

NEPAL

(Continued)

— Sylvain Levi

The suspicious and brutal character of Jaya Prakaca deprived him of the fruits of victory. The people of Kirtipur asked him to become their king; the nobles chosen to settle the affair with him gathered together on his invitation. He arrested them with the help of his soldiers and handed over several of them to the executioner, in order to humble or definitively do away with this swarming and boisterous aristocracy that held him in check at Patan. A noble called Danuvanta was paraded in the streets garbed in a woman's clothes with several others dressed in a ridiculous attire; they were afterwards held in long captivity.

The nobility revenged itself by treason. The Thais handed over to Prithi Narayan several of the places of Nepal which depended on Kathmandu. The Gurkha being now convinced of the insufficiency of his forces flattered himself of succeeding by means of famine. He posted troops at all the mountain defiles, to intercept all communications from outside, his orders were carried out strictly. Who-so-ever was found on the road with a little salt or cotton, was hung from a tree. He most cruelly put to death the inhabitants of a village found guilty of having

supplied a little cotton to inhabitants of Nepal; the very woman and children were not spared. It was impossible not to be horror-stricken at the sight of so many hanging from the trees by the roadway. At the same time the intrigue was consuming its work; two thousand Brahmans in the service of the Gurkha king, freely roamed the country buying consciences. At last Prithi Narayan re-appeared before Kirtipur; after a siege of several months, he ordered the town to surrender. The commander of the town, seconded by the approbation of the inhabitants sent him an injurious and insolent reply on the head of an skulls" (Ginesppe).

Immediately afterwards, Prithi Narayan invested Patan. The inhabitants show sign of preparations for resisting. The Gurkhas threaten to cut them, besides the nose and the lips, the right wrist if they do not surrender within five days. A diversion saves the town from these horrors. The British company, solicited by the three Mallas and anxious at the progress of Prithi Narayan, thought the occasion suitable to extend its influence in the mountain. But the country is still badly known. Captain Kinloch who commands the Anglo-Indian detachment, penetrates as far as Hariharpur; the

swollen streams on account of the rainy season bar his progress sweep away the brigades he built; malaria ravages his troops; communications for the supply of victuals fail him (October 1767). He is compelled to retreat in the beginning of December 1767. The Gurkha chronicle naturally represents the failure of Kinloch as a positive Gurkha victory over the English.

Once free from anxiety, Prithi Narayan brings back his troops into Nepal and besieges Kathmandu whilst the Brahmans paid by him win over to their side the principal inhabitants. At last, on the 20th September 1768, whilst the population of Kathmandu was celebrating the Indra-Yatra by feasts and orgies, the Gurkhas penetrate the town in the evening without encountering the least resistance. Jaya Prakasa who was then in the temple of Tulaja spreads powder on the steps, flees to Patan, drags with him king Tejo Simha and both of them escape to Bhatgaon. At the moment when the Gurkhas enter the abandoned temples the gunpowder explodes and kills a great number of the victors. Prithi Narayan orders the feast to continue and receives in the title of king the present (prasada) of the Kumari.

He despatches on the morrow, a messenger to Patan, promises the nobility that he would not touch their properties and even would increase them. To dispel distrust he declares by the medium of his priest that he should happen to turn a perjurer, he would himself call the curse of the gods on his descendants up to five generations. The nobility welcomes him. For several months he manages it, even proposes to it to select a viceroy among its own. Before solemnly entering the town, he orders that the majority of children born should be handed over to him in order to connect them to his court, so he says; in reality he

keeps them as hostages. On the day of the ceremony he orders the arrested of the nobles gathered in a body, and hands them over to the executioner, and also orders the mutilation of the corpses.

Bhatgaon still resisted the three Mallas united in misfortune, remained threatening. A desperate resistance was to be expected; a straggling village, Dhulikhel (Dhaukhel) in the mountain, to the east of Bhatgaon had stopped the Gurkhas for six months. The resistance of Chaukot, in the neighbourhood of Dhulikhel has the beauty of an epic ballad in the Vacmavali. The Gurkhas besieged Chaukot. The people fled some to Pyuthana and some elsewhere. Nam Simha Rai went and found Mahindra Simha Rai, and said to him: we cannot hope to resist the Gurkhas with fifty houses only; the remainder of the population has fled; I come to tell you this. Do not delay; flee quickly. Mahindra Simha treated him as a coward; 'Do not remain for my sake; save your life. I shall repulse the Gurkhas. I shall earn great renown and I shall enjoy my properties in heaven and thereby assure the welfare of my sons and grandsons. He then gathered his faithful companions who also wanted the happiness of the next world and he encouraged them. (The battle was fought; the Gurkhas are repulsed). At last a soldier stepping behind Mahindra Simha, killed him with the blow from a lance; he wounded Nam Simha on the left shoulder with a knife and Nam Simha fell unconscious to the ground. The people of Chaukot fled at this sight and the town was set in flames. In this battle the Gurkhas lost 201 men; on the previous day they had lost 131. Nam Simha Rai, returning to consciousness, saw no Gurkhas around him; he attended to his wound with the cloth of his dress and then fled to Pyuthana through Basdol. He saw Mahindra Simha Rai stretched lifeless on the ground, pierced

from behind with a lance but he had no time to stop.

On the following day, Prithi Narayan inspected the battle field and seeing the lifeless body of Mahindra Simha Rai pierced with blows, he praised his bravery, sent for his parents and told them that he would take under his protection the family of a so brave man. Morning and evening they were fed from the royal kitchen, after this he captured easily the five market-towns of Panauti, Banepa, Nala, Khadpu, Sauga and returned to Nayakot.

Eight months later, he appeared at the gates of Bhatgaon. He had seduced the "Sat Bahalyas" (the seven illegitimate sons of Rana Jit Malla) with beautiful promises; he would leave them the throne, the revenues and would be satisfied with a nominal suzerainty. The troops of the Sat Bahalyas fired blank shots, allowed the Gurkhas to approach within the precincts of the walls and even helped them with munitions. Having penetrated the town very easily, the Gurkhas rushed to the palace. Jaya Prakaca, always energetic and courageous faced the enemy; but a bullet struck him on the foot which placed him hors de combat (incapacitated him). Rana Jit Malla had taken Tibetan mercenaries in his service; but suspecting their fidelity he burnt them alive in their barracks.

Prithi Narayan entered the palace, followed by his companions. At the sight of the three Mallas, they burst out laughing. Gravely Jaya Prakaca said to them: It is the treason of our servants which has done everything; otherwise you would have nothing to laugh about. The Gurkhas then became serious. Prithi Narayan respectfully approached Rana Jit Malla and requested him to keep his kingdom. Rana Jit answered that

he was compelled to submit to the will of the gods and that he only wanted to leave to go to Benares; the treason of the Sat Bahalyas had definitively cured him of the world. He took the road to India and on the pass of the Chandragiri, he turned his eyes for the last time towards his kingdom and pronounced formidable curses against the Sat Bahalyas and their posterity. Then he bade adieu to Tulaja, to Pashupati, to Guhyecvari and descended towards the Ganges.

Prithi Narayan then summoned the seven traitors, publicly reproached them their infamy had their nose cut off and confiscated their goods. Then he enquired for informations of Jaya Prakaca. The king of Kathmandu simply asked to be carried to Pashupati on the spot of the cremation of kings, to die thither. His request was granted; a message of the conqueror even placed at this disposal everything he wished to give as alms. Jaya Prakaca only asked for a parasol and a pair of shoes. At this request which surprised the court, Prithi Narayan became thoughtful; he had well understood that Jaya Prakaca wished by these symbols to become king again, because the parasol marks the royal dignity and the shoes represent the land, spouse of kings. He got on horseback, galloped to Pashupati gave to Jaya Prakaca the parasol and shoes; adding: I give you what you want; do not enjoy it in my lifetime but under my grand-sons lifetime. Jaya Prakaca consented. He died shortly afterwards.

Tejo Nara Simha the king of Patan, grew stubborn in keeping silent. Nothing could decide him to speak; he was locked up in a prison and died in irons. The old mother of Jaya Prakaca, whom age had almost rendered blind, asked like Rana Jit to end her days in Benares. She was allowed to go, but they at first deprived her of a necklace of precious stones which she was wearing, she ended her

days in misery on the banks of the sacred river, the North of the country as far as the defiles of Kirong and Kuri, the South as far as the Terai. Compelled to maintain and enormous

Ruler of Nepal, Prithi Narayan established the capital of the Gurkha kingdom at Kathmandu. But he was not lulled to sleep by success. No sooner was Bhatgaon subdued than he renewed his campaign against the twenty-four king confederates of the seven Gandakis, whom he wanted to eliminate one by one as he had done in Nepal. He at first succeeded by means of his two favourite instruments—war and intrigue. But the king of Tanahung inflicted on him a heavy defeat. Faithful to his method he went to-mend and try his forces elsewhere he proceeded towards the east of Nepal, invaded the country of the Kirata which had so far maintained its independence almost whole and even threatened Sikkim. His troops under the leadership of Kaji Kahar Simha subdued the North of the country as far as the defiles of Kirong and Kuri, the South as far as the Terai. Compelled to maintain and enormous army on the revenues of a fairly poor kingdom, he oppressed the people and especially the merchants who deserted Nepal. He thought of finding compensations on the side of Tibet. He wrote a letter, to the lama asking him to arrange markets of exchanges on the frontier of the two countries; he was disposed to allow the transport of Indian goods, but determined to prohibit the import of glass and curiosities of this nature. He asked Tibet to decline all relations with the Fringhis (Europeans) or the Moghuls and to refuse them admission in the country as he was doing himself. In short he intended remaining like the Mallas before him the supplier of the coined silver of Tibet and he addressed a first dispatch of 2000 rupers stamped in his name. (To be Contd.)