

Historical: Terai sold @ 2 Elephants

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Terai was sold for two elephant to Prithvi Narayan Shah

After the fall of Bhaktapur, the frontiers of Nepal in the hill region had expanded from the Chepe and Marsyangdi rivers to the Dudhkoshi river, and to the inner Tarai in the south. However, the new State of Nepal was still incomplete, since the British occupation of the Tarai areas of Makwanpur continued. The Tarai territories expanding from Parsa to Mahottari were a part of Makwanpur State. The forests of this area were inhabited by numerous wild animals. The Maghul emperors, therefore, had accepted two elephants annually as tribute from Makwanpur. However, when the Nawab of Bengal and Bihar declared himself independent after the disintegration of the Moghul Empire following the death of Aurangzeb, the administrator of Patna demanded cash instead of elephants. They eventually raised the amount of the tribute to Rs 12,500.00. Payment of the tribute was discontinued when Prithvi Narayan Shah occupied Makwanpur, including its Tarai territories. In the meantime, the British had brought Bengal and Bihar, as well as Oudh, under their control. The emergence of two parallel States in this manner created feelings of hostility between them. It was out of fear of the British that Prithvi Narayan Shah hurriedly occupied Makwanpur.

The British had also the ambition of occupying the hill regions of Nepal in order to monopolize India's trade with Tibet and Mangolia through Nepal's territories. At the moment they were thinking of doing so, they received a message from Jaya Prakash Malla pleading of assistance. The British responded to this message by sending troops under the command of Kinloch. However, Kinloch failed to enter into the hill region and the inner Tarai of Nepal. He stayed on in Bara district with the intention of attempting to move into Nepal territory a year later. However, he occupied the Tarai areas of Parsa and Rautahat districts, and started collecting revenue in order to meet the costs of the war. In the meantime, Prithvi Narayan Shah occupied Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, thereby discouraging the British from making any attempt to enter into Nepal. Till then, however, he had not paid attention to Bara district. Even after the death of Kinloch, Hardy continued collecting revenue amounting to Rs 24,00.00 annually in Bara district. Hence he, together with his troops, fell a victim of malaria. Hence the British thought they should be ready to quit the Tarai if they could persuade Prithvi Narayan Shah to permit them to engage in trade in Nepal, which would yield an income of more than Rs 24,00.00 annually to them.

Satyadhar Upadhyaya Dahal, who lived at Jhangajheli (now in East No. 2), which formed part of Makwanpur state, was an employee of the desposed King Hemakarna Sen. His son, Dinanath Upadhyaya, was an employee of Kahar Simha Basnyat while the latter was governor of Makwanpur, for he know well relationship between the king of Makwanpur and the Mughal Nawabs with regard to the Tarai. He also had access to the relevant documents. He therefore went to Kathmandu along with Kahar Simha Basnya, and personally appealed to Prithvi Narayan Sahh to liberate the Tarai region of Makwanpur from the cluteches of the British. The suggestions put forward by him in his regard were appreciated by Prithvi Narayan Shah, who therefore sent Dinanath

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Upadhyaya to hold negotiation with Major Kally, a British officer, in Darbhanga (January 1771)

At this time, British officers and the officials of the Moghul Nawab in Bengal and Bihar were administering the districts. In reaching Darbhanga, Dinanath Upadhyaya conveyed a message from Prithvi Narayan Shah to Major Kelly. The message promised to pay to the British the same tributes in consideration of the Tarai territories which the Moghul Nawabs used to receive from the King of Makwanpur. In addition, it claimed that since Makwanpur had been annexed by Prithvi Narayan Shah, its Tarai territories should belong to him. Major Kelly forwarded this proposal to his superior in Patna, who transmitted it to the governor of Bengal and Bihar. The governor accepted this proposal in the hope that such a conciliatory gesture would enable the British to get a foothold in Nepal. There were heated arguments between Dinanath Upadhyaya and Major Kelly on the question of tributes. Records in the possession of the British officers in Patna showed that the Kings of Makwanpur used to send a 21 feet tall elephant as tribute every year. It was on this condition that the British agreed to vacate the Tarai territories of Makwanpur in favor of the Gorkhals and recall Hardy from there. However, the British proposed that the Gorkhals should help to recover the revenue arrears which Hardy had been unable to collect. Dinanath Upadhyaya agreed to this proposal and signed an agreement to this effect. Hardy then withdrew from the Tari region along with his troops. Dinanath Upadhyaya, on his part, recovered the revenue arrears and handed over the same to the British.

For three years, Nepal continued sending a 21-foot tall elephant to the British. As elephants of the height were not available in the forests, in subsequent years Nepal sent elephants of a height of approximately 19 feet. At first, the British raised objection to this. But when Dinanath Upadhyaya produced an agreement signed between Nawab Mohawat Jung and Ram Narayan, which provided for the presentation of elephants of that height, the English officer, George Vansittart, agreed to accept such an elephant annually. The dispute over Parsa and Rautahat was thus finally settled. Warren Hastings, the new governor General of the British East India Company, accepted Nepal's sovereignty over the Tarai. With the restoration of the Tarai region, the territory of the newly-created Kingdom of Nepal extended to the Dudhkoshi and Kamala rivers in the east, the Marsyangdi river in the western hill region, the Uria river in the Tarai, Tibet in the north, and Bihar in the south (1771-72). Prithvi Narayan Shah gave priority to the task of further expanding the territory of this new State. Having [â€¦] with setbacks in Satahun as a result of which he failed to conquer the Chaubisi states, he diverted his attention from the western region, and started preparing to occupy the two Sen Kingdoms of Chaudandi and Bijayapur, situated in the eastern region.

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