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Chautariya Bahadur Shah and General Fuk'anggan: Opposing Leaders of Nepal-Tibet China War

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Abstract

The Nepal-Tibet-China War (1791-92) was a noteworthy event in the geopolitical history of the Himalayan area, marked by the decisive generalship of Chautariya Bahadur Shah of Nepal and Fuk'anggan of the Qing dynasty. During this conflict, Nepal, led by Chautariya Bahadur Shah, aimed to preserve Nepali influence over Tibet. Bahadur Shah was one of the important military and political leaders of the newly united modern Nepal who carried out a strategy of unification in the Himalayas following the path of his father, Great King Prithvi Narayan Shah. Both strategic interests and the goal to strengthen Nepal's regional power led Nepali troops to penetrate the Tibetan plateau. Though the initial conflict was limited to Nepal and Tibet, Tibetan leadership requested Chinese assistance in the war. Chinese authorities considered Tibet as a region within their sphere of control. Fuk'anggan, the governor of Xining and a senior military general of the Qing dynasty of the Chinese empire, was assigned the responsibility of thwarting the Nepali progress. Fuk'anggan was considered the most influential personality in the Chinese court. Fuk'anggan's military tactics were marked by greater force and a resolute offensive, helping to push Nepali troops to retrograde in defensive positions. The dispute involving Bahadur Shah and Fuk'anggan was characterized by a succession of intense military confrontations and intricate diplomatic strategies. The war resulted in high casualties and resource depletion for both sides. With both warfare and negotiations, a 'no loser' situation for both China and Nepal was set. The final solution was achieved by treaties that defined fresh borders and made adjustments. Methodologically, this study examines the involvement of Bahadur Shah and Fuk'anggan in the war using a multi-step approach. This includes analyzing old texts and academic papers, studying primary sources such as treaties and official documents, and referring to secondary sources for background information. An examination of military strategies and leadership styles, as well as an investigation into the geopolitical context, is carried out. Data were collected and analyzed to draw a deep understanding of the research questions. The article has sought some distinct similarities and differences between the great leaders in terms of their personal characters and leadership traits.

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Introduction

A newly reunified nation in the late 18th century faced war with one of the biggest empires that ever existed in human history. It may sound like a common feud for the naïve ones who have less understanding of the history, however, from the strategic point of view, the situation was a battle between a moth and an elephant. Tibet, with its unresolved issues with Nepal, had brought upon Nepal and Tibet into uncharted territories of a new scale of war. Feud with Tibet would have been a war with comparable force ratios and war-fighting capabilities. However, the involvement of China in the Himalayan adversities of 1791 was estimated to be a total disaster for the new nation, Nepal. But, the result of the war turned the other way. The newly formed nation, Nepal, fought the battle in such a praiseworthy way that neither she lost her land nor her pride (Bajracharya, 1999, p 41). All the credit for such a result of war goes to the Great General of Nepal, Bahadur Shah, and his diplomacy with Chinese General Fuk'anggan. The personality of both the princely generals concluded the war in a win-win situation amalgamated with the weather and geographical factors, which had a direct impact on the fighting spirit of both countries.

Chautariya Bahadur Shah was the youngest son of King Prithvi Narayan Shah. As a regent of Nepal after the death of his predecessor, his sister-in-law, Queen Rajendra Laxmi, he fought hard and accelerated his father's unification campaign of modern-day Nepal. In the course, he had to face Chinese forces when the war was supposed to end between Nepal and Tibet. Tibetans with unwise decisions invited the dragon forces led by Fuk'anggan. The war eventually turned sour for the Tibetans themselves rather than Nepal.

Fuk'anggan was a member of the Manchu forces of Manchuria who had established the Qing dynasty. Fuk'anggan inherited a minor post in the government. He suppressed rebellions in the western Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Gansu and Taiwan. Considered one of the ablest commanders of the Chinese Empire, he led a Chinese expedition into Tibet, some 3,000 miles (4,800 km) from Beijing, and fought against Nepali warriors led by Bahadur Shah (Bajracharya, 1999, p 314). Like Bahadur Shah, Fuk'anggan had a royal heritage. The similarities between the main leaders and the real wartime situations finally led to a peace treaty. For his services, Fuk'anggan was made a prince of the fourth degree, the first Manchu outside the imperial family to receive that rank.

Both the leaders lived a very short life; Bahadur Shah died at the age of 40, and Fuk'anggan at the age of 48. Though there is no evidence of the generals meeting one another, they had many common characteristics in their personality, strategy, and flaws as well.

Review of Literature

A thorough study of historical writings on the Nepal-Tibet-China War has been undertaken while preparing this paper. Captain Kirkpatrick, envoy of the East India Company, met Bahadur Shah, earned his favor, and made accounts of Nepal in his book :An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul. However, he failed to impress the regent on behalf of the East India Company, as the

company provided no assistance during the Nepal-Sino war (Kirkpatrick, 1811, pp. 358-366). Hamilton, in *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, stated about petty states and the unification efforts of Bahadur Shah. Bajracharya (1992), in his book *Bahadur Shah, the Regent of Nepal*, has stated many dimensions of Bahadur Shah's life and a detailed chapter focusing on the Nepal-Tibet-China war. Subedi (2021), in his book *Nepal ko Tathya Itihas*, has highlighted Bahadur Shah as the most significant figure in the unification of Nepal after Prithvi Narayan Shah. Stiller, S.J., in his book *The Rise of the House of Gorkha*, has dedicated a chapter to Bahadur Shah—The Conquests of Bahadur Shah. The literature lacks a comparative study of the leadership and personality aspects of Bahadur Shah and Fuk'anggan; this paper has tried to focus on analyzing their military strategies, diplomatic maneuvers, leadership qualities, and their roles in shaping the outcome of the Nepal-Tibet-China war.

Methodology

An analytical approach is used for research on the important aspects of Chautariya Bahadur Shah and General Fuk'anggan, their leadership, and achievements. Analysis of the unification efforts of Bahadur Shah and his other reforms and Fuk'anggan's various military campaigns has been conducted. Inscriptions, important documents, books, journals, and related articles have been studied relating to both the generals while preparing this paper. The focus on the study of documents from the National Archives was made. Interviews of experts and historians, including Prof. Dr. Rajaram Subedi, Mr. Anand Aditya, professors, and lecturers from Tribhuvan University, Central Department of Nepali History, Culture, and Archaeology, have been taken for analyzing the personalities.

Discussion and Analysis

Discussion and analysis of some important aspects of Chautariya Bahadur Shah and General Fuk'anggan are focused on their brief biography, their war efforts during the Nepal-Tibet-China war, and their personality and leadership traits. The main effort of this section is on highlighting the contrasting and similar aspects of personalities between these leaders. The Nepal-Tibet-China war is highlighted with an analysis of military organization, tactics, and the military campaign.

Brief Biography of the Leaders

Early life

The early lives of both leaders, Bahadur Shah and Fuk'anggan, were spent around the courts of their respective governments. Bahadur Shah was born in the palace of Gorkha on 16 June 1757 and was the second son of King Prithvi Narayan Shah. He was originally known as Fateh Bahadur Shah but eventually came to be known as Bahadur Shah. He was educated at the palaces of Gorkha and Nuwakot and also accompanied his father on certain battlefields. Unlike his brother Pratap Singh Shah, who was a luxury-loving and more interested in tantrism, Bahadur Shah spent most of his time learning diplomacy from the courtiers in Nuwakot (Vajracharya, 1975).

Fuk'anggan was born in 1748 as a member of the Fuca clan, a Manchu tribe of the Bordered Yellow Banner, an elite military clan (Elliott, 2001). He was better known as Thung-

Thang Chan-Chane (Bajracharya, 1992, p. 315). He belonged to the royal family, but unlike Bahadur Shah, he was the son of the Grand Secretary, Fu-hêng. His father was the brother of the Empress Xiaoxianchun and the nephew of Empress Hsiao-hsien. The Qianlong Emperor was his uncle-in-law and rumored biological father. Fu-heng served as a grand minister of the state during the midyears of the reign of the Qianlong Emperor, and hence, Fuk'anggan must have had a good observation of the state mechanism and leadership traits.

Adulthood in Nepal-Tibet-China War

1760s: Understanding the state power. After a conducive environment in childhood for future responsibilities, both the leaders went through distinct and different situations in their adulthood during the 1760s. The war between Nepal and China was a milestone in the careers of each leader and the nation as well. In the case of Bahadur Shah, after the death of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, his eldest son, Pratap Singh Shah, succeeded him as the king of Nepal. He immediately detained Bahadur Shah, aged 17, and put him under house arrest in Nuwakot. Detention was executed under the advice of the new king's top advisor, Bajranath Pandit, who was always against the young prince. The court of Nepal had begun to be filled with group politics (Bajracharya, 1992, p. 4). After his release from immediate imprisonment, Bahadur Shah spent most of his time in Palpa and Tanahu, both of which used to be independent nations back then. He aimed at establishing friendly relations with these nations and later gaining their alliance in order to continue the unification of Nepal. However, he was still not allowed to get back to Nepal. Eventually, Bahadur Shah left for Bettiah, India, for exile.

1770s: Gaining experience of exercising power. In the 1770s, both leaders, Bahadur Shah and Fuk'anggan, started to exercise powers in their respective courts. In Nepal, after the death of Prithvi Narayan Shah, Pratap Singh Shah became the new king. However, he died on 17 November 1777, and his two-year-old son, Rana Bahadur Shah, ascended the throne. Overall regency was held by the child king's mother, Queen Rajendra Laxmi. She invited the exiled brother-in-law, Bahadur Shah, back to Nepal with good intentions. However, under the influence of her confidantes, she placed him under house arrest. After his release from house arrest, out of revenge, Bahadur Shah also put Queen Rajendra Laxmi in house arrest in late 1778. However, during a military campaign to invade Tanahu, taking advantage of his absence from the capital, Rajendra Laxmi seized power again on 20 June 1779, at which point Bahadur Shah went into self-exile to Bettiah again (Subedi, 2019, p. 190).

Fuk'anggan held important government positions as the minor hereditary rank of Yün-ch'i-Yü, a senior Imperial Bodyguard and junior vice president in the Board of Revenue from the age of 19, i.e., 1767. In 1772, he was appointed as lieutenant-general of the Manchu division of the Bordered Yellow Banner for the delivery of seals to officers fighting the Chin-ch'uan rebels in Szechwan. He was appointed as subordinate commander in Army headquarters in 1773, where he distinguished himself by his adept command over his troops and bravery. After quelling the conflict in the Chin-ch'uan area in 1776, he was made a third class baron' with the designation of Chia-yung. He was promoted to the senior vice-presidency in the Board of Revenue, serving as commander of the Mongol division of the Plain White Banner. His portrait and poem dedicated to him by the emperor were placed in the Tzū-kuang ko with those of other

officials who participated in the suppression of the Chin-ch'uan rebellion. From 1777 to 1780, Fu-k'ang-an served as a military governor in Manchuria.

1780s: Period of accumulating and consolidating power. In 1785, Rajendra Laxmi died. Her death opened the doors for Bahadur Shah to come back to Nepal. He resumed the expansion of Nepal and held regency until his demise in 1794. He took vigorous steps for unification. Many minor states accepted annexation with notable resistance from Jumla and Doti. The king of Jumla, Shovan Shahi, fled to China, later assisting China in the Sino-Nepali War. The king of Doti fled to British India and assisted them in the Anglo-Nepali War. On his eastern front, with Damodar Pande and Amar Singh Thapa as his military generals, Bahadur Shah crushed Limbuwan and annexed Sikkim. General Amar Singh Thapa became a trusted general of Bahadur Shah when he annexed the Kumaon kingdom upon the invitation of its minister, Hari Singh Dev (Subedi, 2021, p. 203).

In 1788, tension with Tibet started to erupt, which brought the two nation-states to war. The tension ultimately brought the Chinese at the Himalayan frontier from 2000 km away. A more detailed study of the Nepal-Tibet war is conducted in the following paragraphs.

During the 1780s, Fu-k'anggan commanded many military campaigns. In 1784, he was sent with A-kuei to Kansu to put down a serious Mohammedan rebellion. At the end of several months of hard fighting, the revolt was quelled, and Fuk'anggan was rewarded with the higher rank of marquis. As a reward for the success of this campaign, Fuk'anggan was raised (early in 1788) to Duke Chia-yung (a dukedom of the first class). He was appointed as governor-general of the following provinces on the following dates.

- Province of Kweichow and Yunnan (1780–1781, 1794–1795)
- Province of Szechwan (1781–1783, 1793–1794)
- Province of Kansu and Shensi (1784–1788)
- Province of Chekiang and Fukien (1788–1789, 1795)
- Province of Kwangsi and Kwangtung (1789–1793)

The post of governor-general in Kwangtung and Kwangsi was his longest and most lucrative, owing to the volume of foreign trade which had flourished at Canton. Contemporary accounts say his use of public office to further his own political and financial fortunes gave him a reputation. 300,000 people took part in the Lin Shuangwen rebellion in Taiwan against the Qing government in 1787, where Fuk'anggan commanded 20,000 troops to suppress the rebellion.

Nepal–Tibet China War and the Role of Leaders

Nepal had historically cordial relations with Tibet and China. In ancient history, Bhrikuti (Harit Tara) was believed to have married King Tsrangchongyampo, and Araniko had traveled to Beijing to build pagoda-style buildings. Moreover, trade with Tibet was profitable for Nepal. Nepali merchants and officials also enjoyed their stay in Lhasa. Until the 18th century, Tibet had no mint and hence relied on Nepali silver coins as its own currency. However, the relationship began to sour after the Malla rulers started minting impure silver coins just before their downfall. When Prithvi Narayan Shah took over Nepal, his attempts to resolve the issue remained stagnant due to his untimely demise. Around the same time, Nepal provided refuge to Syamarpa Lama along with his 14 disciples from Tibet on religious and political grounds (Dhungel, 1999, pp. 189–210). Another reason for the dispute was the low-quality salt delivered

by Tibet to Nepal (Bajracharya, 1999, p. 291). Tibet ignored Nepali ultimatums, prompting the Nepali regent Bahadur Shah to prepare for war (Rose, 1973, pp. 36–37). Bahadur Shah launched a multi-directional attack with his forces. Nepali troops crossed Kerung on 20th July 1788 and captured Jhunga on 3rd August of the same year (Regmi, p. 432). The Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama, sought military assistance from both the Chinese Emperor and the East India Company. However, the Tibetans received no significant help from either China or the East India Company. By then, the Nepali were on the verge of capturing Dirgacha via both Kuti and Kerung. Out of desperation, the Tibetans began negotiating compromises with the Nepali commanders. Negotiations between the two nations started and ultimately resulted in the Peace of Kerung. As per the agreement, Nepal agreed to return the Tibetan prisoners to Tibet. In return, Tibet agreed to pay tributes amounting to Rs. 50,000 in silver coins per annum to Nepal, and a treaty was signed on 2nd June 1789 in Kerung. This treaty is commonly known as the 'Treaty of Kerung' (Regmi, 1975, p. 435).

Involvement of China in 1792

After signing the Kerung Treaty, the Dalai Lama was ready to pay the Rs 50,000 per year tribute, but the amount was paid only for the first year and abstained from the next year. Bahadur Shah took it as an insult and decided to wage the next battle with Tibet as a lesson. According to the Nepali Army (2024), the war was offensive and in 3 axes.

Kerung Axis. Troops under the command of Kaji Abhimansingh Basnyat marched towards the Kerung front with tasks to capture Jhunga and finally Dirgacha.

Kuti Axis. Kaji Damodar Pandey commanded the troops in the axis to capture the Kuti area and finally Dirgacha. His troops entered Tashihunpo monastery and most probably informed the Dalai Lama about his entry in the monastery. Despite his request, the Dalai Lama did not reply. In the midst of the situation, Nepali troops looted the chambers of the monastery, the jeweled spires of the stupa, tombs of deceased Panchen Lama, and 14 Parwanas written in gold leaf by the Chinese emperor. The achievement and the loot were booty for the Nepali troops. However, it turned out to be the main reason behind the involvement of the Chinese in the war.

Kharta Axis. Kaji Kirtimansingh Basnyat was the overall commander of the axis with the task of capturing Kharta initially and finally Dirgacha.

The Battle. Rasuwa Gadhi and Timure were vital for reinforcement and logistic support for Nepali troops. A fortress was there since the Malla period. Similarly, Listi and Duguna villages were the nearest points for logistic backup. Nepali troops would later resist the Sino-Tibetan offensive from here, as it was useful for defensive battles.

All the commanders succeeded in their missions in general. Lamas of Digarcha retreated with a few skirmishes. Nepal put in a demand of 50 dharni (120 kg) of gold and 100 thousand rupees from the Tibetan authority in Dirgacha. The Lamas refused to pay the demanded compensation, leading the Nepali troops to plunder Dirgacha and some monasteries, including Tashilonpo monastery. Taking the bounty, the Nepali troops returned to Nepal; the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Ambans forwarded a complaint to the Chinese Emperor about the Nepali invasion and looting of 14 Parwanas of the Chinese emperor from the monasteries. They exaggerated the loot as a disgraceful action of Nepal aimed at dishonoring the Chinese empire.

After the elimination of the Mongol threat to Tibet in 1757, the Qing court assumed that Tibet was a defensive backyard of the empire. They were unaware of the rise of Nepal and their involvement in Tibet and therefore did not initially understand the background of the conflict, believing it to be simply a matter of disputes on tariffs between two small states (Zhang 2015, p 45). However, the Chinese emperor was mad with fury when his couriers narrated the exaggerated situation on his southwestern front. He immediately ordered his best general Fuk'anggan to take swift action.

Unaware of the developing situation in Beijing, the Nepali were celebrating the successful offensive against Tibet. Bahadur Shah was hailed as a worthy son of a worthy father. The festivity ended with news that a vast Chinese army had reached Lhasa to help Tibet against Nepal on 8th March 1792. Nepal was at the time scarce of national resources due to extensive military campaigns—the unification battles, the earlier Nepal-Tibet war, and against the rebellious state of Jumla. Fuk'anggan, appointed as the supreme commander of the Sino-Tibetan joint forces, led a huge force of approximately 11,000 Chinese and 3,000 Tibetan troops (Landon, pp. 276-77). They had 3,000 troops in reserve. By that time, Tibet had also prepared 10,000 local troops under Kalong Hor Khang. So, the total strength of the enemy was approximately 17,000. The total invading joint forces, including irregulars, totaled 60,000 to 70,000 (Bajracharya, p316).

Bahadur Shah tried to bring the Chinese to negotiation, but the Chinese were in no mood (Bajracharya, 1992, p.318). The Chinese troops were deployed along three different axes to launch their attack against Nepal. The first would advance through Kuti and the second through Kerung. The third would take the route from Lhasa through Kharta and withdrew their troops prematurely.

Consequently, the Chinese commander decided to launch his attacks from the two main axes, the Kuti Axis under the command of Cheng-Tse and the Kerung Axis under his own command. Fuk'anggan's joint force attacked Nepal when Bahadur Shah's Nepali forces were overextended in the Western unification campaign. They were busy crushing revolts in western Nepal, including Achham, Doti, and Jumla. Nepal had few surplus soldiers to fight against the Chinese and Tibetan fighters. Bahadur Shah fixed Betrawoti in Nuwakot as the final line of defense to fight a defensive battle from the position. Troops and commanders were called in from far western Nepal, including Kumaun, Gadhwal, and Jumla, to fight against the opposing forces. Some troops were even moved to defensive positions on the eastern front of the Kirat and Limbuwan areas.

The joint Sino-Tibetan forces entered Nepali borders on 30 June, 1792, and captured Kukurghat. The battle in Khasa and Kuti began with a few contacts. The Nepali had good defensive positions in the Duguna and Listi areas. Finally, the Chinese Army fought against the Nepali defense of Subedar Talaram, Satru Bhanjan Malla, and Udhaun Khawas with fewer troops in the Kerung front, where Fuk'anggan was wounded. However, Fuk'anggan took the fort in a battle of 5 days (Bajracharya, 1992, 319).

By the time the main defensive battle started, the Chinese lost thousands of men. In minor battles and the contrasting weather conditions between Kerung's snowline terrain and Dhaibung's humid and hot weather, they had already lost a significant number of troops. The

Nepali Army secured fortified localities in the Dudha Thumka, Dhaibung, and Gerku areas and stretched the Chinese, keeping them engaged. The Nepali Army deployed a strong force in Betrawoti, whereas other villages of Nuwakot were vacated to protect the civilians on the vital grounds of defensive battles. Meanwhile, elsewhere, Bahadur Shah ordered Kaji Amar Singh Thapa to give up the conquest of Godhwal and released his troops for the defense of the motherland. After returning a distance of more than 1,000 km, they reached Nuwakot by traveling some 30 km per day. By this time, the Nepali troops had retreated about 85 km from their initial defensive position in Kerung. Bahadur Shah designed a linear defense along the Betrawoti River and Dudhe Thumka Hill. It would be difficult for the Chinese to launch an uphill attack. One battalion plus Chinese troops marched to capture Dudhe Thumka but could not do so. Further, a big flood in the Betrawoti River on 20th August 1792 washed off many Chinese troops. Nepali troops destroyed the bridge over Betrawoti before it fell under the hands of the enemy forces. As a result, the Chinese could only utilize the rope of the bridge to cross the river (Bajracharya, 1992). After the arduous task of crossing the Betrawoti, Chinese troops advanced to capture the Gerku ridge. If succeeded, the ridge would have been an ideal firm base for them to launch downhill assaults on Nuwakot and Trishuli Bazar. Due to earlier successes, the Chinese underestimated the Nepali troops to the extent of launching a daylight uphill assault. Prepared Nepali troops launched counterattacks from many flanks. A large number of Nepali troops attacked the enemy with the deception of animals rushing at night, causing havoc among the enemy and chopping them with Khukuris from flank and rear positions. The attrition was overwhelming, forcing the enemy to retreat. The turning point of the battle and the war came here and led to the overextended Chinese dropping their insistence to negotiate only after Nuwakot fell. Only a small party of those who reached the northeast part of Kathmandu to interview Regent Bahadur Shah (Boulnois, p. 99) and the major forces were stuck and engaged between Dhaibung and Betrawoti (Vajrachaya and Nepal 1957, p. 10). As the winter was approaching soon, Fuk'anggan hastened to prevent the tired troops from catastrophes and death. Desperate Fuk'anggan offered negotiation, which came as a pleasant surprise for Nepali troops. Bahadur Shah succeeded in his gamble.

The Treaty of Betrawoti concluded the war. Details of the terms of the treaty are stated in appendix "A" The terms of tribute to Peking every five years were graciously accepted by Bahadur Shah. The war with Nepal resulted in little benefit to China beyond establishing her suzerainty more securely over Tibet.

As a reward for his success in this ability to defend the nation, Bahadur Shah offered goddess Bhairavi at Nuwakot a golden roof with doors (Acharya, 1967, p. 140). The campaign Emperor Kao-tsung made Fu-k'ang-an a Grand Secretary and granted him the additional hereditary rank of a first-class Ch'ing-ch'ê tu-yü, which was inherited by his son Tê-lin. The Emperor had expected Fuk'anggan to be victorious over Nepal, which he could not succeed in. In a state ceremony, he declared that had Fu-k'ang-an completed the conquest of Nepal, he would have made him a prince. An additional honor of Chung-jui was granted to him in 1793 to his dukedom.

It may be noteworthy that the East India Company benefitted more from the Sino-Nepal war than the Chinese, for it served as an entry point into Nepal where the government was unresponsive and indifferent towards the East India Company Government (Hummel, 1943).

Bahadur Shah had requested the East India Company for assistance, but the Company instead offered to serve as mediators in the dispute, fearing reprisals against the lucrative trade in Canton. Nepal agreed to the British proposal but in vain because William Kirkpatrick, envoy of the East India Company, reached the capital of Nepal in 1793, when the war was already over. In a nutshell, the relations between Nepal and the British Empire took a further step for mutual benefit.

Life after the Nepal-Tibet China War

After the war, difficult days were waiting for the regent. The child king Rana Bahadur Shah reached the age of 18 and started to tighten his reign, and Bahadur Shah's influence in the palace declined. The King of Garhwal submitted to Nepal out of fear of the powerful Nepal after the war. The new image of Nepal as the most powerful Hindu kingdom in the Pan-Himalayan region began to pose a great threat to the British. This image of Nepal was the precursor of the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814. In 1794, Bahadur Shah was forced to resign from his office. He attempted to retreat to China, but his request was declined by the young king. Left with no choice, the regent decided to remain in the Pashupatinath temple premises alongside the saints. The ill-fated Bahadur Shah was arrested again and imprisoned in February 1797 on several false charges, including an attempt to kill the king. His wife was also falsely charged with poisoning the late Queen Rajendra Laxmi. Bahadur Shah was tortured for months until his death on 24 June in 1797. Some historians state that he was killed by having hot oil poured on his body, while some mention that he was hung till death and denied a royal cremation (Subedi, 2021, p. 208).

In the case of Fuk'anggan, he continued to impress the emperor with his courage and victories. In 1795, the emperor ordered him to suppress Miao rebels in the provinces of Szechwan, Kweichow, and Hunan. After a hilarious success, Fuk'anggan was made a 'fourth degree' prince, provided with the privileges and authorities of a royal prince. He died in a camp in June 1796 and was posthumously declared a 'second degree' prince. As a respect, his tablet was placed along with the illustrious founders of the dynasty in the Imperial Ancestral Hall. A temple dedicated to his memory was constructed near his home. Further, his name was celebrated, both in the Temple of Eminent Statesmen and the Temple of the Zealots of the Dynasty. Three of his portraits were hung in the Tzū-kuang ko in respect of his bravery in the campaigns of Chin-ch'uan, Formosa, and against the Nepali forces, respectively. Emperor Jên-tsung, the young emperor, did not adhere to his father's high regard for Fu-k'ang-an. He criticized Fuk'anggan posthumously for his extravagant expenses in the army. Out of disregard, the emperor, in 1808, reduced his son, Tê-lin, from his inherited rank of 'the third-degree prince' to 'the fourth-degree prince' (Hummel, 1943).

Comparison of personality and leadership traits of Chautariya Bahadur Shah and General Fuk'anggan

This part of the research has attempted to deal with the leadership and personality aspects of the main commanders of the war. Both Chautariya Bahadur Shah and Commander Fuk'anggan had unique personalities and well-developed leadership traits that helped to define their effectiveness and legacy as leaders during their lifetimes. During the literature review, similar works on the comparison of the personalities were not found, making the part more pertinent.

A comparison of their traits and personality is done in the following paragraphs.

Strategic Vision

Brought up among warriors and patriots of father Prithvi Narayan Shah, Bahadur Shah sought to expand Nepal's unification campaign and control over trade routes (Stiller, 1975, p. 148). He led the Nepal-Tibet War (1788-1792) to assert Nepal's dominance over Tibet, aiming to control key trade routes. He had brought about administrative, legal, educational, and economic reforms within Nepal. With the British East India Company and China, he had maintained a balanced relationship with the strategic vision of expanding Nepal as a pan-Himalayan kingdom.

Fuk'anggan was known for his strong strategic acumen, particularly in managing complex campaigns over difficult terrain and against well-organized opponents. His strategies were instrumental in the Qing victories in Tibet, Taiwan, and the suppression of various regional uprisings, such as the Miao Rebellion. In the Nepal- Tibet- China War, he devised a comprehensive strategy that allowed Qing forces to overcome challenging mountainous terrain. He opted for a rapid offensive that emphasized mobility and surprise. This strategic foresight enabled him to compromise with Nepali forces evaluating the condition of his forces, to negotiate, and to make a lasting peace between Nepal and China.

Adaptability and Resourcefulness

Bahadur Shah had adapted himself and his regency to the development of the situation with the nation and outside. Having been through various challenges like exile, imprisonment, and the rise and fall of power, he had developed the ability to cope with the situations with vigor and energy in all situations. Even when the Chinese entered the theater of the Nepal-Tibet war, he adapted to the situation, halted the campaign of the West, and brought the bulk of the force for the defense of Kathmandu (Aditya, A., Personal Interview, October 18, 2024).

Fuk'anggan displayed remarkable adaptability, particularly in unfamiliar or challenging environments. Whether facing rugged mountain terrain in the Sino-Nepali War or handling diverse tribal resistance, he was able to adjust his tactics to suit the conditions and challenges, which was critical to his success. For instance, when the Chinese troops were on the verge of collapse in the Battle of Betrawoti, he offered peace to Nepal, saving the face of the Chinese empire and his own pride. During the Miao Rebellion in southwestern China, he demonstrated his adaptability by adjusting to the local Miao guerrilla tactics, which relied on the dense forests. Instead of traditional Qing battlefield tactics, he adapted to guerrilla warfare strategies by deploying smaller, more agile units capable of responding to ambushes. He also used scouts familiar with the local terrain to track rebel movements, which was crucial to navigating and controlling the region effectively.

Courage and Initiative

Both the leaders, Bahadur Shah and Fu'angan, displayed boldness on the battlefield, which inspired loyalty and confidence among the troops.

Especially during the unification campaign, Bahadur Shah placed himself as the driving force for the field commanders and the troops (Stiller, 1975, p. 157). Instances of his initiative to attack Tanahun at the age of 20 during joint regency with Rajendra Laxmi and even imprisoning

Rajendra Laxmi to accelerate the unification campaign show his highest degree of courage and boldness (Acharya, 1967, p.78).

Fuk'anggan often placed himself at the frontlines, which demonstrated his commitment and earned respect from his soldiers, creating a unified and motivated force under his command. His courage was evident in his approach during both the Miao Rebellion and the Sino-Nepali War. He often took the frontlines, particularly in the intense battles with Miao insurgents, showing a willingness to face danger alongside his troops. This fearlessness inspired loyalty among his soldiers, who saw him as a committed leader willing to share their risks, motivating his men to push forward even in challenging engagements.

Decisiveness

Bahadur Shah acted swiftly throughout his entire career. The unification effort of P.N. Shah would never have reached such a high scale without the relentless effort of Bahadur Shah. When the dispute with Tibet escalated over economic and territorial issues, he timely ordered the dispatch of troops engaged in the western front towards the defense of the northern front. He took the decision to launch military action, leading his forces into Tibet and capturing several regions. When China intervened by sending a large military force to Tibet, Bahadur Shah quickly assessed the situation and decided to seek peace rather than continue the conflict.

Similarly, Fuk'anggan was also renowned in the Chinese court for making quick, firm decisions during battles, enabling him to maintain the momentum of his campaigns. His decisiveness, even in high-stakes situations, allowed him to seize opportunities and react effectively to threats. During the Sino-Nepali War, when he saw an opportunity to strike at the Kerung front, he acted quickly, pushing his troops forward without hesitation. This decision to advance rapidly prevented the Nepali Army from regrouping and forced them into a defensive position. His prompt decision-making ability led to a swift conclusion of the campaign and minimized prolonged conflict, resulting in favorable terms in the Treaty of Betrawati.

Patriotism

Bahadur Shah, from his early childhood, had true devotion towards his motherland, Nepal. Grown up in Nuwakot amongst the courtiers of Gorkha, he developed a deep sense of responsibility to unite Nepal and expand her as a pan-Himalayan kingdom. Even when he was in exile in Betia, he never allowed any confidential information of the Nepali court to East India Company or any other foreign parties (Stiller, 1967, p. 148). A thorough analysis of the unification efforts of Nepal would clearly mark him as the greatest contributor to the expansion of Nepal's territory, even greater than the Great King Prithvi Narayan Shah.

Fuk'anggan's deep loyalty to the Qing Dynasty, especially to the Qianlong Emperor, was one of his core traits. This loyalty was reflected in his dedication to the emperor's policies and his willingness to lead challenging campaigns in defense of the empire. He dedicated his career to realizing the emperor's goals of territorial expansion and stability. He took on arduous assignments in difficult regions, like the remote Tibetan and southwestern provinces, out of loyalty to the emperor. His commitment to the Qing court's goals led him to carry out even the harsh orders with diligence, displaying his alignment with the empire's policies. This loyalty was recognized by the Qianlong Emperor, who honored him with titles and rewards.

Use of Psychological Tactics

Bahadur Shah was a ruthless user of the psychological domain of warfare. His ability to keep the adversaries guessing about his next moves proved him as a master of psychological warfare during the unification campaign and the Nepal-Tibet-China war. He used to send a clear message to the petty states and adversary forces warning of total destruction in case of resistance.

Fuk'anggan understood the psychological aspects of warfare and often used intimidation and harsh treatment of opposition forces to discourage resistance. Although controversial, his tactics aimed to suppress rebellion and maintain Qing control. In dealing with the Miao Rebellion, he employed psychological tactics to intimidate insurgents and dissuade further uprisings. He publicly executed captured rebel leaders to make a strong statement, creating fear among other rebellious factions. By demonstrating the Qing's uncompromising response to rebellion, he discouraged potential resistance from local leaders and helped to re-establish control.

Diplomacy

In addition to his military prowess, Bahadur Shah was an expert in diplomacy. He had developed a strong relationship with the East India Company and China. He had used every diplomatic measure within the petty states of the Himalayas to avoid bloodshed while unifying them (Subedi, 2021, p. 199). During his unification campaign, he dealt with the rebellious states of Jumla and Garhwal with fine diplomacy (ibid., p. 203).

Fuk'anggan demonstrated an ability to negotiate and broker peace where possible, balancing force with diplomacy. He used these skills to stabilize regions following campaigns, which helped maintain long-term peace in some areas. Fuk'anggan's combination of military skill, loyalty, and both hard and soft leadership approaches established him as a formidable leader in Qing history. While some of his methods were harsh, they were effective in achieving the Qing Dynasty's strategic objectives. After the successful campaign in Nepal, he displayed his diplomatic acumen by negotiating the Treaty of Betrawoti (1792), which established Qing suzerainty over Nepal while allowing it to retain some autonomy. This approach balanced strength with diplomacy, allowing the Qing to maintain influence over the region without incurring the costs of direct occupation. Fuk'anggan's ability to negotiate favorable terms helped stabilize the relationship between Nepal and the Qing, ensuring a lasting peace that served the Qing's broader strategic interests.

Critics

Bahadur Shah. Bahadur Shah was taken as a ruthless and violent commander by his rivals and critics. He is blamed for furthering group politics in the courts of Nepal, as he was ruthless against his adversaries in the palace, especially against the confidantes of Queen Rajyalaxmi and his enemies in the court. Bahadur Shah was poor in financial bookkeeping, which aroused great accusations against Bahadur Shah in his later life (Subedi, Personal Interview, November 18, 2024). He was also accused of taking unnecessary risks, costing the lives of thousands during the Nepal-Tibet-China war. His aggressive policy is accused of being the root of the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814 and was extremely superstitious (Hamilton, p. 250).

Fuk'anggan. Fuk'anggan was accused of being a corrupt and power-mongering prince in the court of the Chinese empire. Accused of exploiting the power of his family, he is accused of promoting nepotism instead of meritocracy in the Chinese court. From 1780 to 1795, he served in many provinces and many terms as governor-general in different Chinese provinces, where he is said to have greatly enriched himself in such various positions.

Conclusion

Bahadur Shah and Fuk'anggan shaped the relationship between Nepal and China in history. Both the leaders took part in many other campaigns in their own part; however, the Nepal-Tibet China War provided a spectacular theater to observe the leadership of both the leaders despite never meeting each other in their entire lifetime. The war not only shaped a unique relation between the countries; it also began an episode in Tibetan history of Chinese suzerainty, which ultimately became an integral part of China in the 1950s.

With royal inheritance and distinct personalities, both the leaders reached the acme of power and displayed their potential in statecraft and on the battlefield as well. Though both the leaders died in their forties, they exercised statecraft, command, and leadership at the highest level. The study of both the legendary leaders has always been the source of inspiration and motivation for the patriots, leaders, and students of history in the past and present.

The terms of the Betrawati treaty 1792 (Acharya 2018, pp 25, 209)

1. Both Nepal and Tibet will accept the suzerainty of the Qing emperor.
2. The Government of Tibet will compensate for the property of Nepali merchants that was looted by Tibetans in Lhasa.
3. The Nepali citizens will have the right to visit, trade, and establish industries in any part of Tibet and China.
4. In case of any dispute between Nepal and Tibet, the Qing government will intervene and settle the dispute at the request of both countries.
5. The Qing will help Nepal defend against any external aggression.
6. Both Nepal and Tibet will have to send a delegation to pay tribute to the Imperial Court in China every five years.
7. In return, the Qing emperor will also send friendly gifts to both the countries and the people who carry the tribute will be treated as important guests and will be provided every facility.

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