

History and Political Journey of Nepal

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The Nepali congress, the first political party of Nepal, had its organizational premise that if Nepal was to remove itself from the dictatorial Rana regime, the fall of the British colonialism from India was its precondition. As a result of his active role with this up held belief of the party, B.P. Koirala was imprisoned in the Hajaribagh jail for three years (1942-45). Similarly, Manmohan Adhikari, leader of the communist party of Nepal was imprisoned for two years (1942-1944) for his involvement in the great struggle. During their imprisonment, they were very much influenced by the Indian leaders they with where they had lived in the jails.

Even today, a total of fifty-six thousand Gurkhas are safe guarding India as part of Indian military, Recently on 31 December 2019, Arjun Thapa, 25 of Gorkha municipality-5, Rip, Nepal got martyrdom in the Jammu Kashmir line of control bombing leaving behind his newly married wife Sarita Thapa Magar, 20 and his 70 years old father Prem Bahadur Thapa. It came pain a very big shock to Nepal. The marks of the tears are still vivid. Nepal and Nepalese are still attracted to this services. what is stunning is that, how this father and other son, he would certainly send him, too to fulfill the place of his demised son. Remember, Thapa is the seventh to get Martyrdom in the last two years. News has it that Martyr Thapa's 20 years old widow has committed suicide, which is even more shocking. As a student of history and a patriot of Nepal, it always humiliates me to think that Jung Bahadur Rana, the founder of the Rana Regime, who ruled Nepal which never saw foreign rule and hegemony, moreover fought for safeguarding the sovereignty of many foreign countries, had militarily supported the British Colonialist during the Mutiny of 1857. Now, standing before you, I apologies to the Indian people and the freedom fighters for it and regret what Jung Bahadur Rana had done.

Otherwise, Nepalese and Indian have always been oriented together in the same criteria. This direction in the direction of world peace, humanity, co-working and world fraternity. Majority of the people living in Nepal and India are having the same ideology, culture and religion and worship the same god in the same temples, be it Siddhartha Gautam Buddha, Sita-Ram, Shiva-Parbati or

Lord Krishna.

Before going into Bal Gangadhar Tilak, let's have a look at the background of direction of human freedom fight campaign which had produced Tilak. Passing its three phases, freedom fight had culminated in the achievement of freedom in 1947. They were: the liberal era (1885-1905) the extremist era (1906-1918) and Gandhi an era (1999-1947).

While the liberal era was had by the leaders like Dada Bhai Nawroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Surendranath Benerji, the extremist era was under the prime leadership of Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920). He was to say, freedom is our birth right, and we shall have it.

Unfortunately, this freedom fighter met a sudden demise at the age of 64 on July 24, 1920 and could not see his dream fulfilled. But when on 15 August, 1947, India got freedom, it was undoubtedly the concretized, form of his 'Inborn right of freedom.' Therefore, now when I am talking to you as a guest speaker on the contribution and scarifies made by such a great leader, that too, on the auspicious occasion of his centenary, I feel this is the most glourious moment of my life. As I have been invited here not to talk on the personality and actions of Tilakji, but to express my views on the history and political development of Nepal, please allow me to do the same.

I have framed my views on the Nepali History and politics taking the following sub topics into consideration:

1. Prehistoric Age
2. Historical Age
3. Ancientness of Nepal
4. Greater Nepal
5. Demarcation of Nepal and the pain of treaty of Sugauli
6. Political development of Nepal in brief
7. Conclusion

1. Prehistoric Age:

The age before the invention of writing is the prehistoric age. Archaeologists and anthropologist hold the view that this age began some five million years ago and last till ten thousand years ago, and homosapience was considered the common ancestor of man. Many stages like Ramapithecus, Astralopithecus, Homoerectus and Neanderthal had to be passed for Homosapience to come to existence. The World has achieved a significant success in the study of prehistory, however it is sad that Nepali's achievement in the study of this field is just minimal.

History has it that Nepal began to study its prehistory only in 1935, that, too at a rather low race. From the excavations and other studies carried out

by various explores both foreigners and Nepali, in 1952, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1966, 1969, 1970, 1978, 1981, 1984 and 1996/97 it has been conducted that prehistoric man did exist in Nepal.

2. Historical Age

While prehistoric, study has not been carried out systematically in Nepal, even the historical study of Nepal has not got that clarity. Needless to say, the history supported by the written documents in historical age. We see that far from associating with the overall history of mankind, the history of Nepal in fact, has been the history of monarchy. Accordingly, the pillar inscription of Changunarayan at Bhaktapur district founded by the Lichchhavi king Mandev (464-505) remained the only historical evidence of the historicity of Nepal. Lain Sing Bangdel's Idol of 185 related to Jaya Verma has been the latest proof to support the inscription of Changunarayan.

From then on we do find authentic orderly history of Nepal. We certainly found many ups and downs regarding the history but it is not scattered and disorderly. These historical facts show the geographical structure of Nepal from the Lichchhavi period to the eleventh century. After that we find many changes taking place exactly the same way as the pre- Lichchhavi geographical structure of today. It is because of the backwardness of history writing that today we have to keep announcing that world famous Lord Buddha was born in Nepal. However, this fact cannot be hidden in this backwardness. What I mean to say is that we have to do a lot in the field of writing history.

3. Ancientness of Nepal

Nepal is regarded as one of the few most ancient countries in the world. Nepal is also among those countries which were never under foreign rule. From various studies Nepalese as well as the foreign historians have come to the conclusion that the name 'Nepal' of this country has been in existence for almost twenty-five hundred years. However the problem is that the term 'Nepal' has been authentically used since the sixth century V.S. Therefore, the history of the term 'Nepal' is based either on hear say or on the imaginery and supernatural stories of genealogy. At first the term 'Nepal' is found to have used in the Atharva Parisistha (B.C. 600-800). In it, Nepal has been mentioned along with six countries as—

- 1. Nepal**
- 2. Videha (Mithila)**
- 3. Udumbur (Panjab)**
- 4. Avanti (Ujjain)**
- 5. Kamarupa (Assam)**
- 6. Kekaya**

In the Kurma part of the Atharva Parisistha what has been literally mentioned is—

Nepal, Kamarupa, too, videha, Udumbarian and Avanti to the north east of

Kekaya.

Despite this, the time of Atharva parisistha is not authentically fixed yet. Therefore, referring to the literature including Boutha, Jain and others, historians believe that during the period of Buddha (483-563 B.C.) the Kathmandu Centric geography of Nepal had been fixed. In these literatures there is the reference of Buddha disciples visiting Nepal with Indian traders while Buddha was giving his religious teaching in India. This shows that at the time of Buddha Nepal had earned its status as a nation and its identity. It is not limited only to this. The Prayag inscription of Gupta Emperor Samundra Gupta (389-432 A.D.) also mentions as- Nepal is a mountainous country on the northern border of his empire. It is situated between Kamarupa (Assam) Kartipur (Kumaandn).

Various documents and references mentioning Nepal are found, but among them Arthashastra by Kautilya is of additional importance. It has specifically mentioned about Nepal. We also find an abundance of Chinese sources describing Nepal. However, the question of prime importance is- which part of this land has been regarded as Nepal? It is so because the 'Nepal' which we are talking of is mainly the valley of Kathmandu and its periphery. Facts show that from the Pre Lichchhavi period, in the present day Lumbini, Kapilvastu, Nawalparasi and Janakpur there were states like Kapilvastu, Debdaha, Videha etc.

The then states like Kapilvastu and videha were in fact more famous than Nepal. Not only this, the wise rules of king Janaka and Suddhodan as well as specialities of Sita, Gautam Buddha are enough to prove that the states had secured their special status in the world civilizations. Similarly, princess Bhrikuti of Lichchhavi described had earned name and fame of Nepal by spreading Buddhism in Tibet. The marks laid by their personalities as well as their knowledge are in fact the speciality and totality of Nepal. But things do not end here. The states mentioned above had to see many ups and downs. Moreover, these descriptions have remained silent about the history of far eastern and western Nepal.

The inscription of Changunarayn is a proof that the Lichchhavi Nepal extended, at least, to the Koshi in the east and the Gandaki to the west. But it is not clear how far beyond Koshi and Gandaki the Lichchhavi state extended and what happened after that. All of a sudden, in 1200 A.D. another dynasty named Malla appeared in the Kathmandu valley. The name of their state was Nepal Mandal.

Mostly, Nepal Mandal did not remain confined only to the valley of Kathmandu. The powerful king of the Malla Dynasty Yaksha Malla died in 1481, three years after that in 1484 his second son Ratna Malla declared

Kantipur a free state. With this the process of division began in Nepal Mandal. Similarly, Bishn Singh, a powerful local courtier of Lalitpur got Lalitpur recognized as a free state in 1548. but Bhaktapur remained as a patriarchal state as usual.

When the powerful Lichchhavi Nepal met this fate, far west also took a different path- the path of making a free state on its own. Accordingly, in 1107, a brave fighter named Nagarja came down to Karnali from Khari founded a new state in the Jumla valley with Sinja as its capital. In the days of its culmination, the state was extended up to Kumau-Gadhwal in the west and to Gorkha to the east. Though powerful, eventually it had to see the day of division. It formally took this path in 1389- this big Khas empire, too was finally divided into 46 small states. In the history of Nepal these states were known as 'Twenty-two states and Twenty-four states' This trend of division was so fatal that sometimes there would appear subdivision in division. Dolakha and Banepa state of the Malla state, and Makawanpur, Chaudani and Bijayapur states of Sen state were the result of this divisions.

Another trend of the history of Nepal, which is necessary to understand is the conflict between Kapilvastu, Videha and Simraungirh. When Kathmandu had the Kirant rule, there were small states like Kapilvastu, Videha, Devadaha in the central Terai. Gautam Buddha was the prince of Kapilvastu. In 500 B.C., that is, towards the end of Buddha's life, Kapilvastu was destroyed in an attack carried out by Biruddhak, army general of king Prasenjit. A total of 77 thousand people were killed. At that time Kapilvastu had populations of five hundred thousand. Thus, Kapilvastu had lost its existence.

Another similar state was Videha. Mithila was its capital. This state is also known as Mithila, which lies in Janakpur today. In the history of Videha, the rule of King Janak had a special importance. He was the contemporary of Dashrath King of Ayodhya. As we know a great epic has been prepared about the life of Ram and Sita, prince of Ayodhya and Princess of Videha respectively.

The state also had to meet the fate of Kapilvastu when in the sixth century B.C. Magadh ruler Ajat Sattu attacked it. Thus, all the small and big states got hidden in history. But in 1097 Nanyadeve of Karnat dynasty, founded a new state named Simraungarh in the region of today Bara-Parsa. After 227 years, the state too lost its existence when Gayasuddin Tughlak of Delhi attacked it.

4. Expansion of Nepal

When the British rule had just begun in India, Prithivinarayan Shah, King of Gorkha, was about to expand his state. While Plassey(1757) and Boxer (1762) wars were going on, in Nepal Prithivinarayan was fighting Kirtipur and

Makawanpur wars. Not finding any other way, Dighandhan Sen, displaced king of Makawanpur went to Nawab Mirkasim of Bengal for help. Similarly, king Jayaprakash Malla of Kantipur sought help from British East India company. But both the armies were badly defeated by the Gorka Army.

The British was engaged with its colonial expansion while Gorkha carried on its campaign of state expansion. During the period the British brought almost all India territory under its rule while Prithivinarayan Shah expanded its Gorkha state up to Tista in the east and Kangada in the west. Thus a great Nepal was founded.

5. Demarcation of Nepal and the pain of treaty of Sugauli

In spite of the company government efforts for a friendly relation with Nepal, the then leadership of Nepal was determined not to do give and take of any kind with it. In such a situation the British had no option but to wage war. On November 1, 1814, the British waged war against Nepal, which lasted for two years. Finally, Nepal had to sign a humiliating and unequal treaty on 4 March 1816 and that treaty known as the treaty of Sugauli. This was the treaty which fixed the demarcation of Nepal at large.

6. Political development of Nepal in brief

The Sugauli treaty brought a remarkable change in the internal politics of Nepal. After the end of army ambition, the courtiers got engaged with internal intrigue for power. The powerful Prime minister of the war period Bhimsen Thapa, got over 93 possible rivals killed for being associated in the conspiracy of killing former king and regent Rana Bahadur Shah. And thus continued his rule unhindered for a long time. However, with the demise of Lalit Tripura Sundari on April 1, 1832, minor king Rajendra Bikram Shah started to become more active, which eventually led from downfall to imprisonment of Bhimsen Thapa. He was accused of treason against the state. On July 20, 1839 made public that he committed suicide while in prison not being able to bear the humiliation. Even his corpse was heinously treated by allowing dogs and jackals to snatch it.

(a) Fall of Bhimsen Thapa and Rise of Rana Rule

After the fall and demise of Bhimsen Thapa, a big vacuum was created in the Nepali politics. The disability of king Rajendra, the vacuum was itself oriented towards a crisis. His two queens came into politics so as to take the place of the king. Thus they formed their own groups. The king also had separate group of his own. The power game between the three made the politics poisonous. There arose political instability, no government was stable and last-

ing. Powerful courtiers began to be killed one after another. All this conspiracy culminated in the horrible massacre on the night of 14 September, 1846, that known as the Kot Massacre in the Nepali history. Almost three dozen of promising courtiers were killed including the ministers and prime ministers of the then government. Surprisingly, such a massacre was orchestrated by one of the ministers of the government, Jang Bahadur Kunwar.

After the massacre, the rule was overtaken by Jang Bahadur. Then, limiting the king only to a puppet, he not only declared himself as an executive prime minister but also prepared a background for the rule of his family. The politics took such a turn that, the sitting king and queen left the country and self exile to Banaras. However, they soon returned and fought with the state army at Alau near Birgunj of Parsa district hoping to regain the lost throne. Later the king was brought the Kathmandu as a royal prisoner and jailed, and prince Surendra was made the king. Even the achievement of Jung Bahadur did not turn out a pleasure became after his death in 1877, the Rana rule, too took the path of internal intrigue and killing and counter killing. Ranoddip Singh, who had taken over Jung Bahadur, was killed in 1885 in a conspiracy hatched by his own nephew, Bir Shamsheer. Not only this, the sons of Jung Bahadur, too were killed brutally.

Despite the killing of Jang Bahadur and his sons, the Rana regime did continue. His brother, Dhir Shumsher's 17 sons took the Rana rule up to 1951 in turn. Nepal had ten Rana Prime Minister in total. Thus, dictatorial Rana regime lasted in Nepal for 104 years.

(b) Rise of democracy and Royal take over

Though there were reactions against the rana regime right from its beginning, they could bear no fruits. The main organizations like the Prachanda Gorkha and Prajaparishad, which were firm against the Rana regime, were suppressed. Then the Nepali Congress and communist party of Nepal, which were established in India, threw down the Rana regime in 1951. However, in the changed atmosphere there arose a conflict between the old and the newly established power. The new power got defeated and as a result, the country had to bear yet another dictatorship in 1960. Formation of governments one after another reminds one the decade of the fall of Bhimsen Thapa. Therefore, in such a situation, the king started making plans to take over. All such conspiracies were hatched by the king, but the parties were there to be blamed. Pretending that the parties were responsible for the chaos, on December 19, 1960, the then king Mahendra collapsed the elected government of Prime Minister B.P. Koirala of Nepali Congress, imprisoned and banned the democratic system. All this was done with the military power.

After that, eventually the age of powerful monarchy began. The system which lasted for 29 years, was named 'Partyless Panchayati System', which ran under his direct control. All the party activities were banned. Though representatives were elected by the people, the formation and deformation of government was done in his gestures.

(c) Reinstatement of democracy and a gain political instability

The king imposed his dictatorial rule for 29 years at the same time the parties also continued their struggle for democracy to bring back. Big sacrifices were made along with losses. Finally king Birendra was compelled after 29 years to lift ban on the political parties. Thus, as a result of the contribution of democracy was reinstated in the country, and then all the processes of democracy along with election continued. It was the Nepali Congress government that was dismissed, after 29 years in 1991 the same party turned out victorious and B.P. Koirala's youngest brother Girija Prasad Koirala became the first elected prime minister after the reinstatement of democracy.

Unfortunately, the earlier trend was repeated in politics- the same rivalry and the same conspiracies. Lure of Power, no regards for others, and pulling the legs! As a result, the elected prime minister pushed the country into mid-term election only after 3 years. And, the party was defeated. For the first time, the country saw the communist government; however, instability and confusion in politics persisted.

(d) Rise of Maoist and the Massacre of Royal Family

When the reinstated democracy could not deliver good governance and stability, an ultra leftist faction of the communist party named communist party of Nepal (Maoist) launched 'peoples war' on 13 February, 1996. As usual, India become its dependable and friendly ground for the party. It formed its own military organization named peoples liberation army. Shaking the whole state structure, it continued with its own local governments and courts. 17 thousands man killed, many wounded and others displaced. While the country was facing all this, all of a sudden, a news shocked the whole world on the night of June 1, 2001 at about 9 p.m. the Royal family which was in the military security in the palace was massacred. In the massacre, ten member of the family including King Birendra, Queen Aishwarya, and prince Dipendra.

(e) Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the End of Monarchy

King Gyanendra, who had taken the place of his brother king Birendra did not run out as considerate and intelligent as his brother. It was evident in his unripe vocal service. Not only this, on October 4, 2002 he went to the

extent of dismissing Deuwa Government and taking power in his own hands, which was a move to irritate parties. Then continued the process of forming and dissolving governments one after another, but politics got no way out. This aside, in Delhi on November 22, 2005, the Maoist and the 7 political parties reached 12- point agreement. With this, they were ready to struggle against the king. The nineteen day long peoples movement compelled the king to surrender. Then, the dissolved house of representatives was reinstated. Girija Prasad Koirala became the prime minister. The comprehensive peace agreement reached between the Maoist and the government on November 2, 2007, which opened up the gate to interim government for the Maoists. Then, the interim constitution was made which suspended the king. The second meeting of the house of representative gave all the power to the pm exercised the parliament. It was the move which made monarchy irrelevant in the politics of Nepal. Eventually, on May 28, 2008, the first meeting of the constituent assembly declared Nepal as a federal democratic republic.

Thus, formally ending the 240 yeras long political leadership of the Shah dynasty. Nepal entered into a federal republic. It was, in fact, an epoch breaking event in the history of Nepal.

(f) Interim constitution 2007 and Inclusive state

Unfortunately, the newly form regional group Madheshi Janadhikar Forum launched the Madhishi movement for federal and inclusive Nepal just the next day of the promulongtion of the interim constitution (January 16, 2007). As a result, on March 14, the interim govern made the first amendment to the interim constitution to the following effects:

1. There will be inclusion of Madeshi's, Dalits, indigenious people, Janajatis, Woman, labourers, farmers, disabled people, backward people and regiois on the basis of proportional representation in the state apparatus.
2. The country will go for federalism. Thus, for the first time, the country adopted inclusiveness and federalism constitutionally.

Politically, our country is still facing the state of transition. The basic peoples are still far from the basic needs. So far, it was thought that monarchy and hindu religion were the main factors behind the un-development and backwardness of the country proved false. Accordingly, the movement of 1951, 1990 and 2006 removed the Rana rule, partyless Panchayati System and monarchy respectively and the country was turned to secular federal republic. However, the people have not realised any significant difference in their life. Despite that, the constitution of Nepal, 2015 has brought some of the fundamental practices of prime importance into practices. They are:

1. Fedral democratic setup
2. Secularism
3. Inclusiveness
4. Orientation to socialism

Accordingly, the country has accomplished the task of promulgating the constitution through the constituent assembly. Not only this, as per the new constitution, the 753 local and 77 districts body, 7 provincial governments and the federal government are being run by the elected representatives of the people. Now the challenges we are facing is how to make it truly a "Peoples federal republic"?

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