

# The Kot Massacre: A Critical Assessment <sup>\*\*</sup>

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The Kot Massacre is one of the most important epoch-making events in the history of Nepal. The event, although connected with the murder of Gagan Simha as the immediate cause, was the outcome of the most dirty, self-centred and nefarious conspiratorial politics since 1832 A.D. We have many most pertinent questions about the incidents-Who killed Gagan Simha ? Was it a pre-planned incident ? Did the Residency people have any role to play in the event ? Who was responsible for it- the king,the queen, Fatya Jung, Jang Bahadur ? To what extent are the available accounts of the event authentic ?

Before responding to all these questions, let us, first of all, have different accounts of the incident for a comparative study. The first version narrated by Thoresby<sup>1</sup> which is the only detailed account is as follows:

## Thoresby's account

Gagan Simha was killed by a shot fired through a window of his house while he was in prayer at around 10 p.m. Monday, September 14, 1846. The news of the murder was immediately brought to the *Rani* (*queen Laxmidevi*) by Wazir Simha, son of Gagan. She instantly went to Gagan Simha's house on foot. She put the *Tulsipatra*, *Gangazal* and gold, she had taken, on the mouth of the deceased, consoled Wazir Simha, Sher Simha and Khadga Bir Simha, three sons of the deceased, assured them of meeting all the expenses for the cremation and other rituals by the state and forbade the three wives of Gagan from becoming *Sati* and came to the Kot, an arsenal and meeting hall near the royal palace and ordered *Kazi* Abhiman Simha, who was already summoned, to have the bugle sounded to summon all government employees. Sitting in the second storey of the Kot she was repeating that until the assassin of his minister would not be traced out and put to death she would neither take food nor water. Meantime Jang Bahadur, accompanied by his six brothers and three regiments under his command (all well equipped with arms), reached Kot. To know of Gagan's murder Jang Bahadur went to the *Rani* and had some discussion which reminded her of the gravity of the problem and also insecurity of the *Rani*, her sons as well as his own. As such he advised the *Rani* to use the power she had got from the King to find out the culprit and punish. Thus having provoked the *Rani* Jang Bahadur came out of the Kot to alert officers of his regiments. Abhiman went to the royal palace to inform the king of what had occurred. Later the king came to the Kot. Meanwhile, all officers came there unarmed.

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<sup>\*</sup> Extract from *Nepal in Transition* (Unpublished book of the writer)

1. Resident Thoresby to Government, March 18, 1847, Foreign Secret Consultation, March 27, 1847, No.112, National Archives of India, New Delhi (NAI).

Bam Bahadur, a brother of Jang, was sent to bring Fatya Jung by *Rani*. She also ordered Abhiman to put *Kazi* Bir Kishore Pande in irons and it was done. But Pande was saying his innocence. *Rani* did not believe it; rather, was more infuriated. So she, giving her open sword, ordered Abhiman to drop off the head of Pande. Abhiman, taking the word, asked the king in the presence of all officers in the *Dalan* (Ground floor) for the order to execute Pande. The king refused to give the order to execute Pande so long as investigation would not take place and guilt would not be proved. Such an elderly, honest, able, long employed and highly descended servant of the state should not be put to death. Abhiman reported the version of the king to the *Rani* and refused to carry out the order. There was a dialogue between the two. *Kazi* told the *Rani* that in the presence of the king she should not exercise the power and left her presence.

Up to that time Fatya Jung had not come to the Kot. So *Rani* ordered the officers present to discuss and find out the culprit. The officers were also warned that until the culprit was traced out, they would not be permitted to go away. Thinking no fair and satisfactory investigation was possible without Fatya Jung, the king accompanied by Badri Narsimha, a brother of Jang and a small retinue, went to call Fatya Jung, whence he sent *Chautariya* Fatya Jung, his relatives and two brothers of Jang Bahadur to Kot. He himself with his retainues went to the British Residency at 2 a.m. to have an interview with Acting Resident Captain Ottley, the only Englishman present in the Residency (as both Resident Colvin and Dr. Login had gone out of Kathmandu on morning September 13, 1846). He wanted to have discussion on Gagan Simha's death and the assembly of the courtiers at Kot but Ottley did not meet the king on the ground of his suffering from rheumatism. Ottley sent his *Mirmunshi* Devi Prasad to meet the king, who informed the *Munshi* about the death of Gagan, assemble of the courtiers, the *Rani's* engagement in investigating the affair. The king also told him that he was determined to use every possible exertion towards discovery and punishment. He also advised that a good look-out be kept that night around the Residency compound. The king asked the *Munshi* to accompany him but the latter avoided to do so assuring him visit to the palace on the next morning. When the king reached the Kot, the gutter of the street, was flowing with blood coming out of the Kot; and as he was prevented from entering the Kot by the people around he went to Hanumandhoka Palace.

Thoresby's report about the incident of Kot after the arrival of Fatya Jung and his relatives is like this. Jang Bahadur reported *Mukhtiyar* about the whole development i.e. *Rani's* suspicion on Bir Kishore and order to chop his head, refusal to carry out the order by Abhiman, fury of *Rani* against Abhiman etc. He also discussed with him how to appease the *Rani* to bring matters around. His suggestion was to bring the matter round both Bir Kishore and Abhiman should be put to death which he was ready to do with the *Mukhtiyar's* consent. He also proposed the *Mukhtiyar* that the latter should administer the affairs of revenue and territorial departments and he preferred to remain in the post of *Jungi* General (Commander of the army) and act under him.

To that Fatya Jung replied that nothing could be done without thorough investigation. If on investigation Bir Kishore was found guilty he would be punished accordingly. But Abhiman Simha, a respectable man and honest servant of the *Raj* of long-standing, should not suffer the punishment. Thus having replied, Fatya Jung went to the *Dalan* where Abhiman was sitting and Jang went to the *Rani*. He discussed the matter with Abhiman Simha, who foreseeing the forthcoming untoward event, sent for the officers of his regiments and ordered them to load muskets with balls and cartridges. When he saw Abhiman's army loading their muskets Jang Bahadur instantly reported that to the *Maharani*, who with a drawn sword in her hand, came to the *Dalan*, calling for *Mukhtiyar* and Fatya Jung requested the queen not to precipitate the crisis as he would investigate the matter to her satisfaction. Infuriated more by the answer, she made an attempt to kill Bir Kishore Pande. Fatya Jung, Abhiman Simha and Dalbhanjan Pande stopped her and trying to pacify followed her to the second storey. While she was ascending the staircase, the three ministers followed. Suddenly fires were shot and Fatya Jung and Dalbhanjan fell dead. Abhiman got injured.

Injured Abhiman rushed out to *Dalan* shouting that Jang Bahadur had done that treacherous act and tried to get out and join his regiments. At that Krishna Bahadur, a younger brother of Jang, cut him into almost two pieces and Abhiman fell dead. To see Abhiman cut dead and hearing the death of his father Fatya Jung, Khadga Bikram with his *khukuri* attacked Bam Bahadur, Krishna Bahadur and a soldier. He was also shot dead. Meanwhile Jang Bahadur's soldiers armed with double barrelled guns, entered and started firing on the *Bhardars* present in the *Dalan*. Meantime *Maharani Laxmidevi* continued on shouting from the window "kill and destroy my enemies". Most of the dignified persons present in the *Dalan* were shot or cut down, though some were saved by the brothers of Jang Bahadur by taking them out by a small back door. Meantime Jang Bahadur was granted the post of *Vizarate (Mukhtiyar)* and Commander-in-Chief by the *Maharani* exercising the power granted to her by the king. In the morning Jang Bahadur escorted the *Maharani* to the royal palace. After that he went to offer his *Nazar* of the *Vizarate* to the king who angrily inquired Jang by whose order so many officers and chiefs were massacred. Jang Bahadur replied that it was done by the order of *Maharani* when the king had made her sovereign power. The king, much infuriated, went to *Maharani* for an explanation. The *Rani* absorbed in grief and regret over the death of Gagan Simha told the king if the latter would not make her eldest son the king, more calamities would ensue. When the bitter dialogue did not come to any satisfactory conclusion, the king accompanied by *Sardar* Bhawani Simha and Captain Karbir went to Patan. *Maharani* sent for Jang Bahadur and Bir Dhoj Basnet and ordered them to confiscate the properties of the *Sardars* and officers who had been killed or had fled and to expel their families from the country and to put the crown prince and his brother under strict surveillance and permit no one to approach them.

## Rana Family Version

The Ranas have maintained their own family oral tradition and version which was published by a scholarly Rana<sup>2</sup>. The details of the event in Kot differ with those reported by Thoresby. For a comparative study the Rana version is presented here :

On September 12, 1846 *Mukhtiyar* Fatya Jung had a secret discussion with General Abhiman Simha Rana and General Jang Bahadur Kunwar. His complaint was whose order he was to obey-king, queen, crown prince or the all powerful general Gagan Simha. Fearing that he would meet the fate of General Mathabar Simha Thapa, he wished to tender resignation in favour of Gagan. All of them, after much deliberation, decided that Jang should assassinate Gagan. Gagan was killed at 10 p.m. while in prayer, in his house on September 14. Instantly his son Captain Wazir Simha informed the *Maharani* about the murder. The queen, becoming quite furious like *Ranchandi*, and accompanied by a few followers, went to Gagan's house. She consoled and forbade the three wives of Gagan from becoming *Sati*, ordered for the cremation of the deceased in proper way, assured the grant of one *lakh* rupees (Rs. 1,00,000) as an expense for the whole ritual and took an oath of punishing the assassin. While she, holding an open sword, was about to come to Kot for the military action (court martial) Jang Bahadur, accompanied by his brothers and his three regiments, all well equipped with arms, came there. Out of awe to see Jang and his followers, *Rani* asked the reason of coming with the army, Jang replied that when Gagan was killed, *Maharani* needed security. So he had brought the army. The queen ordered Jang to find out the assassin. Jang assured her that he would trace out the culprit and requested her to return to the royal palace. But she went to Shismahal building of Kot. Jang had his soldiers around the Kot complex and gave strict order to his officers specially his brothers to station at the main points and gates and not to allow anyone go out without his order. Then he had the bugle sounded.

At the sound of trumpet all the officers, *Chautariyas* and *Bhardars* came there. King Rajendra also came there. *Kapardar* Bir Kishore Pande had enmity with Gagan since long. So the queen ordered Pande's arrest and instantly the order was carried out. When inquired he expressed his innocence on the murder of Gagan but queen was not convinced. *Maharani* ordered General Abhiman to cut Bir Kishore. But Abhiman, who knew Pande's innocence, looked towards King Rajendra. The king ordered that no one should be cut without any investigation. At that the queen, out of fury, went to Shismahal while the king went to Fatya Jung's house. Jang Bahadur who had already sent his brother Bam Bahadur to the *Mukhtiyar* sent his another brother Badrinarsimha along with the king. King Rajendra, having sent *Mukhtiyar* Fatya Jung and two brothers of Jang to Kot, went to British Residency, where he could not meet Acting Resident Capt. George O.B.

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<sup>2</sup> Purushottam Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, *Sri 3 Haruko Tathya Vritanta*, (Factual Description of *Sri Tins*), Banaras : Parambir Shamsher J.B.R., 2047 B.S., pp. 15-21.

Ottley but only met *Subedar* Manu Simha. From there the king returned to Fatya Jung's house at Narayanhiti.

Jang Bahadur reported Fatya Jung that the situation was quite grave. Bloodshed might take place. Jang, Fatya Jung and Abhiman had discussion. To avoid the bloodshed either the queen was to be confined instantly or obey her without any question. On that Fatya Jung suggested to confine the queen instantly but Jang advised that it would be unwise to imprison the queen in the presence of so many persons whose intentions were unknown. Fatya was convinced of Jang's suggestion. He and Jang went to the *Dalan* of Shismahal. Abhiman wanted to meet his regiments outside the Kot. But the sentry Bhim Ale checked him; at which there was a hot discussion between the two. Bhim Ale, who could not check him, assaulted the General by his bayonet. Thus injured and bleeding Abhiman shouted that Jang had killed Gagan and died. At this Khadga Bikram, son of Fatya, shouted to the *Chautariyas* to unite and confront Jang and followers. Krishna Bahadur, Jang's brother, warned him not to speak unnecessary and provocative words or he would also meet the fate of Abhiman. This provoked Khadga to assault Krishna Bahadur, with his sword but only a thumb was cut. To see that Bam Bahadur, another brother of Jang, attempting to attack him, Khadga fell upon Bam. But the ceiling of *Dalan* checked the stroke of sword. Khadga was about to make second attempt, but Dhir Shamsheer, another brother of Jang, promptly chopped off Khadga by one stroke. To hear it Jang got nervous and foresaw a dark future for his family. So he rushed to Fatya and begged apology on that. Fatya, stunned to and shocked to hear the death of his only son of eighteen years, rushed to Shismahal (most probably) to report to the queen. Jang, scared of the probable (fearful) outcome, implored and even pulled his hands to check him go to the queen. When nothing could check him, Jang gave order to his man *Havaldar* Ramamehar Adhikari to shoot Fatya Jung so that the secrecy of Gagan's assassination would not be disclosed. On the order Ram Ale Rana Magar, a sepoy, instantly shot at Fatya Jung from the top of the staircase.

Meanwhile the *Chautariyas* and their followers, not satisfied with Jang's assurance of no more bloodshed, assaulted which resulted in a *melee*. The *Chautariyas*, Thapas, Pandes, and Basnets, did not have weapons whereas Jang's soldiers started shooting at them. There was a stampede and many escaped by ascending the walls, roofs and even through the drainage. Some were saved by Jang also. Three/four Basnets and Thapas brickbated the queen out of fury. After the massacre there was a curfew in the town.

In the incident only fifty-five persons including Gagan were killed, twenty-seven fled, three were shaved bald (as punishment) and five persons with family and twenty one without family were expelled. The names of all these persons are given.

### **Pudma Jung's Version**

Pudma Jung, in his father's biography, has also written almost the same description about the Kot Massacre<sup>3</sup> with some differences as that of the Rana version. The differences are: firstly, Pudma Jung writes that his father followed by his brothers, the regiments had gone to Kot, to hear the sounding of the bugle. Secondly, Jang is described to know nothing about the murder (of Gagan) as such he had no motive at all and was very frank and outspoken in the Kot. Thirdly, Rana version mentions that Jang advised Fatya that it would be unwise to arrest the queen there. But Pudma writes that Fatya said it so. Rana version mentions that Fatya Jung had secretly consulted Abhiman Simha Rana and Jang Bahadur about Gagan. After much deliberation Jang Bahadur was given responsibility to murder Gagan, whereas Pudma Jung writes that Fatya had consulted Abhiman, Dalbhanjan and Bir Kishore to assassinate Gagan and Jang did not know about it.

### **A Vamsavali Version**

A local *Vamsavali* (Chronicle) gives a bit different picture of the Kot Massacre.<sup>4</sup> It does not mention who assassinated Gagan. According to it, hearing the murder of Gagan, *Rani* went to his house and out of fury said that so long as the assassin was not found out, the corpse would not be taken out for funeral rites. She also said that her *Vazir* (minister) was killed due to the conspiratorial politics of *Bhardar* and she would have the justice done with the permission of the king. Residing at Shismahal of Kot she had Jang, Fatya Jung and Abhiman there and ordered them to find out the culprit. The suspected persons were brought there and confined separately. *Kazi* Kalu Shahi was chained in one leg and *Kazi* Simha Bir Pande was about to be handcuffed. Everything was made ready for flogging. The discussion was going on in the presence of *Kancha Badamaharani* on the ground floor of the building.

The persons present could not reach to unanimity in the discussion, which led to the physical assault among themselves. So the *Kachahari* was stopped. Jang Bahadur requested the queen that if he was ordered he would find out and punish the culprit. The queen okayed the proposal and handed her sword to Jang to carry out the investigation. Instantly he summoned the *Bhardars* to come unarmed by sending soldiers. Jang had posted his regiments around the Kot. The unarmed courtiers were murdered by Jang with the help of his soldiers.

The *Vamsavli* mentions that thirty-one courtiers from *Mukhtiyar* to orderly including Gagan were killed, twenty-six persons fled, two persons were shaved bald, twenty-seven persons and families expelled. Guru Prasad Shah (Chief of Palpa) and Bhim Vikram Shah (Chief of Doti) fled. Gagan and others massacred were cremated at Aryaghat and other parts of Pashupatighat respectively.

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3. Pudma Jung Bahadur Rana, *Life of Maharaja Sir Jung Bahadur*, Kathmandu : Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Reprint, 1980, pp. 66-76.

4. "Nepal Desh Ko Itihas" (History of Nepal), *Ancient Nepal*, No. 25, October 1973, pp. 10-17.

### Maharani's Version

In a letter written by *Maharani* Rajyalaxmi, on B.S. 1904 *Jestha Vadi 5 Roj 4* (Wednesday, May 5, 1847 A.D.) giving an explanation to king Rajendra, she has written about some of the crucial issues.<sup>5</sup> When Rajendra ordered her to give an explanation on what Jang had written (the *Bhardars* and royal family members (*Chautariyas*) were massacred by the order of *Maharani*), she answered that she was repeating the same answer which she had given earlier also. The answer was that Gagan Simha was killed by *Hukum* (Order). He who had given *Hukum* to kill Gagan had also given order to kill the royal family members and *Bhardars*. She had not given order to massacre them. She further writes that when the royal couple was investigating to find out the assassin of Gagan, both Jang and *Pandit Vijaya Raj* informed them that the *Kaushal* (council of *Bhardars*) would find out the culprit and advised them to have rest in the palace. At that *Rani* went to a room (of the *Shismahal* of *Kot*) and the king went to the palace. In their absence Jang had massacred the nobles with the help of his men. The *Rani* informs the king that she had already informed the king earlier that Jang had expelled the family members of the *Bhardars* (killed in the *Kot*) and everyone was aware of it. The queen also reminds the king that Jang had said many times to the king that he and his men had killed and expelled the *Bhardars* in their self-defence. She was not to be blamed as Jang had done that. She wished only to punish the mother of *Mathabar*, *Randhoj Dada*, *Bir Kishore Pande* and *Darhi Khadya Brahman* for their involvement in conspiring against her sons and Gagan according to the then law. She was fully confident that an ordinary man like *Lal Jha* could not venture to attack the life of Gagan. It was achieved by the *Hukum*. He who had given *Hukum* to kill Gagan was responsible for the massacre at *Kot*.

Thus in her letter she insists that Gagan Simha was no doubt killed by *Lal Jha* but it was done (he had killed) by the *Hukum* (order) which could be given only by royalties not by others. Her answer "he who gave *Hukum* to kill Gagan had also given *Hukum* to massacre the *Bhardars*" is rather ambiguous. Although *Manandhar* points out that Jang was responsible for the death of Gagan, *Hukum* word was not used for Jang. It was used only for the royalties. Would a *Maharani* like her mention *Hukum* for Jang ? Up to that time "Timi" word was used to the *Mukhtiyars* and Prime Minister like *Bhimasena Thapa*, *Fatya Jung* and *Mathabar Simha*. She must have pointed out to the king that Gagan was killed by his *Hukum*, which led to the *Kot* Massacre. Thus she blamed the king for the whole event.

There are many accounts of the historic event one differing with the other. Only four accounts (exemplary) are presented here for a comparative study of the events of *Kot*. Before making a comparative study of the events in the *Kot*, the historicity of these accounts is dealt with here.

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<sup>5</sup>. Tri Ratna Manandhar, "Kot Parva : Ek Naya Drishtikon" (A new light on The Kot Massacre), *Nepal Ko Itihasma Jang Bahadur* (Jang Bahadur in the History of Nepal), Kathmandu: Diati Prakashan, 2046 B.S., pp. 30-43.

## Historicity of the Available Sources

We have accounts of Kot Massacre written by many persons. Resident Thoresby wrote his account on March 18, 1847 only i.e. six months after the event. Moreover it seems to have been written on the basis of Jang Bahadur's or his supporters' information to the Resident, because no other person had access to the Resident. Whelpton also doubts the authenticity of the account. We have some reports written by other contemporary Residency people like Captain Ottley's (then Acting Resident) eight letters (three dated September 15, one September 16, two September 17, and one each of September 20 and 24),<sup>6</sup> C.H. Nichollette's (Asst. Resident) *Events of the Court of Nepal* II, 1840-1851 and J. Talsboys Wheeler's *Diary of Events in Nepal* 1841-1846. Besides these accounts, we have accounts written by the British writers (Two Residency doctors and a temporary visitor) of Jang Bahadur's contemporary time like H. Ambrose Oldfield, Daniel Wright (Both Residency doctors) and Orfeur Cavenagh.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to them, Jang Bahadur's own son Pudma Jung has written about the Kot Massacre while writing his father's biography.<sup>8</sup> There are accounts of the issue written in the *Vamsavali* compiled during the Rana period. Dr. Manandhar has published a document written by *Maharani* Laxmidevi dated *Jestha Vadi 5 Roj 4 B.S.* 1904 (Wednesday May 5, 1847 A.D.) which is an explanation by the *Rani* to king Rajendra. The Ranas have their own family version about the incident published by Purushoottam Rana, mentioned above. Before tallying all above mentioned accounts, let us have an assessment of their authenticity. As already mentioned, Thoresby's report seems to have been based on either the information provided by Jang Bahadur or his supporters. Moreover, after the Kot Massacre and Basnet episode nobody could venture to say anything against Jang Bahadur. Even the king and the queen became helpless before the new Prime Minister. As such Thoresby's contemporary account, although it is detailed, cannot be accepted as authentic. The main crux of the problem is that those who were opposed to Jang Bahadur were already butchered. Only Jang Bahadur, his brothers and his supporters including the soldiers who were the eye-witnesses had their own story to tell in their favour. No eye-witness either could say or write anything against Jang at the pain of death.

Nicholette and Talsboys Wheeler also were not the eye-witnesses. They had also written on the basis of what they had heard or were reported. The reporters had also the fear of severe punishment if their anti-Jang report would be known by the Prime Minister. The fact is that on the day of Kot Massacre Captain Ottley was the sole

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6. These documents are available in National Archives of India, New Delhi. Ludwig F. Stiller has published them in edited form. Ludwig F. Stiller, *Letters From Kathmandu: The Kot Massacre*, Kathmandu: CNAS, 1981, pp. 295-316.

7. H. Ambrose Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal* (2 vols), Delhi: Cosmos Publications, Reprint, 1981.  
Daniel Wright (ed.), *History of Nepal*, Calcutta: Susil Gupta (India) Pvt. Ltd., Second Edition, 1958. (His introductory sketch is relevant).  
Captain Orfeur Cavenagh, *Rough Notes on the State of Nepal: its Government, Army and Resources*, Calcutta: W. Palmer Military Orphan Press, 1851.

8. Rana, f.n. no. 3.



Englishman present in the Residency, as the Resident Colvin and Dr. Login had left Kathmandu on September 13, morning. Capt. Ottley's letters are based on what was reported to him by Jang Bahadur during the latter's visit to Residency on September 16, and by the cousin of Jang Bahadur and Darbar *Mir Munshi* on the morning of September 15, rumours as well as his own personal experience. The problem of his report is that all the details are not based on his personal observation. Yet some of his reports, based on his personal experience, are authentic. For example, king's visit to the Residency at 2 a.m. (September 15), Jang Bahadur's visit to him, Jang's cousin's and *Darbar Munshi's* visit, capital under the grip of army for a week, expulsion of *Chautariyas'* family members, confiscation of the *Chautariyas'* properties, appointment of Jang Bahadur as *Mukhtiyar* and Commander-in-Chief on September 16, etc.

Pudma Jung's account is also not free from some weaknesses. He was not an eyewitness as he was born only in December 1857 i.e. on the day on which Jang Bahadur was to move to India to suppress the Great Revolt of India. He wrote what his family member maintained the version of the event. Moreover, his was the effort to glorify his father and not to assess his father's rule. Similarly, the accounts of the *Vamsavalis* are also questionable as they were compiled during the Rana period.

Jang Bahadur's contemporary British writers like Cavenagh, Daniel Wright, H. Ambrose Oldfield have also written on the basis of what they had heard. Most of their informants were Jang Bahadur's men as at that time the Nepalese local people of any status were not allowed to have access to the Residency people or *vice versa*. The most important thing was that to say anything against Jang Bahadur meant to suffer severe punishment like expulsion, confiscation of property, death sentence or likewise.

In her letter *Rani* Rajyalaxmi argues more to prove herself guiltless of what had happened in the Kot rather than give the real picture of the event. In fact, she was ordered to give her explanation by the king and the letter is an explanation of the queen about the Kot Massacre. She clearly mentioned that the king was responsible for the whole event.

In reality, we are still in search of impartial and correct information about what had actually happened in the Kot Massacre. The present available information, about the Kot Massacre, are almost like Balanarsimha Kunwar's account of the assassination of Rana Bahadur Shah. In spite of it so far no other more reliable evidences are available. We have to make the best use of them to make an assessment of the event. Let us now make a comparative analysis of the description of the events on the basis of various sources.

### **Contradictory information about the Kot Massacre**

We have a lot of contradictory information about the event; yet a comparative analysis of the event based on the available sources will reveal many things. All the available sources unanimously agree that the assassination of Gagan Simha was the immediate cause of the Kot Massacre; as such there is no more issue about it.

There is much controversy about the assassin of Gagan Simha. When we think of the then court politics, it is evident that Gagan Simha, being the most favourite of

*Maharani* as such most powerful, having seven regiments under his control and having *defacto* superiority over other minister, was looked upon with much jealousy by all *Bhardars* and ministers. If *Maharani's* wish could prevail, she would have made him the *Mukhtiyar* to fulfil her political design. So everyone wished his fall. At such a time when the king, who did not share the bed except with his married wife, smelt the special relation between the *Maharani* and Gagan Simha, naturally he wished to do away with him. It was the imbecility of the king which had caused such massacre as a result of the murder of a person like Gagan.

There are three versions about the assassin Gagan Simha. The first version is that Jang Bahadur himself had murdered Gagan Simha. The second version is that Badrinarsimha had killed him by the order of his elder brother Jang Bahadur. The last version points out Lal Jha, a notorious person, as the assassin. Jang Bahadur had not killed Gagan Simha because if he had done so he must have told it later, as he had confessed that he killed his maternal uncle Mathabar Simha. Similarly, if Badrinarsimha had killed Gagan Simha, he would have also exposed it when he was punished by Jang Bahadur later on. Considering the then circumstantial evidences *Maharani's* letter and his (Lal Jha's) confession (written by Jang Bahadur and Nicholette) Lal Jha was the assassin who was hired by Fatya Jung with the king's consent to kill Gagan.<sup>9</sup> So the imbecile king did not stay in the Kot when furious *Rani* was repeatedly inquiring "who assassinated Gagan". A very simple minded person like Fatya Jung cannot be expected to do such a dangerous job without the full support of the king and some of his most confidential persons. There is every possibility of Fatya Jung informing Jang Bahadur of the plot as mentioned by Wheplton<sup>10</sup> and guessed by Stiller.<sup>11</sup> Thus Lal Jha had assassinated Gagan Simha by the order of Fatya Jung supported by the king. Jang was aware of it. So as a shrewd statesman Jang Bahadur moved his steps very cautiously and tactfully, which led to his rise.

Regarding the event of Kot, Jang Bahadur's version of September 16, and Thoresby's report differ. Jang Bahadur made a formal and official visit to Captain Ottley after 3 p.m. on September 16 accompanied by some officers and soldiers to inform his appointment as the *Mukhtiyar* and Commander-in-Chief. After saying Capt. Ottley not to send any Residency people out of the compound for a few days and also assuring cordial relations between his and Company governments, Jang Bahadur gave a brief account of the Kot Massacre. According to that, the *Maharani* accused the

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<sup>9</sup> For all the versions see, Bal Chandra Sharma, *Nepalko Aitihāsik Rooparekha* (An Outline of the History of Nepal), Banaras: Krishna Kumari Devi, 2008 B.S., p. 308.

Dhanavajra Vajracharya (ed.), *Baburam Acharya Ra Unka Kriti* (Baburam Acharya and His Work), Kathmandu: Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies, 2029 B.S., pp. 66-67.

Tri Ratna Manandhar, "Who assassinated Gagan Singh ?", *Voice of History*, Vol. 1, 1975, pp. 79-84.

Rana, f.n. no. 2, p.21.

Krishna Kant Adhikari, *Nepal Under Jang Bahadur 1846-1877*, Vol. I, Kathmandu: Buku, 1984, pp. 29-38.

<sup>10</sup> John Whelpton, *Kings, Soldiers and Priests*, Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1992, p. 160.

<sup>11</sup> Stiller, f.n. no. 6, p. 374.

Ministers by name of being accessory to the plot and called out Gagan Simha's regiment, which was at hand, to seize them. Great confusion followed. The ministers themselves recriminated against one another, swords were drawn and a son of Fatya Jung, it was stated, was the first to use his weapon in wounding a brother of Jang. The fight then commenced and twenty-six or twenty-seven mostly principal chiefs fell in the *melee*.<sup>12</sup>

According to that information, the catastrophe occurred after the entry of Gagan's regiment and Fatya's son's (Khadga Bikram) use of weapon against Bam Bahadur. Thoresby's report mentions that the first shots were fired at Fatya Jung, Dalbhanjan and Abhiman Simha. Krishna Bahadur Kunwar was the first person to kill Abhiman by his sword resulting in the great confusion. Thus the two versions differ on the beginning of the *melee*, in which, according to Captain Ottley, thirty-one persons of different ranks-*Mukhtiyar* to an orderly, were killed.<sup>13</sup>

Ottley has written that on September 15, the entire family (wives and children) of the late *Chautariyas* Fatya Jung Shah and all his brothers and sons (as well as of others of the chiefs who had fallen) were turned out of their houses and ordered to reach Chisapani on that very day. Each individual was allowed to take one bundle,<sup>14</sup> Thoresby has written that confiscation of the property of the massacred persons and expulsion of their family members were carried out by order of Laxmidevi. But Laxmidevi mentions that Jang Bahadur was solely responsible for the whole massacre, expulsion and confiscation of property etc.<sup>15</sup> Thoresby's report also mentions that *Maharani* was shouting energetically "kill and destroy my enemies." Laxmidevi mentions that she wanted only to imprison and punish Mathabar's mother, Bir Kishore Pande, Ranadhoj and Darhi Khadya Brahman and not to cause such bloodshed. Laxmidevi, although an eyewitness, has not given correct information, although Dr. Manandhar claims the account as throwing new light on the event.

Thoresby's report clearly mentions that Jang advised Fatya Jung "to bring matters around, it will be necessary to make away with these persons, which course with your approval, I will effect". But Rana's version narrates that Jang had pointed out that "there were only two ways of avoiding bloodshed-either by the instantaneous arrest of the faithless queen or by obeying her unhesitatingly; and expressed his readiness to start by him in either case."

Even between the two versions of Ranas (Pudma Jung and Purushottom Shamsher) there is a difference. Pudma Jung writes that Fatya, although he agreed to the imprisonment of the *Maharani*, declared that it would be dangerous to adopt that instantly. But Purushottom writes that Jang was of the view that it would be a risky job to do that at that time. He has further written that Jang had discussion with Fatya Jung

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<sup>12.</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

<sup>13.</sup> Acting Resident Ottley to Govt., September 24, 1846, FSC, Oct. 31, 1846, No. 160, NAI. The report tallies with the Wheeler's account. But a local *Vamsavali* gives a different picture.

<sup>14.</sup> Acting Resident Ottley to Govt., September 17, 1846, FSC, Oct. 31, 1846, No. 154, NAI.

<sup>15.</sup> Tri Ratna Manandhar "A New Light on the Kot Massacre", *Rolamba*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April-June 1984), pp. 19-20.

as well as Abhiman, whereas Thoresby, Oldfield and Pudma Jung write that Jang had a meeting with Fatya Jung only. Oldfield writes that Jang wished both Abhiman and Bir Kishore should be killed to pacify the queen.

Thoresby's report mentions that after that discussion Fatya Jung went to the *Dalan* where Abhiman was sitting (after refusing to carry out the order of the queen) and Jang to attend the *Maharani*. Abhiman, hearing everything from Fatya, sent for his officer and gave the order to load their weapons for preparation. Jang reported this preparation to the queen who came down to the place where the *Chautariyas*, Fatya, ministers and others were sitting. She demanded to name out the assassin. When Fatya tried to console her by assuring an impartial investigation, the *Maharani* became more furious and herself made an attempt to kill Bir Kishore. Fatya Jung, Abhiman and Dalbhanjan checked her and followed her upstairs, when shots were fired (from upstairs) killing Fatya Jung and Dalbhanjan and injuring Abhiman, who returned to *Dalan* "exclaiming that Jang Bahadur had done this treacherous act, endeavoured to get out and join his regiment but Col. Krishna Bahadur (brother of Jang) with one stroke of his sword nearly cut him in Two pieces and he fell dead." Oldfield has the same story to tell. But Pudma Jung writes that Fatya Jung and Jang Bahadur interposed on behalf of the prisoner and the queen flew back to the upper storey. Moreover, Pudma Jung narrates that Jang got the information of the secret consultation of Fatya and Abhiman and as a result the advance of Abhiman's regiments to the Kot. Jang reported that to the *Maharani* and also warned her that her party (Jang's regiments) were about to be overpowered. The queen ordered the instant arrest of Abhiman who had gone towards the gate to join his army outside. Abhiman was stopped by a sentinel on duty. There was no discussion between the two. Jang, coming to know about the squabble, informed the queen who instantly ordered to kill Abhiman. A soldier, getting the order, thrust the bayonet into the breast of Abhiman who shouted that Jang had killed Gagan.

Thus the two accounts give two different stories about the death of Abhiman. Similar is the story about the death of Fatya Jung. We have already refuted Thoresby's report, which is followed by Oldfield. But the version mentioned that after the assassination of Abhiman (by a soldier according to Pudma Jung and Purushottom Rana and Krishna Bahadur according to Thoresby's and Oldfield) Khadga Bikram, son of Fatya Jung, invited all the *Chautariyas* and others to fight to finish as a result of which he was cut into two pieces by Dhir Shamsher. Jang, on learning about it, approached Fatya Jung in an apologetic tone but the latter without replying rushed to the queen's room muttering whispers that Jang was the assassin of Gagan. Foreseeing a great danger to Jang and his followers, Ram Mehar Adhikari, faithful follower of Jang, ordered Ram Ale to fire on Fatya Jung and the order was instantly carried out and Fatya Jung rolled down the stairs as a shattered corpse. About it Jang Bahadur had told Capt. Ottley on September 16 that Fatya Jung and other ministers were killed not at the outbreak but during the progress of slaughter. Here Thoresby's report differs with this information.

Thus about the death of Fatya Jung, Rana's (including Jang) version differs with Thoresby and Oldfield. Moreover Rana's tradition mention that Jang tried to console the remaining *Bhardars* not to raise weapons and took oath that no more bloodshed would occur. But others refused and the fight began. A promiscuous *melee* ensued which soon became slaughter rather than a fight as the majority had no

weapons. Jang Bahadur's regiment, named afterwards *Kali Baksh*, played an active role in the slaughter. Jang Bahadur had also told Acting Resident Capt. Ottley on September 16, when he made the first official visit to Residency after becoming *Mukhtiyar* and Commander-in-Chief, that had he not restrained the *Maharani*, she would have put the crown prince and his brother to death at that time of massacre and imprisoned the king.

Jang's report to Ottley (September 16) tallies with *Maharani's* version that Gagan was not killed by an ordinary person like Lal Jha until he was prompted by dignified personalities. Jang told Ottley that *Maharani* insisted that Gagan's death had been planned by no mean person but probably by rivals in the ministry. *Maharani* wrote the same story from Varanasi to king Rajendra. Her guess has much weightage and was nearer to truth.

Thus we have many contradictory versions about the event of the Kot Massacre. The main problem is that we have not so far got any contemporary account written by an impartial eyewitness. It is not proper to make a guess work of what happened in the Kot Massacre. There is a weak probability to find out an authentic and impartial account of the Kot Massacre. However further research work may reveal more facts on it. Moreover one thing must be borne in mind by a student of history i.e. the impact of the Kot Massacre is more important in the history of Nepal than the unanswered questions like who raised weapon first ? Whether Fatya Jung was killed earlier or his son ? By whose order was Gagan killed ? It hardly matters whether Gagan was killed by Jang, Badrinarsimha or Lal Jha.

Besides, even on the basis of sources so far available, however doubtful they are regarding the event of the massacre, some pertinent questions still exist: why did the king leave the Kot at crucial time? Was the Kot Massacre a pre-planned event? Was it an outcome of the machination of the British Residency people? Was it the result of *Maharani's* conduct as stated by Jang Bahadur? Was it the outcome of Jang's machination? Was it a sudden and unpredicted event?

King Rajendra was a weak, wily and jealous natured king. He did not have the courage to face any problem-domestic or governmental, boldly. Moreover in the case of Kot Massacre he was scared to face the wrath of the *Maharani* if the secrecy of his being the principal author of the murder of Gagan would be exposed in course of hot discussion that was about to take place. So on the pretext of bringing the *Mukhtiyar* he slipped away from the Kot. Had he been a man of masculine character, the Kot Massacre would not have occurred. His slipping away at such a critical time was a grave mistake from his part.

The Kot Massacre is described by some writers as pre-planned in which Jang played the role of a tool of the British Residency<sup>16</sup>. Such opinion was expressed by a

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<sup>16</sup>. Dhundi Raj Bhandari, *Nepalko Alochanatmak Itihas* (A Critical History of Nepal), Kathmandu: Prakash Prakashan, 2027 B.S., p. 106.  
Lalit Bahadur Bom, *Sri Panch Maharajadhiraj Rajendra Ra Tatkalin Nepal* (King Rajendra and Contemporary Nepal), Kathmandu: Nirpana Bom, 2023 B.S., pp. 44-49.  
G.C. Shastri, *Historical Glimpses of Modern Nepal*, Kathmandu: Arya Sanskrit Sangha, n. d., p. 50.

few writers who were much influenced by the anti-Rana feeling during the anti-Rana movement and post 1950-51. Their suspicion was based on the following reasons: forecast made by Mrs. Lawrence, Major Lawrence and I.R. Colvin about the inevitable bloodshed in Nepal, three regiments well equipped with arms brought by Jang, Capt. Ottley's refusal to give asylum to the king, Jang's role during the period of Kot Massacre etc. But the aforesaid arguments do not seem strong enough to prove the massacre as a pre-planned event, as other sources reveal more facts.

Any sensible person, specially the diplomatic corps keep very watchful eyes on the events of a country where they are assigned. It was natural for the Residency people to foresee the untoward event in Nepal. I.R. Colvin, Resident, had also forecasted that Gagan Simha would be assassinated.<sup>17</sup> Similarly Resident Lawrence has written on May 28, 1845 "Should Jung Bahadur be made a General I should not be surprised at his being the next victim".<sup>18</sup> Mathabar was killed on May 17 so Lawrence mentioned next victim. Daniel Wright had also predicted the possibility of huge bloodshed after the death of Jang Bahadur on February 25, 1877 when he wrote:

"Sir Jung Bahadur is now advanced in years, being about sixty. What may happen in the event of his becoming frail or dying suddenly, it is difficult to anticipate. Most probably there will be a succession of struggles for power, accompanied with much bloodshed, amongst his relatives; such in fact as usually occurs when "*an Amurath succeeds*"<sup>19</sup>

Thus when the Residency people who were keenly watching the development of the then self-centred dirty politics made a forecast about the possibility of an untoward event, it does not imply that they were involved in the event. It is also written that British Residency people might have felt surprised and uneasy to find Rajendra still surviving<sup>20</sup>. To read the contemporary Residency letters (only contemporary sources so far available) it does not seem that the British Residency had any role in the Kot Massacre. Our historians like Bhandari have written that Rajendra had gone to seek asylum. Had the king really visited the Residency for asylum? On that we have only the British documents as the contemporary evidences. Ottley has written on September 15, 1846:

"His Highness expressed the great regret at the death of his minister (Gagan) and had immediately summoned a council of all the chiefs to inquire into the matter that the troops had been called out at the moment of the murder, and there under arms. The Maharaja, I believe, expected that I would have an interview, but suffering from a

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Sushila Tyagi, *Indo-Nepalese Relations 1858-1914*, Delhi: D.K. Publishing House, 1974, p. 64.

17. Resident Colvin wrote on March 6, 1846. "General Gagan Singh will share the fate which had befallen so many of his predecessors in power at Kathmandu". July 25, 1846, No. 142, NAI.

18. Resident Lawrence to Government, FSC, June 13, 1845, No. 19, NAI. But Jang was already appointed as General on May 18.

19. Wright, f.n. no.7, pp. 41-42.

20. Dhundi Raj Bhandari, *Nepal Ko Udbhav Tatha Vikasko Visleshanatamak Itihas* (An Analytical History of Origin and Development of Nepal), Kathmandu: Prakash Prakashan, 2046 B.S., p. 446.

rheumatic attack, I sent the *Mir Munshi* to hear what His Highness had to say. The message brought by him was little more than a recapitulation of the above"<sup>21</sup> Thoresby's report mentions that the king sent *Subedar* Manu Simha, attached to the Residency to request an interview with Capt. Ottley for the purpose of conversing with him regarding the event of the murder of Gagan Simha. As it was late night, Capt. Ottley did not think it proper to go out and meet the king but sent *Mir Munshi* Devi Prasad back with *Subedar*. The king narrated the event of murder of Gagan Simha, summon of the council of *Bhardars* in Kot, *Maharani's* engaging in the investigation etc. Meanwhile, the king advised him thus: "let there be a good lookout kept tonight about the Residency premises". The king wished the *Mir Munshi* to accompany him to Kot in order to see and hear what passed there (Kot) and be able to report the issue of the investigation to Capt. Ottley. But *Munshi*, on the pretext of some delay for his preparation, assured the king that he would call on the king early in the morning.

It can be said that either Capt. Ottley hid some information or Thoresby made an exaggerated report. Both agree that king had visited the Residency at 2 a.m. Ottley mentions that he could not go out to meet the king due to his suffering from rheumatism. But Thoresby write, that being late night time Ottley did not think it proper to go out and meet the king. Thus the two accounts give two difference reasons Capt. Ottley's not meeting the king-one suffering from rheumatism and other due to late night. But both of them as well as the Rana versions and *vamsavali* do not mention that the king visited there to seek asylum. The question is why the king visited the Residency. It should be to seek advice of Capt. Ottley on the issue, to have a Residency staff in the Kot to pacify the situation or to pass time so that he would not have to make the crucial decision. Wily as he was, the king generally avoided taking major decisions. Capt. Ottley does not write anything about the king's advice to Residency compound and the king's request to him (*Munshi*) to accompany him to Kot. Supposing the king really said the two things, Why was Ottley silent about them in his first letter of September 15 ? Did he hide the fact? Even if he had hidden that, it would be exposed later on. So Ottley's silence gives us some ground to think that Thoresby exaggerated the fact.

There is a crucial question why did not Ottley meet the king ? There are many possibilities. Capt. Ottley thought that the presence of the king in such an odd time in the Residency meant something very unusual. He might have thought of many possibilities such as the king's seeking asylum, the king wishing to see Residency people involved in the investigation and many others. His main problems were: Firstly, he was only acting Resident. Secondly, he was the sole Englishman in the Residency. Thirdly, he was fully aware of Governor General's instruction not to meddle with the internal politics of a country. Fourthly, he was fully aware of deceitful and unproductive nature of the king and lastly, could an acting Resident take such a risky decision on giving asylum to the king if the latter wished so? Giving asylum meant to be involved in the internal politics of Nepal, which was a very risky job. Although they were just defeated in March 1846, the Sikhs, as a whole nation, had the feeling that they were defeated not because of their inferiority in military strength but because of the treachery of their own officers. They were determined to fight to finish with the

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<sup>21</sup>. Stiller, f.n. no. 6, pp. 295-296.

British. At such a time giving asylum to the king or meddling with the internal politics of Nepal would mean inviting unnecessary problem. Taking all these aspects into account Capt. Ottley, decided not to take the risk and, avoided meeting the king. Manandhar has also given his personal views on Ottley's not meeting the king.<sup>22</sup> Ottley's refusal to meddle with the internal politics (Kot Massacre) of Nepal is good for both Nepal and Company government in the long run.

None of the Residency papers gives us any clue about Jang Bahadur being used as a tool to massacre the staunch nationalists as some of our writers have written. Moreover, Jang Bahadur was also a nationalist ruler. Jang was an ambitious, talented, pragmatic, realistic, shrewd and calculating politician trained in the school of life and got matured by the lessons of the past events i.e. mistakes of Bhimasena Thapa and Mathabar Simha.

Was massacre pre-planned ? About it Adhikari writes that the Kot Massacre was not a premeditated affair.<sup>23</sup> It is mentioned 'pre-planned' because of Jang's presence there with his three regiments also. But available materials mention the presence of Gagan's regiment, Abhiman's two regiments and Jang's three regiments. Thus Fatya Jung was the only person to come there without his army. Why did not Fatya come with his regiments as others did, although he came to Kot so late ? He was fully aware of the assassination of Gagan. Bam Bahadur was already sent by the queen to fetch him. Moreover, king Rajendra had also gone to his house and both of them must have discussion on the subject. The king must have told him the queen's attitude and behaviour in the Kot. In spite of that why did Fatya Jung come to Kot unprepared ? Was he fully confident of dominating the investigation council ? Was he not informed about the gravity of problem by king and brothers of Jang Bahadur ? Was Fatya Jung confident of the strength of his relatives and some followers ? The available sources do not give any satisfactory answer to the above questions. It is very surprising to note Fatya Jung coming to the Kot unprepared without his army. Further research will reveal the fact on it.

On the basis of circumstantial evidences, Jang Bahadur, who was the best qualified, active, intelligent, calculating and shrewd minister, had got information about what was to happen on that day i.e. assassination of Gagan. So he was fully prepared to face any eventuality. Available sources suggest that he was most active and had most faithful, smart and active supporters-his brothers, officers and soldiers of his regiments well equipped with arms to face any sort of untoward event in the Kot. He could make the best use of his available supporters, which Abhiman was deprived of at the nick of time to overcome his opponents and emerge as the most powerful person of the state. At the time he worked not as a tool of the British Residency but on his own with his own tact, competency and support of his men. He was, no doubt, successful to become the most powerful person on that destined day which he must not even have thought of that beforehand.

For the Kot Massacre no one individually was responsible. The responsibility was shared by the king, the queen, Fatya Jung, *Bhardars*. Adhikari blames the king, the

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22. Tri Ratna Manandhar "Captain Ottley and the Kot Massacre", *The Rising Nepal* (Daily), May 10, 1974.

23. Adhikari, f.n. no. 9, p. 37.



queen and Jang Bahadur,<sup>24</sup> whereas Stiller points out Jang Bahadur as the sole responsible person.<sup>25</sup> Fatya Jung was also equally responsible for the event. Had he behaved properly and worked according to the situation befitting *Mukhtiyar*, the massacre would not have occurred. As already mentioned on the basis of the available sources, his coming so late, after Bam Bahadur's and king's visits to his house, without any preparation and easy going handling of the situation in the Kot are quite surprising for anyone. Available sources give us the idea of his direct involvement in the death of Gagan. Moreover, he had already experienced the difference of opinions among the ministers. When the Residency people could foresee the possibility of bloodshed, was he so ignorant of the grave situation of the country? He had also a long experience of the court life of Nepal. He must have foreseen the consequence of the murder of Gagan and possible reaction of the queen to that event. Did he rely on Abhiman's army, Jang Bahadur or his own relatives? These questions need to be answered. Available documents make him equally responsible. However, I consider him more responsible for the event.

The king's timid and wily nature, unmanliness, sheer cowardice to face the problem are responsible for the whole political scenario marked by frustration, bitterness, fear, unforeseen sanguine events, senseless manipulation, after he took the reins of administration. On the destined day his very presence, assertive decision and manipulation of the whole situation as a strong ruler could have saved the situation. His cowardice and impotent behaviour not only doomed his career but also the future of his posterity and the nation.

The queen's great blunder was that she forgot what for the leaders of the First National Revolt of 1842 had bestowed the sovereign power on her. To achieve her goal she was playing all sorts of foul games creating a situation of frustration, fear, corruption, manipulation, personal rivalries which culminated in the Kot Massacre. Had she ruled as aspired by the leaders of the first revolt or as the nation wished she could have earned the fame of being a great ruler of Nepal. But her personal desire to make her son the king, not only led to the most inhuman and cold blooded murders of persons like Mathabar Simha Thapa and others but ultimately to the Kot Massacre. Her responsibility for the Kot Massacre also cannot be minimised. Available documents reveal both Laxmidevi and Jang Bahadur blaming each other responsible for the Kot Massacre. Laxmidevi is more responsible for the Kot Massacre than Jang Bahadur. It was because of her most uncompromising and furious behaviour that the situation worsened in the Kot where shrewd and tactful Jang fished most successfully and emerged as the most powerful person of the country.

The Kot Massacre is the culmination of the most unpredictable political scenario dominated by fear, frustration, jealousy, corruption, selfish interest, senseless machination and manipulation etc. Political vacuum which resulted from the fall of a strong ruler Bhimasena Thapa was filled up by the rise of an equally strong man Jang Bahadur who had learnt the lesson of history, specially the follies of Bhimasena Thapa and Mathabar Simha Thapa. In reality, as one thinks of the then political scenario of

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<sup>24.</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25.</sup> Stiller, f.n. no. 6.

Nepal it can be said that the rise of Jang Bahadur was the demand of the time. Jang Bahadur is not to be blamed, he was the product of the time.

To think of another scenario of the exPanded country i.e. greater Gorkha, it was faced with many challenges-social, economic, political, administrative and cultural to be won over by dealing with them in the proper way. Vanquished people were most exploited in every respect, which compelled the people to desert the villages and enter into the jungle. Even in the jungle they were hunted like wild animals. Thousands of distressed people were sold as slaves. No ruler in the centre had any time to think of the plight of the people. After Nepal-Company war Bhimasena Thapa gave some attention to the welfare of the oppressed people. But his fall again worsened the whole political situation. The whole political scenario was marked by internecine feuds and intrigues, frustration, fear, personal interests, jealousy, clashes among the nobles and, above all, the selfish interest and clashes among the royal family members. King Rajendra, master mind of the conspiratorial politics using a group of courtiers against others and taking advantage of the conflict among the courtiers found himself outwitted and consumed in the flame of Kot Massacre where most of his supporters were butchered.

Thus Nepal had witnessed a transition phase in its history. Divided principalities were merged into one big state in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Administration of petty states turned into the big administration over such highly rugged and hazardous high mountainous terrain. The old Gorkhali *Tharaghars* had to give way to new groups of courtiers who were also gradually eliminated from the political scene and the Rana oligarchy emerged for over a century. Thus, the Kot Massacre was the historic epoch-making turning point in the history of Nepal and an outcome of the fear, frustration, feuds and intrigues, jealousy, personal interests and clashes among the *Bhardars* and the royalty.

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