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Feudalism in Nepal

By

Mahesh C. Regmi

The rights and privileges of rajas, birtaowners and jagirdars have led some observers to believe that the agrarian system devised by the Gorkhali rulers after the political unification of the country was essentially feudal in character. According to one observer¹:

He (Prithvi Narayan Shah) created a feudal system of a military nature, assessed the revenues to be drawn from each part of the country in a rough but not unjust manner, and left it almost entirely to the feudal overlord to maintain order, collect and remit his dues to Kathmandu, and execute justice.

Nevertheless, the view that rajas, birtaowners, and jagirdars enjoyed a status similar to that of feudal lords in medieval Europe seems to be untenable. The term feudalism emerged in western Europe and carries with it a set of specific connotations, such as the feudal lord, the vassal, the fief, the feudal contract, and the serf². In the words of Marc Bloch³:

A subject peasantry; widespread use of the service tenement (i.e. the fief) instead of a salary, which was out of the question; the supremacy of a class of specialized warriors; ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man and, within the warrior class, assume the distinctive form called vassalage; fragmentation of authority... leading inevitably to disorder; and, in the midst of all this, the survival of other forms of association, family and state, of which the latter, during the second feudal age, was to acquire renewed strength... such then seem to the fundamental features of European feudalism.

There is no evidence that these fundamental features were present in Nepal's agrarian system during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In fact, "if we use the term feudal in any of the precise senses used by historians, we cannot apply it to most Asian systems."⁴ In the words of Daniel Thorner⁵:

From our perspective, European feudalism of the high Middle Ages may be seen as embodying a particular form of peasant economy. Nothing is gained by trying to view all peasant economics as variations of that one rather special form. The time has arrived to treat European experience in categories derived from world history, rather than to squeeze world history into western European categories.

The use of the term feudalism to describe socio-economic conditions in Nepal during the nineteenth century in advance of empirical studies in this field may, therefore, suggest erroneous analogies with the European experience.

It is true, of course, that Marxist writers, while defining feudalism, place emphasis "not in the juridical relation between vassal and sovereign, nor in the relation between production and the destination of the product, but in the relation between the direct producer (whether he be artisan in some workshop or peasant cultivator on the land) and his immediate superior or overlord and in the socio-economic content of the obligation which connects them."⁶ They regard feudalism primarily as "a mode of production" and virtually identical with serfdom: "an obligation laid on the producer by force and independently of his own volition to fulfill certain economic demands of an overlord, whether these demands take the form of services to be performed or of dues to be paid in money or in kind."⁷

On the basis of this definition, one has to admit that the rajya, birta and jagir contained a number of feudalistic characteristics. Nevertheless, as Marx himself has pointed out, "the direct relation of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers" show "infinite variations and gradations in its appearance," due to "numerous outside circumstances natural environment, race peculiarities, outside historical influences, and so forth, all of which must be ascertained by careful analysis."⁸

Moreover, Marx himself made a distinction between "the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois modes of feudalism to describe Nepali economy and society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would be inaccurate even in the Marxist sense.

It is doubtful whether the process of analytical inquiry is facilitated by affixing in advance the label of feudalism to any economic system. The scientific method lies in making generalizations on the basis of observation and inquiry, not vice versa. According to one view¹⁰:

The danger with the scholar's conceptual theory is that it suffers a constant tendency to obstruction, to remoteness from real life. The material on which the theory is based may originally be derived from living experience, but ... as time goes by... the inherent logic of internal consistency is liable to become more important than correspondence with the facts. Even when a theory offers an adequate basis for explaining a particular set of problems, there is an unfortunate tendency to abstract and to generalize any such theory far beyond the area of inquiry in which it has been validated and found useful.

Notes

1. Perceval Landon, Nepal. Reprint. (Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1976), Vol. 2, p. 158.
2. Daniel Thorner, "Peasant Economy as a Category in Economic History," in Teodor Shanin, Peasants and Peasant Societies (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 217.
3. Marc Bloch, Feudal Society (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1965), Vol. 2, P. 446.
4. Doreen Warriner, "Land Reform and Economic Development," in Carl K. Eicher and Lawrence W. Witt, Agriculture in Economic Development. First Indian reprint. (Bombay: Vora & Co., 1970), P. 277.
5. Daniel Thorner, loc. cit.
6. Maurice Dobb, Studies in the Development of Capitalism. 7th impression (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1959), P. 35.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. T.B. Bottomore (ed.), Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy. Reprint (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1965), P. 69.
10. John Madge, The Tools of Social Science. Fourth impression (London: Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd, 1965), pp. 69-70.

Industrial Development in Nepal

By

Mahesh C. Regmi.

Chapter 11.

(Continued)

Foreign Capital

In Nepal the importance of foreign, that is to say, Indian capital, has all along been recognized by the Government. In the past Marwari merchants from India were encouraged to come and settle in the valley, as well as in some towns in the Tarai. The law, however, forbade ownership of property and enterprise by foreigners, and it was only by the special sanction of the Government that Indians were allowed to start industries and business. In general, however, the law was difficult to enforce, as, especially in the Tarai districts, it was difficult to distinguish a Nepali from an Indian.

Contd...

Attempts to encourage Indian capital for the organised industrial development of Nepal were initiated in 1936, when the Chamrias, a well-known family of Marwari financiers from Calcutta, were encouraged to take up the managing agency of the Biratnagar Jute Mills Ltd. The venture was a success, and soon after, other financiers also were attracted, though none of them were able to initiate any substantial industrial ventures. Towards the end of the Rana period, the only notable success had been achieved by the Chamria group, which operated jute, cotton and sugar mills in Biratnagar. Total investment of Indian capital in the joint stock industry of Nepal during this period was of the following magnitude:-

Table VII

Foreign Capital in Nepali joint stock industry

<u>Company</u>	<u>Total Indian Investment.</u>	<u>Percentage of the Total Authorised Capitals</u>
Biratnagar Jute Mills Ltd	Rs. 8,90,000	50
Guhyeshwari Rice Mills Ltd	Rs. 33,500	67
Morang Cotton Mills Ltd	Rs. 44,40,878	50
Nepal Chemical Industries Ltd	Rs. 1,15,000	46
Raghupati Jute Mills Ltd	Rs. 20,35,932	40
Cour Rice and Oil Mills Ltd	Rs. 1,96,000	49
Morang Sugar Mills Ltd	Rs. 4,78,990	40

In addition, investments from Indian sources were planned for the inception of ventures like the Ram Janaki Textiles Ltd, Nepal Textiles Ltd, and Pashupati Textiles Ltd, at the rate of 40 percent, but never materialised.

In subsequent years the figures given above underwent changes. The share capital of the Biratnagar Jute Mills Ltd was increased to Rs. 52 lakhs; while in the case of the Raghupati Jute Mills Ltd Rs. 14 lakhs worth of shares held by the Indian Managing agents were purchased by the Government. Recently, the managing agency of Morang Cotton Mills Ltd has been acquired by the Morang Trading Co. Ltd, with a capital of Rs. 5,50,000. This has been the first Indian Managing agency to take over a Nepali industrial concern after the advent of the Interim regime.

The last important group of financiers during the latter part of the Rana regime were the Kakranias, who invested Rs. 20 lakhs to acquire the managing agency of the Raghupati Jute Mills Ltd. Soon however, the Rana

regime came to an end and the Interim Government came into power. There was interference in the management of the company, and the managing agents complained that their statutory rights had been infringed. Not until their shares were purchased by the Government in 1953 was the dispute settled, but not before the vagaries of the industrial policy of the new Government had raised doubts in the minds of the foreign investors regarding the administrative and financial stability of the new regime. Direct private investment of foreign capital has since come to a standstill, for the change in the managing agency of the Morang Cotton Mills Ltd did not mean any net increase in foreign capital investment. Even the Chamarlia group has shown itself somewhat distrustful of the present political and economic situation. This has tended to discourage them from making fresh investments that are very badly needed at present in their concerns that are in a bad economic condition.

Besides direct investment in shares, Indian financiers have also supplied considerable capital through loans and debentures. Such investments naturally depended upon the credit worthiness of the managing agents of the company concerned, and in recent years this has gone down considerably, as a feature of the prevailing stagnation in industry. In a number of cases, loans have not been settled in time, nor have debentures been redeemed when mature, nor interest on them paid when due. All this has hardly been conducive to the development of a proper investment atmosphere in the country, with disastrous effects on the smooth running and development of industry.

Recently the Government has issued a notification permitting foreigners to purchase up to one-third of the shares of a Nepali company without procuring any special sanction. So far, this has not led to any net investment, inasmuch as no Nepali companies of any significance have come into being.

In recent years investment of foreign capital from Indian and non-Indian sources on governmental level has assumed great importance. The Draft Five Year Plan expects to obtain all its requirements of finance, beyond the amount of Rs. 950 lakhs expected to be contributed by increase in internal revenues, necessarily from external aid.

Such external aid commitments are expected to be of the following order over the next five years:-

Table VIII

External aid to Nepal

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u> (in lakhs)	<u>Purpose</u>
India	Rs. 100	Hydro Electric Project, airodromes, canals, drinking water, village and agricultural development.

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u> (in lakhs)	<u>Purpose</u>
U.S.A.	Rs.80	
China	Rs.60	Rs.2 crores in cash and the balance in materials. Main purposes are: Junior technical training, rural credit, resettlement, industrial loans, government buildings, district development, establishment of an engineering college, and of cement, paper, and sugar mills.
Ford Foundation	Rs. 18	Development of cottage industries and training in Home Economics.
Australia	Rs.179	Construction of roads, and improvement of the Tokha Sanatorium.
U.N.T.A.A.	Rs. 10	Technicians from W.H.O., F.A.O., I.L.O., U.N.E.S.C.O., and other U.N. organizations.

The Indian aid includes the amount already spent for the Gaucher Airport at Kathmandu, as well as the amount of Rs. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ crores expected to be spent for the Trisuli hydro electric project. In addition, the Government of India has also borne the cost of the construction of the Tribhuvan Raj Path, amounting to a total of Rs. 325 lakhs.

Aid from the United States Government, which was initially Rs. 50 lakhs per annum, has now been raised to Rs. 1 crore. It is expected that this figure will shortly be again raised to Rs. 150 lakhs per annum.

In addition, the U.S. Government has agreed to grant Rs. 62.25 lakhs for the construction of roads and the conversion of the Nepal Government Railway into a metre gauge-line, and extension up to Hetauda. The United States Government is also committed to grant funds for the construction of a new ropeway from Kathmandu to Hetauda with a carrying capacity of 25 tons per hour. Under a recent agreement between the Nepal Government and the U.S. Government, the U.S. will contribute \$4,255,000 and the Nepal Government Rs.4,000,000 out of this amount, \$2,000,000 and Rs.1,300,000 are to be spent on the construction of the ropeway. The joint fund will also be used for the construction of 53 miles of road between Hetauda and Narayangarh. Other items of expenditure under the agreement are mineral development, development of small industries, malaria control, village development, the establishment of an industrial research centre, and so on. (Gorkhapatra, 22 May).

It is also probable that the U.S.S.R. Government, with whom Nepal has recently entered into diplomatic relations, will proffer substantial aid for the implementation of the Five Year Plan.

Nepal has also received aid from New Zealand for a cheese factory and a milk collecting and distributing centre. So far, these commitments have amounted to \$19,000. Another country from which Nepal has obtained technical assistance is Switzerland.

In these circumstances, it is expected that the financial requirements of the Five Year Plan will be fully covered from external aid, without making investment of Rs.950 lakhs contemplated from doubtful-obtained budget surpluses necessary.

It is, therefore, clear that in the present circumstances, when Nepal is confronted with the vicious circle of a poverty-stricken and static economy and a chronically deficit budget, foreign capital will be a major source of capital required for the industrial development of the country. This fact has been recognized by the Draft Plan when it says, "It is expected that during the first years of developmental efforts, we shall, due to our limited resources, rely heavily on foreign aid." Even the people in general have become aware of the fact. The manifesto of the Nepali Congress Party, for example, says, "For long years we cannot expect substantial capital formation inside the country. There must be idle hoards belonging to the Ranas, but they cannot be large. All attempts should be made to attract this idle money into industry. In the main, however, we shall have to depend on foreign capital for any policy of rapid industrial development." (Nepali Congress Party: Manifesto adopted at the sixth National Convention of the Nepali Congress at Birgunj, 1953, p.16)n

The outlook for the ensuing years will be therefore a substantial amount of foreign capital, channelled through government agencies like the projected Industrial Development Corporation.

With increasing stability, moreover, private sources of capital from India may also be expected to play an important role in the private sector of industry as demarcated in the Draft Five Year Plan. It is obvious however that the Government will have to bring about a more favorable climate for such investment. So far, the absence of any clear-cut industrial policy has been a strongly deterrent factor. Nor has recent official pronouncements tended to encourage investment of such private foreign capital. Recently (21 April, 1957), the Industries and Commerce Minister, Gunja Man Singh, said, "Nepal will welcome foreign capital for the development of the country, but only a small portion of the profits accruing there from will be allowed to be taken away." (Kathmandu Municipality: "Jana Chetana," Monthly, 28 April, 1957)n

It is obvious that this hardly constitutes an attraction for Indian financiers who might be in a position to invest their money in Nepal. Unless, therefore, the Government comes forward with a more practical and clear-cut policy with regard to investment of private capital from foreign sources, this cannot be expected to feature prominently in the years to come in the industrial development of the country.

Markets

Geographical factors, in the main, have so far held up the proper development of the internal markets of the country. As the Draft Five Year Plan puts it, "Ridges stretching southward from Himalayan highlands to the lowlands of the Tarai have interposed lofty deterrents to east-west trade within the country, an effect reinforced by unbridged rivers flowing southward into India." (Draft Five Year Plan, P. 6) Thus, from the point of view of economic development, "what would be a small market even if it were a single entity is in fact no more than a congeries of more or less unconnected and much smaller markets." (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Processes and problems of Industrialization in underdeveloped countries 1955. P. 14). The result of all this has been highly unfavorable to proper economic development. To quote the Draft Five Year Plan again, "People living in small and isolated rural communities are cut off from each other. Each isolated region tends to follow a pattern of subsistence economy the most primitive and rudimentary type, the lack of communication handicapping all prospects of development." (Draft Five Year Plan, P. 59).

From the very beginning trade channels have tended more to run north and south to facilitate trade with India as well as with Tibet. The various improvements in means of transportation that were effected in the first quarter of the present century all helped to promote trade with India, with the result that internal trade languished. There was a tendency to import from foreign sources what could easily have been obtained locally. Moreover, this gave rise to discrepancy in the economic development of the various regions of the country. On the one hand some region, mainly the hilly region, in which people followed a primitive and rudimentary economy of the subsistence type; while on the other was another which was comparatively highly developed in so far as its exchange economy, particularly in respect of its economic alignments with India, was concerned. This gap between the two sectors of the economy has meant that "Substantial elements of the population tend on the average, to be much less productive, much less adaptable, much less educated, much poorer, than those belonging to the more favored sectors... labor tends to be less mobile or less suitable than it might otherwise be and the market for industrial products much narrower." (Processes and problems of Industrialization in underdeveloped countries. P. 15).

Another major hindrance to the proper development of the internal markets for the products of local industry has been the existence of inter-district duties. For example, matches, cotton textiles and sugar imported into the Valley of Kathmandu from Birgunj and Biratnagar are subject to the imposition of duties at the Kathmandu customs house, and similar is the case in the district areas also. These probably date back from the time when the country was divided into several petty states, and the immediate gains in revenue contributed by them have so far proved too attractive to the government to enable it to abolish them altogether. Such inter district duties as obtained in the hill districts, as well as the posts at which duties were exacted at several points along the principal trade routes between Nepal and Shigatse, Gyantse, Lhasa, and other Tibetan centres were abolished in 1925, (Perceval Landon: Nepal, Vol. II, P...), but in the Tarai districts they still exist. Substantial modifications have been effected since the inception of the interim Government in 1951. For example, a recent Government announcement waived the inter district duty on local manufactured ghums (rain covers made of bamboo skins and sal leaves), charged by the Lale Lapse customs house. (Nepal Gazette, Vol. V, No. III, Part II, August..., 1957). Similarly the inter district duties on Nepali handmade paper have also been abolished. In general, however, such duties will constitute a major source of irritation and hinderance to the movement of manufactured and other goods from one region of the country to another.

The effect of all these factors on the proper development of local industry has been very unfavorable. In particular, this has handicapped industry in the establishment of optimum size and minimum costs. In consequence, the cotton textile and sugar manufacturing industries have always suffered from higher costs of production than those prevalent in Indian industries. Moreover, lack of an adequate internal market has led these industries to export nearly half of their total production to India. In view, however, of the rapidly developing Indian industry, as well as the numerous advantages in respect of transport, power, raw materials and so on, as compared to the Biratnagar industries, it is doubtful whether it will be a judicious policy for Nepal to attempt to develop much secondary industries with an eye to the Indian market. In present circumstances it might be more advisable for Nepali industry to develop on lines complementary to Indian industry than to depend upon Indian markets for the products of its secondary industries to any appreciable extent.

(To be continued)

Yangrup and Yangnam Forts

On Marga Sudi 8, 1941 (December 1884), Kathmandu sent a seven-point questionnaire to Colonel Fatte Bahadur Rana, Chief of the Dhankuta Gaunda office. The questions, and the answers sent by the Colonel, are as follows:-

1. Question: Do you apprehend any external aggression if the tax remissions allowed to the watchmen and other functionaries employed in the forts of Chainpur, Yangrup, and Yangnam are abolished, and the forts vacated ?

Answer: These forts are situated near the boundary. This is the reason why they were established here. If these forts are vacated, there will certainly be the danger of external aggression.

2. Question: How far is the boundary ?

Answer: The boundary is located at a distance of $3\frac{3}{4}$ kosh from Yangnam fort, and $4\frac{3}{4}$ kosh from the Yangrup Hastapur fort.

3. Question: If it is necessary to appoint watchmen and other functionaries, how many households should be assigned ?

Answer: Formerly, one patti of troops had each been stationed at the forts of Yangrup and Yangnam. These troops were withdrawn during the war of 1911 Vikrama (A.D. 1854-55). A total of 958 households were then assigned on a tax-exempt basis to these forts, 694 households for Yangrup fort, and 694 households for Yangnam fort.

These households had arranged for the following number of persons to work as sentries and watchmen at the following places by rotation for eight days each:

Yangnam fort	-	10.
Yangrup-Hastapur fort	-	10.
Nyamyang Checkpost	-	10.
Chyangthapu Checkpost	-	10.
Total	-	40 persons.

In addition, these households had been employed in installing spiked barriers and traps and undertaking necessary repairs. Levies were also collected from them to pay the remuneration of a priest for performing regular and ceremonial religious functions.

A store for arms and ammunition, and quarters for the sentries and watchmen, were constructed at both these forts through the labor of these households, who had worked faithfully during war and other occasions.

When a petition was filed to the effect that the number of households had proved inadequate, an order was issued in 1940 Vikrama (A.D. 1883) to assign the same number of tax-exempt households to Yangnam as to Yangrup-Hastapur.

In my opinion, therefore, it will be appropriate to continue assigning the same number of households for both these forts.

4. Question: Have any watchmen been assigned in Isaling-Chiwa-Phanjyang, Phalelung and Nyamyang ?

Answer: Because Phalelung and Isaling-Chiwa-Bhanjyang are situated in inaccessible Himalayan terrain, ten households each have been assigned (for checkpoints at) Nyamang and Changthapu respectively.

5. Question: Is it necessary to keep these forts strong ?

Answer: On the other side of the border at Phalelung, the English have an establishment (kothi) and so there is much traffic. Consequently, it appears necessary to keep the forts of Yangnam and Yangrup strong.

Although the fort of Chainpur is situated at a distance of 14 kosh from the border, it does not appear advisable to abandon it, because it had been constructed at the time of the Gorkhali conquest. 342 households have been assigned to this fort on a tax-exempt basis. It may be appropriate to abolish the tax-exemption in the case of half of these households, and retain the fort.

6. Question: Will there be any complaints from the local people if taxes are imposed on households who have been exempted from forced-labor (Jhara) obligations ?

Answer: The local people are willing to accept either of these two alternatives: (a) Continue working as before, if an adequate number of households is assigned, or (b) get exemption from forced-labor obligations and pay taxes.

If troops are stationed at these forts, the costs will be heavier than if the existing arrangements for assigning tax-exempt households are retained.

7. Question: Is Jagat duty collected at Olangchung ?

Answer: A royal order had been issued in 1883 Vikrama (A.D. 1826) according to which criminals fleeing to Sikkim or India should be captured and handed over to the Adalat. These functions are being discharged accordingly. There is no evidence that Jagat duty is collected at Olangchung. It appears necessary to close this route.

Baisakh Sudi 14, 1942

(May 1885).

The Pallokirat Mahajanch Office made the following recommendations:-

1. It does not appear advisable to vacate these forts and impose taxes (on the tax-exempt households),
2. The tax-exemptions reconfirmed in 1925 Vikrama (A.D. 1868) should be retained, and the tax-exempt households employed as usual in the two forts of Yangnam and Yangrup-Hastapur.
3. Jhara obligations should be imposed on the new households registered in the course of the current settlement. In case they submit a complaint against this step, and in case it appears that they too must be granted exemption according to current royal orders and regulations, the matter should be referred to the government.
4. If only half of the existing number of households needs to be retained for the fort of Chainpur, action should be taken accordingly.
5. Orders to this effect should be sent to the Pallokirat Sarpat Mahajanch and the Dhankuta Gaunda.

These recommendations were submitted under the signature of Mir Subba Krishna Raj Gurugherana Panditjee, and Kharidars Sadman and Dil Bahadur on Jestha Badi 7, 1942 (May 1885). They were endorsed by the Prime Minister, Ranoddip Singh, on Shrawan Sudi 2, 1942 (July 1885).

King Prithvi Narayan Shah

By

Baburam Acharya

(Shri 5 Badamaharajadhiraja Prithvinarayana Shah) (Samkshipta Jivani) (A.D. 1723-75) (A short biography of His Majesty the great King Prithvi Narayan Shah, from A.D. 1723 to 1775). Kathmandu: His Majesty's Press Secretariat, Royal Palace, 2024 (1967). Pt. I, Chapter 2: "Janma ra Balyakala, A.D. 1723-37" (Birth and childhood, from A.D. 1723-1737). (pp.91-124).

At a time when plague was taking a heavy toll of life in the towns and villages of the Kathmandu Valley, the old King Prithvipati Shah was counting his last days in the Gorkha palace. He had a great desire to see his heir and great-grandson at the last moment of his life. Prince Narabhupala Shah had already come of age. Prithvipati Shah did not like to arrange the marriage of his grandson with the daughter of an ordinary Thakuri family. He wanted his grandson to marry a daughter of a ruling Chaubisi King. But Gorkha was not rich in mineral resources, nor had it big trading centers. Most Gorkhalis were farmers. As a result, the King of Gorkha and his subjects were not rich. It was for this

reason that the Kings of Palpa and Parbat were not willing to offer their daughters in marriage to the Gorkhali prince. Realizing this, Prithvipati Shah proposed the marriage of Narabhupala Shah with the daughter of a middle-rank Chaubisi King. A King of Khanchi whose name is not known, accepted the proposal. However, he did not agree to send his daughter as a dola, so that the wedding ceremony would be solemnized at the bridegroom's palace. Instead, he suggested that the bridegroom be sent in a marriage procession. Prithvipati Shah could not participate in the procession because of his advanced age, and so sent the bridegroom along with another son. The marriage of Narabhupala Shah was thus solemnized on an auspicious day in Khanchi (circa A.D. 1715).

(Note- This description of the marriage of Narabhupala Shah has been given on the basis of his biography written by Khardar Sherman Singh. A marriage solemnized at a distance of a few days' journey used to be known as Kumle. It is still so described at some places. But it is difficult to find the term in Nepali dictionaries).

Narabhupala Shah returned to the royal palace of Gorkha with his wife, Chandraprabhavati. The joy of old King Prithvipati Shah knew no bounds when he saw the beauty and good manners of his daughter-in-law. The royal palace of Gorkha assumed a bright appearance after her arrival.

The Kings of Palpa had enlisted Gulmi Argha and Khanchi as allies and made arrangements for their defence. This was the reason why the King of Palpa, Gandharbha Sen, attended the marriage of Chandraprabha on the invitation of the King of Khanchi. On that occasion, he was impressed by the sturdy physique and disciplined behavior of the Gorkhali youths. King Prithvipati Shah died the year after the marriage of his grandson. Narabhupala Shah then became the King of Gorkha. Gandharbha Sen proposed his daughter's marriage with King Narabhupala Shah. Narabhupala Shah accepted the proposal and married the daughter of Gandharbha Sen (circa A.D. 1717).

(Note-It is possible that Narabhupala Shah married again because of the impertinent behavior of Sultan Shah during his marriage with Chandraprabha, as described by Khardar Sherman Singh).

This matrimonial relationship with the royal family of Palpa enhanced the prestige of Gorkha. The new queen, Kaushalyavati, was probably the grand-daughter of Chandraprabha's paternal aunt.

(Note-According to Khardar Sherman Singh, Kaushalya was the grand-daughter of Chandraprabha's paternal aunt).

Both these princesses were thus wedded to Narabhupala Shah. They completely forgot that they were co-wives, developed a close relationship like that of sisters, and became ideal housewives.

When no child was born to Narabhupala Shah until the age of twenty-three years, he thought it necessary to marry two more wives. He married Buddhimati, a niece of the King of Parbat. Buddhimati was thus his third wife. He also married Subhadravati, who belonged to his maternal uncle's family in Tanahu.

(Note- Sherman Singh has written that even before the conclusion of the second marriage nobles (tharghar) of Gorkha had brought as a dola a princess (maiya) of the Malla King of Parbat, that she was Narabhupala Shah's third wife, and that his fourth wife, also a dola was the daughter of the King of Tanahu. He has not mentioned the names of the Kings of Parbat and Tanahu. But the account given by Dr. Hamilton (p. 245) that Narabhupala Shah was married to the daughter of the sixth son of the King of Malabam (Parbat) appears to be true. Narabhupala Shah's third wife was thus the grand-daughter, and not the daughter, of the King of Parbat. Khardar Serman Singh has not mentioned the name of the King of Tanahu who gave his daughter in marriage to Narabhupala Shah as his fourth wife. She does not appear to have been the daughter of the King of Tanahu, but only a princess of the royal family).

At last, the second queen, Kaushalyavati, gave birth to a son, King Prithvi Narayan Shah, shortly before midnight on January 7, 1723.

(Note- King Prithvi Narayan Shah was born 10 ghati and 19 pala after nightfall on Poush Shukla 1, 1779 Vikrama, that is, January 7, 1723 according to the Gregorian calendar. However, England adopted that calendar only after A.D. 1752, replacing the Julian calendar. In his biography of Prithvi Narayan Shah (p.42), Surya Bikram Gnyawali has given the date of King Prithvi Narayan Shah's birth as December 27, 1722 according to the Julian calendar. However, Pope Gregory XIII had reformed the Julian calendar in A.D. 1582 and extended it by ten days. The Catholic states of Europe had adopted the new calendar in that very year. By the seventeenth century, only two or three protestant states, including Holland, had adopted the Gregorian calendar. England did so in A.D. 1752, but the Tsars of Russia retained the Julian calendar until the end of the first world war. After the fall of the Tsarist regime, Russia too switched over to the Gregorian calendar. The Julian calendar has thus become obsolete throughout the world. In conformity with international practice, the Gregorian calendar has been used in this book. This is the reason why January 7, 1723 has been given as the date of King Prithvi Narayan Shah's birth.

The eldest queen, Chandraprabha, had had no issue by that time, hence a dispute over succession to the throne was likely in the event she gave birth to a son subsequently. In Vijayapur, the sons of the eldest queen of King Harihara Sen had raised objections when he had sought to proclaim his eldest son from his junior queen as heir to the throne. The memory of this event was still fresh, and the King and nobles of Gorkha had made arrangements in advance to forestall such a situation.

Narabhupala Shah, therefore, handed over the child to the care of Chandraprabha immediately Kaushalyavati gave birth to it. He directed that the mother of the Crown Prince should obey the orders of the eldest Queen.

(Note- Queen Rajarajeshwari was designated the guardian, and later the regent, of King Girban Yuddha Bikram Shah. It is possible that this convention started from the time of King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Queen Subarnaprabha became regent when Queen Rajarajeshwari was exiled. When Queen Subarnaprabha visited Gorkha in the capacity of regent, she heard about Chandraprabha, and, in a copper-plate inscription installed at the royal palace in Gorkha, changed her own name to Somaprabha, a synonym of Chandraprabha. This proves that the royal palace in Gorkha became lustrous after the arrival of Chandraprabha, and that she had undertaken the management of the palace, as well as the care and education of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, throughout the lifetime of King Narabhupala Shah).

Kaushalya and the third Queen had become pregnant almost simultaneously. Kaushalya gave birth to Prithvi Narayan Shah after seven months of pregnancy. The survival of a child born in the seventh month of pregnancy was not possible. A child is believed to have been born in the seventh month of pregnancy because some women, though pregnant, continue menstruation for two months. Buddhimati gave birth to Brindakeshara Shah after the birth of Prithvi Narayan Shah, and the question was raised in the palace that the child who was first conceived was entitled to become the heir-apparent. But the question was resolved through the early death of Brindakeshara Shah.

(Note: Khardar Sherman writes: "Subsequently, both the second and third queens became pregnant. The second queen gave birth to a prince after seven months of pregnancy at midnight. The child was named Prithvi Narayan Shah. The third queen also gave birth to a son after the completion of ten months of pregnancy. The child was named Brindakeshara Shah. A dispute arose regarding seniority by birth and in pregnancy. In the meantime, Brindakeshara Shah breathed his last."

Thereafter, the youngest queen, Subhadravati, gave birth to Mahoddamakirti Shah, the second queen, Kaushalyavati, to Dalamardana Shah, Subhadravati to Dalajit Shah, Buddhimati to Surapratapa Shah, and Kaushalyavati again to Prithvipala Shah. However, Prithvipala Shah died soon after or some time before his sacred-thread investiture ceremony. Prithvi Narayan Shah, Mahoddamakirti Shah, Dalamardana Shah, and Surapratapa Shah were known as the five Pandawas.

(Note: This is how Prithvi Narayan Shah has described himself and his brother in Divya Upadesh (p.1). Khardar Sherman Singh has not mentioned the order in which the princes were born. The order as given above is based on other sources).

Narabhupala Shah had five sons also from his Thakuri concubine. The eldest Ranarudra Shah, was famous among them. Several daughters were also born to Narabhupala Shah. Among them, Padma Kumari, born of Kaushalayavati, was famous because she remained unmarried throughout her life, and spent her days in reading and writing within the confines of the Gorkha palace.

(Note: A calendar captioned "Bhaswati" written by Sharangadhara Sharma in 1673 Shaka (A.D. 1751), and presented to Padma Kumari, has been found. The then astrologers used to make calculations on the basis of this calendar. Padma Kumari appears to have been only fifteen years old at that time, because the calendar is believed to have been written twenty-nine years after the birth of King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Registers of thousands of official documents written during the administration of Bahadur Shah have been found at the Records Section (Lagat Phant) under the Finance Ministry. Nearly one hundred documents every year were issued through Padma Kumari. It is said that she remained unmarried throughout her life because she was a dwarf. This seems true).

From his very childhood, Crown Prince Prithvi Narayan Shah was clever, talented, and promising. He was also strong and robust. He started learning the alphabet at the age of five years from Arjyal (Joshi) priests. Gokulavilasa Pande had been the royal priest in Gorkha after Narabhupala Shah was invested with the sacred thread, and the Mishra preceptors had remain neglected. However, the Arjyals (Joshis) remained influential. After Narabhupala Shah was crowned, Rajivalochana Pande brother of Gokulavilasa, had come to Gorkha as a royal priest to put an end to influence of the Arjyals. But since the Arjyal priests had retained the right of teaching the vedas to the Crown Prince at the time of his sacred thread investiture ceremony, Moksheshwara Joshi and Bhanu Joshi were entrusted with the task of initiating the Crown Prince into the alphabet with the consent of Queen Chandraprabha. The Crown Prince was then taught reading-writing and simple arithmetic, as well as the Durga-Kauvacha.

(Note: Though no written evidence has been found in this regard, I believe that Moksheshwara had initiated King Prithvi Narayan Shah into the vedas on the occasion of his sacred thread investiture ceremony, because according to the Bhaktavijaya, written by Lalitaballabha, Masheswara, son of Moksheshwara, had similarly initiated Crown Prince Pratapa Sinha. It is believed that Bhanu Joshi, who was a pupil of Moksheshwara, and an official at the Jaisikotha, was proficient in mathematics, and so taught this subject to the Crown Prince.

(To be continued).
