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Gorkhali Conquest of Garhwal

By

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(Uttarakhand Ka Rajajaitika Tatha Sanskritik Itihasa,
Part V: Kumaun, Garhwal, Aur Harinachal Par Gorkhali Shasana,
Samvat 1847-1872 (1790-1815), Dogadha, Garhwal, Vir-Gatha Prakashan,

According to Bala Chandra Sharma, Vice-Chancellor of the Nepal Academy, the Nepali troops crossed the Mahakali river and entered Almora. After the capture of Almora, they immediately moved into Garhwal. The Nepalis did not have to fight at all for occupying territories beyond the Alakananda river. But as the war against the King of Garhwal for control of areas across that river was in progress, the Nepali troops were informed of China's attack on Nepal. In 1848 Vikrama Samvat (1791), the Nepal troops withdrew from Garhwal after signing a treaty.

Neither Nepali nor Garhwal sources confirm Bala Chandra Sharma's contention that the Gorkhalis did not have to do any fighting to occupy areas beyond the Alakananda. According to available records, during 1791, that is, one year after the Gorkhali occupation of Kumaun, Harshadeva Joshi was present in Almora, and providing every possible cooperation to the Gorkhali commanders in occupying Garhwal, whereas no other person in Garhwal was an opportunist like him, willing to help the Gorkhali army in enslaving his own motherland. Nor was any functionary of Garhwal dissatisfied with his King. In fact, the people of Garhwal had profound respect for their King. There was every possibility of the Garhwal troops deployed in the frontier forts resisting the aggressors with determination. That is why the Gorkhalis had to make special preparations to invade Garhwal.

The rulers of Kumaun used three main routes for attacking Garhwal. One route passed from Almora to Chankhatiya on the Banks of the Ramaganga river via Hawalbag, Dwarkhat, and Maharganj. After crossing the Ramaganga, one could reach Mehchauri, Gairsen, and Chandpur Gadi. The Garhwal Kings stationed troops at Lohawagadi, situated at an altitude of 823 feet, in order to defend this route. The second route passed from Almora to Srinagar through Bageshwar, Bajianath, Ghaidan, Tapinagar Valley, Tehrani, Harayangadh, Simali, Kuma Prayag, Ram Prayag, and Khankara. To defend this route, the Garhwal rulers stationed troops at Baghanagadi (8124 ft.). The third route linked Almora with Nayar Valley through Bhikhiysain, Dehat, Gujurgadhi, and Devalikhal. The Garhwal rulers maintained troops at Gujurgadhi (6000 ft.) to defend this route.

There was yet another route leading to the Salan area in Garhwal. After crossing the Kali river near Brahmadeo Mandi, one could reach the modern Kathgodam from Doti of Nepal. At Kathgodam, one could catch the route leading to the Terai via Almora, Chhakhata, and Bhimtal. From that route, one could reach Kashipur through Chikiyas, and modern Ramnagar. From Kashipur, one could reach Kotwari in the Bhabar region after crossing the Ramaganga river near Kalagadh. At Kotwari, a major route to Srinagar via Darikhal started. Troops of the Garhwal Kings used to be stationed at Langurgadh (6200 ft) to defend this route.
The conquest of Kumaun by the Gorkhalis posed a serious threat to the Kingdom of Garhwal. The Gorkhali rulers did not need any pretext for attacking neighboring kingdoms. That is why Pradyumna Shah, King of Garhwal, was anxious to defend his frontier territories. He alerted the troops stationed at the frontier forts. Expecting fierce resistance from the Garhwal troops, the Gorkhali commanders divided their troops into several units and they invaded Garhwal from different routes.

Sardar Amar Saimha Naya and Pratima Shah ordered their troops to open fronts at various points. As a result, the ruler of Garhwal was forced to concentrate his troops on his eastern frontier. Fresh reinforcements were probably brought from Nepal to attack Longurghat on the southern front.

A unit of the Gorkhali army, under the command of Sardar Ganga Ram, proceeded from Almora and marched toward Chandpur. Garhwal army, based in Lohawangchhiptrid to stop the advance of the Gorkhali troops. Ganga Ram was therefore compelled to open another front near Benital in Chandpur. King Pradyumna Shah promptly despatched troops under the command of Prince Parakrama Shah and Da.rnathra Khandudi toward Benitaln. The Garhwal troops fought bravely and defeated the Gorkhali forces. Ganga Ram was killed. The remaining Gorkhali troops withdrew to Kumaun.

In his book, Nepalcko Atinesika Vivechana (An historical account of Nepal), Dhundi Raj Bandari has made no reference to the battle of Benital. Instead, according to him, a battle was fought at Malan-Gadhi. I have failed to locate Malan Garhi in any map of Garhwal. Bandari has written that the Garhwal forces attacked the Gorkhals while the later were establishing their headquarters at Malan-Gadhi. He adds: "The Gorkhals resisted the attack with bravery and repulsed the enemy."

Yet another Gorkhali force, which seems to have been sent from Nepal, marched through Kotdwar. The Garhwal forces stationed there evaded an encounter because they were heavily outnumbered by the Gorkhalis. Instead, they lay in wait for the Gorkhali invaders at Langurgarh and Kaudiyapatti. Kaudiyapatti was a key point in the route leading from Dwarkhal and Gumkhal to the Nayar Valley. The route leading into the fort passed through steep and rocky terrain and could be defended even by a very small force. During times of peace, the meager cultivable land available in the fort was used to grow vegetables in the rainy season. Rain water was collected there being no other source of water. For drinking purposes, one had to go down the rocky hill to a place called Katalmunda through a distance of one mile to fetch water from a spring located there. This route was also used to supply food to the fort. The walls of the fort no longer exist, but religious ceremonies are still performed at the temple of Bhaireva inside ita.
The Gorkhalis decided to occupy Langurgarh as a stepping stone to the Kingdom of Garh, as otherwise they could be attacked by the Garhwals from both Srinagar and Langurgarh. According to Patirrun, there were 6,000 Garhwali troops in Langurgarh, but the figure is obviously an exaggeration, for Langurgarh could hardly accommodate so many troops. According to Miyan Prem Singh, Pradyumma Shah received information that another Gorkhali force was invading Garh through the Srinagar route, and so sent a Garhwali force commanded by Kansapati Khandudi to defend Langurgarh. The Gorkhalis successfully repulsed the Gorkhalis. The Gorkhalis were defeated at Kaudiyapatti also. According to Dhundi Raj Bhandari, "The Garhwals fought bravely at Kaudiya and Langur even though they had been defeated by the Gorkhalis at Malangarhi. Thanks to the bravery and zeal of men of Srinagar, even a brave fighter such as Pratima Singh was forced to flee from the battle field."

The Gorkhali forces had hoped that they would be able to strike terror among the Garhwals in the same way as they had done in Kumaun and make them accept Gorkha's suzerainty. But after being defeated at the battles of Langurgarh and Kaudiya, the Gorkhalis laid siege to Langurgarh. They dug trenches near the fort and organized their position. Some of these trenches are still extant. From there the Gorkhalis could keep a watch on the route leading to Kutulmanda. They wanted to block the supply of food and water to Langurgarh and force the Garhwals to accept defeat.

The Gorkhalis started undertaking surprise raids against the Gorkhali forces from the fort, and, while the enemy was engaged, bringing food and water. One year passed in this manner, but the Gorkhalis were able neither to occupy Langurgarh nor to proceed to Srinagar through that route.

The Gorkhalis had occupied most parts of Kumaun easily and within a short time. The unsuccessful siege of Langurgarh was likely to undermine their prestige, reduce the feeling of terror they inspired, and encourage ambitious persons in the conquered principalities to raise their heads. The Gorkhali forces, therefore, gave vent to their anger by oppressing the innocent inhabitants of the adjoining villages. Small units of the Gorkhali forces started raiding those villages on foraging missions. As time passed, the range of such missions widened. The Gorkhalis not only seized whatever provisions they could lay their hands on, but also raped or abducted the villagers.

In order to defend themselves from the atrocities of the Gorkhalis, one or two men from each village kept a watch on tracks leading to the village from the tops of trees located at elevated places. They then informed the villagers whenever they saw Gorkhali troops approaching. It is said that even the village gods warned the villagers of the impending approach of the Gorkhalis. If any villager was captured by the Gorkhalis, and nothing of value was obtained from him, he was sold as a slave to the Rohillas. Whenever they received information that
the Gorkhalis were approaching, the inhabitants of Salan drove their cattle to the forests and concealed themselves in bushes or ravines or behind rocks. The Gorkhalis looted their food, clothes, utensils, and sheep and goats in their absence, or even when they were present. The Gorkhalis did not like coarse grains, hence they used to break the containers or mix three types of grains together and leave them. At times, they plowed over ripening crops. In Mande village, it is said that this increased the yield of the *mausa* (millet) crop. The inhabitants of Salan accordingly adopted that practice, which is prevalent to this day.

As in Kumaun, the Gorkhali troops expelled anyone who was found staying inside his house. They then cooked food there, with the rafters or doors and windows as kindling if firewood was not available. They plucked ripe fruits from the trees and threw away the unripe ones. Often they used their khukuris to cut down the fruit trees.

The inhabitants of Salan were thus left with no alternative but to escape to the adjoining forests and live in makeshift huts with wild herbs and roots, or even leaves, as food. They buried their ornaments in the ground and concealed other belonging in caves or under rocks. They used to cook their food at night, lest the Gorkhalis should locate them by the smoke if they did so during the day. Ruins of such makeshift huts are found in the forests of Salan to this day.

The rulers of Salan were powerless to do anything to protect the people from the depredations of the Gorkhalis. The Gorkhalis sold hundreds of men, women, and children of Garhwal as slaves to the Rohillas, and sent thousands more to Kumaun and Nepal. After signing a treaty with Amara Simha Thapa in the year 1849 Vikrama (A.D. 1792), Pradyumna Shah sent Dharanidhara Khandudi to Nepal to negotiate the release of those unfortunate people of Salan. But nothing could be done for those who had been sold to the Rohillas.

Three years later, in 1852 Vikrama (A.D. 1795), a terrible famine ravaged the Kingdom of Garh. According to Captain Hardwick, who travelled through Salan on his way to Srinagar a year later, he saw that once-prosperous region devastated by the Gorkhali atrocities and famine. Wild animals roamed in areas which once were populated by human beings, and the few who still remained there were living a very miserable life. Only two or three huts were left in most villages, while villages containing ten huts, or even five or six huts, were rare. The Gorkhali troops conducted frequent raids into the eastern border areas of Garh, and the inhabitants of Lohaw used to retaliate in kind.

The invincible Gorkhali army had succeeded in vanquishing dozens of principalities in the region west of the Kali River, but it failed to proceed beyond Langurgarh after an attempt of more than a year. There was no geographical barrier obstructing its advance through the borders of Kumaun and Garh in the region south of the Nanda Himal. The Gorkhali army could have taken several other routes besides the main ones. The main reason why
it could not advance beyond Langurgarh was that no military reinforcements came from Nepal. The number of Gorkhali troops in Kumau was not large. It was necessary to station some troops in the southern borders of Kumau on a permanent basis in order to defend the territory against Lal Singh and Mahendra Chand. The Garhwal troops under the command of Dharanidhara Khandudi in the east, and Premapati Khandudi in Langurgarh, had already checked the Gorkhali invasion. Had the Gorkhalis marched ahead through Guakhal, Darikhal, or any other route toward Srinagar, there was the fear of the Khandaus attacking them from the rear.

(Dr. Dabral then gives a detailed account of the Nepal-China war of A.D. 1791–92, and the treaty concluded by the two sides at the end of the war).

Thanks to that treaty, Nepal, Tibet, and China were able to establish a political union all along the northern borders of the Indian dominion of the East India Company, which the Company was never able to subjugate.

After one year's unsuccessful siege of Langurgarh, the Gorkhalis made fresh preparations to occupy that fort with fresh reinforcements from Nepal. But meanwhile Jagajit Pande received a royal order from Kathmandu directing him to hand over the administration of the occupied territories west of the Kali River to Harshadeva Joshi and return to Kathmandu along with the entire Gorkhali Army.

However, Captain Kalu Pande and Amara Simha Thapa considered it dishonorable to return to Nepal after their failure in Langurgarh. Displaying extraordinary bravery, they succeeded in reaching Srinagar with a small body of troops. According to Prem Singh, the group included Kaji Jagajit Pande, Amara Simha Thapa, and Bhakti Thapa. The few Garhwal troops that were stationed in Srinagar thought that the Gorkhalis had already defeated the forces commanded by the two Khandus on the frontier and, therefore, refused to fight. Pradyumna Shah fled along with his family to Ranihat across the Alakananda river. The Gorkhali troops then established their headquarters at Dhamuki.

On receiving this news, Dharanidhara Khandudi joined Pradyumna Shah at Ranihat. Pradyumna Shah sent him to Dhamuku to negotiate a treaty with the Gorkhalis.

On behalf of Pradyumna Shah, Dharanidhara Khandudi offered some money to the Gorkhalis. The Garhwal King was ignorant of the fact that the Gorkhali troops had been summoned back to Nepal because of the serious crisis facing the Kingdom. The Gorkhali commanders, on their part, were eager to leave as quickly as possible after signing an honorable treaty. Accordingly, they did not stipulate any conditions that might not be acceptable to the Garhwals. A treaty was then signed stipulating an annual tribute of Rs. 3,000 to the government of Nepal.
There is a controversy regarding the actual amount of the tribute stipulated in the treaty. Atkinson (1884) puts the figure at Rs. 25,000 and Prem Singh (1886) at Rs. 4,000. Raper, who visited Srinagar in 1808, has given the figure Rs. 3,000 on the basis of information received from Gorkhali authorities. This figure is corroborated by archival materials of Tehri States.

With the objective of having the treaty endorsed, and securing the freedom of enslaved inhabitants of Salan, Pradyumna Shah sent Dharamidhara Khandudi to Nepal along with the Gorkhali commanders.

After the treaty was concluded, the Gorkhali commanders raised the question of handing over the administration of the conquered territories west of the Kali River to Harshadeva Joshi. Parakrama Shah opposed this plan on the ground that Harshadeva Joshi could not be trusted; the Gorkhalis could not, of course, violate the treaty and hand over the administration of Garhwal to Harshadeva Joshi. Amara Simha Thapa, probably angered by the actions of Harshadeva Joshi, placed him in detention and told him that the conquered territories would be put under his control only if he gave proof of his loyalty to the government of Nepal. Harshadeva Joshi appealed to Jagajit Pande against this action of Amara Simha Thapa. Jagajit Pande then proposed that Harshadeva Joshi accompany them to Nepal, where a final decision could be taken. Harshadeva Joshi accordingly accompanied the Gorkhalis for a few days but succeeded in escaping at Gangoli and reaching Johar, which had not yet been occupied by the Gorkhalis.

Meanwhile, the Gorkhalis received another royal order from Nepal informing them that a treaty had been signed with China and instructing them not to hand over the administration of the conquered territories west of the Kali River to any one. The Gorkhali troops then returned to Almora. Amara Simha Thapa remained in Kumaun, while Jagajit Pande, accompanied by the Wakil of the King of Garhwal, Dharamidhara Khandudi, left for Nepal. The government of Nepal endorsed the treaty that had been signed with Garhwal and sent gifts and presents to Pradyumna Shah through Dharamidhara Khandudi. Dharamidhara Khandudi raised the question of the enslaved inhabitants of Salan. Many of them had already been sold, but the government of Nepal released thousands of others who had not yet been sold.

In Nepal, Dharamidhara Khandudi married the daughter of a Brahman who occupied an influential position in the royal court and whom Tehri State archives have identified as Gajaraj. Dharamidhara Khandudi then left Nepal and handed over the endorsed treaty to Pradyumna Shah, who, consequently, felt relieved.

According to Raper, the treaty required the King of Garhwal to bear the expenses of maintaining a Nepali envoy (Wakil) at Srinagar. According to Atkinson, he also agreed to send a Wakil to Kathmandu. Ratudi has noted that no source other than Raper has made any reference to a Garhwali Wakil at Kathmandu, hence he considers it improbable. Otherwise, how could the Gorkhalis have again invaded Garhwal in contravention of the treaty.
According to a document in the possession of the Tehri State Archives, Rama (Ramapati Khandudi) was Garhwali’s Wakil in Kathmandu while Dharani (Dharanidhar Khandudi) was the Gorkha Lekhwar. But the capital of Nepal was known as Kantipur, not Kathmandu, during the time when the treaty was signed. The document referred to above was probably written during the reign of Sudarshana Shahi. It shows that Dharanidhar Khandudi had been placed in charge of the Nepal Desk at Srinagar. More than three dozen letters, sent by Ramapati Khandudi to the Kans of Gujru and Dhang during the period between 1850 and 1856 Vikram (A.D. 1793 and 1799), are available. This means that Ramapati Khandudi was at Srinagar during those years, and that he was not permanently stationed at Kathmandu. It is possible that he visited Kathmandu only occasionally, probably for the payment of their annual tribute. There is similarly no evidence that any Nepali Wakil had been permanently stationed at Srinagar. Apparently there was an official named Lekhwar at Srinagar in charge of correspondence with the royal court of Nepal. That post was occupied by Dharanidhar Khandudi. Because he had married the daughter of the royal preceptor of Nepal, he was trusted by the Nepali royal court.

There is some controversy about the date when the treaty between Nepal and Garhwal was signed. The treaty was signed after the Chinese invasion of Nepal. Immediately after it was signed, Amara Simha Thapa and the other Gorkha commanders left for Nepal by way of Kumaun. They received information about the Nepal-China treaty while they were yet in Kumaun and had not crossed the Kali River. According to Balai Chandra Sharma, the Nepalis had been in contact with the Chinese and compelling them to withdraw from the village of Phedi during the first week of Bhadra 1849 (September 19, 1792), and the Nepal-China treaty was signed not long thereafter. The treaty with Garhwal was signed when the Gorkha commanders reached Srinagar in Shrawan 1849 (August -September 1792).

Harshadeva Joshi reached Johar after escaping from the Gorkhals at Gengoli. Johar had not yet been brought under Gorkhal control. Kumaun had been occupied again by the Gorkhals. Harshadeva Joshi was very afraid of Amara Simha Thapa. It was no longer possible for him to return to Kumaun and mobilise his supporters in the Berhamandal region against the Gorkhals. The people of Johar had connections with the Phartials and other enemies of Harshadeva Joshi. Accordingly, they informed Lal Singh and Mahendra Chand, who were then in the Tarai region, of Harshadeva Joshi’s arrival and also made adequate arrangements for his maintenance. Lal Singh sent Kunwar Padma Singh, a relative of other persons to Johar to arrest Harshadeva Joshi and bring him to the Tarai. The people of Johar handed over Harshadeva Joshi to Kunwar Padma Singh. Harshadeva Joshi then resorted to another strategy. He said that Kunwar Padma Singh was the real heir of the Chand dynasty, and that Lal Singh and Mahendra Chand did not belong to its main branch. Harshadeva Joshi, therefore, offered his cooperation to Kunwar Padma Singh in gaining the Chand throne. Lured by this offer, Kunwar Padma Singh released Harshadeva Joshi.
Accompanied by Kunwer Padma Singh and his party, Harshadeva Joshi went to Pradyumna Shah in Srinagar and asked for military assistance in placing Kunwar Padma Singh on the throne of Kumaun. Pradyumna Shah, however, reiterated his resolve to stay out of the politics of Kumaun and refused to break his treaty with the Gorkhalis. Since he had already freed himself from detention, Harshadeva Joshi had no longer any need to accompany Kunwar Padma Singh. Seeing no hope of getting any assistance from Pradyumna Shah, Kunwar Padma Singh returned to the Tarai, while Harshadeva Joshi remained in Srinagar.

Realising that it was impossible to dislodge the Gorkhalis from Kumaun, Harshadeva Joshi once again developed friendly relations with them. Lal Singh and Mahendra Chand twice invaded Kumaun to free it from Gorkhali control, but were defeated because Harshadeva Joshi and his supporters rendered active cooperation to the Gorkhalis. The Gorkhali troops stationed in the fort of Barakhedi pursued Lal Singh and Mahendra Chand, who then shifted their headquarters to Kilapuri and began to collect an army.

(To be continued).
Kumaun Documents

Jagir Grant in Kumaun

Royal order to Devidatta Vaidya: "We hereby grant you as Jagir lands yielding an income of Rs. 112 in the Kingdom of Kumaun. Proceed to the front (muhamda) along with Kaji Amber Singh Thapa and provide medical services to bharadars, troops and other officials who are working there in our cause." Particulars of the Jagir grant are as follows:-

2 Jyulas in Monan previously in the possession of Redha Panth ... Rs. 61

Bhandarkot village in Bora
Kiran, previously in the possession of Shiva Joshi ... Rs. 51

Wednesday, Kartick Sudi 11, 1867
Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 38, pp. 604-5

Birta Grant to Padmanidhi Upreti

Royal order to Padmanidhi Upreti: "Our bharadars had reported to us that during the conquest of Garh you offered prayers for our victory at the temple of Sri Bedrinath and calculated auspicious timings (sakti). In appreciation of these services, we had granted you two Jyulas of land in the Manan area of Kumaun as birta in the year 1861 Vikrama Samvat. We hereby reconfirm the grant. With due assurance, remain true to our cause and use the lands as your birta."

Wednesday, Kartick Sudi 11, 1867

Slave Traffic in Garhwal and Kumaun

Royal order to Kaji Bahadur Bhandari and Bakshi Dasharath Khatri: "You have been sent there with the responsibility of administering Garh and Kumaun and making these territories prosperous. You are now ordered to detect and send back to their homes any inhabitant of those territories who may have been taken to the plains, the hills, the mountains, or Nepal, through force, fraud, guile, or sale. In addition, find out the persons responsible for such traffic, and, if they are located, punish them according to the regulations.

"We have also received reports that Khas, Magar, Khawas, Gurung, and other soldiers sent from here (to Garh and Kumaun) marry Brahman girls without any consideration of caste. Inflict severe punishment on such persons, and confiscate their property."

Monday, Marga Badi 8, 1867.
Oppression in Garhwal

Royal order to Kaji Bahadur Bhandari and Bakhshi Dasharath Khatri: "We have received reports that Upendra Kanwar, Bahadur Khadka, Krishna Upreti, and other persons who had been sent to collect revenues in the Kingdom of Garh had greatly oppressed the ryots and caused them severe hardships, and that many ryots have fled to India (Moglan) or are coming here to submit complaints if these reports are correct. Most Upendra Kanwar and others lest they should escape on hearing news of your arrival, put them in fetters, and send them here along with the documents. In addition, submit accurate reports identifying the persons whose oppressive behavior has ruined that territory."

Sunday, Marga Badi 14, 1867

Appointment of Rajawar

Royal order to Rudra Pal, "Your nephew, Mahendra Pal, and you had been managing the territory of Askot in Kumaun, and transmitting a sum of Rs. 2,025d to the government every year on account of Saumifag and other revenues. In the year 1866 Vikram Samvat, Mahendra Pal obtained an order from the bhardars stationed at Kumaun to appropriate the entire (half of the revenue) himself, thus denying you your share. From the year 1868 Vikram Samvat, we hereby appoint you as Rajawar of Askot. Manage that territory on a joint basis along with Mahendra Pal, transmit Rs. 2025 to the government, and discharge your responsibilities as Rajawar."

Friday, Marga Sudi 4, 1867

Damaged Jatir Lands in Kumaun

Royal order to Chauperiya Ram Shah and Subba Hastadal Shah, "The Budha Kaji (Amrita Simha Thapa) has reported that lands assigned to the newly-created unit (Patti) of the Sri Maya Mad Company in Kumaun have been damaged by floods and landslides, and that the soldiers are, therefore, complaining. Soldiers cannot stay there if they do not get any income (bali) from their lands. The Kaji will send a messenger along with documents containing particulars of the damaged lands. You are ordered to scrutinize those particulars, ascertain the amount of the income in money, and disburse such amount from the general revenues of Kumaun."

Thursday, Poush Badi 10, 1867
Desertions from the Army

Royal order to Chautariya Ben Shah and Subta Hastadal Shahi: "(Military) personnel who were not given any jagirs during the (annual) Fajrm I, as well as demobilized dhakres are coming here without our orders. There is still work to be done in Besahar. Until that work is accomplished, do not let any dhakre, irrespective of his status, who had been deputed for action in Garh, Kumaul, Simur, and elsewhere, come (to Kathmandu) without our orders and without passports issued by Kaji Ambar Simha Thapa, but send him to the front. Any dhakre who disobeys this order shall be arrested, put in fetters, and sent here."

Sunday, Magh Sudi 3, 1867
Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 38, p. 714

Plan for Attack on Besahar

Royal order to dhakres, Bhardars, Subbas, Subedars, Jumdars, Umras, etc. in the region situated west of the Mahakali River and east of the Saturudra (Sutlej) River: "We are planning to start action in Besahar in the year 1868 Vikrama Samvat. Everyone, whether a dhakre or a jagirdar, must join in that action. All dhakres, wherever they may be, are hereby ordered to report to Kaji Ambar Simha Thapa immediately and wholeheartedly obey orders issued by him in our cause. Any one who does so shall be provided with jagirs and allowances according to his performance. Any one who does not do so shall be punished."

Sunday, Magh Sudi 3, 1867
Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 38, p. 715.

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Kipat Lands of Different Communities

1. The Pun Kipat-Owners of Jumla

Manya Pun submitted the following petition to Kathmandu: "Kami Bhagiraty Pun has claimed inheritance rights in our kipat lands. The dispute was referred to the samal, a trial by ordeal of water was held and we were declared victorious. Now, 35 years later Kami Bhagiraty Pun has revived his claim. Because he is a prominent person (jatha-budha) of the village, he is thus encroaching upon the rights of simple and innocent (lata-ganda, nimukha) persons like us."

On Wednesday, Baisakh Badi 7, 1888 (April 1831) the following order, signed by General Bimsen Thapa and Kaji Bhaktabir Thapa, was sent to the amalis and mukhiyas of Jumla: "If the facts mentioned in the petition are true, (Bhagiraty Pun) has no right to revive a claim in a dispute which had lost 35 years ago. If, however, the facts are different, desist both parties here."

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 34, pp. 275-76.
2. The Denuwars of Nuwakot

The Majhis of four villages in Nuwakot district, including Rajman Denuwar, submitted the following petition to Prime Minister Jung Bahadur:

"Our Kipat lands had been acquired for the Gadkhar (birts), but the samra tax on these lands has not yet been remitted and we have accordingly been paying it since the year 1918 (A.D. 1891). The concerned office is delaying action in the matter. We pray, therefore, that other lands be given to us in exchange for our kipat lands."

On Saturday, Marga Budi, 7, 1925 (November 1868), the following order was issued on this petition: "If the particulars are true, what is the reason for delaying a decision in the matter since the year 1918 Vikrama Samvat? If it is not necessary to grant other lands in exchange for the petitioners' Kipat, explain the reasons in detail. If it is necessary to grant other lands in exchange, this should have been done promptly. Until either course of action is decided, a fine of 2 annas is hereby imposed for every additional day of delay. You may ask why the fine has been imposed. The reason is the delay that has been made in recommending whether or not other lands should be granted in exchange for the Kipat lands which have been acquired for the Gadkhar gardens and thus harassing the concerned people since the year 1918 Vikrama Samvat."

The Sadar Dafdarkhana then reported, "The Kipat lands had been surveyed during the year 1911 Vikrama Samvat by Captain Sevak Ram Thapa, but neither he nor his writers and clarks are available at present. A fresh inquiry has now been held, and the local people have represented their case as follows: "A lokabhar settlement has been made for our village by increasing the actual amount of revenue assessment (wajib) by 50 percent. We have been paying the amount so stipulated every year. Since a part of the lands have been placed under the jurisdiction of the Bakyauta Tahasil office, a remission in such payment would be justified. It is also not justified to deduct a part of our Kipat lands within the boundaries specified in the relevant royal order."

The Sadar Dafdarkhana then made the following recommendations: "The officials deputed to make the 1911 Vikrama Samvat settlement had not been granted powers to inspect Kipat holdings. If a local inquiry shows that lands are being held under Kipat tenure, the Kipat-owners should not be placed under dual obligations. If the transfer of a part of their Kipat lands to the jurisdiction of the Bakyauta Tahasil Adda is valid, the amount of payment stipulated by them must be reduced accordingly. If not, such remission must be made by the Bakyauta Tahasil Adda. In my opinion, the officials who acted beyond their authority and recorded a part of Kipat holdings as undeclared (ukas) lands must be punished with fines. The lands which have been so recorded must be exempted from taxes imposed by the Bakyauta Tahasil Adda."
The case was referred to the Kaushal Adda, which recommended that the Bakyaunta Tahasil Adda should be ordered not to collect taxes on the lands which had once formed part of Kipat holdings.

The following royal orders (lal mohar) were attached to the file:

(a) A royal order issued in 1864 Vikrama Samvat reconfirming 398 muris of rice-fields and additional uncultivated lands as Seva Birta within specified boundaries.

(b) A royal order issued in 1902 Vikrama Samvat (sic) endorsing Kipat land grants made by Shri Til Maha raj.

(c) A similar royal order issued in 1966 Vikrama Samvat.

During the revenue survey of 1911 Vikrama Samvat, Kipat lands covered by a grant signed by Prime Minister(Jung Bahadur) in 1906 Vikrama Samvat were deducted to the extent of 533 muris, and registered with the Bakyaunta Tahasil Adda.

The Sadar Dafdar Khana submitted the following recommendation:

"If the boundaries of the Kipat holding, as specified in the relevant royal order, have been substantiated through a local inquiry, and if newly-reclaimed lands within these boundaries have been taxed, the concerned officials should have been punished with fines because they have acted beyond their authority. But since they are already dead, it may be sufficient to order the revenue-collecting officials not to collect taxes on such resumed Kipat lands."

The recommendation, which was made on Wednesday, Baisakh Badi 4, 1926 (April 1869), was referred to the Commander-in-Chief. He accepted the recommendation with retroactive effect from the year in which tax-collection on the resumed Kipat lands had started.

Thursday, Marga Sudi 6, 1926 (November 1869)
Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 59, pp. 555-61

A Note on the Gadkhar Birta

On Sunday, Poush Sudi 5, 1918 (December 1861), all lands in the following villages in Nuwakot district, including those under birtha, jagir, or other tenures, were granted as Sarbakera-Akara-Sarbangamsi- Birta-Bitalāb to Prime Minister Jung Bahadur in appreciation of his services in safely escorting King Surendra during a pilgrimage to Gosainkundh.

(a) Gadkhar - Gaun.  (f) Gairni - Gaun.
(b) Pokhara - Gaun.  (g) Amchaur - Gaun.
(c) Chhap - Gaun.  (h) Kobilas-Katte - Gaun.
(d) Bodhawa - Gaun.  (i) Syudi - Gaun.
(e) Ratimara - Gaun.  (j) Tinghara-Gaun.

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 33, pp. 434-35.
3. Kipat Lands of Kumhales

A part of the Kipat holdings of Mijhar Jageshwar Kumhale and Mijhar Saduram Kumhale was acquired for a royal orchard as well as for birta grants. The remaining area was reconfirmed as Kipat on Thursday, Bhadrab Abad 5, 1865 (August 1908). The location of the lands is not mentioned in the order.


4. Kipat Lands of Churyada Muslims

Royal order to Biraj Churyada: "From the time of your ancestors you had been in possession of lands South of the Begreni-Khola (other boundaries are also specified) under Kipat tenure subject to hulak services. Later, Harke Bhatta obtained a grant of these lands by falsely representing them as uncultivated. We hereby invalidate that order and reconfirm the lands as your Kipat. Provide the customary hulak services and payments and retain the lands under Kipat tenure as before."

Monday, Ashadh Subi 2, 1864
Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 6, pp. 905-6.

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Royal Orders of Kartik 1867 Samvat

Rent on Confiscated Birta Lands

160 muris of rice-fields, owned as birta by Kisan Thopa and Gaur Parajuli, had been confiscated along with those of other birta owners and assigned as jagir to the Sri Meher Company. They were now ordered to pay rents as follows every year to the bearer of certificates (purjaa) issued by that Company:

80 muris of paddy as but.
Rs 4 as ghiukhane levy.
Chardam - Taaki fees.

The order added, "We hereby allot these lands to you on adhiye tenure. (So long as you make these payments, you shall not be evicted from these lands."

Wednesday, Kartik Sudi 11, 1867
Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 38, p. 605
Expenses for Rautahat Fort

The Ijadar of Rautahat district had traditionally been allowed to debit the emoluments of the Jamadar of the local fort from the amount of payment stipulated by him under the Ijara. Later, however, he was not allowed to do so. When Guru Pandit Raj Ranganath Pandit (was Ijadar of Rautahat), he requested that he be allowed to debit such emoluments (from the amount of payment stipulated by him). However, he was allowed remission of that amount under the head of depreciation (jarti). Subsequently, Subba Laxman Gir was appointed Ijadar of Rautahat, and he prayed that the same concession be extended to him.

The following royal order was then issued on Wednesday, Kartik 11, 1867: "No remission shall now be allowed on account of depreciation. Instead, you will be allowed a sum of Rs. 888 as expenses (mamali-kharsha) to be incurred on the fort like previous Ijardars from the year 1866 Vikrama Samvat. Use that amount to pay the emoluments of Jamadars and soldiers of the fort every year. The amount will be debited from the payment stipulated by you under the ijaras."


Rhinoceros Hunting

Royal order to the Subbas of Fauzdaris, Birtowners, Jagirdars, and Chhap-holders of Morung, Septari, and Mehtotari: "We have sent nine men, including Patal Ghale, to hunt rhinoceros for the Royal Palace. Make laborers available to them if they so request. You shall be held responsible if you do not do so, or if you forcibly seize the rhinoceros horns from them."

Wednesday, Kartik Sudi 11, 1867

Remission of Sair Duties

Royal order to the Rauts, Mahouts, and Sairders of the premises of Mehtotari, Kordari, and Asibhou: "Mahaut Baliram Das's men visit those areas to procure timber, fire-wood, bamboo, sabai grass, khar grass, etc. for his Asthan (monastery). Collect sair duties on such supplies only if these have been collected customarily. Do not collect such duties by force. They need these supplies for religious ceremonies, so do not collect sair duties from them."

Wednesday, Kartik Sudi 11, 1867
Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 38, p. 603.
Chhap Land Grant

The King of Nepal (i.e. the Malla King of Kathmandu) had granted a plot of land in Jipur as Mayau to Nathi Pandit, which needed 3 parchis of seeds for sowing. The land was granted under Chhap tenure to Gang ram Thapa on Wednesday, Kartik Sudi 11, 1867.

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 38, p. 603.

Appointment of Mohineike

On Wednesday, Kartik 11, 1867, Matyang was appointed as Mohineike in Khwadpa for 620 murs of rice lands assigned to the Purano-Sabuj Company. He was ordered to collect the customery rents from the lands on behalf of the Company, and register undeclared and newly-reclaimed lands, which had not been so assigned, at the Royal Palace Dafdarkhana through Kaji Balanarasimha Kanwar. You shall be punished if there is any bungling in the matter. Appropriate the customery fees and perquisites of your office and remain in attendance at the Dafdarkhana.


Expenses and Religious Ceremonies

On Wednesday, Kartik 11, 1867, Mahabir Karki was ordered to make the following disbursements from the thakbendi revenues of Thak for the year 1867 Vikrama Samvat:

1. Amount due to Nilekantha Pandit against ritual offering (daksha) for religious ceremonies and prayers at the temple of Sri Guhyeshwari.

2. Rs. 183 due to Nilekantha Pandit against ritual offering for reciting the Puanis during the four-month period from Shrawan to Kartik in the year 1865 Vikrama Samvat.

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 38, p. 604d

Disbursements from Darshan-Bhat Revenues

In two separate royal orders issued on Wednesday, Kartik 11, 1867, Subedar Dhambar Thapa of Sri Bhagawati Dal Company in Majhikirit, and Sardar Bhairava Simha Thapa of the ... Company in Chasnupur, were ordered to disburse Rs. 300 each to Yudhisthir Thapa and Gambhir Simha Thapa as maintenance allowance (pat-kharcha) from the Darshan-Bhat revenues collected from their respective Companies during the year 1868 Vikrama Samvat.

Regmi Research Collection, Vol. 38, p. 600d

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