Chapter II
Geo Political Profile of Nepal

Modern political science lays considerable emphasis on the geo-political aspect of a country, i.e. how the politics of a state is influenced by its geography. The case of Nepal is peculiar in this aspect.

Nepal is the largest of the Himalayan Kingdoms, and a landlocked state of the South Asian Region. Sandwiched between the two Asian giants - India and China\(^1\), Nepal serves as the buffer state between the two countries. Being a landlocked state, it is dependent on others for a transit access to sea. Moreover, "the buffer position coupled with its mountainous topography gives it a striking resemblance to Switzerland in Europe, which has attracted the attention of others."\(^2\)

Nepal shares borders with China in north and with India in south, east and west. Besides, the southern Indo-Nepal border is 804 km. long, free and open border, demarcated by pillars set up at regular intervals.

Nepal is characterised by an un-uniform topography. The country is of roughly trapezoidal shape. It lies between longitude 80° 15' and 88' 10' east and latitude 26° 20' and 30° 10' north. It is 800 km long and 200 km, with an area of 147,181 sq. km. Nepal is a small country, slightly larger than England.

Nepal is broadly divided into three, east-west running geographical regions - The Mountain Region, The Hill Region and The Terai Region. These areas are vertically intersected by Nepal's major, north to south flowing river systems, viz. the Kosi in the east, the Gandaki in the centre and the Karnali in the west. The mountainous region and the hill occupy 80 percent of the country's landmass.\(^3\) Nepal, is the second country in the world possessing largest water resources, being preceded by Brazil. The river systems of Nepal are fed by 6000 rivers and their tributaries.

**The Mountain Region**, constitutes the northern part of Nepal and is situated in the Great Himalayan Range. This region is comprised of highest attitudes in the
world. Eight of the world's highest maintain peaks are located in this region, including the Mt. Everest (called Sagarmatha in Nepali), which is 8,850 m or 29,035 ft. high.

**The Hill Region (Pahad)**, comprises of mountains and varies from 1,000 to 4,000 meters (3,300-13,125 ft.) in attitude. The region is dominated by the two low mountain ranges, the Mahabharat Lekh and the Shiwalik Range (also known as the Churia Range). The hilly belt includes the Kathmandu Valley, which is the most fertile and urbanised area of the country of the country.

**The Terai Plains**, bordering India are a constituent of the Indo Gangetic Plains. These plains were formed and are drained by the three major rivers, the Kosi, the Narayani, and the Karnali.

Nepal experiences five seasons: summer, monsoon, autumn, winter and spring. The Himalayas serve as a blockade to cold winds from Central Asia in winter, and forms the northern limit of the monsoon wind patterns. Nepal has five climatic zones, according to the attitudes:

(a) The tropical and sub-tropical zone - It lies below 1,200 meter (3,940 ft.).

(b) The Temperate zone - It lies between 1200 to 2400 m (3,900 ft to 7,875 ft.)

(c) The Cold Zone - It lies between 2,400 to 3,600 meters (7,875 to 11,800 ft.)

(d) The sub-arctic zone - It lies between 3,600 to 4,400 meters (11,800 - 14,400 ft.)

(e) The Arctic zone - It lies above 4,400 meters (14,400 ft.)

According to scholars, the word "Nepal" had been derived from the word "Nepa", which refers to the Newar Kingdom, the present day Kathmandu Valley. With Sanskritization, the Newar word Nepa became Nepal. Some historians and local traditions hold that the Kathmandu Valley was established by a Hindu sage named...
"Ne" during the pre-historic times. Hence, the world "Nepal" means as, the place protected ("pala" in Sanskrit) by the sage "Ne". The etymology of the name Nepal means, "the country looked after by Ne."  

Perched on the southern slopes of the Himalayan Mountains, Nepal is as ethnically diverse as its topography of plains, broad valleys and high mountains. It has been rightly remarked: "The Physical divisions of Nepal correspond roughly to the broad outlines of its well-marked racial and religious zones." But, as a result of these divisions the inhabitants have developed a sort of isolation from each other, because of lack of effective means of communication. Also, the Nepalese society has been subjected at regular intervals to the strain of immigrants both from the north-east and from the south-west. Consequently the Nepali populace is a mixed race of both Mongoloid and Indianized stocks. There also exist to this day remnants of the indigenous communities, whose habitation predates the advent of the former two elements.

The real highlands exhibit prominence of Bon, a primitive religion of Tibet, which existed prior to the advent of Buddhism, involving the worship of spirits, animals and elements and nature. The midlands or the hilly region, consisting of the fertile mountain valleys, show the effect of the steady penetration of Hinduism from the south. But the people of this area also include Newars of Kathmandu Valley, the Buddhist sub-groups who practice Mahayana or Tibetan Buddhism. The lowlands or the Terai area can be considered as a "Hindu heartland", excluding a few aboriginal tribes living there. According to the 2007 census, the total population of Nepal is 28,875,140, out which Hindus comprise of 80.6% of population, Buddhists 10.7%, Muslims 4.2%, Christians 0.5% and others constitute 4.1%. Today Nepal is a shifting mosaic of diverse ethnic groups. However, some generalizations along geographic lines are still possible.

The Sherpas and Tamangs, who are most analogous to the Tibetans, live in the northern most region of the country. Central Nepal is inhibited by the Gurungs and the Magars, but Gurungs have a preference for slightly higher attitudes. The Kiratis/ Kirantis comprising of the Rais and the Limbus dwell in the eastern region of Nepal. The Khasas, Thakuris and Brahmin who have their roots in far
western Nepal, have dispersed themselves along the middle of the country, along with the vocational classes like Kamis, Damaies and Sarkis. The Kathmandu Valley is home to Newars and is thus predominated by them. The Tharus inhibit the inner regions of Terai and all long Terai. Here, the Rajbansis and the Satars are also found. Nepal's southernmost borders (which is next to India) is occupied populace which is cast in the same mould as the Indians on the other side. These include Rajputs, Brahmins, Kayasthas, Yadavas and numerous of occupational classes of Terai. The Sunwars Dunwars, Murmis, Mayhis, Dhimats, Chepangs Kusundas, Rautyas and Pahars are significant too, because of their interesting commercial life and organisation. A small chunk of Christians and Muslims is also included in Nepali populace, dwelling both in the hills and the plains.

All the languages spoken in Nepal are the national languages. Nepali is the official languages of Nepal, with almost 60 percent of the population speaking it. However, all languages spoken in Nepal can be used for official purposes and documentation irrespective of what the official language is. The mother tongue of the Brahmins and Khatris is Nepali, which is also spoken by tailors, cobblers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths and other occupational casters. The Newars (inhabitants of Kathmandu Valley) speak their mother tongue, Newari and also use Nepali. Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Hindi, Bengali and Urdu are spoken by the populace dwelling in the Terai region.

It has been aptly remarked: "Nepal's cultural process has been characterized by synthesis, flexibility and eclecticism. Nepali religious tradition has evolved along syncretic and symbotic lines. The intricate texture of Nepali religious culture is woven from main strands of Hindustan, Buddhism, Tantricism and Bon animism. However, the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism is markedly visible in Nepali religious and cultural life. Hinduism, then, has for several hundred years been the official religion of the Nepali ruling class. Lord Shiva is revered as the guardian deity of the country. Nepal is home to the Pashupatinath Temple, considered to be the largest Shiva temple in the world, where Hindus worldwide flock for pilgrimage. The country is also, the birthplace of two deities, one Hindu and the other Buddha himself - Devi Sita of Ramayana was considered to be born in the Janakpur and Lord Buddha's birthplace is called Kapilvastu."
Hinduism is practiced by the Magars, Sunwars, Limbus and Rais. While, Gurungs, Bhutias and Thakalis are the followers of Buddhism. However, due to the intermingling of the Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, the difference between them is very subtle and academic in nature. Both share common temples and deities. However, most of the festivals celebrated in Nepal are Hindu.

Nepal has a long established identity as a political and territorial unit. The kingdom had been mentioned in the great Hindu epic, the Mahabharata, in the Puranas, and also in the Buddhist and Jain scriptures. Kautilya's Arthashastra of 4th century B.C. also takes notice of Nepal. Around 1000 BC, the region was marked by the existence of small kingdoms and confederations of clans. From among these, arose a prince called, Siddharth Gautam (of Shakya confederation), who later came to be known as the "Buddha" (the enlightened one). By 250 B.C., the Mauryan Empire of northern India, established its influence on this region, and later it become a vassal state under the Gupta Dynasty in the fourth century A.D. In the fifth century A.D., the major part of the region was governed by Licchavi Rulers. By the early 12th century, the region was dominated by the Malla rulers who ruled for next two centuries. However, the downfall of the Malla rulers heralded on era of disintegration and the region was carved out into three kingdoms: Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, in the end of 13th Century. After the 14th Century, the western region alone was divided into seventy - eight small principalities, the most prominent among them were the Chaubise (twenty-four principalities in the Gandaki region of Central Nepal) and the Baise (twenty-two) principalities in the Karnali region. The kingdoms of Kumaun and Garhwal were located beyond Mahakali river, and to the west of Garhwal were the Barah Thakurai (the twelve principalities) and the Athara Thakurai (the eighteen principalities) between the Tons and Satlaj Rivers. In the south-west, the kingdoms of Makwanpur, Chaudandi and Vijaypur emerged under the ruler ship of the branches of the Sen dynasty of Palpa. Chaubandi and Vijaypur, comprised the tribal communities of the Kirantis in the eastern hill region. Although the above states nominally recognized the supremacy of several of the more powerful among them, the Chaubise and the Baise states were virtually independent and engaged in continual warfare. Gorkha, was the most prominent principality of
Chaubise region. It was conquered by Dravya Shah in 1559 A.D., and founded the "ruling house of Shah". The Shahs are considered to be the descendants of the Rajput rulers, who fled from the Central India, in the wake of Muslim invasion, in 12th - 13th century A.D. Some of the chronicles trace the ancestry of the Ruling House of Gorkha to one Bhupati Ranaji Rao of Chittor.²⁰

Prithvi Narayan Shah (1739-1775), the ruler of Gorkha from 1743 A.D., was the 9th generation descendant of Dravya Shah (1559 - 1570 A.D.). He is honoured as "the Father of Modern Nepal" because of his historical task of unifying the Himalayan kingdom. He embarked on his herculean mission to consolidate the principalities of Nepal into a single integrated state in 1765 A.D. He undertook several bloody battles and sieges, and steadily expanded his authority by until 1775 A.D., the year of his death. By this point of time, much of the present-day Nepal had been incorporated in his empire. For the next four decades, his successors continued the process of unification and explanation until the whole of the sub-Himalayan hill area from Bhutan in the east to Kangra in the west was under Gorkha dominion²¹. Nepal even challenged Chinese suzerainty in Tibet (1788-92) and British authority on the plains of northern India (1814-16), with predictably adverse consequences²². The Nepalese monarch reigned by the fable of the national deity, Lord Pashupati: "the throne of Nepal was a fort... A fort built by God Himself."²³ The King adopted the little of Maharajadhuraj, the great sovereign, i.e., the king over the king and the one who possessed absolute power.

Prithvinarayan's eldest son and successor, King Pratap Singh (1775-17774) died after a brief reign of roughly two years. His wife Queen Rajendralakshmi became the Regent to King Rana Bahadur (c. 1777-1799), ran the administration from 1777 to 1785. Naib or Regent Bahadur Shah, brother of the late King Pratap Singh dominated the scene from 1785 to 1794. Then the Basnyat and Pande families were pre-eminent under the leadership of Kazi Kirtiman Singh Basnyat and Kazi Damodar Pande from 1799 to 1804, during the regencies of Queen Subaranaprabha (April 1800 to February 1803) and Queen Rajarajeshvari (February 1803 to 1804). The Thapa family, led by Mukhtiyar General Bhimsen Thapa from 1806 to 1837, was dominant during the Regency of Queen Tripurasundari (1806-1832).²²
King Rajendra Bikram Shah (1816-1847) tried to establish the monarchial influence in the decade following the fall of Bhimsen Thapa in 1837. However he turned out to be insufficient to carry on the administration on his own and often sought advice from either of his two queens and soon felt the need of a Prime Minister or Mukhtiyar.

Nepali Court politics were dominated by Rana Jang Pande with Senior Queen Samrajyalakshmi’s support, from July 1837 through November 1840, notwithstanding frequent changes in the Prime Minister ship. Ranganath Pandit became Mukhtiyar for about nine months from December 1837 till August 1838. Following his resignation, a joint ministry of Pushkar Shah and Rana Jang Pande, and in February 1840 Rana Jang Pande once again became Mukhtiyar and remained in that position till November of the same year, when a coalition under the Mukhtiyarship of Chautara Fatte Jang Shah (1840-1843) came into power with the backing of the British Resident and continued in office till December 1843, when Mathbar Singh Trapa became Prime Minister and Commander-in-chief.

General Mathbar Singh Thapa was murdered on 17 May 1845 at the behest of King Rajendra Bikram Shah and Junior Queen Rajyalakshmi. It took King Rajendra four months to persuade Chautara Fatte Jang Shah (September 1845 to September 1846) to be the nominal head of an ill-fated coalition government. The cabinet consisted of the Junior Queen's favorite General Gagan Singh, who was "Prime Minister except in name," General Abhiman Rana and Kazi Dalabhanjan Gora Pande. All of them were killed on the night of 14 September 1846, in the wake of the efficiently conducted massacre at the Kot which paved the way for the emergence of a real strong man, Jang Bahadur Rana.²⁴

To conclude, it can be said that the first quarter of the 19th century saw the waning of King's authority, because the successors to the throne were either minors, guided over by a Regent, or inefficient and worthless. Making most of the opportunity, the ministers or Mukhtiyars came to wield the real powers of state, and the authority got concentrated in the hands of the Prime Ministers. The Bhardars (bearers of the burden of the state), who were the court nobles and members of the highest State Council, saw a transformation in their function from
the advisers of the King, to the councilors to the Prime Minister. However, the
Prime Minister was not bound to accept their advice, and could sideline it. It was
symbolic of the absolute power of Prime Minister. Thus the gradual decline of the
King’s authority ran parallel to the disappearance of the Bhardars as "an effective
policy-making body". "Thus, the wheel of Nepalese history fro 1778 to 1846 was
turned by a complex amalgam of forces" - the minor Kings, the Regents, the
senior and junior Queens, the court nobles, all involved in factionalism and dirty
conspiracies, resulting into tragedies, bloodbaths, dissensions and anarchy.

However circumstances took a decisive turn in 1846, with the emergence of Jung
Bahadur Rana as a strong and forceful personality, which was the need of the
hour, following the infamous Kot Massacre, in which the erstwhile court nobles
were wiped out altogether, including the chautaras, kazis, sardars, captains and
kumedans and the then prime minister Fatte Jang Shah. Only a very few were
saved by Jang Bahadur's brothers who held them by the hand and let them slip out
of the quadrangle through a small doorway at the back. According to General
Padma Jung, "the names of fifty-five of the slain, along with those of their slayers,
have come down to us", but the number must have been many times greater than
this as the list does not mention the names of any but very important men. Six
thousand persons left the country as refugees in the aftermath of the event.

In the first eight or nine months that immediately followed the Kot Massacre, Jang
Bahadur controlled the royal opponents by playing them off against one another.
His cunning moves helped him not only in seizing power for himself, but also
concentrating it in his own bloodline for a century to come. He made it sure that
his appointment as the Prime Minister was endorsed by all the three sovereigns,
King Rajendra, Junior Queen Rajyalakshmi and Heir Apparent Surendra.
Initially, Jang Bahadur chose to comply with the Junior Queen Rajyalakshmi since
he was fully aware of the fact that it would be dangerous to challenge or going
against her authority without consolidating his own position. He took advantage
of the difference between King Rajendra and Junior Queen Rajyalakshmi to fill
the resulting vacancies with his own men at the Pajani, the routine annual renewal
of service, held after the Kot Massacre. Jang professed to act under the authority
of the Queen, while at the same time retaining the positions of the King and the
heir apparent intact for use when needed to counter her moves against the newly appointed Prime Minister himself. Jang’s purpose in doing so was ultimately to gather all powers in his own hands.27

Later, using his manipulative skills, Jang Bahadur took on the mantle to rule the country restricting the role of Nepalese monarchy to a titular head of the state. Jang Bahadur not only received the title of Maharaj (meaning the "King") from King Surendra and the sovereignty of two districts, Kaski and Lamjung, but also acquired power over the King himself through an edict bearing the King's red seal and dated 6 August 1856. The document (called The Lal Panja or Red Palm Print) stated:

I am pleased with you for the following reasons:-

1. You secured to me the throne of Nepal by killing those persons who were aiding the efforts of the Junior Queen of Rajendra Bikram Shah (who had earlier given her sovereign powers) to put her own son on the throne, and deprive me of my rights;

2. You promoted friendship with the Queen of England by paying a visit to that country;

3. You won the war with Tibet, and made it pay an annual tribute to Nepal in cash;

4. You treated with respect and kindness my father, ex-king Rajendra Bikram Shan, in the face of his conspiracies against your life;

5. You did not inflict the death sentence on my younger brother, Upendra Bikram Shah, who had conspired against you. Instead, you were lenient to him and interned him only for five years with due regard for his status;

6. During your prime minister ship, you have satisfied the mobility, the soldiery and peasantry of Nepal, rendered them justice, and promoted peace and prosperity;
7. You have increased the military force of Nepal, observed economy, and added to the state exchequer.

... So, for this reason, I give you the title of Sri Maharaj of Kaski and Lamjung. As the Maharaja of these lands, you should restrain me at any time, with the assistance of the Umraos, the people, and the army if I try to injure the friendship with Queen-Empress of England and the Emperor of China. If, in your attempts to do so, I apply force, then my Umraos and army should support you... In matters of justice we have given you the authority to inflict capital punishment. Live happily with your title of Sri Maharaj of your kingdom. If any subjects of my country try to plot against your kingdom and your life, we have authorized you to kill such persons if necessary. These rights will be inheritable by your children. Along with your brothers, according to the roll of succession we have established for the office of Mukhtiyar, your son Jagat Jang Bahadur Kanwar Rana will be Mukhtiyar after the completion of the role with Dhir Shamsher Jang Kanwar Ranajee.28

This historic Lal Panja took away all the powers from the reigning monarch, King Surendra, and institutionalised the power and position of the Ranas within the political structure. It provided a legal basis for Rana family rule which lasted for more than a century. It bestowed on Jang and his successors, absolute authority in civil and military administration, justice and foreign relations, including the right to supersede the monarch, if it was necessary in the national interest. The Nepali Monarchy was thus deprived of all of its sovereign powers and was confined to the walls of the Royal Palace, although the exalted title of Maharajadhiraj (king of kings) was reserved for the king.

The roll of succession mentioned in the decree was drawn up by Jang Bahadur on which all the male descendants of the Rana family were enrolled in the chronological order of their dates of birth. It was laid down that upon the death of a Rana prime minister, the oldest male members would succeed him. Other male members of the family, after attaining adulthood would occupy the key civil and military posts. Practically, it was possible that a younger uncle would take precedence over an older nephew in respect of succession to the office of Prime
Minister, under the prevailing arrangement. However, the Prime Minister was empowered to change the roll of succession for disciplinary and other reasons. A non-Rana could not aspire to any rank higher than that of a commanding colonel in the army and that of a bada kazi in the civil service, since the higher positions were reserved exclusively for the Ranas.

The creation of the office of Maharaja of Kaski and Lamjung was of special distinction, since the Lal Mauhar vested absolute authority in this office. The document is so phrased as to make one believe that Jang Bahadur was interested in establishing primogeniture as the basis of succession to the office. Such an arrangement would have enabled his eldest son, Jagat Jang, to inherit the title of Maharaj with full powers and would have deprived the Prime Minister's office of supreme powers. But after Jang Bahadur died, his brothers compelled the King to appoint the eldest surviving brother, Ranoddip Singh (1877-1885), as both Prime Minister and Maharaj of Kaski and Lamjung. Thus, a precedent was created that was maintained throughout the Rana period.

Jang Bahadur died in the year 1877 and was succeeded by his eldest surviving brother, Ranoddip Singh. The appropriation of the title of the Maharaj of Kaski and Lamjung by Ranoddip Singh caused resentment amongst Jang Bahadur's sons particularly to Jagat Jang the eldest one, who should have succeeded to that office in accordance with the Red Seal granted by king Surendra. Consequently Jang Bahadur's sons instigated many plans to oust him by hook or by crook. Eventually, he was assassinated in 1885 and succeeded by Bir Shamshere, Jung Bahadur's youngest and closest brother. As soon as Bir assumed office, he initiated a purge of his opponents.

Bir Shamsher permanently removed the names of descendants of Maharaj Jang Bahadur and his other five brothers from the role of succession. This revision implied promotion and higher ranks for all of his half-brothers already on the roll of succession. Bir's other half brothers who were born out of wedlock were also given higher military offices and, as members of the family of seventeen brothers, were accorded a status distinct from the other Ranas. However, he was not satisfied by editing the roll only. He expelled the other Ranas from the country.
and confiscated their properties, even re-distributing them among his half-brothers. However, during his short reign, from 1855 to 1901, Bir Shamsher arranged for a number of projects for the benefit of Nepali population.

Dev Shamsher, Bir's successor for three months continued with his projects and took some radical measures as emancipation of all female slaves, and publication of the first Nepali language newspaper - *Gorakhapatra*. Because of these drastic steps, he was forced to resign and exiled in India by rest of his brothers.

The new Prime Minister, Chandra Shamsher sought a permanent solution to the family discord over the rights of succession. Therefore, he categorized the Rana clan as under:-

'A' class Ranas - These were the direct and legitimate offsprings of Ranas, and could only dine with any high - caste Chhetri family.

'B' class Ranas - Those born of second wives, could take part in all forms of social interaction with high- caste Chhetris, except the sharing of boiled rice.

'C' class Ranas - This class included the off spring of wives and concubines of lower status with whom inter-dining was forbidden.

Only the 'A' class Ranas would be allowed to fill the highest positions in the army or civil administration. Any 'B' or 'C' class Rana were permitted to reach the rank of Colonel in the army but could never become Prime Minister.

It was during Chandra Shamsher's reign that the First World War (1914-18) was fought. Nepal gave massive support to the British Government in the form of men and money. A total no. of 16,554 Nepali soldiers were deployed at the service of the British Indian regiments. It was since then, the custom of directly recruiting *Gorkhas* for the British Indian regiments started, which is followed till date for the Indian regiments as well. Nepal also rendered commendable material and financial help. In 1914, 1916 and 1917, a cash donation of 3,00,000 was made each year and in 1918 Rs. 2,00,000 was given in connection with the silver wedding anniversary of the King. Thirty - one machine guns purchased from Vickers Armstrong were presented to King George V in London on the occasion
of his birthday in 1915. The same year 71 mechanics were sent by Nepal from its arms factories and workshops to work in India. Forty thousand pounds of cardamom, 84,699 pounds of tea, 200 jackets and 12 great coats were supplied to the British soldiers, and 2,00,00 broad gauge sleepers and sisum logs were supplied to the railways free of cost30. Britain's reward to Nepal for its assistance in World War I was an annual payment of one million rupees in perpetuity. Chandra Shamsher, who had been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant - General in the British army in 1915, was appointed full General after the war and was decorated with the Grand cross of the order of St. Michael and St. George.

Maharaj Chandra Shamsher died on 25 November 1929 and his brother Bhim Shamsher became the new Prime Minister, at the ripe age of 64. However, he felt insecure and was constantly haunted by the remains of rigid control and authority that his brother Chandra Shamsher implemented on him. Therefore, the first step he took after assuming the office was to settle scores with those officials who insulted him during his brother's region, by publically humiliating and expelling them from the country. He acted arbitrarily and in a high-handed fashion and relied exclusively on intelligence reports which were designed by interested parties to manipulate him. Maharaj Bhim Shamsher had many 'C' class sons, and so he revised the roll of succession to accommodate them on it, which led to the demotion of some of his 'A' and 'C' class nephews already on the roll. He tried to pacify them by appointing them as General and commanding Generals and by making all of Chandra's and his own grandsons Major - Generals, but offended them in practice. They started plotting to oust him from power. During Bhim Shamsher's reign capital punishment was abolished except in cases falling under military law and high treason, and the practice of observing Saturday as public holiday every week was introduced.

Juddha Shamshere assumed power in 1932 after Bhim Shamsher's death. During his reign, a massive earthquake shook the Kathmandu Valley and its adjacent areas in January 1934. It must be said to the credit of Juddha that he undertook to provide prompt and effective relief to the earthquake stricken population on his own without even availing himself of the generous offer of help by the
Governments and voluntary organizations of other countries, thus making him extremely popular and beloved of the Nepali people.

Two months after the earthquake, Juddha decided to resolve the problem of the growing tension between the 'legitimate' and the 'illegitimate' Ranas by eliminating the names of all the 'C' class Ranas from the roll of succession. Most of them were posted on administrative positions far away from Kathmandu. This removal acted as a self-destructive measure, ultimately leading to the fall of the Rana Dynasty. It was also during Juddha's regime that the first organised opposition against Rana rule in the form of the Praja Parishad came to light and was crushed brutally by Juddha Shamsher.

Another remarkable event which Juddha witnessed during his regime was the outbreak of World War II. This time also, Nepal offered its earnest help to the British Indian Government by sending 8000 troops for garrison duties in India. However, as the war progressed, the Nepali troops were mobilized for active duties and the peacetime strength of the Brigade of 20 battalions was doubled. Maharaj allowed the Gorkha units of the British Indian army to go overseas, thus obliging the British Government. Juddha also unfailingly sent the congratulatory messages to Prime Minister Churchill whenever and wherever, the Allied Powers won worthwhile victories during the course of war when the war ended in 1945, and all the returning regiments were personally welcomed back by Maharaj Juddha himself and were given a public reception.

Like previous time, British Government showered Nepal with gifts and remunerations. The Nepali contingent was allowed to bring back to Nepal its modern standard equipment valued at 3,30,000 rupees. As a war memorial to the men of the Nepali contingent four life-size plaster statues of Gorkha soldiers in full battle dress were placed on pedestals round the permanent platform at the centre of the parade ground in Kathmandu. British Government increased the annual present to Nepal of one million Indian rupees to two million and agreed to the capitalization of up to 50% of the enhanced annual present to assist the Nepal Government in financing post-war development in the erstwhile kingdom. The actual amount was subsequently fixed at 2.5 million rupees. On 29 November
1945, Juddha voluntarily relinquished the office of Maharaj Prime Minister and retire to a life of prayer and meditation. He was the only Rana prime minister to do so. He was succeeded by his nephew, Padma Shamsher.

Padma acquired the office at the age of 62 years. Along with the title of Maharaj, he also inherited a legacy of problems from his uncle. Juddha was indifferent to the wind of change blowing throughout the globe and forcefully crushed the non-violent movement for civil rights in Nepal. He staunchly opposed the Indian independence movement. Moreover he spent lavishly on his family to the extent that Padma is said to have inherited on empty treasury. Again, he had to manage the inherent friction between Chandra's sons and Juddha's son regarding the role of succession, in addition to settling the claims and counterclaims among Juddha's innumerable sons based on sibling rivalries. Another disadvantage on his part was that he was not well-off as per the Rana standard and also had no brother of his own to support him. Thus he had to depend on the Chandra and Juddha branches of the Shamsher family for administrative chores.

However, the gravest crisis to the Rana Dynasty and Maharaj Padma Shamsher came in the late 1940s, with the British withdrawal from India and establishment of a communist government in India. The year 1947 proved ominous for Rana regime in mainly two ways Firstly, the formation of Nepali congress, and the wide-scale anti-Rana movement organised by it, baffled the Ranas on how to tackle the situation. Secondly, the British decision to leave India, deprived the Ranas of the powerful external support which was unlikely of the new Indian Government. All these factors compelled Padma Shamsher to submit to the popular will and promised to associate the people with the administration in a meaningful way. In this series, he gave the Nepali people their first written constitution in the year 1948. However, the constitution was widely criticized as it kept intact the autocratic nature of Rana family and gave a meager space for popular participation (the details of this constitution are discussed in the next chapter).

The last hereditary Rana prime ministers, Mohan Shamsher, assumed the office on 30th April 1948. In the given background of his ascension accompanied by the
establishment of a communist regime in China and its forceful occupation of Tibet worsened the situation for Ranas. But, even then the Maharaj Prime Minister was more concerned in aggravating his powers and privileges, rather than meeting the political challenge. Instead he banned all kinds of political activities within Nepal, which farmed civil unrest against the Rana Rule. Besides, the desire of the erstwhile monarch King Tribhuvan, to reassert his position, proved the last nail in the Rana coffin. The flight of the Royal family and the mass-scale popular resentment led by Nepali Congress forced the Ranas to step down for good. The famous Delhi Agreement of 1951 established constitutional monarchy in Nepal, putting an end to the nearly 100 years old tyrannical "Ranacracy" of Nepal.

List of the Hereditary Rana Prime Ministers:-

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<th>NAME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Jang Bahadur Kunwar (from 5 May 1848, Jang Bahadur Rana)</td>
<td>15 September 1846 to 1 August 1856</td>
<td>Born 1817 died 1877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bam Bahadur Kunwar Rana</td>
<td>1 August 1856 to 25 May 1857</td>
<td>Born 1818 died 1857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jang Bahadur Rana</td>
<td>28 June 1857 to 25 February 1877</td>
<td>Born 1817 died 1877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rannodip Singh Bahadur</td>
<td>27 February 1877 to 22 November 1885</td>
<td>Born 1825 died 1885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bir Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana</td>
<td>22 November 1885 to 5 March 1901</td>
<td>Born 1852 died 1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Dev Shamber Jang Bahadur Rana</td>
<td>5 March 1901 to 27 June 1901</td>
<td>Born 1862 died 1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Chandra Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana</td>
<td>27 June 1901 to 26 November 1929</td>
</tr>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Bhim Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana</td>
<td>26 November 1929 to 1 Sept. 1932</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Juddha Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana</td>
<td>1 September 1932 to 29 November 1945</td>
</tr>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Padma Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana</td>
<td>29 November 1945 to 30 April 1948</td>
</tr>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Mohan Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana</td>
<td>30 April 1948 to 12 November 1951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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9. Wikipedia.com

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11. ibid, Pg. 13


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