Chapter Four

THE GATHERING STORM AND POLICY OF PATIENCE

Bhim Sen's fall in July 1837 was expected to inaugurate a happier era in the Indo-Nepalese relations; for it removed a man "who from the hour of his appearance on the theatre of Nepal politics till his overthrow cherished no thought but of injury to us" (the British).

The revolution, though peaceful, as desired, was not an end in itself. The end, for the British, was the establishment of a regime internally strong, peaceful and friendly towards the British government in India.

(1) "For a long tract of years following 1816, it was the fashion with us to applaud the administration of General Bhim Sen because his talents and energy were conspicuous at home, and his sagacity was relied upon for calculating soundly the chances of open collision with us. Whatever the wisdom of those pundits in times past, the events of the last two years have proved to demonstration that ... he was and is, of necessity, fixed by his position, his views and his character, in implacable enmity to us." Resident to Government, 15 June 1837, P.C., 3 July 1837, 57. Hodgson himself held the fall of Bhim Sen as a very deplorable event. S.C., 14 October 1829, 23.

(2) "Nations in the commotion of violent change are always dangerous to their neighbours but it is possible that in this case the late fierce and military administration of Nepal may be mitigated into one of more peaceful character and this will be well for India." Lord Auckland to Sir Charles Metcalfe, 16 August 1837, Private Book of Lord Auckland, No.2, 185, British Museum Additional Mss., 37691, (In Microfilm) National Archives of India, New Delhi.
Such a régime could be established, the British rightly saw, by none else than the King himself. It was he, who alone had a permanent interest in the maintenance of his dynasty in power, and consequently, it was he, who had the greatest stake in the internal stability of the government, and its policy towards the British government in India. Hodgson had clearly seen that the King was the coming man of Nepal, the linch-pin of its government, after the fall of the great Minister. It was to him, hence, that he (Hodgson) had extended moral support as the spearhead of (4) opposition to Bhim Sen and his regime, with the fond hope that his administrative ability would be as much an insurance against internal instability as his intelligence, and amiable disposition, a guarantee of friendly relations (5) with the British.

Period of transition: The various factions

After Bhim Sen's fall there began a period of transition, when the internal administration of the state was in a


(4) P.C., 3 July 1837, 37; 14 August 1837, 35.

(5) "... the Raja will be his own master in future. And that H.H.'s dispositions towards the British government are such as might easily be rendered accessory to very improved relations with Nepal." Resident to Government, 29 July 1837, P.C., 14 August 1837, 35.
flux, chaotic and unstable. The Court became the cockpit of factions, contending to realise their conflicting ambitions, the nobles vying with each other in jealousy, rancour and malevolence; even the royal palace became the secret conclave where intrigues were hatched and nursed to maturity. The King, his two queens, the Gurus, the Chautarias, the Pandes and the Thapas, all were involved in this vile game, each with his own axe to grind.

The King and the Court

The King was the Central figure in this Court rent with discords. It was he, whom all other parties sought to influence for their own interests; his weak, though ambitious mind was played upon, his vanity excited, his whims pandered to. Lacking a firm and independent mind, yet full of cunning and intrigue, he appeared to yield to all counsels, good and evil, feasible and fatuous, beneficial and beneful. A scramble to possess the King's exclusive confidence accentuated the party wrangles. Whoever seized the King was sure of success; yet not wholly, for he was extremely unsteady in his alliances, prolific in professions, but tardy in redeeming them.

(6) There were seven factions in the Court; the King, the Senior Queen, the Junior Queen, the Chautarias, the Pandes, the Thapas and the Gurus. Hunter, n. 2, 143-5.
The King's two queens, the Senior, imperious, ambitious and violent, who wielded enormous authority on her weak spouse; and the Junior, equally ambitious, violent and jealous, were the rallying points of contending factions, the former of the Pandes, the latter of all who were opposed to them.

The Pandes

Of all the parties, the Pandes were emerging as the strongest. Bitterly anti-Thapa, and mainly instrumental in causing their fall, the Pandes, with the backing of the Senior Queen, made an earnest bid for absolute sway over the administration, to the envy and opposition of all other factions, especially of the Gurus and the Chanteries. The long deprivation of real power in Bhim Sen's regime left the Pandes with little administrative experience and still less with the tact and dexterity with which Bhim Sen managed the British. They were headstrong, impulsive and rash, extremely jealous, revengeful and bitterly hostile to the British government. This anti-British sentiment was the main plank of their policy, for they knew that nothing was more popular with the army, long starved of martial exploits, than war with the British, and nothing more alluring than the plunder of their opulent dominions. The popularity in the army was the guarantee of strength and viability of a regime, this
they knew. Hence,

"They saw that they must be war ministers or no ministers at all, for their long exile had stripped them of all legitimate weight among their fellow nobles.... Thus all circumstances of their character and position correspond to make the Kala Pandes (8) determined opponents of responsible intercourse with our government at Kathmandu and of that peace and good neighbourhood which could by such means only be secured to us." (9)

The warlike spirits and anti-British sentiments

Jealous of the Pandes, trying to steal a march over them, other parties too sedulously humoured the army for its support, and excited its warlike spirits, with the result that these spirits reigned predominant in the Court. Since warlike spirits at Kathmandu had exclusive reference to the British, a bitterly anti-British sentiment, followed as their menacing corollary.

(7) S.C., 26 December 1839, 131; Hodgson to Marshman, 4 October 1842, Hodgson Mss., Vol. 10, 224, Bodleian Library, Oxford (in Microfilm) National Archives of India, New Delhi; S.C., 7 September 1842, 88.

(8) The Pande family had two branches; the Gora Pandes, who were pacific and moderate, and the Kala Pandes. In this dissertation the name 'Pande' always signifies the Kala Pandes, except where it is specifically stated otherwise.

(9) Resident to Government, 22 June 1842, S.C., 7 September 1842, 88.

(10) See Chapter Two, n. 48.
So this was the situation in the Durbar following the fall of Bhim Sen; a court self-divided, parties scrambling for exclusive power, intrigues and machinations raging, and the warlike and anti-British spirits fast growing in vehemence. Hodgson found to his dismay that his hopes were oversanguine, and the calculations based on them were consequently faulty. He had hailed the fall of Bhim Sen as a "favourable crisis" for the British; in effect, however, it soon turned out to be just the opposite. Instead of being the herald of a glorious era in the Indo-Nepalese relations, the fall of Bhim Sen proved to be but the portent of a storm.

The British Policy: Strengthening the King

The policy of the British, after the fall of Bhim Sen, was to strengthen the King and help him in setting up a strong administration, which would restrain the contending nobles from staging a civil war and the army from going out of hand. Hodgson sought to be close to the King, with a view to preventing the scrambling factions from unfavourably exploiting his natural indecision and youthful inexperience.

(11) P.C., 14 August 1837, 34. "Mr. Hodgson is sanguine in his hopes that these events [the fall of Bhim Sen, the ascendancy of the King etc.] will lead to some improvement in our connection, and on our influence with the government of Nepal, and there is some promise of this." Auckland to Hobhouse, 8 September 1837, P.B., Vol. 2, 238; B.M.A.M., 37691.
The King was encouraged to retain personal intercourse with the Resident, this being "among the first wishes of the Governor-General in Council," to administer the state with prudent, impartial and honest councillors, and with the full support, confidence and sympathy of the British government. Hodgson exhorted him to hold personally the reins of administration, to avoid falling a prey to his evil councillors and to abide by the good counsels of his "spiritual adviser", Gurn Krishna Ram Pandit, a confident of Hodgson himself. The Guru undertook to influence the

(12) Government to Resident, 21 August 1857, P.C., 21 August 1857, 41. "... intestine commotions in any country are not without danger to its neighbours and I shall be glad, when the Raja shall have established his supremacy." Auckland to J.C. Hobhouse, President of the Commissioners for the Affairs of India, 5 August 1857, Private Book of Lord Auckland, Vol. 2, 134, B.M.A.M., 37691.

"It will be a great point gained to win his [King's] confidence and to give him, by courting frequent and direct communication with him, confidence in himself." A. Colvin, Private Secretary to Lord Auckland, to Hodgson, 31 August 1857, ibid., 224.

(13) "I told His Highness the King to bend his own shoulder to the wheel, to distribute the offices of government among several persons, to superintend them and above all, and in respect to my government [i.e. the British] to hear and see and judge directly." Resident to Government, 18 September 1837, P.C., 9 October 1837, 45.

Guru Krishna Ram Pandit, the brother of Ranganath Pandit who was Minister of Nepal between August 1837 and August 1838, was a warm friend and trusted agent of Hodgson. He served as a liaison between the Palace and the Residency during 1832-37, contributing in some way to realization of the King's and the Resident's object against Bhim Sen. After the revolution in July 1837, he continued to serve as a link between the King and the Resident, who used him as an artery of influencing the King. Hodgson succeeded in making him the "Minister for Residency Affairs." He played a great role in forming a party opposed to the Pandes and favourable to the Resident.
King, in favour of the Resident, and to check him from being 'possessed' by other factions.

The British realised that the surest way of influencing the policy of the state was to influence the King through their trusted friends in the Court. The Court of Directors clearly wrote,

"One result of some value to us has, however, been realised, viz., an habitual free communication on public business with the Raja personally, and this privilege, having now been established by you [the Governor-General] should not if possible suffer the British representative to be again deprived of." (15)

But to retain an exclusive hold on the King was not an easy task in the face of all the parties' similar bid. The more Hodgson sought to 'advise' the King, the bitterer became the feelings against him in the Court. Minister (16) Ranganath Pandit tried to prevent free intercourse between the King and the Resident to the bitter chagrin of the latter. Indignantly Hodgson noted.

(14) "The Guru added, 'If I do so and then retire to Benaras, may I look upon you for my reward in the shape of a smaller but more permanent settlement than that I had, and which if given, must be given in secret, for were the fact or promise known meanwhile, I should lose all power of doing good.' I encouraged the Guru to rely upon me, provided he evinced that power and disposition to do good of which he had spoken." Resident to Government, 12 October 1837, P.C., 1 November 1837, 49.

(15) Political Letter from Court, 24 October 1838, 61.

(16) He became Minister in August 1837.
"Certainly it is neither decent nor expedient that I should be made over to the Minister of this state ... he will ... habitually twist my affairs, so far as he safely can to his own petty prejudices ... and if the Resident is to influence the policy and conduct of the Durbar, beyond the prevention of positive aggression, he should have the direct and virtual access to the throne, which has heretofore been denied on the score of the Raja's minority." (17)

Hodgson wanted to make the King "master of the Durbar", (18) by giving him the necessary support through Guru Krishna Ram. Ranganath's bid for plenary powers in imitation of Bhim Sen's, (19) foiled Hodgson's scheme.

Situation deteriorates

After Bhim Sen's deposition in July 1837, Rangjung Pande, the head of the Kala Pandes, was appointed the Minister; but a month later, he was obliged to yield the place to Ranganath Pandit, the head of the Gurus. The result was a

(17) Resident to Government, 12 August 1837, P.C., 21 August 1837, 41.

(18) "In whatever I have done and said during the past month, I have had in view the necessity of reaching the Raja so as to inspire confidence in him and the expediency of reaching him ... through the channel least liable to imputation of party. With this view, I have selected Krishna Ram Misra, the Raja's Guru." Resident to Government, 18 September 1837, P.C., 9 October 1837, 45. It was the "safest channel" to "reach" the King, when direct intercourse between the latter and the Resident was becoming difficult. Resident to Government, 24 September 1837, Ibid., 46.

(19) Ibid. All the Gurus were allies of the Resident before the revolution was effected. Ranganath's present attitude underlines how he detested the Resident's bid to gain influence in the state by influencing the King. See Chapter Three, n. 34.

bitter feud between the Pandes and the Gurus. Ranganath and the Junior queen coaxed the King to set Bhim Sen and his followers free, hoping presumably to use them as counterpoise (21) to the Senior Queen and her henchmen, the Pandes. Hodgson advised the King as much against the release of the Thapas as against their summary execution, desired by the revengeful Pandes. Vengeance on the Thapas was likely to provoke national ebullition and might even spark off a civil war. It was "a point of very high importance, for if one life be taken, more will follow, and barbarism resume its reign in this Court." He assured the King that the ex-Minister and his men would be, if desired by him (the King), kept under the political custody (23) of the British in India. Such commitment on the part of the Resident was "puzzling" to the Government; yet they agreed to take such charge on humanitarian, no less political grounds. (24)


(22) Resident to Government, 2 August 1837, P.C., 21 August 1837, 45; same to same, 18 September 1837, P.C.; 9 October 1837, 45; 14 August 1837, 35-6. Bhim Sen's wife was heard to say, "now their [Thapas'] lives are safe, if the gentleman's [Hodgson's] justice be listened to; and if not, they [Thapas] would be put where they were liable to Gurkha justice. Surely, a splendid tribute to British justice and humanity." Resident to Government, 2 August 1837, P.C., 21 August 1837, 39.

(23) Resident to Government, 29 July 1837, P.C., 14 August 1837, 35.

(24) "... but we are already state-gaolers for Oudh and Jeypore and if the case of guilt be made clear and save life, we should hardly be able or would be wise to refuse for Nepal." Auckland to Hobhouse, 5 August 1837, Private Book of Lord Auckland, Vol. 2, 143, B.M.A.M., 37691.
Nothing, however, came of this, for the King was advised by his counsellors that the British might use Bhim Sen as a political lever against the Court of Nepal.

A strong administration under the King was, still a desideratum. In spite of Hodgson's best endeavour, the King's weak and wavering mind was successfully played upon by the parties. In consequence, he drifted away from Hodgson and his trusted agents; affairs relating to the British government were kept designedly pending, administrative confusion was abetted, as also the feud between parties. Hodgson was concerned over the gradual loss of his grip on the politics of the Court. He lost hope in the improvement of affairs, as also in the character of the King himself. The latter was found to be neither intelligent, nor amiable nor well disposed, but cunning, imbecile and sulky, intoxicated with sudden acquisition of power. In despair, Hodgson wrote to the Government:

"... if as seems to be the case, the Raja has no character or a bad one, why concern oneself at all further with his personal interests? So long it was worthwhile to risk something, in order to make a man of him. I question, if there be much room for reasonable hope of the sort now." (26)

(25) About the King Hodgson wrote on 15 June 1837 to the Government, "His Highness apparently possesses talents and prudence adequate to the task." He was regarded as an intelligent and amiable character. P.C., 3 July 1837, 37, see also, n. 5.

(26) Resident to Government, 24 September 1837, P.C.; 9 October 1837, 46.
What is worse, Hodgson reported, that the restlessness of the Durbar had found manifestation in its attempts to intrigue with the Courts of Lahore, Rajputana and China, presumably against the British government.

Hodgson urges strong measures

He urged for a "decisive course of action" to stem the rot before it had gone too far. The growing anti-British sentiment had to be nipped in the bud or else, he feared, the Durbar "will shilly-shally through the cold season and show the cloven foot at its close, when any present redress will be impossible to us." The British Resident might then be expelled from the country. To avert such an eventuality, the British government must strongly remonstrate with the King, warning him that if he did not abandon these unfriendly activities and show due deference to the Resident, he would lose not only the confidence of the British government but also the Tarai, which they had retroceded to Nepal on her undertaking to accept the British Resident. To add due weight

(27) Ibid.

(28) Ibid.

(29) Hodgson held that the Tarai was a gratuitous concession to Nepal to "quiet" her on the score of acceptance of the British Resident, to which she was at first bitterly opposed. Resident to Government, 24 September 1837, F.C., 9 October 1837. 46.
to this remonstrance, Hodgson suggested military demonstration on the Nepal frontier. It was a period of transition; if the voice of the British government was now "distinctly and sternly heard" at Kathmandu, it was likely that the anti-British party would be scared, and "a British party would gather heart to proclaim in Durbar the folly of dissention (sic) with us."

Auckland disfavours such policy

These suggestions carried no weight with Lord Auckland. He was from the outset averse to too much meddling in the party-squabbles on the part of the Resident. He disfavoured being so harsh with the Nepal Durbar as urged by Hodgson. (50) The King's wavering, evasive and unfaithful attitude to the Resident seemed to him less a manifestation of his designed hostility towards the British government than the natural behaviour of a man, timid and vacillating by nature, unsettled in power, and perplexed by parties, seeking to influence him in a variety of conflicting ways. No wonder then, the King

(50) "His Highness's mind may be irreparably perverted unless the British government will undertake the office of truth-speaker." Ibid.

(51) Hodgson averred that the King owed his "recent deliverance remotely to the ... refusal of the British government to side with" Bim Sen. Hence he waxed wrath at the King's wilful oblivion of "his vast obligations" to the British government. Ibid.
had so far failed to act up to the hopes of the British. He held that the King and other parties were holding aloof from the British Resident, for fear that "too ostensible deference" to him might bring on them the ire of the Pandes, now popular with the army. He advised patience and timely forbearance. A military demonstration by the British was certain to give a handle to the 'war party', enabling them to unite all against the British. Far from subduing the warlike spirit, such a policy would merely exacerbate it. Lord Auckland found no sufficient evidence to credit the alleged bid of Nepal to forge offensive alliances with Lahore, Rajput States and China, nor anything unusual in her non-intercourse with the British. In short, while the policy of peace and patience was likely to improve relations with Nepal, it was to him the "height of folly" to resort to "demonstration of anger" and anticipate thereby an armed reckoning with her, which was neither unavoidable nor necessary. Hodgson was strongly advised to keep himself "entirely aloof" from the party squabbles, "until the transition period shall have passed and parties shall have assumed a shape upon which we (32) may better rely for friendship or its reverse."

(32) Minute of the Governor-General, 3 October 1837, P.C., 9 October 1837, 47.

* * * it is inconvenient and it is galling, but it is not new nor is it contrary to treaty that the policy of Nepal, in its relations with foreigners, is rather Chinese than British." Ibid.
The circumstances in the Court were propitious for increasing British interference; yet in spite of Hodgson's repeated suggestions, Lord Auckland was reluctant to exploit the situation in order to augment British influence in the Durbar. He did not have Hodgson's deep-laid prejudice, that the Nepalese were a treacherous and incorrigibly hostile people. He was in favour of the revolution settling down of itself to a more stable state of affairs. He did not have Hodgson's despondent views. He hoped that the situation would improve, if gradually; then the political confusion would give way to a stable state of affairs and improved relations with the British. In the transition period he believed that the policy of peace, patience and forbearance was the most politic course. He wrote clearly:

"A change in the military character and habits of the Nepal population would undoubtedly be most desirable. But we must not begin what it is hoped will be an approach to a better state of things by an appearance of thwarting or setting ourselves against the prevailing disposition of your nation of soldier-mountaineers. (34)

(33) Governor-General's minute, 28 August 1837, P.C., 18 September 1837, 72. In this minute Lord Auckland clearly expresses his avowed opposition to Hodgson's contention that Nepal was not only a potential but an imminent danger to the British in India. The Governor-General wrote,

"The Gurkhas may be a fierce, false and barbarous people, but for more than twenty years they have respected our frontiers, though ungraciously, having observed the conditions of their treaty .... They are not strongly prejudiced in favour of responsible intercourse with British India.... We have no right to quarrel with this."

(34) Colvin to Hodgson, 31 August 1837, P.B., Vol. 2, 224, B.M.A.M., 37641; P.C., 14 August 1837, 34; 18 September 1837, 69; 9 October 1837, 47.
Hence, "any more minute influence and interference would probably be productive; at least for the present, of no good." (35)

Naturally, the British Government took no other step beyond encouraging the King to hold the reins of administration personally, and to retain "friendly and unreserved intercourse" with the Resident.

This pacific policy paid dividends, though only for a while. The King apologised for causing wrath to the Resident, promised good behaviour in future and, at Hodgson's hint, agreed to send a complimentary mission to the Governor-General. Portraits were exchanged between Lord Auckland and (36) the King of Nepal; it seemed the cloud had thawed. Very soon, however, the British were disillusioned; it was but a false dawn.

(35) Colvin to Hodgson, 31 August 1837, P.C., Vol. 2; 224, B.M.A.M., 37611.

"I see no active or violent remedy. One must rest on the hope that a long continuance of peace will establish confidence and peaceful habits and I anxiously desire that the late revolution ... may tend to this result." Governor-General's Minute, 28 August 1837, P.C., 18 September 1837, 72.

(36) Governor-General's Khareeta to the Raja of Nepal, 9 October 1837, P.C., 9 October 1837, 48.

(37) P.C., 1 November 1837, 49; 20 October 1837, 89-90. The Governor-General declined to receive the mission, assuring, however, the King, of his continued goodwill towards him. Governor-General's Khareeta to the Raja of Nepal, 17 February 1838, P.C., 30 May 1838, 13; Khareeta from the Raja of Nepal to Lord Auckland, 29 November 1837, P.C., 24 January 1838, 39; Colvin to Dr. Campbell, Acting Resident, 23 December 1837, 23 January 1838, P.C., Vol. 21, 110-1, 188-91, B.M.A.M., 37692; The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British and Foreign India, China and Australasia (London) 26 (May-August 1853) 216.
Troubles in Afghanistan: Restlessness in Nepal

For some time past, a storm was brewing in Afghanistan and its environs, where the great tidal waves of Russia and England seemed to lash against each other. These regions soon became the cockpit of Russian, British and Sikh diplomacy, the confluence of their ambitious schemes and discordant interests. A feeling of restless uneasiness, and an "ignorant expectancy - a looking outwards in the belief of some change, the nature of which no one clearly understood," ran through everywhere in India. The Indian states, already in "brooding discontent," grew increasingly restive; they were agitated; some even betrayed disaffection. Relations with Burma and China now were also strained. Mutterings of Russo-Persian invasion of India, and the imminent collapse of the "Company's raj" gained wide currency and ready credence. Lord Auckland was naturally uneasy at this spectre of "a vast change" opening upon the British - a phenomenon which was certain to tax the resources of the British government, both military


(40) Metcalfe to Auckland, 15 October 1836, ibid., Vol. I, 80, B.M.A.M., 37689.
and diplomatic; as never before. All about there was an
air of crisis and high events.

These were England's woes, and Nepal's opportunities.
The warlike spirit at Kathmandu increased; its abettors,
the Pandes became enthusiastic; the army grew proportionately
restless and excited over the dazzling vista of invasion and
plunder of the British territories. The general tone of the
Durbar became unfriendly, corresponding with the increasing
preoccupation of the British in these troubles in Afghanistan.

Hodgson warned the Government that "the facts and rumours
relative to the state of things in Ava, Cabool and Persia,
conspiring with the unsettled state of administration here,
are producing the worse effect."

Intrigues with various states

Its obvious manifestation was the Durbar's intrigues
with various courts in India and abroad. A horde of
emissaries was sent to almost all important states of India,
and to some abroad, with the fond expectation of finding
allies in Nepal's scheme of exploiting the political troubles

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(41) Tickell's Memorandum of Principal events in Nepal,
1830-1840, S.C., 18 January 1841, 74; P.C., 29 November 1837,
38-9.

(42) Resident to Government, 6 July 1839, S.C., 20 July
1839, 1.
Situated close to the storm-centre in Afghanistan, alliance with the Punjab, the richest independent state in India, as also the strongest, was most prized by Nepal, and consequently, as much dreaded by the British. The British were aware of Nepal's keen interest in the Court of Lahore and the latter's similar disposition. Between 1833 and 1836, several Nepalese missions had been seen in Lahore, receiving a warm welcome from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In May 1837, a Nepalese emissary presented Ranjit Singh with complimentary letters and presents from the King of Nepal. In March 1838, Matabar Singh was sent to Lahore to report on Ranjit's reactions to the events in Afghanistan, and if possible, to

(43) P.C., 17 January 1833, 30; S.C., 22 August 1833, 46-7; P.C., 14 March 1833, 171; S.C., 15 June 1833, 10-1, 15-4; 22 August 1833, 40-3; 1 November 1833, 156; 16 May 1833, 14-5; 4 July 1833, 11-2; 26 July 1833, 7-9; 1 August 1833, 35-9; 22 August 1833, 19-21, 23, 29, 39-40; 26 September 1833, 41; 17 October 1833, 154-9; 21 November 1833, 169; 13 December 1833, 8, 16-7; 22 August 1838, 26; 17 October 1839, 153-6, 171; 21 November 1858, 170; 28 November 1858, 41, 172-3; 12 December 1858, 47; 26 December 1838, 65; 16 May 1838, 33, 38; 13 June 1838, 9; 18 July 1838, 11; 20 July 1838, 1-3, 6; 25 July 1858, 12; 22 August 1858, 27; 17 October 1858, 165-7; 17 October 1858, 186.


(45) P.C., 21 August 1837, 35; 12 June 1837, 41-2; 26 June 1837, 56-8; 3 July 1837, 16-8; 17 July 1837, 58.

(46) Bhim Sen and Matabar Singh had been released from prison in December 1837. P.C., 27 December 1837, 57.
coax him to a political alliance with Nepal. The game was seen through by the British; they detained Matabar at Ludhiana and kept him under strict surveillance. 

But the political intercourse between Lahore and Kathmandu did not cease, nor the hope of Ranjit’s favourable reception to Nepal’s overtures, a whit dimmed. Ranjit was not averse, for a time at least, to reciprocate the friendliness of the King of Nepal, although he does not seem to have readily agreed to form an open alliance with him, much less so when this alliance was designed to be anti-British in intent. To the British he gave a clear understanding that his coquetry with Nepal was by no means malicious in design. In his court, however, Raja Golab Singh was much inclined to such an alliance with Nepal, as also to establish a territorial link with that state over Ladakh, now Sikh territory. Such an alliance was expected to enhance his political influence,

(47) S.C., 22 August 1838, 19-21; P.C., 4 April 1839, 92; S.C., 25 July 1838, 9; The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British and Foreign India, China and Australasia (London, 1838) XXVII, (September-December 1838) 222-4.

(48) Wade, Political Agent at Ludhiana, to Government, 27 May 1837, P.C.; 12 June 1837, 41. Hodgson, however, strongly suspected Ranjit’s motives. “A perpetual intercourse is kept up still with Lahore and with several parties there, and Ranjit has lately written to say that the English and Muslims having now united, the Hindoos must look closer to themselves.” S.C., 26 December 1838, 65; 20 July 1838, 1.
and might in future prove as of "reciprocal importance."

Similar efforts were made to exploit the uneasy relations between the British and the Court of Ava. Emissaries disguised as merchants and mendicants were sent to Ava to report on the King's ill-feelings towards the British, his military strength, and the military preparations of the British in this quarter. The emissaries carried with them offers of military aid to the Burmese if they projected a break with the British. Repeated appeals were made to China for her open support or acquiescence in Nepal's war-like schemes. Nearer home, Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan were all incited to look upon the British as enemies. As for the Marathas, the reluctance of the Sindhis, and the lukewarmness of the Gaikwad, were compensated by the eager

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(49) P.C., 12 June 1837, 41. This is also corroborated by a secret report of Major Raghunat Singh and Jemadar Manno Singh, the Nepal agents to Delhi and the Punjab. The Jammu Rajas of Lahore were shortly involved in war with Tibet. They sought to take Nepal's help in their dispute with Ladakh, China and Tibet. See Appendix I, Report of Major Raghubir Singh etc., 1835, Sreven Sudi 15, Roj 1, Foreign Office, Kathmandu.

(50) S.C., 12 December 1838, 47; P.C., 14 March 1838, 171; W.S. Desai, History of the British Residency in Burma, 1826-1840 (Rangoon, 1939).

(51) Instructions to Nepalese Missions to Ava in an undated letter preserved in the Foreign Office, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu.

(52) S.C., 13 June 1838, 10; 20 July 1838, 1; 17 October 1838, 125, 178; 21 November 1838, 156; 26 December 1839, 139.
support of Baji Rao II, the ex-Peshwa, and the Raja of Satara. The "chain of evidence" against the ex-Peshwa was complete enough to convince the British of his active complicity in these intriguing activities. The Rajput and the Central Indian States, some of them with anti-British feelings, welcomed the Nepalese emissaries sent to their courts. The attitude of Raja Man Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur, and of Apa Sahib, the ex-Raja of Nagpur, now a political (53) emigre in Jodhpur, called for keenest vigilance. Attempts were also made to establish political intercourse with the (54) rulers of Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. Nepal was astir with "feverish speculation" regarding the probable fall of Herat, the possible advance of Persia with Russian instigation, the defection of the Afghan rulers and the estrangement of (55) the lion of the Punjab. Evidently, Nepal was too receptive to the stirring news of the North-West and too responsive, too; she trimmed her sail to every passing wind.

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(53) S.G., 13 June 1838, 8, 16; 25 July 1838, 7, 12; 1 August 1838, 36-9; 22 August 1838, 29, 40-7; 17 October 1838, 190; 28 November 1838, 41.

(54) Tickell's Memorandum.

(55) Persia besieged Herat between November 1837 and September 1838, when she was obliged to raise it at the intervention of the British. Kaye, n. 53, 202-88; Lord Auckland to Sir H. Fans, Commander-in-Chief, 21 June 1838, S.G., 29 August 1838, 2. 
Hodgson urges stern measures

Hodgson was greatly alarmed, and naturally so. It was the very development which he had not only foreseen, but of which he had forewarned the Government. He vehemently urged for putting down sternly these intriguing activities, which exacerbated the warlike spirit and emboldened the party most prone to it. The party, consisting mostly of the Kala Pandes, was in favour of expelling the Resident immediately. Hodgson's remonstrances had all proved infructuous. The Durbar seemed to be waiting for a "favourable occasion of open attack on us, in concert with powerful allies which the Durbar fully expects will occur in the coming year or two."

Ranjit's recent attitude was suspicious as it accorded little with his earlier professions of friendliness and disavowals of intrigue with Nepal. Far from discouraging the Nepalese missions, he had himself sent some to Kathmandu; he had helped Matabar at Ludhiana with money, asking him to come to Lahore by all means of fraud or force. He had also persuaded the British to free Matabar from surveillance.

(56) Resident to Government, 24 September 1837, P.C., 9 October 1837, 46.

(57) Resident to Government, 5 August 1838, S.C., 22 August 1838, 27.

(58) S.C., 20 July 1838, 1-2; 28 November 1838, 41. "But with respect of Lahore, it would certainly appear that Ranjit himself has dallied with the Durbar, and is still doing so, despite his friendly professions to us." S.C., 20 July 1838. 2: Gupta. n. 44.
Hodgson gravely warned:

"Should therefore, Ranjit play us false or the emperor of China afford any encouragement to Gurkha aggressions, and should matters not speedily assume a happy aspect in Ava, a rupture with us and expulsion of the Residency must I fear be looked for at the hands of the Nepalese." (59)

The Durbar was manifestly hostile, and if the British government did not restrain it by political pressure, elaborate defensive measures against a certain swoop-down of the Nepalese army would have to be undertaken.

Lord Auckland's views

Lord Auckland was not unaware of the "extremely ramified" intrigues of Nepal, through "mysterious" emissaries. He was aware too of the warlike feeling running high at Kathmandu and the danger it posed at such critical times. Yet he was averse to exerting strong political pressure on her, let alone taking stern military action. His Nepal policy was governed by the troubles in Afghanistan, China and Burma, distressing political situation in various parts of India, and the inadequacy of the British army to meet

(59) Resident to Government, 6 July 1838, S.C., 20 July 1838, l.

(60) S.C., 21 November 1838, 150.

(61) Auckland to Hobhouse, 3 June 1838, Auckland to Fane, Commander-in-Chief, 21 June 1838, P.B., Vol. 3½, 22, 53, B.M.A.M., 37693; Auckland to Fane, 21 June 1838, S.C., 29 August 1838, 2; Governor-General to Secret Committee, 10 September 1838, 21.
these increasing and manifold exigencies. His hands were too full with these pressing cares; naturally he was eager to avoid an issue with Nepal now.

As regards the intrigues, the policy adopted by him was that of keen vigilance. He regarded them as "rather originating in the struggles of faction than any determined and concerted scheme of hostility to the British power."
The intrigues were evidently malicious in design but they had failed to ripen into any league of hostile powers. The Indian states seemed to him rather lukewarm in this regard; evidently, the fear of retribution at the British hands weighed more heavily on them than the allurement of Nepal’s overture to exploit their difficulties. All evidence proved

(62) "... with a peace establishment of 17000 men in Nepal and with the possible necessity of at least a display of force towards the Punjab at no distant period, we are not so strong as I could wish." Auckland to J. Carnac, 5 January 1837; Auckland to J. Sullivan, 7 January 1837, P.R., Vol. I, B.M.A.M., 37689.
that China had no inclination to back up Nepal. With Lahore a treaty of alliance had been concluded in June 1838. More recently Ranjit was reported to have disfavoured the collusion of Nepalese agents with Raja Dhian Singh and Matta Singh, as also their exaggerated reports of his (Ranjit's) disaffection towards the British and hearty support of Nepal's schemes against them. With mingled relief and relish the British found that "Ranjit's mind is effectually diverted from any Nepalese connections" and the suspected "intimate alliance" was groundless. All these convinced Lord Auckland

(63) S.C., 17 October 1838, 178; 25 July 1838, 7-8. "I have good grounds for hoping that in many instances the progress of these intrigues has not been attended with success and the attempt to secure the co-operation of the Maharaja of Lahore seems to have totally failed." Governor-General's despatch to Secret Committee, 5 July 1838, 15; S.C., 12 September 1838, 16; 23 August 1838, 2; 13 June 1838, 10; 20 July 1832; Auckland to Macnaughton, on Political Mission to Lahore, 11 June 1838, Private Book, Vol. 5, 32, B.M.A.M., 57693.

(64) C.U. Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads (Calcutta, 1951) 1, 41-4.

(65) Ranjit is extremely angry with Har Prasad for colluding with Dhian Singh and Matta Singh and carrying a forged letter to Nepal in favour of the Thapas. Har Prasad is concealed at Lahore by Dhian Singh or Ranjit would seize and punish him." Resident to Government, 1 August 1838, S.C., 22 August 1838, 26.

(66) Colvin to Hodgson, 28 August 1838, Private Book, Vol. 4, 62, B.M.A.M., 57694; Government to Resident, 14 June 1838, S.C., 20 July 1838, 5. The treaty of 1838 greatly relieved the British of their strong suspicion of Ranjit, who was suspected earlier of "waiting on events before her germinates himself to a policy." Colvin to Macnaughton, 25 June 1838, Private Book, Vol. 5, 53, B.M.A.M., 57693. Ranjit was always kept in good humour, for otherwise he might give a "renewed activity" to intrigues of Nepal. Ibid.
that it was impolitic and unnecessary to "notice too openly" or to "pry into the details of these intrigues," involving almost all the States in India, let alone to take harsh measures to check them. Hodgson was informed that,

"To be known to have information directly criminating Nepal which it might be highly inconvenient for us to use, yet which to abstain from using, might appear justly liable to the imputation of apprehension and weakness, is a position in which, it must be undesirable for our government to be placed." (68)

As "we seek not an instant quarrel with Nepal ... it has never been permitted that her emissaries should be used roughly in a manner openly offensive to her." (69)

Precautionary steps

Yet it was wise to be on guard. The Indian States were warned against entertaining the Nepalese emissaries; strict watch was kept on the latter's going to the trans-Indus regions. Since Lahore was an independent state, no


(69) Same to same, 28 August 1838, P.B., Vol. 4, 62, B.M.A.M., 37694.

other course could be taken to prevent her from keeping
(71) up relations with Nepal, save a mild hint that the British
government disfavoured Ranjit, their ally, entertaining the
(72) Nepalese intriguers.

The situation in the North-West was coming to a head,
requiring the bulk of the British army to be shifted to that
quarter. At such a time the attitude of Nepal demanded the
"most serious reflection" of the Government, Sir Henry Fane,
(73) the Commander-in-Chief, held. She had 40000 soldiers eager
to descend into the plains, lying completely defenceless and

(71) "... it is very desirable to discourage the
intercourse between the Gurkha and the Sikh States. There
does not appear to be any direct mode of accomplishing the
object nor does it occur to His Lordship in Council to suggest
any indirect means for that purpose." Government to Capt.
Wade, 12 June 1837, P. C., 12 June 1837, 42.

"His Lordship in Council fully admits the principle
asserted by you that we have acquired no right by treaty to
prevent the intercourse of Nepal with other independent states
however desirable it may be that such intercourse should be
discouraged." Government to Resident, 26 June 1837, P. C.,
26 June 1837, 57.

(72) "It would be desirable that you should either
directly or indirectly ... hint to Ranjeet, that we have our
eye upon Nepal intrigue and place entire confidence in his
decisively discouraging them. Entire silence on the point
might lead him to fancy that we are afraid of or indifferent
to them." Colvin to Macnaughton, 9 June 1838, Private Book,
Vol. 3h, 30, B.M.A.L., 37693.

(73) Fane to Governor General, 24 June 1838, S. C., 29
August 1838, 3.
exposed to such inroad. He strongly held "that the
Government of India has needlessly allowed a thorn to grow
in her side, which it behoves her to pluck out or eradicate
at the earliest favourable opportunity." With equal
vehemence, the President and members of the Supreme Council
in Calcutta held that the Government must demand full
explanation from the Nepal Durbar of its hostile activities,
giving it firmly to understand that the issue of war and
peace depended solely on the nature of its explanation.
Colonel Monson held that "the safest means of preventing the
invasion of our provinces would be to attack the Gurkhas in
their own country and at their own capital."

Lord Auckland felt the weight of the above suggestions;
yet his pressing preoccupations allowed him to adopt nothing
but only precautionary steps. The strength of the Bengal
local horse and infantry was augmented; particulars about

(74) In 1838, the number of regular soldiers in Nepal
was 16195. This number could be trebled in a short time if
desired by the State. Nepal Army List for January 1838,
compiled by A. Campbell, Asstt. Resident, with notes by

(75) Fane to Governor-General, 24 June 1838, S.C.,
29 August 1838, 3.

(76) Resolution of the President and members of the
Council, 20 July 1838, S.C., 20 July 1838, 4-5.

(77) Minute of Col. Monson, 20 July 1838, Ibid.
the routes and passes into Nepal and her economic and military resources were collected through Hodgson.

An army of observation under General Oglander was posted on the Gorakhpur frontier as "a measure of precaution and activity, if necessary." The military stations on the Ganges and in Kumaon were alerted; a local corps was formed at Darjeeling to watch activities in Eastern Nepal and Sikkim, which was strongly suspected of being won over by Nepal.

Policy of Peace and Patience

These "measures of precaution and preparation," Lord Auckland thought, would suffice. These, coupled with other


(79) S.C., 20 July 1838, 3, 5; 22 August 1838, 9-14; 3 October 1838, 13-4; 17 October 1838, 185; 19 June 1839, 74; Auckland to Colonel Monson, 11 August 1838, Colvin to Hodgson, 28 August 1838, P.E., Vol. 4, 14, 62, B.M.A.M., 37694; The Englishman (Calcutta) 4 July 1838; Agra Akhber (Agra) 13 September 1838. References to newspapers as Bombay Times (Bombay), Delhi Gazette (Delhi), Calcutta Star (Calcutta), Agra Journal (Agra) have all been taken from the annual Asiatic Register, n. 37.

factors, as the "confirmed alliance" with Ranjit Singh, the recent improvement of British position in the North-West and Burma, the ineffectiveness of intrigues with Indian States, were expected to convince Nepal of the futility of her hostile activities. Lord Auckland was prepared for an armed offensive by Nepal, but he was keen on avoiding any step which might provoke her to do so. The relations were manifestly unfriendly, but it was impolitic to strain it abruptly to the breaking point. It was safer to temporise and bide time. Lord Auckland held:

"Nepal has given us just cause of offence and stands in a position towards us which is not long to be borne. But it would not be wise to seek more than one great military operation at a time and unless forced to bring matters to an issue, for which I would be prepared, I would bide my time." (82)

He admitted that the tone of the Durbar was unfriendly, and its acts positively disagreeable, but

"acts which could be acts of offence committed by a settled government are less so when committed by a government in this condition, and it is not necessary or wise to be hasty in resentment upon them." (83)

(81) S.C., 29 August 1838, 2; Desai, n. 59, 355. The treaty with Ranjit was looked upon as one "whereby the British and the Sikh interests have been completely identified," S.C., 17 October 1838, 161; Governor-General to Secret Committee, 5 July 1838, 15; Auckland to Hobhouse, 19 September 1838, Private Book, Vol. 4, 99, B.M.A.M., 37694. The siege of Herat by the Persians was raised in September 1838, under British pressure.


(83) Governor-General's despatch to Secret Committee.

(contd. on next page)
Thus avoidance of an open war at such a critical time was the keynote of Lord Auckland's policy in Nepal, and in this he relied on Hodgson. Hodgson was warned to refrain from "more busy activity," "to remain a passive but observant spectator" of the events around him, and to "exert the most strenuous and persevering efforts to ward off so serious a contingency" as the breach of even the "nominally friendly (84) relations" between the two governments. He was further asked to supply secret intelligence of the strength and disposition of the army, the feelings of the nobles towards the British, the chance of subverting the loyalty of the cultivating population and the deposed chiefs of western Nepal to the state, the likely effect of the occupation of


At this time (September 1838) there was no settled government at Kathmandu; Ranganath Pandit had been deposed in August; the Senior Queen urged the King to appoint her favourite, Ran Jang Pande, as the Minister; the King seemed to balance the contending factions and avoid forming a ministry, so that this unsettled state could be used as a cloak to his hostile preparations against the British.

(84) Government to Resident, 5 July 1838, S.C., 12 September 1838, 16; 17 October 1838, 161.

"We do not desire to be now entangled with Nepal because although we have ample spare means to keep her as we trust in effective check, we are about to embark in serious operations with a large force across the Indus .... While our hands are so full on this frontier, it will be best, it seems to Lord Auckland, certain to postpone for a while our Second Nepalese war." Colvin to Hodgson, 28 August 1838, Private Book, Vol. 4, 62, B.M.A.M., 37694; Colvin to Batten, 27 September 1838, Ibid., 120.
Kathmandu on the morale of the people, and such other
(85) matters.

Durbar changes its tone

The King and his councillors were uneasy, dreading
the precautionary measures of the British as preludes to
(86) invasion. He undertook to recall the emissaries, to render
effective cooperation for the suppression of the Thags on
the border, to redress the grievances of the Indian merchants
at Kathmandu, and to send a complimentary mission as a token
(87) of penitence and effusive cordiality. Hodgson, though
astonished, could hardly be duped. He knew that "the
suddenness of the Durbar's passage from an attitude of
hostility and almost overt threat to one of flattery and
(88) compliment" was caused by the fear of British bayonets.

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(85) Colvin to Hodgson, 28 August 1838, P.B., Vol. 4,
B.M.A.M., 37694; same to same, 3 June 1838, M.H., Vol. 12,
K479, 121.

"The Gurkha Kings of Nepal had subjected many
chiefs of western Nepal to their authority. These chiefs
helped the British in the war against Nepal (1814-16).
Besides, it was hoped that the peasants, belonging mostly
to the Newar race, would be eager to supplant their Gurkha
conquerors, a wholly martial tribe.

(86) Nepal Summary Commencing from May 1837, Events in
October-November 1838, Cleveland Public Library, Ohio, U.S.A.

(87) S.C., 21 November 1838, 157, 160.

(88) Ibid. "... it has been my object, as indirectly
and negatively as possible, to maintain the operation upon
the Durbar of that wholesome degree of alarm from which such
good effects had previously been found to result." Resident
to Government, 6 November 1838, S.C., 21 November 1838, 160.
He kept the King's fear alive, inducing him to desert his evil counsellors, the Pandes. As a "proof of Durbar's pacific and friendly policy" towards the British, Guru Krishna Ram, Hodgson's confidant, was appointed "Minister for British Affairs." The Durbar also took defensive measures alongside. The frontier posts in the South and West were strengthened, arms and provisions were stored, emissaries were sent to military stations in India, to report the movement of the British troops. These defensive measures released a wave of alarm in the bordering areas of Bihar and North-Western Province, where the rumours became

(89) Ibid.

(90) S.C., 17 October 1838, 167; Nepal Summary of events, October-November 1838; The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register, XXVIII (January-April 1839) 239; Report of Major Raghubir Singh and Jamedar Manno Singh, Nepal agents to Delhi and Punjab to the Nepal Durbar, 1895, Sravan Sudi 16, Roj 1, Foreign Office, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, see Appendix 1. Some postal employees in the Punjab seem to have been won over by these agents, who procured political intelligence through them.

(91) "... there should be reason to believe that the armed demonstrations of the Nepalese upon our frontier are as much the result of apprehension as of hostile feeling." Hodgson was asked to allay this apprehension, Colvin to Hodgson, 22 October 1838, Private Book, Vol. 4, 169, E.M.A.M., 37694. "It would appear ... that the demonstrations on their [Nepalese] part was dictated by a distrust of our intentions towards them, not by a desire to take advantage of our embarrassments." The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register, n. 90, 4, 55.
rife of an imminent war with Nepal. Hodgson took fright; in circular letters he cautioned General Oglander and the magistrates in Bihar and Gorakhpur. The Government strongly censured him for this "further proof of want of prudence and calmness of purpose and conduct." His alarmist reports, thought the Government, gave unnecessary, dangerous and rather erroneous publicity to the objects and policies of the Government and raised the keenest suspicion of the agitated Nepalese and spread trepidation along the border. General Oglander was asked to keep a "quiet guard" on the frontier, lest his troops betrayed the appearance of an invading army. Hodgson was sternly told,


(94) Government to Resident, 22 October 1838, S.C., 21 November 1838, 169. "You hastily adopt and act upon a most exaggerated view of the responsibility which can in reason be held to attach to you." Ibid. He (Hodgson) is strangely inconsistent and little to be depended upon." Auckland to Prinsep, 20 October 1838, Private Book, Vol. 4, 164, B.M.A.M., 37694.

"He [the Governor-General] sees the necessity of watchfulness and of preparation but he sees also the danger of the two countries being, by mistrust, led into a competition of armaments and defiance and from these into mutual provocation and war. His Lordship has every reason to hope that by proper measures on our part, peace may at present be preserved with the Nepalese Court ... nothing should be undertaken (beyond such measures of precaution) as are absolutely necessary, which may have the effect of forcing an irreconcilable difference to a premature issue." (96)

The British had already launched upon war in Afghanistan, and hence Lord Auckland was now particularly anxious to avoid an issue with Nepal. It was hard to convince Hodgson, harder to persuade the councillors, to such a soft pedalling policy.

(96) Colvin to Hodgson, 22 October 1838, Ibid., 169. Lord Auckland attributed the military preparations of Nepal to the alarm wrought by Oglander's troops and other precautionary measures of the British. "... but nothing could be farther from its [Government's] intention than that an exhibition should be made either of the expectation or the intention of war and that a general disturbance of men's minds should be raised." Auckland to Hodgson, 16 October 1838, Ibid., 145.

(97) "It will be hard to avoid a collision with Nepal, but I will try hard to do so, for I would not have too much upon my hands at a time and in the meantime will be well-prepared." Auckland to Hobhouse, 13 October 1838, Ibid., 138.

"The time will come when we must severely question Nepal upon her policy and the armed attitude by which she supports it, but now is not the convenient season, and it is thought very desirable to avoid measures which might occasion much excitement and even premature collision." Colvin to Robinson, 24 October 1838, Ibid., 182.
Party Strifes: The 'Peace Party'  

Meanwhile, in the Durbar party wrangles raged unabated with the concomitant political confusion. Ranganath, the Brahmin Minister, had earned unpopularity for his military reforms, and had fallen from royal grace. The Pandes far outbid him in the pledge of immediate expulsion of the Resident and resumption of the lucrative career of conquest. Bhim Sen, ever since his release in December 1837 was making vain attempts to regain his lost power, and vainer endeavours to ingratiate himself with the Resident.

(98) "Bhim Sen's deposition led to the cancelling of many military innovations introduced by him, and the disposition of the army throughout Nepal was remodelled." Tickell's Memorandum, S.C., 18 January 1841, 74.

During Bhim Sen's regime the bulk of the army was stationed at Kathmandu. Ranganath removed a fair portion of it to military posts in the interior and southern border. Offg. Resident to Government, 10 December 1837, F.G., 17 January 1838, 28-9; Nepal Summary of Events, January-April 1838. Ranganath reduced the pay scale of the army to the great discontent of both soldiers and their officers, "at present this army is less contented than it has been at any time since the peace." Campbell's Report on Nepal Army, January 1838, M.H., Vol. 6, K476, 154 ff.

(99) F.G., 27 December 1837, 57.

(100) Nepal Summary of Events, January-May 1838, July 1838; F.G., 3 January 1838, 33; 17 January 1838, 33.

Bhim Sen apprised the Resident of the malicious intrigues of the Court with Indian States. He tried to seek interviews with the Resident. Hodgson scrupulously evaded his 'overtures'. S.C., 16 May 1838, 33, 35.
Ranganath was deposed in August 1838 in favour of Ranjeng Pande and Pushkar Shah Chautaria, who were made joint Ministers in October 1838, promising war with the British. Ranganath's natural bitterness towards the Pandes was successfully played upon by Guru Krishna Ram, his brother and Hodgson's confidant; very soon he was won over to the faction opposed to the war party led by the Pandes. This faction, composed of the Junior Queen, Krishna Ram and the Thapas can be termed as the 'Peace Party'. It worked hand in glove with the British Resident, whose main interest was to strengthen it as a counterpoise to the 'war party'. Krishna Ram was its main spring; he and Hodgson adopted a policy of mingled persuasion and admonition to convince the King that the Pandes were his evil counsellors, that their tempting promises were but false, their schemes illusory and their policy ruinous for him and his country.

(101) Nepal Summary of Events, 20-31 October 1838.

(102) Guru Krishna Ram Pendit was from the very outset a warm ally of Hodgson and acted as his instrument in the Court. "He [Krishna Ram] is the only eminent person in Nepal who has ever avowed himself openly the friend of the alliance with our government: he has always avowed it and by that avowal has subjected himself to cold looks and neglect when his talents might otherwise have given him office and favour." Hodgson to Torrens, Offg. Secretary, Political Department, 22 July 1839, S.C., 26 December 1839, 138.
Hostile policy resumed

But it was hard to restrain the Durbar, now
"vacillating between a conviction of the necessity of
adherence to its recent promises of amendment and a strong
inclination to resume the ill practices of last year." The
dreams of conquests and plunders went to the head of the
King; and the pacific counsels of Hodgson and Krishna Ram
were, far, faint and futile cry of reason. The intrigues
with Indian States were resumed, mostly under cover of
marriage missions. The Pandes impressed on the King that
the British would be unable to notice these activities
through the thick cloud of their Afghan problems. To dis-
abuse them of this notion, Hodgson vigorously urged for a
strong personal remonstance of the Governor-General to the
King; for "the more prevalent is the notion here that we
are, or soon must be seriously embarrassed the more needful
is it to be firm." Such "decided warning and rebuke" of the
Governor-General himself, seemed to be the only means to

(103) Resident to Government, 4 February 1839, S.C.,
18 December 1839, 87.

(104) The King and the senior queen were anxious to
got their son, the Heir-Apparent, married. The Nepalese
Royal family had their marriage relations with the states
of Rajputana in India.

(105) S.C., 26 December 1839, 131.
sustain the peace-party and smother the growing influence of the Pandes. The Government took heed. On Hodgson’s strong recommendation, sterner measures were taken against the Nepalese agents of intrigue. It was ordered to arrest summarily all Gurkhas found in the British territories without the requisite passports of the Resident. The Indian States were warned, and Lord Auckland firmly wrote to the King that he would not suffer his King's matrimonial necessities being pressed into political services, prejudicial to British interests.

As the crisis in Afghanistan deepened, the Pandes entrenched themselves firmly in the Durbar. From April 1839 Pushkar Shah Chantaria was obliged to act in subordinate capacity to Ranjeng Pande. He and his clan, the Chantarias, took it as a grievous insult. In 1839, British relations with Ava stood almost on the breaking point, while with

(106) Resident to Government, 29 March 1839, S.C., 18 December 1839, 103; same to same, 4 February 1839, Ibid., 87; Ibid., 95, 103.

(107) Government to Resident, 21 February 1839, S.C., 20 May 1839, 113; same to same, 18 March 1839, S.C., 18 December 1839, 95; 5 June 1839, 129; Auckland to the King of Nepal, 18 April 1839, S.C., 18 December 1839, 105-7, 97.

(108) S.C., 18 December 1839, 115.

China, war actually broke out. Both these events acted as great stimuli to the warlike policy of the Pandes. Missions were again sent to both these courts with overtures (110) for alliance against the British. Ranjit had died in June 1839; his grandson Kunwar Nao Nihal Singh seemed greatly inclined to an alliance with Nepal. Matabar Singh had earlier managed to escape to Lahore, where he sedulously wove the (111) much-desired alliance. There were reasons to fear that Sikkim and Bhutan had fallen prey to Nepal's overtures. Kathmandu became a rendezvous of agents from Burma, Gwalior, Satara, Baroda, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Kotah, Bundi, Rewa, Pannah, (112) Lahore and many petty Rajas of the Indo-Gangetic plain. Stories of the likely combination of the Sikhs, the Marathas, the Rajputs, the Chinese and the Burmese, as also of the

(110) S.C., 18 December 1839, 87, 90; 26 December 1839, 124-7, 161.

(111) S.C., 5 February 1840, 58. The British officer in charge of Matabar at Ludhiana allowed him to go without making the necessary reference to the Supreme Government. Auckland to T.H. Robinson, 31 January 1839, Private Book, Vol. 5, 52, B.M.A.M., 37695; Colvin to Wade, 18 January 1839, Ibid., 38. Ranjit had assured the British that he would give no encouragement to Matabar. Gupta, n. 44.

(112) S.C., 20 November 1839, 73-4; 2 January 1839, 39, 42-4; 9 January 1839, 114; 6 February 1839, 53-4; 5 July 1839, 84; 10 July 1839, 116; 7 August 1839, 16-26; 4 September 1839, 44; 18 December 1839, 87-112; 26 December 1839, 166, 151-5, 140, 123-7.
Persians, Afghans and the Russians were deliberately floated by the Pandes. They also fostered the impression of British reverses in Afghanistan. Large numbers of people were recruited in Bihar and Gorakhpur, presumably for a huge army, through agents, supposed to be Nepalese, and with money, supposed to be the ex-Peshwa's. Suspicion deepened into conviction that a war was to break out between Nepal and British India in the ensuing winter.

Pandes revengeful: Death of Bhim Sen

Corresponding with this provocative external policy, the Pandes carried on a policy of vengeance in regard to their enemies and rivals. The old charges of poisoning against Bhim Sen were raked up, and he and his followers were subjected to gruesome torture. His patroness, the Junior Queen, and her two sons, suffered from the constant dread of being assassinated by the Senior Queen and her followers, the Pandes. The latter sought to effect the

(113) Auckland to Hobhouse, 25 May 1839; Private Book Vol. 5; 34, B.M.A.M., 37696; S.C., 4 September 1839, 40; 26 December 1839, 127, 131, 135-7, 144-7; Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces to Jt. Magistrate, Champaran, 19 February 1840, Champaran Collectorate Records, Letters Received, Vol. 29.

(114) S.C., 18 December 1839, 82; 26 December 1839, 121.

(115) S.C., 18 December 1839, 115.
abduction of the King in favour of the Senior Queen's 
(116) eldest son, the Heir-Apparent. Hodgson was worried, for
the Junior Queen and the Thapas acted, however imperfectly,
as checks to the bid of the Senior Queen and the Pandes
for absolute dominance in the Durbar. Hodgson was eager to
intercede on their behalf but in the face of stern instruc-
tions against embroilment in party squabbles, he could do
(117) nothing. Shortly hereafter, driven to extremes of dread,
desperation and disgrace, Bhim Sen committed suicide. His
body was denied the customary funeral rites; and vultures
and jackals made a merry feast of the carcass of the model
(118) Minister of Nepal. Bhim Sen dead elicted from the British

(116) Sec., 26 December 1839, 131; Tickell's Memorandum.

(117) "I need not say should the Governor-General see
fit to allow me to intercede with the Raja to spare Bhim Sen,
the Junior Ranee and her children... I would joyfully use
the liberty accorded me and to do so might possibly consist
as well with expediency as with humanity." Hodgson to
Torrens, 22 July 1839, Sec., 26 December 1839, 138.

"I have been obliged to answer the affecting
secret appeals of the old man /Bhim Sen/ by telling him
that any volunteer interference on my part might do him, in
the present temper of the Durbar, very serious harm and
almost certainly do him no good." Resident to Government,
3 June 1839, Ibid., 121.

(118) Resident to Government, 30 July 1839; Sec.,
18 December 1839, 22; Nepal Summary of Events, 1-14 August
1839. Hodgson deplored his death thus,

"Thus has perished the great and able statesman
who for more than 30 years had ruled this kingdom with more
than regal sway, just two years after his sudden fall from
power in 1837 - prior to which the uniform success of nearly
all his measures had been no less remarkable than the energy

(contd. on next page)
such a glowing tribute which Bhim Sen living did not get.

Pandes unpopular

All classes of nobles were ruthlessly mulcted of their wealth; the grandiose war schemes of the Pandes needed money. Their policy of vengeance at home and violence abroad unleashed a strong wave of indignation among a large section of the nobles, some of whom even contemplated to appeal to the Resident for his intervention. They were concerned that the provocative policy of the Pandes would bring on Nepal the armed retribution of the British. The Junior Queen appealed to the Resident to save her from the Senior Queen's machinations; many nobles even preferred the conquest of Nepal by the British to the continuance of Pande misrule. Hodgson reported,

and sagacity which so much promoted that success. He was indeed a man born to exercise dominion over his fellows, alike by the means of command as of persuasion. Nor am I aware of any native statesman of recent times, except Ranjit Singh, who is all things considered, to be compared with the late General Bhim Sen of Nepal." Resident to Government, 30 July 1839, S.C., 18 December 1839, 82.

The British Government looked at this event with "extreme disgust and abhorrence." They paid due, though belated, compliments to his administrative ability and deplored frankly his long pacific rule and an able, comparatively enlightened administration. Government to Resident, 15 August 1839, Ibid., 83.

(119) The Englishman, 12 August 1839,
(120) S.C., 18 December 1839, 115; 26 December 1839, 131; Nepal Summary of Events, September-October 1838, 16-31 August 1838.
"All persons of rank now look to the Company's government and earnestly hope that the Governor-General will ere long be led to address the Raja in such terms as may frighten him with justice at home and abroad and redeem him from the toils of the Ranees and Pandes [i.e. Ranjang Pande] whose unjust and irregular ambition threatens equal mischief to the state in its domestic and in its foreign relations. (121)

Hodgson clearly saw that the "weak-kneed backing" of the Governor-General to him had merely increased the (123) presumptions of the Pandes, whose leader Ranjang Pande seemed (124) now certain to be confirmed as Minister with absolute powers.

The peace party was quailing before the onslaughts of the war party, to the manifest concern of Hodgson and Guru Krishna Ram, who constantly asked for more vigorous backing (125) from the British Government. There was now every reason to apprehend the Nepalese army sweeping over Sikkim and Bhutan,

(121) Resident to Government, 14 April 1839, S.G., 12 December 1839, 115. "Many eyes are turned towards the Residency and many prayers put up that the Company may soon attack and take possession of Nepal."

(122) Hunter, n.s. 5, 178.

(123) "They are ready to break forth or at least to break the Treaty and expel the envoy, i.e., myself." Hodgson to Father, July 1839, quoted in Ibid., 177.

(124) Tickell's Memorandum.

(125) "The Guru says that his strength is mine and mine the Governor-General's, the Governor-General has only distinctly to support us in order to recall the vacillating young Raja to the necessity of abiding by his recent pledges to us ... he is right in the main." Hodgson to Torrens, 17 February 1839, S.G., 12 December 1839, 89.
attacking Assam and expelling the Resident. To ward off such hazards, Hodgson urged for "some special and immediate measures of precaution," as garrisoning the military posts of Titalya and Mullaye, on the Nepal frontier.

Auckland and his Council

The supreme councillors in Calcutta strongly felt that it was now incumbent on the British government to abjure the erstwhile policy of temporisation and forbearance and resort, instead, to more active interference in the Court politics of Nepal. Supreme Councillor Robertson felt the urgency of immediately forming an openly countenancing a "British party" in the Nepal Durbar, composed of the Junior Queen, the Thapas, the Gurus, the Chautarias and all others, hostile to the Pandes. This party would act as a counter to the absolute preponderance of the Pandes, and would temper their hostile propensities. An experienced and dexterous Resident as Hodgson would easily accomplish this

(126) Same to same, 4 July 1839, S&C, 26 December 1839, 155.

(127) "From the locality, the value to us of the Nepal frontiers, and of their inestimable military population, I am decidedly averse to persevering in a forbearing pacific policy towards that state." Minute of Major General W.M. Casement, 2 August 1839, S&C, 18 December 1839, 69.

(128) "We are prepared to support and indeed to advise that Your Lordship should authorise the Resident at Kathmandu to take any favourable opportunity that may offer to form and strengthen a British party at that Court." President in Council to Governor-General, 4 July 1839, Ibid., 67.
project, with the help of the pro-British element already (129) known to be in existence in the Court. The councillors strongly held that the Government must squarely demand immediate redress of their manifold grievances against the Durbar's hostile policy. The demands should be such that compliance with them would involve an entire change in the policy of the administration, while their rejection would (130) adequately justify declaration of war against Nepal. The ruling party (i.e. the Pandes) had now incurred great unpopularity; and hence 'we shall have no difficulty in the present state of the country to strike a blow which will (131) drive from the head of affairs the hostile cabal." With wars in Afghanistan and China, and serious estrangement with Burma, the British rule in India was approaching a crisis,

(129) S.C., 18 December 1839, 67.

The Pandes had become very unpopular with a large section of the nobles. Krishna Ram had managed to convince the latter of the wisdom of being friendly to the British. Thus the Gurus, Chautarias, Thapas and the Junior Queen were looked upon as the peace party as opposed to the war party of the Pandes and the Senior Queen.

(130) Minute of Casement, 2 August 1839; Minute of W.W. Bird, 3 August 1839, Minute of Robinson, 6 August 1839, President in Council to Governor-General, 12 August 1839, same to same, 9 October 1839, S.C., 18 December 1839, 67-75.

(131) President in Council to Governor-General, 12 August 1839, S.C., 18 December 1839, 72.
when its future itself was at stake. Before such a crisis befell, it was prudent to settle accounts with Nepal, by either crushing her by arms, or rendering her innocuous by political means. It was "absolutely fatal" to let the "most formidable power" to vent its "decidedly hostile" spirit on the weakest and the richest part of British India at this critical time. A change in Nepal's policy should be "compulsorily exacted", if she was to be reduced "to the footing of a faithful and useful ally."

Auckland's opposition to War

Lord Auckland realised that,

"our Indian possessions will not be on the footing of security such as should belong to them so long as we have overhanging us a power hostile in policy, military in its institutions and strong in its means." (134)

He clearly saw her abiding hostility, masqueraded under disavowals of ill-feeling and occasional effusive cordiality.

(132) "We are evidently approaching a crisis, when our hold on India will be loosened or become more firm." Minute of Casement, 2 August 1839, S.o.C., 18 December 1839, 69.

(133) Minutes of Supreme Councillors, S.o.C., 18 December 1839, 67; 69-72, 74.

He realised too that the war in Afghanistan and China had keyed up this feeling, and that a showdown with her could not be avoided for long. Yet he was keen to avoid a war "until a more favourable time." He knew that:

"Our next war with Nepal must be a war of conquest and must not be entered on until after much accurate examination and perfect preparations. We have more pressing cares before us and must not attempt too many things at once." (137)

Nepal was certainly a thorn in the side of the British dominion in India, but not one of "active and immediate peril." It was, to him, "wholly improbable" that single handed, she would hazard an open rupture with the British; nor was there any likelihood of a coalition of Indian powers under her guidance and inspiration. It could be

(135) "It will be hard to avoid a collision with Nepal ... but I will try hard to do so, for I would not have too much upon my hands at a time, and in the meantime, will be well prepared." Auckland to Hobhouse, 13 October 1838, P.B., Vol. 4, 138, B.M.A.M., 37694; Auckland to Carnac, 13 July 1839, Ibid., Vol. 6, 160, B.M.A.M., 37696.

(136) "The time will come when we must seriously question Nepal upon her policy ... but now is not the convenient season." Colvin to Robinson, 24 October 1838, Ibid., 182.


(138) Auckland to President in Council, 18 July 1839, S.C., 18 December 1839, 68.

(139) Ibid.; Colvin to Robertson, 29 July 1839; Private Book, Vol. 5, 113, B.M.A.M., 37695; Governor-General to Secret Committee, 7 February 1839, 3.
hoped that the internal dissensions would keep her busy for sometime, while a war with her was certain to unite all the parties against the British.

As for the 'British Party', Auckland was manifestly sceptical, for

"We can never rely with certainly upon any faction, not being readily drawn into hostility to our views ... which most directly affect the greatness and pride of the Goorkha power," and "... though all in their turn might try to use us for the sake of rising to power, we can look to no consistent and faithful support from any of them." (141)

If such a party was created by the British, the latter would be committed to its protection, if needed by arms, from the assaults of other parties; it was a grave commitment, an onerous obligation, which the preoccupation of the British did not permit undertaking. Such an open interference in the internal affairs of a foreign court was "clearly inconsistent with the principle and right," so long as there had not been an open break with that court.

(140) "I am not without hopes that the party dissendions of Nepal may, if let alone, give occupation to its government, whilst either war or violent interference (in party politics) would probably have the opposite effect of uniting all parties against us." Auckland to Robertson, 17 July 1839, Private Book, Vol. 6, 382-3, B.M.A.M., 37696; Auckland to R. Jenkins, 14 July 1839, to J.C. Robinson, 12 July 1839, to Camac, 13 July 1839, Ibid., 178, 159, 160.

(141) Governor-General to President in Council, 18 July 1839, S.C., 13 December 1839, 68; same to same, 2 September 1839, Ibid., 75.
The British might then be naturally accused by the King of Nepal of unjustifiable intrigues with parties in his court - a deed, which the British Government itself charged him of doing in Indian states acknowledging British paramountcy. A war with Nepal called for intensive preparation and vast store of arms, while not more than 12 to 14 regiments could then be spared for the purpose - a wholly inadequate army. There was the further difficulty of deciding the precise objects of a war. An injunction on resumption of hostility towards the British, was unlikely to be suffered by her, so long as the martial character of her government remained unchanged; the martial character itself could not also be moderated soon.

Besides, a war with Nepal was certain to spark off a war with Burma, with whom she had, reportedly, reached an understanding. Even a more drastic policy regarding the

(142) Ibid.

(143) Governor General's Minute, 13 July 1839, Private Book, Vol. 6, 185, B.M.A.M.; 37696.

(144) S.C., 18 December 1839, 73.

(145) "We may hold it as certain that we shall not have a Burmese without also having a Nepalese war." Auckland to Hobhouse, 12 June 1839, Private Book, Vol. 6, 102, B.M.A.M., 37696. "It has long been my opinion that an actual collision with the Burmese would lead to a breach at the same time with the Nepalese." Auckland to Carnac, 30 June 1839, Ibid., 135.
intriguing propensities of Nepal was risky, for the Indian States were in a state of sullen ill-will; the Indian people were, generally speaking, without sympathy with the British government. Although there was no fear of universal and active feeling of aversion to the British rule, there was enough indication of a general spirit of unease and restlessness.

In short,

"... looking to the general state of the empire, to the existing demands on our military means and to the uncertainty which yet prevails in many quarters as to whether these demands may not be extended, it would have been inexpedient in the present season to court a rupture with the state of Nepal." (148)

To the Supreme Councillors, this amounted to impolitic underestimation of the magnitude and imminence of a certain danger. Sir Casement, in particular, vigorously urged for immediate reduction of Nepal as a morale-booster for the British army and as a salutary lesson to the whole of India and other nations regarding the undimmed vigour of the British rule. The Councillors confidently held that even

(146) Note of the Offg. Secretary, Foreign Department, 18 April 1839, S.C., 12 June 1839, 11; Governor General's Minute, 22 April 1839, Ibid., 12.

(147) Ibid.

(148) Governor-General to President in Council, 24 October 1839, S.C., 18 December 1839, 75.

(149) Ibid., 69.
with the existing means, Nepal could be reduced in one
single campaign in one season; and that she would be a
profitable acquisition, while Ava would be a liability.
Internal strifes in Nepal, they rightly held, acted as
incubators of restlessness; they did not check but abet
warlike instincts; they were not safeguards of peace but
(150) accelerators of war; "unquiet times at home are unquiet and
(151) energetically so abroad." It was, to them, a far sounder
policy to anticipate the inevitable evil and crush it, than
to tackle it after it actually befell. Regarding the
objects of the war, they suggested, the dismissal of the
war-party from power, the cessation of intrigues with
states in India and abroad, the reduction of her military
establishment to one-third of its existing strength and
opening the interior of the country to the British subjects.
To keep her true to her engagements, some of her fortresses
in southern Nepal could be retained by the British. The
Councillors concluded:

"We have little hesitation in declaring that it
appears to us to be no security for the stability
of the British empire in India, so long as the
power of Nepal remains unreduced ... an operation
which in comparison with a war either beyond the

(150) President in Council to Governor-General,
9 October 1839, Ibid., 74.

(151) Hodgson to Maddock, 2 December 1839, S.C.,
26 December 1839, 164.

(152) S.C., 18 December 1839, 74."
Indus or in Ava would cost but little and which would contribute more than anything else to place us in a position calculated to secure to England the undisturbed possession of India for ages to come." (153)

To this Lord Auckland replied,

"I have no hesitation in recording my decided opinion that we ought not to court the risk of a war with Nepal in the approaching season," for "I do not share an acute apprehension of immediate danger from the government of Nepal. I by no means regard that power as likely to venture an assault upon us on the plains under any circumstances of which we can at this time contemplate the probability." (154)

Lord Auckland deprecated the "tendency to overalarm", for he was sure Nepal "would bark long indeed before she ventures a bite." (155)

(153) Ibid. "... it would have been the best policy to have entered on the course which we must sooner or later be compelled to take when Nepal herself was torn by internal dissensions, when our enemies in all quarters were dismayed by our unlocked-for success in Afghanistan, and when the conquest could be achieved before any reaction from the west possibly be apprehended." Ibid.

(154) Governor-General to President in Council, 2 September 1838, Ibid., 73.

(155) Colvin to Capt. Jenkins, 30 July 1839, Private Book, Vol. 6, 206, R.M.A.M., 37696. "The subjection of Nepal is no doubt most desirable but the first object is to avoid war as well with Nepal as with Ava ... My speculation is that the show of preparation and the arrival of recruits from Europe will keep both quiet ..." Auckland to J.C. Robertson, 12 July 1839, Ibid., 169.
Engagement of 1839

By the end of 1839, the tone of the Durbar began to ring a little soft, and the war cry of the Pandes seemed a whit mellowed. The triumph of the British at Ghazni disabused them of the impression that the end of the 'Company's raj' was in sight. Intrigues had failed to rope in any power so far; the Heir-Apparent's marriage was a pressing necessity. On top of it, there was reason to fear that the British might call Nepal to account on the point of bayonet. The Durbar hastened to undertake again, by a written engagement, to desist from intriguing activities, to do justice to the Indian traders and to allow the Resident to move freely within a radius of twenty miles from Kathmandu. Hodgson was too familiar with such sudden volte-face, such tactical step-down. He knew that the Pandes were unpopular and were alarmed of armed retribution of the British. The peace party had become stronger; many nobles assured Hodgson


(157) Nepal Summary of events, October-November 1839.

(158) Aitchison, Treaties, Engagements and Sanads. XIV, 68; Ahadnama, 1886, Bhadra Vadi 9, Roj 2, Foreign Office, Kathmandu. In this document, article 7 provides for the right of the Resident and his men to move up to a limit of 10 kos beyond Kathmandu Valley. In Aitchison, we do not find such an article, nor in the original engagement in English translation, s.c., 26 December 1839, 154.
of help to oust the Pandes; some had been "won by gold", and could be depended upon at the time of war. In fact, many "look askance and vexed that now the season is propitious why not the British intervene?" Now was, Hodgson held, the opportune time to compel Nepal to "succeed thoroughly and once for all." Her court was divided; the party in power wholly unpopular; a section of the nobles covertly pro-British and bitterly opposed to the Pande policy. Her army was now badly officered; its strength and power of resistance had waned; the Nepal army of 1938-39 was much inferior to that in 1814-16. Nor were her roads, topography, military and other resources secrets any more.

(159) "... Nay, I have been sounded from various quarters and quasi-tenders of allegiance made me in the event of war." Hodgson to Maddock, 2 December 1839, S.C., 26 December 1839, 164; Nepal Summary of Events, 4-15 October 1839.

(160) "I have, as you are aware, actually given to Majhila Guru (Krishna Ram) Rs. 2000 from my treasury ... and with regard to the additional 3000/- which I have proposed to be given conditionally, it shall, if sanctioned, be paid by bill in the plains in such manners as to elude possibility of discovery at this place." Hodgson to Torrens, 22 July 1839, S.C., 26 December 1839, 168.

(161) Nepal Summary of Events, 4-15 October 1839.

(162) Hodgson to Maddock, 2 December 1839, S.C., 26 December 1839, 164.

Hodgson urges for decisive measures

On these grounds Hodgson suggested

"that if there be any inclination to the other course with Nepal [i.e. war] many circumstances combine to render the present season one of singular advantage to us. If Nepal will not be ruled by advice, she may be humbled, I strongly incline to think, with a speed and certainty that would surprise the world as much as has lately done the acquisition of Afghanistan." (164) (165)

If Matabar Singh and Ranudat Shah were brought with the British army, many Nepalese, hostile to the Pandes, were likely to join them, so that with their "conjoint aid and that of the appliances they would place at our disposal, the subjection of Nepal must prove a comparatively facile achievement." Now was the opportunity for drastic intervention; now or never.

(164) Hodgson to Maddock, 8 November 1839, S.C., 26 December 1839, 164.

(165) Ranudat Shah, an uncle of the King, was living in exile at Benaras since 1838. P.C., 17 January 1839, 34.

(166) Hodgson to Maddock, 2 December 1839, S.C., 26 December 1839, 164.

"If we were presently to take Nepal into account, we might look to much benefit from the prevalent discontent, from the infirm seat of the new men and from the still enduring commissions of the old whose anticipations are so fearful that they would sooner welcome foreign intervention than the uncontrolled proponderance of the Pandes; so at least it is alleged to me and with some likelihood." Ibid.

"... the whole chiefs and country being now disgusted and ready to welcome a foreign deliverer." Nepal Summary of Events, 4-18 October 1839.
His past experience convinced him that stern policy was the best one to deal with such a fractious court, on whose engagements little reliance could be placed. The bull should be taken by its horns and dealt with firmly.

Lord Auckland, however, did not accept these suggestions; he stuck to "the policy of peace and patience", for "it was not prudent to run into new cares and combinations whilst liable to distractions from this [North-West] quarter."

**Pandes confirmed**

Hodgson's judgement was vindicated by events. In February 1840, Ranjang Pande was confirmed as Minister. The jingo spirit in the Durbar reached its acme now, the engagement of November 1839 was honoured more in breach than in observance, the difficulties of Hodgson became acutest, the danger of British Government gravest. The Pandes having got into their stride, the Indo-Nepalese relations, precariously maintained over successive crises, seemed destined to a violent breach.

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(167) Hodgson to Maddock, 4 December 1839, S.C., 26 December 1839, 166, 154.

(168) Governor-General to President in Council, 12 September 1839, S.C., 18 December 1839, 73.

(169) Nepal Summary of Events, 5-13 February 1840.