Chapter Three
THE FALL OF BHIM SEN THAPA

Hodgson's Plans

Hodgson's policy was to subdue Nepal's strong military spirit, and thereby transform her from a potential menace to British India into a peaceful, innocuous neighbour, and "then a highly useful ally." He had a four-fold plan; first, he tried to provide a safe outlet to the pent-up military spirit of the Nepalese by drafting them in increasing number to the British Indian army; second, to direct these martial instincts to peaceful pursuits like trade and commerce; third, to procure a definite legal status for the Indian merchants at Kathmandu; and lastly, to settle amicably the political questions, as disputes over boundaries and border crimes. So long as Bhim Sen's power remained unimpaired,

(1) Hodgson to Macnaughton, Political Secretary, 24 August 1833, F.H., Vol. 162.

(2) This point is elaborately discussed in Chapter Ten.

(3) The Indian merchants at Kathmandu were often subjected to discrimination; they were often harassed by the authorities at Kathmandu. They had no free access to the Resident. Their grievances were often unredressed by the Courts of Nepal.

(4) W.W. Hunter, Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson, British Resident at the Court of Nepal (London, 1886) 126-7. "To lead Nepal from her present war policy to one of peace and fitness to her condition and to rid ourselves of the dangers that may beset us from the undue amount of troops maintained by her, has occupied for some time past the attention of our present Resident [Hodgson].' Campbell's Report, 1837, P.C., 18 September 1837, 69-72.
it was difficult to implement the above plans, and impossible to change his system by either persuasion or political pressure.

**His Commercial Schemes**

Hodgson first tried to implement his commercial schemes. He vigorously urged the Government to undertake active measures to augment the volume of trade between India and Nepal. He dealt elaborately with the prospects of trade with the trans-Himalayan regions through Nepal, the latter's advantages over Sikkim, Bhutan and Kumaon in regard to trade with Chinese Central Asia, the prevalent customs duty at various places, the imports and exports, the principal trade routes, transport and conveyance and other relevant details, and came to the conclusion that "the trade in question is capable of an early, immediate and considerable extension." Now that Russia was making political and commercial headway in Central Asia, it was incumbent on the British government to accelerate their activities. Elaborating the point, Hodgson noted,

"were it possible to change the almost exclusively martial propensities of most of these highlanders and inspiring their chiefs and government with perfect reliance on our good faith, to win them to a gradual reduction of their large standing army ... then might we look with confidence not only to the continuance of the present amicable political relations with Nepal, but also to the speedy rise and progress of valuable commercial relations with it"
Between 1829 and 1851, Hodgson, as the Acting Resident of Nepal, made many abortive efforts to persuade the Government to take positive steps for developing this lucrative trade.

**Internal factors help Hodgson**

No other direct or political measures could be taken till the state of politics in Nepal itself changed. Hodgson's plan developed, his strength increased, his strategy changed with each successive turn in the politics of Nepal. Hodgson did not create so much a favourable situation for his plans, as he exploited the fast deteriorating political state of the Durbar to his advantage. Alone and unaided by these favourable internal factors, he could hardly have attained his objects, without causing a violent breach in the peaceful relations between the two governments. In attaining his

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(5) **Tibet.**

(6) Resident to Govt., 8 March 1830, P.C., 26 March 1830, 24. "I like to see Nepal connected into a literal bridge to transport the merchandise of the vast intra and extra Himalayan plains. I like to see the gallant Harbattens (the generic name of the highlanders dwelling in regions west of Kathmandu) \( \text{r} \) H. Oldfield, *Sketches From Nepal* (London, 1880) 1, 44 \( \text{r} \) filling whole brigades of our army and shaming our sepoeas out of half their ridiculous and disabling prejudices of caste." Hodgson to Macnaughton, 10 July 1833, P.M., Vol. 161; P.C., 2 December 1831, 4.

objects, he interfered in Nepal's internal politics, thus deviating from the course of dignified neutrality, scrupulously held by his predecessors - a course which had hardened into a political maxim, and had contributed greatly to stabilise the relations of Nepal and British India.

Bhim Sen's political system rested on three pillars: (8)
the minority of the Kings, the favours of the Regent Queen, and the successful crippling of the political power of all (9) other parties save his own, the Thapas. The situation was bound to change when the King was no longer a minor, the Regent Queen no longer alive, and the various parties no longer disposed to suffer the unrivalled absolutism of the great Minister. In 1833, when Hodgson became full Resident, the political situation in Nepal boded these ominous developments and portended the impairment of Bhim Sen's power.

(8) See Chapter Two, f.n. 29.
(9) His clan's 'unmeasured usurpation having stripped almost all others naked of honour and influence and wealth and filled them with deep though concealed remorse.' Resident to Government, 10 November 1833, P.C., 21 November 1833, 37. This is an exaggeration. During Bhim Sen's rule, Chautaria Pran Sah and Kaji Dalbhanjan Pande were "associated Ministers" in 1826; Pushkar Shah was governor of Doti, an important place in western Nepal, Birkishore Pande acted as a Kaji, P.M., Vol. 198; P.C., 11 February 1825, 18; Ben Jang Pande, the arch enemy of Bhim Sen, was called back from exile in India by Bhim Sen himself. C. Nepal, Bhim Sen Thapa Ra Tatkalin Nepal (Nepali, Kathmandu, 2013 V.S.) 25-9.
The Death of the Regent Queen: Growth of Anti-Bhim Sen faction

On 6 April 1832, the old Regent Queen, Lalit Tripura Sundari Devi, died. Commenting on the political effect of her death, Resident Maddock wrote to the Government:

"The death of the Princess is likely, it is supposed, to have detrimental effect on the influence of the Minister, who had been much indebted for the length and stability of his administration to her countenance and support, and it has occurred at a time when the Rajah is of an age to think and act for himself." (10)

It was a major crisis in the state, for her death was the first material blow to Bhim Sen, a premonition of his eventual fall and the resultant political commotion. She was the chief plank of Bhim Sen's power, bound to him by ties closer than political. Her personality had kept so long in effective restraint the rivals of Bhim Sen; her death emboldened them (12) to undermine by intrigues his overwhelming predominance.

(10) Resident to Government, 6 April 1832, P.C., 28 May 1832, 52.


Ere long an anti-Bhim Sen faction was gradually formed in the palace, composed of the Senior Queen of the King, the Chautarias, the Gurus and the Pandes, all with rankling grievances against the dominant Minister, with a common spirit of jealousy, and a common thirst for power.

In the person of King Rajendra Vikram Shah, now no longer a minor, the anti-Bhim Sen faction found its rallying point. Shorn of all power and influence, he had so long been mewed up in his palace, resigned to the life of a roi faineant. By nature weak and indolent, yet ambitious, jealous and intriguing, he was now ceaselessly instigated by his Senior Queen and her men to shake off the thrall of Bhim Sen, by bold assertion of his legitimate royal authority.

__(13) E.G., 28 May 1832, 52.__

__(14) "The Raja is hemmed into his palace beyond which he cannot stir unaccompanied by the Minister, and then only to the extent of a short ride or drive. Even within the walls of the palace the Minister and his brother both reside ... Of power he has not a particle, nor seems to wish it, of patronage, he has not a fraction and is naturally galled at this, as well as being sentinelled all round by Bhim Sen's creatures, even within his own abode and at being debarred from almost all liberty of locomotion and of intercourse with the Sardars and gentry of the country." Resident to Govt., 18 February 1833, E.G., 5 March 1833, 24.

__(15) Hodgson wrote about her "But his wife in both spirited and clever and she is incessantly upbraiding him for suffering himself to be ... rendered a mere idol (Matee Ko Deota) for occasional exposure to the worship of the multitude." Ibid.
or, if necessary, by effecting the ruin of the Minister.
The anti-Bhim Sen faction made attempts to enlist the
Resident's support to the King's bid for power. The Resident,
Mr. Haddock, however, refused to be embroiled in this domestic
(17) brawl. It seemed, rather than share his powers with others,
Bhim Sen would prefer resignation - an eventuality which the
(18) Resident disfavoured as an unwelcome development.

At such a time the Thapa family was rent with bitter
discord. Bhim Sen's brother, Bakhtswar Singh and Ranbeer
Singh, were extremely jealous of his power. His inveterate
(19) enemies, they served as ready and pliable instruments of the
anti-Bhim Sen faction. Thus after twenty-five years of unbroken
and successful rule, Bhim Sen found himself arrayed everywhere
against elements, jealous, revengeful and hostile.

(16) Ibid. "The Raja has been purposely so trained as
to possess little energy of body and mind, so that had not his
wife turned out an ambitious woman, he would probably have
submitted quietly to political non-entity or but for her
vigilance, have been spirited under his grave so soon as he
had begot a successor." Ibid.

(17) Resident to Government, 20 June 1833, F.G., 27
August 1833, 18.

(18) F.G., 12 February 1833, 160; see Chapter Two, f.n. 58.

(19) Resident to Government, 10 November 1833, F.G.,
21 November 1833, 57; Hodgson to Prinsep, Political Secretary,
27 June 1831, F.H.; Vol. 150; Hodgson's Memorandum relative to
the Gurkha army, 14 February 1825, F.H., Vol. 125.
This, then, was the situation when Hodgson became full Resident in 1833. A storm was brewing in the air, with a clear premonition of a domestic revolution. Such a revolution was, to Hodgson, a welcome development, for it presaged the relaxation of Bhim Sen's absolute hold on the administration and bore in it the prospects of much-desired change in the spirit of Nepal's Government.

Policy of direct intercourse with the King

The revolution was steadily moving on its way; it was prudent to lay grip on it. The first step Hodgson took was to establish direct communication with the King and the nobles in the Court. No such direct intercourse was hitherto possible when the King was a minor and when all matters of business were, of necessity, conducted through the all-powerful Minister. But now, when the King had come of age,

(20) "Thus you see that since the Maharana's death, affairs have already advanced to that point when the Raja's jealousy and fear of the Minister can no longer be disguised. He may now perhaps be regarded as the head of the party opposed to Bhim Sen, which consists of some members of the Raja's family and of several Sardars whose present power and income bear little proportion to the posts and influence which they or other members of their families enjoyed before Bhim Sen had established his own preponderance and exclusive sway." Meddock to Macnaughton, Political Secretary, 20 June 1832, E.G., 27 August 1832, 18.

(21) Resident to Government, 20 September 1834, E.G., 9 October 1834, 17.

(22) Resident to Government, 18 February 1833, S.G., 5 March 1833, 24; C. Nepali, n. 9, 40.
and had shown marked restiveness under the Minister's dominance, Hodgson insisted to have direct dealings with him. He wanted to disabuse the King and his principal nobles of their baseless apprehension of closer intercourse with the Resident - an apprehension deliberately fostered by Bhim Sen to subserve his own ends. Hodgson strongly felt that Bhim Sen had so long misrepresented the attitude of the British towards Nepal; that he had created the bogey of the evil designs of the British and had thus for long deluded the King and the nobles. As the Resident had no means of communicating with the King and the nobles, this delusion could not be removed from their minds. In the interest both of the King and the British themselves, Hodgson argued, the Resident should have free access to the King, for,

"So long as the Company's views can be represented as dangerous so long will Bhim Sen's jealous alienation seem indispensable to the hoodwinked Raja and chiefs whose rights and substance he [Bhim Sen] and his family will continue to eat up, scaring them into acquiescence with monstrous pictures of the great devourer of nations! It rests entirely with Government to put an end to this fraud, by no longer suffering its sentiments and wishes to reach the Durbar only through a distorting medium." (24)

If free and direct intercourse could be established with the King and the nobles, Hodgson hoped to convince them of the sincere goodwill of the British and the vile policy of

(23) See Chapter Two, page

the Minister. The result was likely to be far more friendly relations between the two states, with far greater possibility of the British influence being felt in the Durbar. The myth of Bhim Sen's indispensability had to be exploded. Waxing eloquent, Hodgson wrote to the Government,

"Let our light shine before all men, and the body of the honourable and gallant gentry of Nepal who have a vast but irregular influence over the government will soon be ready to stay any rascally agent of power. Let all men have room to perceive that the British Representative with all the consideration that belongs to him of courtesy, knowing all, unimpeded and undeluded - yet freely and steadily maintaining a neutral course, and we shall soon with our pure purposes and happy sort of connexion with Nepal become honoured, trusted and able in any emergency that may arise to procure the heart and hand cooperation of these gallant tribes." (26)

If the British Resident pressed the Minister to have direct dealings with the King, the latter was certain to look upon the British government in a very friendly spirit. It would be a recognition of his coming of age, and of his right to rule as well as reign. Such a stand of the British, when the King was at an issue with the domineering Minister, was likely to bind the King to the British government with ties of obligation and gratitude. In consequence, it could be hoped, that the King would change the martial spirit of the

(26) Ibid., Resident to Government, 8 March 1833, P.C., 19 March 1833, 26; S.C., 5 March 1833, 24.

(26) Hodgson to Macnaghton, 16 June 1833, S.C., 28 June 1833, 11.
government in deference to the wishes of his benefactors. In short, without any more overt intervention the much-desired change in Nepal's policy could be effected.

On the other hand, Hodgson strongly held that if the British government continued to acquiesce in Bhim Sen's absolute preponderance and his masterful tutelage of the King, now no longer a minor, it was certain to be misconstrued by the latter and his party as the British Government's wilful indifference to his (King's) lawful claim to sovereignty, of which he had so long been deprived by the Minister. The British government must be greatly interested in the wrangle between the King and the Minister, for neutrality and non-interference in the present situation

"could not fail to make the Raja and his friends lot us down for allies of the other faction, (27) and to reduce me [the Resident] in fact to a virtual partisanship as efficacious as my direct and corrupt one." (28)

If the British insisted, it was likely that Bhim Sen would yield some effective power to the King. This is how Hodgson sought to justify his interest in the Nepalese politics.

(27) i.e., Bhim Sen and his men.

(28) Hodgson to Macnaghten, 14 June 1833, E.G., 28 June 1833, 11.

(29) Resident to Government, 20 September 1834, E.G., 9 October 1834, 17.
Simultaneously, Hodgson vigorously pressed Bhim Sen to waive the injunctions on the Indian merchants at Kathmandu against having communication with the Resident. After some futile demurs, Bhim Sen gave way, allowing the merchants to freely communicate with the Resident. Hodgson had thus gained his first major point against the all-powerful (30) Minister.

Emboldened, Hodgson then tried to elicit his long-denied ambassadorial privileges like those of freely moving beyond the strictly guarded limits, and receiving courtesy (31) and civility from the nobles of the Court.

Hodgson and the Anti-Bhim Sen faction

Meanwhile, the anti-Bhim Sen faction was fast mustering strength. The King ceaselessly strove at enlisting the Resident's open support against the masterful Minister. Hodgson gave him no overt support, for open partisanship with the King was risky when "the time was out of joint and (32) is also pregnant with changes." It was still uncertain as to what extent the King and his men would succeed against the

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(31) Hodgson to Macnaughton, 3 June 1833, 15 June 1833, S.C., 28 June 1833, 11; same to same, 29 July 1833, F.M., Vol. 152.
(32) Hodgson to Macnaughton, 3 June 1833, S.C., 28 June 1833, 11.
Minister. Hodgson could only hope that Bhim Sen would yield some real power to the King and terminate the scramble (33) for power peacefully. He kept a regular, though clandestine, intercourse with the palace through the 'Gurus', who acted as the liaison between the King and the Resident. Through these Gurus, Hodgson conveyed to the King that the British government disfavoured the Minister's absolute monopoly of power, and the total deprivation of the King's legitimate rights and authority and that they would welcome the King's assuming the reins of administration in his own hands.

Ostensibly there was no league between the Resident (36) and the King, but in effect there was one. The knowledge of each other's sentiment emboldened both of them. The King was certain to exploit Hodgson's covert support as a second


(34) "The Raj Guru's family of four shrewd brothers are the Maharaja's best and safest advisers.... The Guru family are men of the world, who have been our's aforesmne, for a consideration and are ready to be so again on like terms.... Besides, their superior sense and experience make them friendly to our alliance on general grounds and their good report with the Maharaja is the more necessary to us." Resident to Government, 2 December 1833, *P.C.*, 19 December 1833, 13. The Gurus were opposed to war with the British in 1814-16. For this they were insulted and oppressed by Bhim Sen. *M.H.*, Vol. 18, K481, 6-7.


(36) "I hope and I believe that both Minister and Prince are now pretty well convinced I am not and cannot be made to be or even appear to be a partisan." Hodgson to Macnaughton, 23 June 1833, *P.M.*, Vol. 151.
string to his bow against the Minister. He was led by Hodgson's sentiments to think that far from opposing his assertion against the Minister, the British government would appreciate it.

Bhim Sen stubbornly opposed Hodgson's efforts to deal directly with the King, but he failed to stop their clandestine intercourse. It was rumoured that the King himself (37) would hold the 'reniance' and personally conduct the investiture of offices, - a function which was so long the exclusive preserve of the Minister. Speculation was rife, that Bhim Sen would either acquiesce in the King's assumption of real power or retire. At a time even a compromise between the de facto and the de jure sovereign seemed not improbable. Hodgson confidently hoped that Bhim Sen would bow to the force of circumstances and moderate his absolute regime. Even if he retired now, the King was capable enough to hold (38) the reins of the government.

(37) An institution whereby all the civil and military offices of Nepal were renewed every year. In Nepal all services were held by annual tenure, and all tenures of land were attached to actual service. A man off the roll of employ was called Dhakareah, one in employ was known as Jagara. Oldfield, n. 6, 175.

(38) Hodgson to Macnaughton, 3 June 1833, S. C., 28 June 1833, S. C., 11; same to same, 23 June 1833, F. M., Vol. 151; same to same, 6 September 1833, Ibid., Vol. 152; Resident to Government, 20 February 1834, F. C., 6 March 1834, 14. Hodgson hoped, "... he will himself change his course even if we insist not at all." Hodgson to Macnaughton, 10 July 1833, F. M., Vol. 151.
Soft-peddling Policy: Restlessness in Nepal

The time was such that it was politic to go slow, to wait and see, letting the events drift to their happy culmination. Considerable agitation and ferment were seen in Nepal on account of the rumoured Russo-Persian project of invasion of India. Speculations were rife in the excited Nepalese army on the overwhelming strength of the Russo-Persian army, the relative weakness of the British power, the uneasy neutrality of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the rebellious disposition of Raja Man Singh of Jodhpur, the likely shift of the whole British Indian army to the North-west and Rajputana, and the resultant undefended nature of Indo-Nepal frontier. Emissaries were sent to Lahore and Teheran to pick up intelligence, and increased correspondence with zamindars in the Indo-Gangetic plain smacked of suspicious motives. With Doorjan Sal, the ex-Raja of Bharatpur, too, secret communications were actively carried on. In obvious concern Hodgson noted:


(40) Tickell's Memorandum, n. 12.

"... they would hail with delight the appearance of any foreign or domestic foe to our government. Let our force be turned to any such in the North-West and the Gurkhaese would pour down upon our backs, 30000 regular as well armed and trained as our sepoys and infinitely better soldiers in all moral respects."

Hodgson suspected that by indulging in these intrigues and exciting the restlessness of the soldiers, Bhim Sen sought to warn the British that once his personal hold over the administration were relaxed, the Nepalese soldiers would swoop down upon the plains below.

In view of these considerations, it was wise to refrain, for a while, from pressing too closely upon Bhim Sen for securing the ambassadorial rights, and to hold meanwhile an ostensibly neutral course in the domestic politics of Nepal. To temporise and suffer for a while Bhim Sen's game of "shifts and expedients", his duplicity and evasion, his familiar reserve, and "alteration of hot and cold fits", seemed the best expedient. The least the British hands were now seen


(43) Same to same, 10 July 1833, E.M., Vol. 161.

(44) "It is obviously more offensive to discontinue honours which have been continually paid than it is to continue to withhold them where they have never been conceded." Government to Resident, 25 July 1833, F.G., 25 July 1833, 27.

(45) S.G., 28 June 1833, 11; Hodgson to Macnaughton, 2 September 1833, F.M., 162.
in the schemes against Bhim Sen, the best, for it was feared that he might goad the restless soldiery against the British, and create an external crisis in order to arrest the erosion of his power. A silent, peaceful change in the administration was desired by the British. They avoided giving Bhim Sen any pretext to come openly at an issue with them, when situation in the North-west was uneasy. The domestic brawls in Nepal were expected to keep her engaged till the storm in the north-west blew over. It was impolitic to take any hasty and rash step and so precipitate the domestic crisis and bring about a convulsion at such a time. To curb the restlessness of the Nepalese, Hodgson suggested that the rumoured Russo-Persian invasion of India should be kept off as far as possible, and that the awe and fear of the Nepalese should be kept alive by occasional display of British arms on the Nepalese frontier.

**Bhim Sen yields to Hodgson**

Soon after the rumour of Russo-Persian invasion passed off. Hodgson resumed his policy of urging his long-

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(46) "Let him [Bhim Sen] but avoid violences towards the Raja and ... let our predominance remain unimpaired in India and I should have the best hopes for the future." Hodgson to Macnaghten, 10 July 1833, E.H., Vol. 151.

denied ambassadorial privileges. He kept on encouraging
the King, through the Gurus, to assume real authority in the
state. The King was gradually gaining influence and the
Minister proportionately yielding. Very soon, in the internal
administration of the state and in dealings with the Chinese
government, the voice of the King was heard. Hodgson insisted
that as the King's majority had thus been recognised by the
Minister himself, there was no reason why the British
government should not be allowed to deal with him directly.
Sorely perplexed, Bhim Sen relented, allowing Hodgson to
meet the King personally and to conduct business with him
(49) directly. A great point had, at long last, been wrung from
the obstinate Minister. The latter also promised to waive
the rigid restrictions regarding commercial matters, as also
to show greater deference to the Resident's status and
position.

(48) Hodgson gave all moral support to the Raj Guru's
Krishna Ram Pandit attempts "to encourage, direct and aid
him [the King] in the novel but necessary attempt to see
with his own eyes and hear with his own ears, instead of
passively trusting to those of Bhim Sen." Hodgson to Govern-
ment, 28 January 1834, P.C., 13 February 1834, 6. The Rajguru
sought to persuade Hodgson to declare himself openly against
Bhim Sen. Hodgson refused, but plainly told him "that Nepal
must answer for whatever Bhim Sen did, in the Raja's name;
that if he [Raj Guru] did not presently disabuse H.H.'s of
the lies about us instilled into him daily by the Thapa faction
and procure H.H.'s own personal attention to the affairs of
the government, he might find too late the sins of the
Minister visited on the head of the Raja, or the latter become
indeed, a cypher in the hands of his Mayor of the palace, and
that too with the entire acquiescence of the foreign
governments, as a matter of necessity and expediency on their
parts." Ibid.

(49) Ibid.
The British government, however, were reluctant to move so fast as Hodgson; a settlement with Bhim Sen on political and commercial matters was indeed long overdue; but it was not felt to be so urgent as Hodgson contended; besides, there was risk in pressing Bhim Sen too hard. They asked Hodgson to desist from embroiling himself openly in the party politics of a foreign court. He was instructed to observe strict neutrality, to show a friendly demeanour to all parties, and to take particular care to conciliate the young King, with a view to instilling in him confidence and convincing him of the goodwill of the British government. To act more overtly as a support of one party against another was undignified, unwarranted and impolitic. It was evidently difficult for the British government to cast away their non-interference policy in Nepal, held so long with success.

**Hodgson urges commercial concessions**

Hodgson had since long been consistently trying to resuscitate and develop the mercantile relations between India and Nepal. With this end in view he had been ceaselessly urging the Government to demand Nepal's recognition of the commercial treaty of 1792, which had so long worked to the

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(50) Government to Resident, 13 February 1854, P.C., 13 February 1854, 8.
great advantage of Nepal, without any reciprocal benefit to the British.

Political motive of commercial schemes

Hodgson urged the development of commerce, with a political motive. He hoped that the more the Nepalese would thrive in the peaceful and profitable pursuits of trade and commerce, the more would they abandon their itch for hazardous evocations of arms and conquests. Thus commerce and material prosperity would act as euthanasia of their martial spirit, and that attained, the British government would be relieved of a potential menace. Moreover with every increase in the volume of trade with Nepal, the British government would gain increasing control over the Nepalese economy. Nepal would then not dare risk estranging the British who controlled the strings of her economic life. Free flow of commerce, he held, was the only effective moral element to wean these martial tribes from their exclusively warlike propensities. It was the safest and the most effective course to bind Nepal in "real amity to the British government", for

(51) Resident to Government, 31 May 1834, P.G.; 12 June 1834, 140; same to same, 18 May 1834, P.G.; 10 July 1834, 146; same to same, 20 September 1834, 23 September 1834, P.G., 9 October 1834, 17-8.
"commerce works unseen ... claims only the negative countenance of rulers (and) ... seeks to bind nations together in amity not Governments, her quelling influence over the latter being reflective only and efficacious so ever." (52)

Besides serving political purposes, these commercial measures would prove economically beneficial for both Nepal and British India.

The time was propitious to implement these commercial schemes when a marked change had occurred in the character of Nepalese trade following the establishment of British relations with the country. Nepal's southern trade had trebled since 1816, with its annual prime cost value being

(52) "My reasons for desiring to see an extended commercial intercourse between Nepal and the plains are rather political than economical. After nearly 20 years of peace, sentiment is as enthusiastic and habit as uniform in favour of arms at Kathmandu as they were in 1814, nor can it be reasonably anticipated that the case should be otherwise for 20 years to come, even should peace be so long maintained ... unless some effective moral element of change be brought to bear upon the tribes. Of the few known elements of the kind, commerce is the only one applicable to the present case and its efficacy as a peacemaker is, I believe, the safest induction from general history ... I would reach the Government through the people. Commerce should be my instrument." Resident to Government, 31 May 1834, P.C., 12 June 1834, 140.

(53) Ibid.; P.C., 10 July 1834, 144; 15 November 1834, 24; 9 October 1834, 17. The Court of Directors asked the Governor-General to develop commercial traffic with Nepal "as we [the Court] are fully of opinion with Mr. Hodgson that the greatest safeguard against a rupture with the Nepal State ... will be found in the extension of commercial relations between that country and our own possessions." Political Letter from Court, 16 November 1837, 29; Ibid., 8 June 1836, 16.
about 26 lakhs of rupees in 1831. Proportionately, her northern trade, i.e., trade with Tibet and China, had dwindled. The people showed marked preference for English and Indian cotton fabrics to those of Tibet and China, so that it could be hoped that with free trade two-thirds of the people of Nepal could be clothed by English and Indian cotton stuff. The nobility of Nepal, Bhim Sen not excepting, had developed a "growing inclination for British luxuries and customs." Indian merchants at Kathmandu had a considerable share in Nepal's mercantile activities and the Nepalese people in general had liking for Indian goods. On such reports, the Government authorised Hodgson to ascertain if the Durbar regarded the Commercial treaty of 1792 as binding on itself.

(54) P.C., 12 June 1834, 140; M.H., Vol. 14, K480, 178 et seg.

(55) "Within the last 10 years himself [Bhim Sen] and family and a few other wealthy persons have built fine houses in a half European style and furnished them with a like fashion. Himself and his brother have laid out spacious gardens, stocked with all the botanical treasures of the Hon'ble Company's garden at Calcutta. Carriages, buggies and horses are now common in a city where 15 years ago no horse better than Hote Tengkam was seen and nothing like a carriage was known. When Mr. Stuart [the Asst. Resident] died here, the Minister bought whole of his silver plates which he constantly uses and Minister's nephew not long ago presented me with a pew upon a Staffordshire wave dish.... Lastly, the English dress even to boots and top boots is often to be seen upon the person of the last mentioned gentleman." Resident to Government, 8 March 1830, P.C., 26 March 1830, 24.

(56) P.C., 9 October 1834, 17. In Kathmandu there were 34 Indian merchants with a trading capital of about 23 lakhs of rupees. P.C., 2 December 1831, 4.

(57) P.C., 26 March 1830, 24; 10 July 1834, 144.
Bhim Sen refused to abide by the said treaty and sought to parcel the issue. Hodgson recommended strong retaliatory economic measures, to bring the Minister to reason. He was convinced that Bhim Sen feared that a Commercial treaty and freer commercial intercourse between the two governments would remove the popular prejudice in Nepal against the British government. The British government warned the Durbar that the said treaty, if at all to operate, must be bilateral. Hodgson went one step further. He instructed the magistrates of the border districts to levy full duties on Nepalese goods in place of the usual 2½ p.c. advalorem duties.

(63) Hodgson urged the imposition of full duties or double duties on the exports of Nepal to India, an embargo on her trade, and resumption of the Tarai, the mainstay of Nepal's revenue. P.C., 9 October 1834, 17; 10 July 1834, 151.

Hodgson was impatient: "It is my decided opinion that we should immediately come to an understanding with him - with him, I say expressly, and not the Durbar, because he is the alpha and omega of all things at Kathmandu ..." Resident to Government, 20 September 1834, P.C., 9 October 1834, 17.

(59) "Natabar Singh, his [Bhim Sen's] nephew distinctly told me ... that recognition of the Treaty [of 1792] would cause the whole country using the praises of the Company and that the Maharaja (that is the Minister) would lose all consideration among his own subjects." Resident to Government, 20 September 1834, P.C., 9 October 1834, 17.

(60) Government to Resident, 9 October 1834, P.C., 9 October 1834, 19.
stipulated by the treaty of 1792. For this overzeal, Hodgson was censured by the Government. It seems that the latter were opposed to "compromise the existing good relations" with Nepal for the sake of this economic question. (61)

Bhim Sen resumes stubbornness

This soft attitude of the British government did not fail to have its natural effect on Bhim Sen's mind. It led him to believe that in spite of Hodgson's hostility towards him, the British government were not so much concerned with the internal affairs of Nepal, far less in her party strife. He resumed coolness towards the Resident, and placed all obstacles in the way of his free access to the King. All forms of delay and prevarications were shown regarding the commercial question. It was even rumoured that he was making insidious attempts to effect the abdication of the King in favour of his infant son. To foil such an attempt was Hodgson's prime concern; for if the King was deposed and a minor set upon the throne, Bhim Sen would assume the Regency and rule in absolute sway. Hodgson ceaselessly urged the

(61) Resident to Government, 12 November 1834, P.C., 2 December 1834, 87-8; Government to Resident, 2 December 1834, P.C., 2 December 1834, 89.

(62) "Bhim Sen after two years' intense watching of the Resident's movements has resolved to essay the possibility of usurping the virtual sovereignty of Nepal." Resident to Government, 20 September 1834, P.C., 9 October 1834, 17.
Government to recognise in open terms the King's majority and to remonstrate against his being prevented from direct dealings with the Resident. A full, free and direct intercourse with the King and the nobles, Hodgson asserted, would not only "brush away Bhim Sen's cobwebs entirely" but would be hailed as a widely popular measure. He warned the Government not to be deluded by the Minister's occasional concessions; they were but time-serving expedients and tactful political shifts.

Hodgson's pleadings were in vain. He was warned by the Government not to force an intimate intercourse with the King, for such open partisanship was sure to set the Minister and his party in "continual opposition" to the Resident and the King - "a state of things manifestly undesirable." Hodgson was pointedly told,

"It is of no concern to the British government whether the Raja rule the Minister or the Minister rule the Raja. Your business is with the government as you find it .... Your government does not propose to interfere in the domestic politics of Nepal. Whether the Minister does or does not exercise too much authority is a question not for us but for the prince and the people of Nepal to consider. Your duty is strict neutrality and conciliatory inoffensive conduct towards all." (64)

(63) Same to same, 20 September 1834, 23 September 1834, P.C., 9 October 1834, 17-8.

(64) Government to Resident, 9 October 1834, P.C., 9 October 1834, 19.
In vain did Hodgson try to prove that the longer the open recognition of the King's majority was deferred, the firmer became the King's conviction that the British government, under cover of neutrality, were a party to Bhim Sen's scheme of making him a cipher and causing his abdication. Such a policy was little short of playing into Bhim Sen's hands, Hodgson pleaded.

**Hodgson and the palace intrigues**

By now Hodgson's attitude had convinced the King of his friendly disposition. He sought to ingratiate himself more openly with the Resident, in order to bring him more in the open as a shield against Bhim Sen. He made a sly attempt to win over the Resident, promising to be more friendly and accommodating to the British than Bhim Sen had ever been. Hodgson observed apparent neutrality, reporting to the Government that it was "rank folly to procure the Raja's liberation by entering into secret cabals here with the chiefs." Yet the King's attitude served to underline Hodgson's contention that the sooner his majority was recognised the better for the British.

Realising the eagerness of the British in regard to the commercial question, the King made a suggestion, through

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(65) Hodgson to Macnaughton, 11 December \[sic\] 1834, F.C., 21 November 1834, 155; same to same, 28 December 1834, F.M., Vol. 154.
Chamaria Fateh Jang Shah, of a new commercial treaty with them. It provided, among others, for the levy of a uniform ad valorem duty of 4 p.c. on the produce of Nepal and Tibet in British provinces and 5 p.c. on those of India and England in Nepal. The King also caused a rest-house to be built for Hodgson a little away from Kathmandu. These were concrete proofs of his cordiality. To increase his confidence and strength in himself, the Governor-General sent presents and complimentary addresses to the King as a mark of appreciation of his friendly policy. Hodgson recommended the acceptance of the proposed commercial treaty not for its economic benefit alone, but for its political value too. Its acceptance was likely to cement the relations between the King and the British government and proportionately weaken Bhim Sen. The Government, however, thought that Hodgson had subjected the Durbar to 'undue influence to elicit the said treaty, but Hodgson emphatically

(66)Tickell's Memorandum, para 18, S.C., 18 January 1841, 74; Resident to Government, 30 December 1834, P.C., 15 January 1835, 44.


(68) Same to same, 14 January 1835, P.M., Vol. 154; P.C., 23 January 1835, 55-4.

(69) "The Durbar is on tip-toe with expectation," Hodgson to Macnaughton, 30 December 1834, P.C., 15 January 1835, 44.

asserted that it was a spontaneous expression of the
Durbar's friendly disposition towards the British.

Bhim Sen conciliates the British

The growth of cordiality between the King and the
Resident drove Bhim Sen to the natural realisation that all
his efforts to prevent it had failed. He realised too that
the King had earned as much sympathy and support of the
British, as he himself had lost. He clearly saw that any
open opposition to the King's friendly policy towards the
British was sure to bring on him Bhim Sen the wrath of
that power and further weaken his position. The faction
opposed to him had strengthened meanwhile. Thus, although
Bhim Sen had been reinvested with Ministrieship, the King
had shown open sympathy for Ranbeer and Bakhtawar, his two
brothers and implacable enemies. The Pandes, the deadly
enemies of the Thapas, were openly shown royal favour; they
got back their properties and privileges, so long denied
them by the Thapas. This gave impetus and effectiveness to
the intrigues of the King and his party against the Minister.

(71) Same to same, 14 January 1835, F.H., Vol.154;
P.C., 15 January 1835, 44.

The Board of Customs, Salt and Opium disapproved
of the proposed commercial agreement, and hence, it fell

(72) Tickell's Memorandum, n.66. Although all offices
in Nepal were subject to renewal every year, the highest
officers were usually reinvested with their powers; the
renewal of office was hence formal in their case.

(73) "From this day may be reckoned the commencement of
a counter-revolution and of those intrigues of the Kala Pandes
which eventually succeeded so well in the overthrow of their
and in repaying the cruelties they had themselves suffered
at his Bhim Sen's hands." Ibid.
In view of these developments, Bhim Sen made a tactful shift to a policy of placating the Resident. Not only did he refrain from opposing the King in his friendliness towards the British, but he himself "seemed resolved to conciliate the British Resident by acts as well as by words." Some of the outstanding commercial and political questions were settled in an amicable spirit. The restrictions on the Resident regarding the issue of the bills of exchange to the traders were waived. The vexed issue of the surrender of criminals on the border was settled with an understanding that the right of punishment should belong to the state within which the crime was committed. The Durbar also undertook to effectively suppress the border crimes. Border disputes with Sikkim were also adjusted. Hodgson was invited by the King and Matabar Singh to join a hunting expedition. As a further proof of friendliness, the King was induced to propose a complimentary mission to England, "for drawing closer the

(74) Hunter, no. 4, 149.

(75) P.C., 3 August 1835, 39-45; 2 May 1836, 59-65.


(77) P.C., 4 May 1835, 101-2.

(78) Resident to Government, 6 February 1835, P.C., 24 February 1835, 49.
ties of amity between the two governments. Bhim Sen managed to make Matabar Singh, his trusted nephew, the head of the mission, hoping to seal the honour of such an act. It was hoped these conciliatory gestures would disarm the British government's opposition to him and would restore him their appreciation and support. They were further intended to take the wind out of the sails of the anti-Bhim Sen faction which, since long, was ingratiating itself with the British Resident. Yet this "strange effusion of friendliness" was not without some ulterior political motive. The Mission was calculated to be a feeler of the British government's reactions to Bhim Sen's recently-adopted conciliatory policy. It was even suspected that Matabar had been charged with an important political mission, namely, to settle an understanding with the British government that they would recognise Bhim Sen as the Minister of Nepal for life, and after his death, his successors alone would hold this august post. Matabar was to promise, on behalf of Bhim Sen, a guarantee of perpetual friendly relations between the two Governments, in token whereof the Minister was ready to send

(79) Same to same, 10 October 1835, P.C., 26 October 1835, 22-3; 23 November 1835, 23-4; 25 May 1835, 34.

(80) Hunter, n. 4, 140; 147.

(81) Resident to Government, 30 November 1835, P.C., 21 December 1835, 29.
a periodical mission to Calcutta with presents and a stipulated sum of money. Matabar even sought to get a land grant in British territory, presumably to convince the anti-Thapa party of the great friendship subsisting between the Thapa family and the British government. This conviction was likely to deter the enemies of Bhim Sen from supplanting his regime. The mission, in short, saw the climax of Bhim Sen's conciliatory policy, adopted as an insurance against an impending domestic crisis.

Yet, notwithstanding these suspicions, the British government deemed it politic to humour the Durbar, when all parties were eager to curry favour with them, and when the affairs in the North-West were drawing undue attention of the Durbar.

The Mission of Matabar Singh (1834-35)

Hence the idea of a Nepalese mission to India and England was heartily approved in Calcutta. A first hand knowledge of the great military and economic resources of the British was needed to convince the Nepalese of the utter futility of estranging that power. It was worthwhile to bind such influential men as Matabar, "the probable future

(82) P.C., 24 April 1837, 82.

(83) Resident to Government, 24 June 1835, P.C., 13 July 1835, 61.

(84) P.C., 25 May 1835, 34-5.
administrator of Nepalese government", "by the double ties of gratitude and complete conviction of our British unassailable strength." Besides, by treating the Mission with due honour, the Resident's right to move freely, and some economic concessions might be elicited from the Durbar as a return gesture of friendliness.

The failure of the Mission

The anti-Bhim Sen party was jealous of Matahar's heading the mission, and of the bid of the Thapas to "monopolise all the consequences and eclat resulting from such an important mission." They feared that if the Thapas rehabilitated their position in the esteem and support of the British government, they would be immensely powerful in Nepal. Bhim Sen was supposed to have promised the King to coax the British government to withdraw the Resident and retrocede Kumaoon as a friendly gesture. The party opposed to Bhim Sen naturally feared that if Matahar really achieved these objects, the Thapas would be immensely popular. The British government

(85) P.C., 25 May 1835, 34.
(86) Ibid., 34-5.
(87) P.C., 13 July 1835, 61.
(88) Extract from a paper of secret intelligence, 10 November 1835, P.C., 25 November 1835, 26; Ibid., 25-6. C. Nepali holds that Matahar was sent by Bhim Sen to assess the strength of the British in India, n. 9, 42.
lulled this apprehension by making it clear that the mission would not be allowed to make any political negotiation. This was a damper to Bhim Sen, for it seems he did have some political axe to grind in sending this mission. Consequently, the idea of Matabar's going to England "cooled off".

**Relations deteriorate: Bhim Sen's position weakened**

The failure of the mission hardened Bhim Sen's attitude to the British, as it widened the gulf between him and the Resident. The cordial atmosphere of 1835 soon gave way to one of distrust and unfriendliness. In June 1836, the British government's proposal of customs-free trade on the border was rejected by the Minister. He found his own

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(89) The Mission started from Kathmandu on 26 November 1834, with Dr. Campbell, the Asstt. Resident, attached as a political officer. It received due attention and marked honour while in India. It returned to Kathmandu on 20 March 1835. No political object was achieved by it. P.C., 14 December 1835, 68-71; 21 December 1835, 29-32; 28 December 1835, 42-8; 25 November 1835, 30-3; 4 January 1836, 42-5; 28 March 1836, 61-3; 15 February 1836, 48; 8 February 1836, 79-81; 11 January 1836, 50-6.

(90) Hodgson wrote in a private letter in May 1835, "The Darbar is growing increasingly civil and I have now at last a prospect of seeing the realisation of those hopes which have buoyed me up these ten years." Hunter, n. 4, 147; Hodgson to Macnaghton, 6 February 1835, E.M., Vol. 154; Bhim Sen to Lokraman (Nepalase Vakeel in Calcutta) 1832, Chaitra Shudi 15, Raburam Collections.

(91) P.C., 11 April 1836, 40.

position shaky, while the King and his party became increasingly assertive, and the British Resident sullenly hostile. He made an increase in the army to strengthen his stand against his rivals. It alarmed the latter, as it provided Hodgson with a proof that he meant mischief. A domestic crisis was imminent. The rival party clamoured for more equitable distribution of the offices in the state. The King heeded; the chief adherents of Bhim Sen, Matabar including, were removed from their offices to make room for the Pendes and others - "a further proof of transition from ministerial to royal supremacy." Soon after, a malicious charge of incest was trumped up against Matabar. The charge could not be proved, but significantly enough, the false accusers went unpunished. The quinquennial mission to China, so long an exclusive charge of Bhim Sen, was this time sent under the King's personal supervision; and unlike heretofore,

(93) P.G., 13 February 1837, 40.
(95) Resident to Government, 4 March 1837, P.G., 20 March 1837, 98 (Abstract).
(96) Tickell's Memorandum.
(97) Since 1792, Nepal had been sending quinquennial tributary missions to China as a token of compliment, defence and submission. See Chapter One, page 12.
a man of the King's own choice, not the Minister's, headed it. Attempts were made to arraign the Minister with charges of peculation and prodigality. The head of the Gurus, Ranganath Pandit, was seen angling for Ministership.

Hodgson is jubilant: The Revolution is a welcome event

Hodgson was jubilant, though not absolutely confident. The King was gradually gaining power; the Minister was gradually giving way; the situation was peaceful. It was likely that the peaceful domestic revolution would result in the establishment of "an administration, so constitutional (purely civil) and guided by a sovereign of so amiable and intelligent a character [which] Nepal has not known for fifty years." The unsophisticated simplicity of the people, the uncommon loyalty of the soldiery to the King, the ordinary administrative talent of the nobles and the friendly disposition of the well-meaning King, all promised internal stability and amicable relations with the British government. Hodgson's only apprehension was that

(98) Tickell's Memorandum.

(99) Resident to Government, 15 June 1837, P.C., 3 July 1837, 57.

(100) Ibid., Resident to Government, 4 March 1837, P.C., 20 March 1837, 88.

(101) Resident to Government, 15 June 1837, P.C., 3 July 1837, 57.
Bhim Sen might, in desperation, goad the army against the British with a view to creating an external crisis to stave off his impending fall. In such a contingency, Hodgson was prepared to come out openly in favour of the King's party.

Outlining his policy, Hodgson noted:

"If the change come not soon or come without improvement, I would take the first fair occasion of a reckoning with Nepal. If the change seems to tremble in the balance, wanting but a simple manifestation on our part in favour of the legitimate head of the State, that manifestation should be made by and by and under a distincer probability of quiet efficacy than now exists. In the mode there need be no interference so called."

(103) He kept up a regular secret intercourse with the King, who seemed to have gained considerable confidence in himself. Hodgson plainly told him that the British government expected

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(102) Hodgson to Colvin, Private Secretary to Lord Auckland, 24 June 1837, quoted in Hunter, n. 4, 154-7. Both Hodgson and Lord Auckland, were now weighing the pros and cons of a civil war in Nepal. Hodgson wrote, "Civil wars have rather a tendency to feed than to quench martial spirit and power; and if one broke out here, I should expect it to be diverted per fas et nefas upon us before it had raged three months. But there is no probability of its occurrence .... I therefore neither expect civil war nor think it would possibly advantage us if it occurred." Ibid, 156. Lord Auckland wrote to J. Camac, "Such disturbances in so near a neighbour are not without a danger and must be watched but I trust that there is for some time occupation at home for these troubled spirits." Auckland Mag., B.M.A.M., 87689, 72.

(103) Hodgson to Colvin, 24 June 1837, quoted in Hunter, n. 4, 154-7. "Let the change come, it cannot be for worse, and there is good reason to expect much good." Hodgson to Macnaughton, n.d., P.C., 3 July 1837, 37.
more cordial relations with Nepal when he (Raja) assumed unrivelled power.

The fall of Bhim Sen (1837)

On 24 July 1837, the infant son of the Senior Queen died, after taking a dose of medicine from the royal (physician, a henchman of the Minister. The event was immediately seized by the anti-Bhim Sen faction to convince the King that the poisonous medicine was really meant for the Senior Queen herself, the deadliest enemy of Bhim Sen. Goaded

(104) Resident to Government, 24 June 1837, P.C., 17 July 1837, 55; Lord Auckland to J. Curnock, 15 October 1836, Auckland MSS., British Museum, Additional MSS. (in microfilm) 37689, 72, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

(105) Hodgson to Government, 29 July 1837, S.C., 14 August 1837, 35; King Rajendra Vikram to Lokram, 1899, Svaran Vedi 13, Roi 1. In this letter the King asks the Nepalese Vekeel in Calcutta to inform the Governor-General of the circumstances leading to the deposition of Bhim Sen. The letter is in the Foreign Office, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu. Records of this office were made available to me by Chittaranjan Nepali.

(106) Resident to Government, 29 July 1837, S.C., 14 August 1837, 35. Hodgson too regarded the allegation as true. "Queen is Senior, her energy has been for some time the stay of her husband's party. Her removal was the object of the plot, of the reality of which ... I am afraid there is no room for doubt." Ibid. Subsequently, however, Hodgson realised that this charge was absolutely baseless, for it was merely a pretext to effect Bhim Sen's ruin. S.C., 25 December 1839, 121. The King himself admits it in his Lannchar to Matahar (when he was Minister later), 1900, Chaitra Vedi 30, Roi 2, Itihas Prakash (Nepali, Kathmandu, 2012 V.S.) 1, 41-6. Dr. Oldfield, Residency Surgeon at Kathmandu in 1850-1863, holds that the child was poisoned by the King himself to find an excuse to depose the Minister, n. 6, 310. See also, B. Acharya, n. 94.
by the long simmering jealousy of his own, the mad fury of the Queen, and the clever machination of Bhim Sen's enemies, the King struck. Bhim Sen was deposed and, along with Matabar and other principal followers, immediately put in chains. Hereafter he lay in a wretched dungeon, in utter disgrace and despair, condemned to a fate, gloomy, horrid and uncertain. The fall long meditated was effected at long last, and peacefully.

Its significance

The fall of Bhim Sen was a domestic revolution in the history of Nepal and a landmark in Indo-Nepalese relations. By efficient administration of the state and firm control of the restless martial propensities of the people, and by equally able handling of the conflicting ambitions of the aspiring nobles, he had given Nepal three decades of peace, prosperity, progress and power. During his thirty-three years of unbroken rule, Bhim Sen was Nepal and Nepal Bhim Sen. He had preserved the political integrity of Nepal at a time when the powerful states of India were slowly being weakened, transformed into vassals of the British government, though euphemistically called their protected allies.

Yet, imposing from without his regime was based on weak foundations and bore within itself the cankers of eventual disruption. It was wholly an one men's show,
resting solely on his own towering personality. Such identification of a regime with a person was a dangerous development, for the fall of the person was sure to result in the crash of his regime, along with all its benefits to the state. His rule was grounded on distrust, sullen jealousy and suppressed rancour of all other parties, save his own. His long monopoly of power left but little scope for administrative training of others. His fall released a bitter wrangle for power; the utter incapacity of any one in Nepal to administer the country with even the semblance of efficiency, was woefully exposed, as soon as the reins of government were wrested from him.

Hereafter followed a decade of tumult, when powers rose and fell in tragic sequence and alarming frequency; when horrid scenes were enacted; blood freely shed, everybody's hands being up against everybody. His fall from power unleashed the fissiparous elements, so long kept in effective restraint by him. The pent-up martial zeal of the soldiers, so long pampered but checked by him was soon likely to burst forth in all its accumulated fury. The jingo spirit, the lust for plunder and war reigned supreme in the Council of the State. The clink of arms broke the calm of peace hitherto reigning at Kathmandu. The warning of a former Resident rang too true.

(107) Resident Maddock had truly said in 1852, "A powerful and vigorous government has hitherto been able to control this military mania, and whenever the present ministry
The fall of Bhim Sen brought rather evils to the British than the anticipated good. Indo-Nepalese relations entered upon a new phase - a phase of storm and stress as never before. Far from softening the exclusively martial spirit of the state, the fall of the great Minister, accentuated it. The fall was expected to improve the relations of the two governments; in effect, however, the reverse happened; the relations were strained almost to the breaking point. Never was there a period when so much misunderstanding was created between the two governments, as in the decade following the fall of Bhim Sen. It was a time when one state stood in apprehension of invasion by the other, when many wrongs were committed, leaving a legacy of hostile and bitter feelings in both.

At this time, the British were passing through one of the most critical phases of their career in India. The Indian states were known to be in a state of brooding discontent; the north-west frontier was ablaze; China and Burma were hostile; and the state of the Indian army was far from reassuring - in short, all affairs were distressing and full of

is subverted or fallen to pieces, it will at first find abundant exercise in the intensive commotions likely to ensue, but we shall no longer have that security for the continuance of peace with Nepal that we have found in the energy and intelligence of Bhim Sen. The contingency of peace and war may then depend on the ambition of party leaders or the caprice of a military mob."

To Government, 2 December 1832, L.C., 12 February 1833, 160.
gloomy portents. These were England's woes and Nepal's opportunities.

The cardinal maxim of Bhim Sen was peace with the British government, and avoidance of disputes with them, and their total exclusion from the internal affairs of Nepal. After his fall, this sound maxim was cast to the winds and provocative pinpricks in various ways were given to the British, confirming their suspicion and ill-will. This led the latter to abandon their erstwhile policy of non-interference and adopt that of active intervention. British interference increased correspondingly with the intensity in the squabbles for power among the chiefs of Nepal, not a few of whom were obliged to bank on British support for their power, and some even for their life. The British Resident made and marred the ministries of Nepal, making the political confusion worse

(108) Lord Metcalfe wrote to Lord Auckland on 15 October 1836, "We are, I fear, about to plunge into a labyrinth of interference from which I fear we shall never be able to extricate ourselves, the result will be a blow, which will either end in our downfall or in the necessity of maintaining large armies in countries too poor to pay them .... The die is cast and a vast change is opening upon us." Private Book of Lord Auckland, B.M.A.R., 37639, 80.

(109) It should be clearly noted that Bhim Sen was peaceful towards the British, though not cordial. For a time he attempted to rally the Indian powers against the British, but gradually he realised the overwhelming strength of the British government. To him, his military policy was more a measure of defence than offence. Hodgson, however, exaggerated the evil intentions of Bhim Sen. He himself deplored Bhim Sen's death in 1839. See Chapter Four, page 145-6.
confounded. Since the Resident had played an indirect, though, nonetheless, effective part in hastening the fall of Bhim Sen, he naturally expected to establish his political influence through the anti-Bhim Sen party, which he had so long morally helped. After the fall, however, he was mortified to find that his erstwhile friends had turned their backs on him, and all of them were bitter about his meddling policy.

Verily, with the fall of Bhim Sen the mainstay of Nepal's internal stability and pacific relations with the British was swept away. The long spell of strong government was broken; Nepal lay politically weak after him, corroded with dissensions, providing ample scope for British interference. Thus the system of Bhim Sen, the laborious work of three decades, collapsed when its pilot was no more to turn it along its well-defined course; but the collapse brought good to none. Bhim Sen out of power posed a greater problem to both Nepal and the British in India than Bhim Sen in power.

(110) See Chapters Four, Five and Six.