

Ancient and Medieval Nepal

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Licchavi Society

The Licchavi dynasty, like the Malla and the Shah dynasties of a later period in Nepal's history, was founded by immigrants from India who came to Nepal to escape political persecution in the country of their origin. The last known home of the Licchavis was the republic of Vaishali in the Muzaffarpur, Champaran and Darbhanga districts of North Bihar in India. The ancestors of the Licchavi rulers in Nepal were first displaced by the invasion of their republic by the expanding empire of Magadha and subsequently by the Kuṣāna emperors. By the time the rule of the Licchavi dynasty began in Nepal, not only the Licchavi republic of Vaishali, but also the Śākya republic of Kapilavastu and the Videha republic of Mithila, in the areas adjoining Nepal, had already disappeared under the impact of new historical trends and forces released in the wake of rigorous empire building in India.

Politics and Administration

In the plains the Licchavis were known for their republican tradition, but in Nepal they founded a strong monarchy to hold in check the divisive forces of feudalism. Local conditions in Nepal at times necessitated the unique system of dual government described earlier. This does not mean, however, that the Licchavis completely abandoned their republican tradition in Nepal. They initiated a limited measure of local self-government by introducing an institution known as *pāñcālī*. The *pāñcālīs* were representative committees of the village responsible for the administration of local affairs and the collection of the kings' taxes. The members of the *pāñcālī* committees were called

pāñcālikas. Autonomous bodies or trusts known as *goṣṭhī*, reminiscent of the *gūṭhīs* in the later periods of Nepal's history, administered private and public trusts of different kinds. A member of one of these trusts was known as *ḡauṣṭhika*. Hence a participatory system of government by committees and conferences was not entirely unknown in Nepal under the Licchavis.

On the other hand, these institutions of local self-government in Nepal were not allowed to affect the absolute power of the Licchavi monarchs and their co-rulers in any way. The inscriptions state clearly that the king's command was a law unto the people and whoever disobeyed it would be very strictly dealt with.

The administration of the state was fairly well-organised. The smallest unit of administration was the village (*grāma*) and the largest unit was probably the province (*pradeśa*). Between them there were intermediate territorial and administrative units such as the city (*pūra*), *tala*, *draṅga*, *janapada*, *koṭṭa*, all of which implied a graded collection of villages or a city. Government departments and legal offices were in all probability called *adhikaraṇa* and *karana*.

The king who was called 'The Revered King of Kings' (*bhaṭṭāraka mahārājadhirāja*) was the highest executive officer of the state. Monarchy was based on some kind of theory of divine right, as the monarch claimed to rule over his fellow beings an incarnation of Narayana and by the favour of Lord Pashupati or Shiva. Unlike that of some of the republican peoples, such as the Śākya who had an elected monarchy, the Licchavi monarchy in Nepal was purely hereditary. The next office in the hierarchy of the state was that of the crown prince (*yuvarāja*) and he often appeared as witness (*dūtaka*) to the royal inscriptions. The king's other sons and relatives performed such state duties as witnesses to royal acts (*dūtaka*), commanders of the army (*baladhyakṣya*) or state counselors (*vārtta*). Since justice and morality were associated with religion, the judges of the civil and criminal courts were called 'Religious-authorities' (*dharmādhikāra*), and the state minister for religious affairs was known as *dharmarājikāmātya*. Other important members of the official hierarchy mentioned in the Licchavi inscriptions are the Minister of the Crown Prince (*kumāramātya*), the Chamberlain of the Palace (*pratihāra*), the Commander in Chief who was also responsible for imposing penalties for legal and state offenses (*sarvadaṇḍanāyaka pratihāra*). Lesser officials such as *adhikṛta*, *ayukta*, *daṇḍanāyaka*, *dauvārika*, are also mentioned. Though the precise functions of these officials are not known, the specific names indicate that there was a classification of their functions and duties and that the government machinery was well integrated. In our

present state of knowledge we cannot elaborate on the actual working of the state machinery.¹

Economic Conditions

The people of Nepal were a prosperous agricultural and trading community during the Licchavi period. Land and agriculture were the main bases of the economy. Inscriptions yield information about two land measures in use at the time: *bhūmi* and *mānika*. The present day Newari *bhū*, which is equivalent to two acres of land, is probably derived from the *bhūmi* of the Licchavi period. Government officers and public institutions, monasteries and temples depended on income from land-grants for their support. The main function of the popular village committees or *goṣṭhis* seems to have been the support of religious leaders and religious rituals (*bhagavad vāsūdeva brāhmaṇa goṣṭhi*, *indra g.*, *dhvaja g.*, *pradipa g.*, *dhupa g.*, etc.). Though some of them provided support for more social works such as the 'Water Supply Committee' (*pāniya praṇālī g.*), it is not clear from the inscriptions whether they were used for all-round village development.

Taxes of various kinds are mentioned. The king received his share: one sixth, one-eighth or one-twelfth of the agriculture produce from the land, depending on the productivity of the land. This tax was known as *bhāga-bhoga-kara*. In addition to land revenue, taxes either in kind or in cash were levied on such things as jars of oil, earthen pots, firewood, textiles, onions and garlic, fish and animals like pigs and sheep. Except in one or two cases the rate of taxation is not known. A tax of one *kārṣāpana* was levied on rams and later reduced to four *paṇas*. (One *kārṣāpana* was equal to sixteen copper *paṇas*.) Two kinds of forced labour are mentioned (*bhoṭṭa viṣṭi* and *phalañju viṣṭi*). What this forced labour was used for is not clear except that the first certainly involved portage.²

At this time Nepal was also a thriving centre for trade and handicrafts. It was involved in the profitable entrepot trade between India and Tibet. Waterproof blankets of a black colour from Nepal, known as *bhīngi*, were prized in India, and handmade paper from Nepal was India's choice import. Other imports included musk and orpiment. The prevalence of a tax known as the 'Indigo Tax' (*nailyakara*) indicates that dyeing was a

¹ The best explanation in English of the Licchavi administrative, land and taxation terms is contained in Prayag Raj Sharma, 'The Land System of the Licchavis in Nepal', *Kailash* (1983) X, 1-2:11-62.

² *Ibid.* p.38.

home industry of some kind. The merchants or commercial class must have been quite affluent as is shown by an inscription of the time of Mānadeva I. The inscription on the pedestal of an image of the sun-god mentions one Guhamitra as the leader of the business community. Trading was certainly not considered to be a disreputable profession.

The Licchavi period has yielded a variety of coins, though they are limited in quantity. Mānadeva I was the first to circulate his own coins called *mānāṅkas* with a lion on the obverse and an image of the goddess Lakshmi on the reverse. The next group of coins that has come to light comprises coins known as *guṇāṅkas* which bear a female image on the obverse and an elephant on the reverse. According to the Nepali historian Baburam Acarya, the *guṇāṅka* coins were struck by Mānadeva I himself. However, some other Nepali historians have, on the basis of these coins, posited a king by the name of Guṇakāmadeva who possibly succeeded Gaṇadeva. Aṃśuvarman's coins bear the image of lions in different postures and sometimes with wings. The coin of a lesser ruler, Jīṣṇu Gupta, is of high artistic merit and bears the image of a winged horse, or possibly lion, with a trident which looks like a thunderbolt. Other coins of the Licchavi period called *paśupati* and *vaiśravaṇa* coins are not named after any kings. They yield a rich variety of iconographic features. Some writers have pointed out a similarity between the Licchavi coins and the Kuśāna, Yaudheya and Gupta coins. However these latter have no real resemblance to the former. Unlike the Indian coins, the Licchavi coins do not bear any monograph or mint-marks but are punch-marked. They also differ vastly in iconographic features except for the common gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon like Lakshmi, Shiva and Kuvera and some of the fixed traditional symbols associated with each of these. So far only copper coins from the Licchavi period have been discovered, but inscriptions give indications that gold and silver coins were also in circulation during the Licchavi period. The standard measures of money or currency in use were: *kārṣāpaṇa*, *purāṇa*, *paṇa*, *paṇapurna*. One *kārṣāpaṇa* was equivalent to sixteen *paṇas*.

Social and Religious Conditions

The Licchavis were considered to be an inferior kind of Kṣatriya by the 'pure' Kṣatriyas in the plains. The indigenous people of Nepal were originally a non-Hindu, casteless community which, initially subject to Shaiva and Vaishnava influence, was eventually overwhelmed by the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism from the India of the Kuśānas just before the advent of the Licchavis. The caste system, based on the four classes (*varṇa*) or broad classifications of labour in society did not make much headway in Licchavi Nepal among these people. However, some ambitious kings like Aṃśuvarman, Śivadeva II and Jayadeva II tried their best to enforce the rule of occupation according to the caste of the people.

Men and women enjoyed equal status in performing religious and social duties. Women also set up religious trusts and images as their tribute to the memory of their deceased relatives. Since even widows made donations of land for religious purposes in their own names, it would appear that women possessed the right to landed property. Polygamy was prevalent among the upper classes and the rulers. Manadeva I had three wives who each followed their own inclinations in matters of religious worship. *Sati*, or the practice of burning oneself with the dead body of one's husband, was not entirely unknown, but was rarely performed. Mānadeva's mother, Rājyavati, herself did not perform *sati* after her husband, King Dharmadeva, died. Inscriptions reveal instances of widow remarriage and divorce. Among the poorer people, women publicly worked for a living. The women of the well-to-do classes were probably educated, since one of the inscriptions refers to Mānadeva's daughter as having been 'proficient in all arts'. Men devoted to the pursuit of knowledge were patronized through a public institution called *agrahara* supported by tax-free property and managed by organizations of Brahman scholars or Buddhist monks (*āryabhikṣu saṅgha*).

The earliest settlers in the Kathmandu valley were a non-Aryan people as attested to by the large number of places in the Licchavi inscriptions with non-Sanskrit names. The still current Newari names for the three cities of the Valley: Ye (Kathmandu), Yala (Patan), Khopva (Bhaktapur) trace their origins back to this early period. In the chronicles the Kirātas, who are supposed to be the first people to exercise supremacy in the Valley, have non-Aryan names such as Stangko, Yelambar, etc.

The oldest religion of the Kathmandu Valley seems to be related to a non-Aryan cult of the 'Lord of the Animals' (*paśupati*) who later became identified as Shiva. It appears that the earliest people practised a religion closely related to the later cult of the Paśupatas, but unfortunately the relics of the pre-Aryan period have not yet been unearthed, nor is there any reference to them in the inscriptions of the Licchavi period. Therefore, there is so far no way of tracing the growth of the pre-Aryan culture and its assimilation of later elements. Nepal then was subject to the influence of the pre-Aryan cult of Pashupati and subsequently to Mahāyāna Buddhism under the Kuṣāṇa influence to the exclusion of the Brahmanical tradition. The Bharasivas and Bakatakas, who ousted the Kuṣāṇas, must have introduced Shaivism in the form of a revival. Shaivism became the prevailing religion because several sects and subsects of the cult of Pashupati had been known in Nepal for a long time.

Although Shaivism was the religion of most of the rulers (with the exception of Mānadeva I, who was personally more devoted to Vishnu), Vaishnavism, Buddhism and the Śakta worship of the cosmic goddess were in vogue. Both the rulers and the people possessed a highly liberal outlook on religion. Amśuvarman adopted Shiva or Pashupati

as his guardian deity, and his successors to the throne followed the precedent set by him. However, all of them also looked after Buddhist monasteries and nunneries. Religious temples and institutions were not merely the concern of the rulers and the state, even ordinary people took an interest in them.

Hence, during the time of the Licchavis and their successors (ca. A.D. 400-880) Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Buddhism were known in the Valley, but Shaivism was still the prevailing religion. Perhaps Shaivism owed its popularity to its link with the practices of the non-Aryan cult of Pashupati in the distant past. Pashupati has been acknowledged as the guardian deity of the country by every ruler since Amśuvarman (A.D. 604-620). Several later sects and subsects of the Paśupata cult, like the Lakulisa Pasupata sect, the Muṇḍāśrīṅkhalika Paśupata sect, the Śrīṅkhalika Paśupata sect and the Dānaśrīṅkhalika Paśupata sect became prevalent in ancient Nepal. Mahāyāna Buddhism, with its emphasis on human compassion as manifest in the ideal of the *bodhisattva* who foregoes his state of *nirvāṇa* to be of service to suffering humanity, gradually gained ground over the Hīnayāna or Lesser Vehicle with its stress on cold reason and logic and on purity of character and austerity of life. The Śakta cult, or the worship of the mother goddess, was known even in the Licchavi period. The image of Palanchok Bhagavati set up by Mānadeva I's wife and also the images of Naxal Bhagavati, Sobhābhagavati antedate the medieval period of Nepal's history.

The Soma Siddhānta sect, practising moon-Shiva worship was also in vogue prior to the medieval period, but much more popular was the Sūrya Sampradaya, or the sect that practised sun-worship. A stone image of the sun, in the form of Indra, was set up by a person called Guhamitra in the Licchavi period and reminds one of the strong Kuṣāṇa influence.

Vaisnavism, the mild Hindu cult of the worship of Vishnu as the preserver of life and the universe, was also prevalent. Similarity in the devotional aspects of Vaishnavism and Buddhism may have initially combined the followers of these two sects against the Shaivas, or the adherents of the Shaiva cult. The adherents of the Paśupata cult kept long, uncut hair and followed a more vigorous and spectacular life of renunciation, wearing bark garments and sporting long flowing chains of human skulls.

One also notes that the rulers and the general public of the Licchavi period experimented in religious matters. One such example is that of the Hari-Hara cult. An inscription found standing near the Pashupati temple dated A.D. 565 records the installation of a Hari-Hara image by one government officer called Svāmi Vārta who seems to be closely associated with the then co-ruler Bhūmma Gupta. Such an early example of a Hari-Hara image is not found even in India.

Religious antagonism of any sort was not evident among the adherents of the different religious sects. This can be deduced from the fact that not only father and sons of the same ruling line worshipped deities of the different sects according to their personal preferences, but their wives were themselves free to worship any deity they chose. Temples and monasteries of the Shaiva, Vaishnava and Buddhist sects were subsidized by the rulers without discrimination. Hence tolerance was the policy of the rulers and the general public alike. Nepal was internationally known for this, for it is remarked by the famous Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang in his memoirs.

Architecture

The Licchavi period is known for its architectural and sculptural achievements. Mānadeva I (A.D. 464-505), Amśuvarman (A.D. 604-620) and Narendradeva (A.D. 642-678), the three leading rulers of the period, put up magnificent buildings which served both as their personal residences and as the seats of their governments. These public palaces, known as Mānagrha, Kailāskūṭa Bhavana, and Bhadrādhivāsa Bhavana were built by Mānadeva I, Amśuvarman and Narendradeva respectively. No trace of these buildings remains today, and historians do not even agree on the site of these buildings. According to some historians, Mānagrha was situated at Madhyalākhu near Deopatan in the Pashupatinath area, and Kailāskūṭa Bhavana at Hadigaun near Tangal in Kathmandu. Others think that Kailāskūṭa Bhavana was located between Deopatan and the Pashupatinath temple. While others place Kailāskūṭa Bhavana just a short distance south of the present Hanuman Dhoka in Kathmandu. Although these buildings, constructed primarily of brick, mortar and wood, could not stand the wear and tear of nature over the centuries, references to them in contemporary inscriptions and in the Tang Annals leave no doubt about their existence. The Chinese sources give a detailed description of the artistic and decorative features of Narendradeva's palace, Bhadrādhivāsa.

Sculpture

The indigenous people of the Kathmandu Valley worshipped stones in their natural shapes as divinities. But the numinous stones failed to awaken the visual imagination of the people or inspire in their minds a sense of artistic restraint, proportion and symmetry. The figures and forms of the gods came from India together with the tools and techniques of their manufacture. The rough and unhewn stone was rooted in the soil of the Kathmandu Valley, which was once the bottom of a lake.

Balbala, the legendary hero of agriculture and sculpture in Nepal, was the first person to break ground for the purpose of cultivation. He was also the first to create an image of himself in stone. The legend of Balbala, 'the stutterer', though ignored by the chronicles admirably fits into the misty, pre-agricultural era as Balbala's sad tale shows how reluctant and hesitant the indigenous inhabitants of the Valley were to chip a stone or dig up the soil for fear of violating the mother goddess of earth.

The change from a pastoral life to an agricultural one corresponded to the change from the use of an unhewn stone to that of the complex organization of the relief of a stele or sculpture in the round. This transition is reflected in the legend of Balbala who is said to have lived during the reign of Vṛṣadeva or shortly before that time. According to the legends, Balbala's statue of himself set the fashion for sculpture in Nepal. At the same time, it is said that King Vṛṣadeva, like his ancestors, set up images of the Buddha and of Avalokiteśvara.

Concrete evidence of the change wrought by Balbala, 'The Stutterer', however, does not appear in the Kathmandu Valley until the time of King Mānadeva I. Two of the relief steles set up by him are images of Vishnu dated A.D. 467. One of these images, which used to be at Lazimpat, is now in the National Museum, Kathmandu, and the other one is at its original site in the area of the Pashupatinath temple. Although these two images bear the same date in their inscriptions, the one in the National Museum is the more elegant and sophisticated of the two. The massive stone figure of Vaineteṃya, or the mythical sun-bird Garuḁa, at Changunarayan, is also an example of early sculpture of the fifth century A.D.

A remarkable limestone statue of a royal personage at Mṛgasthālī, Pashupati, perhaps slightly antedates the above two images of Vishnu Vikranta, i.e. Vishnu in the extended posture. Portrait statues have an important place in Indian art. The grand statue of the Kuṣāṇa Emperor Kaniṣka of the first century A.D. is an outstanding example of Indian sculpture. Indian Kuṣāṇa coins, available in Nepal, also display portraits of kings, but the statue of a king at Mṛgasthālī has Nepali physiognomical features. As pointed out by Dr. Stella Kramrisch, its facial features are mongoloid and more like those of a child but also show the same kind of determination as the kings' faces in pre-Khmer sculpture.³

The image of Vishnu in his manifestation as the wild boar at Dhumvarahi is also said to belong to the fifth century A.D. Three other pieces of Vaishnava sculpture of the

³ Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal* (Asia House Gallery, 1964), p. 23.

Licchavi period that deserve mention are the image of Vishnu mounted on Garuḍa, the mythical sun-bird, the image of Vishnu mentioned in a Jīṣṇu Gupta inscription of the seventh century and the image of Vishnu lying supine in a pool of water at Budhanilakantha outside of Kathmandu.

The Licchavis were themselves followers of Vaishṇavism but they did not discourage Buddhism or Shaivism. Remarkable among the masterpieces of Licchavi sculpture of the fifth Century A.D. is an individual image of the Buddha, half-buried in the sands, on the bank of the Bagmati river in the vicinity of the Pashupatinath temple. In the same area, on the left bank of the Bagmati River and half-buried in the ground, is a lovely one-faced (*ekamukha*) Shivalinga. The exquisitely carved face of Shiva resembles the Buddha's face in its infinite serenity and purity.

There is evidence of Nepal's contact with the Indian schools of sculpture in Mathura and Central India during the fifth and sixth centuries. However, we do not know how these contacts came about. Dr. Stella Kramrisch, however, has rightly noted that 'traits of these several Indian schools mingle in Nepal, but whichever components prevail they are is subsumed to a whole which is Nepali'.⁴

By the seventh century, the Deccan and Western India had left their permanent mark on Indian tradition in art and sculpture. Nepali sculpture also displays some features of the Aurangabad cave sculpture and the western Indian school of North Gujarat (*samalaji*).

The sculptured figures of 'pilgrims in the mountains' near Katesimbhu at Kathmandu are of the seventh century A.D. These figures are set against rugged cubist configurations which represent rocks and symbolic nature. This is in keeping with the pattern evolved in India over a millennium from the time of Barhut. Dr. Kramrisch takes special notice of a 'loving presentation of children and flowers' and states that Nepali sculpture has excelled in the creation of images of childhood in many figures of nameless children. The flying celestial beings (*vidyadhara*) in Nepali sculpture are not charismatic youth heroes nor the flying angelic *devatas* of Indian reliefs, but 'children of god' (*devaputra*) who know how to fly.⁵ Near the old palace at Kathmandu there is a piece of Nepali sculpture which dates back to the seventh century and shows the subjugation of the serpent Kaliya by Krishna. The godlike Krishna, who subjugates the serpent in this sculpture, is a child and not an adolescent as in Indian sculpture.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 24.

Images of the Buddha and the *bodhisattva* Padmapāṇi dating from the seventh century are found at Lagan and at Dhvākā Bāhā in Kathmandu. They are carved between pilasters in niches that face the compass points. These pilasters and niches stand on a pedestal which lends support to the *stūpa*. In architectural setting, they are related to the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh in Uttar Pradesh, India. Although the latter is more detailed and sophisticated than the Nepali specimens mentioned above, the modeling of the images at Dhvākā Bāhā strengthens the purity of the contour through suppression of details. Among the Buddhist religious images of the Licchavi era mention must also be made of the image of Bhagavat Avalokiteśvara at Patan and the small caityas or *stūpas* of Chabel among others.

Although the worship of a goddess as Śakti, or the source of power, had not attained the same measure of popularity as it did during the medieval years, statues of goddesses were not unknown during the Licchavi period. Bhagavati literally means a goddess and implies the female counterpart of Shiva, i.e. Pārvatī in her different manifestations as Dūrgā, Kālī, etc. While nothing definite can be stated about the images of this goddess, known as Dakṣinkālī at Pharping, Sobhābhagavatī at Vijeshvari and Bhagavatī at Naxal, there is no doubt that an image of Bhagavati was set up at Palanchok in the Licchavi period. According to an inscription in the last-named temple, the image was put up by Vijayaswāminī in A.D. 505. It is perhaps the oldest image of a goddess in Nepal and represents the first specimen of the Śakta cult which later became dominant.

The early part of the seventh century was characterized by great sculptural achievements in Nepal as in India. The masterpieces of this period provided inspiration for Nepali sculptors for the next five hundred years. From the second half of the seventh century onwards, both Hindu and Buddhist cult images became very popular in Nepal. They often consist of three images in which the figure of the main deity, recognised by virtue of its size and central position, dominates the other two minor figures. The figure of Vishnu, accompanied by Lakshmi and Garuda in their standing position, is the typical Hindu version. The Buddhist counterpart is the figure of Avalokitesvara accompanied by two worshipping female guardian deities (*yakṣiṇi*) on their knees. The image of Vishnu Śrīdhara (of the ninth century) at Changunarayan is another example of the Hindu type, while the image of Padmapāṇi Lokeśvara, dating from the end of the seventh or the early eighth century, near Yampī Bahī in Patan affords an illustration of the Buddhist type. Among the Buddhist cult images dating from before A.D. 800, the image of Padmapāṇi Lokeśvara at Sigha Bāhā, Kathesimbu in Kathmandu may also be mentioned. The black limestone statue of Māya Devī, Buddha's mother, at Sundhara in Deopatan is more sophisticated than the image of Padmapāṇi at Sigha Bāhā and is reminiscent of the forms of Gaurī and the Yakṣiṇis from Mathura.

Vishnu was not the only Hindu god to receive homage from Nepali sculptors, Shiva also came in for his share. There are an array of representations of Umā-Maheśvara depicting the great lord together with his consort Umā and attendants. The image of Umā-Maheśvara at Nagal Tole in Kathmandu belongs to the eighth or ninth century and displays a complex iconography which blends the contemporary Deccan influences, such as those of Ellora, with central and northern Indian motifs. It is interesting to note that the eastern school of Indian art did not contribute anything to this kind of image, despite the fact that this school sent its manuscripts and artists to Nepal from about the year A.D. 1000. In the images of the eastern school, Umā sits on the lap of the god, but in the Nepali cult image Shiva embraces with his hand the goddess who sits next to him and rests her hand on his leg. Similarly, in the Umā-Maheśvara bronze of Nepal of the eighth-ninth century, which is kept in the Baroda Museum and picture gallery in India, Umā is not seated on the lap of the god. However, one image of the Shiva family at Patan, which shows Pārvatī seated on the left thigh of Shiva who has his left leg bent as in a posture of sitting cross-legged, is typical of the eastern school of Indian art. Exquisitely wrought and chiseled Shivalingas and Vaishnava pillars with Vishnu seated on his traditional mount Garuda, the royal eagle, are frequently encountered and include some outstanding examples of the Licchavi tradition in sculpture.

During the rule of the Pala dynasty (A.D. 750-1150) in eastern India, bronzes made in Nalanda were sent to Nepal where they were recast in the Nepali style as is attested by the aforementioned Umā-Maheśvara bronze. In the eleventh century, Nalanda was replaced by Vikramasila as the centre of the Buddhist religion and studies. The Nepali bronzes of this period, in the opinion of Dr. Kramrisch, parallels the phases of Pala sculpture but also tend to borrow from the ornate maturity of the Sena sculpture a delicacy of feeling which is lacking in the East Indian bronzes. The Nepali bronzes, however, excel those of the subsequent Sena dynasty in Eastern India.⁶

Nepali sculpture draws on the resources of India and on its own none-too-well established tradition but seems to gather momentum as it proceeds from one work to another. Dr. Kramrisch has analysed the process in the following terms:

Confirmed in its own ways, a local tradition tests its strength against the inflowing Indian types. Transplanted into the body of Nepali art, their cumulative combinations and exchanges are part of its substance and are transformed with it, while one or the other motif is carried along as a residual shape in a new context. Eclecticism and conscious borrowing are part of this process.... The art of Nepal is

⁶ *Ibid* p. 40.

not a regional school of Indian art. It is on the receiving end of a one-way traffic. No art forms flow from Nepal to India, they stay in the mountain kingdom having received the impress of their makers, the Newars.⁷

Bronze sculptures and sculptures cast in other metals were also made in the Licchavi period. However specimens from this period have become rare. Some of these rare pieces have been smuggled out of the country. One such sculpture is an image of the Buddha which is inscribed and dated with a date corresponding to A.D. 591.

A lovely copper image of a goddess standing on a lotus pedestal *mahābhujapīṭha*, reproduced in Dr. Stella Kramrisch's book, *The Art of Nepal*, belongs to the seventh century and is a fine specimen of Nepali art in Metal statuary.⁸ This shows that metal statuary was not merely keeping pace with stone sculpture during the seventh century but actually surpassed it. In this connection, the metal image of the Buddha, discovered for the first time by Dr. Balaram Das, and dated between the fifth and the sixth century A.D., may also be mentioned.

Terracotta was another avenue used by the artists of this time to express their artistic skills. Some specimens of their art have been recovered during trial archaeological excavations done at two sites within the Kathmandu Valley.

Literature

Sanskrit was the court and literary language of Nepal during the Licchavi period. It was used in inscriptions and royal edicts of the time. The quality and standard of the Sanskrit verse inscribed on the stone-slabs are proof of the literary and intellectual achievement of the Licchavis, which equaled the aesthetic success in the field of architecture and sculpture. The Licchavi period has accurately been described by historians as the 'Golden Age' of Nepali history.

Nepal, along with India, made contributions to the renaissance in Tibet both in the time of the Licchavi King Narendradeva and subsequently. Tibetan kings and abbots employed Nepali teachers of Buddhism to copy Buddhist religious manuscripts and also to translate them into Tibetan from Sanskrit. Nepali artists and architects were hired to build the *stūpas* and monasteries and to decorate them with paintings and murals.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 26.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Teachers like Śīla Mañjuśrī and Buddhakīrti, of the Licchavi era, rendered as much service to the cause of religious reform and revival in Tibet as did Śāntarakṣita, Padmasambhava and Atiśa of the early medieval period.

THE DAWN OF THE MEDIEVAL ERA (880-1200)

In view of the confusion about the so-called Thakuri dynasty in the ancient and medieval history of Nepal, a few words about it may not be out of place here. In the works on the history of Nepal, the term 'thakuri' is applied to three sets of rulers during the Licchavi and period and the following periods: The first set of rulers from Amsuvarman (A.D. 605-1043), the Thakuris of Nuwakot (c. A.D. 1043-1082), and the Thakuris of Patan (c. A.D. 1082-1200). Since the Thakuris of Patan and those of Nuwakot overlap and alternate on the throne, the above classification is not of much service.

Moreover, in view of the fact that the Licchavis were of the Sun Dynasty (*sūryavamśī*), the pre-Malla rulers, from A.D. 879 through 1200, who are said to have belonged to the Thakuri dynasty, may as well be regarded as the later Licchavis. The term 'Thakuri' does not occur in the earlier chronicles which use the word '*sūryavamśī*'. But the epithet '*sūryavamśī*' would apply to the Mallas also, as they too claimed solar descent. However, the later Nepali chronicles of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries used the term 'Thakuri' to distinguish the predecessors of the Mallas from both the Licchavis and the Mallas. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there had arisen a general impression that rulers everywhere in Nepal as well as in India were Thakuris or Thakurs. In fact the term has long been used in the hills to denote anyone who claimed Rajput descent. Hence to call the kings between the Licchavi and Malla periods 'Thakuri' and to refer to the period as the 'Thakuri Period' is neither very accurate nor informative. Mary Slusser in her work on the cultural history of the Valley has called the period 'The Transitional Period'⁹ and Petech in his revised edition has adopted the same term.¹⁰

⁹ Mary S. Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley* (Princeton, 1982), p. 41 ff.

¹⁰ Luciano Petech *Mediaeval History of Nepal*, Second Edition (Roma, 1984), p. 31 ff. Petech's first edition (1958) was a pioneering work on this period. Since that time considerable primary research has been done on the period by a variety of Nepalese scholars and published in Nepali in a number of different periodicals. Both Petech in his second edition and Slusser in her book have made full use of this new material, and hence both have made a significant contribution to Nepalese history by collecting and integrating this new material into a single volume in English and making it available to a larger public.

However, a transitional period of over 300 years sounds strange indeed and would seem to indicate a transition from one clear-cut situation to another which is not at all the case.

The early medieval history of Nepal is full of confusion. The duplication of names within the same chronicle, together with the divergence of names and their order in different chronicles makes the confusion worse. There are different versions of the names of the successors of the Licchavis or the later Licchavis. For example, the *Gopālarājavamśāvalī* and the chronicle used by Kirkpatrick, mention Raghavadeva, who is said to have founded the Newari or Nepal Era (*Nepāl Samvat*) on 20 October 879 A.D. The era did indeed begin on this date, but the name of this king does not occur in the genealogical lists given in the chronicles used by Daniel Wright, Bhagavanlal Indrajī, Sylvain Levi, and Cecil Bendall. It does not occur in the later Sanskrit chronicles nor in the Nepali chronicles which have been more recently published.

We have only two historical documents, both confirming the reign of Sankaradeva, for the first few kings of this period. The most reliable chronicles the *Gopālarājavamśāvalī* and the chronicle used by Kirkpatrick give different lists, but the above two documents have shown that the one used by Kirkpatrick is the correct one. The first king was Rāghavadeva who founded the new era in A.D. 879. He was followed by Śankaradeva who was ruling in A.D. 920. He was in turn followed by Sahadeva and Vikramadeva. After Vikramadeva the order of succession is clear from contemporary documents, i.e. manuscript colophons and inscriptions.¹¹

The next king is Gunakāmadeva who ruled from about A.D.980 to 998. Both the *Gopālarājavamśāvalī* and the chronicle used by Kirkpatrick give this king an impossibly long reign of 85 years and 6 months. He certainly was no longer ruling by the end of the year 998 and his reign cannot have started much earlier than 980. The long reign perhaps relates to the very high profile he has in Nepal's history of this period; he is a dominant figure in a line of shadowy and insignificant kings. According to the later chronicles he founded the city of Kathmandu¹² and made lavish donations to the temple of Pashupatinath. In the oral tradition almost anything really old is ascribed to Gunakāmadeva.

A manuscript colophon of the year A.D. 889-90 notes that in that year Gunakāmadeva 'established his sole rule'.¹³ This implies that up to this point he shared

¹¹ Petech, p. 32.

¹² Deviprasad Lamsal, ed., *Bhāṣā Vamśāvalī*, Part II (Kathmandu, National Library), p. 32.

¹³ Petech, p. 33.

the rule with someone else. This points to a phenomenon which occurs repeatedly in this period known as *dvairājya* (or *dvirājyaka* in the Nepali documents), some sort of joint rule. Two types of joint rule are known in Sanskrit literature. It could mean the joint rule of two kings, of equal rank, each ruling over one half of a kingdom which was still considered to be one kingdom. In this case one half of the kingdom could in turn be ruled jointly by two kings. The other type of joint rule consisted of co-rulership by two kings on the throne without involving a partition of the kingdom. This type is clearly attested to in some of the situations of this period where we find the term *ubhayarājya* 'joint-rule'. Though Guṇakāmadeva put an end to this double rule, it was revived after his death by Narendradeva (c. A.D. 998-999) and Udayadeva (c.998-1004), in this case a true joint-rule (*ubhayarājya*). These two are followed by three overlapping kings: Nirbhayadeva (c. 1004-1009), Rudradeva (c. 1007-1028) and Bhojadeva (c.1009-1020). There are seven documents from this period which sketch a very complicated situation. Petech speculates that this is what happened:

Nirbhayadeva succeeded Udayadeva. In 1005 he was alone on the throne; then about 1008 he took as colleague Rudradeva. Nirbhayadeva died a few years later. Rudradeva's grand-nephew Bhojadeva proclaimed himself king at Kathmandu at some time before 1011; but in 1012 and 1015 he recognized again Rudradeva as his senior partner. Both reigned at Patan, while in 1015 Lakṣmikāmadeva ruled the other half of the Kingdom (perhaps from Kathmandu). Then Bhojadeva disappeared, and in 1028 Rudradeva was reigning alone in his share of the kingdom, which after his death was taken over by Lakṣmikāmadeva.¹⁴

Lakṣmikāmadeva ruled from about A.D. 1010 to 1041. The *Gopālarāja Vamśāvalī* credits Lakṣmikāmadeva with bringing peace to the country after a struggle. This may refer to a unification of the two half kingdoms. However, peace did not last. A manuscript copied in A.D. 1039 refers to a great war raging in Bhaktapur.¹⁵

The chronicles refer to the next king by different names: Vijayadeva, Jayadeva and Jayakāmadeva. We have no contemporary documents referring to his rule but he must have ruled from about A.D. 1030 until 1037. Petech speculates that perhaps he was a sort of junior king under Lakṣmikāmadeva who eventually deposed him. Later after the civil war of 1039 referred to above, he reappears in collaboration with Lakṣmikāmadeva's successor Bhāskaradeva (c. 1039-1048).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Bhāskaradeva seems to have been the sole ruler for the last few years of his reign, but his reign was followed by the joint rule of Baladeva (c. 1048-1060) and Yiśadeva (c. 1048-1049). Yiśadeva's role in this partnership was short lived and for most of his reign Bhāskaradeva ruled alone. This reign also seems to have been the last example of joint or divided rule.

Bhāskaradeva was succeeded by Pradyumnakāmadeva (c. 1060-1066) and Nāgārjunadeva (c. 1066-1069). Next came Śaṅkaradeva (c. 1069-1082) who seems to have been a ruler of some stature. The *Gopālarājavamśavali* credits him with making an image of Śaṅkeśvara at Naxal and completing a temple there. Above all, he kept the country at peace. But the peace was short lived. According to the chronicles Śaṅkaradeva was expelled by Vāmadeva (1082-1085), a descendant of Aṃśuvarman through a side line who became king with the help of the Thakuris of Thankot, Patan and Kathmandu. Harṣadeva (c. 1085-1098) succeeded Vāmadeva. Harṣadeva was a weak king and his reign ushered in a period of disorder and instability.

Entry of Nānyadeva into Nepal's History

Towards the end of the eleventh century, a new ruler came into power and prominence in Tirhut, which adjoins Nepal's boundary in the south. His name was Nānyadeva. Nānyadeva's family were originally from Karnataka like the family of Vijaya Sena, Nānyadeva's contemporary and founder of the Sena dynasty in Bengal. The emergence of southern rulers in northern India is attributed to the military expeditions of the Chalukya Kings Someśvara I and Vikramāditya VI. At the beginning of his career Nānyadeva was merely a local feudal chief (*mahāsāmantādhipati*). In A.D. 1097 he proclaimed himself king and founded a new capital at Simraungarh (in the present Nepal tarai). At some date, that is now unknown, he invaded Nepal.

The later Nepal chronicles refer to him as a prince of Karnataka who came north in A.D. 889 [sic], entered Nepal, conquered it, dethroning two of the Malla kings whom he forced to flee to the plains, and established his court at Bhaktapur. This whole account is, as Professor Petech says, 'a tissue of chronological absurdities (including the names of non-existing kings)'¹⁶ which was first fabricated by the late Malla kings to claim descent from Nānyadeva. However, it led many astray. Levi believed in Nānyadeva's conquest of Nepal on the authority of these late chronicles. Indian historians of repute, such as Dr. R. C. Majumdar and Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhury took their cue from Levi.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

The rulers of Simraungarh are referred to in the *Gopālarāja-vaṃśāvalī* under the name of the Ḍoya, i.e. the people of Tirhut. The first reference to them is under the date of 27th August 1111 when one Śrī Naramalladeva cut to pieces the Ḍoya. Naramalladeva must have been a local chieftain, but what is clear from the reference is that Nānyadeva did raid Nepal and may have even entered the Valley but was defeated and driven back to Tirhut. Further raids are referred to in the time of the Malla kings, but the Ḍoya never conquered the Valley.

The arguments against Nānyadeva's conquest of Nepal may be briefly summed up as follows: The Nepali kings are found ruling undisturbed at the time when they are supposed to have been under attack from Nānyadeva; genealogical and chronological difficulties arise if one accepts Nānyadeva as the founder of a new dynasty in Nepal; there is a dearth of contemporary evidence to support these claims.¹⁷

To return to our narrative, the anarchy which followed Harṣadeva's reign resulted in the temporary rise of independent feudatories. These included Rāmadeva of Dhavalaśrotri of mid-Western Nepal. Rāmadeva seems to have claimed absolute independence but soon had to retreat from this position.

The period of chaos and uncertainty came to an end with the revival of the old dynasty by Śivadeva (1098-1126). He was the son of the Śaṅkaradeva who was expelled by Vāmadeva and had ruled before Harṣadeva. Śivadeva made donations to Pashupati and built a palace at Kirti-Bhaktapur, i.e. modern Kirtipur. He struck both gold and silver coins and forced the feudatory Rāmadeva to recognize his suzerainty over Dhavalaśrotri in the Magar area.

At this point a serious problem of chronology arises. There are six documents from A.D. 1105 to 1122 which attest to a king called Siṃhadeva. These documents are completely included within the reign of Śivadeva. Do we have here a king with two names or a return of the old joint rule? A definite answer cannot be given to this question, but after considering all the evidence and the arguments pro and con, both Petech and the Nepali historian Dhanavajra Vajracarya plead for Śivadeva and Siṃhadeva being one and the same man.¹⁸

¹⁷ The first evidence of this fabrication appears to be an inscription of King Pratapa Malla of Kathmandu.

¹⁸ Petech, p. 53-4; Dhanavajra Vajracarya 'Madhyakālik Nepālkā ek Prakhyāt Rājā Śivadeva', *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 8,1 (1980)207-222.

Sivadeva's immediate successor was Indradeva (c.1126-1136) who was supported by the Jīva chiefs of Udayapur. The Jīvas of Udayapur must have attained prominence during the period of chaos. Even after the restoration of the dynastic rulers, the Jīva chiefs continued as powers behind the throne. It seems that they supported Vāmadeva and Siṃhadeva (= Śivadeva?), but at this point abandoned the descendants of Siṃhadeva. Siṃhadeva's rightful heir, Mahendradeva, never ruled but was passed over in favour of an elder half brother. After Indradeva we hear no more of the Jīva chiefs.

Indradeva was followed by Mānadeva (c. 1136-1140), Narendradeva (1140-1147), and Ānandadeva (1147-1167). Ānandadeva's coronation marked the return of Siṃhadeva's direct line. The chronicle speaks in glowing terms of this king who is credited with a number of foundations, the most important of which may be his building of a royal palace in Bhadgaun known as the Tipura (or Tripura) Palace.¹⁹ His was a long, peaceful and prosperous reign but turmoil and disunity were just over the horizon.

Ānandadeva was succeeded by Rudradeva (1167-1175) and Amṛtadeva (1176-1178). Amṛtadeva's reign was marked by a disastrous famine as a result of which the price of grain rose and food became scarce. He was succeeded by Someśvaradeva (1178-1183/5), the son of the prince Mahendradeva (son of Siṃhadeva) who never ruled. In 1184, a new king, called Guṇakāmadeva appeared upon the scene. He ruled for at least three years. Guṇakāmadeva is followed by two overlapping kings: Lakṣmikāmadeva (c. 1192-1197) and Vijayakāmadeva (c. 1192-1200) who may well have been sons or at least relatives of Guṇakāmadeva. It was a time of confusion and civil strife. Nothing is known about the relationship between these two kings except that from about 1192 to 1197 Kathmandu was definitely included in the dominion of Lakṣmikāmadeva. On this note of confusion the period of the successors of the Licchavi and the so-called Thakuri dynasties comes to an end.

THE EARLY MALLAS

The Mallas, like the Licchavis, appear and reappear on the scene of Indian history. The word 'malla' in Sanskrit means a wrestler and is sometimes adopted by rulers, like the

¹⁹ It has been maintained that from the time of the founding of this palace Bhadgaun became the Capital city of Nepal and that there is little or no evidence that Patan was ever the Capital (Slusser, p. 123). Not all writers have accepted this theory, including Petech (see p. 188). What is clear is that from this time forward the kings had a residence in Bhadgaun and one in Patan. Which was the major residence, or the *de facto* capital, is still a matter of discussion; but it is clear that at least from the time of the third Malla king (Jayadeva Deva [A.D. 1255-1258]) the political activity was centered in Bhadgaun.

Pallavas of Kanchi in India, as a title to signify their skill or success in wrestling contests with their adversaries and rivals. Early Buddhist texts mention a republican confederation of the Mallas whose territory adjoined that of the Licchavis. Kushinagara and Pava were known as Mallapuri, or the cities of the Mallas. Despite the attempt of the later Nepali chronicles to link the Nepali Mallas with Nānyadeva and Harisimhadeva of Tirhut, the ancestry of the Malla rulers in the Kathmandu Valley is obscure.

Ari Malla (A.D. 1200-1216), the son of one Jayaśī Malla, was the first Malla king of the Kathmandu Valley. We do not know how he acquired the throne, whether by conquest, election or dynastic link. The last known document of the Thakuri King Vijayakāmadeva, the last ruler of the earlier dynasty is dated January 1200, and the first colophon of Ari Malla's reign is dated October 1200 (or possibly 1199). It may, therefore, be correct to assume that the Malla dynasty was established in A.D. 1200. Ari Malla's titles in the successive colophons reveal the gradual consolidation of his authority. The earlier documents of his reign refer to him merely as *rājā* or *nrpa*, whereas only in 1211 is he given the full royal title: *rājādhirāja paramésvara paramabhāṭṭāraka*.

His son and successor, Abhaya Malla (1216-1255), had acquired considerable learning before he became king. His reign was turbulent because he was at first challenged by one Raṇaśura, who may have been a claimant to the Nepali throne or one of the lesser kings of the western hills. On 24th May 1244 the Doya (the Tirhutiyas from Simraungarh) invaded Nepal through the Khandadhara forest but were driven off with heavy losses by the Commander in Chief Anarghamalladeva, evidently a member of the royal family. Later the same year, another raid, perhaps again by the Doyas, was repulsed by one Amaru Mahātha who set out from Palanchok. He routed the invaders and returned to a triumphant procession. In 1245 the Doya returned again and advanced as far as Gokarna where they were defeated. In the course of a number of petty skirmishes within the kingdom, one Jayaśīha Malla (or Jayasimha Malla), based in Bhadgaun and the son of one Jagataneka Malla; emerges as a power to be reckoned with. Abhaya Malla's reign, which also had its share of famine, plague and serious earthquakes, was not a prosperous one. A disastrous earthquake occurred on 7th June 1255. One third of the population perished and the king himself was seriously injured dying of his injuries six days later.

Abhaya Malla was succeeded by his son Jayadeva Malla (1255-1258) whose reign also suffered a series of natural calamities--earthquakes and famine. The monarchy itself was weakened by a struggle between the Jayaśīhamalla mentioned above and one Jayabhīmadeva. Jayabhīmadeva was the feudal lord of Bhonta, the region of Banepa east of the Kathmandu Valley. Jayaśīha Malla was building his own extensive following within the city of Bhadgaun. His descendants are referred to as the Tripura royal family (*rājakula*) after the royal palace in Bhadgaun where they lived. The rest of this period is

marred by the struggle between the house of Bhonta and the house of Tripura. The situation was complicated by the fact that the royal family was dying out. Jayadeva had two sons both of whom died in childhood. Jayadeva's reign was marked by a number of revolts and clashes between the contending forces within the Valley. Jayaśiha Malla and Jayabhimadeva were the principal contenders with Jayabhimadeva often siding with the reigning monarch. Jayadeva died on 19th March 1258 and two months later Jayabhimadeva and Jayasiha Malla were encamped near Palanchok which they had jointly subdued. Out of this association came an agreement between the two rivals that henceforth the two houses of Bhonta and Tripura would share the throne alternately. Though there is no documentary proof of this agreement, this is in fact what happened more or less regularly over the next one hundred years.

From this point on to the time of Jayasthiti Malla the later chronicles do not correspond at all to the older ones such as the *Gopālarājavamśāvalī*, the chronicle used by Kirkpatrick and the so-called 'Kaiser Vamśāvalī'. It is at this point that the later chronicles bring in the list of the Tirhutiya kings, allegedly descended from the line of Nānyadeva and Harisimhadeva, neither of whom reigned in the Valley. This is a result of a deliberate falsification of history perpetrated by the descendants of Jayasthiti Malla. This falsification first appears in a seventeenth century inscription of Pratāpa Malla and was taken up the later writers and incorporated into the later chronicles.

After the agreement cited above Jayabhimadeva became king and ruled until 1271 when he was succeeded by Jayaśiha Malla who ruled until 1274. Thus the kingship shifted again from the house of Bhonta to the house of Tripura. Jayabhimadeva is never referred to as 'Malla' and Jayaśiha Malla, who was the son of one Jagataneka Malla, may or may not have been a relation of the Malla royal family. Hence we are dealing with two new dynasties alternating on the throne. Jayaśiha Malla had a short reign when he either abdicated or was deposed in 1274 or 1275 to be followed by Ananta Malla (c. 1274-1308). Jayaśi Malla died only in A.D. 1287.

Ananta Malla, whose ancestry is not known, reigned for 34 years and during this time dealt with the Mongol Court in China, not directly, but through the Sakya Monastery in Tibet which enjoyed the favour of the Emperor Kublai Khan. Kublai Khan ordered the erection of a golden stupa in Tibet for his teacher Sa-skyapa Lama, and, by 1260, during the rule of Jayabhimadeva, Nepali artisans were sent to undertake the task. In response to a request from the Sakya-pa Lama a group of Nepali artisans, under the leadership of A-ni-ko (A.D. 1245-1306) was sent to Lhasa. Although A-ni-ko is not mentioned in the Nepali chronicles, information available in the Chinese annals reveals that close relations existed between Nepal and the great monasteries of central Tibet. According to the Chinese account A-ni-ko was a descendant of the royal family of Nepal.

During the last thirteen years of Ananta Malla's reign Nepal was invaded both from the west and the south. In the winter of 1287-1288 Jitāri (or Jayatāri) Malla of the other Malla dynasty from the Khasa area in the Karnali region, invaded the Kathmandu Valley. According to the chronicles the city dwellers sought shelter in the neighbouring forests, but returned when the invaders left. Jitāri Malla came again in March of 1289. This time he burned down several villages but paid visits to Swayambhu and Bungadya (Matsyendranath) and then made religious offerings to Pashupatinath before leaving. In February of 1290 he returned once again taking Nuwakot on his way. He again visited Matsyendranath and Pashupatinath. After this he put some villages to the torch and then spent one month at a fort in Patan which he destroyed before leaving.

In December of 1291 the Doya from Tirhut again attacked Nepal from the south penetrating as far as Bhadgaun. The same invaders reappeared in 1300 and, after taking several places which can no longer be identified, they attacked Bhadgaun. They inflicted a fine on the house of Tripura and levies were laid on the populace to buy off the Doya. Eventually they were satisfied and in March they withdrew. There is evidence that the Doya were actually called by the reigning monarch and the house of Bhonta to put an end to the claims of the house of Tripura. After their withdrawal the kingdom was once again wracked by internal strife resulting from the rivalry between these two factions. Sick of the constant bickering and fighting, Ananta Malla took all his treasure and the treasure of the Bhadgaun temples and donated this to Pashupatinath in 1307. He then withdrew to Bhonta though he continued to be recognised as the king until he died in August of 1308 at Banepa.

During this period the house of Tripura was out of power and the house of Bhonta under the leadership of Jayādityadeva, the elder son of King Jayabhīmadeva was the power behind the throne. It was most probably Jayāditya who had arranged the abdication of Jayaśiha Malla and he who put in Ananta Malla as a puppet ruler. Jayādityadeva was made heir apparent and soon came into conflict with his younger half-brother Jayānandadeva whom he then imprisoned at Palanchok. Jayāditya died in 1292 and his widow, Viramadevi filled in his position until her son Jayaśaktideva could come of age.

With the death of Ananta Malla the struggle between the two houses broke out again. The house of Tripura, under Jayatuṅga Malla, son of Jayaśiha Malla, took several places to the west of the Valley and at one point Banepa itself was conquered. Jayaśaktideva was too weak to press his claim to the vacant throne, and his despondency led him to a fatal mistake: he called on the Doya for help. In March of 1311 the Doya came, occupied a part of the city of Patan, destroyed religious objects, imprisoned the Brahmans and all the local noblemen and destroyed the palace. After this they exacted war

expenses from the local people and set several buildings on fire. But then Jayaśaktideva had trouble getting rid of his saviours. They began to loot the treasury in Deopatan and later set off toward Sanga. Several people from Banepa were killed. Finally in March of 1312 the Doya withdrew and started off for home. Though the Nepali chronicles do not mention the name of the Doya commander at this time, Mithila sources claim that one Candēśvara, a minister of King Harasiṃha of Tirhut conquered Nepal at this time, vanquished the ruler of Nepal and touched the image of Pashupati. This exaggerated claim probably refers to the one year occupation of Patan by the Doya who were invited by Jayaśaktideva.

The year 1312 saw the arrival of another force. The Khasya king Ripu Malla, after visiting Lumbini--where he and his son immortalized themselves by scratching their names on the Ashokan pillar--entered Nepal. He took a ceremonial bath at the Bungamati shrine of Matsyendranath and worshipped both at the Pashupatinath shrine and Swayambhu. Eighteen days later he departed. This was not an invasion or even a raid but more in the nature of a religious pilgrimage. However, it has been suggested that he came at the behest of the Tripura faction to counter the occupation of the Doya.²⁰ Perhaps--but he was a year too late.

This struggle between the two houses resulted in the complete collapse of the power and prestige of the monarchy and untold suffering for the people. The agreement between the two houses had broken down and local feudatories began to enjoy a greater measure of autonomy, the most well known of which were the ruler of Pharping and the chief of Nuwakot. Jayaśaktideva, perhaps discredited by his shameful role in the whole affair, disappears from the chronicles. Jayatuṅga Malla of Tripura died in 1312. His young son, Jayarudra Malla (born 1295), became the heir of the Tripura fortunes.

The *Gopālarājavamśavalī* notes that in November of 1311 an expedition set off from Banepa towards Tripura and the people of Bhadgaun fled. This took place, it says, during the reign of Jayarudra Malla and his mother Padumalladevi.²¹ It is difficult to evaluate this entry, but it seems that at this time Jayarudra Malla was recognised as the *de facto* ruler of Bhadgaun. In 1313, after the retreat of the Doya, Jayarudra Malla went to Patan to attend the Matsyendranath festival. He stayed for ten days and put to death five of the leading noblemen. This seems to indicate that he took charge of Patan and eliminated the heads of the opposition. From this point on the house of Tripura had the

²⁰ See Dhanavajra Vajracarya and Tek Bdr. Shrestha, *Nuwakotko Aitihāsik Rūprekhā* (Kathmandu, 2032 V.S.) 32-33.

²¹ Dhanavajra Vajracarya and Kamal P. Malla, eds., *The Gopālarājavamśavalī* (Wiesbaden 1985), 43 kha.

upper hand, and Jayarudra Malla and his mother were the wielders of real power behind the throne.

By 1313 Nepal had been five years without a recognised king and it was time to rectify the situation. Rather than try to claim the throne himself Jayarudra Malla made peace with the house of Bhonta by putting a Bhonta ruler on the throne. However, he chose not Śaktideva but Śaktideva's aged uncle Jayānandadeva who had once been imprisoned by his brother Jayādityadeva. Though he was universally recognised as the legitimate monarch by all, Jayānandadeva continued to reside in Palanchok. In the meantime Jayarudra Malla continued to attack various places around the Valley and bring them under his power. By 1320 he withdrew his support for Jayānandadeva and crowned Jayāri Malla, his relative, as king. Jayāri Malla, who ruled until 1344, was the son of Ananta Malla, and his power was more apparent than real, like that of his father. Jayarudra Malla continued to exercise real power, though without any title.

During this period Harisimhadeva, the ruler of Tirhut fled his capital of Simraungarh in A.D. 1324-25 when his kingdom was annexed by Ghiyas ud-din Tughlaq the king of Delhi. Sylvain Levi and other writers, misinterpreting an old Sanskrit verse, had assumed Harisimhadeva invaded Nepal. Actually, Harisimhadeva never went back to Tirhut where the Sultan set up a vassal state under Kameśvara, the founder of the Oniwara dynasty. Harisimhadeva and his court fled into the hills to the Dolakha area where he died at a place called Timpata in 1326. His son and ministers were arrested by a local chieftain and their wealth seized. Another contemporary account notes that his wife Devalakṣmidevī and his son with their relatives entered Nepal as refugees.²² It is known from later events that the members of this court were received as honoured guests by Jayarudra Malla's family and exercised a considerable influence over events in the succeeding decades. A recently published chronicle, which appears to be a complete version of the truncated 'Kaiser Vaṃśāvalī', gives the reason for this royal reception: Devaladevī was the daughter of Jayatuṅga Malla and Padumalladevī and hence the sister of Jayarudra Malla.²³

²² See Mohan P. Khanal, 'Itihas Samsodhanko Kehi Samsodhan', *Ancient Nepal* 3 (October 1970), 46.

²³ Kamal P. Malla, 'Nepalavaṃśāvalī: A Complete Version of the Kaisher Vaṃśāvalī', *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* XII, 2 (April 1985) p. 74-101. This is the only reference to Devaladevī being the daughter of Jayatuṅga Malla and one can certainly question this sole reference. If one accepts it, of course, it raises further serious difficulties: Rājalladevī and Jagatasimha were then first cousins. Their co-habitation would certainly have been considered incestuous by Hindu law. On the other hand, the contemporary records make it abundantly clear that they were never married in any formal way and that shortly after the birth of Rājalladevī Jagatasimha was thrown into prison. Was this purely a political move

In June of 1326 the king maker of Bhadgaun, Jayarudra Malla, still a young man of thirty, died. Since he had no male heirs, his daughter Nāyakadevī assumed leadership of the Tripura house, tutored by her grandmother Padumalladevī. For the next two generations the women of the house of Tripura--Padumalladevī, Devaladevī, Nāyakadevī and her daughter played centre stage in the political drama that was acted out in Bhadgaun.

In 1328 the Kathmandu Valley was invaded by another Malla ruler from the Khasa kingdom. The new invader, Āditya Malla, came to Nepal by way of Nuwakot and conquered Pharping. Next he attacked the fort of Patan for twenty-two days but was not able to take it. A Khasya ruler returned one last time in 1334 when the chronicle notes that in September of that year a local feudatory who had entered Patan and tried to exact tribute from the people was killed by the Khasa. Forty men were killed. In turn the Khasya ruler exacted a tribute from the people and withdrew only in March of the following year when he had collected his tax. In the meantime he and his followers had burned the town of Sankhu. The name of the Khasa ruler is not mentioned, but Punya Malla was the Khasya ruler from 1336 to 1339. This five-month occupation of Patan was the last incursion of the Khasiya rulers into the Valley.

Back in Bhadgaun, Nāyakadevī grew up under the care of her grandmother Padumalladevī. She was married to one Hariścandra who, along with his brother Gopālācandra (or Gopāladeva) were refugees from Kasi. The prince consort was soon caught up in the family struggles and was resented by the local aristocracy. In September of 1332 Padumalladevi died and Hariścandra found it difficult to maintain his place in the old palace of Jayarudra Malla. Finally in May of 1335 he was poisoned by the nobles who boasted of it afterwards. This left Nāyakadevī under the guardianship of her brother-in-law Gopāladeva. Eventually she became the lover of a prince of Tirhut, one Jagatasimha. This led to a conflict between Jagatasimha and Gopāladeva which ended when Gopāladeva was seized and decapitated by the followers of Jagatasimha.

Who was Jagatasimha? This is a question which vexed students of this period for a long time. It is clear that he was a Tirhutia prince; most probably he was the son of Harisimhadeva. This theory was first put forward by the Nepali historians Dhanavajra Vajracarya and Tulsi Ram Vaidya and has been accepted by Petech in his latest edition.²⁴ If this is true then it is clear that Devaladevī was indeed the widow of Harisimhadeva as

or does it indicate the court's disapproval of this highly irregular liaison? The fact that the daughter was accepted as the heir of the fortunes of the house of Jayarudra Malla and played such a prominent role in her lifetime can easily be explained by the force of circumstances: there were no other living heirs.

²⁴ See Petech p. 120.

confirmed by the independent source which gives Harisimhadeva's wife's name as Devalakṣmīdevī. Here is the connection between the late Malla kings and the dynasty of Nānyadeva which Pratāpa Malla and his successors tried to sanitize by falsifying the records to show a direct descent in the male line from Nānyadeva.

Jagatasimha seems to have succeeded in reaffirming the ascendancy of the Tripura house but had to contend with the old enemies of the court who made a compact with a shadowy figure called Paśupati Malla. In January of 1347 a daughter was born to Jagatasimha and Nāyakadevī. She was named Rājalladevī. Ten days later her mother died and about this time Jagatasimha himself was thrown into prison and disappeared from the scene. The infant princess was left to the care of old Devaladevī who proved to be an able regent of the fortunes of the Tripura house. In 1348 she was able to have Paśupati Malla arrested and imprisoned, thus ending the one current threat to the family's fortunes.

Jayāri Malla, the puppet of the house of Tripura had died in 1344. For three years there was no king, for Jayāri Malla had died without an heir and the house of Tripura was going through a difficult period in those days of the rise of Jagatasimha. In 1347 Devaladevī reaffirmed her power and made an agreement with the Bhonta house allowing them to supply the reigning monarch while she retained *de facto* control of the Valley. Thus in July of 1347, with the agreement of all parties, Jayarājadeva of the Bhonta house was crowned king of Nepal at Deopatan and ruled until 1361. Jayarājadeva was the illegitimate son of Jayānandadeva of Bhonta and had been born at Palanchok. In the year 1323, when he was only six years old, we hear of him accompanying Jyotirāma Varddhana Mahāta on a journey to Pharping, Patan and Tripura. Jyotirāma Varddhana was from a *vaisya* family of nobles from Banepa who came to play a very large role in the politics of the next two generations. Throughout Jayarājadeva's reign Jyotirāma's son, Anekārāma Varddhana, held the position of prime minister and his son, Jayasimharāma Varddhana, was the attendant to the heir apparent, Jayārjunadeva. Devaladevī remained in close contact with these powerful figures and acted in concert with them at critical times. Acting as Regent, Devaladevī played a prominent role in piloting the principality of Bhadgaun through the storm that was about to break over the Valley.

Shumshud-din Illiyas, formerly a vassal of Mahummad Tughlaq, declared himself independent of his overlord and in 1345-46 conquered Tirhut, which the Tughlaq Sultan had settled on Kamesvara of the Oniwara family, about eleven years earlier. From Tirhut, Illiyas invaded Nepal in 1349 through Janakpur, Sindhuli and Banepa. The Muslim invaders despoiled the temples of their ancient treasure, accumulated from time immemorial, and also destroyed images of gods and goddesses. Although the Muslim invasion had left its visible mark on the Valley, in the shape of damaged and broken images, the myth of Nepal having been unsullied by the taint of Muslim invasion

persisted for a long time. It was Dr. K. P. Jayasawal who pointed out the facts of the Muslim invasion, on the basis of the Swayambhu inscription, in an article in the *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* (XXII) in 1936. Dr. R. K. Choudhary reconstructed the background of the events in his article called 'The Oniwara of Mithila'. It was found later that Jayasawal had slightly misinterpreted the date of invasion as 1346, whereas, in fact, the Swayambhu inscription gives the date as 20 November 1349. This date is also corroborated by the Pim Bahal inscription at Patan and by the *Gopālarājavamśavālī*.

After Shamsud-din Illiyas left Nepal, Devaladevī continued to exert her influence, and in one manuscript colophon of 1353 she is given royal titles and said to be ruling (*vijayarājye*).²⁵ Whatever the meaning of this stray reference, it is clear that she was in control. In 1354 she arranged the marriage of her grand-daughter and ward, Rājalladevī to one Sthitirāja (or Jayasthiti) Malla.²⁶ This marriage proved to be an event of great consequence, for this man influenced the political destiny of Nepal for the next four centuries. We leave consideration of the last king of this period for the next chapter. His fortunes are entirely enmeshed in the story of the rise of Sthitirāja Malla.

Thus the state of strife and uncertainty that had characterized Ananta Malla's reign continued for another 75 years. The throne was fought over by two factions. The feudal nobles and hill-chiefs became restive and more influential. External invasions by the Doya, the Khasiya Malla Kings, and the Muslim ruler of Bengal, aggravated the situation all the more. These chaotic conditions lasted until the throne passed into the hands of Sthitirāja Malla, husband of a distant relative of Ananta Mallas' family on the maternal side. He, at last, succeeded in restoring peace and harmony in strife-torn Nepal.

Jayasthiti Malla and His Successors

Some time after his marriage to Rājalladevī, Jayasthiti Malla developed into the key figure in the history and politics of the period. However, because his father was an obscure person, named Aśoka Malla, the later chronicles present him as a descendant of Harisimhadeva, which is patently absurd. One Chronicle connects him with Nāga Malla, a son of Jayadeva (1255-58), the third of the Malla rulers, in an attempt to make him appear to be a scion of the earliest branch of the ruling House of the Mallas. This

²⁵ *Gopālarājavamśavālī* 54 ka.

²⁶ Jayasthiti Malla has become the accepted form of this man's name in books on the history of Nepal in English and in many in Nepali, probably because this form of his name appears in the later Nepalese chronicles. However, in contemporary references he is consistently referred to as Sthitarāja or Jayasthitirāja Malla.

version of Jayasthiti Malla's ancestry cannot be taken seriously either, inasmuch as Jayadeva did not have a son of that name, and Jayasthiti Malla's own descendants laid pretentious and false claims to their descent from the Tirhutiya family of Harisimhadeva rather than from the early Mallas of Nepal itself. It has also been suggested that he might be a son of that shadowy figure Paśupati Malla who had made a brief appearance on the Bhadgaun scene, or that he was an obscure scion of the Khasiya Malla family of western Nepal. None of these theories rests on any solid basis. The only hint we have of Jayasthiti Malla's origins comes from the *Gopālarājavamśāvalī* which says that he came from the South. It is possible that he came from Tirhut and this would explain why he was selected by Devaladevī and why his career was marked by a measure of immigration from Tirhut and by the very strong influence of the orthodox Jhā Brahmans of Tirhut.²⁷

In 1361 Jayārjunadeva, son of Jayarājadeva, was crowned king after the death of his father. Like his father he was weak. He ruled directly over Bhonta and was recognised as king in Patan but the real power there was in the hands of the traditional aristocracy of Patan, the *mahāpātras*. His rule over Bhadgaun was nominal as long as Devaladevī lived but even this was later rejected. Jayasthiti Malla did not play a prominent role immediately after his marriage to Princess Rājalladevī. His role became conspicuous only after the death of the feudatory chief, Anekarāma Mahātha in 1356 and of Regent Devaladevī in 1366. After her death Jayasthiti first cooperated with the king and his powerful minister Jayasimharāma, son of Anekarāma. The old feud between the two houses, however, soon flared up again when in 1370 Jayasthiti Malla won over the aristocracy of Patan and made a triumphant entry into the city on 28th April at the time of the Matsyendranath festival. He rewarded local leaders, foremost of whom was Jayata Mūlamī whom he made his Prime Minister. Jayasimharāma tried to regain the lost ground and raised a rebellion against Jayasthiti in 1372 and again in 1374 but finally had to admit defeat. Despite all of this, Jayārjunadeva continued as king, but in 1380 Jayasthiti Malla and his minister Jayata Mahātha sent the king to Banepa on a pilgrimage. It was in fact an exile and exclusion from any political activity in the Valley. Some months later Jayārjunadeva made a last feeble attempt to regain his position and from the fort at Gokarna he took a force to Bhadgaun. He was easily defeated and confined to a room adjoining the Tripura palace in Bhadgaun where he died on 3rd Feb. 1382. His death marked the end of the claims of the Bhonta lineage.

²⁷ Jayasthiti Malla's Hindu orthodoxy and his attempts to impose this on the populace have become proverbial in the oral tradition. The later chronicles note his formulation of a strict Hindu code of law for the land mentioned below. At least two of the five Brahmans credited with the formulation of this law are Maithila Jhā Brahmans. A large number of literary works, mostly dramas, written in Maithili for the Bhadgaun court have also survived from this period.

Jayasthiti Malla

The official date of the beginning of Jayasthiti Malla's reign is 15th September 1382 when he officially accepted the homage and offerings of the assembled nobles in Bhadgaun. Jayasthiti Malla owed his throne to his own efforts and skill rather than to his position as the husband of Princess Rājalladevī of Bhadgaun, although naturally his position as Princess Rājalladevī's husband received due importance in the Bhadgaun documents. At Bhadgaun he ruled as Prince-Consort until the death of Rājalladevī in 1385. After her death, Bhadgaun was placed under one of Jayasthiti Malla's sons. After acquiring the Kingdom of Patan by conquest or by popular consent, through the submission of the seven *mahāpātras*, he was given the full royal title: *rājadhirāja paramēśvara paramabhāṭṭāraka*, but only there. The Patan documents had used this title for him even before Rājalladevī's death. No Bhadgaun document, even after the death of Rājalladevī, ever gave him the full royal title.

Jayasthiti Malla restored a considerable measure of order and stability throughout the land after three quarters of a century of anarchy. It naturally took the rival feudatories some time to reconcile themselves to Jayasthiti Malla's supremacy. Nuwakot had overthrown the suzerainty of the Kathmandu Valley Kings and declared its independence. The Rāma family of Banepa tried to pick up the banner of the Bhonta house and carry it as their own but belatedly and reluctantly accepted Jayasthiti Malla's suzerainty. The feudal chiefs of Pharping were less aggressive, but this did not mean that they were more submissive. Jayasthiti Malla succeeded in controlling the refractory feudatories without entirely doing away with the hierarchical feudal system.

Jayasthiti Malla was a far-sighted ruler. He took a long-term view of the consolidation of Nepali society. He drew up a code of religious and social conduct with the help of five Brahmans from North and South India. Their names were: Kīrtinātha Upādhyāya Kānyakabuja, Rāghunātha Jhā Maithilī, Śrīnātha Bhaṭṭa, Mahinātha Bhaṭṭa and Rāmanātha Jhā. His legal and social code aimed at consolidating Nepali society within the orthodox Hindu religious framework, with due regard and concessions for local conditions. The success of his policy is shown by the fact that the Newar society in the Valley to this day operates on the basis of his code, with only a few modifications. The distinctive feature of Jayasthiti Malla's code was that it did not lay stress on the traditional four classes (*varṇa*), but, in view of the existing conditions in Nepal, classified people into what may be called subcastes. It divided people into sixty-four subcastes and introduced detailed rules for marriage, interdining and drinking water, albeit in a relaxed form. Jayasthiti Malla's code also introduced a system of standard weights and measures and laid down rules for the use of pastures and the use of water for irrigation purposes.

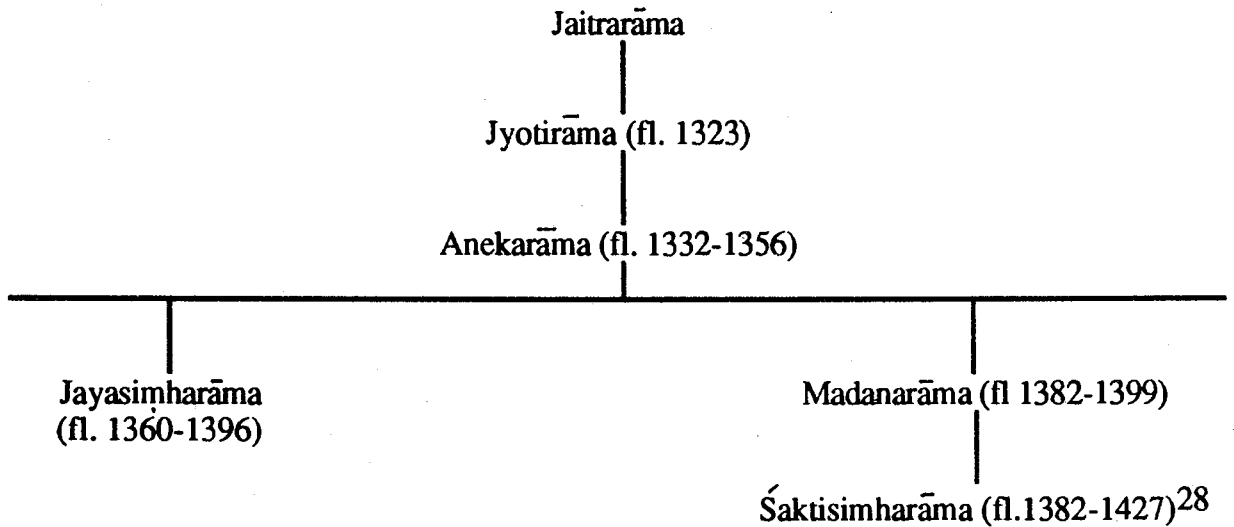
A goddess known as Māneśvarī had been worshipped by the Licchavis and by their successors. Some time early in the fourteenth century, perhaps with the coming of the court of Harisimhadeva, a form of Dūrgā known as Taleju or Taleju Bhavānī found her way into the Valley perhaps as a result of contacts with the Doya of Tirhut where she was the titular deity of Nānyadeva's dynasty. The two fused in the Valley and Jayasthiti Malla adopted Taleju as tutelary goddess in addition to Pashupatinath. Like Pashupatinath himself she thus forged a link joining all of these various dynasties. She was worshipped as a family deity by the successors of Jayasthiti Malla to the end of the Malla dynasty. Jayasthiti Malla, nonetheless, had a basically liberal outlook in matters of religion. He was devoted to Vishnu's popular incarnation as Rāma and encouraged the staging of plays that celebrated the incidents narrated in the *Rāmāyana*. Some of his inscriptions also show his devotion to Shiva and Vishnu. Two persons, a Shaiva Swami named Śivadāsa and Dvijarāja Upādhyāya, were quite influential in his court. Jayasthiti Malla died on 5th September 1395.

The Sons of Jayasthiti Malla

Jayasthiti Malla had three sons, Jayadharma Malla (born 1367), Jayajyotir Malla (born 1373), and Jayakirti Malla (born 1377). They ruled conjointly after their fathers' death with the eldest brother acting as their main representative. In documents from Bhadgaun the three brothers are listed as ruling jointly; in documents from Patan and Kathmandu, Jayadharma is given the full royal titles. Possibly, this arrangement was made to separate Jayasthiti Malla's own kingdom from his wife's inheritance of the principality of Bhadgaun.

It seems that even Jayasthiti Malla failed to repress the members of the Banepa family of Anekarāma. Jayasimharāma Vardhana Mahātha, son of Anekarāma, tried, after the death of Jarārjunadeva, to assert his old position as Lord-Protector of the realm. This was an attempt to vindicate the rights of the vacant throne of Bhonta, but it was doomed from the start. Gradually the Rāmas had to accept Jayasthiti Malla and develop a working relationship with him. They recognised Jayasthiti Malla but Jayasimharāma continued to hold Banepa as his seat of power as a sort of Prime Minister for the Bhonta principality with his younger brother, Madanarāma, bearing a similar title and residing at Palanchok. After the death of Jayasthiti Malla, Jayasimharāma and Madanarāma seem to have acted as senior and junior regents outside of Bhadgaun. Their continued attempts to exert political influence and continued attempts to maintain a continuity with the extinct Bhonta dynasty helps to explain why they succeeded in being recognized as the rulers of Nepal by the Chinese Emperor. The Chinese Ming annals refer to Madanarāma and his sons and successors as Kings of Nepal. They state that Śaktisimharāma, son of Madanarāma,

could not maintain the authority of his father and therefore retired to a valley to the east. In fact they were never kings of Nepal and their withdrawal to the east marks their returning to the only area they could call their own, the principality of Bhonta. Dhanavajra Vajracarya has reconstructed their genealogy as follows:



Jayajyotir Malla (1408-1428), who, of the three sons of Jayasthiti Malla, lived longest, eventually assumed the royal title as sole King of the whole of the Kathmandu Valley. He finally put an end to the influence of the Rāma family of Bhonta. For a while it seems that Patan became the seat of the royal Power and Bhadgaun was relegated to a position of secondary importance. However, the practice of appointing the Crown Prince as Governor of Bhadgaun recognised the importance of Bhadgaun as the place of origin of the royal family.

Yakṣa Malla

Jayajyotir was succeeded by his eldest son, Yakṣa Malla (1428-1482). His was a long and prosperous reign. Yakṣa Malla took advantage of a long period of stability and prosperity in his reign to extend the bounds of his kingdom. It is claimed that he conquered Mithila and extended his kingdom as far south as Gaya. He ensured the security of Nepal by defeating the hill rājās, including the king of Gorkha to the west. His kingdom extended to Bengal in the east and to the Ganges in the south. To the north his kingdom extended as far as Shekar Dzong in Tibet. A literary work by King Jagajyotir

²⁸ Dhanavajra Vajracarya, 'Śaktiśālī Bhārdar Rāmavarddhanaharū ra Tatkalik Nepāl', *Pūrnimā* 7:12-36.

Malla of Bhadgaun (1614-1635) called *Narapatijayacarya* (now preserved in the National Archives) gives this description of Yakṣa Malla's conquests. This account is, no doubt, exaggerated; but it is a fact that Yakṣa Malla added to the territory he had inherited from his father.

Yakṣa Malla set the precedent of entrusting the worship of Pashupati to the charge of Bhaṭṭa Brahmans from South India. He built the temple of Dattātreya at Bhadgaun and was probably responsible for the magnificent lattice window on the neighbouring Shaiva monastery, which is now famous as the 'Peacock Window'. The Newari language, which had already entered into the field of Nepali epigraphy in the time of Jayasthiti Malla, began to be even more widely used during the time of Yakṣa Malla and took the place formerly enjoyed by Sanskrit.

Yakṣa Malla's career marked the zenith of the power and glory of the Malla kings. After his death in 1482 the kingdom disintegrated. Some of the chronicles claim that Yakṣa Malla divided the kingdom among his sons. He did not, but this error has been so often repeated that it is important to review what actually happened and its causes. The disintegration was not a sudden event that can be simply blamed on the sons of Yakṣa Malla, much less on their father.

Divisive forces had been at work for at least two centuries before Yakṣa Malla became King, and they did not diminish during his reign. Internal strife and dissension had prevailed in Nepal since the days of Jayabhimadeva (1258-71) and the struggle between the houses of Bhonta and Tripura. Throughout this time the situation was aggravated by external invasions. The invasions of the Kathmandu Valley by the Doya, the Khasa Malla rulers of the Karnali region in the 13th and 14th centuries, and especially the invasion of Sultan Shamsuddin-Illiyas of Bengal in 1349 completely disrupted the social equilibrium of the country. A few strong personalities, like Jayarudra Malla and Anekarāma and some of the noble families like the Rāmas, the Mūlamīs and the Mahāthas fished in the troubled waters for their own self aggrandizement. The careers of Princess Nāyakadevī of Bhadgaun and her daughter, Princess Rājalladevī, show how dependent on courtiers, feudal officials and leading families the rightful heirs to the throne had become. There was an on-going tendency for cities where the king did not actually reside to go their own way under local rulers. After the death of Yakṣa Malla, Patan became in effect a city state with its own rulers and remained so until the seventeenth century. The same process had begun in Kathmandu when one of Yakṣa Malla's sons went there as king to put a stop to it. This problem had existed during Yakṣa Malla's reign and he was able to subdue the local chieftains of Patan and Kathmandu, but he could not stop this tendency toward autonomy.

Division of the Kingdom

Yakṣa Malla had at least six sons: Rāya Malla, Ratna Malla, Raṇa Malla, Rāma Malla, Ari Malla, and Purna Malla. Besides these he had at least one daughter, Dharmavati and one other son, Rāja Malla, who evidently predeceased his father. Already in 1462 the eldest son, Rāya Malla, evidently tried to usurp royal status, but this attempt came to nothing. At the death of Yakṣa Malla the three senior brothers (Rāya, Ratna and Raṇa) ascended the throne and ruled jointly as had happened after the death of Jayasthiti Malla. By 1487 the three had taken their nephew Bhīma Malla (son of Dharmavati) as an associate. Immediately a process of division set in with each of the three brothers claiming authority in a part of the kingdom. By 1484 Ratna Malla had established his rule in Kathmandu with his younger brother Ari Malla as an associate ruler. Later Ari Malla's son Indra Malla appears as an associate ruler, but after 1511 Ratna remains the sole ruler of Kathmandu. Rāya Malla was able to get himself recognised as the sole ruler of Bhadgaun and Raṇa Malla took hold of Bhonta with his capital in Banepa.

The eldest son, Rāya Malla, died in 1509 and Bhīma Malla disappeared from the scene. After this all pretense to unity is abandoned. Raṇa Malla returned from Banepa and acted for a time as regent to his nephews in Bhadgaun. When he died in 1529, without an heir, Banepa was reabsorbed by Bhadgaun. Patan went its own way. Until about 1520 it recognised the overlordship of the three kings and then of the king of Kathmandu. Finally Patan rejected the Mallas altogether and became formally independent under a king called Viṣṇusiṃha, one of the chief *mahāpātras* of Patan. It remained independent until it was conquered in about 1600 by Śivasimha of Kathmandu after whose death it became a separate kingdom with his grandson as king.²⁹ The perpetual strife and dissension caused by this division made the Kathmandu Valley an easy victim for the Gorkha conqueror, Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha, in 1768-69.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE BETTER-KNOWN KINGDOMS IN MEDIEVAL NEPAL

Before we proceed with the history of the three Malla Kingdoms of the Kathmandu Valley, it may be apposite to add a note on the Malla dynasty of the Khasa Kingdom which we have already met in their incursions into the Valley, and a few words on the other kingdoms that dotted the area that is the modern state of Nepal. The present state of our knowledge does not enable us to write a comprehensive history of the whole of Nepal

²⁹ Śivasimha installed Hariharasiṃha his son as governor of Patan. He pre-deceased his father and at Sivasimha's death the kingdom was divided between Hariharasiṃha's two sons.

during the medieval period. The information that we possess is limited primarily to the Kathmandu Valley.

The Khasa Malla Dynasty of The Karnali Basin

In 1955 Prof. G. Tucci and Yogi Narharinath discovered the Dullu pillar and other inscriptions.³⁰ This discovery brought to light the rule of the Khasa Malla kings in the Karnali region. Their rule covered a period from the twelfth century through the fourteenth century. There were two Khasa dynasties at the beginning, one ruling Guge (Western Tibet) and the other Purang (modern Jumla and Surkhet). Guge consisted of a part of western Tibet known as Zanjun which, before the establishment of the Khasa dynasty, had its capital at Tsaparang and was ruled by the Tibetan Kings of the L De Family, who claimed their descent from the Lhasa kings. Guge, where one of the Khasa dynasties was initially based, was to the south of the Satlaj River. Purang, the seat of the other Khasa family, formed the south-eastern part of western Tibet with its capital at Tallakot. The two Khasa dynasties were merged when Pratāpa Malla (of the Purang-based Khasa dynasty), who had no male heir, gave his daughter Śakunamālā in marriage to Puṇya Malla (of the Guge based Khasa dynasty). Siṃja, at the confluence of the two tributaries of the Karnali River in Jumla, became the capital of the united Khasa Kingdom. Prthvī Malla, son of Puṇya Malla and Śakunamālā, was probably the last king of the united Khasa Kingdom.

The Khasa kingdom reached the height of its power during the reign of Prthvī Malla, who ruled over a large kingdom that consisted of Guge, Purang and the cis-himalayan territory extending as far as Dullu to the south-west of Kashikot and Gorkha to the east.

The genealogical tree inscribed on the front side of the Dullu stone pillar names fifteen of the ancestral predecessors of Puṇya Malla, and shows him being followed by his son, Prthvī Malla, born of Śakunamālā, an heiress of the other Khasa dynasty. The family tree on the back of the same Dullu stone pillar shows Pratāpa Malla in the twelfth generation of his family line which begins with Nāgarāja, the founder of the Khasa dynasty at Purang, and mentions eleven of Pratāpa Malla's ancestral predecessors by name.

³⁰ See G. Tucci, *Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal* (Rome, 1956) on which the data for this section is based.

Among the predecessors of Pratāpa Malla were Kracalla and Aśokacalla, who ruled over an area that included Kumaun and Garhwal. Prof. Petech has determined the dates of the reign of Aśokacalla as being between A.D. 1255 and 1278. Jitāri Malla, who invaded the Kathmandu Valley in 1288 and 1289, and Ripu Malla and Āditya Malla, who invaded it in 1312 and 1328 respectively, were the descendants of Aśokacalla and the immediate predecessors of Pratāpa Malla.

The discovery of the Malla dynasty in the Karnali region has certainly added to our knowledge of the medieval history of Nepal. It has not only enabled us to locate the origin of successive attacks on the Kathmandu Valley in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, but has also made it clear, for the first time, that there were once other centres of power and civilization in the present-day territory of Nepal itself. Although the Khasa kingdom of the Mallas in the west did not attain the same level of artistic and cultural development as the Kathmandu Valley of the Malla rulers, the achievements of the former were not insignificant by any count.

Ruins of Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples show the prevalence of both Buddhism and Hinduism in the area. The co-existence of Hindu gods and goddesses with the Vajrayanic Siddhas (sages) reveals the same kind of religious and cultural synthesis that obtained in the Kathmandu Valley under the Mallas. The images of both types show a fair level of artistic and sculptural development.

Trade was a main prop of an agricultural economy in hill areas which were unproductive compared to the fertile soil of the Kathmandu Valley. The present-day Jumla-Dullu-Surkhet trail may, at that time, have been the main commercial highway for trans-Himalayan trade. Taklakot, the winter capital of the Khasa Malla dynasty, was the main gateway for Tibetan trade.

The Twenty-four and Twenty-two Principalities

Following successive waves of the Muslim invasion of India launched by Mohammed of Ghanzi c. A.D. 999, immigrant Hindu chiefs from Rajasthan are said to have made their way into the hill areas of western Nepal. Over a period of time they carved out principalities for themselves and their progeny in the area which was largely inhabited by various indigenous tribes. The new rulers sought to trace their ancestry to some Indian Rajput clan or the other, but the links they tried to establish were, at best, tenuous. The Rajas of Piuthan boasted of their connection with the Chandelas, the Rajas of Khanchi and the Rajas of Dhurkot with the Medhasi clan, and the Rajas of Parvat, Galkot, Sallyan and Ghiring with the Samal clan. Nepali chronicles trace the ancestry of

the Raja of Gorkha, along with the Rajas of Bhirkot, Nuwakot, Garahun, Satahun, Kaski and Lumjung, to a common Rajput stock of the lunar dynasty that had originally belonged to Chittor in Rajputana.

The Chaubise, or Twenty-four Principalities, and the Baise, or Twenty-two Principalities, together numbered forty-six principalities in all. Roughly speaking, the principalities in the Gandaki region of central Nepal were known as the Chaubise and those in the Karnali region of western Nepal as the Baise. However, it was not possible to draw a strict boundary-line between the geographical areas comprising the Chaubise and the Baise states inasmuch as natural frontiers did not exist between them. These two categories of hill states did not represent collective political entities nor did they form permanent alliances of any kind. All the forty-six principalities were independent and sovereign, for all practical purposes, and were constantly engaged in fighting one another, unable to evolve a system for regulating relations among themselves.

There are no fixed or permanent lists of the Twenty-Four and Twenty-Two Principalities. Some of them, especially those geographically situated in the border region, are named on both lists. Parvat (Malebam), Galkot, Piuthan, Khungrikot, and Bhingrikot generally occurred on both lists because their boundaries adjoined the Chaubise and Baise geographical divisions.

Most of these kingdoms lay entirely in the hills, but a few of them had land either in the tarai, the lowland plains adjoining what is now Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, or low land behind the first low range of hills--called the 'Inner Tarai' (*bhitri mades*) in Nepal and Doon Valleys in India. Possession of tarai or Inner Tarai land made the difference between a 'rich' state and a 'poor' state, for the elephants and fish, and above all, the flat, fertile land which provided rich revenue, enabled the state to rise above the subsistence level. The only kingdoms of these forty-six which had tarai lands were Tanahun, Palpa and Piuthan, among the Twenty-four Principalities, and Salyan, Dang-Deukhuri and Dullu among the Twenty-two Principalities.

The Twenty-four Principalities

Francis Buchanan Hamilton lists the Chaubise of Twenty-four Principalities as follows:³¹

1. Piuthan	7. Khanchi	13. Bhirkot	19. Ghiring
2. Malebum (Parvat)	8. Gulmi	14. Nuwakot	20. Tanahun
3. Galkot	9. Palpa	15. Kaski	21. Lamjung
4. Isma	10. Garahun	16. Dhor	22. Gorkha
5. Dhurkot	11. Paiyun	17. Gajarkot	23. Tarki
6. Argha	12. Satahun	18. Rising	24. Musikot

According to information available to Hamilton in 1803-4, temporary alliances had existed among various states along the following lines:

1. Lamjung led the alliance composed of itself, Tanahun and Kaski, but independently of Lamjung; Tanahun had the backing of Dhor and Kaski that of Satahun.
2. Bhirkot headed the group composed of itself, Gajarkot, Rising, Ghiring, Argha, Khanchi and Gulmi
3. Palpa was the leader of a group consisting of itself, Gajarkot, Rising, Ghiring, Argha, Khanchi and Gulmi.
4. Malebum formed an alliance with Galkot.
5. Piuthan led the alliance composed of itself, Musikot and Isma along with the two petty chiefs of Khungrikot and Bhingrikot, who, though surrounded by the Chaubise, were not included among them.³²

The ruling houses of the eight Chaubise principalities, Bhirkot, Garahun, Satahun, Nuwakot, Kaski, Dhor and Gorkha came of the same stock and were branches of the Khān family that had originally ruled from Bhirkot. The original family of the Khāns split into the sub-branches that later called themselves Śāha and Śāhī. As the ruling house of Gorkha later became the ruling dynasty of Nepal, its links with the Rajput clan of Chittor, however tenuous, received a good deal of attention. However, the circumstances described in the chronicles do not agree with the historical facts.

³¹ Francis Buchanan Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* (Reprint: New Delhi, 1971) p. 238.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 239-40.

Some of the chronicles trace the ancestry of the Ruling house of Gorkha to one Bhūpati Rānāji Rao of Chittor. According to these sources, his son, Fateh Rānā refused to give his daughter in marriage to Akbar, the great Mughal Emperor of India, and invited his wrath. Fateh Rānā lost his life and kingdom in a fierce battle with Akbar's army. His two brothers, Udambara and Manmatha, continued to offer resistance to the Mughal Emperor from Udaipur and Ujjain respectively. It was Manmatha's son, Bhūpāl Rānāji, who entered the central Himalayan region and reached Ridi, near Palpa, in 1495.

Other chronicles trace the circumstances of the flight of Bhūpati and Manmatha to the conquest of Chittor by Alauddin Khiji in A.D. 1303. However, the chronicles generally agree that a descendant of Manmatha, named Bhūpāl, went to Palpa, by way of Ridi, from somewhere in India and settled down in the village of Lasargha, situated on the Biagha Ridge on the left bank of the River Kali Gandaki. Bhūpāl's son, Jain Khān, lived and died at Lasarha, but Sūrya Khān, Jain Khān's son, proceeded to Bhirkot and settled down in a village called Khilung, on the bank of the river Andhi Khola. Of the two sons of Sūrya Khān, Khancha, the elder son, acquired control of Bhirkot, Garahun, Satahun and Dhōr and became the king of the area. The younger son, Micha Khān, established his rule in Nuwakot and one of his descendants, named Kulmardan, adopted the title of Śāha. Some of the later descendants of Micha Khān subsequently seized control of Kaski and made it their seat of government. Meanwhile, Lamjung adopted as its king a prince of the family named Yaśobrahma. Dravya Śāha, who acquired the Kingdom of Gorkha by conquest was Yaśobrahma's second son.

Palpa was the most important of the Twenty-four Principalities as it had acquired, on lease from the Muslim rulers in Oudh (Awadh), extensive tracts of land in the Tarai. Butaul, at the feet of the mountains surrounding Palpa, was a thriving centre of trade and served as a source of commercial supplies, not only to Palpa but also to a large section of the hinterland in Central Nepal. Palpa was a much bigger kingdom until Argha, Khanchi and Gulmi seceded to become independent principalities. Branches of the Sena dynasty of Palpa ruled also the independent kingdoms of Makwanpur and Tanahuñ. The Makwanpur branch subsequently divided and created the independent kingdoms of Chaudandi and Vijayapur in the eastern Nepal Tarai and hills.

Northwest of Palpa was the principality of Parvat which was sometimes called Malebam after its ruler of that name. Its boundary touched Jumla in the west and Kaski in the east, and the principality also included areas in the trans-himalayan region in the north.

The Twenty-Two Principalities

The Twenty-two Principalities in the Karnali region were once part of the kingdom of the united Khasa Malla dynasty, with its summer capital at Siñja and its winter capital at Tallakot. Jumla proved to be the most powerful of the Twenty-two Principalities and controlled one or two principalities that lay in the Gandaki region. The principality of Mustang, founded in the 15th century and situated in the trans-himalayan region behind the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri range, came under the sway of Jumla in 1760 after intermittent warfare extending over a period of three centuries.

The Twenty-two Principalities that lie between the western-most boundary of Piuthan and the Mahakali River are listed as follows:³³

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Jumla | 7. Jajarkot | 13. Musikot | 19. Kalagaun |
| 2. Doti | 8. Baphi | 14. Khungrikot | 20. Gotam |
| 3. Bhajang | 9. Dang-Deukhuri | 15. Bhingrikot | 21. Goriakot |
| 4. Acham | 10. Phalebang | 16. Jahari | 22. Gajur |
| 5. Thallara | 11. Rolpa | 17. Chilli | |
| 6. Dailekh | 12. Rukumkot | 18. Malnetta | |

The Kingdoms in the Tarai

In the eastern Nepal tarai, there were as many as three kingdoms by the eighteenth century. The kingdom of Makwanpur, situated to the south of the Kathmandu Valley, included the present tarai districts of Bara, Parsa and Rautahat. It was ruled by the Sena rulers who belonged to one of the sub-branches of the Sena dynasty of Palpa.

The kingdom of Chaudandi contained the eastern tarai districts of Saptari, Siraha, Mahottari, Dhanusa, Sarlahi and also the eastern hill districts of Okhaldhunga and Bhojpur. East of the kingdom of Chaudandi was the powerful and extensive Kingdom of Vijayapur, which was ruled by a sub-branch of the Sena dynasty of Palpa, with the title of 'Hindūpati' or 'Overlord of the Hindus'. The kingdom of Vijayapur once contained within it the territory of Chaudandi. After the division, Vijayapur included the tarai districts of Morang, Sunsari, and Jhapa. In addition, it also exercised control over the far-eastern hill districts of Dhankuta, Panchtar, Taplejung, Therathum and Sankhuwa-Sabha. Although the Sena rulers of Makwanpur, Chaudandi and Vijayapur were originally

³³ *Ibid*, p. 268 ff.

connected with the Sena dynasty of Palpa and also with each other, these dynastic links seldom served any political purpose. However, the novel feature of the political set-up in Vijayapur was the acceptance of its ruler's authority by the autonomous Kirati units in the hills in return for the appointment of a hill-based Kirati minister by the Hindu kings in the tarai.

At the present time there is not sufficient information to sketch a connected outline of the historical developments within the various principalities of the different regions. We must, therefore, be content with this brief summary in our account of how they were all gradually incorporated in the expanding area dominated by the Gorkhalis, which eventually became the modern Kingdom of Nepal.

Banepa

We have already traced the development of the principality of Banepa or Bhonta with its royal line of '-deva' kings and the powerful ministers of the Rāma family. Banepa became one of the three independent kingdoms, along with Bhadgaun and Kathmandu, that arose out of the disintegration of the kingdom of the Kathmandu Valley after the death of Yakṣa Malla. Raṇa Malla, one of the sons of Yakṣa Malla, became the king of Banepa. He later returned to Bhadgaun to act as regent for his nephews and at his death Banepa was re-absorbed by the kingdom of Bhadgaun. There is some evidence that it was again separate under one Keśava Malla who appears to be a ruler of Banepa in A.D. 1539. From the time of Jagatprakāśa Malla (144-1673) of Bhadgaun the records clearly show Banepa being administered as a part of Bhadgaun.

Nuwakot

Nuwakot was a feudal principality situated about thirty miles to the west of Kathmandu. Its chiefs also ruled over the Kathmandu Valley in the early medieval times. Like so many of these feudal principalities, it attempted to assert its independence when the kings of the Valley were weak but officially remained under the Malla kings of the Valley. In the late Malla period it was the western outpost of the kingdom of Kathmandu and the first place attacked by the King of Gorkha.

Dolakha

Dolakha, which lies to the east of the Kathmandu Valley and was settled by Newars from the Valley, was long a very important centre. Most of the trading

expeditions going to Tibet passed through Dolakha. Dhanavajra Vajracarya and Tek Bahadur Shrestha have collected important documents from Dolakha which prove that an independent kingdom was established there for a century.³⁴

During King Yakṣa Malla's powerful reign the Dolakha region was governed by a feudatory ruler named Kīrti Siṃha. His last known date is A.D. 1474. Kīrti Siṃha's son, Udhava Deva, became independent of the central government during the period when Yakṣa Malla's successors were divided into various groups. Thus in 1491 Udhava Deva appears as a semi-independent ruler of Dolakha, though he was still loosely connected to the centre once again some years later.

Nanda Deva, Ujota Deva and Govinda Deva were the successors of Udhava Deva. Next comes the important name of Indra Siṃha Deva who probably began to rule in A.D. 1534. He issued a silver coin sometime before 1548 and thus became the first ruler in Nepali history, to issue a silver *mohara* coin. Indra Siṃha's successors maintained their political identity in Dolakha up to 1595 when the king of Kathmandu, Śiva Siṃha Malla, occupied Dolakha and placed it under his rule.

Conclusion

After the Licchavi period, Nepal became divided into several kingdoms. The Kathmandu Valley itself split into a number of political units. There were at least three independent kingdoms--Kathmandu, Bhadgaun and Patan--by the end of the fifteenth century. Even Banepa and Nuwakot to the east and the west respectively were able to assert their independence occasionally. In the Karnali region, the powerful kingdom of the Khasa Mallas came into existence by the twelfth century. It is not yet clear just when this kingdom disintegrated but by the sixteenth century there were at least forty-six principalities in the western part of Nepal. These included the Twenty-four Principalities in the Gandaki region of central Nepal, and the Twenty-two Principalities in the Karnali region. As we have seen, in the south and south-east, the kingdoms of Makwanpur, Chaudandi and Vijayapur emerged under the several branches of the Sena dynasty of Palpa. Chaudandi and Vijayapur, which respectively had their capitals in Saptari and Morang in the tarai, also included the tribal communities of the Kirātīs in the eastern hill region. Although the above states nominally recognised the supremacy of several of the more powerful among them, the Twenty-four and the Twenty-two Principalities were virtually independent and engaged in continual warfare. The chaotic state of relations

³⁴ Dhanavajra Vajracarya and Tek Bdr. Shrestha, *Dolakhāko Aitihāsik Rūprekhā* (Kathmandu, 2031 V.S.).

among these states prepared the way for the rise of the Gorkhalis and, ultimately, for the formation of the present-day state of Nepal.

THE KINGDOM OF KATHMANDU (c. 1484-1768)

Ratna Malla, who had become King of Kathmandu by 1482 following the disintegration of the central Kingdom of the Kathmandu Valley, was an energetic, ambitious and unscrupulous ruler. For some time he ruled over Patan also. He increased his authority by suppressing the rebellious Thakuri feudatories of Nuwakot and other areas, and with the assistance of Palpa, repulsed the Bhotia intrusions.

During Ratna Malla's rule, brahmins from South India and Mithila became prominent in the affairs of the court to the exclusion of local Hindu and Buddhist priests, but he did not neglect the worship and care of traditional goddesses. He circulated copper coins and exploited local copper mines for the purpose.

Ratna Malla died in the year A.D. 1520 and was succeeded by his son, Sūrya Malla (1520-1529). The later chronicles note an invasion of Nepal by one Mukunda Sena and give various dates for this invasion such as A.D. 1110 and A.D. 1258. This had long vexed Nepali historians and much effort was expended in trying to identify this king. A notation found on a manuscript copy of the *Nāradaśmṛiti* and recently published by Maheshraj and Dineshraj Pant notes two invasions of Mukunda Sena in the year A.D. 1526 and in the previous year. This fits, for at that time we know from other sources that Mukunda Sena was the king of Palpa. He attacked various places in the Valley and at one time had both Kathmandu and Patan surrounded. This happened, therefore, in the time of Sūrya Malla.³⁵

Sūrya Malla died in 1529 and was succeeded by his son Amara (Narendra) Malla (1629-1660). Both names for this king occur in various documents, and for a long time scholars thought that Amara and Narendra were different kings. It is now clear that they are one and the same. Amara Malla was a man of religious temperament. He patronized the dance of the goddess Harisiddhi and also revived other religious dances such as Mana Maijū, Haricoka Devī, Pacalī Bhairava, Navadūrgā, Bhadrakālī, and Kaṅkeśvarī.

Upon the death of Amara Malla, Mahendra Malla became king and ruled until his death in 1574. Mahendra Malla built the royal palace in Kathmandu on the model of the

³⁵ Mahesh and Dinesh Raj Pant, 'Nepālkhāldomā Pālpālī Rājā Mukunda Senko Hamalā,' *Pūrnimā* 45:7.

Bhadgaun palace, and in 1563 built the Taleju Temple within the palace complex. He issued silver *mohara* coins, and for a long time Nepali silver coins were so associated with his name that they were called *mahendramallis*. The first Nepali coin found in Tibet was that of Bhūpatindra Malla, king of Bhadgaun (1696-1722). This led both Sylvain Levi and Walsh to dismiss as a myth the accounts of the minting of coins by Mahendra Malla for circulation in Tibet, but since these silver *mohara* coins have now been found the theory is untenable. Following in the footsteps of Jayasthiti Malla, the illustrious King of the Kathmandu Valley, Mahendra Malla also laid down a code for regulating the social, economic and religious life and conduct of his subjects.

Mahendra Malla was succeeded by his eldest son Sadāśiva Malla (1574-c. 1578). Sadāśiva was notorious for his profligacy, and his half-brother Śivasimha was soon claiming the kingship. Finally this opposition from his brother and a general public outcry forced him to flee Kathmandu and seek shelter in Bhadgaun where he seems to have died in A.D. 1581. Śivasimha commenced to rule about 1578. He repaired the Swayambhu *stūpa* and the temple of Changunarayan. Śivasimha was an ambitious king. At the turn of the century he seized Patan where the successors of Viṣṇusimha had maintained an independent kingdom since the time of Ratna Malla and the disintegration of Yakṣa Malla's kingdom. After this he planned to expand eastward and occupied Dolakha where the Deva dynasty had been ruling an independent kingdom for a century. In Patan he had installed his son Hariharasimha as governor. When Hariharasimha died his wife conspired to have one of her sons, Siddhinarasimha, installed as governor. When Śivasimha died in A.D. 1617 he was succeeded by his elder grandson Lakṣminarasimha and the two grandsons split the kingdom. Thus Patan retained its independence, but now under a Malla king, no longer under its own rulers.

Lakṣminarasimha lost some of his territory to his brother as the area east of the Bagmati River was incorporated into Patan. Lakṣminarasimha, being a man of peaceful and quiet disposition, took no steps to regain this territory. He finally concluded a treaty of peace and friendship with his brother, Siddhinarasimha, King of Patan. Lakṣminarasimha himself strictly adhered to the treaty, but later he became insane and his son, Pratāpa Malla, captured some of the forts of Patan.

Because of his father's insanity Pratāpa Malla assumed effective power in the kingdom being formally recognised as king in A.D. 1641, long before his father's death in 1659. Pratāpa Malla had a very wise and experienced minister in one of his distant relatives of the royal family, one Kāji Bhīma Malla. Kāji Bhīma Malla conquered Dolakha, on the Kathmandu-Lhasa route, and also led a military expedition into Tibet. He overran Kuti and advanced toward Shigatse. Tibet sued for peace and a treaty was signed under which Kathmandu was given joint authority with Tibet in the border towns

of Kuti and Kerung. Newari merchants of the Kathmandu Valley were permitted to establish thirty-two trading houses in Tibet. This facilitated imports of silver and gold. Bhīma Malla arranged with the Tibetan authorities that escheat property of Nepali traders in Tibet should accrue to the Nepal (i.e. Kathmandu) government. These arrangements led to a considerable increase in the volume of Nepal's trade with Tibet.

The success of Kājī Bhīma Malla's expedition to Tibet provoked jealousy among the other courtiers. Hence two of his rivals, Mayasiṃha and Mahādeva Ojhā, hatched a successful plot to assassinate him. The story of the treachery worked on Bhīma Malla has become proverbial. At his funeral his wife uttered a curse (*satīko sarāp*) and this has become a proverb the import of which is: 'Selfless service to the country is ill-requited in Nepal'.

In the first half of the seventeenth century, as a result of the struggle for power among the various Tibetan Buddhist sects, Tibet was virtually in a state of anarchy. At this time, Nepal had two strong and ambitious kings: Rāma Śāha of Gorkha (c. 1606-1633) and Pratāpa Malla of Kathmandu (1641-1674). It was only natural that they should try to take advantage of Tibet's weakness to control the main trade routes between Nepal and Tibet. Incursions across the Tibetan border by Rāma Śāha and Pratāpa Malla probably took place in A.D. 1630 and 1649 respectively. Rāma Śāha's conquests in Tibet threatened the Valley's important trade route to Kerung. This necessitated immediate and bold action on the part of the Kathmandu Valley to preserve its near-monopoly in Nepal-Tibet trade. Hence Pratāpa Malla's determined and successful military campaign against Dambara Śāha, King of Gorkha (c. 1635-1642) at a time when Dambara Śāha was helping the Patan king, Siddhinarasiṃha Malla. Pratāpa Malla thus extended his sway over Kerung and Kuti. From the accounts of the Capuchin missionaries who passed through Nepal on their way to India and Europe from Tibet, we know that the commercial goods and products of Nepal were very much in demand in Tibet. To ensure Nepal's interests in the entrepot trade between India and Tibet, Pratāpa Malla also attacked Makwanpur, to the south-east, with the joint support of Patan and Bhadgaun, and imposed terms on it.

By conquering some of the forts of Patan, Pratāpa Malla forced Patan to sue for peace. Then with the help of Patan's king, Śrīnivāsa Malla, he invaded Bhadgaun. The war continued for two years, almost without a break. Pratāpa Malla carried the war to the very heart of Bhadgaun and inflicted considerable damage on its buildings. He thus forced King Jagatprakāśa Malla of Bhadgaun to accept his terms for peace.

Pratāpa Malla was a proud and ambitious king. He wanted to leave his mark on history. Inscriptions of hymns composed by him are found within the precincts of the

temples of Pashupatinath and Guhyeshwari, in the Buddhist shrine of Swayambhu and in many other places. The still extant Rānī Pokharī tank in Kathmandu was built by King Pratāpa Malla, towards the end of his rule, to console his queen after the death of their son Cakravartindra Malla. Water from holy places was poured into it so that the people might bathe and offer oblations to their gods and ancestors. He constructed many temples in the memory of his deceased wives. However, his primary motive in performing these acts was probably the perpetuation of his own memory.

Pratāpa Malla's vain glorious nature was apparent in everything he did. He assumed the title of 'Chief Among Poets' (*kavindra*), despite the fact that his poetry was of a rather mediocre quality. Poets and sycophants satisfied his vanity by paying tribute to him not only as a successful poet but also as an accomplished painter. He was extolled as 'proficient in all branches of learning and adept in the use of all kinds of weapons'. He put up a multi-script tablet of jumbled words in various languages and scripts, which did not make any sense and which was intended to be a concrete and lasting proof of his linguistic proficiency. This tablet can still be seen at the Hanūmān Dhokā Palace.

Though his knowledge of other subjects was also superficial, he was a patron of scholars and men of religion who gathered at his court from distant places in India. He sought to profit by their company and add to his own knowledge of various branches of learning. He was especially interested in Tantric lore and practices. Among the scholars in permanent attendance at his court was a tantric philosopher by the name of Jñānānanda from the Deccan, a Maharastrian magic teacher named Lambakarna Bhaṭṭa, a Tirhutiya logician by the name of Narasimha Thākur, a Tibetan Lama named Shāmarpa and a local scholar-priest by the name of Jāmana Gubhājū.

At the temple of Pashupatinath, in a religious ceremony called *tuladāna*, Pratāpa Malla once gave away in charity one hundred horses and his own weight in gold, silver, pearls and coral. It may be noted that the practice of giving away one's own weight in valuables as an act of charity was also prevalent in those days among the Mughal rulers of India. A drama called *Gīta-digamvaram* (a hymn to Mahādeva), was performed for the entertainment of those assembled to watch Pratāpa Malla make his religious donation. The drama, which bestowed fulsome praise on King Pratāpa Malla, was specially written by one Vamśamani Jhā for the purpose. Most of the Malla kings sponsored religious activities for the recreation and entertainment of their subjects. New religious processions, dances and plays provided healthy amusements which also served as vehicles of popular education. Though the later chronicles credit Pratāpa Malla with starting the White Matsyendranath procession in Kathmandu, it is clear he did not. There are references to the festival as early as A.D. 1627 early in the reign of his father. Yet it is

clear that he took part in this festival and patronized it. Thus, he shared with other kings of Nepal his devotion to both Hinduism and Buddhism.

Pratāpa Malla introduced reforms in the administration of justice. He imparted greater responsibility to the judge in deciding cases and permitted trial by ordeal only for capital offenses. He was proud of his marriage connection with the state of Kuch Bihar. Another wife, Rājamatī, was a princess of the Karnata dynasty of Tirhut. He also married Pārvatī, daughter of the Raja of Bhagavatipur, and Lālamatī, daughter of the Raja of Mahottari. He had a large number of other wives and mistresses as well.

Pratāpa Malla's fondness for women and for magical practices and incantations was, in part, a result of his interest in Tantric yoga and its practices. Chronicles relate how, by virtue of his courage and the power of his magic, he once removed an ancient book written in the blood of snakes (*nāga*) from the inner sanctum of the Śāntipūra shrine at Swayambhu and thus relieved the people of a prolonged drought. A still extant painting portrays and describes the scene. The king and his court had assembled to witness the removal of the book from the inner sanctum, where no one had dared enter for centuries, by the Vajracārya priest in charge of the shrine. The priest was too terrified to enter so the king agreed to accompany him. As they stepped across the threshold the Vajracārya fainted dead away and Pratāpa went on alone.

Legend ascribes even his death in 1674 to supernatural causes. When he was watching the Harisiddhi dance, he found a beautiful girl sitting next to him and made advances toward her. Alas, the girl turned out to be the goddess Harisiddhi herself, and Pratāpa Malla died instantly as he had incurred her displeasure.

Pratāpa Malla had several sons by his innumerable wives. He sought to make his favourite sons his heirs apparent. Unfortunately, his most favourite son, Cakravartindra Malla, died during his life time. His eldest son also predeceased him. As a result of his manipulations and favouritism, considerable misunderstanding arose on the question of succession after his death. Mahipatendra Malla, whom Pratāpa had wanted to be his successor, had finally to yield to his half-brother Nṛpendra Malla (1674-1680), as a result of a consensus reached between the royal family of Kathmandu and King Śrīnivāsa Malla of Patan. Śrīnivāsa Malla lent the services of an experienced minister named Chikutī to assist his grand-nephew Nṛpendra. With the help of Chikutī, Nṛpendra Malla ruled for six years without incident. He died, however, in A.D. 1680 without leaving any male issue.

Nṛpendra was succeeded by his brother Pārthivendra Malla (1680-1687) who replaced Chikutī with one Raut Bhakuta. Parthivendra resembled his father, Pratāpa Malla, in some ways. He erected statues of himself, his wives, his mother and his son.

He claimed the conquest of Sindhuli, fifty miles to the south-east, and called himself 'The King of Poets' (*kavirāja*).

When he died in 1687 Pārthivendra left the throne to an eight year old son, Bhūpālendra Malla (1687-1700). With the support of Bhūpālendra's mother, regent Queen Rddhilakṣmī, one Lakṣminārāyaṇa Jōśī became Chief Minister and the supreme authority in the realm. He even had his name inscribed on the reverse of Bhūpālendra's coins. As Lakṣminārāyaṇa had come into prominence after the removal of Chikutī as Minister during the time of King Pārthivendra, he considered the existence of men like Chikutī as a potential threat to his newly acquired power. Lakṣminārāyaṇa finally had Chikutī and one Vamśidhara, another prominent courtier from Patan, assassinated with the aid of two men called Kanu Ojhā and Badala Ojhā. These two men were members of the notorious family of Mahādeva Ojha, who had in similar circumstances, assassinated Kāji Bhīma Malla during Pratāpa Malla's reign. Having eliminated his potential rivals in this manner, Lakṣminārāyaṇa Jōśī carried on the administration with a strong and heavy hand, temporarily dominating even the kings of Bhadgaun and Patan. His overbearing manner, combined with widespread rumours about a liaison with Regent Queen Rddhilakṣmī excited the wrath and jealousy of the entire court as well as of the rulers of Bhadgaun and Patan. As a result he was assassinated in A. D. 1690.

After the assassination of Lakṣminārāyaṇa, Regent Queen Rddhilakṣmī continued to be the power behind the throne. However, King Bhūpālendra Malla soon began to have differences with his mother and, as he matured, he took over the entire administration. The young man was said to be fond of military activity, but his military campaigns, directed mainly against Patan and Bhadgaun, did not result in any territorial gains. He died in A.D. 1700 at the age of twenty-one while on a pilgrimage to Varanasi and Ayodhya.

Bhūpālendra was succeeded by another minor, his four year old son, Bhāskara Malla (A.D. 1700-1719). The dowager Queen Bhūvanalakṣmī functioned as Regent. At that time Patan also had a minor on the throne following the death of Yoganarendra Malla. Bhadgaun alone had, in Bhūpatindra Malla, an adult King with some experience of administration. Regent Queen Bhūvanalakṣmī maintained friendly relations with Bhadgaun without surrendering her independence in any way. At the same time, she maintained peace with Patan.

At this point our sources lead us into confusion for there are several references after 1714 to a king of Kathmandu in this period calling himself Mahendrasimha. Much effort has gone into trying to determine who this man was and where he came from. In fact Mahendrasimha is most probably another name for Bhāskara Malla. One of the later

chronicles, the *Bhāṣāvamśāvalī* actually states that Mahendrasimha's earlier name was Bhāskara.³⁶ Much more important, though, than a single reference in an often unreliable chronicle, is a series of overlapping contemporary sources which refer to the King of Kathmandu alternately now as Bhāskara now as Mahendrasimha with Bhāskara Malla being referred to as late as 1719. These were first pointed out several years ago by Shankar Man Rajvamsi.³⁷ Furthermore, we have abundant material from court records of this period on the births, initiations, marriages, etc. of members of the royal family of Kathmandu. No Mahendrasimha is mentioned in these records.

Bhāskara--Mahendrasimha also served as king of Patan from A.D. 1710-1715. He permitted Muslim musicians, perfumers and bangle dealers to settle in Kathmandu. He even appointed a Muslim as his minister, but this resulted in a popular uprising in the course of which all but five of the Muslim settlers were slaughtered. The date of Bhāskara Malla's death is not certain but by 1722 his successor was ruling.

The year 1722 saw new rulers in all three of the kingdoms of the Kathmandu Valley: Jagajjaya Malla in Kathmandu, Rañajita Malla in Bhadgaun and Yogaparakāśa Malla in Patan. Jagajjaya Malla (c. 1722-1733) had been adopted by Bhāskara-Mahendrasimha as his successor. He was the son of one Kumudini Devī, daughter of Mahipatendra Malla, a son of King Pratāpa Malla. Mahipatendra Malla had been deprived of his right of succession and died a fugitive during the reign of his brother Pārthivendra Malla. Jagajjaya inscribed the names of both his mother, Kumudini, and his maternal grandfather, Mahipatendra, on his coins. He also received tribute from the kings of Morang and Makwanpur.

Rajendra Malla, Jagajjaya's eldest son and heir apparent, died before his father, but Jagajjaya had four other sons: Jayaparakāśa Malla, Rājyaparakāśa Malla, Narendraprakāśa Malla and Candraprakāśa Malla. In 1722 Jagajjaya Malla granted permission to Capuchin missionaries to work in Kathmandu. He fought with King Bhūpatindra Malla of Bhadgaun very often, but was at peace with Patan, because his daughter was married to the king of Patan, Viṣṇu Malla.

Jayaparakāśa Malla ascended the throne in 1734 after his father's death. Even before he became king, Khasa military officers from the hills who served in his army had shown

³⁶ Deviprasad Lamsal, ed., *Bhāṣā Vamśāvalī* (Kathmandu, 2033 V.S.), p. 101.

³⁷ Shankar Man Rajvamsi, 'Mahindrasimha (Bhāskara) Mallako Tāmrapatra ra Thyasko Aitihāsik Vyākhyā', *Pūrṇimā* 11:55-60. See also Mohan Prasad Khanal, 'Rājā Bhāskara Malla (Mahindra Simha)kā Viśayamā Samsodhan ra Nirṇaya', *Ancient Nepal* 9(Oct. 1969):47-52.

their dislike for him. They expressed their preference for Jagajjaya's second son, Rajyaprakāśa. Naturally, therefore, Jayaprakāśa looked upon these officers with suspicion. As if to confirm his suspicions, they soon hatched a plot to dethrone him. They induced his younger brother, Narendraprakāśa, to declare himself an independent king in the north-eastern part of the kingdom, i.e. in Sankhu and Changu. It took Jayaprakāśa four months to put down this rebellion.

If Jayaprakāśa did not trust his Khasa officers from the hills, he was no more satisfied with the nobles of his father's time, like Shuka Bha. He appointed one Ranavira Thāpā, from the eastern hill district of Palanchok as Chief Officer of the court in place of Shuka Bha. In 1744 Prthvinārāyana Śāha of Gorkha, who had ascended the throne in 1742 year, wrested Nuwakot from Kathmandu. When Kāsīrāma Thāpā and other Thāpā officers of Palanchok failed to recover Nuwakot from Gorkha, Jayaprakāśa suspected them of being in league with Prthvinārāyana. Kāsīrāma Thāpā was punished with death along with his associates. This turned the influential Thāpā family of Palanchok against Jayaprakāśa. Kāsīrāma Thāpā's younger brother, Paraśurāma Thāpā, therefore went over to Prthvinārāyana Śāha.

Jayaprakāśa also ordered the execution of an old officer called Dati. At this, Dati's brother, Taudika, sought asylum in the Patan court. Jayaprakāśa thus made enemies of both the Khasa and the Newari officers of his court. He began to rely more and more on his Maithili Brahman advisors, and on the troops recruited in the Indian plains and the distant hills of Doti.

King Ranajita Malla (1722-1769) of Bhadgaun was openly hostile to Jayaprakāśa Malla. Unwittingly, Ranajita Malla was cooperating in Prthvinārāyana Śāha's move to blockade the Valley. Jayaprakāśa was not even on good terms with his own brother, King Rajyaprakāśa Malla of Patan, because the latter had given refuge to disgruntled officials of the Kathmandu court like Taudika.

Gorkha's troops occupied Sankhu and Gokarna, near Kathmandu, in 1746 and Jayaprakāśa Malla suffered tremendous loss of face as a result. Naturally there was great unrest among the people of the Kathmandu Valley. Ranajita Malla of Bhadgaun kept quiet because of his prior understanding with Prthvinārāyana Śāha. Patan took quick action and rushed troops to relieve Gokarna and Sankhu. These troops also succeeded in dethroning Jayaprakāśa Malla and replacing him with his minor son, Jyotiprakāśa Malla, under the regency of his mother, Dayāvati from 1746-1752. Taudika became minister of the court in Kathmandu and he forced the Gorkhalis to retreat beyond the Sanga pass.

Jayaprakāśa remained in exile for at least four years with a few loyal officers. His resumption of power was facilitated by the scandalous affair of his wife, Dayāvati, with an officer called Garudadhvaja. Taudika withdrew his support from Dayavati, and Garudadhvaja was assassinated. After regaining power, Jayaprakāśa imprisoned his wife as a punishment for her complicity in the plot against him. Taudika once again went into exile.

After Jayaprakāśa regained his throne in 1752, he tried his best to counter the moves of Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha designed to weaken the defense of the Kathmandu Valley. With the support of Bhadgaun and Patan, Jayaprakāśa went to the assistance of Kirtipur when it was attacked by the Gorkhali troops in 1757 and 1764. On both occasions the Gorkhali attacks were repulsed successfully. Prthvinārāyaṇa's strategy against the Valley had much advanced by 1764. In 1762 he had attacked Makwanpur. This made it possible for him to block the southern entrance to the Kathmandu Valley. Even before Gorkha's 1758 treaty with Kathmandu which negotiated the sharing of the revenue from trade with Tibet, Prthvinārāyaṇa had acquired full control of Kabhrepalanchok and Sindhupalchok, on the main trade route to Lhasa through the Kuti pass. Thus the Kathmandu Valley was blockaded from all sides.

Despite Jayaprakāśa's repeated pleas for unity in the face of Gorkha's menace, the nobles of Patan invited Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha to be their king. Prthvinārāyaṇa sent his brother, Dalmardana Śāha, instead. Dalmardana ruled Patan until 1765, when he was forced to flee because of Prthvinārāyaṇa's refusal to lift his blockade. Enraged at these developments, Jayaprakāśa had several important ministers of Patan, including Kājīs Bhinkwa and Dhanavanta assassinated. Gratified with its share in Prthvinārāyaṇa's conquests in and around the Valley, Bhadgaun cooperated with him from the very beginning. The Thāpās of Palanchok were from the start in league with the Gorkhalis. To make matters worse for Jayaprakāśa, his court was overrun with agents and informers of Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha.

Faced with this situation, Jayaprakāśa requested the armed assistance of the East India Company Government against Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha. However, the Company's troops, his last hope against the Gorkhalis, retreated from near Sindhuli in 1767 when monsoon rains, floods and malaria prevented their onward march after they had been thoroughly routed by the Gorkhalis who simply rolled rocks down on them as they tried to fight their way up the hills. One result of this encounter was that the Gorkhalis acquired a number of 'modern' weapons abandoned by the retreating seypoys.

On 26th September 1768, Jayaprakāśa fled the palace when he belatedly found out that Prthvinārāyaṇa's take-over was imminent. He tried to organize resistance against

Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha from Patan. After Patan surrendered to the Gorkhalis in November of 1768, he made his way to Bhadgaun with King Tejanarasimha Malla of Patan. Jayaprakāśa finally aroused the patriotic feelings of the Kathmandu Valley as a whole and compelled even the mild and complacent King Ranajita Malla of Bhadgaun to stage a last ditch fight against the Gorkhalis in 1769. Jayaprakāśa bravely met his death from injuries he received in the last battle.

Jayaprakāśa Malla was called upon to meet not only the challenge of Prthvinārāyaṇa but also that of adverse circumstances. Admittedly, he was impulsive by nature, but if we see his personality against the background of the treachery of his officers, the active assistance they received from Bhadgaun and Patan, and the organized attack of Prthvinārāyaṇa, he appears to be a remarkable man. Jayaprakāśa's long rule in Kathmandu was a constant struggle with internal as well as external enemies. Even the prospect of a fight on a double front, rendered all the more grim by internecine disputes, did not daunt him. To his last hour, he faced the situation with fortitude and equanimity, and tried his best to meet it with all his strength and intelligence. Although his patriotism may appear parochial, from the modern point of view, it was nonetheless real.

THE KINGDOM OF PATAN (c. 1536-1768)

Patan, which was also sometimes called Lalitpur or Lalitapatanna ('Beautiful City'), had probably been the capital of Nepal during much of the medieval period.³⁸ It had accumulated a wealth of art, architecture and sculpture during the Licchavi, Thakuri and early Malla periods. Early on though, the Malla kings lost effective control of the city of Patan. There were seven feudatory families in Patan, referred to in earlier sources as the *Pradhānāṅgas* or the *mahāpātras* and in the later inscriptions as the *pramanas*. As early as A.D. 1383, in the reign of Ananta Malla, we find two of these feudatories, Anantapāla Varman and Ujotpāla Varman, administering Patan. They recognized the sovereignty of the Malla king, but were strong enough to maintain effective control of the city.

The kings who followed Ananta Malla were weak, and there was political confusion throughout the Valley. During this period of confusion the *pramānas*

³⁸ Much of the history of Patan has been clarified by the following four articles: Dhanavajra Vajracarya, 'Cautāra Bhagirata Bhaiyā', *Pūrṇimā* 5:21-31; 'Yognarendra Mallako Rajyābhiṣek', *Pūrṇimā* 9:17-22; Sankar Man Rājvamis 'Yognarendra Mallakā Uttardhikāri', *Pūrṇimā* 6:37-44, 'Siddhinarasimha Mallabhandā Agardikā Patankā Sāsakarūkā Kehi Tāptra', *Pūrṇimā* 12:17-22.

strengthened their position. Political stability returned with the reign of Jayasthiti Malla. Though Patan was the first of the cities to recognize Jayasthiti and gave him the full royal titles, throughout his reign Patan continued to be controlled by three of the *pramānas* from these seven feudatory families. The situation remained the same right through the reign of Yakṣa Malla. There is evidence to show that King Ratna Malla (A.D. 1482-1520), along with his brothers Rāma Malla and Ari Malla, exercised some authority in Patan before Ratna Malla became sole king of Kathmandu. Within a decade after Ratna Malla's death, though, (certainly by 1536) Patan had become autonomous under the leadership of Viṣṇusimha, one of the *pramānas*. Jayasimha and his son Kirtisimha are mentioned as Viṣṇusimha's ancestors. Kuśumasimha, son of Kirtisimha, married one Jayalakṣmī, who was a *vaiśya* or a member of the trading class. Out of this union was born Viṣṇusimha. It is interesting to find Viṣṇusimha emphasizing his mother's *vaiśya* origin at a time when other rulers were desirous of linking their ancestry with some illustrious *kṣatriya* lineage or personage. Jayasimha, Viṣṇusimha's father, was a member of one of the leading feudal families responsible for the administration of Patan.

Viṣṇusimha lived until A.D. 1556 when he was succeeded by his three sons: Narasimha, Purandarsimha and Uddhavasimha who ruled jointly until at least 1572. By 1582 Purandarsimha had become sole ruler of Patan. Though Viṣṇusimha referred to himself merely as *mahāpātra*, and in an inscription of 1551 his sons use this title plus 'Feudal Overlord of Patan' (*maṇigalādhipati*) for him, the sons adopted the royal title of *mahārājadhira*. Yet they could not retain their supremacy for long. Viṣṇusimha's son, Purandarsimha, was defeated by Śivasimha Malla of Kathmandu, and Patan was incorporated into the state of Kathmandu. As the last available document of Purandarsimha is dated A.D. 1596 and the first reference to Śivasimha as king of Patan is dated A.D. 1599, the conquest must have taken place between 1596 and 1599.

Śivasimha Malla appointed his son, Hariharasimha as Governor of Patan in his name. After the death of Hariharasimha, Śivasimha assumed administration of Patan himself. When Śivasimha died in 1617 he was succeeded in Kathmandu by his elder son Lakṣminarasimha; and his younger son Siddhinarasimha assumed the administration of Patan. In A.D. 1620 the two brothers concluded a treaty of friendship and cooperation which clearly shows that by this time Kathmandu and Patan were separate kingdoms.

Siddhinarasimha (c.1618-1661) was the son of Hariharasimha Malla by his younger wife, Lālamatidēvi. He ascended the throne as a minor and his mother acted as his Regent. He maintained amicable relations with his brother Lakṣminarasimha, king of Kathmandu. Relations between the two states became strained only when Lakṣminarasimha's son and heir, Pratāpa Malla (A.D. 1641-1674), became king of

Kathmandu. Unlike his father, Pratāpa Malla was not reconciled to the partition of the kingdom of Kathmandu. He caused constant pin pricks to Patan by capturing its border forts. This aggressive policy was curbed only because Kathmandu needed Patan's support against Bhadgaun.

Siddhinarasimha Malla was on excellent terms with the King of Gorkha, Rāma Śāha. The kings pledged not only friendship and fraternity to each other but also agreed to have a joint successor should one of them die without a male heir. Siddhinarasimha must have maintained friendship with the rulers of the Indian plains and the Nepal tarai also. His wife, Bhānumatī, came from the plains, and his daughter, Bhīmalakṣmī, settled there after her marriage.

Siddhinarasimha Malla was a man of religious disposition. He lived an austere and abstemious life, though he too had a liberal outlook on religion. He was as much devoted to the gods and goddesses of Shaivism and Vaishnavism as to the manifold deities of the Buddhist Vajrayāna cult. He constructed the famous temple of Krishna in front of the Royal Palace at Lalitpur in A.D. 1636. Like the other Malla kings he too was a votary of Taleju. He regularly practised charity and performed ritualistic fire-ceremonies called *koryāhuti*. He was also interested in dance and drama and initiated the Kartika dance-drama sequence depicting the events of the *Rāmāyana*. He wrote devotional songs in Maithili called *Bhanitas Nṛsimha* and *Nṛpasimha*. He also wrote a dance drama in mixed Bengali and Maithili called *Hariścandranṛtyam* which was staged in 1651.

Siddhinarasimha's son, Śrīnivāsa, was born in A.D. 1627 and as soon as the boy approached adolescence his father involved him in the administration of the state. This seems to have been partly a scheme to train the boy for the tasks of ruling and partly the result of a desire to withdraw gradually from the business of government to devote himself to religious exercises. Already by 1641 Śrīnivāsa was sharing administrative responsibilities with his father. By 1649 he is listed as joint ruler with his father. In 1652 Siddhinarasimha set off on a two-year pilgrimage to India. In 1658 an agreement with King Pratāpa Malla of Kathmandu was signed in the name of Śrīnivāsa Malla. Siddhinarasimha finally abdicated to go and spend his remaining days in religious retirement. Most probably this took place in 1661, the date of a medal of Śrīnivāsa which may commemorate his coronation. The date of Siddhinarasimha's death is not known, but his name appears again on an inscription of 1676, so it was some time after that date.

Upon the death of his Chief Minister, Viśvarāma Bhāro, Śrīnivāsa Malla appointed one Kīrtisimha Rājkulabhājū Chautāra to this post. However, his best known Chief Minister was a man known as Bhagiratha Bhaiyā who served him loyally. Śrīnivāsa

himself referred to him as his alter ego; 'There is no difference between him and me', he said; and in fact all edicts and inscriptions bear the names of both men. We have no information on who Bhagiratha was or where he came from. From the references it is clear that he was not a member of the royal family or of the nobility. Certainly he was not from the seven noble families of Patan and he may well have been an outsider.

Śrīnivāsa Malla's kingdom touched the boundaries of Gorkha and Tanahū in the west and Gajuripeda in the north-west. It included Dhunibesi and the adjoining areas beyond Lamidanda. In 1658, King Jagatprakāśa Malla (A.D. 1647-72) of Bhadgaun captured a military outpost on the Kathmandu-Bhadgaun frontier. This incident began a war which ended four years later in 1662 when peace was restored through Patan's mediation. However, the success of Patan's mediatory role led Kathmandu to abrogate its agreement of peace and friendship with that kingdom. It was now Bhadgaun's turn to side with Patan against Kathmandu. In 1672 Patan and Bhadgaun jointly attacked Kathmandu but were immediately repulsed by Pratāpa Malla.

In 1671 Patan led a military expedition to the tarai single-handedly. A military commander, Jaga Bania, captured Śubhasimha, son of Raja Harihara Sena of Morang. Between 1672 and 1675 there was regular war between Makwanpur and a coalition of the forces of Patan, Bhadgaun, Gorkha and Tanahu forged by Śrīnivāsa Malla to meet the challenge. Morang also sided with Patan in the latter's war with Makwanpur, notwithstanding the fact that Morang and Makwanpur were ruled by the same branch of the Sena family. Their combined action against Makwanpur resulted in small territorial gains for both Patan and Bhadgaun.

After the death of King Pratāpa Malla of Kathmandu in 1674 Śrīnivāsa Malla became the leading figure in the Kathmandu Valley. His influence was greatest in Kathmandu where he forced the accession of Nṛpendra Malla (the elder son of Pratāpa) instead of Mahīpatendra whom Pratāpa Malla had designated as his successor. He was able to seat and unseat ministers in Kathmandu at will. He arranged the return to Kathmandu of the famous courtier called Cikuti, who had been forced to flee to Patan in the time of King Pratāpa Malla, and made him a high ranking official. His influence also extended to Bhadgaun whose king was also a minor, and finally he began to call himself 'The Lord of Nepal' (*nepaleśvara*).

Like his father, Siddhinarasimha Malla, Śrīnivāsa Malla made a large number of religious endowments. Although a devotee of Shiva, he bestowed generous land-grants on the temple of Bunga-dya (Matsyendranatha). With his wife, Mṛgavati, he set up an image of his tutelary goddess, Taleju, in the main quadrangle of the palace.

Śrīnivāsa Malla was also fond of literature, dance and drama. He wrote a seven-act play called 'The Drama of the Killing of Kāṃsa' (*Kāṃsabadhanātakam*) and vigorously carried on the tradition of the Kartik dance-drama sequence introduced by his father. He promulgated rules for the conduct of religious and social rites, especially for mourning and purification, and, according to one of the later chronicles, he made new arrangements for all of the Buddhist foundations in his territory which have remained in force until the present time.

Śrīnivāsa's son Yoganarendra was born in A.D. 1667 and like his father before him, was brought into the administration at an early age. In this case, though, it was not so much the father's doing as the son's impatience and intrigue. He began to spend money independently and to play off the *pramāṇas* against his father's advisors, especially against Bhagiratha Bhaiyā whom he resented. Eventually he was disgraced by his liaisons with low women and by engaging in a partnership with a common merchant. Disgraced by the public scandal of his son's life, Śrīnivāsa Malla's mood of despondency deepened when he lost his mother in 1679 and one of his wives two years later. The frequent breakdown of the Matsyendranath Chariot at the time of the festival, bode ill for the future to Śrīnivāsa's mind. All this led Śrīnivāsa to abdicate the throne in disgust to save the kingdom from further intrigue. Yoganarendra was crowned in December of 1685. The transfer of power was smooth and peaceful, as had been the case twenty-four years earlier, when Siddhinarasiṃha made over the kingdom to his son Śrīnivāsa Malla. Śrīnivāsa Malla continued to play a mediatory role among the three kingdoms whenever necessary until his death in 1687.

Yoganarendra Malla (1685-1705) was eighteen when he became king and one of his first acts was to get rid of Bhagiratha Bhaiyā. He concocted a charge against Bhagiratha Bhaiyā which turned the populace against him and forced him to resign. Shortly after this he was murdered. Yoganarendra then appointed as his Chief Minister one Vamsidhara, a brother of his favorite mistress and a member of one of the seven families who had so long controlled Patan in the past.

After Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa Jośī, Minister of the Kathmandu court, acquired a dominant position in the affairs of the whole of the Kathmandu Valley, Patan temporarily sided with Kathmandu against Bhadgaun. The king of Bhadgaun, Jagatprakāśa Malla (A.D. 1647-72), stubbornly resisted Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa's pressure by refusing to dismiss his minister Bhagirāma. Patan strengthened Kathmandu's blockade of Bhadgaun until Bhagirāma fell a victim to popular disaffection in Bhadgaun itself. By 1689 Patan had changed sides and joined Bhadgaun in attacking Kathmandu. However, in 1690 Patan waged a war of its own against both Bhadgaun and Kathmandu. Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa Jośī was assassinated in 1690, and the Kathmandu Valley then saw a brief spell of peace.

In 1692 King Yoganarendra Malla raided Makwanpur in collusion with Kathmandu and Bhadgaun. This alliance did not last long, however, for Bhadgaun and Kathmandu soon forged an alliance against Patan in 1696. Then, when the King of Kathmandu was away on an elephant-catching expedition in the tarai, Patan won over Bhadgaun to its side and went into action against Kathmandu.

In 1697, the rulers of the three kingdoms of the Valley, Yoganarendra Malla of Patan, Bhūpālendra Malla of Kathmandu, and Bhūpatindra Malla of Bhadgaun had made a joint proclamation banning every kind of contact with the members of the Ojhā family--Mahādeva, Kantu, Śyāma, Guni and Gaṅgadhara--and holding them responsible for the perpetual state of strife and dissension in the Kathmandu Valley.³⁹ The immediate charge against the Ojhā family was that of plotting against the life of King Bhūpālendra of Kathmandu with a view to driving a wedge between Patan and Kathmandu. But the members of the Ojhā family were then blamed for everything that had gone wrong in the Kathmandu Valley since Pratāpa Malla's death in 1674. Whatever may have been the role of the Ojhās in the politics of the Kathmandu Valley, the proclamation of the kings was only an attempt to find scapegoats for their sins and those of their fathers.

Yoganarendra Malla loved poetry and music and assumed high-sounding titles such as 'Proficient in All Branches of Learning', and 'Well-versed in Dance, Art, and Music'. He also boasted of his skill in the practice of the art of eroticism or *kāmakala*. He was a man of loose sexual morals and given to profligacy. He was devoted to the goddesses Taleju and Harisiddhi, but also worshipped Lokanātha Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Matsyendranath), the Buddhist deity. He also performed Hindu religious ceremonies.

Yoganarendra Malla died in 1705 at the age of 38 having been poisoned, evidently by the people of Bhadgaun whose fort of Wabhu he had under siege. Despite his numerous wives, Yoganarendra died without a legitimate male heir to succeed him. He was succeeded by his daughter Yogamati's infant son Lokaparakāśa, and Yogamati then came to play a prominent role in Patan politics. Lokaparakāśa ruled for only about eleven months when he died of small pox. He was succeeded by Indra Malla (1706-1709), a son of Yoganarendra Malla's elder sister Maṇimati and her husband Buddha Malla. The name of Indra Malla's wife, Bhāgyavati, appears on the reverse of his coin.

Indra Malla ruled only three years dying in 1709. On the day after his death Mahindra Malla (1709-1715), an illegitimate son of Yoganarendra Malla was crowned. He

³⁹ See the section on the Kingdom of Kathmandu.

had been born and raised in Tanahū where his mother, Rājyeśvaridevī, had gone to have her child shortly before the death of Yoganarendra. He returned to Patan with his mother, who acted as regent, but had a short reign of only about five years when he too died of small pox. At this point, though, our sources lead to confusion. There is a coin dated 1709 bearing the name of one King Vīranarasimha, and a land deed of the same year which refers to King Viranarsimha. A contemporary account sheds some light on the confusion. With the death of Indra Malla there was a struggle for power between Yogamatī and Rājyeśvaridevī. Yogamatī and her faction tried to set up Vīranarasimha as the king and issued coins in his name. We know nothing about this man except that he was a protege of Yogamatī. The theory that he was her husband needs to be further substantiated.⁴⁰ Thus for a time there may have been two rival claimants to the throne, but Vīranarasimha certainly lost out soon. His name appears again on a land document of A.D. 1715 but in this document Rddhinarasimha is listed as the King and Vīranarasimha is referred to, without royal title, as a witness to the document.

Hrdhinarasimha (or Rddhinarasimha) (1715-1717) was the next king of Patan. He was the son of one Rudra Malla and grandson of Rudramatī, Śrinivāsa Malla's daughter and Yoganarendra Malla's sister. He died two years later in 1717. At his death there was no legitimate heir and a plan was hatched to bring a king from one of the other two kingdoms. Finally, Mahendrasimha, king of Kathmandu, was made the king of both Kathmandu and Patan with the help of Yoganarendra's influential daughter, Yogamatī, even though Patan's ministers favoured Rañajita Malla who was then the heir apparent of Bhadgaun. In 1719 Bhūpatindra Malla, King of Bhadgaun (1696-1722), attacked Patan but suffered a costly defeat because his son, Rañajita Malla, was captured by the enemy. Rañajita was freed only on payment of a ransom of Rs. 14,000.00 and two elephants.

Mahendrasimha ruled Patan until his death, most probably in 1722. He was succeeded by Yogaparakāśa Malla (1722-1729). We do not know who Yogaparakāśa Malla was and how he gained the throne. Like Vīranarasimha Malla, he was probably a distant relative of the ruling Malla family or a protege of Yogamatī Devī. He proved to be a weak and ineffective ruler. King Rañajita Malla of Bhadgaun bribed Jagajjaya Malla of Kathmandu to join him in a military campaign against Patan. Jagajjaya took the bribe but then linked forces with Gorkha against Bhadgaun and succeeded in extorting from Bhadgaun a ransom of two elephants and Rs. 24,000.00.

⁴⁰ An inscription of N.S. 820 (A.D. 1700) which lists a number of donors and their geonology notes one Virasimha who is the son of a daughter (Bhīmakalśmī) of Siddhinarasimha. He may be the same as Vīranarasimha. See Hem Raj Sakya and Tulsi Ram Vaidya, *Medieval Nepal, Colophons and Inscriptions (Kathmandu, 1970) p., xxii, 187-88.*

As Yogaparakāśa Malla died childless, Viṣṇu Malla (1729-1745), son of King Indra Malla's sister Puṇyamati and one Darasiṃha, ascended the throne of Patan. Viṣṇu Malla's mother, Puṇyamati, was a daughter of Śrīnivāsa Malla's daughter, Maṇimati. He strengthened his political position by marrying Candralakṣmī, daughter of King Jagajjaya Malla of Kathmandu. Viṣṇu Malla and Jagajjaya Malla, with the support of Gorkha, attacked Bhadgaun in 1730 and wrested Nala and Sanga from Raṇajita Malla who later recovered those places with the help of Tanahu. Meanwhile, Gorkha, Tanahu and Lamjung started intervening in the politics of the Kathmandu Valley. Gorkha's active interest in developments inside the Valley disturbed both Lamjung and Tanahu. Viṣṇu Malla performed acts of religious piety, built temples and endowed them with land. In 1734 he reconstructed the royal palace of Patan.

As Viṣṇu Malla had no child of his own, he adopted his wife's brother, Rājyaparakāśa Malla, as his heir apparent. At Viṣṇu Malla's death in 1745 Rājyaparakāśa became king and ruled for thirteen years. His was an eventful reign. The court officials of Patan and Kathmandu entered into conspiracies together to the detriment of their supposed masters. These courtiers, so adept at underhand dealings, proved ineffective in meeting the new challenge posed by Gorkha. During the reign of Rājyaparakāśa Malla and for eight years after his death the *pramāṇas* were once more securely entrenched in their position. Little did they think that they would also be dislodged in due course.

Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha of Gorkha proved more than a match for these courtiers in the art of intrigue. In a clever move to widen the gulf between Patan and Kathmandu, he wrested Lamidanda from Tanahū on Patan's behalf. The courtiers of Patan were naturally pleased with him. But subsequently Prthvinārāyaṇa kept Lamidanda for himself on the understanding that the people of Patan would be permitted to collect fire-wood and fodder from the forests of Lamidanda.

Rājyaparakāśa Malla, already helpless against the powerful officials of his court, became blind in 1752. Possibly the courtiers had a hand in blinding him. Before he died in 1758, Dahachok, Thankot, Balambu, Satingal and Pharping had already fallen into Prthvinārāyaṇa's hands. The courtiers of Patan then put Viśvajita Malla on the throne. He was, according to a chronicle, the son of Viṣṇu Malla's sister, though probably his own family did not have any standing since the ancestry of Viśvajita Malla is unclear. He was only eighteen years old when he became king and he reigned for only two years and nine months. He was assassinated by a minister's son with whose wife he was living.

After the assassination of Viśvajita Malla in 1760, the courtiers of Patan invited King Jayaparakāśa Malla of Kathmandu to become king of Patan, but they found Jayaparakāśa too clever and energetic for them. They therefore replaced him in less than a

year's time by King Raṇajita Malla of Bhadgaun. Raṇajita Malla remained King of Patan for hardly a year and half when the *pramānas* once again invited Jayaprakāśa Malla to be their king. This lasted for less than six months. Later, Jayaprakāśa put Kājīs Dhanavanta and Bhinkwa of Patan to death after Prthvinārāyaṇa attacked Kirtipur. In 1764 the *pramānas* invited Prthvinārāyaṇa himself to be King of Patan, but he sent his brother, Dalmardana Śāha, instead. Before the year 1765 had passed, Dalmardana was thrown out by the *pramānas* because Prthvinārāyaṇa refused to lift his economic blockade of Patan. In April-May of 1765 Tejanarasimha Malla was placed on the throne of Patan. He was the last Malla king of Patan, for Patan was conquered by Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha in October of 1768 after which Tejanarasimha Malla fled with Jayaprakāśa of Kathmandu to Bhadgaun where the combined forces of the three kings were defeated in November of the following year by Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha.

THE KINGDOM OF BHADGAUN (1496-1769)

After the partition of the Kathmandu Valley among Yakṣa Malla's sons, the kingdom of Bhadgaun consisted of Changu, Sanga, Nakades, Thimi and Bode as well as the town of Bhadgaun itself. By 1496 Raya Malla was the sole ruler of Bhadgaun. At his death in 1505 he was succeeded by his son Bhūvana Malla, a minor. Raṇa Malla, who then ruled the separate kingdom of Banepa, returned to Bhadgaun to assist his nephew. When he died childless Banepa was reabsorbed by Bhadgaun.

Bhūvana Malla's rule was followed by the joint rule of Jīta Malla and Prāṇa Malla (1518-c. 1545). However, from 1534 Prāṇa Malla ruled alone. Nothing definite can be said about the relationship between Jīta Malla and Prāṇa Malla. There is not a single document of the period in which Jīta Malla figures alone, whereas there are at least ten documents that mention Prāṇa Malla alone. This has led some writers to infer that Jīta Malla may have been Prāṇa Malla's younger brother, and that he was mentioned only out of courtesy along with his elder brother, the *de facto* and *de jure* ruler. However, whenever both names occur, Jīta Malla is mentioned first. The precedence given to Jīta Malla in this way has led one author to conclude that he may have been an uncle of Prāṇa Malla.

Prāṇa Malla's son and successor, Viśva Malla (c. 1545-1559), and his queen, Gaṅgā Rānī, were noted for their religious deeds. Viśva Malla made additions and repairs to the temple of Dattātreya and also set up a monastery for Shaiva ascetics. Viśva Malla was succeeded by his son, Trailokya Malla (c. 1560-1614). Trailokya is mentioned along with his younger brother, Trivhuvana Malla, in some of his inscriptions. The dowager queen, Gaṅgā Rānī, who was running the country's administration during the

reign of her son, Trailokya, probably wanted both of her sons to be mentioned in the inscriptions. But the fact that Trailokya is mentioned as the predecessor of the Bhadgaun kings in genealogies leaves no room for doubt that he was the eldest son and the reigning monarch.

Trailokya Malla was succeeded by his son, Jagajjyotira Malla (c.1614-1637) who was a great lover of music, poetry, drama and dance. He was conversant with the Bharat school of Indian music. He initiated the Bisket festival of Bhairava, which is observed to this day in Bhadgaun. He authored a treatise on music called *Sanġitabhāskara* in collaboration with Vamṣamani Jhā, who also wrote for the Kathmandu Court two plays in Maithili, *Gītādigamvara* and *Muditamadālāsā*. Jagajjyotira Malla compiled a collection of songs in Sanskrit called *Gītapañcasika*. He also composed the *Dasāvātāra Nr̥tya*, a religious poem. He is credited with the authorship of three dramas in Maithili, *Muditakuvalayāśva*, *Hara Gaurivivāha*, and *Kuñjavihārinātaka*. Despite the defects in language, the last two plays, in the opinion of Sylvain Levi, approach the standard of the plays of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti in their wealth of melody and imagery. Jagajjyotira Malla also wrote a commentary on Vatsayana's *Kāmasūtra*, the well-known Sanskrit treatise on sex.

Nareśa Malla (c.1637-1643), called Narendra Malla by later chronicles, succeeded his father Jagajjyotira. Nareśa Malla was once defeated in battle by Pratāpa Malla, King of Kathmandu. At his death in 1643 he was succeeded by his son Jagatprakāśa Malla (1643-1672), a boy of less than five years. Though it is not clear who ran the administration during his childhood two different Chief Ministers are mentioned Dhanadasimha and Viśva Bhāro. As a young man his Chief Minister was Candrasēkhara Siṃha Bhājū. Although very little is known about Candrasēkhara Siṃha's achievements, he is mentioned and highly praised by King Jagatprakāśa Malla in a number of inscriptions from this period in his life. From 1660 on Jagatprakāśa Malla suffered a series of defeats at the hands of King Pratāpa Malla of Kathmandu. After being rescued by King Śrīnivāsa Malla of Patan from a precarious situation, Jagatprakāśa acknowledged his gratitude to the Patan king in verse.

Jagatprakāśa Malla had a taste for poetry and music. He called himself 'King of Poets' (*kavindra*) and 'Teacher and Master of Music' (*gandharvavidyaguru*.) He composed a collection of poems called *Nānāraṅgagītaśaṅgraha* when he was very young. His other known works are *Padyasamucchaya* and *Gītapañcaka*. He died at the age of thirty four in the year 1672 leaving two young sons.

Jitāmītra Malla (1672-1696) succeeded his father Jagatprakāśa Malla at an early age and his Chief Minister, Bhagirāma Pradhānāṅga, was a great asset to the young king.

However, Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa Jośī, the powerful minister at the Kathmandu Court, was jealous of Bhagirāma and pressured King Jitāmitra Malla to get rid of his trusted minister. He even subjected Bhadgaun to a blockade with a view to causing the common people to rise against the minister. The blockade served the purpose, and the people requested King Jitāmitra to dismiss his minister. When the king refused to grant their demand, they dragged Bhagirāma through the streets and forced the king to dismiss him. Śyāmadāsa Mūlamī and Hāku Bhāju became ministers after Bhagirāma. Jitāmitra was interested in the well-being of his people and during his reign, new canals were dug and measures adopted for their maintenance. Rules were also made for the use and sharing of water.

Like other rulers of Bhadgaun, Jitāmitra was a man of artistic temperament. He built annexes to the royal palace and was credited with providing for murals in the hall of the palace depicting the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and for having beautiful struts with images of the 'Eight Mother Goddesses' (*aṣṭamātrka*) carved. He also wrote several literary works in Sanskrit and Maithili. *Aśwamedhanāṭakam* was one of his plays, and he also wrote a commentary on the *Gītāgovindam* by Jayadeva, the well-know writer of erotic and devotional songs in Sanskrit.

Jitāmitra was essentially a man of peace and spared no pains to improve his relations with the neighbouring kingdoms of Patan and Kathmandu. On the occasion of the Harisiddhi dance and of the Scimitar Procession (*khadga jātrā*), frequent fights broke out among the people of Bhadgaun and Patan. Jitāmitra entered into an agreement with King Yoganarendra Malla of Patan to take every precaution to avoid these skirmishes. In disregard of this agreement, Patan joined Kathmandu in attacking Bhadgaun, but the joint attack was repulsed. Mindful of the trouble and confusion so recently caused in Patan by the profligacy and intrigue of Yoganarendra against his father Śrinivāsa, Jitāmitra brought his son, Bhūpatīndra Malla, into the administration early and trained him for his duties. In 1696 he abdicated in favour of his son and went into retirement dying only in 1709.

Jitāmitra's son and successor, Bhūpatīndra Malla (1696-1722) was a great builder. He added new wings to the royal palace of Bhadgaun and refurnished its main courtyard with a miniature temple of Taleju Bhavānī. He had a glass pane set into one of the fifty-five windows of the palace he built. The pane of glass had been given to him by someone from India and proved to be an object of curiosity to all. He installed a bronze statue of himself on front of the palace which still stands, and he also erected an image of Ākāśa Bhairava in the palace square. He had the Malaticok front of the palace fitted with sandal-wood windows, which overlooked the main gateway. He also set up an image of Hanūmān, the monkey god, and Narasiṃha, the half-man half-lion god, on the pattern of images outside the gate of the Kathmandu palace.

It was during his reign that the water conduit at Kwalakhutol and the famous five-storied temple, called Nyātpola in Newari, were built. This temple is an outstanding example of the Nepali pagoda. Amusing and interesting at the same time are the images of two wrestlers, named after the two well-known Rajput heroes of the sixteenth century--Jayamal and Patta--as doorkeepers in charge of the paved stairway lined on both sides with figures of lions, griffins, and elephants. His son and heir apparent, Raṇajita Malla, is mentioned with him as a co-builder of some of the above monuments and also as a partner in the performance of charitable and religious deeds.

Bhūpatīndra Malla resembled an earlier king of Kathmandu, Pratāpa Malla (1641-74), not only in his zeal for building enterprises, but also in temperament and character. He shared Pratāpa Malla's domineering spirit and sought aggrandizement at the cost of the neighbouring kingdoms of Patan and Kathmandu. Once Bhūpatīndra was trapped when his son, Raṇajita Malla, fell into the hands of his enemies at Bisankhu on one of Bhadgaun's frequent forays into Patan's territory. The heir apparent himself was held to ransom and was subsequently freed only when King Bhūpatīndra made payment. He had to seek peace with King Yoganarendra Malla of Patan and let the latter visit Bhadgaun to worship at the original image of Taleju, the tutelary goddess of the Malla family.

Like Pratāpa Malla, Bhūpatīndra Malla also composed poems. A collection of his poems in Maithili, called *Padyāvalī*, is highly rated by critics. He also wrote dramas, one of them based on the *Mahābhārata*. The lament of King Dhṛtrāṣṭra, father of the Kauravas, over the loss of his one hundred sons in the Armageddon of the *Mahābhārata* is remarkable for its poignant pathos.

Bhūpatīndra Malla was able to persuade King Yoganarendra Malla of Patan to join himself and the rulers of Gorkha and Makwanpur in pledging that in case anyone of the four entered into relations with Kathmandu, without the prior knowledge of the others, the defaulter would have to pay a penalty of Rs. 40,000.00. But this did not prevent Patan from attacking Bhadgaun. During Bhūpatīndra Malla's rule Bhadgaun was attacked four times by Patan and Kathmandu after the last two had patched up their old differences. However, it must be said, to the credit of Bhūpatīndra Malla, that he successfully repulsed the combined attack of Patan and Kathmandu every time. He had friendly relations with Makwanpur, where he took part in 'Elephant Capturing Operations' (*hāīkheadah*).

Bhūpatīndra Malla died early in 1722 and was succeeded by his son, Raṇajita Malla (1722-1769). On the frame of the golden door set up by Raṇajita Malla and his wife, Jayalakṣmī, to commemorate the performance of the religious rite of fire (*kotyāhuti*), Raṇajita is mentioned as ruler of the territory that extended to the Dudhkoshi river in the east, including the town of Dolakha.

Rañajita Malla had a long reign of forty-seven years. He was a man of kindly disposition and of soft and amicable nature, and was thus unsuited to rule at a time of political conflict. Pr̥thvinārāyaṇa Śāha, the ruler of Gorkha, exploited Rañajita Malla's basic goodness to make him an instrument for the destruction of his own kingdom and the whole Malla dynasty.

During his stay as a guest at the court of Bhadgaun before he became king, Pr̥thvinārāyaṇa had contracted a relationship of ritual brotherhood with Rañajita Malla's eldest son, Viranarasimha Malla, who died early under rather suspicious circumstances. Thus, Rañajita Malla was Pr̥thvinārāyaṇa's ritual father. Rañajita Malla was attached to Pr̥thvinārāyaṇa because of this and also because of his temperamental abhorrence of the overbearing manners of King Jayaprakāśa Malla of Kathmandu. This attachment made him indifferent to the threat to the existence of the three kingdoms of the Kathmandu Valley posed by the gradual ascendancy of Gorkha. Neither the other two Valley rulers nor the king of Gorkha enjoyed the same prestige among the common people as Rañajita Malla, the only direct ruling descendant of Yakṣa Malla and Jayasthiti Malla. If he had risen to the occasion and acted in time, it might have been difficult for Pr̥thvinārāyaṇa to conquer the Valley. Even with all the lapses of Rañajita and the other rulers, it took the Gorkha King twenty seven years to accomplish the conquest of the Kathmandu Valley.

Like other kings of the valley, Rañajita Malla had many wives and several children. His favourite mistress persuaded him to pass over the claim of his first-born and legitimate child and make her own son heir-apparent instead. Naturally, the sympathy of the ministers and the common people were with the legitimate queen, who left the palace and took up residence in the village of Thimi. She was warmly received by the local people and proclaimed their sovereign. Pressure was steadily brought to bear on the king through constant representations by several groups of people who were allowed inside the main hall of the palace in accordance with an old custom of personal audiences. Finally, King Rañajita Malla yielded to popular pressure, and with due apology to his people, he accepted the legitimate child's right. The queen returned to the royal palace with the infant prince.

King Jayaprakāśa Malla of Kathmandu took advantage of this situation in Bhadgaun to gain control of some forts within its territory. Patan, too, capitalized on the disturbed situation in Bhadgaun and annexed a piece of Bhadgaun's territory near the tri-junction of Bhadgaun, Patan and Makwanpur. These depredations by Kathmandu and Patan initially inclined Rañajita Malla to support Gorkha and its king, Pr̥thvinārāyaṇa.

By 1754 the Kathmandu Valley was constantly exposed to intermittent attacks by Pr̥thvinārāyaṇa's troops, who had already encircled it with military outposts on the

surrounding hills. With the help of Raṇajita Malla, Pṛthvinārāyaṇa captured Naldum and Mahadev Pokhari to the east of the Kathmandu Valley. The Gorkhali troops were already entrenched in their outpost on the north-western ridge of Dahachok overlooking the Valley. Pṛthvinārāyaṇa made a deal with Raṇajita Malla for their joint forces to wrest Changu and Sankhu from Kathmandu. The understanding was that once these two places were seized, they would be left in the possession of Bhadgaun. Raṇajita Malla rightly sensed Pṛthvinārāyaṇa's ulterior motive in making the deal and did not send his forces on the appointed day. The result was that Pṛthvinārāyaṇa's advancing forces were forced to retreat from Jitpur. Pṛthvinārāyaṇa himself was completely at the mercy of Raṇajita Malla, but the Bhadgaun ruler refused to surrender the Gorkha leader to King Jayaprakāśa Malla notwithstanding the Kathmandu king's earnest pleas.

Once Pṛthvinārāyaṇa was out of the area of Bhadgaun, he did not forgive Raṇajita Malla for his failure to keep his word. Pṛthvinārāyaṇa took back Kabhrepalanchok and Sindhupalchok, which the Gorkhas themselves had earlier conquered and left in possession of Bhadgaun. Pṛthvinārāyaṇa had plans for capturing Raṇajita Malla himself at Palanchok, but Raṇajita Malla escaped by a fortuitous absence from the palace. By 1757, even Raṇajita Malla had realized Gorkha's menace, and joined hands with the kings of Kathmandu and Patan in repulsing the invasion of Kirtipur. But by then it was too late.

Pṛthvinārāyaṇa had already ringed the Valley with his military outposts and had closed its gate to Tibet through the control of Kabhrepalanchok and Sindhupalchok in the east. He also conquered Makwanpur in 1762 and repulsed an attack on it by Ali Mir Kasim's forces from India led by Gurgin Khan in 1763. With Makwanpur also under Pṛthvinārāyaṇa's control, the outlet for trade with India was blocked.

In 1764 an attack by Pṛthvinārāyaṇa on Kirtipur was again repulsed by the people of Kirtipur. This time they got no help from the other kings of the Valley who were quarreling among themselves as they had done before. Patan had Pṛthvinārāyaṇa's brother, Dalmardana Śāha, as king for a few months in 1764-65. In 1765, Gorkha's troops attacked Kirtipur for the third time and finally took it by storm. Now the days of the Valley kingdoms were numbered. On 25th September 1768 Kathmandu fell into the hands of Pṛthvinārāyaṇa and on 6th October Patan followed suit. The displaced kings of Patan and Kathmandu took refuge at Bhadgaun and together fought a last-gasp action against the Gorkhas in 1769, but to no avail. On 10th November the Gorkhas broke through the eastern gate and poured into the city. The three kings, under the leadership of Jayaprakāśa Malla of Kathmandu, put up a valiant fight, but surrendered on the 12th after Jayaprakāśa himself was wounded in the leg by a musket ball.

Prthvinārāyaṇa had delayed action against Bhadgaun even after he acquired Kathmandu and Patan for two reasons. First, he needed time to consolidate his newly acquired position in Kathmandu and Patan. Second, Prthvinārāyaṇa did not want to appear ungrateful to his ritual father, Raṇajita Malla, as he was sure that Bhadgaun would fall into his hands in due time. But the presence of the displaced kings of Kathmandu and Patan in Bhadgaun gave Prthvinārāyaṇa an excuse to ask Raṇajita Malla for their surrender. When Raṇajita Malla refused to hand them over to Prthvinārāyaṇa, he attacked Bhadgaun and occupied it. However, Prthvinārāyaṇa treated Raṇajita Malla with respect even after his defeat. As Raṇajita Malla himself expressed a desire to live a retired life in Varanasi, Prthvinārāyaṇa allowed him to go, taking all his personal wealth with him.