Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

Nepal, a small beautiful and the only Hindu kingdom in the world, sandwiched between India and China presents a unique feature in the political world. The country came to experience Monarchical form of Government even before the birth of Christ. The people seemed to remain satisfied with the Monarchical form of Government which they regarded as of divine origin. A succession of dynasties like the Kirata, the Solar dynasty, the Gurkha etc. ruled over that state and for most of the time the country adopted an isolationist policy. Some other dynasties like the Thakuris in the 7th century, the Licchavis and the Mallas also ruled the country. Of all those dynasties the Gurkhas were more prominent since the 12th century. Upto the arrival of the Ranas, Prithvi Narayan Shah was one of the famous kings of that period. The political scene of Nepal was a long stretch of infighting among the members of the ruling families.

The year 1846 saw the beginning of a new charter in Nepal's political history. Rana Jung emerged as the most powerful and the founding father of Ranacracry in Nepal. He was the first hereditary Prime Minister and his line was continued till 1950. During the Rana period the Gurkha kings, known better as the Shah kings came to be deprived of their
real powers. The Ranas were conservative and reactionary and they were on record of amassing huge wealth at the cost of the common people. The Ranas became so powerful that they usurped the power of the Monarchs so much so that the latter were reduced to insignificant puppet. The title of 'Maharaja' and the privileges associated with it were enjoyed by the Rana Prime Ministers without any break and the same was legalised by means of an Act. The law of primogeniture was followed in the matter of appointment to the office of the hereditary Prime Minister. The concentration of the executive, legislative and judicial powers in the hands of the Prime Minister was but a logical end. Padma Shumsher almost a century later in 1948 by his pro-democratic move brought into existence a written Constitution and became the first Rana Prime Minister to concede civil rights to the common people. He liked to call himself the servant of the people. No doubt that the independence of India in 1947 exerted tremendous impact on the socio-political scenario of Nepal. Various organisations were formed during this period as a sort of protest against the high handed attitude of the ruling elite of the country. Moreover the 'C' class Ranas also got a chance to fight against the Rana rulers. King Tribhuvan's escape to India complicated the situation which led to the formation of an interim Government with the representatives of the Ranas and the Nepali Congress. This was the beginning of the people's
struggle for political freedom under the aegis of the Nepali Congress led by B.P. Koirala.

Democratic political culture in Nepal began to develop since the last part of 1947. The Nepali National Congress was a party which consisted of the hard core believers in non-violence. Several other parties also emerged in the political scene and among them the Nepal Democratic Congress believed in violence. Although the political parties were formed on different ideologies, their main aim was to uproot Ranaism. The Nepali Congress was formed in 1950 as a result of merger of the two parties, namely, the Nepali National Congress and the Nepal Democratic Congress. During that period a civil war broke out in different parts of Nepal where the guerilla insurgent activities took place. The Muktin-Sena also started violent activities which was joined by the 'C' class Ranas who were a deprived lot. In the meantime Peking's annexation of Tibet expedited the democratic movement in Nepal since Nepal occupied a strategic position from the point of view of India's security. With the mediation of the Government of India, the king of Nepal made an agreement which came to be known as the Delhi Agreement. Accordingly the king returned to Nepal and his power was restored to him. Subsequently a coalition cabinet was formed with the king as its head. An agitation started by the Nepalese population in Sikkim also contributed towards the development of political consciousness.
of the people in Nepal. A move was afoot for the framing up of a Constitution on democratic lines, so that the rights of the people could be recognized. However for sometime chaos, confusion and uncertainty reigned supreme in the political scene of Nepal.

The Nepali Congress had a tough time which compelled it to tilt towards the Monarchy for sometime. The coalition cabinet under M.R. Koirala could not achieve much success either. However the king appointed an Advisory Council in order to prevent B.P. Koirala from coming into power. The Coalition Government was broad based and named as the National Government. A striking feature of the period was that in the name of development of parliamentary form of Government or democratic culture interim Governments came to be established from time to time, which were far from being democratic or parliamentary. The king had the aim of playing one political party against the other. The king had to face bitter criticism from the political parties and organisations for his anti-democratic activities.

King Tribhuvan was succeeded by King Mahendra who had to announce General Election in 1959 as the people's reaction against the autocratic rule of the king reached the apex. The General Election that took place in early part of 1959 brought landslide victory to the Nepali Congress led by B.P. Koirala. The Constitution of 1959 provided both for a parliamentary
system as well as a Monarchical system of Government. The bicameral Parliament, the cabinet and the provisions for independent judiciary completed the scene and along with it for the first time a democratic political atmosphere dawned in the political horizon in Nepal.

Some disgruntled politicians, leaders of the Opposition parties and the rich Ranas encouraged the king to take real power in his hand since in their opinion the elected Nepali Congress Government became more powerful and popular than the king. The progressive policies adopted by the Nepali Congress Government to reform administration, abolish corruption and streamline administration to the maximum possible extent embittered the conservative elements especially the reactionary Ranas who tried hard to dislodge the elected Government from power. The king could not tolerate the growing popularity of the elected Prime Minister and the growing dependence of the common people on the Prime Minister for the redressal of their grievances. He took the full advantage of the situation. The parliamentary experiment was a short-lived one. King Mahendra dissolved the Parliament, dismissed the cabinet, disbanded the political parties and declared the Constitution as null and void. The ministers were imprisoned and the political leaders and workers went underground. The king replaced the parliamentary system by a Panchayat system modelled on the line of the basic democracies.
of Pakistan which were brought into existence by Field Marshal Md. Ayub Khan as a Marshal law administrator and President of Pakistan in 1958.

In the early part of 1961 political activities of the disbanded political parties continued despite the imposition of severe restrictions on the parties by the king. Sporadic riots and violence became the order of the day in which hundreds of people lost their lives and properties. The disturbances combined with the raids on police posts by the people, attacks on officials and sabotage became so common that these events ultimately culminated in an armed uprising in several areas of Nepal under the leadership of the Nepali Congress. Consequently, a state of emergency was declared. A Constitution that came into existence in 1962 replaced the parliamentary system of Government. It also withdrew the state of emergency. King Mahendra declared the launching of a system of 'Guided democracy' in which he envisaged the gradual establishment of a Panchayat system on a pyramidal structure. A unicameral legislature known as the Rashtriya Panchayat headed the system. Despite the new Constitution the political scene of Nepal during 1962-63 was far from tranquil. It was just like a dormant volcano and the whole situation bore a striking resemblance with the political scene of post 1942 India. The non-party system under the new Constitution started developing cracks and fissures. The
political parties though were underground tried to revive multi-party system but without success. Politics in Nepal entered a new phase with the third amendment to the Constitution which provided for direct election to the Rashtriya Panchayat. The political events of this period were marked by a students movement that took place in April-May 1979. The king had no other way than to announce a referendum to decide whether the people wanted a multi-party parliamentary democracy or the continuation of the Panchayat system. Almost all the leaders of the major defunct political parties welcomed the holding of the referendum. Surprisingly the supporters of the partyless Panchayat system won the election by a small margin. For the first time in 22 years the people of Nepal got an opportunity to exercise their franchise in the referendum. This event proved to be an important landmark in the kingdom's march towards the modern age. The winds of change seemed to blow from the Caucasus to Kathmandu. Nepal also struggled to bring in a chance in its 30 years old political system in which the king commanded absolute power behind a facade of partyless democracy. The king had no other way than to concede to the demands for the multi-party system. The change over from absolute Monarchy to democracy in Nepal in early part of 1990 had been an event of great political significance not only to Nepal but also the entire South-East-Asian countries.
Thus it has been seen that the people of Nepal have been in continuous struggle to realise their aim of establishing a parliamentary form of Government. For over a few centuries Nepal had been under a Monarchical form of Government. The Ranas were always there to let loose a reign of terror. The common people were under the pressure of Monarchy, Ranarchy and seldom they came to know about the principle of rule of law in their day-to-day life. A short stint of nineteenth months of parliamentary democracy brought considerable relief to the people and they experienced democratic political culture. Nepali people have been known for their chivalry and sense of sacrifice all over the world. The new coalition Government which consists of the Nepali Congress and United Left Front under the leadership of K.P. Bhattarai with the promises to fulfil the democratic aspiration of the people has however many miles to go. It has yet to have a democratic constitution to frame and many hurdles to cross which are put on their way by the conservative and the reactionary forces in the country. Nepal's internal crisis is still far from over. Though the Nepali Congress is in political dominance along with the United Left Front there are also sharp ideological difference between the Left party and the Nepali Congress. Moreover, the clear schisms within the Nepali Congress itself and the relations among the three top leaders Ganesh Man Singh, G.P. Koirala and K.P. Bhattarai
pause a threat to the emerging democratic political trend in
the country. The king may be buying time and the palace ploy
may be the part of a strategy aimed at dividing the political
parties so that no single party achieves a majority in the
next General Election. The revival of the multi-party system
in Nepal is certainly a healthy political trend of the country.
On the basis of the current political development it may fur­
ther be stated that the future Constitution may provide for a
Constitutional Monarchy as well as secularism in Nepal.