1806 and that funds be made available to cover the cost of bringing the new allotments under cultivation.¹¹⁰ The preamble explained that 'Jang Bahadur and others' had represented that until the injustice done in 1806 was righted there could be no peace and stability within the Darbar. It went on to explain that restoration of the original land involved was

not possible as this had now been allocated as *jagir* to the army and thus could not be disturbed without undermining the bulwark of *hindu dharma*.

Over the next two years considerable administrative effort was put into implementation of the scheme. The *tharghars* (land survey officials) were busy assessing the value of lands originally lost and adjudicating disputes between Brahmans reclaiming land and the occupiers of adjacent plots.¹¹¹ Yet at the end of the exercise it appears that most of those who had lost their rights in 1806 went uncompensated, for Ranoddip Singh, who succeeded his brother Jang as prime minister and maharaja in 1877, had to tackle the problem all over again. His own order on the subject explained that the beneficiaries of Jang's programme had lacked the resources to bring the lands assigned to them under cultivation. Accounts in the Lagat Phant show that as against the 250,487 rupees estimated necessary to finance the 1846 scheme, only 5,359 rupees were actually forthcoming. Neither the share of the money pledged by the government, nor the levy on *jagirdars*, which should have amounted to almost 100,000 rupees, was forthcoming.¹¹² This was despite the fact that apparently vigorous measures had been taken to make the collection; an order to Jay Bahadur in March 1847 made army commanders responsible for obtaining the money due from their own men and liable to have the full amount realised from their personal *jagirs* if they failed to do so.¹¹³ As Regmi suggests, failure to carry through the programme may simply have occurred because Jang lost interest once the threat to his own position seemed to have subsided.¹¹⁴ It is also possible, however, that having made a gesture towards the Brahmans, Jang decided a higher priority was not to press *bharadars* or ordinary soldiers too hard.

In launching the compensation programme in the first place, Jang's motivation will have been complex. In the first place, there is every reason to accept that he personally subscribed to the assumptions implicit in the November *lal mohar*, believing that violation of the sanctity of *birta* grants could bring divine retribution. Although in British company in later years Jang might sometimes speak scornfully of some Hindu religious prejudices, in a letter to his brother he freely invoked the notion of an avenging deity, whilst even to the British he admitted a belief in ghosts.¹¹⁵ He was also the son of Bal Narsingh Kunwar, a man of outstanding piety. It would not be unnatural, therefore, if Jang followed the example of previous rulers in Nepal by seeking secular success through the obtaining of religious merit.

Even without taking into account Jang's personal religiosity, there were also sound political reasons for taking the step he did. The compensation programme was actually initiated before King Rajendra left Nepal, and by suggesting such a measure to a king who set much store by religion the minister might have hoped to strengthen Rajendra's confidence in him. More important, however, was probably the calculation that the reaction of the Brahmans themselves would strengthen his own position. The Brahmans did not exercise political influence as a bloc, since those who participated in public affairs as *rajgurus* or *purohits* operated on a familial rather than a caste basis. However, the relationship between monarch and *rajguru* was replicated at a lower level by the *guru-sisya* ties binding particular Brahman and non-Brahman families. As an example of the kind of influence a *guru* might have over a particular *bharadar*, there is the case of Dilli Singh Basnet who in the 1850s demolished a new house after his *guru* told him the

death of his son had occurred because the structure blocked the path of the Serpent King (Nagraja).¹¹⁶ An administration which was careful of Brahman rights could therefore hope to influence the *bharadari* as a whole through the advocacy of their spiritual counsellors. The wish to win such support was perhaps the greater because the new *rajguru*, as a Kumaon Brahman, might have anticipated some resentment from the *purbiya* Brahmans, who were, and still are, regarded as their superiors in the ritual hierarchy.¹¹⁷ Vijay himself may have played an important role in formulating the project, for the advice he gave in conjunction with Jang Bahadur is included in a list of his services presented to him by Surendra seventeen years later.¹¹⁸

Whilst Jang consolidated his position in Kathmandu, in India King Rajendra considered his options. His own objective was to return to Nepal to take effective charge of the administration whilst protecting Surendra's position for the longer term. At the same time he was now open to the influence of the exiled *bharadars* who wished to regain their previous positions of influence and to obtain vengeance against Jang and his supporters. Foremost amongst these were Guru Prasad Shah, Fateh Jang's brother, who had been Governor of Palpa at the time of his brother's death, and had been able to flee the country before Jang's agents could arrive to arrest him, and also the Kala Pande refugees who had been in India since the campaigns against their family under Mathbar Singh Thapa. They were reinforced, after his break with Jang, by Hira Lal Jha. Finally, Rangnath Paudyal was also urging the king to act against Jang, though his position appeared a little ambiguous at times: in December he gave the impression in a private letter that he was now more interested in pilgrimage than in politics, whilst in

March he was acting as an intermediary for correspondence between Rajendra and Jang.¹¹⁹

Before leaving Kathmandu in November, the king had stated he would return in Magh, that is by the end of January or by mid-February, depending on whether the reference was to the lunar or the solar month.¹²⁰

When the deadline passed, Jang, informed by his agents on the plains of the activities of the exiled *bharadars* and of the queen and apprehensive that Rajendra was waiting to return together with the emigrés, secured Surendra's authority to send extra troops to strong points guarding routes into the hills.¹²¹

On 22 February the king left Banaras, but although moving close to the frontier, still delayed in the plains.

In correspondence with Jang and with Surendra, he sought to negotiate terms for his return, whether through a genuine wish to reach an accommodation with the minister or as a cover to plans for drastic action against him. Rajendra wanted in particular to have control of the military *pajani* promised to him, a condition that Jang was unwilling to meet.¹²²

The king was conciliatory as possible on other matters, writing to Surendra in April that he gave him authority to assume the throne if he himself should ever plot against Jang, approving his promise to let Jang conduct next year's civil *pajani*, and declaring that the *bharadars* and the army should disregard anything in orders that Surendra or himself might give inconsistent with their promises to Jang.¹²³

At the end of the month he issued a *lal mohar* promising that he would allow the queen no political role;¹²⁴ he had been in contact with the queen in India, but did not fully trust her, and realised that her return to Nepal would in any case be completely unacceptable to Surendra and Jang. Surendra, Upendra and Jang all

wrote to the king urging him to return at once, but presumably not providing him with the assurances he wanted. In reply Rajendra expressed his approval of all Jang's actions, but pleaded that the onset of the malarial season now made it dangerous to cross the Tarai and that he was therefore going to stay at Ghusot (where Hira Lal Jah's estate was situated).¹²⁵ This was despite the fact that he probably knew that on 8 April the astrologers in Kathmandu had been asked to fix an auspicious date for Surendra's coronation; this decision had been taken, so the Residency, was assured, in the hope that it would cause Rajendra to return immediately and thus remove the need to go ahead with the ceremony.¹²⁶

The twenty-day period within which the astrologers had been ordered to fix a day was allowed to elapse without the coronation taking place, but a few days later the final break with Rajendra was precipitated by the arrest of two ex-soldiers involved in a plan to assassinate Jang. Would-be assassins had been apprehended before, but on this occasion those arrested had with them a *lal mohar* of King Rajendra calling on the army to seize or kill Jang and his relatives. Jang had the document read out to the assembled troops and asked them whether they wished to carry out the order. The army replied that what the king now commanded was inconsistent with his earlier instructions and that they thought it right to abide by the latter. The *bharadars* then called upon Surendra to assume the throne. He accepted the invitation and the ceremony took place that evening, 12 May 1847.¹²⁷ The same day a letter signed by all the principal *bharadars* and state officials was despatched to Rajendra. It detailed Jang's services and the consequent injustice of the royal order, pointed out that in the same document Rajendra

himself had upheld the authority of Surendra, listed the bloodshed in Nepal from Bhimsen's death onwards for which Rajendra was held responsible, and concluded that 'Sri Panch Maharajadhiraj Surendra Bikram Shah...being now ruler of the *Raj* with the aid of the Prime Minister, we cannot hereafter act under your Highness' orders and authority'. They offered Rajendra honourable treatment if he now returned to Kathmandu, but no share in the government.¹²⁸

In response, Rajendra wrote separate letters of protest to the *bharadars* and to Jang, denying the authenticity of the *lal mohar* found on the would-be assassins and maintaining that neither he himself, nor Jagat Bam Pande and Guru Prasad, who had allegedly handed the men the document, had had anything to do with the affair.¹²⁹ With the *bharadars* he took a robust line, rejecting their accusation that he had made over complete authority to the queen, suggesting that the killings at the Kot might in any case have gone beyond what the queen ordered, and finally accusing the signatories of 'setting up the flag of treason'. With Jang, on the other hand, he was relatively conciliatory, refusing to accept his own deposition, but promising to retain the minister in favour if he disowned the *bharadars*' letter and either surrendered control of the military *pajani* or persuaded the Resident to allow Nepal to annex the Sikkim territory which she had held before the Anglo-Gorkha war. The ex-king received dusty answers to both letters. The *bharadars* repeated at length the argument that all the troubles were the result of the queen's orders and of Rajendra's folly in alienating his authority to her.¹³⁰ In making the latter claim, the document on which they relied, and which they offered to let Rajendra examine, was probably the *lal mohar* issued in January 1846, though Pudma Rana might possibly be

correct in suggesting that the earlier grant of January 1843 was still the one on which argument centred.¹³¹ In either case, the *bharadars*' claim was tendentious, but there was truth in their assertion that a repetition of the divided authority existing the previous autumn, with 'two Rajas, a Rani supreme and four Mukhtiyar Ministers...would have caused the final ruin of the king of Sri Maharaja Prithvi Narayan Shah'.¹³²

Shortly after receiving the news of his deposition, Rajendra had summoned all the fugitive *bharadars* to join him at Sagauli.¹³³ Urged by them to act against Jang, on 23 July he crossed the frontier with about 1,500 followers and established himself in the Tarai settlement of Alau. Troops from the Purana Gorakh regiment, with which Jang had long been closely associated, were sent from Kathmandu under his brother-in-law, Sanak Singh. At about 3.00 am on the 28th, Jang's forces attacked, killing eighty of the king's party and taking Rajendra himself prisoner. Many of the dead were Rajputs from the plains, including Rajendra's maternal uncle, Ram Baksh Singh, but all of the principal Nepali refugee *bharadars* were able to escape back across the frontier. Rajendra was taken back to the Valley and installed in the old royal palace at Bhaktapur. He was treated with due deference, but was in fact a political prisoner and to remain so for the remainder of his life.¹³⁴

Although the Resident dubbed Rajendra and his followers 'invaders' and accused the Champaran Joint Magistrate of negligence in allowing an armed force to assemble and cross the border, the Magistrate's reply makes it clear that the party were not equipped for full-scale battle but rather expected troops in Nepal to come over ^{to} their side.¹³⁵

After his capture, Rajendra himself claimed that Guru Prasad and Jagat Bam Pande had told him they had raised several regiments and Pudma Jung alleges that the refugee *bharadars* had in fact received funds for this purpose but had diverted them to their own pockets.¹³⁶ A further intriguing possibility is that the ex-king was deliberately enticed over the border into a trap, for the Champaran magistrate believed that it was a letter from Nepal that prompted him to leave Sagauli. A recently published *lal mohar* of Rajendra's, ordering the army and civil officers to arrest Jang and his brothers and bring them to him at Kararbana in the Terai or Chisapani within the hills, has been identified by its editor with the document found on Jang's would-be assassins.¹³⁷

However, the reference to Jang's making the addressees sign a document repudiating Rajendra's authority shows that the *lal mohar* must in fact have been issued after, not before, the discovery of the assassination plot and the installation of Surendra on 12 May. It is probable that the *lal mohar* was sent to Nepal at the end of June, after Rajendra had received the replies to his initial protests, in which case Jang could well have had a letter sent in reply, purporting to be from a section of the army willing to support Rajendra.

Whatever the truth of the matter, Thoresby's acceptance of Jang's version was in line with the favourable attitude he had taken ever since his arrival at the Residency in December 1846. His despatches were consistently sympathetic to Jang and Surendra, and critical of Rajendra, and he was eager to prevent British territory being used by exiles as a base for hostile activity against the new regime. In part this willingness to work with those actually in power was simply the logical continuation of the non-intervention policy pursued since

Hodgson's departure. It is likely, none the less, that the personal impression Jang made upon him was also important. Certainly there is a complete contrast with the sentiments voiced by British officials in the immediate aftermath of the Kot, when Colvin, the departing Resident following events from Sagauli, had dismissed Jang as 'too rash and too vicious to play successfully the role of a second Bhimsen', while the Governor-General's Agent at Banaras wrote to Brian Hodgson that he expected Rajendra and Surendra soon to combine against the minister who would then meet a well-deserved end.¹³⁸ Something of this sentiment persisted in Calcutta into summer 1847, for although the Governor-General authorised Thoresby to order Rajendra away from the frontier if he did not reach an agreement with his son, he initially refused to recognise the new regime formally as Thoresby had recommended at the end of June, giving as the reason for delay the fact that Jang had 'obtained power by means the most revolting to humanity'.¹³⁹ When, a month after Alau, a *khariṭa* was finally sent to Surendra recognising him as king, it contained no congratulations.¹⁴⁰

While moral sentiments may have coloured individuals' reactions, it was the logic of non-intervention that shaped British policy during the critical months. M.S. Jain has rightly pointed out that both Hardinge's unwillingness to extend recognition before it was certain the change was permanent and also his measures to restrain the exiles were natural consequences of the decision not to become involved in internal Nepali politics.¹⁴¹ Realisation that British protestations of neutrality were genuine may have been the reason that neither Jang nor Rajendra tried to enlist British support in the blatant fashion of both Ran Bahadur and his opponents fifty years previously. At the

same time, however, anxiety that, despite everything, the other side might secure an arrangement with the Company cannot have been entirely absent. Jang's appeals to Rajendra before May to return to Kathmandu were probably quite genuine, for as long as he remained in India he was a card the British could choose to play at any time.¹⁴² In the other camp, Jagat Bam Pande played upon Rajendra's corresponding fears by telling him that Jang had pledged part of Nepal's revenue to the British.¹⁴³ The final securing of British recognition must have been a great relief to Jang, but with many of his opponents still in India continued fostering of British goodwill was still a high priority.

Three years after the dramatic events of 1846/7 Jang was to find himself in London when a mentally deranged ex-army officer assaulted Queen Victoria. The incident led him to remark to his British travelling companion on the severity with which such a crime would be punished in Nepal, and he went on to give an interesting characterisation of political upheavals there:

Although revolutions often occurred..; yet the country at large did not suffer more from such disturbances than England would from a change of ministry; as the slaughter was confined almost entirely to the chiefs and their dependants: neither the army not the peasantry taking any part in the disputes, and submitting without a murmur to the dictates of whichever party might prove the victors.¹⁴⁴

As an analysis of the process which had brought him to power, this has some validity, but the reality was a little more complex.

In the first place, Jang was correct in representing the change as one essentially involving members of an existing political elite, and certainly not a 'revolution' in the twentieth-century sense. As M.C. Regmi has pointed out, it is even misleading to talk in terms of

'the emergence of a new aristocracy', the thesis proclaimed in the title of Jain's book.¹⁴⁵ The victims were not outsiders displacing a governing class, but themselves established members of the *bharadari*, within which Jang himself, Vijay Raj Pande, and the Basnet brothers Kulman and Jitman Singh had already reached influential positions. Their victims were members of other *bharadar* families, in particular the Fateh Jang Shah branch of the *cauntaras*, the two most prominent Thapa families, the Gora Pandes and a section of the Basnets. Although Jang would employ his victory in a novel manner, establishing his own family as a new ruling elite within the aristocracy, nothing that had yet occurred was fundamentally different from earlier upheavals, such as those in which Bhimsen Thapa had established his supremacy.

There was, of course, a new development in that for the first time in the history of unified Nepal a king had been deposed by his subjects. The significance of this is greatly lessened, however, because the throne was transferred to an heir whom Rajendra had himself on previous occasions virtually set up as co-ruler. In any case, Kirkpatrick had pointed out half a century earlier that the loyalty of the *bharadari* was focused on the dynasty of Prithvi Narayan Shah rather than on any one individual descendant (see above, p. 38), and it is significant that it was Prithvi's name that the *bharadars* invoked in their reply to Rajendra's protest at his deposition. The willingness of both *bharadars* and army to accept the change of monarch thus did not involve any radical change in their attitude towards royal authority. The justification for their actions which those at Kathmandu produced also relied largely on the existence, real or supposed, of royal sanction for those actions, with insistence that until Rajendra's final unacceptable order for Jang's

death everything had been done in accordance with the old king's own instructions or with those of a relative to whom he had delegated full authority.

The events of 1847 were not only readily reconcilable with Nepal's own political tradition but also fully consistent with current Hindu political theory. The *Sukranitisara*, which may well have been composed only a few years previously in a Maratha state, clearly envisaged deposition as a legitimate weapon against a bad ruler:

If the King be an enemy of virtue, morality and strength, and unrighteous even though from the [royal] family, people should desert him as the ruiner of the state.

In his place for the maintenance of the state, the *purohit*, with the consent of the ministers, should instal one who belongs to his family and is qualified.¹⁴⁶

The lines could almost have been written with the enthronement of Surendra in mind; it is in fact possible, though unlikely, that they were composed after the event, since the *Sukranitisara* was only discovered in 1850. For Nepal fully to fit the general case, however, one needs to substitute 'guru' for 'purohit', as it was Vijay Raj Pande, Jang's political collaborator, who actually placed the *tika* of sovereignty on Surendra's forehead.

Jang claimed that the role of the army in all this, like that of the peasantry, was purely passive. This is slightly misleading given that he himself had appealed directly to the army in May 1847 when the *lal mohar* ordering his own death was found upon Sher Mardan and Dambar Singh above (p. 292). It had also been Jang who told Henry Lawrence in 1844 when discussing a possible regency while the king's 'imbecility' persisted, that the army would be the judge of when Rajendra recovered

his sanity (above, p.215). The army's decision on such occasions had always followed that of its senior officers, but it was in fact being granted an authority which it might conceivably choose in future to use autonomously.

There is perhaps another point that emerges from the crisis, namely that alongside the tie between king and subject and the power of the military, the concept of the state and its interests formed an undercurrent in Nepali thinking. As has already been seen (above, p.298), in writing to the deposed Rajendra of the possible final ruin of the kingdom of Prithvi Narayan Shah, the *bharadars* were at one level simply expressing their loyalty to the Shah dynasty as a whole. Nevertheless, the word used in the original Nepali was almost certainly not *rajya* or *rajaim*, but *dhunga*,¹⁴⁷ the realm as a concrete reality rather than simply the area within which kingship was exercised, and the implicit logic was that its preservation was the fundamental political consideration. This is not, of course, to argue that the signatories of the letter were disinterested public servants, but rather to underline that what Brian Hodgson termed the 'eminent nationality' of the Gorkhas retained its effect on their thinking and set Nepal slightly apart from most political units in South Asia at that time.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Lawrence to Government, 18 May 1845, FS 13 June 1845, No.15, *KM*, pp.270-1.
2. Lawrence Diary, 30 May 1845.
3. Lawrence to Government, 24 May 1845, FS 13 June 1845, No.17, *KM*, pp.272-5.
4. Lawrence to Government, 28 May 1845, FS 13 June 1845, No.19, *KM*, pp.282-4.
5. Lawrence Diary, 30 June and 17 September 1845.
6. Lawrence recorded in his Diary (30 May 1845) that Surendra thought Jang his friend, adding cynically, 'He will find him friend or foe according to circumstance'.
7. Ranojjal Singh and Ranjor Singh, Mathbar's legitimate and illegitimate sons respectively, took refuge with Jang after the murder and were escorted out of the Valley by his brothers, Bam Bahadur and Ranoddip Singh (Lawrence to Government, 24 May 1845, *loc.cit.*; Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, pp.56-7).
8. Lawrence to Government, 24 May 1845, *loc.cit.*
9. Lawrence to Government, 28 May 1845, FS 13 June 1845, No.19, *KM*, pp.282-4.
10. Lawrence Diary, 4 August 1845.
11. *Ibid.*, 15 August 1845.
12. Lawrence to Government, 23 September 1845, FS 29 November 1845. No.38, *KM*, pp.286-7. The *Kumari Cauk*, which Jang had originally been given charge of in 1843 (above, p.203) had judicial as well as audit functions, and was situated off Basantapur Square in the centre of Kathmandu, so could equate with the *basantapur tahvil* which the *vamsavali* (*Ancient Nepal*, 25 (October 1973), p.15) says was assigned to him in May 1845. For the 'coalition' arrangements, see also Lawrence Diary, 18 September to 3 October 1845. Pudma Rana *op.cit.*, pp.62-3, confuses these with appointments made immediately following the assassination.
13. Lawrence to Government, 23 and 30 September 1845, FS 29 November 1845, Nos.38 and 40, *KM*, pp.285-6.
14. Lawrence to Government, 26 August 1845, FS 25 October No.1, *KM*, pp.285-6.
15. Jang had been put in command of the Purana Gorakh when he was made a *kaji* in 1842 (see above, p.185). The queen now stopped the *pajani*, which he had just begun, and ordered a delay until after Dasai (Lawrence Diary, 1 October 1845).

16. *Ibid.*, 11-20 October 1845.
17. *Ibid.*, 16 October 1845.
18. Lawrence's Diary for 30 June 1845 notes that Rangnath was expected in Kathmandu that day, but nothing is known of his activity there apart from his participation in the Indra Jatra festival in September (Hanumandhoka Documents, No.225).
19. Lawrence Diary, 28 April 1845.
20. Nayin Raj Pande (interview, Kathmandu, 2 August 1983) claims Rangnath took the post from Bani, whilst Dinesh Raj Pant (interview, 22 August 1983) reports seeing a document in the Nepal Foreign Ministry referring to the Paudyals as joint *dharmadhikars*. They will be the 'four *dharmadhikar* Brahmans' addressed in a *lal mohar* of 1 Jyestha Badi 1864 (22 May 1807) published in summary translation in *Regmi Research Series*, 8, 1 (January 1976).
21. Prithvi Narayan used Narayan Pande as an intermediary to arrange a meeting with the Tanahu ruler on the border of the two kingdoms, and then violated a pledge of safe conduct by seizing his adversary. See Acharya, *Prithvi Narayan Shah*, *op.cit.*, Vol.2, pp.294 and 315-6.
22. Interview with Rudra Raj Pande (Banaras, 4 March 1983) and, for the date, Prakash E. Raj, *Vidvacchiromani Hemraj Sarma* (Kathmandu: the author 2035 VS (1978/9)), p.9.
23. Rudra Raj Pande, *loc.cit.* A *jetha budha* (literally, 'senior elder') seems originally to have been a royal messenger and investigator. (See Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, pp.113-4.)
24. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.86, and below, pp.
25. Interview with Chaitanya Upadhyaya, Kathmandu 31 March 1983.
26. Rose, *Strategy*, *op.cit.*, p.102.
27. FS 28 February 1846, Nos.21 and 24.
28. *Diary of Events*, 9 December 1845.
29. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.64.
30. *Diary of Events*, 21 October, 1 and 14 November 1845.
31. *Ibid.*, 9 February 1846.
32. *Ibid.*, 5 December 1845.

33. *Sri 5 kancha maharanibata hukum baksyabamojim garnu bhani 1902 sal magh badi 9 rojka din lalmohar gari baksyako ho* ('On 21 January 1846 a *lal mohar* was issued providing that the commands of the junior queen should be obeyed') - *lal mohar* of 10 Magh Sudi 1924 (3 February 1868), published in *Purnima*, 40 (2034 VS (1978/9)), pp.178-81.
34. Colvin to Hodgson, 31 March 1846, Hodgson MSS, Vol.9.
35. Colvin to Government, 6 March 1846, FS 25 July, No.142, *KM*, pp.290-5; Lawrence left Nepal on 11 or 12 December (*vamsavali, Ancient Nepal*, 25 (October 1974), p.15.) and Colvin arrived in February (M.W. Fisher and L.E. Rose, *England, India, Nepal, Tibet, China 1765-1958* (Berkeley: University of California 1959)).
36. Colvin to Hodgson, 9 July 1846, Hodgson MSS. Vol.9.
37. *Diary of Events*, 23 and 25 August 1846.
38. Deposition of Daddu Upadhyaya, FS 27 March 1847, No.110; Thoresby to Government, 1 and 4 October 1847, Nepal Residency Papers (NAI), *KM*, pp.365-7.
39. Baburam Acharya rejected the story of the love affair but insisted Badri Narsingh was the assassin (*Baburam Acarya ra Uhamko Kriti* (Kathmandu: INAS 2029 VS (1972/3), p.35). For alternative versions giving Jang himself this role, see Pratiman Thapa, *Sri Tin Maharaja Jang Bahadur Ranajiko Jivan Caritra* (Babu Hari Singh Thapa, 1908) p.47, and Balachandra Sharma, *Nepalko Aitihāsik Ruprekha* (Varanasi: Krishna Kumari Devi 2038 VS (1981/2), p.307.
40. Laksmi Devi to Rajendra, Thursday, 5 Jestha Badi 1904 (5 May 1847), published in Triratna Manandhar, 'A New Light on the Kot Massacre', *Rolamba*, 4, 2 (April-June 1984), pp.19-26.
41. Interview with Sundar Prasad Shah, Kathmandu 9 August 1983, and unpublished note by Toran Bahadur Shah.
42. *KM*, p.374.
43. Triratna Manandhar, 'Who Assassinated Gagan Singh?', *Voice of History*, 1 (1974), pp.79-84A.
44. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.68.
45. FS 27 March 1847, No.113, published by Krishna Kant Adhikari, *Voice of History*, 3 (1977), pp.33-9, and (in edited form) in *KM*, pp.310-16. This document, a translation from a Nepali or Hindustani original was the principal source for Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal*, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, pp.359-65, supplemented by additional details presumably supplied by Jang or other Nepali witnesses.

46. Jain, *Emergence, op.cit.*, p.70, and Stiller, *KM*, p.370.
47. Resident Thoresby to Government, 18 March 1847, FS 27 March 1847, No.112.
48. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.363.
49. *Ancient Nepal*, 25 (October 1973), p.16.
50. 'Narrative of Events at the Court of Nepal, 1852-1861' (FP(B) March 1875, Nos.145-164), in Hasrat, *History of Nepal, op.cit.*, p.322.
51. Laksmi Devi to Rajendra, 5 Jestha Badi 1904 (5 May 1847), in Manandhar, 'A New Light...', *op.cit.*, p.20.
52. *Ibid.*, p.23.
53. *Kothari* means a small room, especially one which is difficult of access and/or dimly lit (*Brihat Nepali Sabdakos*, sv.). It would be quite appropriately applied to a room reached by steep wooden steps and a trap door at the end of the main hall (cf. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.361).
54. Ottley's rheumatism is mentioned only in his own despatch written later the same day (15 September 1846, FS 31 October 1846, No.151), the Thoresby Report merely stating that 'he did not think proper to go out and meet the Raja' at night-time.
55. The story was told by Baburam Acharya to Triratna Manandhar (v. Manandhar, 'A New Light...', *op.cit.*, p.24).
56. Ganpat Sahai to Brian Hodgson, 15 October 1847 (Hodgson Correspondence, RAS).
57. Peter Mayne, *Friends in High Places* (London: Bodley Head 1975), pp.223-5. Mayne makes the cogent point that the flashes of shots from above would not have been visible in the main body of the hall, in which case the Thoresby Report's silence on the direction of the shots is readily understandable.
58. *KM*, p.376. This hypothesis is perhaps supported by the account Jang gave to Orfeur Cavenagh in 1850, in which he claimed the violence started after his own 'attempted arrest' of Fateh Jang Shah (Cavenagh, *Rough Notes, op.cit.*, p.237).
59. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.363; Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.73, and Cavenagh, *op.cit.*, p.238, both state that Khadga was killed by Jang's youngest brother, Dhir Shamsher.
60. Ottley to Government, 24 September, FS 31 October 1846, No.161, and 20 October 1846, FS 26 December 1846, No.143, *KM*, pp.304-7.
61. 'Thoresby Report'.

62. Ottley to Government, 15 September 1846, FS 31 October 1846, Nos.151 and 152.
63. Ottley to Government, 16 September 1846, FS 31 October 1846, No.153.
64. Bhavani Singh acted as one of Mathbar's aides during Surendra's 1844 march towards the border (Dabi Prasad to Lawrence, 11 December 1844, FS 28 December 1844, No.120, *KM*, p.256). Karbir was a long-time Thapa adherent (see above, Chapter Three, p.151).
65. Jain, *op.cit.*, pp.74 and 76, fns.43 and 54; Ottley to Government, 16 September 1846 and Thoresby to Government, 7 December 1846, FS 31 October 1846, No.153, and 26 December 1846, No.166.
66. Laksmi Devi to Rajendra, 5 Jestha Badi 1904 (5 May 1847), in Manandhar, 'A New Light...', *op.cit.*
67. Ottley to Government, 15 September 1846, FS 31 October 1846, No.152 (*KM*, p.297), and 4 November 1846, FS 26 December 1846, No.157. The Residency Diary for 30 September, to which Ottley refers Calcutta for details of the accusations against the queen, is not extant.
68. Wheler to Currie (DO), 22 October 1846, FS 26 December 1846, No.144.
69. Cavenagh, *Rough Notes*, *op.cit.*, pp.241-2.
70. Ottley to Government, 24 September 1846, FS 31 October 1846, No.160, *KM*, pp.303-6.
71. *Ibid.*
72. Wheler to Currie (DO), 22 October 1846, FS 31 October 1846, No.144.
73. Ottley to Currie (DO), 24 September 1846, FS 31 October 1846, No.165.
74. *Ibid.*
75. Cf. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.83, fn.13.
76. Thoresby Report, and Pudma Jung, *op.cit.*, p.83.
77. *Lal mohar* of 11 Kartik Badi 1903 (15 October 1846), cited in Madhav Raj Pande, 'How Jang Bahadur established Rana Rule in Nepal', *Cont. to Nepalese Studies*, 1, 1 (December 1973), p.50. The significance of this document was first pointed by Marize, 'Les Rana et le Pouvoir', unpublished thesis, Rouen University 1980, p.57.
78. *Diary of Events*, 16 October 1846.

79. Ottley to Government, 26 October 1846, FS 26 December 1846, No.145.
80. *Lal mohar* of 10 Kartik Sudi 1903 (29 October 1846), cited in M.R. Pande, *op.cit.*, p.90.
81. Thoresby Report. Bir Dhoj is listed as a captain in the order of ceremonies for Indra Jatra in 1845 (Hanuman Dhoka Documents, No.225) and his promotion to Kaji will thus have taken place under the queen's patronage.
82. Ganpat Sahai (Residency clerk) to Hodgson, 9 November 1846 (Hodgson Correspondence, RAS).
83. Ottley to Government, 2 November 1846, FS 26 December 1846, No.155 and (for the title) Rajendra to Darbar, 4 June 1847, FS 31 July 1847, No.194, *KM*, p.344. Manandhar, 'Jang Bahadur kahile...', *op.cit.*, points out that previously Jang's civil title was the traditional *mukhtiyar*.
84. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.89.
85. *Lal mohars* of 5 Marg Badi and 9 Marg Badi 1903 (8 and 12 November 1846), cited in M.R. Pande, 'How Jang...', *op.cit.*, p.51.
86. See, for example, Manandhar, 'Jang Bahadur...', *op.cit.*, p.17. Some of the inconsistencies in the various accounts are discussed by Jain, *op.cit.*, pp.84-5.
87. Rajendra to Darbar, 4 June 1847, FS 31 July 1847, No.194, *KM*, p.344.
88. Lists of those killed are given in Ottley's report to Government (FS 26 December 1846, No.156), Ganpat Sahai's letter to Hodgson (above, n.82), and in the *vamsavali* account (*Ancient Nepal*, 25 (October 1973), p.18). The last also gives a list of fugitives.
89. Uzir Singh escaped to the plains on the failure of the alleged plot (Thoresby Report, and Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.88). Dalmardan Thapa, who was among those killed, was probably not a member of either prominent Thapa family and should be distinguished from Jang's brother-in-law of the same name, who is mentioned in the *Kamandari Kitabkhana* (personnel office) Registers for 1905 and 1911 VS (1848/9 and 1854/5).
90. Fathers of several of the victims are given in Ottley's list (n.97, below).
91. Stiller, *The Silent Cry*, *op.cit.*, Appendix; *HP*, Vol.18, f.5, but Bakht Singh, Dariyal Singh and a third fugitive, Ranbhadra, were all sufficiently important for inclusion in the 1843 list of leading *bharadars* (*HP*, Vol.59, f.169-71).

92. Ottley to Government, 2 November 1846, FS 26 December 1846, No.155; *lal mohar* of Marg 6 Badi (9 November 1846), FP(B) April 1861, No.200; Jang Bahadur to Kulman Singh Basnet, 12 Sravan Badi 1904 (7 August 1847), published in Ramji Tevari *et al.*, (eds.), *Abhilekh-Samgraha* Part 1 (Kathmandu: Samsodhan-Mandal, 2018 VS (1961/2), pp.14-6.
93. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.86; cf. Oldfield, *Sketches, op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.370.
94. Jain, *op.cit.*, pp.84-5.
95. *Ancient Nepal*, 25 (October 1973), p.18.
96. Interview with Nayin Raj Pande, Kathmandu, 2 August 1983.
97. Laksmi Devi to Rajendra, 5 Jestha Badi 1904 (see above, n.40); interviews with Chaitanya Upadhyaya, Kathmandu, 31 March 1983, and Rudra Raj Pande, Banaras, 4 March 1983.
98. *Ancient Nepal, loc.cit.*, p.17, and *lal mohars* of appointment to Ranoddip Singh Kunwar, Dhir Shamsher and Hemdal Thapa, Sat 3 Marg Sudi 1903 (21 November 1846) Lagat Phant (KKA). For the date of Jang's marriage to Nanda Kumari, see above, p.154, n.34.
99. Hemdal is listed separately from both Bhimsen Thapa and Ranjor Thapa's families in the 1843 *bharadar* list (HP, Vol.59, f.169-71).
100. *Ancient Nepal, loc.cit.*, pp.16-7, and Rangnath to Hodgson, 7 Margsira 1904 (? November 1846), published in *Kailas*, III, 1 (1975), pp.77-82.
101. Sundarprasad Shah, *Triphat* (Kathmandu: Suksanka Prakasan 2042 (1985/6)), p.27. Caturbhaj Aryal, who is listed as a *purohit* in the Kamandari Kitabkhana Register for 1905 VS (1848/9) attested a *lal mohar* on 22 March 1847 (6 Cairtra Sudi 1903 - Lagat Phant (KKA)).
102. Jha attested the March *lal mohar* (see n.101), but in May King Rajendra, now hostile to Jang, was reported en route to Jha's estate at Ghusot in Bihar (FS 27 June 1847, Nos.185-6, *KM*, pp.327-8 and 340), and by the summer Jha was one of the king's principal counsellors (Thoresby to Government, 8 August 1847, FS 25 September 1847, *KM*, pp.354-6.
103. *Diary of Events*, 16 October 1846, and 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, 25 (October 1973), p.18.
104. FS 21 January 1841, No.121, *KM*, pp.72-6.
105. His name heads the list of those attesting the 22 March 1847 *lal mohar* (see above, n.101).
106. Samser Jang is the sole *cauntara* listed in the Kitabkhana registers for 1848 and 1854, but in 1859 Ransher Shah's name is given followed by 'Samser Shah'.

107. *Diary of Events*, (?) November 1846 (the entry on the last page of the copy in the National Library of India is mutilated).
108. *Dharmapatra* of ? Paus Badi 1903 (first half of December 1846), Nepal Foreign Ministry, Poka 15, published in Triratna Manandhar, 'Jangbahadurko Uday: Kehi Dastavejharu', *Rolamba*, Vol.4, No.4 (October-December 1984), p.11.
109. M.C. Regmi, *Land Tenure and Taxation, op.cit.*, pp.337-41.
110. *Lal mohar* of 12 Marg Badi 1903 (15 November 1846) to Jay Bahadur Kunwar, published in Nepali, *Bhimsen Thapa, op.cit.*, pp.211-2 (translated in Regmi, *op.cit.*, pp.441-2).
111. Jaybahadur Kunwar to Priyabat Khanal and others, 12 Paus Badi 1905 and 15 Jestha Sudi 1906 (22 December 1848 and 5 June 1849), Lagat Phant (KKA).
112. M.C. Regmi, *Land Tenure, op.cit.*, pp.341-2.
113. Order to Jay Bahadur Kunwar and others, 7 Caitra Badi 1903 (9 March 1847), Lagat Phant (KKA).
114. M.C. Regmi, *loc.cit.*
115. Jang to Bam Bahadur, undated, translated below, p.425; Ramsay to Dalhousie, 14 April 1852, GD 45/6/154 (Dalhousie Muniments).
116. *Ibid.*
117. The failures of the 1854 *Muluki Ain* to reflect this status difference will be due solely to Vijay's influence at the time.
118. Surendra to Vijay Raj Pande, 10 II Sravan Sudi 1920 (25 July 1863).
119. Rangnath to Hodgson, undated, published in *Kailas*, III, 1 (1975), p.82; Thoresby to Government, 23 March 1847, FS 24 April 1847, No.105, *KM*, p.322.
120. *Bharadars* to Rajendra, 17 June 1847, FS 31 July 1847, No.195, *KM*, pp.345-6.
121. Royal Order of 12 Phalgun Badi 1903 (12 February 1847), published in Manandhar, 'Jangbahadurko Uday...', *op.cit.*, p.11.
122. Thoresby to Government, 23 March 1847 (n.119 above).
123. Rajendra to Surendra, Baisakh Badi 1904 (first half of April 1847) in Mahandhar, 'Jangbahadurko Uday...', *op.cit.*, p.13.
124. *Lal mohar* of 14 Baisakh Sudi 1904 (29 April 1847), *ibid.*
125. Thoresby to Government, 12 May 1847, FS 26 June 1847, No.18, *KM*, pp.327-8.

126. Thoresby to Government, 8 April 1847, FS 26 June 1847, No.177, *KM*, pp.324-5.
127. Thoresby to Government, 13 May 1847, FS 26 June 1847, No.187, *KM*, pp.328-9.
128. *Bharadars* to Rajendra, 12 May 1847, FS 26 June 1847, No.194, *KM*, pp.333-4.
129. Rajendra to Jang Bahadur, 4 June 1847 and to *bharadars*, 4 June 1847, FS 31 July 1847, Nos.192 and 194, *KM*, pp.343-5.
130. *Bharadars* to Rajendra, 17 June 1847, FS 31 July 1847, No.195, *KM*, pp.345-6.
131. The text of the decree of banishment on the queen in November 1846 as given by Pudma, *op.cit.*, p.88, actually cites the earlier *lal mohar*, but the authenticity of Pudma's document is questionable (cf. above, p.243, n.113).
132. Above, n.130.
133. Rajendra to Kaji Ranjor Thapa and others, II Jyestha Sudi 1904 (24 May 1847), published in Naraharinath Yogi (ed.), *Itihas Prakasma Sandhipatrasamgraha* (Dang, 2022 VS (1966)), p.111.
134. Thoresby to Government, 30 July, 3 and 9 August 1847, FS 25 September 1847, Nos.189, 164 and 170, *KM*, pp.352-6; Jang to Kulman Singh Basnet, 12 Sravan Badi 1904 (7 August 1847) (see above, n.92).
135. Champaran Magistrate to Thoresby, 13 August 1847, FS 25 September 1847, *KM*, pp.356-60, with Stiller's comments.
136. Thoresby to Government, 9 August 1847 (n.134); Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.92.
137. Triratna Manandhar, 'Jangbahadurko Uday...', *op.cit.*, pp.13-4. An abstract translation of the *lal mohar* found on Sher Mardan and Dambar Singh is given in FS 26 June 1847, No.193, *KM*, p.332.
138. Colvin to Government, 20 September 1846, FS 31 October 1846, *KM*, pp.302-3; Carpenter to Hodgson, 19 December 1846, Hodgson Correspondence (RAS).
139. Government to Thoresby, 24 July 1847, FS 31 July 1847, No.204, *KM*, pp.349-52.
140. Governor-General to Surendra, 3 September 1847, No.175, *KM*, pp.362-3.
141. Jain, *op.cit.*, pp.90-1.
142. Cf. Madhav Raj Pande, 'How Jang Bahadur...', *op.cit.*, p.52.

143. Rajendra to Governor-General, 15 August 1847, FS 25 September 1847, No.173, *KM*, p.361.
144. Orfeur Cavenagh, *Reminiscences*, *op.cit.*, p.132.
145. M.C. Regmi, Review of Jain, *Emergence*, *op.cit.*, in *Regmi Research Series*, 6, 6 (June 1974), p.115.
146. *Sukranitisara*, II, pp.274-5, translation adapted from that of B.K. Sarkar, Allahabad, Panini Office, 1914.
147. *Dhunga* is used in the *vamsavali* paraphrase of the letter, *Ancient Nepal*, 25 (October 1974), p.19.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE RANA REGIME: 1846-57Introduction

Although it was not apparent at the time, the events of 1846-47 proved a decisive turning point in Nepali history. Unlike the ministers who had preceded him, Jang Bahadur managed not only to hold on to power for the rest of his life, but to ensure that it remained with the Kunwars afterwards.

In this chapter the principal features of the new regime will be analysed - Jang's relationship with the monarchy, his strategy towards, and dependence on, *bharadari* and army, the machinery of government, the codification of Nepali law, revenue policy, and the importance of the relationship with the British. The major political events down to 1857, the year in which Jang assumed the joint posts of *praim ministar* and *maharaja*, will be treated briefly as they impinge on the different thematic areas.

Underlying the study of these particular areas are questions concerning the general nature of the rule of the Kunwars - or Ranas as they were to be known from 1848. The whole Rana period is still widely characterised in Nepal as a dark age which impeded national development, but although the regime had undeniably by its closing years become an obstacle to political and economic progress, both Nepali and foreign historians have come increasingly to realise that there were also more positive features of Rana rule. Mahesh Chandra Regmi, Nepal's leading economic historian, has characterised the Rana years as marking 'the transition from the semi-feudalistic Gorkhali empire to a centralised

agrarian bureaucracy'.¹ Regmi's own work has done much to make the main outlines of this process clear, as have the contributions of Kumar, Jain, Edwards, Adhikari and Marize, but there is still truth in Regmi's statement that 'we remain ignorant about the nature and composition of the new power elite, and about the measures it took to achieve legitimisation and mobilise the support of the old and new political groups in the country'.² In addition there is the problem of how far changes under Jang were the result of a consciously devised strategy and how far merely the elaboration of trends already evident and only requiring administrative stability to work themselves out. In so far as Jang can indeed be considered a conscious reformer, there is the further question of the extent of his reliance on Western models. This chapter will attempt to provide some tentative answers.

The Establishment of the Maharajaship

Accounts of Jang's relationship with Surendra have normally stressed the close supervision of the king's person and the element of intimidation involved. This was undoubtedly an important factor, and one which operated right from the start, as shown by the note of menace in the *dharmapatra* of December 1846 (above, p.286). It is confirmed by the observations of the Residents, and also admitted in Pudma Rana's biography of his father, which explains that Surendra was dissuaded from abdication in 1851 'partly by indirect inducements, but mostly by direct threats'.³

At the same time, there is evidence that Jang at least attempted to employ subtler methods. A strong oral tradition in Kathmandu maintains that he showed great personal deference to the king, in particular often, carrying him about on his back, as *bharadars* had sometimes been required

to do before 1846.⁴ This contrasts strongly with the picture in the British records, but Resident Ramsay, writing in 1863, did allow that Jang had been outwardly polite to Surendra after the marriage alliances between the two families in the mid-fifties.⁵ It is of course possible that even before then Jang displayed a more domineering attitude in front of British officials, and behaved more respectfully in private.

There was also an attempt to repeat a well-worn strategy by influencing the king through his wives. At the time of his accession Surendra had three queens, Trailokya Rajya Laksmi, Sura Rajya Laksmi and Deb Rajya Laksmi (a fourth had died as a result of his ill treatment five years previously - see above, p.172). At some point before November 1847 Surendra was prevailed upon to issue a *firman* to them acknowledging his own unfitness to rule and making power over to them.⁶ The document provided that after the birth of a son he would be placed on the throne and the mother act as Regent. Queen Trailokya did produce a son on 30 November 1847, but the arrangement previously mooted was not implemented and Surendra remained king. None the less the involvement of the queens in the administration seems to have continued, as in December a *lal mohar* stipulating that no one should contact ex-king Rajendra without Jang's permission also provided that Surendra's monthly meetings with him were dependent on the joint advice of Jang and the queens.⁷

It is probable that the role of Queen Trailokya was particularly important. When she fell ill during Jang's 1850 trip to Europe, he wrote to his brother Bam Bahadur, who was acting premier, that he would forgive him anything else so long as he ensured the queen recovered.⁸ On reaching Bombay on the journey home Jang learned that she was dying,

and told a British companion that it was through her great influence over the king that he was able to guide him along the correct path. Two days later he was in tears when he received the news of her death.⁹

By whatever means he kept Surendra under control, Jang used his power over him to secure a succession of royal orders which marked a definite break with the traditional status of a minister. There was a precedent for appointment to the premiership for life in the document issued in 1844 to Mathbar Singh Thapa, and Rajendra allegedly promised as much to Jang before he left for Banaras in November 1846.¹⁰ Shortly after Surendra's accession, however, this promise was not only renewed but extended into a commitment that the office would remain in his family.¹¹ The next step was the recognition in May 1848 of the Kunwars' claim to descent from the Ranas of Chitaurgadh. Jang and his brothers were authorised to style themselves 'Ranaji', to assume the title *srimadraj_kumar_kumaratmaj* ('royal prince and descendant of princes') and to marry as Rajputs. Since the Shah dynasty itself traced its ancestry back to the Chitaurgadh Ranas, the effect of the royal order was to promote the Kunwars from their status as Khas to caste equality with the royal family itself. This logically opened the way for intermarriage between the two families, but this was seemingly barred by the restriction in the document on the Kunwar Ranajis marrying into any of the plains or hill families with which the Shahs themselves traditionally had marital connections.¹² There was either definite resistance within the royal family to levelling the barrier completely, or Jang felt it advisable to advance one step at a time. The premier's strategy was perhaps devised in conjunction with Vijay Raj, whose approval in matters of caste status would certainly have been sought.

Before further moves to enhance Jang's status could be made, a crisis occurred in his relations with both the royal family and his own relatives. This was precipitated by his journey to Europe in 1850, which both involved his absence from Kathmandu for just over a year and also brought religious complications as he had to cross the forbidden *kalo pani*. Although Jang discounted the pollution problem in advance, arguing that his caste could be readily restored by a purification ritual such as returning envoys from China underwent,¹³ the innovation must still have disturbed the more orthodox. During the summer he learnt by letter from Bam Bahadur that Surendra's brother Upendra was behaving suspiciously, and he sent a curt reply ordering Bam to expel from Kathmandu anyone trying to attach himself to the prince.¹⁴ Jang arrived back in Kathmandu on 5 February, and ten days later was informed by Bam of a plot against him involving Upendra, and his own brother Badri Narsingh and cousin Jay Bahadur. Also implicated was Kaji Karbir Khatri, one of Jang's party on the European journey who had spread stories about Jang violating caste rules by dining with Europeans. Bam himself had been invited to join the conspiracy two previously, and had pretended willingness to do so so as to learn all the details. He claimed he had delayed informing Jang out of reluctance to seal Badri Narsingh's fate. As it was, Jang learned just in time to seize the culprits, who planned to assassinate both Surendra and himself the following morning. The three principal conspirators confessed after an incriminating paper had been produced, and the state council recommended death or blinding as the penalty. Influenced both by the pleas of his mother and by political considerations Jang opposed this, but told the British that the *bharadars* would insist on the extreme penalty unless they could be removed completely from Nepal

so that those who had condemned them would be safe from their future vengeance. After lengthy consultation Dalhousie eventually agreed to accept the three as state prisoners in the fort at Allahabad for five years. In Karbir Khatri's case it was considered sufficient to deprive him of his caste by having untouchables urinate into his mouth.¹⁵ After Jay Bahadur's death at Allahabad in September 1853 Jang requested the release of Badri Narsingh and Upendra, both of whom had their property restored, while Badri was entrusted with the key post of Governor of Palpa. Karbir Khattri was already back in favour before the end of 1852.¹⁶

All of the information about this conspiracy is derived either from Jang's account to the Resident or from Pudma Rana. It is presented at length by Jain and subjected to his standard scepticism. He argues that there was no assassination plot but that Jang moved against Badri Narsingh because of his popularity with the army, which he had commanded during Jang's absence, It was necessary for him to remove a dangerous rival in view of the feeling against him in Kathmandu on the grounds that he had become too close to the British.¹⁷ There is indeed reason to doubt some details of Jang's story, and it is certainly true that his enthusiasm for Britain was not universally popular (see below, p.382), but, as usual, several of Jain's arguments are wide of the mark. He alleges, for example, that Karbir could not have accused Jang of loss of caste by drinking wine because the purification he underwent at Banaras would have been accepted by the orthodox as wiping out any previous transgression. In fact if the purification ceremony had been regarded as a licence for every infringement of caste rules, there would have

been no reason for the party to take the elaborate precautions which they did against even being seen eating by the local population in London and Paris. His suggestion that Bam collaborated with Jang to bring false charges against Badri is also clearly wrong, for in 1856 the British Resident recorded that Jang had mistrusted him ever since 1851 because of the suspicion that at one stage he had actually intended taking part in the conspiracy.¹⁸ Jain is also incorrect in asserting that only Badri Narsingh actually confessed his guilt (a legal requirement in Nepal before a defendant could be convicted). It is in fact clearly stated in the British records that confessions were obtained from all three of the principal conspirators.¹⁹

Whether or not the dissidents had laid their plans as thoroughly as Jang claimed, there is no reason to doubt that they all nursed grievances against Jang. Jay Bahadur had come under suspicion before, and this had been noted at the time by the British Resident.²⁰ Pudma Rana may well be correct in claiming he had a grudge against Jang since being detected accepting a bribe two years previously; the fact that he was left as head of the *Sadar Daphtar Khana* (Central Lands Assignment Office)²¹ while Jang was in Europe is not the strong counter-evidence that Jain makes it out to be, since Jang may well have thought it safer to keep him in employment. Badri Narsingh was similarly said to have been disgraced when Jang learned on his return to Kathmandu of his accepting a 12,000 rupees bribe to reinstate a *subba* (district administrator and revenue collector) previously dismissed for corruption.²² This is probably a reference to the case of Sivanidhi Jaisi, whom Jang had removed from office for oppressing the cultivators and whose reappointment earned both Badri and Bam Bahadur a severe rebuke in one of Jang's letters from

Europe.²³ Finally, Prince Upendra, whether or not unhappy over the size of his *jagir* or over Jang's correspondence with one of his wives,²⁴ was probably resentful of the eclipse of the royal family by the Kunwars and believed Badri and Jay could offer him a higher status.

Jang told the British that at the council meeting to decide the conspirators' punishment both Surendra and his father had been present and had declared that Upendra should suffer whatever penalty was fixed for the others. However, the claim that the plot was aimed at Surendra's life as well as Jang's is one of the more suspicious details in the 'official version', and the sceptics are probably correct in thinking that both father and son were acting under duress. Upendra's disgrace, following upon the death of Queen Trailokya, will have weakened the non-intimidatory element in Jang's relationship with the royal family. Surendra's attempt at abdication that summer was a clear indication of his unhappiness with his situation. Jang's refusal to accept it suggests both his continuing need of the monarchy as a source of his own legitimacy, and his lack of confidence that he would be able to control either of the surviving queens, one of whom would have had to be appointed regent had the infant crown prince been put on the throne as his father wished. With plots by Jang's opponents continuing both inside and outside the country, this constituted a disturbing weakness in his position.

In 1854 this situation was remedied with the first of a series of marriage alliances between his family and Surendra's. On 8 May Jang's eldest son, Jagat Jang, was married to the king's daughter. This was followed within a few days by Jang's own marriage to Hiranya Garbha Kumari, the sister of Fatah Jang Shah, who had been the most prominent victim at the Kot, and of Guru Prasad, one of the leading refugee

bharadars urging Rajendra to action in 1847 and since then an inveterate deviser of plots against Jang. Hiranya's family were collaterals of Surendra's, so that both marriages depended on the acknowledgement of the Kunwar Ranas' caste equality with the royal family. Such an acknowledgement had been almost granted by the 1848 *lal mohar*, but withheld by the ban on inter-marriage which was now removed. Why should this final step have waited until now? Possibly because Jagat and the princess, now eight and six years old respectively, were previously considered too young, but more probably because Surendra agreed to become part of an alliance between Shahs and Ranas worked out by Jang and Ranasher, the younger of Hiranya's two surviving brothers.

Ranasher Shah's important role in the consolidation of the Rana regime is inadequately reflected in the literary sources, but can be deduced from the frequency with which his name is coupled with Jang's in administrative documents, from family tradition, and also as the most economical explanation for developments in 1854. According to his present-day descendants he was present at the Kot on the night of the massacre, but had remained outside the main hall and was warned by Jang's youngest brother, Dhir Shamsher, to make his escape.²⁵ Ranasher accompanied ex-King Rajendra to Alau but escaped back to India, and, in contrast with his brother Guru Prasad who continued his attempts to procure Jang's assassination, he appears to have remained quietly with his mother and sister at Bettiah, where many of the Nepali refugees settled. Some of the exiles began attempting to make their peace with Jang when he passed through Bihar on his return from Europe at the end of 1850.²⁶ Family tradition claims that Ranasher took Hiranya back to Kathmandu in 1907 VS (i.e., the year to mid-April 1851), while British sources place their return in

spring 1854.²⁷ In fact, it must have been before January 1854, when Ranasher was a signatory of the new *Muluki Ain*. The family maintain that the main motive for the return was anxiety that a suitable husband for Hiranya could not be found, and there may be some truth in this since at twenty-three she was already well past the normal age for marriage. It is possible that the marriage to Jang was only broached after they had sought pardon and been allowed back into the country, but rather more likely that the whole arrangement, including also Jagat Jang's marriage to Surendra's daughter, had been worked out in detail before they left Bettiah.

After her marriage, Hiranya persuaded Guru Prasad to return to Kathmandu also, but he refused a position in the army offered by Jang, preferring to retire into private life as a land-holder in the Tarai.²⁸ Ranasher was made a Kaji, and in autumn 1856 was promoted to the rank of *cauntara*.²⁹ In the meantime the links between the Shah and Rana families were further strengthened with the marriage on 24 February 1855 of Jang's² only other legitimate son, Jit Jang, to the king's second daughter, Nain Laksmi Devi. A few days previously Jang's eldest illegitimate son, Bhim Jang Bahadur, had married a grand-daughter of Rajendra's uncle, Ranodut Shah.³⁰ On 30 April, Jang himself married a niece of Hiranya and Ransher, the daughter of Birbahu Shah, who had died at the Kot.³¹

When the first marriage with the royal family had taken place in 1854, rumour had connected it with the approval that year of the *Muluki Ain*, a compilation of Nepali law which will be discussed below. The *Ain* was supposed to have provided for female succession to the throne, so that if the king's two sons died without issue it would go to Jang's daughter-in-law or her male child.³² None of the texts of the *Ain* which have survived

contain such a provision, but Jang had certainly given thought to the rules of succession. In 1851, when the king had talked of abdicating, Jang had told Dr. Oldfield, the Residency Surgeon, that if Surendra and his son (the second prince had not yet been born) died without male heirs, the English system might be followed and Surendra's daughter accepted as successor.³³

If Jang had seen the marriages with the royal family as a possible way of appropriating the crown, in 1856 he turned to a different strategy of establishing his own family as royalty in their own right. On 31 July of that year, just after the conclusion of a war with Tibet on terms amounting to a qualified Nepali victory, he resigned the premiership in favour of his brother Bam Bahadur. The resignation took Kathmandu completely by surprise, the Resident reporting that there were no rumoured explanations available other than Jang's own claim that he was simply tired of the burdens of office.³⁴ Within twenty-four hours, however, speculation was well under way. One theory, found plausible by the Resident himself, was that Jang wished to avoid the unpopularity of rescinding 1,200 promotions which had been made during the war and for which there were no *jagirs* available. Dhir Shamsheer, Jang's youngest brother, who visited the Residency on 1 August, gave what is probably the key factor, namely that Jang had resigned in order to ensure that his brothers would be kindly disposed to his own sons. This was consistent with another rumour now circulating that Bam had been promised the premiership when he revealed the 1851 plot.³⁵

Jang's strategy became clear on 6 August when the king issued a *lal mohar* creating him Maharaja of Kaski and Lamjung, two former princedoms in central Nepal with which both the Shah dynasty and Jang's own ancestors

had been closely connected. The document confirmed Bam's appointment as *mukhtiyar*, or as premier,³⁶ and provided for that office to go in turn to each of the other Kunwar brothers and then to Jang's eldest son. As maharaja, however, Jang would have not only total control of Kaski and Lamjung but also the right to over-rule both the king and premier in both domestic and foreign affairs. As interpreted later by Jang's sons, the *lal mohar* stipulated that the title of maharaja should not be subject to agnate succession like the premiership but should pass direct from father to eldest son. This was disputed by Jang's brothers, however, and there is also uncertainty over precisely what powers should accompany the maharajaship after Jang's death. These are key issues for understanding both the constitutional structure that Jang was trying to set up and also the conflicts which later broke out amongst the Rana family. Is therefore necessary to look at the wording of the document in detail.

There is an initial difficulty in that several different versions are now extant. The most authentic is probably that which is included in the *vamsavali* account.³⁷ This corresponds almost exactly with the 'Abstract Translation' which was prepared by the Residency staff for transmission to Calcutta.³⁸ The correspondence in itself proves that the *vamsavali* version is a condensation of the original document, but other versions which have survived are no fuller so we are still justified in taking it as representative of the lost original. The *vamsavali* is translated below:

When my stepmother, having received from my father control of the military and civil administration including the *pajani* and the power of life and death, killed our *umraos* and *bharadars* and attempted to place her son on the throne, you killed her partisans and installed me on the throne.

You strengthened our friendship with the queen *badsah* (i.e., Queen Victoria) by paying a courtesy visit to her in Britain.

The Tibetans formerly continually intrigued against us, threatening us with the power of the Chinese emperor, but you defeated them in war, making them agree to pay an annual tribute.

When my father, plotting³⁹ against you, sent men from Sagauli to kill you with a *lal mohar* instructing the whole army to that effect, then came himself with his principal *umraos* as far as Alau for the same purpose, you destroyed his army but brought him back without harm to his royal person and treated him with honour.

When my second brother tried to take your life I ordered the army to kill him but you spared his life, put him in custody for five years to remove the creature and otherwise treated him with honour.

You have conducted the premiership so as not to cause distress to the *umraos*, army and peasantry of our country but treat them justly and keep them content.

You have stopped the diversion of revenue by vagabonds and tricksters and by putting up taxes where appropriate, found extra resources and increased the army without touching the ordinary revenues of the treasury.

Being pleased with these services and seeing you so well-intentioned, I had taken an oath that if you gave up the premiership I should give up the throne, but when you came to resign I forgot my oath. Because I was unable to consult my Ranis and the other *umraos* and you requested that I give the office of prime minister to your brother, I gave it him. I left you without employment but stayed on the throne and so went against my oath. If I keep so able a minister without employment, I shall appear foolish in the eyes of the world. Therefore I have given you the title of Maharaja of Kaski and Lamjung. If I should oppress my *umraos*, peasantry or army, or jeopardise friendship with the queen *badsah* of England or the Chinese *badsah*, you as maharaja of your territory are not to allow me to do so. If when you try to restrain me I resort to force then my *umraos* and army should assist you. If prime minister Bam Bahadur should make any mistake in the military or civil *pajani* or in the work of strengthening friendship with the *badsahs* of England and China you are to warn him against it, and if he disregards your warning and acts violently, then I have given orders to my principal

umraos and to the army to act under your instructions. Make your kingdom happy! In the administration of justice I have given you the right and the kingly authority (*rajaim*) to inflict the death penalty. If any inhabitant of my country attempts to act against your kingdom, title or life, I have given you the authority to inflict the death penalty upon him. Enjoy kingly authority down through the generations of your descendants (*timra santandarsantansamma rajaimko bhog gara*). In the roll of succession to the mukhtiyarship which we had previously established for your brothers your son Jagat Jang Kunwar is to follow Dhir Shamsheer Rana. Wednesday Sravan 5 Sudi 1913 (6 August 1856).

The natural way of interpreting the penultimate sentence does seem to be as Jang's sons claimed, *viz.*, that the title of maharaja should be kept separate from the post of *mukhtiyar* and should be inherited by Jang's direct descendants. The words *timra santandarsantansamma* (literally, 'up to your descendants upon descendants') could conceivably be taken as applying both to Jang and his brothers, but this is very unlikely as the notion of agnate succession is not introduced until the following sentence. It is not surprising, therefore, that after the principle of agnate succession to a combined post of maharaja and *mukhtiyar* had become established, the wording of the *lal mohar* needed to be 'improved'. Chandra Shamsheer Rana, Jang's nephew and maharaja from 1901 to 1929, provided the British Resident of the day with an English version which reversed the order of the final sentences:

In the roll of mukhtiyarship bestowed by me in regard to brothers, after the roll (term) of Dhere Sham Shere Jung Rana, thy son Juggut Jung Bahadur Rana shalt succeed to mukhtiyarship and so on your (thy and thy brothers') generation after generation shall be made maharaja and mukhtiyar.⁴⁰

An alternative solution was simply to use the vaguer phrase *ananta kal* (for ever) as in a paraphrase of the *lal mohar* found at the excise office at Ilam in the eastern hills.⁴¹

It is virtually certain, then, that Jang intended the maharajaship to remain in his own direct line whilst the premiership was treated as the property of the Kunwar brothers as a unit. What is much more difficult to determine is whether he envisaged the supervisory powers over the government of Nepal as a whole to be inherited along with the title of maharaja and lordship of Kaski and Lamjung. The word *rajaim* translated above as 'kingly authority' because of the etymological connection with *raja* and *rajya* ('king' and 'kingdom') is normally glossed as 'rule' or 'government'. Whichever meaning is taken it could conceivably refer only to the government of the maharaja's own mini-kingdom or to the whole range of powers listed in the *lal mohar*. The various extant versions of the document opt sometimes for one alternative and sometimes for the other. Kumar's translation, which is based on the same *vamsavali* text as is used in this discussion, has 'All this will be enjoyed by you up to offspring upon offspring' and the translation offered by Rose has 'These rights will be enjoyed...'⁴² Similarly the Ilam text uses the phrase *sabai ti hak* (all these rights). In contrast, the British Residency's abstract translation has the more restrictive '*this territory...*' (italics all supplied). To the present writer it seems quite possible that the ambiguity is one which Jang himself had not resolved and the wording may have been left deliberately vague. If, as Resident Ramsay believed, at the time and most writers have assumed since, Jang saw the title of maharaja as merely an interim step on the road to supplanting the Shah dynasty completely, Jagat Jang could hope to inherit the throne of Nepal outright and the question of the future relationship of maharaja and premier would not arise.

Whatever Jang's long-term intentions, he retained full effective control of Nepali policy, Bam Bahadur acting throughout in accordance with his instructions and actually signing a *dharmapatra* to that effect.⁴³ When Bam died in May 1857, the Resident could inform Calcutta with complete confidence that it would not make the slightest difference to either external or internal policy.⁴⁴ The next brother in seniority, Krishna Bahadur, was appointed acting premier. Despite remaining in *de facto* control of the government Jang had been unable to secure any official British recognition of his special position: the Resident, determined not to provide Jang with any encouragement to make a final move to displace Surendra, continued to insist that he was accredited to the king and could only deal with him or his minister. The situation became particularly galling to Jang when news of the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny reached Kathmandu and discussions began with the Residency on the offer of Nepali assistance to the British.⁴⁵ Accordingly, pleading the 'persuasion' of the king and the *bharadari*, he resumed the premiership on 28 June. The *lal mohar* of appointment gave formal recognition to the powers which he had in fact never ceased to exercise.⁴⁶

The reappointment was, as Jain points out, a violation of the roll of succession to the premiership as laid down in the *lal mohar* of the previous summer.⁴⁷ It was made acceptable to his brothers by allowing Krishna as commander-in-chief to continue to receive the pay he had received as premier and adjusting the salaries of the three remaining brothers accordingly. It was also arranged that Krishna was to manage internal affairs (subject of course to Jang's power of veto), whilst Jang himself was in direct control of external policy.⁴⁸ This established a division of responsibility which was to hold good throughout the Rana

period. Ranoddip, Jagat Shamsheer and Dhir Shamsheer, were given responsibility for the western, southern and eastern areas of the country, an arrangement soon to crystallise into the standard Rana hierarchy of Western, Southern, Eastern and (a later addition) Northern Commanding Generals.⁴⁹

In terms of his formal relationship with the king Jang's new position could be seen as a step backwards, because although he retained his position as maharaja, as prime minister he was once again in theory a royal servant. He had, however, been able to reinforce the quasi-royal status of his own family by another marriage bond. On 25 June, a few days before his reappointment, two of his daughters were married to the Crown Prince, Trailokya.⁵⁰ The *lal mohar* formally proposing the matches had been issued the previous month, and spelt out the caste equality of the partners by stipulating that the prince would accept the most ritually sensitive food, boiled rice, from his wife's hand.⁵¹ Although hypergamous marriage (with consequent restriction on commensality between husband and wife) was common in Nepal, hypogamous unions were not permitted and the previous marriages of Jang's sons to the king's daughters ought in themselves to have removed any question of the Kunwars' caste status being inferior to the Shahs'. The fact that the point still had to be laboured suggests that the irregularity of the whole arrangement had not wholly been overcome. The doubts will, however, have been confined to the most rigidly conservative and no one will have ventured to voice them.

The relationship between king and maharaja-prime minister established in 1857 would remain in the same mould until 1951. Inter-marriage between Shahs and Ranas continued in each subsequent generation, so that the restoration of the monarchy's political supremacy in 1951 can in some

ways be seen as an exchange of places between two branches of one family. Also to persist throughout the Rana period was the admission of the king's formal, and especially ritual supremacy, in stark contrast to his lack of real power over the administration. Jang and his successors as maharaja were kings themselves if the strict sense of their title is pressed, but they were at an altogether lower level of numinosity than the maharajadhiraj. There was thus a separation between the religious and secular aspects of Hindu kingship which were surveyed in the first chapter.

Although Jang would probably have preferred to unite both species of supremacy in his own person, and might, as Rose suggests, have declared himself king if the Tibetan war had ended in a more triumphant fashion⁵² he and his successors accepted and indeed exploited the king's ritual superiority. One writer was consequently even led to suggest that the belief in the king's status as an *avatar* of Vishnu was created by the Ranas as part of a strategy to use him as a source of legitimacy whilst keeping him isolated from contact with his subjects.⁵³ This is, of course, to ignore the antiquity of the religious conception of kingship, but it probably is true that the Ranas deliberately reinforced it. The approach was one which Bhimsen Thapa had pioneered, when in the 1830s he had sought to persuade Rajendra that the king's chief duty 'was and ought to be the reception of his subjects' worship and homage as God's representative on earth and not a meddling with temporal concerns'.⁵⁴ However minimal the Shah dynasty's actual power under the Rana regime, the doctrine that government rested on their consent could not be violated. When Jang Bahadur's sons were ousted by their Shamsheer cousins in 1885 the latter took the infant King Prithvi to the army barracks to ensure the support of the troops, 'whose loyalty to the throne', one of the defeated

party explained afterwards, '[was] almost a passion'.⁵⁵ When in 1950 King Tribhuvan escaped from Rana custody and put himself at the head of the regime's opponents there could be no question of supplanting the dynasty, rather the Ranas tried to place his infant grandson on the throne. Tribhuvan's victory left the monarchy in an unchallengeable position, strengthened in fact by the Rana period because its sacred aura had been protected and indeed enhanced, while its century-long secular powerlessness absolved it from responsibility for the country's economic backwardness and for the 'collaborationist' policy towards the British Raj.

Relations with the *Bharadari*

The killings and expulsions that marked Jang's accession to power in 1846 eliminated many of the leading *bharadars* and ensured that the newly-constituted *bharadari* were all men ostensibly committed to his own interests. None the less, they remained a potential source of opposition as well as of support, and maintenance of their loyalty was essential.

A convenient starting point for a discussion of the political elite in the early years of the Rana regime is the list of 219 officials who attested the *Muluki Ain* (legal code) promulgated in January 1854.⁵⁶ The signatories are listed in order of importance, and the first ninety-two names can therefore be made the basis for a comparison with the list of ninety-two *bharadars* who signed the 1841 guarantee of goodwill for the then Resident, Brian Hodgson.⁵⁷ The following Table shows the distribution of posts between the various *thars* and caste groups. Members of the same *thar* were not *ipso facto* even distantly related, but major changes in a *thar's* representation are in fact normally the result of a change in

TABLE III

THAR AND CASTE DISTRIBUTION OF SENIOR PERSONNEL: 1841 AND 1854

BRAHMAN	KHAS (CHETRI)		THAKURI (RAJPUT)		MAGAR		NEWAR		CASTE UNKNOWN	
	1845	1854	1841	1854	1841	1854	1841	1854	1841	1854
Aryal	2	2	1	2	-	2	Manandhar	-	-	1
Jaïsi	-	1	12	10	4	1	Pudasaini	-	-	1
Jha	1	-	3	2	4	1	Rajbhandari	-	-	3
Josi	-	1	-	1	4	3	Other	1	1	2
KhanaI	1	-	1	-	-	-		1	1	7
Pande	-	3	1	-	-	-		-	-	-
Pant	5	-	-	1	-	-		-	-	-
Paudyal	2	-	3	2	-	-		-	-	-
Upadhyaya	3	6	-	3	-	-		-	-	-
thar	-	1	4	8	-	-		-	-	-
unknown	14	14	3	26	-	-		-	-	-
			-	1	-	-		-	-	-
			-	1	-	-		-	-	-
			1	-	-	-		-	-	-
			16	1	-	-		-	-	-
			6	3	-	-		-	-	-
			51	61	-	-		-	-	-

Sources: FS 25 January 1841, No.121; Ain (op.cit.), pp.2-5; Adhikari, Nepal under Jang Bahadur, op.cit., p.120.

Observations:

1. Magars and Chatries (freedmen of Khas extraction) were technically pure but non-twice-born groups, but individuals in high positions were probably regarded as 'honorary chetris' (see above pp. 41-2).
2. Newar castes are distributed at different points in the overall hierarchy laid down by the Ain, but were viewed as a single group in common practice.

fortune of one particular family. This is shown most dramatically by the increase enjoyed by the Kunwars and the drastic decline suffered by the (Khas) Pandes. The stability of the Basnet total, on the other hand, reflects an ability to maintain their place through successive changes of regime.

The key feature of the new *bharadari* was the elite position given to Jang's own immediate relatives. As well as the most senior positions, his brothers, sons and nephews received regular pay increases whilst the salaries of other functionaries generally remained static from year to year.⁵⁸ Most importantly, they were included on the Roll of Succession to the premiership. The rights of Jang's full brothers to the succession may already have been agreed by 1854; it had at any rate been decided upon before August 1856, for in the *lal mohar* of that month conferring the title of maharaja the king added Jang's son Jagat Jang to 'the roll of mukhtiyarship which I have established (*hamile badhibakseko*) for your brothers'.⁵⁹ A roll of thirty names, including second and (in the case of Jang's grandchildren) third generation Ranas was promulgated in 1868.⁶⁰

It has been generally accepted that the adoption of the agnate principle was intended by Jang as a device to secure the continued loyalty of his brothers.⁶¹ As a witness of the part which Ranbir Thapa had played in the downfall of his brother Bhimsen, Jang must have realised the paramount importance of maintaining family unity, and the 1851 plot against him can only have strengthened that conclusion. The wish to prevent a minor succeeding to the premiership with the consequent risk of instability may have been an additional factor, but cannot have been the decisive one; Jang was much less likely in the 1850s to have been worried about immediate political difficulties than the long-term prospects.

As Jain points out, the system did not in fact prevent strife breaking out within the family after Jang's death, but it was an adequate response to the demands of his lifetime and even afterwards Rana solidarity remained sufficient to protect their rule from outside challenges.

Jang's most important non-Rana ally was arguably Vijay Raj Pande, whose role at the Kot and in the Bhandarkhal affair and in providing legitimation for Jang's claim to caste equality with the royal family has already been highlighted. In contrast with the nonchalant attitude he adopted towards Surendra (at least in British company) Jang was careful to treat Vijay with respect in public. Laurence Oliphant, who met Jang on board ship when he was returning from Europe in 1850 and was invited to accompany him back to Kathmandu, was particularly struck with the deference he had shown towards the rajguru at Banaras and believed that part of Jang's popularity in Nepal was due to his friendship with Vijay.⁶² It is arguable that the belittling attitude towards Vijay displayed in Pudma Rana's book reflects Jang's wish in later life to play down his early dependence on him. None the less, whatever may have been said between family members in private, the special link between Pandes and Ranas was recognised in 1863 by an order promising that Vijay and his descendants would remain *gurus* to Jang and his descendants. This paralleled a similar undertaking to the Pandes from King Surendra.⁶³ In later years the role of personal *guru* to the Ranas was in fact shared between different Brahman families, presumably because, like the Shah kings before 1846, the Ranas thought it safer not to allow a monopoly in such a sensitive area.⁶⁴ On the other hand, the Pandes were permitted to retain their monopoly as personal *gurus* to the royal family until

after the fall of the Rana regime: when the royal family no longer exercised real political power their *gurus*' role became of less political significance.

While Vijay Raj and his close relatives eclipsed the Mishras and Paudyals, another branch of the Pande family took over the role of the Aryal family in providing the king's *purohit*.⁶⁵ Tirtha Raj Pande appears in this position in the *Muluki Ain* list. In compensation the Aryals, who had been *rajgurus* themselves in the earliest days of the Shah dynasty, were at least allowed to retain the post of *khajanci*, or state treasurer. Shiva Prasad Aryal remained for many years in this post, which he had assumed some time before 1846. This position lost something in importance, however, with the creation of a second *khajanci*.

The *cauntaras* as a group retained little of their former importance, and there is no evidence that either Samser Jang or Kulchandra (the latter a former ally of the Kala Pandes during the turbulent 1839-40 period) enjoyed particular influence. The number of posts held by them at lower levels in the *bharadari* declined spectacularly after 1846, as Table III shows, and they were clearly the group which lost most heavily through the changes of 1846-7. Only one individual, Ransher Shah, appears as a contradiction to their general decline. As has already been suggested, he probably played a major role in preparing the way for the Shah-Rana marriage alliances. A *kaji* in 1854, he was soon to become Jang's brother-in-law and also principal *cauntara*. His place on the list of signatories to the *Ain*, immediately after the Rana officers and before Vijay's family, is symptomatic of his personal importance.

A prominent place among the Khas *bharadars* went to relatives of Jang by marriage. The appointments of Hemdal Thapa, father of Jang's son-in-law

Gajraj, of Sanak Singh Khatri, his own brother-in-law, and of Kulman Singh Basnet, brother of Jang's late father-in-law, have already been commented upon. The first two seem to have remained in Jang's confidence without a break. Kulman Singh Basnet, on the other hand, is missing from the *Kitabkhana* record for 1848, possibly because his nephew, Meghambir Basnet, Jang's brother-in-law, was involved in an alleged plot against Jang in the autumn of that year.⁶⁶ His cousin Jitman, who afterwards disappears from the records, is shown as a *kaji* in his place that year, and Kulman himself was soon back in office where he remained into the 1860s. Kulman and Hemdal are shown as colonels in the register, for 1855, when a reorganisation of the hierarchy that year had downgraded the post of *kaji* which henceforth carried a salary of only 3,200 to 3,600 rupees per annum.⁶⁷ Sanak Singh reached the higher rank of Commander-Colonel, the only non-Rana to do so.

Jang's childhood friend Ran Mehar Adhikari, who had played a key role both at the Kot and at Bhandarkhal, would have been another member of this group had he not died in 1852.⁶⁸ The *birta* grant conferred on him in 1846 was later confirmed in his sons' names, but none of them became political prominent.⁶⁹ It is now known whether the Captain Juddha Bir Adhikari on the 1854 list was a relative.

A second Khas group consisted of a few men who had been closely associated either with Bhimsen or Mathbar Singh Thapa. Most important of these was probably Mathbar's adherent, Dilli Singh Basnet, described by Resident George Ramsay in 1852 as one of the few *bharadars* prepared openly to contradict Jang's opinions.⁷⁰ A *sardar* in 1848, he was a *kaji* when he accompanied Jang to Britain in 1850, then, like Hemdal and Kulman,

exchanged the title for that of colonel in 1855. He was made Chief Colonel in charge of the Tarai districts in the early 1860s and was succeeded in this post by his grandson, Bhakta Bahadur, on his death in 1873.⁷¹ The involvement of his elder brother Bhotu Basnet in a plot against Jang in 1852 had not shaken confidence in his loyalty.⁷²

Kaji Umakant Upadhya had served as *vakil* in Calcutta and as head of the treasury during Bhimsen's time. Because of his activities in the latter capacity, an attempt to recover two lakh rupees from him was made by the Pande administration in 1839.⁷³ Umakant, according to Hodgson, had played a central role in a system of trading monopolies set up for the benefit of Bhimsen and his closest associates.⁷⁴ Jang was to set up a similar system and part of Upadhya's usefulness may have been his expertise in this line.

Another former Thapa adherent was Captain Lal Singh Khatri, who had been arrested four months after Mathbar's death for carrying out orders of which the new administration disapproved.⁷⁵ He was a fluent English-speaker, having been taught by Brian Hodgson when *subedar* in charge of the Nepali guard at the Residency in the early 1840s.⁷⁶ He was almost certainly the first Nepali to publish in that language, contributing a letter to the *Illustrated London News* on the subject of the Nepal-Tibet border when he was in London with Jang in 1850.⁷⁷ His special expertise was to be used again in the late 1850s when he was a Nepal Government Agent in Calcutta with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and then again as a full colonel when he brought news of the 1885 coup by Dhir Shamer's sons to the British Residency.

Another clearly identifiable group amongst the *bharadari* were Newar financial administrators, several of whom were in 1854 serving in the grade of *subba*; holders of this title had originally been district revenue collectors but might also hold general administrative powers in their areas. By Jang's time, *subbas* were additionally employed as the heads of certain offices in the central government.⁷⁸ Most conspicuous were the three Rajbhandari brothers - Ratnaman, Siddhiman and Meherman, the first two of whom held the higher ranks of *mir subba* and *amir subba*.⁷⁹ None are mentioned in Hodgson's 1843 *bharadari* list, which includes only five *subbas*, all of them Brahmans in charge of Tarai districts, and no Newar other than Mir Munshi Laksmi Das. Ratnaman and Siddhiman probably first came to prominence in 1845/6, since Jang describes them in a letter as proteges of Abhiman Singh Rana and Gagan Singh respectively.⁸⁰ Their appointment may well have been the result of disenchantment with plains Brahmans such as Hira Lal Jha, who had fallen foul of Surendra, and Motahari district collector Girij Datt Misra, who according to oral tradition in Janakpur had managed to divert most of the revenue into his own pockets.⁸¹ In a letter written during his 1850 European journey, Jang denounced both Ratnaman and Siddhiman as oppressors of the peasantry, and he actually imprisoned Ratnaman on his return to Nepal,⁸² yet he continued to use the family's services. Ratnaman was soon back in charge of the Tarai district of Bara and continued in that post at least until 1854/5, whilst Siddhiman took charge of the day-to-day running of the old government treasury, the *Kausi Tosakhana*, and then became one of the two *khanjanchis* (state treasurers) before returning to Tarai administration in 1858. He was made a colonel in 1861, despite the

fact that Newars were not accepted into the army as ordinary soldiers.⁸³ Meherman Singh was for many years deputy head of the *Mulukikhana*, a new central treasury set up by Jang in parallel with the old *Kausi Tosakhana*. In 1863 he was in charge of the Tarai district of Sarlahi, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.⁸⁴

Alongside the Rajbhandaris, other Newars such as Dhan Sundar and Hriday Ratna worked as revenue collectors for Patan and Bhadgaon respectively. Dhan Sundar was a member of the Salmi or Manandhar (oil presser) caste, and later in the fifties other Manandhars appear in the *Kitab Khana* lists, probably all relatives of Dharma Narayan Manandhar, a financier who was a close associate of Jang's and who purchased many of the commodity monopolies against which the British Resident railed (see below, p.376). These newcomers' duties were generally the collection of excise duties on substances such as tobacco, for which they were themselves probably monopoly suppliers.⁸⁵

The Newars did not entirely displace the Brahmans who had been the most frequent appointees as *subbas* previously - the Brahman Laksmapati Jaisi, for example, *subba* in charge of Saptari district in 1843 and 1846, was collecting revenue in Morang in 1854/5, despite having earned Jang's displeasure for similar reasons to Siddhiman and Ratnaman in the meanwhile.⁸⁶ There can be no doubt, however, of the special reliance which Jang came to place on men such as Siddhiman and Dharma Narayan. A mark of his favour was the royal order of 1848 permitting the *chhathariya* Newar *thars* (the most prestigious section of the Shrestha Newars, who are ranked as *ksatriyas*) to adopt certain marriage customs, such as the groom's carrying of the *khalas* or sacred pot, which had hitherto been

allowed to the higher Indo-Nepali castes only.⁸⁷ Both Siddhiman and Laksmi Das, the *mir munshi*, availed themselves of the privilege.⁸⁸ There is also a disputed tradition that Dharma Narayan's Salmi caste was raised from impure to pure non-twice-born status by Jang as a reward for services in the 1855-6 war with Tibet.⁸⁹ This cannot be true as it stands, for Dhan Sundar was a *subba* in the early fifties and could not have held such a position as a member of an impure caste: confusion has arisen because of the low status of the corresponding caste in India and, if the Nepal Salmis were regarded as impure at one time, their elevation will have taken place under the Newar kings of the Valley before the Ghorkha conquest.⁹⁰ On the other hand, it is admitted by some Manandhars today that a number of families were at one time regarded as outcastes, and it is possible that Jang confirmed the status of the whole caste when it had been brought into dispute.⁹¹

Jang's patronage of particular Newar families did not amount to a new deal for the Newars as a whole, for they remained a suspect group in Indo-Nepali eyes. The individuals who made the greatest gains in status were Hindu, not Buddhist Newars, and they accepted a high degree of cultural assimilation. Laksmi Das' family, for instance, were to become known to later generations as the 'Newar Ranajis' in view of the assiduity with which they followed the customs of their masters.⁹² Oldfield, who knew them both, wrote of Laksmi and Siddhiman as having been 'raised(?) from the rank of Niwar to that of Parbattia'.⁹³ They were none the less still regarded as Newars by the dominant ethnic group, and it was perhaps precisely because as such they could have no hope of reaching the most powerful position that they were safe confidants for Jang.

The various groups so far identified leave unaccounted for a considerable proportion of the 1854 list, including in particular most of the thirty-three captains, who will presumably have been those attached to the *kampu* battations. In many cases they must have been relatives of individuals already described, but the links cannot at the moment be demonstrated, and it must be remembered that possession of the same *thar* does not in itself prove a family connection. Their loyalty was retained not so much by the level of pay they received, but by the prospect of future promotion and because the expansion of both the army and the civil service increased the changes of employment for their relatives. The army increased in size from 18,971 in 1846 to 26,659 in 1863, almost the entire increase taking place in the politically important *kampu*, whilst the civilian payroll went from 2,997 to 4,226 over the same period.⁹⁴ Thus the initial support for the new regime which the many promotions following the Kot Massacre had generated was further consolidated as the patronage in Jang's hands steadily expanded.

How far was the *bharadari* as a whole influential in policy decisions? An extreme view advanced by the Resident, George Ramsay, in 1864 was that it counted for nothing at all. Dismissing Jang's claim that it was politically impossible for him to open the country to British merchants, he wrote as follows:

[Jung Bahadoor] is himself the obstacle to all free intercourse between Nepal and the British Provinces, he is the mainspring of the Goorkhas' policy. All restrictions emanate from himself and not, as he wishes to make it believed, from the Sirdars. There is not a Sirdar in the country who has a voice in the matter. His Excellency's power is absolute; he can do what he pleases; his word is law; his Government is the most perfect autocracy that can be imagined; he could throw open the country tomorrow to English merchants if he willed it, and without a dissentient voice being heard, but he does not choose to do so...⁹⁵

It is indeed true that formal meetings of the *bharadari* - or 'Grand Council' as British sources sometimes describe - were rare, but Ramsay's picture is in fact a gross exaggeration, contradicting much other evidence, including that of his own earlier despatches, and explicable only in terms of his frustration at Jang's habit of sheltering behind the *bharadars'* real or imagined feelings whenever asked to do something inconvenient by the Government of India.

In the first place, whatever limitations there might be on the formal processes of consultation, Jang had always to contend with the possibility of 'extra-systemic' opposition in the shape of the many plots and conspiracies against him, especially in the early years of his rule. As has already been seen, these could involve even his closest relatives, as well as non-Rana *bharadars*. Basnets were particularly prominent in this activity, including the affairs of Meghambhir and Bhotu Basnet noted above, and also a plot to assassinate him when he left Kathmandu in December 1857 at the head of a force marching to assist the British at Lucknow.⁹⁶ The warning given in Chapter Five against seeing such activity as necessarily a family enterprise still stands, but it is reasonable to suppose that Basnets in general were particularly liable to chafe at their subordination to the Kunwars, since they were numerous enough amongst the *bharadari* to make aspirations for higher things seem not entirely unrealistic.

Such opposition to Jang could to some extent be regarded as simply the result of the (relatively) 'outs' against the 'ins', but attitudes were also shaped by policy issues, and in particular by Jang's relations with the British. It is abundantly clear from the writings of the Britons who accompanied Jang back to Kathmandu in 1850, and from Ramsay's

letters after his appointment to the Nepal Residency in 1852, that considerable opposition to Jang existed and that the belief that he was now too close to the British was a factor in this. The role of such feeling in 1851 plot has already been considered (above, p.316), and it was still causing Ramsay considerable anxiety over a year later. He suggested in a private letter to his cousin, the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie, that Jang was showing a disregard for caste and other religious prejudices which could result in his fall if not stopped. Such a belief on the Resident's part had indeed been partly fostered by Jang himself telling the new arrival that the *bharadars* sometimes taunted him with being an Englishman, but it was substantiated by instances such as Jang's draining the sacred pool or Rani Pokhari and defying the ban on sexual relations with outcastes by riding around in public with a Muslim dancing-girl.⁹⁷ Nor surprisingly Dalhousie suggested in reply that 'the chief practical result of [Jang's] civilisation will be that he will get his throat cut some time before that event would otherwise have occurred in the common course of nature in Nepal'.⁹⁸ In later years Ramsay was to come to believe that the picture of Jang as a progressive ruler held back by the prejudices of his countrymen was a totally false one deliberately planted by the premier himself,⁹⁹ whereas in fact this was only part of the truth and Jang had also had to modify his more impetuous reactions to his exposure to Europe in order to appease political feeling among the *bharadars*.

As well as having to take some account of the general climate of opinion amongst senior office-holders, Jang would not doubt consult directly on some occasions, even through peremptory command was a style which came easily to him, as the tone of his letters to his brother from Europe

shows. There was an inevitable tendency for *bharadars* to give the advice they thought the premier wanted to hear, but there were a few individuals, such as Dilli Singh Basnet, not afraid to speak their minds.¹⁰⁰ Jang's brothers, though at times very deferential to him, were at least once prepared to correct him openly in front of the British Resident (see below), and must therefore have often offered very frank advice in private. It is probable that the real debate took place on an informal level with few people present, and that fuller meetings of the *bharadari* when they took place had more of a rubber-stamp quality. This was probably the case with the *bharadari* sessions which decided on Rajendra's deposition and on the punishment of the 1851 conspirators (in the latter case the *bharadars* supposedly argued for a severer penalty than Jang himself wanted to inflict, but they will have done so out of the conviction that this was what Jang wanted them to say, so that proceedings were a ritual performance rather than a genuine debate).

The existence of this contrast between two levels is the most likely explanation of the conflict in the sources over the decision to support the British in the sepoy revolt. This was formally debated on 27 July 1857, after the first troops had been sent down to the plains, but while Jang was pressing an offer of additional troops. The meeting was attended by *bharadars* down to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, which will have included mostly members of the Rana family but also prominent non-Ranas such as Hemdal Thapa, Dilli Singh Basnet and others. Jang asked those present whether they were prepared to support his policy, making it clear that if they did so they would have to share the responsibility should anything go wrong. The result, according to the Resident's report sent two days later to Calcutta, was a unanimous endorsement.¹⁰¹ This is

seemingly contradicted by many other accounts: according to Pudma Rana opinions were offered in favour of joining the British, joining the rebels, and also in favour of staying completely neutral, whilst the *vamsavali* records that all of the *bharadars* spoke against giving support but were overruled by Jang.¹⁰² In addition, one of Jang's brothers told Ramsay In June, before the council had met, that he was under pressure from many leading men to join the rebellion, and similar sentiments were expressed to a subsequent Resident in 1877 by Dhir Shamsheer, the youngest of the brothers. Rajguru Vijay Raj Pande was most conspicuous amongst those convinced that British rule in India was now doomed.¹⁰³ Jain implies that all the accounts of opposition to Jang's policy were fabrications aimed at persuading the British of the obstacles he was overcoming in their interest,¹⁰⁴ but the more plausible explanation is that such opposition did exist but that no one was prepared to vote openly against Jang once his own opinion was made totally clear. Ramsay certainly continued to believe that the anti-British faction might yet carry the day, for he warned in October 1858 of possible danger from those in Nepal 'who have not the same wholesome dread of our power that [Jang] has, and who may impel him, in spite of his own inclinations, to break faith with us, and to try to extend the Goorkha possessions into the provinces of Dumaon and Darjeeling'.¹⁰⁵ Such worries were to remain until the final elimination of rebel fugitives from the Nepal Terai in the winter of 1859-60. Jang's government may have struck Ramsay four years later in peacetime as a 'perfect autocracy', but in time of crisis a more complex reality came into play. The 'iron law of oligarchy' applied in Rana Nepal as it did anywhere else.

The Army

The support of the army had been crucial to Jang's attainment of power and its continued loyalty was the most essential single factor in his regime's survival. This was partly secured by Jang's own personal popularity with the troops, which rested on his reputation for bravery and possibly on sympathy shown earlier in his career for the problems of the ordinary soldier. This hold over the men was commented on by various British observers, including one who witnessed the tearful farewell at Calcutta between Jang and his favoured Rifle Regiment in 1850, and another who, during the Mutiny crisis, contrasted the Gurkhas' loyalty to Jang with their attitude towards other officers regarded as less courageous.¹⁰⁶ Despite this, however, Edwards is probably correct to argue that it was the material rewards offered that had the greater importance.¹⁰⁷

Rates for pay for the army, and in particular for the *kampu* regiments at Kathmandu, had been a major source of contention during the early forties, but by December 1843 the normal pay for a private had been brought down to 72 rupees per year, compared with the rate of 80-100 for the *kampu* prevailing under Bhimsen.¹⁰⁸ The data for rates under Jang are regrettably rather less clear. The table presented by Orfeur Cavenagh, the liaison officer who accompanied Jang on his 1850 journey to Europe and returned with him to Kathmandu, has sepoy receiving between 100 and 300 rupees, whereas the calculations of the cost of the increase in army strength to 1863 given in a register at the *Jangi Adda* (War Office) imply a figure of only 50 rupees for the *kampu*.¹⁰⁹ The same register does, however, give 110 to 120 as the rate for privates in the *rissala* (cavalry) regiment, whilst the Rifle Regiment, Jang's own elite corps which was raised after 1846, paid between 200 and 400, according to a British report.¹¹⁰

Cavenagh had therefore presumably taken preferential rates for standard ones. The *Jangi Adda* (War Office) register is in fact consistent with other evidence indicating that the pay of privates outside Kathmandu did range between 36 to 50 rupees.¹¹¹ The rate for the *kampu* must, however, have been substantially higher than this: the December 1843 rates were increased under Mathbar and although there was talk of reductions in 1845 (see above, p.263), there would surely have been some record in the sources if this had actually been implemented. A *kampu* private's actual pay under Jang may well have been close to the 110 rupees received by cavalry troopers.

As with private soldiers, the pay rates recorded for officers show wide discrepancies. Cavenagh's figures are again far too high with captains, for example, ascribed a salary of 3,000 to 4,000 rupees whereas the *Kamyandari Kitab Khana* record for 1863 shows lieutenant-colonels only receiving from 1,800 to 4,366.¹¹² In contrast, the *Jangi Adda* analysis of the *kampu* gives figures for captain and lieutenant, 900 and 675 rupees respectively, which tally with those for these ranks in regiments outside the capital given in the *Kitab Khana* documents and also for the cavalry regiment (part of the *kampu*) in the *Jangi Adda* register itself.¹¹³ There is no evidence that *kampu* officers, as opposed to private soldiers, necessarily received more pay than their non-*kampu* equivalents, and it must therefore be assumed that these figures are correct. The rate for a captain is thus less than one-third of the pay for that rank prescribed by the *reduced* scale brought in in 1836/7.¹¹⁴ This is explicable if one takes into account the effective down-grading of the rank which had occurred in the meantime: whereas Hodgson in 1843 could write of a Nepali captain as the equivalent of a British colonel, this had changed with

the introduction of the new grade of 'major captain' between 1844 and 1846.¹¹⁵ The 1863 lieutenant's rate of 675 rupees was 200 less than the 1836/7 salary, but was the same as the old sudebars' rate, presumably because subedars had been given a notional promotion to lieutenant when 'major captains' were introduced. In a similar fashion, the subedars shown by the *Jangi Adda* register on 254 rupees equate to the 1837 jemadars on 205. The change had resulted in the elimination of jemadar as a rank in the *kampu* by 1846 (see Table IV). This structure, which was most probably brought in by Mathbar Singh, was modified by Jang with the reintroduction of jemadars, a large increase in the numbers of lieutenants, the introduction of the new rank of lieutenant-colonel, and increases in the numbers of colonels and generals. The very highest ranks were of course monopolised by the Ranas themselves, but, taking the total numbers of officers from jemadar up to lieutenant-colonel, covering in 1863 a pay range of 126 to 3,068 rupees, one obtains a total for the *kampu* of 635 posts. In contrast, in 1846 posts in the same range totalled only 222, so that Jang's first seventeen years in power saw not only a steep absolute rise in the number of higher-paid posts, but also an improvement in the ordinary soldier's perceived chances of promotion, since the ratio of posts paying over 100 rupees to the total strength of the *kampu* went from 1:58 to 1:30. The strategy thus appears to have been one of securing the loyalty of the mass of the troops not by increasing their basic pay, but by holding out the prospect of advancement before them. If, as is likely, recruitment was often from families which already had members serving, the increased prospect of employment for one's kin brought by the army's expansion will have further strengthened the bond between the troops and the premier.

KAMPU : STRENGTH BY RANK, 1838-1863

TABLE IV

	<u>SARDAR</u>	<u>LT.-COLONEL</u>	<u>MAJOR-CAPTAIN</u>	<u>CAPTAIN</u>	<u>LIEUTENANT</u>	<u>SUB</u>	<u>JEM</u>	<u>HAV</u>	<u>AMIL</u>	<u>TOTAL ALL RANKS</u> (inc. sipahi)
1838 (salary in brackets)	- (3,600)	-	-	15 (2,750)	15 (875)	15 (675)	50 (205)	100 (80-100)	200 (75-85)	4,300
1843	2	-	-	14	19	19	118	276	176	8,859
1846	-	-	18	19	18	167	-	356	649	12,732
1863 (salary in brackets)	-	20 (3,038)	19 (2,700)	33 (900)	60 (675)	252 (254)	251 (?126)	525 (?60)	573 (?75)	19,117

Sources: i) Military return for 1838 (HP Vol.6, ff.157, et seq., and 1836/7 pay scale, ibid., ff.174/5); the latter was implemented as planned only for officers (HP, Vol.9, p.117). Sardar's salary is the 1839 rate (HP, Vol.13, f.223).

ii) Military return for 1843, FS 30 March 1844, No.31 (NB: cauntaras and kaji assigned to regiments have been disregarded).

iii) Jangi Adde, Register No.1 (comparative strengths and expenditure for 1846 and 1863). Salary figures for Jemadar and below are probably unreliable (see discussion on p.344).

An exception to the standard pattern was made in the case of the Rifle Regiment, which was set up after 1846 and became the elite of the *kampu*. The pay of an ordinary soldier in this regiment ranged between 200 and 400 rupees per annum, thus placing him in a vastly superior position to his comrades in the other units. The Sri Nath and Letar regiments, which had once been the most favoured part of the Kathmandu garrison, now seem to have received no special treatment. Their loss of status probably preceded Jang's coming to power, since their numerical strength in 1846 was similar to that of the other units.¹¹⁶

In addition to the use of material incentives, Jang sought to strengthen his hold over the army by exploiting ethnic diversity. Up until 1846 troops had been recruited from only three ethnic groups - the Indo-Nepali (excluding the low castes and thus comprising Thakuris, Khas and Brahmans only), the Magars and the Gurungs. According to Hodgson's 1839 account all the officers were drawn from the first group alone, whilst the other two accounted for about half of the NCOs and privates.¹¹⁷ Certain families such as that of the Magar general Abhiman Singh Rana, were treated as 'honorary Khas/Chetris', whilst the ordinary Magars and Gurungs were dispersed through all units of the army. In 1847 Jang altered the traditional pattern by throwing open recruitment to the Kiranti tribes (Rai and Limbus) of the eastern hills.¹¹⁸ Perhaps at the same time, and at any rate before 1850, he decided to segregate the different groups in his own regiments. The intention, as he explained it to Captain Cavenagh during his European journey, was to minimise the danger of mutiny spreading from one regiment to the others.¹¹⁹ The account in the Resident's report of a near mutiny in 1857 makes it clear that the Kathmandu garrison by that time consisted of units of three

different ethnic types: Indo-Nepali, Gurung and combined Kiranti and Tamang.¹²⁰ Oldfield implies that Magar units were also set up, but there is no evidence elsewhere for this. At the outbreak of the war with Tibet in 1854 separate corps were also set up composed of Bhotias - tribespeople of close Tibetan cultural affinity.¹²¹ Within Gurung (and Magar?) regiments officers up to the rank of captain were from those ethnic groups.¹²² This was a paper improvement on the situation in the 1830s, when they were normally unable to rise higher than the rank of jemadar, but really offset by the 'inflation' in the rank structure described above. There may therefore have been resentment that the hill tribals were being herded off into second-class units. It is likely that Magars and Gurungs serving in units earmarked to become totally Khas were rotated out gradually, thus explaining the continuing ethnic mix observed by Oldfield.¹²³ Segregation was probably still not totally completed when the policy was abandoned. A royal order of 1863, conferring rewards on different groups in the country for their part in the war against Tibet in 1855-6 and during the Indian Mutiny, declared that Gurungs and Magars were both to be admitted to the *roja paltan* ('select regiments'), presumably referring to *kampu* units which had hitherto been earmarked as purely Khas.¹²⁴ The same document opened up military ranks up to that of colonel to these two ethnic groups, whilst also removing from the Kiranti their liability to enslavement. The number of non-Indo-Nepali who did reach senior positions remained minimal, but Jang had clearly reached the conclusion that the advantages of a fully rigorous 'divide and rule' policy were outweighed by those of at least an apparent equality of opportunity.

The loyalty of the army was put to its most rigorous test in the summer of 1857, after news of the mutinies in the British provinces had reached Kathmandu. On 1 June, the day after the Nepal government had made a formal offer of help to the British, the officiating prime minister, Krishna Bahadur, informed the British Residency that a Gurung subedar had been arrested after attempting to incite the Rudra Dhoj regiment, a Gurung unit of the *kampu* to mutiny and assassinate Jang Bahadur. His confession had indicated that disaffection existed in several regiments, and Jang and the senior *bharadars* had decided to have the document read out to the assembled troops and to order them to pass sentence upon the culprit. Loaded guns were to be in position around the parade ground and if any regiment failed to call for the death sentence, the artillery would open fire upon them and the other units be ordered to join in the slaughter. Resident Ramsay was horrified at this proposal, believing that the Gurung troops might hesitate to condemn one of their own to death even if they were still basically loyal themselves, and that ordering their comrades to open fire on them might precipitate a general revolt. Jang and his brothers sent word that they would act on this advice. Later that day proclamations were read separately to the high-caste (Indo-Nepali) regiments, the Kiranti and Tamang units, the Gurungs, the artillery and the garrisons at the other Valley towns of Patan and Bhadgaon. The high-caste and the Kiranti units declared at once that they would accept any orders from their officers, but the Gurung regiments, numbering altogether 1,700 to 1,800 men, broke ranks, formed into separate groups and began an animated discussion. The guns were in position around them, but, following Ramsay's advice, Jang had ordered them not to be loaded. Ranodip

Singh, second youngest of Jang's brothers, told the Resident later that at the moment he and all the senior *bharadars* were convinced they were about to be murdered. However, the discussion was allowed to take its course:

No steps were taken to excite them; they were addressed by the well-affected of their number, who pointed out to them the privileges that had been accorded to them by Jung Bahadoor; when suddenly, calling out that the honour of their caste was concerned, they made a simultaneous rush to the place where the prisoner was standing (who had been brought upon the Parade Ground to be shewn and repeat his confession to the troops) and put him to death upon the spot.¹²⁵

The normal loyalist spirit of the Nepal army had thus prevailed.

The background to the whole affair, according to Krishna Bahadur's account to the Resident, had been attempts by 'petty Mahomedan merchants and other inhabitants of the plains of India' resident in Kathmandu to induce the rank and file of the army to persuade their officers to join the Indian revolt.¹²⁶ The Darbar's offer of help on 31 May, which Jang and his brothers had not expected to be accepted and which was probably not yet public knowledge, is unlikely to have been a factor. So far as is known, there were no direct grievances against Jang's government involved either, but merely excitement communicated by events taking place in India. A sense of solidarity with the Indian rebels is unlikely to have been a major factor, for one would have expected the higher-caste, more strongly Hindu regiments to have felt this more than the Gurungs, but given the national sense of grievance against the British for halting Gorkha expansion, some restlessness in the army was inevitable. Although discipline was maintained throughout the crisis, it has been plausibly argued that Jang's motive in giving military support to the

British was not only the prospect of reward from the victory he confidently expected them to win, but also the necessity to let the army have a part in the drama being enacted on the plains below.¹²⁷ The temper of the army remained throughout a critical factor. Although the six regiments initially sent into India, which operated under close British supervision, proved completely reliable, there were some problems with the force which Jang himself took down in December to assist in the reduction of Lucknow. An accurate assessment of these is made more difficult because of the attempt which Jang made to have the Resident, George Ramsay, recalled from his post, which meant that the latter was not inclined to put the most charitable interpretation on his actions. None the less, it is certain enough that Jang was in communication with zamindars involved on the rebel side, in particular with Duman Khan, who had organised raids by Nepal-based bands against British positions across the frontier. Jang told Brigadier McGregor, the British liaison officer with his force, that he was simply employing Khan as a spy, but Ramsay suggested in a letter to the Governor-General that Khan had in fact been used by the rebels to influence the Nepali *bharadars* and troops against the British, and that Jang himself had been unable to stop this happening. 'I have always represented', concluded Ramsay, 'that Jung Bahadoor, though in many respects a despot, is the mere tool of his army and holds his power only by keeping it in good humour.'¹²⁸ Like Ramsay's later and very different characterisation of Jang's regime as 'the most perfect autocracy imaginable' this is an exaggeration, but it still contains an important element of truth.

The Machinery of Government

In conversation with Captain Orfeur Cavenagh in 1850, Jang claimed that he exercised direct personal control over every aspect of the administration:

All written and verbal communications, relative to affairs Political, Fiscal and Judicial, are submitted to the Minister, who generally proceeds to issue his orders thereon without consulting the Maha Raja or...the Grand Council....The minute supervision exercised by General Jung Bahadur over the management of all departments of the State is most extraordinary and deserving of the highest commendation, for the amount of labour thereby entailed upon him must be immense. I believe that I am fully justified in saying that not a rupee is expended from the Public Treasury, nor a merchant permitted to pass the Forts at Muckwanpore or Seesa Gurhee without his knowledge and sanction. All appointments Civil and Military are conferred by him and all complaints regarding the conduct of Public Officials are brought to his notice.¹²⁹

This command of the administrative machine was allegedly achieved despite the fact that, as Jang also told Cavenagh, he had been virtually illiterate on entering office but had overcome this handicap and been able to handle official documents adequately within one year.¹³⁰ There is no reason to doubt that Jang did keep a very tight grip on much government activity, and especially on appointments, but the complexity of the bureaucracy even in 1846 has caused at least one scholar to doubt the claim made by Cavenagh and the similar assertions found in Pudma Rana's book.¹³¹ This scepticism is justified for there is, in fact, direct evidence that Jang had an inadequate grasp of the nuts and bolts of administration. The Resident's report of his resignation from the premiership in 1856 speculated that distaste for such activity might have been one of his motives, and included the following revealing account of a discussion he had had with him the previous month on the financing of Nepal's war with

Tibet then just concluded:

...Jung Bahadoor tried to explain to me what the War had cost his Government, but he made so many blunders and mis-statements that I was able to correct him on some points, whilst his brothers, who were sitting near us, contradicted nearly every other statement he made. Amongst other things, he told me that he had raised 70 lacs of rupees by the tax of one-third on all landed produce and on Jagheres, Pay, etc. (reported in my letter to your address No.3 of the 18th of January), that his now surplus grain would sell for 20 lacs more, etc., etc. I reminded him that he had in the first instance only estimated twenty lacs as the sum that could be raised by the tax just mentioned and that seventy lacs would be nearly double the revenue of his country. He then corrected himself and said that the amount so raised must have been only 35 lacs, and he went on to try and prove to me by adjusting the value of his Assets that the war had only really cost his Government some 5 or 6 lacs of rupees. He told me nearly two years ago that it had then cost the country upwards of sixty lacs. In fact, His Excellency seemed quite puzzled and not to have the least knowledge of what he was talking about.¹³²

When Jang assumed the premiership again in 1857 it was reported that the internal administration of the country would be the responsibility of his brother Krishna Bahadur as Commander-in-Chief, and at least during the last two or three years of Krishna's life (he died in 1863) this was the actual practice.¹³³ Thus by the 1860s Jang was not even attempting to superintend every detail of the administration, whilst even before then he must have been dependent to a considerable extent on his subordinates. The general lines of policy were certainly his, and his letter to Bam Bahadur show how strongly he could feel on some issues, but detailed planning and execution was the work of others.

The civilian government employees to whom this responsibility fell numbered just under 3,000 in 1846, the total rising to almost 4,000 by 1863.¹³⁴ The bulk of these were employed in routine record keeping activities etc., but particular key individuals, even if not politically

influential, kept the administrative machine going and carried through major changes. *Muluki Kharidar* Gunavanta, who shaped the revenue system under Bhimsen, was one such administrator,¹³⁵ and it is likely that Siddhiman Singh Rajbhandari and other financial specialists played a similar role under Jang. The Nepali administration impressed Brian Hodgson, who contrasted it with the difficulties often met in other native states:

...here there is an unsophisticated nobility rendering administration a comparatively easy task. We have no popular commotions, no getting into debt by the Government or any deferring of pay due to its servants, so that the administrative clock moves on almost without the touch of the Durbar's hand.¹³⁶

Political tranquility was one reason for this state of affairs, and this was a condition which disappeared with Bhimsen's fall soon after Hodgson wrote these words in 1837, but which was restored with Jang's coming to power. The inherent quality of the bureaucracy was now able to reassert itself.

The principal government offices in Kathmandu in the early 1840s were described by Hodgson in a paper which was unpublished, but from which extensive extracts were included in Edwards' survey of the pre-Rana administration.¹³⁷ The most important were the treasury, or *Kausi Tosakhana*, which as well as receiving the income from lands not assigned as salary, was the office through which the *subbas* of the Tarai were appointed; the *Sadar Daphtar Khana*, which assigned jagirs to all civil and military employees other than the soldiers of the *kampu*;¹³⁸ the *Kampu Daphtar Khana* which dealt with *kampu* assignments; the *Kumari Chauk*, which Jang himself had once headed and which audited the accounts for all government income as well as acting as a court of law for revenue and revenue-related matters;

the *Munsikhana*, office of the *Mir Munsî*, which handled correspondence with the British, Tibet and China; and the four principal courts of the capital, the *Koti Ling*, *Ita Capali*, *Taksar* and *Dhansar*. Mention should also be made of the *Dak Cauk Dhukuti*, depository for the state reserves, which in 1843 allegedly held ten million rupees. There were, in addition, many lesser offices whose functions are not always clearly understood. Most offices were situated in or near the palace complex at Hanuman Dhoka, and their names, if not descriptive of their function, referred to their location.

Jang largely retained this basic structure, but instituted a new treasury, the *Mulukikhana*, which took over the *Tosakhana's* function of receiving revenue and also the *Dak Cauk Dhukuti's* of holding the main government reserves. The *Tosakhana* continued to act as a channel through which payments were made, receiving funds for this purpose from the *Mulukikhana*. The keeping of land tax assessment records was simplified with the creation of a single *Moth Adda* ('Register Office') in place of the previous sixteen separate offices. A number of new agencies and departments were set up for specific tasks, the most important innovation being the setting-up in 1848 of a personnel records office, the *Kamyandari Kitab Khana*.¹³⁹

This last-mentioned step eased the task of control over the administration and went hand-in-hand with a trend towards great systematisation. It had already become common in Nepal for letters of appointment to contain detailed instructions on the task to be performed, but under Jang there was a proliferation of *sawals*, administrative manuals attempting to provide as fully as possible for all contingencies. A separate office - the *Sawal Adda* - was created to oversee their production.¹⁴⁰

The same drive for standardisation was seen at work in the production for the first time of a Legal Code for the country - the *Muluki Ain* promulgated in January 1854.

The *Muluki Ain*

The preamble to the *Ain* states that its purpose is to end the situation in which identical offences have attracted varying penalties and to ensure that in future everyone shall be dealt with uniformly on the basis of his offence and his caste.¹⁴¹ The Code runs to 693 pages in the 1965 printed edition (essentially the revised version of 1867), and covers not only criminal law in the ordinary sense, but also land tenure issues and offences relating to caste which fell within the sphere of the *dharmadhikar*. Within the last category special emphasis is placed on the punishment of sexual relations violating caste barriers, and on the expiation required even from those who have been unwittingly polluted by the offenders. The penalties laid down bring out clearly the strict prohibition of hypogamy and relative toleration of hypergamy that was an essential feature of the caste ideology. The same logic is extended into the treatment of homosexual relations: cases where the active partner is of lower caste than the passive are treated much more severely than those where the reverse applies.¹⁴² As well as illustrating a general principle, these sections of the *Ain* provide a wealth of detailed information on the caste hierarchy in Nepal, with the relative positions of the different groups explicitly formulated for the lower castes and implied for the upper ones. This has rendered the document of immense significance for anthropologists, and an extensive analysis of the *Ain* from this point of

view has been made by Höfer.¹⁴³ Detailed, though not comprehensive examination of other sections is found in Adhikari and Jain. These discussions, and also briefer accounts elsewhere, have highlighted two main issues: was the *Ain* consciously reformist or merely a codification of existing practice, and how far, if at all, did it reflect Western influence?

Precisely because no codification of the law on the scale of the *Ain* had been attempted before, it is not always clear whether or not particular provisions are innovations. There can, however, be no doubt that Jain is right to see it as a fundamentally conservative document. This is clear both from the overall thrust of the code and from the fact that a relatively small number of sections are highlighted as if they were new.¹⁴⁴ Jain goes much too far, however, in seeking to deny Jang the credit for mitigating the severity of the Nepali penal system which is given him by Cavenagh, Pudma Rana and others.¹⁴⁵ Whilst mutilation was indeed already becoming rarer during Hodgson's time in Nepal, and Jang himself exaggerated the extent of past severity so as to appear in a reforming light to the British, there are many instances of this penalty being applied in the years before the *Ain* was promulgated. This is amply documented by Adhikari, the punishments imposed in one royal order of 1838 which he publishes including castration for a Magar who had had sexual relations with his patrilineal cousin, and amputation of a thumb of a slave convicted of theft. As late as 1850 two untouchables were castrated for having sex with women of pure caste; this was at a time when Jang was already telling his British friends that mutilation was no longer practised, but the sentences were decided on in Kathmandu whilst

he himself was in Europe.¹⁴⁶ With the implementation of the *Ain* physical maltreatment of offenders did not cease altogether, since cutting of the nose was retained in some circumstances for women involved in adultery or theft, as was branding for both sexes, but castration was abolished as a penalty and capital punishment greatly restricted. *Sati* was not prohibited - this step was not finally taken until the time of Jang's nephew, Maharaja Chandra Shamsher - but the circumstances in which it could take place were restricted, widows with male children under thirteen, for example, being barred from ascending the pyre.¹⁴⁷

There can be no doubt that mitigation of the severity of the penal code and restrictions on *sati* were largely if not wholly the result of British influence. Whatever their feelings on the intrinsic merits of reform, Bhimsen and Mathbar Singh Thapa appear to have realised that it could win them British approval. Already by 1832, the law prescribing the death penalty for outcastes having sexual relations with pure caste females had been relaxed in practice, whilst in 1836 Hodgson reported that the British presence in Kathmandu was having an 'ameliorative effect' on the Nepali system and that the Darbar had been careful to bring to his notice the fact that there had for some years been no case of *sati* amongst the families of the leading *bharadars*.¹⁴⁸ As has already been seen, Jang was eager to present himself to the British as liberal-minded, and the need to protect this image will have helped shape his conduct, whether or not he actually went so far as to use the possibility of adverse reaction from *The Times* as an argument against imposing the death penalty on the 1851 conspirators.¹⁴⁹

However else the *Ain* may have reflected foreign influence, there are adequate grounds for suspecting that it helped plant the idea of

codification in Jang's mind. It is true that Nepal's own history offered precedents, for there existed already law codes of sorts ascribed to the fifteenth-century Kathmandu ruler, Jayasthitii Malla, and Rama Shah, a seventeenth-century king of Gorkha, and Prithvi Narayan Shah in the *Divya Upades* had referred to his own intention (not in fact fulfilled) of following their example.¹⁵⁰ The Jayasthitii regulations which, as the *Ain* was also to do, underwrote the existing caste hierarchy, were regarded by the Nepali courts in the 1830s as authoritative for disputes involving Newars, Bhotias or lower-caste Indo-Nepalis.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, both Jayasthiti's and Rama Shah's 'codes' were on a much less extensive and comprehensive scale than the *Ain*. To understand the origins of Jang's more ambitious project, it is probably necessary to take into account both the openness to non-Hindu influence on issues of *form* (not *content*) which Nepal had already displayed, and also Jang's own experiences in Europe in 1850. The first of these is illustrated by the wholesale adoption of Muslim, and specifically Moghul, terminology in land revenue and administration, and also by Bhimsen Thapa's efforts to learn about foreign legal systems; Hodgson was requested during the 1830s to provide the Darbar with details of crimes and penalties in British India, and while Hodgson thought this was prompted by his own curiosity about the Nepali system, Bhimsen had much earlier instructed members of a mission sent to Burma to seek similar information there.¹⁵² When Jang was in Europe it is likely that the Code Napoleon came to his attention and made a strong impression on him. The passages concerning the emperor in *Jang Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*, the account written by one of his travelling companions, are especially vivid, and there is a tradition among Jang's descendants that he regarded Napoleon as his

political exemplar.¹⁵³ The fusion of the roles of warrior and law-giver was an important element in the Napoleonic legend, and Jang's wish to have himself presented in the same light is neatly illustrated by the design of the marble statue of him erected in March 1854 on the Tundhikhel: he was depicted holding a sword in one hand and a law code in the other.¹⁵⁴ As a final reinforcing piece of evidence, there is the Belait-Yatra's mention of *ain-kitap* ('law-book') in the list of things which President Louis Napoleon had suggested Jang might care to see while in Paris.

The possibility of Western influence in a more subtle form is raised in Höfer's valuable discussion of the *Ain*'s relationship with the Indian legal tradition. He points out that whereas the orthodox view requires the king to uphold *dharma* but not to interpret it, the *Ain*, a document drawn up and promulgated by the prime minister and the entire *bharadari kausal*, not just its Brahman members, represents a state take-over of the latter function also. Together with this strengthening of the state's role goes an emphasis on territoriality - the *Ain* is concerned to demarcate Nepal from 'Mughlana', the India formerly ruled (and thus polluted) by the Muslims and now by the British, and the *dharmadhikar*'s authority to grant *patiya* (certificate of expiation) in cases of involuntary pollution is delegated in some circumstances to local authorities or *jagirdars* having tenurial authority over an area. In this Höfer sees not only a natural extension of the king's position as protector of his people and as ultimate owner of the soil, but also the influence of the modern concept of the nation-state.¹⁵⁵

This suggestion is an attractive one, but a number of reservations need to be recorded. In the first place Höfer's picture of the secular

ksatra merely acting as the executive arm of the *brahman* spiritual authority is too stark a dichotomy, failing to take into account the religious aspect of Hindu kingship itself. Secondly, in the Nepali case although the subordination of the Brahman *dharmadhikar* to the secular authorities is seemingly complete (he is barred from issuing *patiya* without the permission of king and premier except in routine, non-intentional pollution (*bhor*)),¹⁵⁶ neither Vijay Raj nor his successors became mere cyphers, and they retained prestige and authority as brahmans and *gurus*. Thirdly, Höfer slightly understates the role of the Hindu state elsewhere in India. As a contrast to the Nepali pattern he examines the Maratha kingdom before 1818, and, relying in Gune's account of its judicial procedure, argues that in caste matters the state 'represents merely the executive power enforcing the resolutions of the caste assembly and/or Brahmins and helps the offender to expiate and reattain his caste status'.¹⁵⁷ In fact, a more recent study of the Maratha system than Gune's has shown that the state's role was a stronger one, with restoration of lost caste-status, for example, possible only when sanctioned by the government; caste-fellows readmitting an offender to commensality or priests performing the *prayaschitta* ceremony were punished if they did so without the state's authority.¹⁵⁸ It would be wrong to deny, however, that 'étatisation' was taken to further limits by the *Ain*, the role of caste assemblies, for example, which was an important though subordinate one in the Maratha territories, being nowhere even mentioned in the Nepali document. Höfer's basic contention can therefore be accepted, but the gap between the Nepali and the 'orthodox' Hindu pattern is a narrower one than he suggests.

The essential feature of the *Ain* is arguably not the state's assumption of the right to prescribe a moral order, but the fact of its promulgating such an order encompassing all the territory under the king's control. Burghart has argued that at the turn of the nineteenth century there existed a clear distinction between the king's *muluk* (possessions), which was simply the area happening to be under his tenurial authority at any one time, and his realm or *desa*, which was a region of fixed extent under the protection of the king's tutelary deity. The obligation to maintain a moral order - and in particular the *varna* hierarchy - applied pre-eminently to the latter. The *muluk*, on the other hand, was not seen as a single moral universe, but as a collection of different 'realms' and of different 'countries' (*des* - vernacular form of the Sanskrit *desa*), the latter being geographical regions and/or the homes of different peoples. The *Ain*, by setting up an all-Nepal caste hierarchy, extends the *desa* to coincide with the *muluk* and replaced a multiplicity of 'countries', each with its own customary law, by a single society of *jati*.¹⁵⁹

Burghart's analysis, like Höfer's is pushed a little too far, since the pre-1854 state certainly sought to impose certain moral values on the areas of the country outside the *desa*, that is outside the old kingdom of Gorkha and the Kathmandu Valley and immediately surrounding hills: as Burghart himself points out, the ban on cow-slaughter was enforced throughout the country, and the king reserved to himself the right to deal with crimes held particularly polluting even when he alienated his tenurial authority in a *birta* grant to a Brahman or ascetic.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the *Ain* represented a significant advance towards integration of all Nepal's territory, justifying Höfer's verdict that its society was 'on the way to becoming a nation of castes'.¹⁶¹ The *Ain*'s role in this respect complemented

the steps already discussed of enlarging the number of ethnic groups from which the army could be recruited and the levels to which members of less-favoured groups could be promoted.

Revenue Policy

Important though the legal enforcement of Hindu orthodoxy was, for the ordinary citizen it was the revenue demand that was the most important element in their relation with the Nepali state.¹⁶² The government's claim on agricultural produce was its principal source of income, and the first object of revenue policy was to maximise that income without placing an intolerable burden on the cultivator. This concern for the agriculturalist was motivated first and foremost by the danger that he would 'vote with his feet' against a harsh regime by abandoning his plot. In the early Rana years land was still in surplus, and except in the western hills it had no capital value, so that the cultivator's interest lay only in the standing crop. The problem was at its worst in the fertile lands of the eastern Tarai, where a peasant might easily abscond with his harvest across the border into India, a move made all the easier because the frontier did not correspond to any cultural or geographical reality.

The second object of state policy was to manage the relationship with the intermediaries, whether holders of land grants from the central government, or collectors or farmers of the revenue. All these groups had to be conciliated, but at the same time prevented from becoming too powerful and from frustrating the government's first objective by oppressing the peasants or by diverting revenue into their own pockets. Here again, the Tarai posed particular problems because the *chaudhuri*s

responsible for collection at the *pargana* level had the advantage of much greater local knowledge than the central authorities and also, like the peasants beneath them, could easily abscond across the border, where most of them already kept a large part of their assets.¹⁶³ Where people of Tarai origin occupied higher positions in the revenue structure, as was the case with individuals such as Hira Lal Jha or Suba Girij Datt Mishra, whose careers have already been discussed, the danger was correspondingly greater.

After many years of frequent changes in revenue demand and collection mechanisms, Jang put in place a more stable and lasting structure. A key part of this strategy was long-term settlements, and in the hills surveys between 1854 and 1868 fixed taxation levels which were then kept broadly constant for the rest of the century. Previously *jagirdars* had been entitled to oust their tenants if they received an offer of a higher rent from another peasant, but this practice was forbidden by the *Ain*, other than on land under *birta* tenure. Even though the sale of land in the central and eastern hills remained theoretically illegal, the granting of security of tenure led to the emergence of a *de facto* market in land, especially after the 1870 edition of the *Ain* laid down that whoever paid tax on a plot would be registered as the holder. In contrast to such moves which paved the way towards private ownership of land and, later in the century, growing subinfeudation, Jang also maintained the *raibandi* system, which had first been introduced in the late 1830s and under which the government reserved the right to redistribute ricelands amongst families which were already holders in order to ensure each retained a viable unit. However, although there is evidence of redistribution actually taking place among families with *rakam* tenure,

that is holding land direct from the government in return for labour services, its use does not appear to have been widespread.

There are not precise data available on the proportion of the crop taken in rent. Regmi's calculations suggest that it was around one-third in the Tarai and the western hills, and one-half or more in the central and eastern hills. In the west and in the Tarai rent was normally assessed in cash and was paid either by a *zamindar* or by independent peasants known as *chuni*, whereas elsewhere the registered land-holder was normally a peasant termed *mohi* ('tenant'). The *mohi* worked the holding himself with his family, whereas both *zamindar* and *chuni* had their land cultivated by sharecroppers (*adhiyar*). The revenue burden on those who actually tilled the fields was thus much the same all over the country.¹⁶⁴

Under Jang's rule the level of rents probably remained broadly at the level it had reached in the early 1840s, except that in the Tarai he did away with the 25 per cent surcharge which had been imposed on the region during that period and which had led to the flight of many peasants across the border. The tendency for intermediaries in the revenue hierarchy to extract more from the peasantry than they were legally entitled to no doubt persisted, but Jang's measures to prevent this were rather more whole-hearted than had previously been the case. His tirades against oppression of the peasantry, included in letters written home from Europe, have already been referred to, as has his arrest and imprisonment on his return to Nepal of Ratnaman Singh Rajbhandari for that offence. This incident appears to have made a great impression in India as well as in Nepal, for Lawrence Oliphant on his way back to the plains from Kathmandu was escorted by a guide who gave it

as his reason for moving from East India Company territory into Nepal.¹⁶⁵ This strict policy was continued, and instructions issued to Jagat Shamsher as Governor-in-Chief of the Tarai in 1856 specified that if peasants deserted their fields an enquiry should be held, and any local official found guilty of oppression should be punished.¹⁶⁶ Jang's wish to reduce pressure on the peasantry was probably also behind the temporary abandonment of the *jhara* system of pressed labour, though this was reintroduced during the war with Tibet and seemingly retained afterwards. The *Ain's* ending of enslavement for debt belongs in the same category. The peasant still none the less had to bear much of the risk of crop failure, for the *Ain* permitted an adjustment of the revenue demand only if the yield were 25 per cent below the level assumed for tax calculations.

On land where the state had alienated its claim to the revenue, either on a temporary or permanent basis, that is on territory under *birta*, *guti*, or *jagir* tenure or included within a dependent *rajya*, the collection of all dues was the responsibility of the grantee. Elsewhere the central government employed a number of different collection systems. In the hills there was a division between *khet* (irrigated) lands, where collection was normally the responsibility of local officials known as *jamawals*, and *pakho* (dry) lands, which were taxed on a homestead basis rather than as a proportion of actual yield. Homestead dues were collected either by contractors or through the village headman (*mukhiya*). In the Tarai, there had been constant switches between different methods, with the one constant element - the *chaudhuris* at *pargana* level - handing over their collections to salaried government employees, to a single

contractor-general for the whole Tarai or to contractors at district level. Jang continued on much the same lines as before in the hills, but radically revised the system in the Tarai. Although the revenue farming element was not eliminated immediately, it was phased out in favour of direct collection by salaried *subbas* (later lieutenant-colonels) responsible to the Tarai Governor-in-Chief, normally a member of Jang's own family. These officials were generally from Kathmandu or the hills, so their assets were readily confiscable in case of need, and they were prohibited from trading or owning land in the area for which they were responsible. Under military discipline, and subject to the control of the *pajani* and of the new personnel department they were unlikely to emulate the exploits of such as Girij Datt Mishra. Local people were only brought into the hierarchy at the *pargana* level, where the *chaudhuri* system was continued. To tighten arrangements lower down, Jang in 1861 instituted the *jimidar* system at *mauja* level. *Jimidars* collected the revenue within their area, receiving as remuneration land calculated to provide 5 per cent ^{of the total collection} (10 per cent in the far western Tarai returned to Nepal in 1860). This land was to be worked compulsorily by the peasants from whom they collected. The arrangement was intended partly as an insurance against absconding cultivators, for the *jimidar* was personally liable for the revenue on land which remained uncultivated. The Revenue Regulations setting up the new system gave the provision of finance to the peasantry as one of their responsibilities, and Jang evidently intended them to operate not only as collectors but also as 'improving landlords'. The logic behind the arrangement was thus similar to that of the Bengal Permanent Settlement. Over the longer

term their role as entrepreneurs became of little significance, once the supply of readily reclaimable land was reduced and they 'only combined the functions of tax collector, rent receiver and moneylender'.¹⁶⁷ Towards the end of the century they emerged as virtual landlords, with the sale of *jimidari* rights known to have occurred as early as 1885. The system thus depressed the position of the *chuni* peasants who had hitherto dealt independently with the *chaudhuris*. Politically, however, the arrangement had the advantage of tying the interests of local 'big men' closely together with those of the central government: appointments as *jimidar* were made by the local authorities in the year immediately following 1861, but by 1890 the role had been taken over by Kathmandu directly. As a collection mechanism the system appears to have worked satisfactorily, and although flight across the border will have remained a problem at first, this must have diminished after the British agreement in 1866 to make revenue embezzlement an extraditable offence, and been even further reduced as land acquired a capital value.¹⁶⁸

The payment of government employees through *jagir* assignments both eased the burden on the central authorities and gave the *jagirdar* the opportunity to realise more than the theoretical value due to him. Jang retained the system, but imposed a number of restrictions. In 1852/3 the use of Tarai land for *jagirs* was abolished: this was reversion to the situation in the early 1830s, but constituted a major change from the practice in the intervening years, as Hodgson's statistics for 1842/3 show that half the assignments to civilian *bharadars* and one-sixth of those to the *kampu* were then in the Tarai.¹⁶⁹ Revenue statistics for 1852/3 graphically illustrate the extent to which the hills were given

over to *jagirs* as less than 1 per cent of the 2.1 million assessment for the region actually reached the treasury.¹⁷⁰ The *jagirdars'* rights were reduced somewhat by the new security of tenure given to the cultivator, whilst the juridical powers which officers (as against rank-and-file army men) held over their tenants were limited by a ban on their trying cases involving claims over 500 rupees; jurisdiction in serious criminal offences attracting the *panchhat* remained reserved to the centre as before. The expansion of district courts (*adalats*) through the hills will have made it easier for the aggrieved tenant to exercise his theoretical right of appear against the *jagirdar's* decision.

The gifting of land as *birta* was prohibited by the *Ain* in areas already under cultivation, and such grants in theory reserved as an inducement for the development of new lands. In practice, however, Jang sometimes violated this rule in his own interest, and large grants were made to himself and to members of his family, particularly in the western districts which were returned to Nepal as a reward for assistance in suppressing the Indian Mutiny.¹⁷¹ In other areas Jang did at least sometimes pay for land made over to him, but his Rana successors discontinued the practice and received grants as outright gifts from the state. By 1950, the year before the fall of the Rana regime, over a third of Nepal's total cultivated area was under *birta* tenure, and three-quarters of this in the possession of Rana family members.¹⁷² The *birtadar* was placed in an especially favoured position by the *Ain* because in addition to permanent possession he was allowed to oust a tenant who failed to match an offer of a higher rent from another peasant. It should be noted, however, that the state retained the right to levy tax on *birta* holdings *in extremis* and this was done in 1855 to meet the cost of the war with Tibet.¹⁷³

Similar in position to large *birtadars* were the rulers of the various *rajyas* not fully integrated into the regular administration. The original *rajyas* were pre-unification states which had been left with internal autonomy in return for tribute. Under Jang and his successors *rajyas* were set up or abolished as rewards and punishment. The 'rajas' thus created might enjoy full autonomy on the old pattern - the one which had of course been followed when Jang himself was created Maharaja of Kaski and Lamjung in 1856 - or merely *birta* rights plus the title, or some other arrangement. The procedure was, however, never taken to the extent that the preponderant power of the central government was jeopardised. Rulers of major old-established *rajyas* such as Sallyana or Phalabang might also intermarry with the Ranas, thus further confirming that the Kunwars enjoyed Thakuri status.¹⁷⁴

The *kipat*-system of communal tenure, principally involving the *kiranti* of the eastern hills, was continued. The *Ain* allowed the mortgaging of individual plots but recognised the reversionary right of the community as a whole by providing that after the debtor's death or absconsion his creditor no longer had any claim on the land, but only against him personally or his estate. The *kiranti* had surrendered to Prithvi Narayan on terms, and subsequent administrations had been careful to respect their rights. It is likely that Jang, who had spent part of his childhood at Dhankuta in Limbu country, and his associate Hemdal Thapa, who had many years of experience on the eastern border, were especially aware of the situation in this part of the country, and sympathy for the *kiranti*, as well as an eye to 'divide and rule' may have lain behind their admittance to the army in 1847. Such sympathy did not however halt a trend towards *de facto* alienation of land to non-Limbus

which continued through the nineteenth century, for in 1901-3 the Limbus had to seek legislation banning further alienation of cultivated rice lands. Individual *kipat* holders were probably no better off by Jang's time than their counterparts on *raikar* (ordinary crown) land, for *kipat* was taxed on a homestead basis and progressive subdivision of holdings must have boosted the proportion of the crop actually taken. Land settlements were made by the central government not with each individual holder but with headmen who were known significantly as *samindars* and who distributed land amongst their fellow-tribesmen while often having their own plot cultivated for them on a sharecropping basis.¹⁷⁵ Life for the average Limbu or Rai cultivator was thus far from tribal communism, and problems were compounded by a growing land shortage in the eastern hills which led to large-scale migration from the 1830s onwards.

The surest way to increase state revenue without putting undue pressure on any level of the tenurial hierarchy was to expand agricultural production, and this was mostly done by expansion of the area under cultivation. The greatest scope for this was in the clearing of the forest which covered much of the Tarai, a process which the pre-unification states of Palpa, Makwanpur and Bijaypur had already begun with the assistance of cultivators from India, and which continued under Prithvi Narayan Shah and his successors.¹⁷⁶ Under Jang the policy was pushed forward with renewed energy. Individual *rayats* were allowed land on favourable terms and given the building materials to construct homesteads. The main thrust, however, was provided by the *jamindars* who brought in cultivators to open up large areas. In 1854 the *Ain* offered them either a three-year tax holiday on new land together with *birta* to the value of 10 per cent of the extra revenue thereafter generated, or alternatively

a five-year tax-free period without any *birta* grant. Revenue regulations issued in 1861 for the eastern Tarai offered a greatly improved deal: no tax for ten years, plus a *birta* grant and the right to retain their holding even if they committed a criminal offence.¹⁷⁷ The result was the stimulation of migration from India on a large scale, which was to continue throughout the Rana period. The financial terms and the security of tenure offered on the Nepali side of the border contrasted favourably with the Bengal tax-and-tenure regime, and even more with the vulnerable position of Oudh *rayats vis-a-vis* the talukdars after the latter's rights were reinstated in the wake of the 1857 rebellion. Another 'push' factor was the pressure on the peasantry from the indigo planters, this being a major reason for a large number of *rayats* crossing over from Champaran in 1866.¹⁷⁸ The success of Nepali policy is in ironic contrast to Kirkpatrick's prediction when he visited the Tarai in 1793 that the blessings of the Permanent Settlement would soon lead the Nepali *rayats* to flock into India.¹⁷⁹

Since there were no improvements in basic agricultural techniques, irrigation remained the only means of boosting production other than simple land clearance. In the eastern Tarai the government met half the cost of irrigation works constructed by peasant farmers or *jimidars* and in the late sixties the government ordered the local authorities to undertake such projects themselves and to extract a 50 per cent contribution from local revenue functionaries. The local administration in the western Tarai (*naya muluk*) was instructed to construct facilities if this would increase the revenue. Regmi suggests that despite such edicts from the centre, relatively few such improvements were actually made, and that most of what was actually constructed was 'possibly nothing

more than temporary channels and earthen embankments which did not outlast the first monsoon'.¹⁸⁰ This is perhaps unnecessarily disparaging, but our knowledge of the agrarian history of the region is insufficient to be certain.

On at least one occasion Jang did seriously consider a much more elaborate irrigation project, involving the use of imported technology. His objective was to use the water of Phewa Tal, the large lake in the Pokhara Valley, to irrigate the surrounding country, which is at a considerably higher level. It was calculated that the resulting increase in revenue would be between 5 and 6 lakhs per year. Dr. Oldfield claimed that the project was not implemented because of Nepali unwillingness to allow foreign surveyors or engineers into the hills.¹⁸¹ This may have been a factor, but lack of enthusiasm on the British side was also partly to blame. Whilst in London in 1850 Jang requested the East India Company to purchase on his behalf a steam pump and tubing for this purpose, and there was extensive correspondence on the subject over the next three years. In spring 1851 Jang asked the Resident for the provision of an engineer to operate the steam engine and to construct a road into the hills to allow the engine to be brought in from the plains. The Governor-General offered to provide an engineer for the road project, but later refused to make one available for the survey of the Pokhara Valley.¹⁸² The Finance and Home Committee in London now provided an estimate of the cost of the steam pump and associated equipment, together with the salaries of the engineers needed to supervise its setting-up and operation. The full bill would have been around £10,000 (equivalent to one lakh Indian rupees, rather more in Nepali currency). Jang finally told the Resident that in view of the heavy expenditure and the fact that

no one in Nepal would be able to operate the machinery, he was cancelling his order.¹⁸³ As the investment involved would have been swiftly recouped by the increase in revenue, reluctance to allow foreigners into the hills may have been the real reason for the change of plan. However, Jang had clearly been willing to countenance this the previous year, and if Dalhousie had then been able to meet his request the outcome might have been very different. Opposition to the idea must certainly have existed among the *bharadars*, but Jang might have been able to carry the project if given backing at the critical moment. As it was, Jang proceeded with an order for a rice-threshing machine which had been part of his original 'shopping order' and this reached Kathmandu in January 1855. It had despatched without user's instructions, which the Resident now requested. It is not known whether the machine was ever actually assembled and put to use.¹⁸⁴

Jang thus toyed with the idea of applying to agricultural production the technology which he saw on his visit to Europe. Did foreign models influence in any way the revenue arrangements which have been described above? Bhimsen Thapa had certainly been interested in learning details of the relationship between peasant and government in other states, as this was one of the topics the mission to Burma in the 1820s was tasked to investigate.¹⁸⁵ In a passage which is probably based on Jang's own lost diary, Pudma Rana includes the 'relation...between public and private rights in land' as one of the things Jang was interested to learn when he travelled to Britain.¹⁸⁶ As with the question of foreign influence on the *Ain*, there is no way of being certain, but it is conceivable, for example that the *jimidari* system introduced in the eastern Tarai, with its expectation that the *jimidars* would play the role of

'improving landlords', owed something to the thinking behind the Permanent Settlement. The model was certainly not followed in detail, however, one vital difference being that the *jimidars* lacked the right to evict their 'tenants' or to increase rents, except on their own *birta* holdings.¹⁸⁷

Although it has attracted less attention than direct agricultural taxation, trade was none the less an important source of government revenue. Excise duties were one part of this picture, but increasingly during Jang's rule the sale of monopoly rights over particular commodities brought in substantial income. Lynch-pin of these arrangements was Jang's Newar associate, Dharma Narayan Manandhar, whose activities, if Ramsay's reports are correct, aroused widespread hostility. By the 1870s government monopolies included raw cotton, tobacco, fish, salt, opium, grain and ghee.¹⁸⁸ It is unclear whether the grain monopoly included rice, staple food of most inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley, but if so this was a late extension: in the mid-sixties a proposal to place the commodity in Dharma Narayan's hands was mooted, but Jang was allegedly persuaded by his brothers that such a move, with the consequent rise in price, would lead to a popular revolt. Feeling on the issue reached such a pitch that King Surendra, normally prepared to follow tamely whatever his prime minister suggested, is said to have roundly abused Dharma Narayan at an audience and to have struck him on the arm with the flat of his sword.¹⁸⁹ British indignation on the subject sprang from the restrictions placed in British Indian merchants and from their free trade ideology; the tone of Ramsay's complaints to Calcutta echoes that of Palmerston's diatribes against similar practices in the Pasha's Egypt.¹⁹⁰ Jang's policy was partly founded on genuine fear

that giving a free rein to British subjects to trade in Nepal would ultimately compromise the country's independence, but more fundamental was a view of trade as a direct source of government revenue rather than an engine of economic growth. Government monopolies went hand-in-hand with widespread participation by Jang and his family, and by leading *bharadars*, in trading ventures, in which they were normally sleeping partners to Newar merchants.¹⁹¹ Even allowing for the bias of our British sources there can be no doubt that the regime's commercial policy raised the cost of living of the ordinary citizen, and although it ensured that profits went to Nepali merchants rather than Indian, it did not prevent Nepali craftsmen suffering the inevitable result of competition with a more advanced neighbour: in 1861 Ramsay reported that 'the very inferior manufactures of Nepal...are annually deteriorating rather than improving, and are gradually giving way before our own manufactures'.¹⁹²

On its own terms, however, Jang's management of Nepal's finances was successful. Revenue from the eastern Tarai, for example, doubled between 1852 and 1862, whilst total revenue across the country rose from 47 lakh Nepali rupees in 1843 to 115 lakh in 1877.¹⁹³ The increase will have accrued largely from the expansion of the area under cultivation, including of course the addition of the western Tarai, formerly part of Oudh, in 1860, but also from improvements to the collection machinery. The expense of the Tibet war - 27 lakhs or more¹⁹⁴ - was thus absorbed without too much dislocation, though the strain in the short term was considerable. As government revenues increased so did the personal income of Jang and his family: running Nepal was a lucrative business.

The total impact of Jang's regime on the well-being of individual Nepalis is difficult to assess in the absence of reliable figures for

total national income and for population. Assuming that the elimination of some - only some - of the worst abuses in the revenue system outbalanced the effects of the monopoly system on those who had to buy their food, the average standard of living perhaps showed a slight increase. Such improvement as there was cannot have been dramatic and Regmi's harsh verdict is substantially correct: Jang and his family were principally concerned to use the surplus they obtained from the peasantry for conspicuous consumption, and they protected their dominant position by allowing a share of the proceeds to go to the landowning elite - the *jagirdars* and non-Rana *birradars* - as well as to the village-level functionaries on whom the system depended. There was no substantial investment in agriculture which would have enabled the population as a whole to climb above subsistence level.¹⁹⁵

In accepting Regmi's analysis, it is none the less necessary to enter two caveats. First it is wrong to suppose that all measures taken by Jang which favoured the peasant were simply the result of his desire to protect revenue levels over the long run or to curb the power of *jagirdars* and other intermediaries. This was undoubtedly the main motive, but it was not the only one. Jang's letters to his brother, documents which were certainly not intended to be made public and which are therefore free from propagandist distortion, show that he did accept that the function of government was to promote the happiness of the governed: 'God put us where we are in order to keep the people happy'.¹⁹⁶ This was a realisation which he attained only intermittently and which he allowed to be over-ruled when in direct conflict with self-interest, but the fact remains that at times he was capable of seeing the state as something more than a system for battenning on the producers.

Secondly, just as Jang's performance bears comparison with that of previous Nepali regimes, so he had no worse record than other South Asian native rulers. The defects of the Nepali political economy were those of the traditional South Asian order. Everywhere in the subcontinent those at the top of the social pyramid were content to maintain their status and comfort within a relatively static society, and to import from Britain or British India those products of Western technology which they wanted for their own consumption. Western methods of military organisation and military hardware were adapted as far as possible - Panjab under Ranjit Singh had been the most successful in this direction - but the spirit of post-Meiji restoration Japan or of an Attaturk was nowhere in evidence.

It can of course be argued that after his 1850 journey to Europe, Jang should have been more aware than other South Asian rulers of the possibilities for agricultural and industrial progress.¹⁹⁷ During and after the visit he himself impressed upon British acquaintances that he was personally eager for modernisation but unable to disregard the prejudices of his countrymen. As has already been seen, George Ramsay, the Resident who served the longest period at Kathmandu during Jang's time in power, was convinced by the mid-sixties that all this was simply a pose for political purposes, and it is certainly true that Jang shared to some extent the general view of the Nepali elite that an opening-up of the country, such as the widespread appliance of modern technology would certainly have implied, would endanger the country's independence. Yet the enthusiasm with which Jang initially viewed the steam-pump irrigation project discussed above, suggests that he was not hypocritically pretending to a degree of enlightenment which he did not really possess,

but rather emotionally oscillating between conflicting ideas: this was a trait in his character well illustrated by his toying with the idea of actually giving up his position in Nepal in order to remain in Europe as permanent Nepali ambassador to Britain.¹⁹⁸ With Jang himself thus in two minds it was indeed the isolationism and conservatism of the *bharadari* generally which proved decisive, and Nepal under his rule saw a strengthening of the state machinery, with consequent increased potential for change in the long run, but no immediate attempt to transform the nation's productive capacities.

The British Connection

Whilst continuing the isolationist policy which Nepal had followed since the days of Prithvi Narayan, Jang and his successors made a firm alliance with British India the bedrock of their foreign policy. In so doing they followed lines which had been laid down during the final years of Bhimsen's predominance and also under Mathbar Singh, but the contrast with the pretence of hostility Bhimsen had maintained for internal purposes and also with the real tensions during the Kala Pande ascendancy was a marked one: not surprisingly *The Times* remarked during Jang's 1850 visit to Britain that 'the Court of Kathmandu was almost the last in India from whom but a few years back any mission of amity or compliment might have been reasonably expected'.¹⁹⁹ The bond between the British Indian government and the Rana regime grew even stronger under Jang's successors, as the British came to see the traditional regimes of the subcontinent as natural allies against the rising nationalist challenge and to regard Nepal's insulation from 'progress' as politically advantageous.²⁰⁰ In consequence the belief developed

amongst the Nepali intelligentsia that Jang had been a British puppet whose rise to power was engineered by the Residency, and this view is still widely held by educated Neaplis today, despite its demolition by archival research since 1951.

Jang's policy was in fact dictated simply by the belief that British power was irresistible and that collaboration was the surest means of securing advantage in the short term and of postponing as long as possible the absorption of Nepal in the British Empire which he regarded as probable in the long run.²⁰¹ His offer of support in the second Sikh War was a natural consequence of this belief, and his conviction was strengthened by what he saw for himself during his 1850 visit to Europe.

Jang's journey, which he made in the capacity of ambassador from King Surendra to Queen Victoria and which involved an absence from Nepal of just over a year, was proposed as a fact-finding mission and accepted by the British as such. Though this was doubtless part of the real reason, most important was the wish to demonstrate Nepal's goodwill towards the British in the aftermath of the annexation of the Panjab and to strengthen Jang's own position at home by creating the impression that he enjoyed a special relationship with the British. In addition, he wished to obtain three specific concessions from the authorities in London: extension of the existing extradition agreement to cover civil offenders (in particular absconding revenue collectors); permission to employ British engineers on irrigation and military projects; and the right to correspond directly with London in future should he be dissatisfied with the Resident in Kathmandu.

In the event, the home authorities simply referred him back to Kathmandu on all the points he wished to discuss, and the visit became

essentially a public relations exercise. The British were anxious to impress Jang with their industrial and military strength, whilst Jang himself, as the first Hindu of such political importance to visit Europe, proved the sensation of the season both in Britain and subsequently in France.²⁰²

Although the Embassy had thus been a success of sorts, it is uncertain whether it did Jang any political good at home, at least in the short term. Too close an identification with the British could bring its own dangers, as previous episodes in Nepali history had demonstrated. The conspiracy against him and the general atmosphere after his return - examined earlier in this chapter - suggest that the negative reaction was predominating. It is also possible that his lack of success with his three requests became known. There is no direct evidence of this in contemporary sources, but earlier this century there was a story current amongst the older generation in Kathmandu that Jang had failed to obtain his objectives in Britain and left hurriedly for home without his hosts' permission.²⁰³ Against all this one can set only the approaches for a reconciliation made by some of the Nepali refugees as he returned home through India (see above, p.319): his treatment as an honoured guest by the British perhaps helped to convince them that a change of regime was no longer to be hoped for.

So far as Anglo-Nepali relations are concerned, the effects were more clearly positive. Improved extradition arrangements were eventually conceded, albeit after lengthy negotiations, whilst the visit stood Jang personally in good stead with the British and also reinforced his own belief that alliance with them was the only realistic policy for Nepal. With assured peace on his southern border, he took advantage of the

Taiping rebellion in China to return to the 'forward policy' towards Tibet which Nepal had to abandon after the Chinese intervention in 1792.

Logistical difficulties limited his advance and led him to give up the aim of wresting control of the frontier districts of Kuti and Kirong, but the war ended with Tibetan agreement to pay an annual tribute to Nepal and with increased extra-territorial privileges for the Nepali merchant community in Lhasa.²⁰⁴ Jang's opportunity to participate in a more decisive, and financially more profitable, campaign came with the Mutiny outbreak. After providing troops who held Azimghar and Jaunpur districts against the rebels, Jang took the field personally at the end of 1857. He told Sir Colin Campbell, with whom he participated in the assault on Lucknow, that had it not been for his visit to Britain he would now be fighting against the British not alongside them.²⁰⁵ This statement was perhaps an exaggeration on his part, since even before 1850 he probably had a sufficiently realistic view of British power to deter him from risking openly opposing it. Nevertheless, Jang would probably have stayed neutral if he had not had his own first-hand experience of Europe to set against the opposition of the *bharadars* to assisting the British. The intervention did not, of course, make the difference between British victory and defeat, as Pudma Rana tried to claim, but it eased their task considerably. In their despatch to Canning authorising the return to Nepal of four districts of the Oudh Tarai annexed from her in 1815, the Court of Directors did not try to minimise the significance of the Nepali contribution:

We are unwilling to imagine the position in which we should now have been without this aid from the Maharajah - and still less of the course which events must have taken had the Maharajah taken advantage of our distresses, and directed against us the force he has employed in our defence.²⁰⁶

It is also arguable that the situation in Oudh and the United Provinces would not have deteriorated as it did if Canning had not countermanded Ramsay's initial offer of Nepali help at the beginning of June 1857.

The fact that Jang's 'collaborationist' policy brought concrete results was in itself a powerful justification from the Nepali viewpoint, but it could not entirely resolve the contradiction of a professedly Hindu state aiding the *mlecha* conqueror of the Hindus of India. Even though the Nepalis, then as now, thought of themselves primarily as such, not as 'Indians' or 'South Asians', the religious tie, as well as the racial factor, did mean that they had some sense of solidarity with the peoples to the south. Very clear evidence of this is provided by one of Jang's travelling companions on the European trip, who wrote that on reaching Bombay on their return journey the party felt as if they were back in their own homes.²⁰⁷ Whether or not Jang felt this as a personal dilemma, it was obviously a factor in the thinking of many of his countrymen, and therefore something which he had to take into account in the presentation of his policies.

The problem was similar to that which had long faced Hindu rulers in the plains when they accepted service under the Mughal emperor against their co-religionists, and a partial solution had been found through the incorporation in 'Rajput ideology' during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries of the theme of service to one's overlord, a schema within which a non-Hindu suzerain could be accommodated.²⁰⁸ However this model was not appropriate for Nepal, because even though Jang could arily declare to a British visitor that Queen Victoria 'has not got a more loyal subject than I am',²⁰⁹ he did not in fact wish to acknowledge that Nepal was a vassal of Britain. He therefore concentrated instead on two other

themes: first, stressing that even if not part of a general Hindu crusade Nepal's conduct always reflected the demands of *dharma* on a Hindu ruler, and, second, exploiting the hillman's sense of separation from the plainsman. Under the first heading came gestures of independence from the British such as granting asylum to Rani Chand Kunwar of the Panjab after her escape from Allahabad in 1849, but also justification of collaboration as in itself dictated by Hindu principles: the *vamsavali* account of the decision to assist in 1857 has Jang argue that it is a Hindu's duty to avenge murder of women and children such as the sepoys had committed.²¹⁰ The evidence for the second ploy is not so explicit but prejudice against *madesis* was too marked a feature of Nepali psychology for its usefulness to be ignored. Hill superiority was implicit in the ranking of *jati* in the *Muluki Ain*, which counted plains Brahmans for some purposes below Thakuri and Rajput, and such feelings must have helped quell any misgivings felt by the Nepali troops who fought alongside the British in 1857-9.

As well as these considerations of realpolitik and national psychology, there is an important aspect of the British connection which has largely been ignored in the various studies of Indo-Nepali relations, and that is the personal relationship established by Jang with the principal British officials with whom he came in contact. In memoirs published shortly after Jang's death, Orfeur Cavenagh records a conversation on board ship at the start of the return journey from Europe. Jang apologised to his companion for any inconvenience he had caused him and told him that, although even brothers sometimes had disagreements, he had certainly looked up to him as an elder brother.²¹¹ Jang's choice of words will have been influenced by the fact that in Nepali 'elder

brother' (*dai* or *dajyu*) is a common way of addressing both a person of superior status and also an equal with whom one is not particularly intimate. However, the conversation was in Hindustani, which Cavenagh understood very well, and Jang was certainly explicitly placing himself in the junior position. This was a pattern of apparent dependence which was to be repeated with other individuals. Brigadier MacGregor, who was attached to Jang's force during the Gorakhpur and Lucknow campaign of 1857-8, rapidly developed a close rapport with him, which he described in a letter to Brian Hodgson:

I get on capitally with Jung. We are already the best friends in the world....He leans very much upon me, indeed almost too much so, but this I consider to be a fault on the right side.²¹²

There were also frequent occasions on which Jang accepted the advice of Resident Ramsay. The most crucial of these was the near mutiny by a Gurung regiment in 1857, an episode already analysed in detail (above, pp.350-1). Ramsay had before then been consulted often in connection with Tibetan affairs. In 1852 Ramsay had persuaded him against threatening hostilities over Tibetan encroachment on a border tract of little economic value.²¹³ One year later, when war had begun but Jang had already realised that he would be unable to secure the cession of Kuti and Kirong districts, he discussed with the Resident his anxiety for the fate of the local people who had collaborated with the invading Nepali force and against whom the Tibetan commander-in-chief was now said to be planning vengeance once the war was over. One of Ramsay's suggestions was making a promise of no reprisals a condition of the eventual peace settlement, and a clause to this effect was in fact included in the Nepal-Tibet Treaty of 1856.²¹⁴

Interpreting Jang's real attitude to such situations is difficult because of his talent for telling people what they wanted to hear: he was certainly subtle enough to realise that a relationship which was friendly but in which they themselves could feel the superior partner was what the usual British official would most prefer. After Ramsay had effectively blocked his plan to wield supervisory authority while not holding the premiership, Jang's continued protestations of friendship towards him were certainly insincere, for the grudge he conceived against him led him in 1858 to seek his removal as a favour from Lord Canning and to fabricate various charges against him to that end.²¹⁵ Having insisted that it would be an unbearable personal humiliation if Ramsay, who had temporarily left Kathmandu, were to return, Jang nevertheless accepted the situation once it was clear that the Governor-General would not give way, and thereafter he once again treated the Resident in an ostensibly friendly manner. Flattery could therefore often be insincere, but at the same time it is clear enough that at times Jang genuinely welcomed and respected advice from individual Britons. Deference towards the representatives of a state incomparably more powerful than his own would come naturally to a man accustomed to view both family and political relations in hierarchical terms, while the Resident, unlike many of Jang's Nepali counsellors, could be expected to give advice without fear or favour on any issue where the interests of Nepal and of British India were not directly opposed.

Conclusion: Continuity and Change under Jang Bahadur

The establishment of the Rana regime was undoubtedly a major turning-point in Nepali history, but the elements of continuity have not always

been given sufficient weight. Despite the elimination of many leading *bharadars* at the Kot, the new elite was very much an outgrowth of the old. Jang's own family overshadowed the others, but great care was taken to bind the latter to the Kunwars. In addition to the various marriages discussed above, there were many undocumented alliances, so that by the 1870s a Residency Surgeon could claim that the Ranas' interests were 'interwoven with those of almost every other family, from that of the king down to the lowest officials'.²¹⁶

In caste terms power remained as before in Chetri (Khas) and Thakuri hands, with Brahmans providing legitimation and advice. There had been, however, an important shift in the relationship between the first two. Though claiming caste equality with the royal family, and thus Rajput status, the Ranas still remained in some sense Chetris, both receiving brides from, and giving them to Chetris. The Chetri caste, which had always been the most numerous element within the political elite, could now feel even more strongly that they were the dominant caste, and the Ranas could thus rely on a basis of Chetri solidarity that remained virtually intact up to the overthrow of the regime in 1950-51.²¹⁷

The relationship of the regime with the mass of the population remained fundamentally the same as before, and the major lines of policy which Jang followed were similar in their objectives to those of Bhimsen and Mathbar before him. Extraction of the maximum revenue without driving the population beyond endurance had always been the guiding philosophy of Gorkha administration, whilst from Bhimsen's later years onwards most contenders for power had realised the necessity for good relations with the British. Jang Bahadur did not so much innovate in

these spheres, as display greater finesse, and perhaps greater determination, in working them out. The notion of promoting more radical change did indeed occur to him, but more as a passing fancy than a settled determination, and it is highly doubtful whether in any case his power-base would have survived the strain of a thoroughgoing attempt at modernisation. Jang's achievement was rather to have stabilised the political structure, to ensure that Nepal survived as an independent country, and to allow the consolidation and strengthening of the central government and the continuance of the slow trend towards national integration already in operation.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. M.C. Regmi, 'Preliminary Notes on the Nature of Rana Law and Government', *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 2, 2 (June 1975), p.106.
2. M.C. Regmi, Review of Jain, *Emergence, op.cit.*, *Regmi Research Series*, 6,6 (June 1974), p.118.
3. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.162.
4. Interview with Bal Bhadra Rana, Kathmandu, 23 October 1982.
5. Ramsay to Government, 14 July 1863, FP(A) August 1863, No.73, quoted in Kumar, *op.cit.*, p.56.
6. Undated *firman* to the three queens, cited in M.P. Pande, 'How Jang Bahadur Established Rana Rule...', *op.cit.*, p.54.
7. *Lal mohar* of Paus Badi 1, 1904 (22 December 1847).
8. Jang to Bam Bahadur, Bhadra 2 Badi 1907 (24 August 1850), translated below, p.424.
9. Cavenagh, *Reminiscences, op.cit.*, p.162.
10. Bharadars to Rajendra, 12 May 1847, FS 26 June 1847, No.194, *KM*, pp.333-5.
11. Letter of II Jestha 8 Badi 1904 (6 June 1847), cited in Jain, *op.cit.*, p.96; *lal mohar* of Sravan 1 Sudi 1904 (11 August 1847), M.R. Pande, *op.cit.*, p.53.
12. *Lal mohar* of Baisakh 13 Sudi 1905 (15 May 1848), published in translation (and misdated to 1849) in Kumar, *op.cit.*, pp.158-9. *Lal mohars* of 1851 and 1868, published respectively in Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur, op.cit.*, p.60, and in *Purnima*, 40 (2035 (1978/9)), pp.178-81, refer to similar orders issued on Baisakh 12 Badi and Jestha 2 Badi 1905 (30 April and 20 May 1848). It is unclear whether there were in fact three separate documents, or only later confusion over the date.
13. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.385.
14. Jang to Bam Bahadur, undated; translated below, p.
15. P.S. Rana, *Rana Nepal - An Insider's view* (Kathmandu: R. Rana 1978), p.41.
16. Ramsay to Government, 29 November 1852, FS 29 December 1852.
17. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.119.

18. Ramsay to Government, 1 August 1856, FS 29 August 1856, No.51.
19. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.113, fn.56; Erskine to Government, 18 February 1851, FS 28 March 1851, No.11.
20. Erskine to Government, 17 February 1851, FS 28 March 1851, No.10.
21. Also known as *Cyangre Kausi*, and therefore must be referred to by Oldfield's description of Jay Bahadur as 'Head of Changra Duties' (*op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.398).
22. Erskine to Government, 17 February 1851, FS 28 March 1851, No.10.
23. Jang to Bam Bahadur, undated, translation below, p.425.
24. Cf. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, pp.398-9.
25. Toran Bahadur Shah, unpublished note in possession of Sundar Prasad Shah, Kathmandu.
26. 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, No.27 (April 1974), p.5.
27. Interview with Sundar Prasad Shah, Kathmandu, 8 August 1983; Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.410.
28. Sundar Prasad Shah, and Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.137.
29. Ramsay to Government, 20 May 1854, cited FP 1 June 1855, No.12; and (for the promotion) *lal mohar* of appointment, Aswin 5 Sudi 1913 (4 October 1856) published in *Adhikari, Nepal under Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, p.137.
30. Ramsay to Government, 10 March 1855, FP 5 April 1855, No.22.
31. Ramsay to Government, 12 May 1855, FP 1 June 1855, No.12.
32. Ramsay to Government, 15 April 1854, FP 28 April 1854, No.28.
33. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.402. Jang presented this as only one possibility, the other being that the *bharadari* would select a male successor.
34. Ramsay to Government, 1 August 1856, FS 29 August 1856, No.51.
35. Ramsay to Government, 2 August 1856, FS 29 August 1856, No.52.
36. Jang held both the traditional title of *mukhtiyar* and that of *praim ministar* (*v.supra*, p.306, n.83).
37. *Ancient Nepal*, 27 (April 1974), p.8. A slightly condensed translation is provided by Kumar, *op.cit.*, pp.159-60.
38. FS 29 August 1856, No.61, published in *Adhikari, op.cit.*, pp.61-3.

39. *Dayā* ('compassion') in the Nepali text is an obvious misprint for *daga* ('plot', 'threat').
40. Foreign Ministry Archive, Kathmandu (Triratna Manandhar).
41. Information from Triratna Manandhar.
42. L. Rose, *Strategy, op.cit.*, pp.119-20.
43. Undated *dharmapatra* of Bam to Jang Bahadur, published in *Nepali*, 63 (2032 VS (1875/6)), pp.16-18, and translated in Marize, 'Les Ranas', *op.cit.*, pp.86-7.
44. Ramsay to Government, 27 May 1857, FS 25 September 1857, No.470.
45. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.195; Jain, *op.cit.*, p.138; Ramsay to Government, 20 June 1857, FS 27 November 1857, No.414.
46. Text in FS 25 September 1857, No.473, published in *Adhikari*, pp.63-4.
47. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.145.
48. Ramsay to Government, 30 June, FS 25 September 1857, No.471.
49. For a fuller discussion of this hierarchy, see Kumar, pp.96-9, and *Adhikari, op.cit.*, pp.93-8.
50. 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, 27 (April 1974), p.10. Trailokya subsequently married a third daughter.
51. *Lal mohar* of Jestha 5 Badi 1914 (14 May 1857), published in *Nepal Antiquary*, 1, 1 (December 1974), pp.47-8.
52. Rose, *Strategy, op.cit.*, p.120.
53. F. Toker, *Gorkha: The story of the Gurkhas of Nepal* (London: Constable 1957), p.243, quoted in Kumar, *op.cit.*, p.58.
54. Campbell's Memorandum on the 1835/6 Mission, FS 24 April 1837, No.81.
55. W. Digby, *1857 A Friend in Need - 1887 Friendship Forgotten* (London: Indian Political Agency 1890), p.94.
56. *Sri 5 Surendra Bikram Sahka Sasankalma Baneko Muluki Ain* (Kathmandu: Kanun tatha Nyaya Mantralaya, 2022 VS (1965/6)), pp.2-7.
57. FS 25 January 1841, No.121, *KM*, pp.72-6.
58. *Adhikari, Nepal under Jang Bahadur, op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.188.
59. *Lal mohar* of Sravan 5 Sudi 1913 (6 August 1856), above, pp.322-4.

60. *Lal mohar* of Magh 10 Sudi 1924 (3 February 1868), published in *Purnima*, Vol.40 (2035 Caitra VS (March-April 1979), pp.1788-81. A translation of the roll itself is given in Kumar, *op.cit.*, pp.161-2.
61. Cf. the discussion of Krishna Kant Adhikari, 'Background of 1885 Coup', *Voice of History*, II (1976), pp.60-1.
62. Laurence Oliphant, *A Journey to Kathmandu with the Camp of Jung Bahadoor* (London: John Murray 1852), p.120; cf. Cavenagh, *Rough Notes*, *op.cit.*, p.55.
63. Order of 13 Bhadra Sudi 1920 (25 September 1863), cited in Edwards, 'Patrimonial and Bureaucratic Administration', *op.cit.*, pp.51-2; Order of 10 II Sravan Sudi 1920 (25 July 1863).
64. Rana prime ministers after Jang seem to have received the *diksa mantra* from the Adhikaris (gurus of the family from before Jang's time), or the Satyals. See Prakash E. Raj, *op.cit.*, p.17.
65. Information from Ishwari Raj Pande.
66. *Bali Khane Register*, 1905 VS (KKK); 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal* 25 (October 1973), p.20.
67. Edwards, *op.cit.*, p.118; *Nijanti Kamyandari Kitab*, 1915 VS (KKK).
68. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.251.
69. Royal Order of Adhika Bhadra 15 Badi 1909 (15 August 1852), published in Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, p.148.
70. Ramsay to Dalhousie (personal), 14 April 1852, GD45/6/164, Dalhousie Muniments).
71. Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, p.219.
72. Details of the plot are given in Ramsay to Government, 29 November 1852, FS 29 December 1852, No.199.
73. Hodgson to Government, 25 February 1839, FS 18 December 1839, No.91.
74. Hodgson to Government, 20 September 1834, FP 9 October 1834, No.17.
75. Lawrence Diary, 4 September 1845.
76. *Ibid.*, and Smith, *Narrative*, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.110.
77. *Illustrated London News*, 27 July 1850. Reprinted in Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur in Europe*, *op.cit.*, p.244.
78. Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, p.109.
79. That the three were brothers is confirmed by Ratnaman's grandson, Ananda Man Rajbhandari (interview, Kathmandu, 15 August 1983).
80. Jang to Bam Bahadur, undated, below, p.425.

81. Burghart, 'History of Janakpurdham', *op.cit.*, pp.430-1.
82. Jang to Bam Bahadur (v. n.80), and Cavenagh, *Rough Notes, op.cit.*, p.54.
83. Edwards, *op.cit.*, p.128. From the mid-fifties onwards military titles were extended to many functionaries whose duties were largely or purely administrative.
84. Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur, op.cit.*, p.219.
85. *Nijanti Kamyandari Kitab Registers*, 1915, 1920, 1925 and 1930 VS (KKK)
86. 1843 *bharadar* list, *HP*, Vol.52 f.171; Register No.1, JA; *Nijanti Kamyandari Kitab*,
87. 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, 25 (October 1973), p.20.
88. Oldfield, *Sketches, op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.411.
89. Gopal Nepali, *The Newars* (Bombay: United Asia Publications 1965), p.171.
90. Gaborieau, *Le Népal, op.cit.*, p.203.
91. Nepali, *loc.cit.*
92. Bhim Bahadur Pande, *Tyas Bakhtko Nepal, op.cit.*, Vol.2, p.114.
93. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.411.
94. Register No.1, JA, FF21-24.
95. Ramsay to Government, 6 July 1864, FP(A) August 1864, No.51.
96. Above, pp.334-5; Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.200.
97. Ramsay to Dalhousie (personal), 14 April 1852, GD45/6/154 (Dalhousie Muniments).
98. Dalhousie to Ramsay (personal), May 1852, GD45/6/82 (Dalhousie Muniments).
99. Ramsay to Government, 6 July 1864.(n.95).
100. Ramsay to Dalhousie, 14 April 1852 (n.97).
101. Ramsay to Government, 29 July 1857, FS 27 November 1857, No.424, quoted in Asad Husain, *British India's Relations with the Kingdom of Nepal* (London: Allen and Unwin 1970), p.73. ('February' is an error for July.)
102. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, pp.198-9; 'Nepal Desko Itihas', *Ancient Nepal*, 27 (April 1974), p.5.

103. Ramakant, *op.cit.*, p.281.
104. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.149, n.24.
105. Ramsay to Government, 23 October 1858, FS 25 February 1859, No.17.
106. *The Times*, 6 August 1850 (reprinted in Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, p.263; W.H. Russell, *My Diary in India in the Year 1858-9* (London: Routledge, Warne and Routledge 1860), Vol.1, p.359.
107. Edwards, *op.cit.*, p.110-11.
108. See above, p.157, n.71.
109. Cavenagh, *Rough Notes*, *op.cit.*, p.7; *Jangi Adda*, Register No.1 (tables on pp.25-31 show an increase in the number of privates of 3, 187, enrolling extra expenditure of 159, 350 rupees).
110. FS 23 February 1855, No.44, cited in Adhikara, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur*, Vol.1, p.188.
111. *Ibid.*, pp.190-1.
112. *Nijamti Thamauti Register* 1920 (KKK).
113. Register No.1, JA, and Adhikari, *loc.cit.*
114. A rate of 2,750 rupees is given in the list in *HP*, Vol.6, ff174/5.
115. Hodgson to Government, 6 June 1843, Nepal Residency Records R/5/53. The new rank is not mentioned in Thomas Smith's 'Return of the Nepal Army for December 1843' (FS 30 March 1844, No.30), but is included in the 1846 complements listed in *Jangi Adda* Register No.1
116. Register No.1, JA.
117. *HP*, Vol.6, pp.175-6. 'Officer' in this context probably meant ranks from subedar upwards. The term *pagari* is used in official documents to refer only to these, whilst the subedar/jemadar dividing line was observed when the 1836/7 reduced rates were introduced for senior personnel only (*HP*, Vol.13, f223).
118. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.171.
119. Cavenagh, *Rough Notes*, *op.cit.*, pp.10-11.
120. Ramsay to Government, 2 June 1857, FS 26 June 1857, No.129.
121. Oldfield, *op.cit.*, Vol.2, pp.3-4.
122. *Ibid.*, Vol.1, p.172.
123. *Ibid.*, Vol.1, p.171.

124. Royal Order of Kartik 9 Badi 1820 (5 November 1863), published in Naraharinath, *Sandhipatrasamgraha*, *op.cit.*
125. Ramsay to Government, 2 June 1857, FS 26 June 1857, No.129.
126. *Ibid.*
127. Mojumdar, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations*, *op.cit.*, pp.81-2.
128. Ramsay to Government, 23 October 1858, FS 25 February 1859, No.17.
129. Cavenagh, *Rough Notes*, *op.cit.*, pp.50-2, quoted in Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang*, *op.cit.*, pp.93-4.
130. Cavenagh, *Rough Notes*, *op.cit.*, p.258.
131. Rudna Rana, *op.cit.*, pp.272-3, cited in Marize, *op.cit.*, p.126.
132. Ramsay to Government, 1 August 1856, FS 29 August 1856, No.51. The correct figures are not known for certain, but see the discussion on p.377, below.
133. Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang*, *op.cit.*, p.96.
134. Register No.1, JA.
135. Gunavanta's role is eulogised in the *vamsavali* (*Ancient Nepal*, 25 (October 1974), pp.2-5), composed by his own son, Buddhiman Singh (see Acharya, *Prithvi Narayanko Samksipta Jivani*, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, pp.36-8).
136. Hodgson to Colvin (DO), 24 June 1837, NR/5/48.
137. Daniel W. Edwards, 'Nepal on the Eve of the Rana Ascendancy', *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 2, 1 (February 1975), pp.99-118.
138. Hodgson contradicts himself on this point, stating first that the *Kampu Daphtar Khana* dealt with *all kampu* units, but then that it handled only those regiments which were 'non-assigned' (i.e., not under the commander of a particular *bharadar*?)
139. Adhikari, *op.cit.*, pp.68-9, 80-1, and 84-5.
140. *Ibid.*, p.89.
141. Nepal, Ministry of Law and Justice, *Sri 5 Surendra Bikram Sahdevka Sasanka'lma baneko Muluki Ain* (Kathmandu, 2022 VS (1965/6)). Printed from the 1867/8 version of the *Ain*.
142. Jean Fezas, 'Perversion et Hiérarchie au Népal au XIX^e siècle: un chapitre inédit du code de 1853: Gar Mara-ko (de la sodomie)', *Journal Asiatique*, 271 (1983), pp.281-344. This section of the *Ain* was omitted from the edition cited in the previous note.

143. Andras Höfer, *The Caste Hierarchy and the State. A Study of the Muluki Ain of 1854* (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner 1979).
144. Jagdish Regmi, 'Judicial System of King Surendra', *Nepal Antiquary*, Nos.61-65, n.d., p.59.
145. Cavenagh, *Rough Notes*, *op.cit.*, pp.62-3; Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.159.
146. Royal Order of Sravan 1 Badi 1895 (8 July 1838), and Sravan 12 Badi 1907 (5 August 1850), published in Adhikari, *op.cit.*, pp.327-8 and 330.
147. Jain, *op.cit.*, p.180.
148. Maddock to Government, 9 August 1832, NR/5/43, and Hodgson to Government, 31 July 1836, NR/5/47.
149. Oliphant, *Journey to Kathmandu*, *op.cit.*, p.90.
150. Divya Upades, in Pokharel (ed.), *Pae Say Barsa*, *op.cit.*, p.179.
151. Brian Hodgson, 'Some Account of the Systems of Law and Police as Recognised in the State of Nepal', in *Miscellaneous Essays Relating to Indian Subjects* (London: Teubner 1880), Vol.II, p.231. Edicts attributed in the nineteenth century to Jayasthiti may not in fact date from his reign (see Theodore Riccardi, Review of Toffin, *Societe et Religion chez les Newar du Nepal*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, XLV, 4 (August 1986), p.895) but this does not affect the present argument.
152. Hodgson to Government, 31 July 1836, NR/5/47, and Cittaranjan Nepali, *Bhimsen Thapa*, *op.cit.*, pp.130-1.
153. Interview with Pradyumna Rana, Allahabad, 27 November 1983.
154. D. Wright (ed.), *History of Nepal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1877), p.12; Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, pp.168-9.
155. Höfer, *op.cit.*, pp.199-202.
156. *Ain*, p.379.
157. Höfer, *op.cit.*, p.200, citing V.T. Gune, *The Judicial System of the Marathas* (Poona: Deccan College 1953).
158. Hiroshi Fukazawa, 'Status and Caste System (Jati) in the Eighteenth-century Maratha Kingdom', *Hitotsubashi Journal of Economics*, 9, 1 (June 1968), pp.32-44.
159. Richard Burghart, 'The Formation of the Concept of Nation-State in Nepal', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XLIV, 1 (November 1984), pp.101-25.
160. *Ibid.*, p.113.
161. Höfer, *op.cit.*, p.202.

162. The account of the land revenue system given here is based largely on M.C. Regmi, *Land Ownership in Nepal* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1976), and *Thatched Huts and Stucco Palaces* (New Delhi: Vikas 1978).
163. Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal, op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.146.
164. Regmi, *Thatched Huts, op.cit.*, p.52ff.
165. Oliphant, *Journey to Kathmandu, op.cit.*, p.126.
166. Sawal to Jagat Shamsher Rana, published in Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur, op.cit.*, p.250.
167. Regmi, *Land Ownership, op.cit.*, p.115.
168. For the negotiations on extradition arrangements see Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations, op.cit.*, pp.216-8 and 336-7.
169. Regmi, *Land Tenure, op.cit.*, pp.492-3; Hodgson to Government, July 1833, NR/5/44; *HP*, Vol.13, pp.153-4.
170. Regmi, *Land Ownership, op.cit.*, p.82.
171. The recovered territory (see map, p.434) constituted the districts of Banke, Kailali, Kanchapur and Bardiya. The whole of the last mentioned was made over as *birta* to Jang and his family (*Regmi Research Series*, 13, 7 (July 1981), pp.110-2; this corrects his erroneous statement in *Thatched Huts*, p.44, that the whole *naya muluk* was included in the assignment).
172. Regmi, *Thatched Huts, op.cit.*, pp.43-5.
173. Royal Order of Baisakh 1 Sudi 1912 (17 April 1855), cited in Regmi, *Land Ownership, op.cit.*, p.36.
174. Marize, *op.cit.*, pp.68-70.
175. These *zamindars* are probably to be identified with the Rai and Limbu *subbas*, who were recognised as local administrators by the government and whose functions are discussion in Adhikari, *Nepal under Jang Bahadur, op.cit.*, pp.236-40.
176. See Vidya Bir Singh Kansakar, 'Indo-Nepal Migrations: Problems and Prospects', *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 11, 2 (April 1984), pp.51-2, and Dilli R. Dahal, 'Economic Development through Indigenous Means: A Case of Indian Migration in the Nepal Tarai', *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 11, 1 (December 1983), p.2.
177. Regmi, *Thatched Huts, op.cit.*, pp.140-2.
179. Resident Lawrence to Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, 28 March 1868, FP(B) April 1868, No.12.
179. Kirkpatrick, *Account of the Kingdom of Nipaul, op.cit.*, p.15.

180. Regmi, *Thatched Huts*, *op.cit.*, p.143.
181. Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal*, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, pp.45-6.
182. Government to Ramsay, 29 March 1851, NR/5/51; FP 29 October 1852, Nos.14-15, and 29 December 1852, No.9.
183. Finance and Home Committees to Governor-General, 18 May 1853, FP 22 July 1853, No.30; Ramsay to Government, 21 October 1853, NR/5/57.
184. Court of Directors to Governor-General, 20 June 1854, FP 11 August 1854, No.14 ('Keep With'); Ramsay to Government, 25 January 1855, FP 16 February 1855.
185. Cittaranjan Nepali, *Bhimsen Thapa*, *op.cit.*, pp.130-1.
186. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.115. For a discussion of the relationship between the diary, Pudma's account and the anonymous *Jang Bahadurko Belait Yatra* see Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur in Europe*, *op.cit.*, pp.135-44.
187. This was the situation in the eastern Tarai. In the west, had actual ownership and could charge rents in excess of government taxes, though the cultivator still had considerable security of tenure (Regmi, *Land Ownership*, *op.cit.*, pp.112-4).
188. Girdlestone to Government, 9 June 1874, FP(A) March 1875, No.30; Henvey to Government, 26 March 1877, FP(A) May 1877, No.61. Dharma may have helped Jang with financial troubles in his early days (v. Daman S.J.A. Rana, *Nepal - Rule and Misrule* (New Delhi: Rajesh 1978), pp.212-3).
189. Ramsay to Government, 6 July 1864, FP(A) August 1864, No.51.
190. Jasper Ridley, *Life of Lord Palmerston* (London: Constable 1970), pp.289-90.
191. Girdlestone, *loc.cit.* (n.188).
192. Ramsay to Government, 18 June 1861, FP(B) July 1861, No.250.
193. Regmi, *Thatched Huts*, *op.cit.*, p.147, and (for the country-wide figure), *HP*, Vol.13, ff.47-8; Wright, *History of Nepal*, *op.cit.*, p.50. Wright actually gives a figure of 96 lakhs in Indian currency which equates to 115 lakhs Nepali at the exchange rate indicated by his table on p.297. It is uncertain, however, whether the two figures are strictly comparable, as Wright's may not include an allowance for *birta* holdings.

194. The figure given by the Buddhiman Singh *vamsavali* (cited in Prem R. Uprety, *Nepal-Tibet Relations* (Kathmandu: Puga Nara 1980), p.78, and also quoted by Maharaja Chandra Shamsher in an interview with the Resident in 1912 (*ibid.*, Appendix J). The figure of 126 lakhs in another version of the *vamsavali* (*Ancient Nepal* 27 (April 1974), p.7, will be an error.
195. Regmi, *Thatched Huts*, *op.cit.*, pp.153-8.
196. Jang to Bam Bahadur, undated (see below, pp.
197. This line is taken strongly by Jain, *op.cit.*, pp.209-10.
198. Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, p.124.
199. *The Times*, 21 June 1850, reprinted in Whelpton, *op.cit.*, p.233-9.
200. K. Mojumdar, *Political Relations between India and Nepal, 1877-1923* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal 1973), pp.261-5.
201. Cavenagh, *Reminiscences*, *op.cit.*, pp.175-6.
202. For a full account of the visit, see Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*
203. Interview with Narayan Manandhar, Birgunj, 22 November 1982.
204. For an account of the war, see Prem R. Uprety, *Nepal-Tibet Relations*, *op.cit.*
205. Diary of Sir Frederick Traills-Burroughs, quoted in Christopher Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny - India 1857* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1980), p.428. Both Jang himself and one of his brothers made similar statements to the Resident in Kathmandu (Ramsay to Sir John Login, 28 November 1860, quoted in Lena Login, *Sir John Login and Duleep Singh* (London: W.H. Allen 1890), pp.456-7).
206. Mangles to Canning, 17 March 1858, Secret Despatch from Secretary of State, No.1933 of 1858, published in Hussain, *British India's Relations with the Kingdom of Nepal*, *op.cit.*, pp.77-8.
207. Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur in Europe*, *op.cit.*, p.218.
208. Norman P. Ziegler, 'Some Notes on Rajput Loyalties during the Moghul Period', in Richards (ed.), *Kingship and Authority*, *op.cit.*, p.233-5.
209. Oliphant, *Journey to Kathmandu*, *op.cit.*, p.143.
210. Inscription dated Caitra 15 Sudi 1931 (20 April 1875), published in Nayaraj Pant, 'Ranarajyabyavastha', *Pragya*, 8, 1 (Sraavan-Asoj, 2036 (July-October 1979)), p.97.

211. Cavenagh, *Reminiscences*, *op.cit.*, p.157.
212. Macgregor to Hodgson, 28 December 1857, Hod.MSS, Vol.9, pp.95-6.
213. Uprety, *Nepal-Tibet Relations*, *op.cit.*, p.62.
214. Ramsay to Government, 27 June 1855, FS 27 July 1855, No.65. An English translation of the treaty is given in FS 30 May, No.27, and the terms summarised in Uprety, *op.cit.*, pp.77-8.
215. For detailed accounts of the quarrel between Jang and Ramsay, see Jain, *op.cit.*, pp.154-9, Ramakant, *op.cit.*, pp.291-3, and Hussain, *op.cit.*, pp.87-91. Though Canning later denied it, it is probable that he *did* give Jang to understand at Allahabad that he would withdraw Ramsay simply as *persona non grata*, and it was only when it became clear that this would not happen that Jang resorted to a list of largely unfounded complaints against him (Hodgson to Prinsep, 16 September 1858, Hod.MSS 9, pp.103-4).
216. Wright, *History of Nepal*, *op.cit.*p.67.
217. Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, 'Unity and Diversity in the Chetri Caste of Nepal', in Haimendorf (ed.), *Caste and Kin in India, Nepal and Ceylon* (London: Asia Publishing House 1966), p.66.

CONCLUSIONNEPAL AND HINDU POLITY

This study has shown how the different elements of the Nepali polity functioned during a period of acute instability, and how that period closed with the inauguration of a new regime which nevertheless retained the same basis of legitimation and also the same relationship to the mass of the population. The Rana regime would not prove totally immune from the strains which had earlier beset the Nepali monarch and *bharadari*, for there was to be a further violent upheaval in 1885 when sons of Dhir Shamsher, Jang's youngest brother, assassinated their uncle, Maharaja Ranoddip Singh, and killed or exiled Jang's own sons. The coup was completed before non-Rana contenders for power could enter the lists, and Dhir's descendants ruled Nepal until 1951, the combined office of maharaja and prime minister being held in turn by five of his sons and two of his grandsons. The basic structure established by Jang was maintained throughout and can be seen as remaining in the tradition of Hindu kingship, leaving the way fully prepared for the resumption of power by the kings themselves after the end of the Rana regime.

Jang's system rested essentially on the same three pillars which were identified in the first chapter as supporting the king's authority. The religious aura of kingship continued to be important, for although the king himself now had virtually no effective voice in the administration Jang ruled in the king's name, whilst also, in his capacity as *maharaja* acquiring a lesser but still significant degree of royal divinity himself. The virtual separation of the principal sacerdotal and administrative

aspects of kingship had the advantage of allowing Jang and his Rana successors a little more flexibility with regard to religious observance than would otherwise have been the case. Jang's European journey, for instance, unsettling as it was to the orthodox, might have been completely impossible for the king himself.¹ The military factor remained important, and indeed became more so, because Jang, like the founder of the Shah dynasty, could project himself as a charismatic military leader. Finally, control over land continued to be crucial, Jang reinforcing this through some reduction of the power (though not the income) of *jagirdars*. The extensive *birta* grants to himself and to members of his own family, and the extension of the *rajya* system might have posed a threat to central control, but the overwhelming military predominance at the centre was an insurance against this. In a sense, therefore, it was business as usual, only with the central focus shifted for most purposes from *maharajadhiraj* to *maharaja*, and with a steady strengthening of the state machinery. Nepal remained a Hindu monarchy, and under a system of government that European observers described as 'autocracy'. Nevertheless there were limits to this autocracy, limits which repay consideration in the context of both the 'traditional' Hindu state and of new influences acting on it.

The hereditary premiership was itself claimed as a check on autocracy by members of the Rana family. This view was put forward by Dhoj Nar Singh, son of Jang's youngest brother, Ranoddip, in a memorandum presented to the Indian government in 1888. Dhoj Nar had fled Nepal three years previously, when the sons of Dhir Shamsher had staged their coup. The refugees sought British assistance against the Shamshers and therefore tried to present Jang as a reformer who ended despotism in Nepal by introducing 'with the assent of all the Estates of the realm...a Constitution,

which, while it upheld the dignity and supremacy of the Crown, at the same time curtailed the power of the Sovereign by vesting all executive authority in the hands of his ministers'.² The implied equation of the Rana maharaja's position *vis-a-vis* the King of Nepal with that of Gladstone *vis-a-vis* Queen Victoria is a false one, the real analogy being with the combination of hereditary minister and titular monarch sometimes found in other Indian states, most notably in the Maratha confederacy and in Vijaynagar. The arrangement can also be seen as an instance of *dvairajya* - dual monarchy - which had been a recurrent feature at earlier periods of Nepali history, both in the medieval Newar kingdoms and in the concurrent reigns of Licchavi and Gupta kings in the seventh century AD. As a term in Indian political theory *dvairajya* first occurs in the *Arthasastra*, and later features in Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitra*.³ Jayaswal sees it as true joint sovereignty, an extension into the realm of politics of the legal principles evolved to accommodate the Hindu joint-family system.⁴ In its practical working, however, it generally provided not the counter-instance to the 'Hobbesian doctrine of indivisible sovereignty' claimed by Jayaswal, but rather confirmation of that doctrine's universality, for either one of the partners held the real power and the other a formal title only, or both were dependent on some third party. Kalidasa's jointly ruling brothers fall in the first category, having been placed on the throne by a foreign suzerain, whilst the Nepali Guptas, like the Ranas, had effectively appropriated the power of the dynasty they left on the throne. If one is looking for the influence of the joint-family on the political world, then the various attempts by Rajendra to associate queen and/or crown prince with his own royal authority, are more promising candidates.

The system manifestly failed to work, however, and the *bharadars* and troops clamoured for 'one master', just as many greeted the news of Jang's title of maharaja with the comment that 'there cannot be two swords in one scabbard'.⁵ The maharajaship worked because for practical purposes there was indeed only one master.

The *de facto* restraints on Jang's freedom of action have been identified in the previous sections: *bharadari*, army and local elites all had to be conciliated. It would be stretching the meaning of the word to describe such restraints as constitutional, for fear of provoking revolt acts as a check even on the most absolute of despotisms. None the less, the *Muluki Ain* in its original version clearly seeks to circumscribe the authority of both king and prime minister, providing specifically that the law binds them also.⁶ These provisions could be violated in practice, and were in fact repealed in a subsequent edition, but they show that the rule of law was at least an ideal at which government was supposed to aim. It is possible to see here influence from Jang's European journey, for the *Belait Yatra* stresses the subjection of both monarch and premier to the law as laid down by parliament.⁷ But it is equally legitimate to view the provision as a natural development of the traditional Hindu view that the king is subject to the rule of *dharma*. This theme is stressed particularly in Manu's seventh book, acting as a counter-balance to the same text's insistence on royal divinity.⁸ This tradition was very much alive in nineteenth-century Nepal, as is demonstrated by the *dharma patra* (solemn undertaking) to which the *bharadars* subscribed in 1799 and which provided for the regulation of the kingdom during the minority of King Girvana Yuddha:

Let the Raja observe justice and equality...and cherish his able and faithful servant....Let the Raja, if he can, exceed in act what is enjoined in the inscriptions in copper; and if he violates that engagement let his authority cease.⁹

The effectiveness of such doctrines as a check on the abuse of authority was somewhat weakened as the implication was often that retribution would be provided by the working out of the king's *karma* rather than by his subjects exercising a right of revolt. There was, however, a more activist strand to the tradition: the *Mahabharata* laid down in one passage that an oppressive king should be killed like a mad dog, whilst Jang Bahadur had himself advocated in 1843 that the army should be the judge of King Rajendra's fitness to rule.¹⁰

Orthodox political theory also required the king to be guided by the advice of his ministers. The *Arthasastra* recommends that when any non-routine question arises the king should convene his council and follow the opinion of the majority.¹¹ More pertinent to the case of Nepal, the *Sukranitisara*, a nineteenth-century text combining traditional material with newer influences, also lays down that the wise king always follows the advice of his councillors.¹² Texts on *nitisastra* were of course frequently the work of men who were themselves royal advisers (the *Arthasastra* would be the prime example if it does in fact derive from an original work by the historical Kautilya) or who aspired to be such, and consequently what they prescribe may be widely divergent from actual practice, but in Nepal in the period under review the advisers' influence was often paramount. When Jang himself, though technically still the king's minister, became *de facto* king, he too relied to some extent on his *bharadars*. Even if debate might not always be full and free, it is significant that Jang felt the need to obtain formal

endorsement of his policies at critical moments, such as when the decision to help the British in 1857 was taken.¹³

In contrast to senior *bharadars*, or even lower level administrators, the ordinary citizen normally had no role in the affairs of state, and Jang himself stressed this point in conversation with Orfeur Cavenagh (see p. 297 above). This absence of a democratic element explains readily why the author of the *Belait Yatra* was unable to perceive that aspect of the British constitution and presented Parliament as a totally aristocratic institution.¹⁴ Yet closer examination shows that there were traces of popular involvement both in political theory and in practice. In the first place the traditional Indian view saw government as very much *for* the people though not by them. The myths of the origin of kingship presented in the *Aitareya Brahmana*, and *Mahabharata* and in Buddhist sources depict men as deciding on the need for a king either to lead them against their enemies or to maintain law and order. The word *raja* itself was derived incorrectly, but illuminatingly, from the verbal root *ranc* ('to please'), the king being someone who pleased his people. In one sense the king did this by ritual incorporation of the whole community, so that, as the *Mahabharata* put it, 'the whole community is pleased by his, the one man's pleasure, and when the one man is in distress all become distressed'.¹⁵ The persistence of this notion in the Nepali case probably lies behind the *Belait Yatra's* inclusion of 'always being happy' in its list of the functions of the British monarch.¹⁶ More important in the Indian tradition, however, was the king's obligation to provide his subjects with direct benefits rather than vicarious satisfaction, and this, too, was fully reflected in the Nepali political consciousness, starting from Prithvi Narayan's characterisation of his newly-created

kingdom as 'a garden of the thirty-six castes'.¹⁷ The *lal mohar* appointing Jang Maharaja of Kaski and Lamjung included the instruction 'make your subjects happy', whilst Jang himself wrote to his brother in 1850 that 'God put us where we are so that we could protect the common people'.¹⁸ Actual practice might not always correspond with theory, but it has already been shown that consideration for the public good did have *some* effect on Jang's policy. It is also significant that even in the relatively disturbed political conditions of the early forties, the regime's treatment of its subjects struck the Lawrences as superior to the general South Asian level.¹⁹

Indian political theory extended the notion of government in the public interest to include government in accordance with public opinion, even where that opinion might not seem soundly based. The classic example is provided in the *Ramayana*, where Ram, though himself confident of Sita's chastity, rejected her because his subjects believed it had been lost. In the same vein the *Mahabharata* advises the appointment of ministers who enjoy the people's confidence.²⁰ In the practice of Hindu states respect for public opinion is seen most clearly in the king's function of providing royal sanction for regulations with a particular caste or community devised for itself.²¹ Nepali reflexes of the general Indian view are again easy to find. Jang's letters to Bam parallel the thinking behind Ram's treatment of Sita, with the dramatic assertion that 'if it will please the people, [a ruler] should even have his own son killed'.²² Endorsement of a community's self-regulation was also common both before and after Jang's coming to power: the rules for the Gurung tribe promulgated in 1867/8, for example, will have been drawn up in the first place by leading Gurungs themselves.²³

The Shah period in Nepal provides little else which could plausibly be described as self-government, but there is evidence that the Newar kingdoms of the Kathmandu Valley did allow a role in the administration to *panes* representing a particular town or area.²⁴ The 'panchayat democracy', which, after the monarchy itself, is the major feature of Nepal's present constitution, involves elected bodies at village or town, district and national level, but is nevertheless contrasted with 'alien' multi-party democracy as continuing an indigenous tradition, and there has therefore been a tendency for Nepali scholars sympathetic to the official ideology to exaggerate the importance of *panchayat*-style institutions in earlier periods. None the less contemporary sources from the Licchavi inscriptions (fifth-eighth centuries) onwards do attest their existence. After the Gorkha conquest *panchayats* continued to play a role in the judicial system: in the politically sensitive case of the Indian merchant Kasinath, for example (see above, p.175) a *panchayat* of merchants was instructed to look into the evidence, whilst *panes* representing the lower and upper sections of Kathmandu city were involved in disputes between Newars.²⁵ There are also indications that *panes* had a hand in administrative as well as judicial affairs. In 1775 '*panes*' were included in the Nepali delegation negotiating a treaty with Tibet.²⁶ After the execution of a leading *bharadar* in 1778, the regent, Bahadur Shah had to allay the suspicions of the Kathmandu *panes* by showing them his nephew, King Rana Bahadur, from the window in the Hanumandhoka known as *panchjhyal* ('panc window').²⁷ The privileges of the *panes* and of the citizens generally were naturally most respected when disunion at the highest level caused contenders for power to bid against each other for support. When Ran Bahadur abdicated and then attempted to reassert his authority

against *bharadars* claiming to act in the name of the infant King Girvana Yddha, the latter issued an order to 'the *panes*, *mahajans* ('merchants') and people of Bhadgaon (third of the Kathmandu Valley towns)' to support them and promised to confirm the addressees' old privileges.²⁸

Whilst these privileges were eroded in the nineteenth century, during the 'National Movement' against Crown Prince Surendra's excesses at the end of 1842, the town functionaries and the merchants were amongst the signatories of the petition presented to King Rajendra (see above, p.194).

The precise mechanism by which *panes* were selected in the Newar and early Shah periods is unknown, but it can be assumed they were drawn from dominant castes and the wealthiest families. The local communities they 'represented' should certainly not be portrayed as models of egalitarianism and consensus democracy. None the less, their existence did at least mean a wider sharing of power than one confined to the king and his nobles.

Whatever the real significance of *panes* in earlier times, there is no evidence of any role for them under Jang, other than a subsidiary one in the judicial process. Direct popular participation in politics, in so far as it occurred at all, was extra-systemic, as in the 1850 riot by Bhotiya (Tibetan) inhabitants of Muwakot district against miners brought into their village by an *ijaradar* or in the 1776 revolt by Magar supporters of a man claiming to be an incarnation of the god Lakhana Thapa.²⁹ The influence of the army, however, remained important, and the nearest approach to a representative assembly the period provides is the gathering of officers from jemadar upwards to which Jang unsuccessfully appealed in 1863 to forgo their salary for a year.³⁰ In the years before 1846 the role of the army had been crucial, as the whole of this

study has demonstrated. The authors of a study of the panchayat system have rightly pointed out that the maintenance of a standing army and its concentration at the capital naturally resulted in the troops assuming in relation to the Gorkha government the position which the leading citizens of the Valley towns had enjoyed *vis-a-vis* the former Newar sovereigns.³¹ Whereas in Newar times the army - generally consisting of non-Newar mercenaries - had been of little political significance, Nepal now came closer to a newer pattern, seen at its most extreme in the dominance of the *khalsa* during the life of the Sikh state in the Panjab.

It is arguable that the army at Kathmandu, though it had special interests of its own, was not entirely unrepresentative of the castes from which it was drawn. Though he enjoyed some of the rights of a *jagirdar*, the ordinary soldier was a peasant farmer in origin and would become so again at the end of his service.³² The tenants who worked soldiers' plots were often themselves *dhakres* - men who had been rotated out of the army - whilst the serving man's own family would continue to look after his plot whilst he was in the cantonment at Kathmandu. The largest single element in the army was Khas - or Chetris (*Ksatriyas*) as Jang ordered they should be styled - who were also the largest community in the country and the one from which the bulk of the political and military leadership was drawn. There was thus a stark contrast with the medieval Indian pattern in which soldiers were drawn from lower castes and from criminals.³³ None of this made the regime under Jang or his predecessors 'democratic', but it did mean that the danger of a sense of alienation between rulers and upper- and middle-caste ruled was reduced.

Nepal under Jang Bahadur continued as a traditionalist Hindu monarchy, but latent within that tradition were elements completely contrary to the model of 'oriental despotism' which is sometimes foisted upon it. Precisely because the tradition was a complex and diverse one, the question of 'modern' influence on his policy, which arises particularly in relation to the *Muluki Ain*, becomes extremely difficult to answer categorically. When the *Ain* lays down specifically that all religions, including Christianity, may be freely practised in Nepal, subject only to the ban on cow slaughter,³⁴ how far was this simply a natural development of the tolerance implicit within Hindu notions of hierarchy, and how far was it a response to 'liberal' ideas from the outside? Four years before the *Ain* was promulgated, Jang had proudly claimed in conversation that Captain Orfeur Cavenagh that perfect religious toleration existed in Nepal, and received the reply that the British went even further by actually praying for the conversion of heretics.³⁵ Who was then being more 'modern' and who more 'traditional'?

The case of Nepal thus illustrates the inadequacy of any analysis which sharply contrasts traditional and modern. This point has been argued by Edwards in the context of the Nepali bureaucracy, a study of which he made the basis for a criticism of the Weberian dichotomy between patrimonial and bureaucratic administration.³⁶ Its applicability can, however, be extended to the whole range of political thought and behaviour in nineteenth-century Nepal. The patterns which have been read into Nepali history either by the too ready application of foreign parallels, as in Hodgson's seeing the shade of 1688 in the events of 1842, or by present-day scholars eager to find a pattern of democratic monarchy to fit the Shah dynasty's current ideological needs, are over-simplifications, yet they contain an element of truth: obedience to the autocrat and

and his tax-gatherers did not exhaust the traditional view of what politics was or should be about.

The Rana regime was strong enough to ensure that the more 'liberal' tendencies inherent within the traditional system remained largely below the surface. It did, however, allow progress towards the creation of a Nepali sense of identity to continue. The self-conscious fostering of a 'Nepali nationalism' should perhaps be seen as starting only in the time of Maharaja Chandra Shamsher (1901-1929), under whom the word 'Nepali' was adopted as official title of the 'parbatiya' language.³⁷ None the less, steps such as the promulgation of the *Muluki Ain* and the admission of the Kiranti to the army reinforced older factors such as the relatively porous barrier between the key Khas/Chettri caste and the main western hill tribes, and the hillman's sense of distinctiveness from the people of the plain. The process was one which did not embrace all groups equally, and the impure Indo-Nepali castes and the people of the Tarai are arguably still not really included today, yet the elements working towards unity were strong enough to require us to see nineteenth-century Nepal as a nation in the making as well as representative of wider South Asian patterns.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1. Whereas a number of Maithill Brahmans emigrated into Nepal to avoid pollution from the visit to Europe of the Darbhanga Maharaja at the beginning of this century, Jang's earlier trip had no such repercussions 'because at that time King Surendra...remained the ritual source of authority in Nepal' (Burghart, 'History of Janakpurdham', *op.cit.*, pp.514-5, fn).
2. Digby, *1857 A Friend in Need*, *op.cit.*, p.133.
3. *Arthasastra*, 8, 2, 5, cited in Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, *op.cit.*, p.96, and *Malavikagnimitra*, Act 5, cited in Sylvain Lévi, *Le Népal* (Paris: Ernest Leroux 1905-8), Vol.II, pp.187-8. See also, for medieval instances, Luciano Petech, *Medieval History of Nepal* (Rome: ISMEO 1958), pp.32, 37, 38 and 40, and, for the ancient period, Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Manadala* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1983), Vol.1, p.29.
4. Jayaswal, *loc.cit.*
5. Ramsay to Edmonstone (DO), 7 August 1856, FS 29 August 1856, No.56. No.56.
6. Regmi, 'Preliminary Notes on the Nature of Rana Law and Administration', *op.cit.*, pp.110-11.
7. Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur in Europe*, *op.cit.*, pp.179-88.
8. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, *op.cit.*, pp.54-8.
9. HP, cited in Edwards, 'Patrimonial and Bureaucratic Administration', *op.cit.*, p.67.
10. *Mahabharata*, xii, 67, cited in A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India* (Fontana 1971), 3rd edition, p.88; above, p.215.
11. *Arthasastra*, 1, 15, 11, cited in Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, *op.cit.*, p.118.
12. *Sukranitisara*, II, 3, *ibid.*
13. See above, pp.342-3.
14. Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur in Europe*, *op.cit.*, p.111. The *Belait-Yatra's* mistake is, of course, more pardonable when it is remembered that in 1850 the franchise was restricted to 5 per cent of the adult male population.
15. *Mahabharata*, *Santi Parva*, 69, 9-10, cited in Jayaswal, *op.cit.*, p.46.
16. Whelpton, *Jang Bahadur*, *op.cit.*, p.177.
17. *Dibya Upades*, in Pokharel, *Panc Say Varsa*, *op.cit.*, p.180.

18. *Lal mohar* of Sravan 5 Sudi 1913 (6 August 1856), translated above, pp.322-4 ; and Jang to Bam Bahadur, undated, below, p.425. The Nepali word used in such passages is generally *raji*, derived through Urdu from the Arabic *razi*. Although there is in fact no etymological connection between the words, it is possible, given the traditional derivation of *raja*, that educated Nepali speakers assumed a link between the latter and *raji*.
19. Henry Lawrence's tribute, quoted on p.233 above, was echoed in his wife's journal (John Lawrence and Audrey Woodwiss, *The Journals of Honoria Lawrence: India Observed 1837-54* (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1980), p.158).
20. *Mahabharata, Santi Parvan*, LXXXIII, 45-6, cited in Jayaswal, *op.cit.*, Part II, p.85.
21. J.D.M. Derrett, 'Rulers and Ruled in India', *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*, XXII (1969), p.67.
22. Jang to Bam Bahadur, undated, below, p.422.
23. *Lal mohar* of 13 Paus 1924 (?December 1867-January 1868), published in Sharma, *Hamro Samaj, op.cit.*, pp.425-7.
24. Dhanbajra Bajracarya and Tekbahadur Shrestha, *Pancali Sasan-Paddhitiko Aitihāsik Vivecna* (Kirtipur: Nepal ra Asiyali Anisandhan Kendra, 2035 (1978/9)).
25. *Ibid.*, pp.213-6.
26. *Ibid.*, p.217.
27. *Ibid.*, pp.210-11.
28. *Ibid.*, p.219.
29. *RRS*, 12, 15 (May 1980), pp.170-1; Marize, *op.cit.*, pp.262-9 and Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, pp.302-4.
30. Uprety, *Nepal-Tibet Relations, op.cit.*, p.109, n.11.
31. Bajracarya and Shrestha, *Pancali Sasan-Paddhiti, op.cit.*, pp.220-1.
32. Stiller, *Silent Cry, op.cit.*, p.310.
33. Derrett, *op.cit.*, p.69.
34. *Ain*, p.379.
35. Cavenagh, *Reminiscences, op.cit.*, pp.110-11.

36. Edwards, 'Patrimonial and Bureaucratic Administration',
Though specifically concentrating on the Weberian thesis, Edwards'
approach reflects that of Lloyd I, and Suzanne Hoerber Rudolph,
The Modernity of Tradition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1967).
37. On the changes of name of 'Nepali', see Burghart, 'Nation-State',
op.cit., pp.118-9.

APPENDIX 1 : JANG BAHADUR'S FAMILY

The earliest reference to Jang's supposed descent from the Ranas of Mewar is in the *lal mohar* of 15 May 1848, authorising his family to style themselves 'Kunwar Ranaji'.¹ An account made available to Danel Wright (Residency Surgeon, 1863-76) and published in translation in 1877, names the ancestor who entered the western hills as Ram Singh Rana, and implicitly links his arrival with the final fall of Chittaurgadh in 1568.² A more elaborate family history was published in 1879 by Jang's former servant, Ram Lal. This places the departure from Chittaurgadh in the twelfth century, and also traces the Rana line back to the hero of the *Ramayana*.³

It is possible, as Baral has argued, that the claim to Rana ancestry was made only after Jang became prime minister, since his original *kul* name was not Rana, but Khandka.⁴ However, Rana was a long-established Magar *thar*, and those who bore it in the 1830s certainly claimed descent from Chittaurgadh.⁵ Jang's ancestry very probably included Magar Ranas on the female side, as his own physiognomy suggests Magar blood, and either this connection, or simple imitation of the Shah dynasty's claim, might have prompted the family to devise the story before 1846.

Whenever first advanced, the family's purported genealogy is even less reliable than that of the Shahs, and the first ancestor who can be accepted as an historical personage is Jang's great-great-grandfather, Ahiram Kunwar. Ahiram is agreed by all sources to have moved from the *caubisi* kingdom of Kaski to Gorkha, in the reign of Prithvi Narayan's father, Narbhupal Shah. ⁶Ram Lal's 1879 account, which is closely paralleled by Pudma Rana, gives Ahiram's son, Ram Krishna, and grandson, Ranjit, central roles in the conquest of the Kathmandu Valley and subsequent campaigns. While not the key figure his family claimed, Ram Krishna's contribution was significant enough for Prithvi Narayan in 1772 to grant him the revenues of Dhulikhel, and to tell him that 'to reward you in proportion to your efforts, not even half my kingdom would be sufficient'.⁷ Ram Krishna's son, Ranjit, was similarly less prominent than the Rana family historians suggest, but took part in the campaigns against Tibet and the Chinese invaders in the 1790s. Both Ranjit and his father were associated in military operations with Abhiman Singh Basnet, and this link, or, less probably, an already established alliance with Bhimsen Thapa's family, may have been the reason for Ranjit's son Bal Narsingh Kunwar gaining an appointment to the staff of ex-King Rana Bahadur and subsequently accompanying him to Banaras.⁸

The family's political importance rose with Balnar Singh's appointment as a *kaji* after he struck down Rana Bahadur's assassin in 1806. Ranjit was at this time serving with the Nepali forces in the far west, and his grandson, Jang Bahadur, himself told the British Resident in 1852 that he died in the fighting at Kangra, the fortress on the west bank of the Satlej which the Gorkhas besieged in vain for four years.⁹ In fact, Ranjit is mentioned as on active service in a document of May 1814, over four years after the Nepalis had abandoned the territory beyond the Satlej to Ranjit Singh's Panjab kingdom.¹⁰ In the 1852 interview Jang had also mentioned the death at Kangra of his maternal grandfather, Bhimsen's brother, Nain

Singh Thapa. This death is independently attested, and Jang presumably thought two dead grandfathers better than one for making his point that he was implacably hostile to Ranjit Singh's descendants. As Ranjit Kunwar may well actually have died in action against the British, Jang had another obvious motive for deception.

Other Kunwars were prominent in military operations in the west in the early years of the nineteenth century, in particular Ranjit's cousin, Chandravir, and his sons, Bir Bhadra and Bal Bhadra. There is evidence of continuing friction between the two branches. Following Nain Singh Thapa's death in winter 1806/7, a compromise agreement with the ruler of Kangra was provisionally negotiated, but eventually rejected on the advice of Amar Singh Thapa, overall commander in the west.¹¹ Ranjit Kunwar appears to have supported the compromise, whereas a contemporary Gadhwal poet writing under the patronage of Bir Bhadra Kunwar accused the Nepalis who negotiated the agreement of having taken bribes from Sansar Chand.¹² Thirty years later Bir Bhadra refused to give help to Bal Narsingh when the latter was in financial difficulties after his dismissal from office. Jang retaliated after coming to power by treating Bir Bhadra's son less generously than his other relatives.¹³ Jang also never told the British that Bal Bhadra, the gallant defender of the hill fort of Kalunga against them in 1814 who had won their admiration, was a Kunwar and his own cousin; they continued to believe that 'our gallant adversary Bulbudder', was a Thapa.¹⁴

NOTES TO APPENDIX ONE

1. *Vide supra*, p.314. If the decree of 13 Baisakh Sudi 1904 (28 April 1847) published in Udayraj Shastri, *Nepal Digdarsan* (Kathmandu 1957, cited by Marize, *op.cit.*, p.63) is accepted as authentic, the title of Ranaji was conferred a year previously, but this is highly unlikely as correspondence later that year still refers to Jang simply as a Kunwar.
2. Wright, *History of Nepal*, *op.cit.*, pp.285-8.
3. Sri Ramlal, *Nepalasya Suryavamsi Sisodiya Rana ki Vamsavali arthat Srimaharaja Jangbahadur ke Gharana ka*, 1879, n.p., n.pub.
4. Leelantswar Baral, 'Life and Writings of Prithvi Narayan Shah', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London 1964, p.111; Bista, *Culte du Kuldevata*, *op.cit.*, p.27, argues for Rana as the original lineage name, but elsewhere (*ibid.*, p.43, n.2) admits that the case for 'Khandka' is supported by the story of Kunwars this century who declared themselves as 'Khandka Kunwar' being admitted to the 'Rana Kunwar' *kuldevata* ceremony at Panchitani temple in Kathmandu.
5. *HP*, Vol.58, ff.37-8, cited in Baral, *op.cit.*, p.121.
6. The correspondence was first pointed out by Marize (*op.cit.*, p.64). It is mostly likely the result of both men having translated the same Nepali source.
7. Prithvi Narayan to Ram Krishna Kunwar, 5 Aswin Badi 1829 (September 1772), published in N. Pant *et.al.* (eds.), *Sri Panc Prithvinarayan Shahko Upades* (Kathmandu: Jagadamba Prakasan 2025 VS (1968/9)), Vol.3, p.1095.
8. *Vide supra*, p.63.
9. Ramsay to Lord Dalhousie, 14 April 1852, GD/45/6/154 (Dalhousie Muniments). The story is repeated by the Rana family historians (Ramlal, *op.cit.*, p.46; Rudma Rana, *op.cit.*, pp.8-9; Phalendra Rana, *Nepali Rana-gharanako Samksipta Vamsavali* (Kathmandu: the author 2014 VS (1957/8)), p.15.
10. Bhimsen Thapa and Ranadhoj Thapa to Bhaktavar Singh Basnet, 18 Jeth 1871 (? June 1814), in Mahesh Raj Pant, 'Nepal-Angreg Yuddhako Tayari', *Purnima*, 2 (1964), pp.68-76.
11. Mahesh Raj Pant, 'Vir Bhakti Thapa', *Purnima*, 18 (1967), pp.132-3.
12. Ramlal, *op.cit.*, p.45 and Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.8; Molaram, *Gadhravamsa*, quoted in Mahesh Raj Pant, 'Bhakti Thapa', *op.cit.*, p.137. Molaram's connection with Bir Bhadra Kunwar is shown by verses in his *Girvana Yuddha Prakasa* (*ibid.*, pp.139-41).
13. Pudma Rana, *op.cit.*, p.18.
14. Atkinson, *Himalayan Gazetteer*, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, Part 2, p.640.

APPENDIX 2 : LETTERS OF JANG BAHADUR WRITTEN FROM EUROPE¹

Letter 1

We have heard the news of the *mahila saheb's* death and this has distressed us all very much.²

I cannot now give you precise instructions. It is not possible for me to say what troubles will arise before my return. You must act as you think fit.

It is a fine thing that Sri Krishna Sahi has been made a captain because he paid court to you, and a fine thing that Indrabir Khatri and Sanman Khatri have been made lieutenants! [It is fine that] the Singhdal Company have been given 40 rupees! The four *kajis*, the three lieutenants and the *subbas* with me are very happy to see these promotions. They say that Bam Bahadur and Badri Nar Singh are as wise as Bharat and Chaturghan, for they reckon that since you have shown so much kindness to people of little account, they themselves, after working like younger brothers, sons or slaves, will certainly be allowed to keep their positions. The people here have said that my brother the minister (i.e., Bam Bahadur) used to tell us he would only dismiss an office-holder for an offence and that he would only promote a man if he was able to increase the area of land under cultivation or was energetic in support of the King's throne or the minister's life. [In practice,] they say, you are more liberal than that. Surely the minister cannot have made promotions on the principle that we are all members of one family who should promote outsiders with care and must fill the army with our own sons and nephews! People are saying that 'Bharat' and 'Chaturghan's' intelligence has led them to promote flatterers and to divert to brothers and sons money that should have gone to the treasury.

When the council recommended the death penalty for Chandrabir Basnet for disobeying your orders you spared his life but exiled him beyond the Trisuli Ganga. A fine decision! You put him in irons, had him beaten and then turned him loose [to go into exile!]. Dhir Shamsher said to me that it was wrong for you to become angry with a dependant of his just on the word of a Newar, and to put him in fetters and punish him, and that, if punishment there had to be, at least you ought not to have cashiered him. I replied: 'If after pushing so severely one whose only offence was to assist the foolish *mahila saheb*,³ Bam Bahadur was equally harsh with a worthless man, who failed to submit his accounts, embezzled money and violated my laws and regulations, if Bam refused a *jagir* to a man who failed to submit his accounts, then he acted in accordance with the law. But if Bam dealt thus only with Chandrabir, then you may assume that he acted merely out of anger against a dependant of his brother; that he is incapable of performing the role of minister; that he pays heed to the word of worthless people. If on the other hand he has treated everyone equally then you can assume that the people will regard your brother as a very intelligent and capable minister'. That is the reply I gave to Dhir Shamsher.

Ram Ale killed a man with two shots, but when this came before the council you reckoned it only a misdemeanour, fined him 2,000 rupees and then reappointed him. A fine act! If you follow the advice of those counsellors of yours, then deserving people who give noteworthy service will find themselves in irons! How well these counsellors have spoken! Chandrabir's capital offence has been punished by loss of his position, imprisonment and abuse, Ram Ale's by a two-thousand rupee fine and reinstatement. Just think what that means. What will the people say? What will God say? How can the state endure if all the peasants are to be killed? *Bhairab* (demon) Singh Kharka's services were no less than Ram Ale's, yet you know I ordered Satram to execute him.

Write to me about Badri Nar Singh's intent to double Laksmipati's *jagir*. What does Badri mean by 'On consultation with my second eldest brother (i.e., Bam Bahadur) I dismissed the *khardar* who had arrested Laksmipati'? If any soldiers talk angrily about myself they are to be dismissed. If your astonishing behaviour is at an end and things now go on properly, it will be alright. If I had hankered after the office of premier, then even though I gave you the routine work, I should not have given you the right to make appointments to the *kampu*. Your actions do not please me, your eldest brother, nor your two other brothers with me. How can they please the common people?

Give Parsa district to *bhairab* Lal Jha at a commission of 900 rupees and take a share (sc. of the revenue) of 400,000 rupees. If there are problems then dismiss him on the ground that he has shown no regard for his own honour or for the king's territory, and that he has deprived children of their portion.

I asked you before how the people could expect justice if, after dismissing Muktinath for being responsible for peasants' deaths, you then appointed as *subba* a man without a penny to his name [literally, 'without any warm ashes in his house']. You should realise that when the cultivators saw that he had been given the position in violation of your elder brother's arrangements, they must have suspected that you have been bribed to make the appointment, or that if you yourself were innocent that it was the man who recommended the appointment who was corrupt. If you were both guiltless, and hadn't, as the saying goes, 'tasted forbidden fruit', then why did you put a basket of shit on your head [*viz.*, act in a way to arouse suspicion]?

When a cultivator's complain against Shiva Nidhi was received you dismissed it on the grounds that the petitioners would not accept the *lal mohar* ordering an enquiry. Bir Bhadra Majhi was dismissed before his time had expired? What was his offence? How can you entrust work to a man without a penny to his name, to someone who is just a face in the crowd? Who should take the blame now that things have gone wrong?

You extended the appointment of Balbhadra Majhi after he had remained at home for three months claiming to be ill, yet you dismissed Birbhanjan Majhi who worked among the cultivators night and day.

Sometimes order is threatened by the failure to punish, and sometimes it is imperilled by punishing in error. For example, Rajendra Bikram Shah punished Bhimsen Thapa in error while he pardoned the men who had contrived his own grandfather's exile. After inflicting such punishment on Bhimsen the mighty king lost his throne and had to sit wiping flies from his face. Now he knows what we gadflies can do he no longer retains the delusion that ruining Bhimsen was a solution for his problems. (DELETED: Whether it concerns a worthless brother like mine, or the common people or the king, I understand what is going on, even though I am far away.)

A man who aims to make a name for himself must renounce greed and adopt compassion. He should not accept flattery from a man without resources, but deeds only. If it will please the people he should even have his own son killed. He should do whatever makes the majority happy, overcoming his anger and love of wealth. He should try to form a council of good persons of high status, but should not be concerned with his own status. He should give the people the impression that he regards everyone's problems as his own. Since lying is sometimes necessary in politics, if you are able to keep the people happy by deluding them it is easy to be a minister; if not, the task is very difficult. Acts which displease the people will soon produce a dangerous situation. You will say I have written too much, but I have described things as I see them. Act as seems best to you. You write that you have carried out the *pajani* of the army. If you have dismissed men with an eye to making savings on salaries you will earn the same bad reputation as Badri Nar Singh has already done. If you have made dismissals for faults committed then you have strengthened your position. If you dismiss *Kamis*, *Sarkis*, *Damais* or *Karmis*, then your capabilities will be undermined, and the arsenals will be ruined. Do not dismiss *kotes*, *pipas*, *jamadars*, *khalasi jamadars* or *pipa khalasis*. Dismissing them is folly as they do a lot of work at little cost.

LETTER 2

If an officer challenges your orders to the army, remove his insignia at once and place him in irons. If four (sc. or more) persons gather in anyone's house, arrest the man at once. If anyone, whether out of or in³ service, Brahman or India, pays court to His Highness the *Mahila Saheb* without your permission, then if he is a *parbate* put him across the Trisuli, and if he is a *deswala* [i.e. an Indian] put him beyond Sisa Gadhi [a fortress controlling the main route from the plains to Kathmandu].

LETTER 3

Jang Bahadur sends greetings to Sri Bam Bahadur: Ram Ale's killing a man is not a 'misdemeanour'. You heard me order the execution of *bhairab* Singh Kharka for just such an offence. Remove Ale's badges of rank and put him in irons. Murder should not be readily forgiven. If you pardon this man what you would do if your own brother or son committed murder? Give him a reward? Cancel his *jagir*. I will decide his case after my return. Although you have already fined him, put him in irons.

LETTER 4

Srimadraj Kumaratmaj Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief General Jang Bahadur Kunwar Ranaji sends greeting to his brother the most auspicious, thousand times blessed and long-lived Srimadraj Kumaratmaj Commander-in-Chief General Bam Bahadur Kunwar Ranaji. All is well here and I hope it is the same with you. Your letters of Jestha Badi - and of Friday, Jestha Sudi 5 [6 June 1850] reached me on Sravan Sudi 12 [19 August] and on Friday, Bhadra Badi 1 [23 August] respectively, and I have noted the contents. After taking leave of Queen Victoria I embarked for Paris on Tuesday, Sravan Sudi 13 [20 August] at seven *ghadis* before sunset, and arrived there on Wednesday, Sravan Sudi 14 [21 August] at eight *ghadis* before sunset. Paris is situated 157 *kos* south-east of London. I have met the Paris minister [i.e., the French premier] and will now leave for Bombay after seeing the President.

(Sc. You write that) Khardar Lilanath Pande's daughter has been defiled, and his wife has been refused a certificate of purification on the grounds that she was aware of the offence. I have learnt from someone else's letter that troops going into Mahottari district to collect the revenue shot and killed a peasant. A mother conceals the fact if a daughter loses her purity, but a mother-in-law will not do the same for a daughter-in-law. Pande's wife should therefore be allowed the certificate of purification. If the soldiers who killed the peasant in Mahottari did so on the orders of Suba Girjadatta Mishra, then confiscate his property. If he did not issue any order and the troops acted on their own initiative, then submit a report to the king, and have the men responsible hanged on the spot where the murder took place.

Khardars Deva Padhya, Manohar Padhya and Laksmibhakta Padhya are sending me regular reports of all happenings at home, great and small. Therefore at the next *tuladan* Khardar Deva Padhya is to receive two or three hundred rupees, Manohar two hundred, and Laksmibhakta one hundred.

After you have written that Her Majesty the Queen has fallen ill, what does it matter if you have completed hundreds of tasks or if you have struck gold! If anything happens to Her Majesty then I was wrong to come away leaving you as minister. As long as you are able to claim that you have made the Queen well again, I shall be perfectly happy for you to ransack the treasury or to surrender the country to foreigners!

(?) You have done good work in Nepal: I knew what I was doing when I came away leaving you as minister. The Resident has asked for 800 Gurkha troops - Magars and Gurungs. [Tell him that] your elder brother will return in Paus (December-January) and the matter can be dealt with then: say that a summons to the off-roll men has gone out, but that grain stored for the Mangsir (November-December) harvest will last them until Paus (i.e., they will have no incentive to enlist until then); say that you will give facilities to anyone who *does* want to enlist; [point out that] troops have to be paid even if they remain at home all month, and prove this by showing him the three categories of certificate issued to the Letar and Sri Nath regiments. Make promises to the Resident, but do not actually provide any troops.

You need not write to me about [other] happenings in Nepal, but write daily with news of Her Majesty's health - you should not include other trifles. You do not know the meaning of 'politics'. Everyone else has mentioned her condition openly in their letters whilst yours contained nothing on the subject. If anything happens to the Queen and I find you allowed it to happen - if anything happens to her while you are acting as minister, I will hold you to blame. (?) Your clothes, your deeds and your stomach are all black and of no use. Understand this, then employ *vaidyas* from anywhere in the world, *jhankris* from all over the country. Use the resources of the treasury, put the army officers on the task, and make the Queen well. You people (sc. Bam and Badri Nar Singh) are descended from a line of three distinguished men and if you now do not show devotion to your benefactor (sc. the Queen) and I have to see misfortune come upon the *sahibjyus*, then you know what my anger will be like. I will never let you show your faces again. Paris, Saturday, Bhadra Badi 2, 1907 (24 August 1850).

Postscript (in Jang's own hand): I have been given a reply to the King's *kharita*. You will learn the contents from the Resident's report to the King. The letter itself is with me.

LETTER 5

Carrying out the civil *pajani* is not like carrying out the military one. It should be done very carefully. If Hemdal Thapa, Ratnam Singh Rajbhandari, Laksmapati Jaisi, Sivanidhi Jaisi, Balhadra Josi and the rest had not oppressed the peasants, why would I have dismissed them? Everyone in the Nepal Valley ['the three cities'] knew they were capable, (?) intelligent men. If they had been worthless,

why would I have appointed them in the first place? You may say that your giving a post to Sivaniddhi was no different from my reappointing an old *subba* like Tara. [In fact] I gave the position to Tara because in 1905 (1848/9) he had not molested the peasants, whereas when 500 peasants by God's will came to the Valley to put their complaints to Sivanidhi, Ramanta shot one of them with his rifle. Ratnaman sent a company of troops from Bhiksakhori to arrest and turn back peasants who were coming to present a list of grievances. Hemdal Thapa has not yet submitted his accounts and was dismissed for irregularities. So that the peasants should be prosperous, even if the king's revenue declined, I entrusted administration in the districts to an insignificant man with not a stick of furniture [literally, 'a pot'] in his house. I am most happy that you have given Butwal to Sivanidhi. The credit for the suffering of the peasants there and for the King's loss of revenue belongs to you and to Badri Nar Singh.

Reappoint all the old officials in the area east of Udiya. I agree with your putting Kesab in charge of Morang. You have done well. Kaji Hemdal Thapa and Amin Suba Siddiman Singh Rajbhandari told me that if I gave them a five-year revenue contract for the seven districts between Udiya and the Mechi they would raise 52,000 rupees to cover the cost of the journey to Europe and run the finances in a way that would maintain good relations with the English and keep the peasants happy. I replied: 'As long as you have not submitted your accounts and have not obtained clearance certificates, and after you forcibly turned back the peasants with troops brought from Bhiksakhori, it is wrong to entrust districts to old rogues like you'. Now, if Hemdal Thapa earned even two paise [i.e., even the smallest amount of money] it would not be Thapa himself but the children of our own little sister and daughter who would get the benefit of it. As for Siddhiman, you know that up to now he has always served me well. You know also that Ratnaman Singh did similar good service at Aulai [i.e., Alau?]. After refusing appointments to men who have always been so dear to me, I could not have given them to other former *subbas* until after they had presented their accounts and received their clearance certificates.

God put us where we are so that we could protect the common people. It is right to find some work or other for old *subbas* so as provide a living for them, but it is also necessary to protect the people. God will not tolerate a man who knowingly unleashes a starving tiger on the peasants, his flock. God did not tolerate Mathbar Singh's unleashing the tiger Hira Lal, whom he made his personal retainer. Bhimsen Thapa was induced by greed to unleash the tiger Kulanand on the peasant flock, and God did not tolerate it. Nor did he tolerate Abhiman's making Ratnaman and Lachimapati his agents and unleashing those tigers on the block. Nor did God tolerate Gagan Singh's making Siddhiman his agent and setting that tiger on the peasant flock. Because I seized those tigers, placed them in a cage and fed them meat, the good wishes of hundreds and thousands of peasants prevented any harm coming to me from my having killed hundreds of men in various ways. Thus I reached this splendid position.

If the peasants see that you are confirming the arrangements your elder brother made, your task will be easy. If a man has not rendered his accounts he should be dismissed, be he *umrao* [i.e. district governor] general or *pipa*. Whether he is the King's man, my man or your man, and even if he possesses thirty-two virtues and can carry out seventeen functions he should still be dismissed. You may ask how you can carry on administration if you dismiss such capable men. For military work you should select a cowherd or *motitar* belonging to a caste eligible for army service. You will ask who should be the replacement on the clerical side for a man who does not submit his accounts. As clerks in the *Kumari Cauk* you should find and appoint sturdy men, of fair complexion, good-looking and with broadforeheads. Have nothing to do with men who cheat and lie and embezzle government funds. Carry on the administration with true and honest men.

When you carry out the *pajani* of district administrators for the west and east, and of civil officials for the Nepal valley, do so with integrity and without regard for self-interest. As for the army, you should dismiss anyone, general or private, who does not wear uniform, fails to perform drill or guard duty, evades work, speaks deceptively, or who cheats and murders (?) hundreds, even if the man is your own brother. Appoint others in their place. There is no need to take action with anyone else. As for men whom I myself have appointed in the army, whatever their rank, you are to confirm the appointments. As you suggest, after my return in Paus I shall be able to confirm appointments myself on the spot. If *khalasis*, *jamadar* or *huda khalasis*, *pipas*, *jamadar pipas*, *sarkes*, *kamis*, *karmis*, *dakarmis*, or *bajrakarmis* fall ill, after they have been away from duty three months and have had one month's home leave they are all to be reappointed. Do not dismiss anyone. Confirm their positions.

Postscript (in Jang's own hand): If you enlist under-age, infirm or cowardly soldiers, their salaries will be deducted from yours. You may ask where you should put your off-roll men, ranging from *jamadar* to private, who have gone to Pachalighat. See to the Kathmandu garrison and find recruits for that. The less sturdy off-roll men [?whom you accept] in your usual way on the advice of your companions, should be put in the Sher regiment. If anyone unsuitable is put in the Riphai, Letar, Rajdal, Sunath, Mahidal, Kali Bakas or Purana Gorkha companies, you will be in trouble.

NOTES

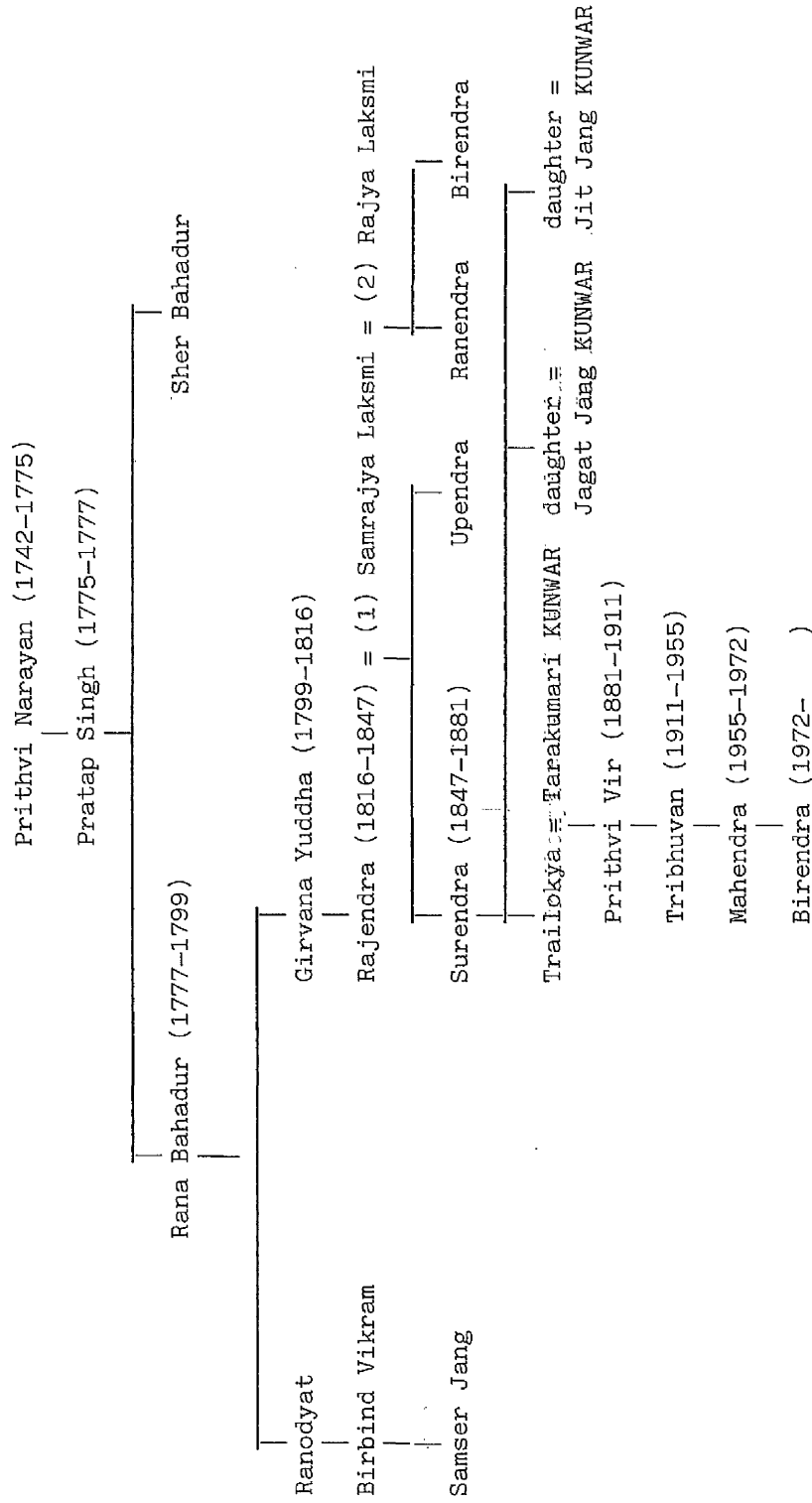
1. Originals published in Kamal Diksit, *Jang-Gita* (Lalitpur, Nepal: Jagadamba Prakasan, 2040 VS (1983/4)), pp.3-58.
2. This possibly refers to a (otherwise unknown) second son of King Surendra who died in infancy. Diksit, *op.cit.*, pp.14-5.
3. Surendra's brother, Upendra.

APPENDIX 3 : FAMILY TREES

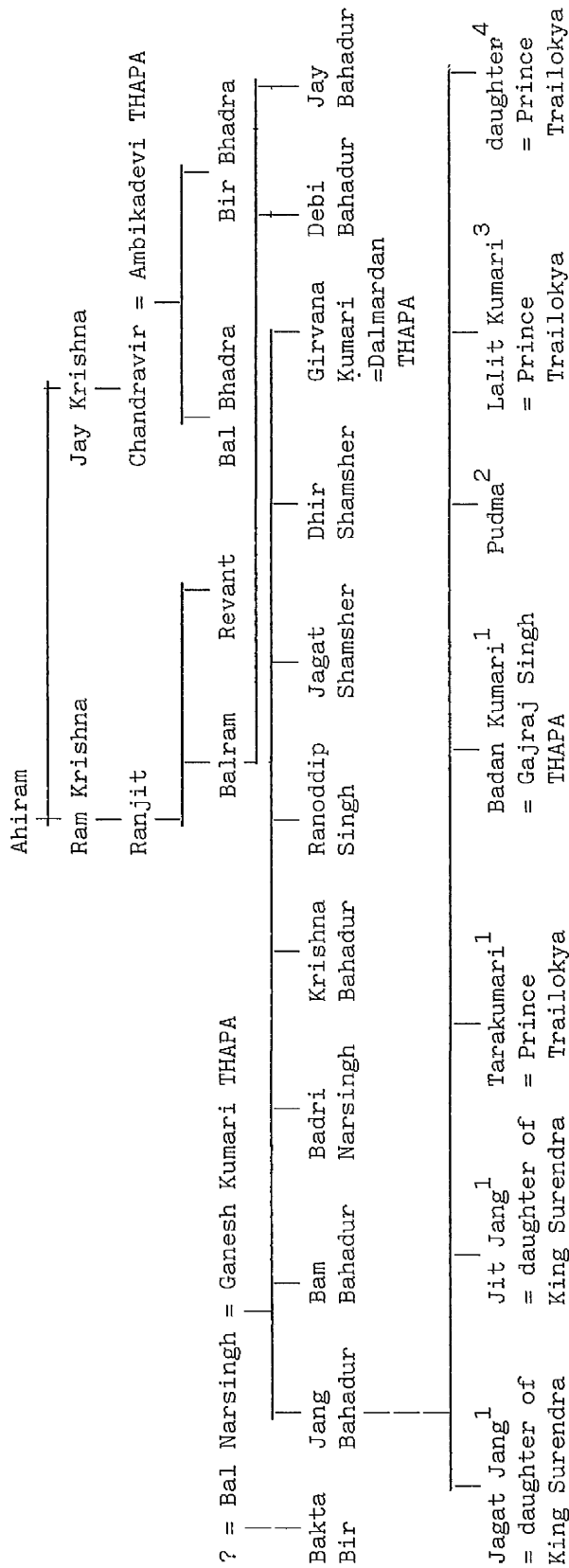
These tables are not fully comprehensive, but designed only to show the connections between individuals mentioned in the text. Principal sources are the tables in Stiller, *Silent Cry* (*op.cit.*), Bhim Bahadur Pande, *Rastrabhaktiko Jahlak* (*op.cit.*), and the Hodgson Papers.

SHAH (ROYAL FAMILY)

(names of kings are accompanied by regnal years)



KUNWAR (JANG BAHADUR)



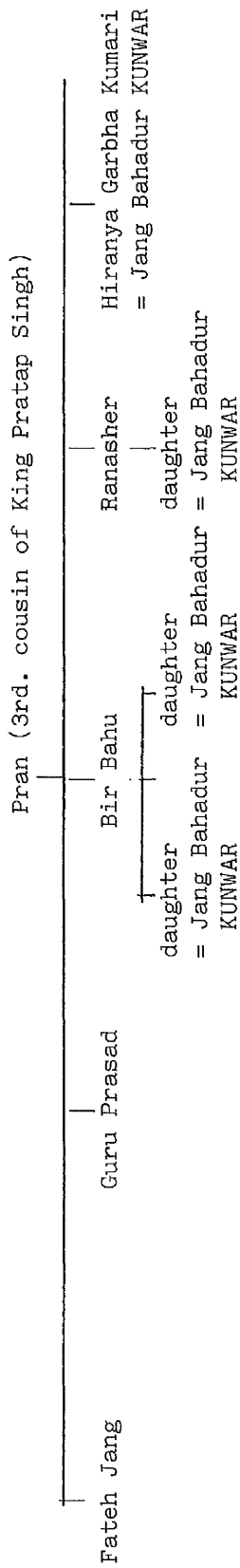
1 Children by Nanda Kumari Devi; sister of Sanak Singh Sripali Tandon, married in 1841

2 Son by a daughter of Ranasher SHAH.

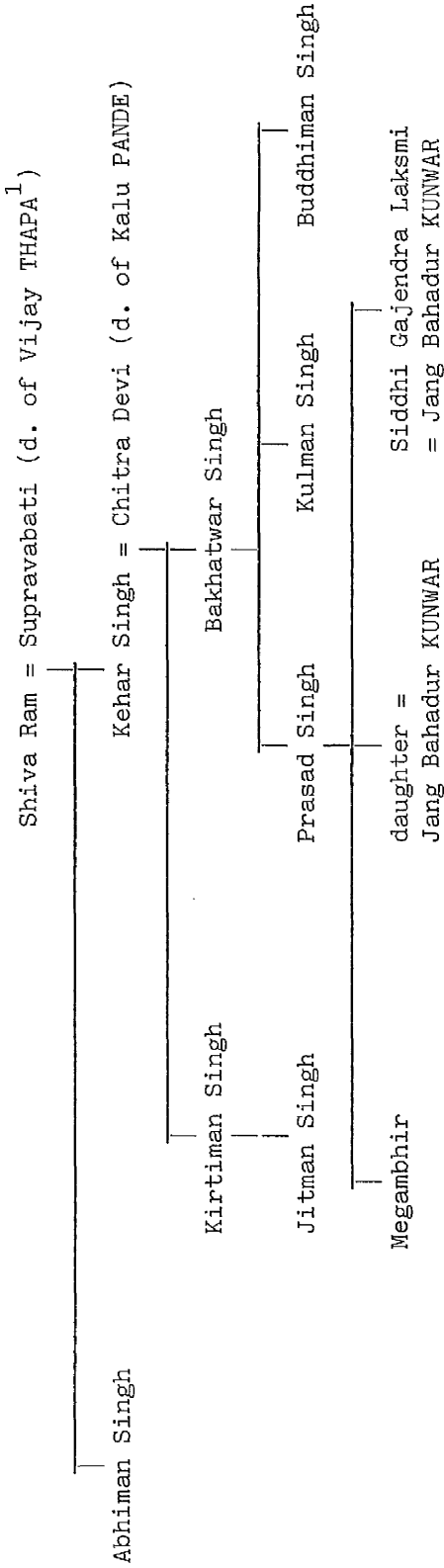
3 Mojumdar, 'Indo-Nepalese Relations', op.cit., p.370. Lalit Kumari may have been the child of Siddhi Gajendra Laksmi BASNET, whom Jang abducted after coming to power. Siddhi is mistakenly described as Tara-kumari's mother by Kashinath Diksit (Bhaeka Kura, Kathmandu: Narendramani Diksit, 2031 VS (1974/5), p.13). Jang had already married another daughter of Prasad Singh BASNET in 1839.

4 Daughter of Hiranya Garbha Kumari SHAH.

SHAH (FATEH JANG CHAUNTARA)



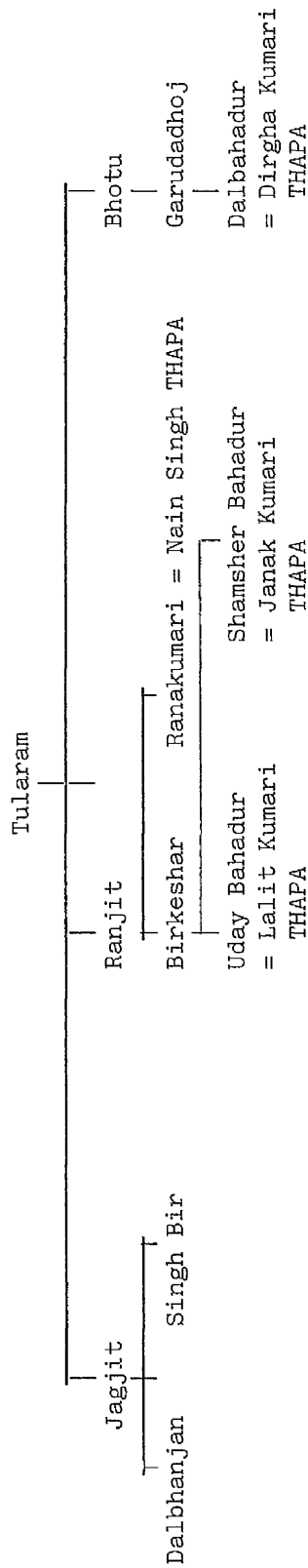
BASNET (PRASAD SINGH)



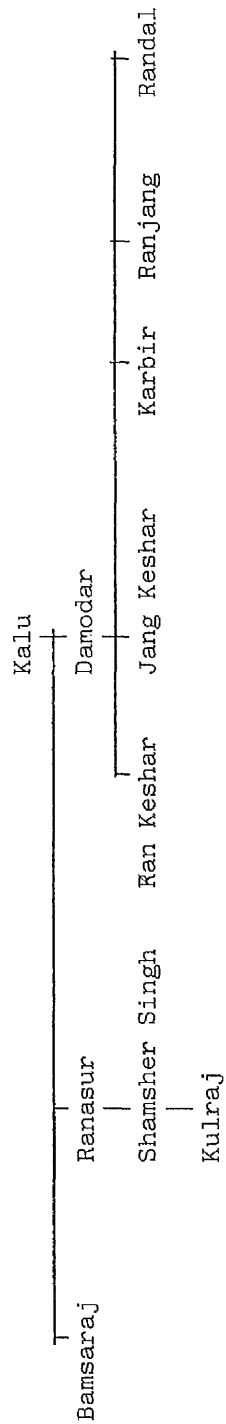
1 Great-great-grandfather of Bhimsen Thapa

PANDE (KHAS/CHETRI)

(i) 'GORA' PANDE (DALBHANJAN)

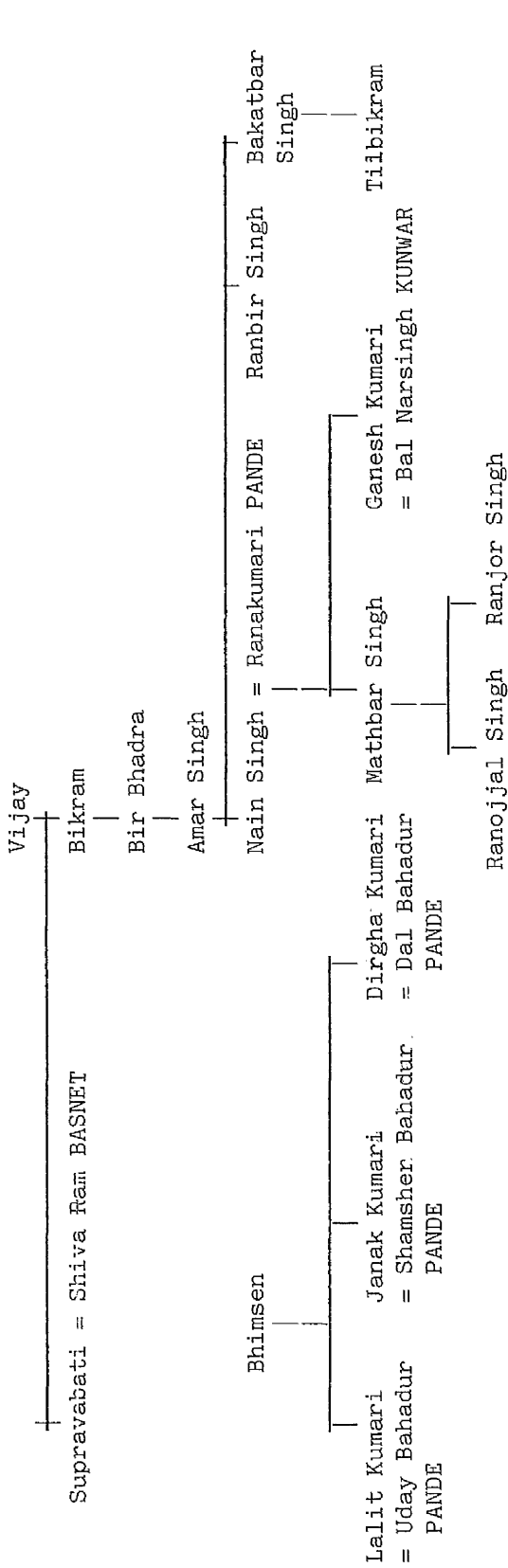


(ii) 'KALU' PANDE (RANAJANG)

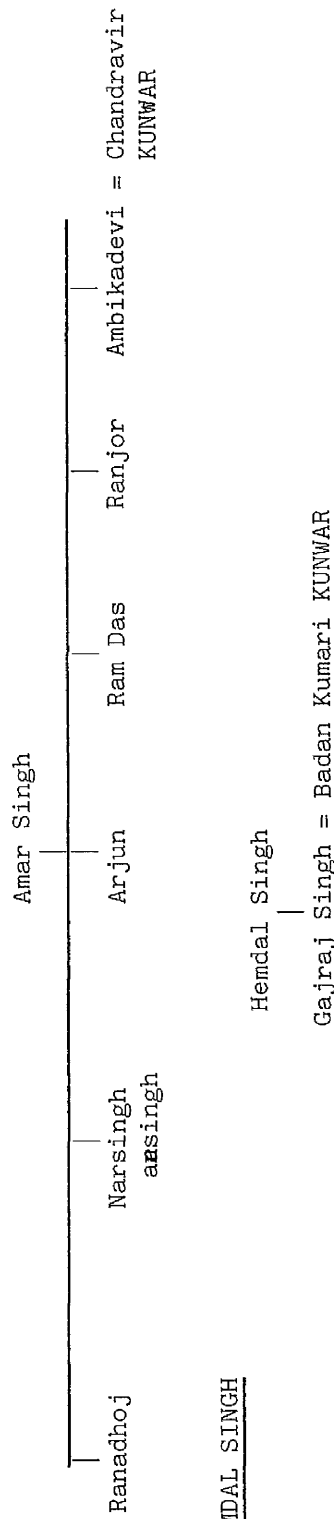


THAPA

(i) BHIMSEN



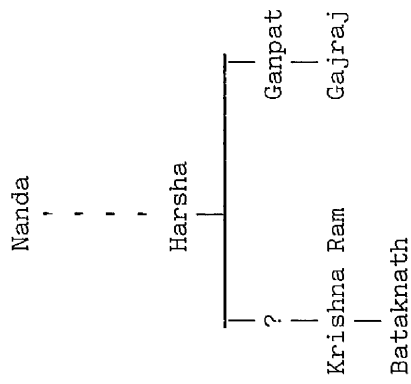
(ii) KAJI AMAR SINGH



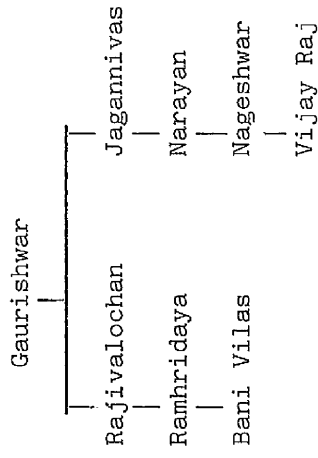
(iii) HEMDAL SINGH

THE GURU FAMILIES

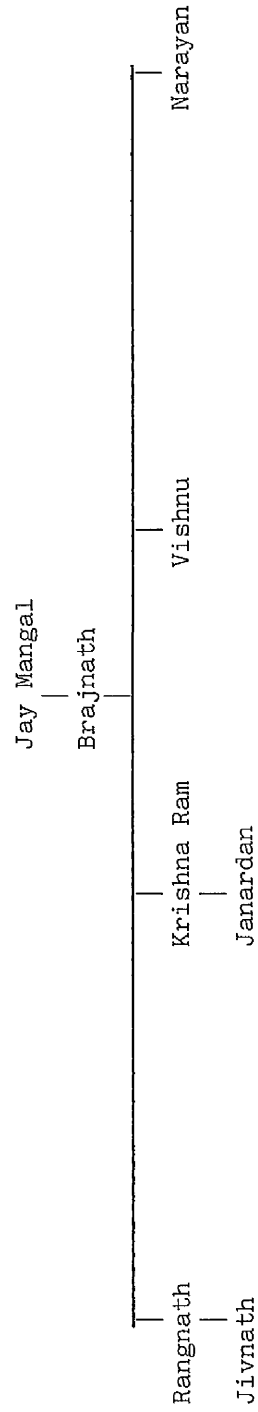
(i) MISHRA



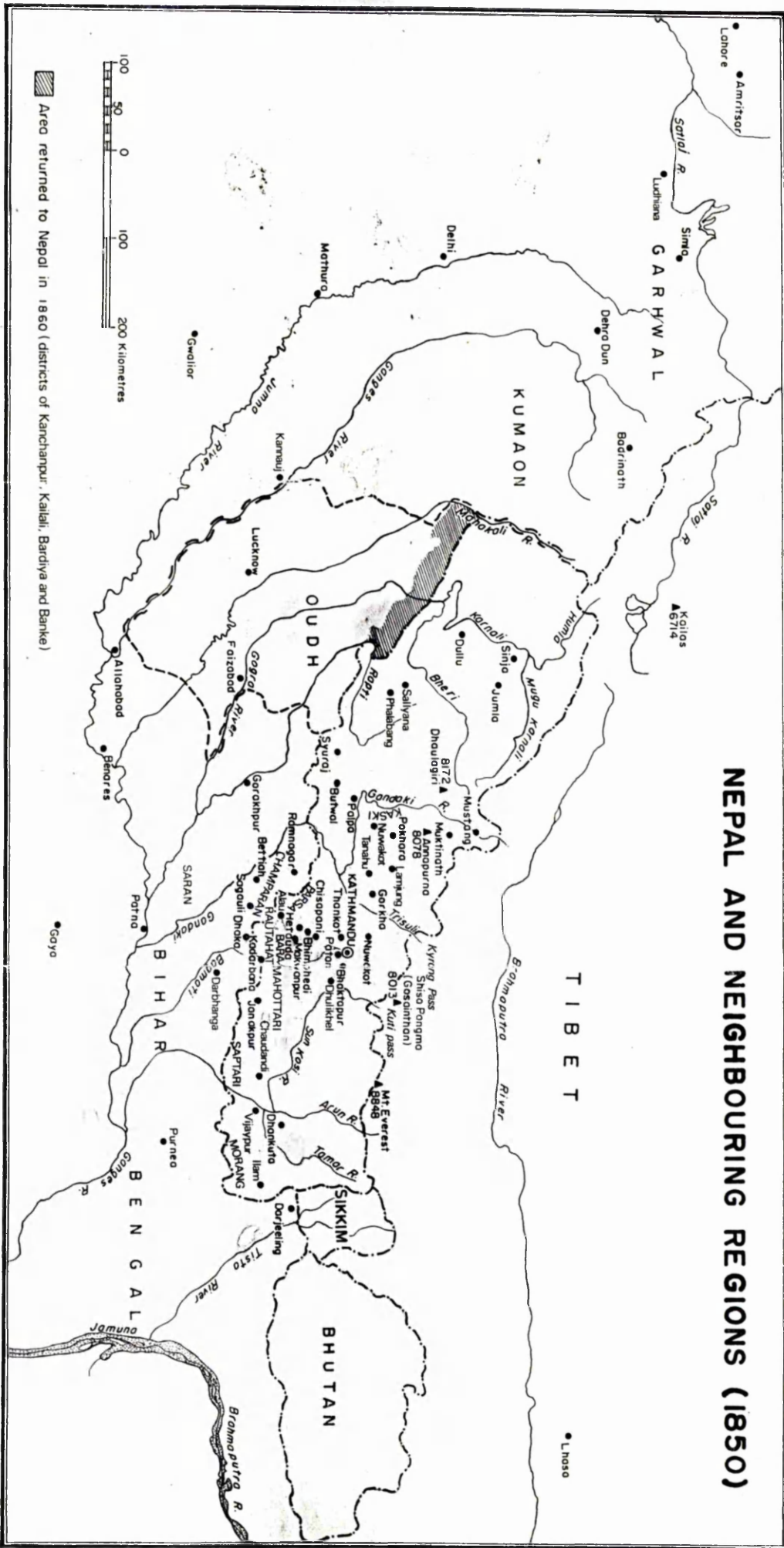
(ii) PANDE



(iii) PAUDYAL



NEPAL AND NEIGHBOURING REGIONS (1850)



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c) In the Bodleian Library, Oxford

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Dalhousie Muniments

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(Note: These are printed copies of the original correspondence. A full set of Part A was provided for London, and a summary of Part B, which comprised matters judged less important.)

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