

Historical::Administrative Arrangements in the Eastern

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Tarai Region and Chitaun

During the early nineteenth century, the eastern Tarai region was divided into several administrative units: Morang, Saptari, Mahottari, Bara, Parsa, Rautahat and Sarlahi. Occasionally, Saptari and Mahottari were placed under a single administrator. Bara, Parsa, Rautahat and Sarlahi were also treated similarly from time to time. (Cf. "Order Regarding Extradition of Dacoits," Shrawan Badi 10, 1892 (July 1835), Regmi Research Collection, vol. 45, pp. 126-28. According to this order there were only three administrators (amali) in the eastern Tarai region at that time, for (1) Morang, (2) Saptari and Mahottari, and (3) Bara, Parsa, Rautahat and Sarlahi).

According to Francis **Hamilton** (*An account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, p. 151); "Morang, in the general sense, extends in the low country from the Tista to the Kosi." The Tista frontier was brought westward toward the Mechi river after the Nepal-British war. Morang during the nineteenth century comprised five modern administrative districts in the region: Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari. The administrative headquarters of the districts were located at Vijayapur, a hill town on the Churia range, which was the capital of the Sen dynasty before the territory was incorporated into the Gorkhali Kingdom.

Saptari and Mahottari had once belonged to another branch of the Sen dynasty based at Chaudandi in the hills. These districts were situated west of the Kosi river and extended up to the Bagmati river in the east, a distance of about 100 miles. The administrative headquarters were located at a place called Naragarhi, which **Hamilton** has described as "a small fort on the plain." (Ibid, pp. 160-61).

Bara, Parsa and Rautahat and belonged to yet another branch of the Sen dynasty based at Makwanpur. The headquarters of this division were located at Makwanpur, "but in the cold season, (the Subba) visits the plains and resides at Baragarhi". (Ibid, p. 167). Kirkpatrick has described Baragarhi as "a mean place, containing 30 or 40 huts," (An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal, p. 40).

The district of Sarlahi seems to have been created some time during the 1830s. **Hamilton** has made no reference to this district in his account of the eastern Tarai region, (**Hamilton**, op. cit. pp. 160-64).

The inner Tarai district of Chitaun, which once formed a part of the Primapality of Tanahu in the western hill region, was similarly a separate administrative unit.

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After the emergence of Rana rule in 1846, these districts were reorganized into seven administrative units: Morang, Saptari, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Rautahat, Bara and Parsa. Chitaun retained its status as a separate administrative unit. ("Revenue and Expenditure of the Government of Nepal," 1908 (A.D. 1851), Regmi Research Collection (Miscellaneous).

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