TWO LETTERS FROM RANGA NATH PANDIT* TO B. H. HODGSON.

Thakurlal Manandhar
Kathmandu

In 1837, owing to the intrigues of the Pande faction, General Bhimsen Thapa was put in irons and imprisoned and Rana Jang Pande managed to obtain the position of Prime Minister. But later, the charge against Bhimsen was discovered to be purely an invention to bring about his downfall. The Pandes confessed and Rana Jang had to be dismissed. Ranga Nath Pandit, who had before obtained the position of a Chief Justice became a 'stop-gap' Prime Minister. But when he came to realise that the weak-witted and fickle-minded king was not much in his favour and that it was impossible for him to conduct the policy of the government as he thought right, he soon resigned that post. Puskar Shah was then appointed and he too soon resigned. 'Prime minister after Prime minister strutted his appointed month or so upon this unreal stage until at the beginning of the year 1839 Rana Jang again assumed command of the anti-Thapa forces.' 1 The old charge against Bhimsen was again resurrected and Bhimsen was again thrown into prison. Students of Nepalese history at that period are quite aware of the fact how the astute old statesman was to perish in his underground cell as a result of the mad folly of Rana Jang's action on July 20, 1839. What followed was the government's anti-British policy. On 1st Nov. 1840, Rana Jang was again dismissed and his supporter the senior Qneen died of avarai in the Terai on 6th Oct. 1841. The two anti-British forces who were 'the gravest—almost the last—danger to peace between Nepal and her great Southern neighbour' 2 were removed. Then followed the appointments of Fateh Jang and later of Mathbar Singh and at long last in the tangled condition of Nepalese politics came the horrible incident of the Kot Massacre. Ranga

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*The name Ranganath is wrongly spelt as Raghunath by Perceval Landon and Pudma Jang Bahadur Rana in their works. This is evidenced by the two letters herein published. It was sometime in 1952 that photo—copies of the letters were given to me by Sir Christopher H. Summerhayes, the then British Ambassador in Nepal for translation into English. He did not say where they came from.

1. Perceval Landon: Nepal, vol. 1, p. 91
2. Op. cit, p. 95
Nath Pandit had to flee the country like the other nobilities for safety. The two letters that follow reveal that since the time of Bhimsen, he was in favour of establishing good and friendly relations with the British to save the country from ruin.

Of this man, Perceval Landon gives a right estimate which is as follows: "He was typical of his caste. He accepted the office of Prime Minister on two occasions, but rapidly realized that the dangers of the post were far more serious than its dignities or emoluments. He was supported by no one, and always took the first opportunity to resign. His chief preoccupation during his term of office was the safety of his own person, and it was not of such men as he that a Governor of Nepal could be made during these terrible times."  

TRANSLATION OF THE LETTERS

1. To Mr. B. H. Hodgson

Benares
Marga Shirsha
7 Wednesday

My dear friend,

I am getting on quite well. I hope you too are well. News at this end is good enough. Your kind letter dated Wednesday, Kartik badi 9 was received on Kartik sudi 15. Happy to hear news of your good self and to have received your kind favour in writing to me. You know already of the events that happened in Nepal in recent years.

I am now here in Benares together with my two sons. Only my wife is in Nepal. I gather that my younger brothers, i.e. the third and the fourth, and the sons of my younger brother, i.e. the second who were in Nepal are now expelled from that country. The third of my brothers has now arrived in Ramnagar while the whereabouts of the fourth one is not known. The son of my second brother has not yet arrived in this country. Chautara Guru Prasad Sah, with his wife, his son, and his brothers and nephews have all fled from Nepal and have now arrived in Gorakhpur. Bhimsen Thapa's brother Ranabir Singh Thapa, who had become a fakir, has now come to Benares with his fourth son and also Singhabir Pande together with his son, while all the other nobilities like Sherjung Thapa, Rana

Ujjwal Thapa and others, the grandsons of Bhimsen Thapa and of Dalbhanjan Thapa and others have now many of them arrived in Betiah.

Again, nowadays Jang Bahadur, taking His Majesty’s eldest son into confidence, is creating an impression that Her Majesty the Queen is making an attempt to enthrone her own son by assassinating him and his brother. The Queen has now been made powerless (imprisoned). Ten or twelve of her men have been beheaded (?) and troubles are still afoot in Nepal. From hence it has become too difficult for men of good intention to remain in that country with their life and property made secure. When these nobilities all will come to gather I shall be able to know their ideas. I shall then speak to the Bada Saheb here and also write to let you know. I have spoken to the Bada Saheb here about my interpretation of the recent events. He tells me that Mr. Thoresby will go to Kathmandu as Resident, that he will wait and see what course of action a man of integrity like him will adopt and that after considering the matter over for about 20 or 25 days he will confer with you and then act as may be deemed needful for our mutual benefit.

He has asked me to write to you accordingly. You know well enough how in the past as well I had done my best to strengthen our friendly relations with the Company’s Government. And now that I have come to the protection of the Company, I shall leave no stone unturned to work for the continued friendship between the two Governments. I ask you as a friend of mine to speak to the Bada Saheb here and also to your friends in the Company’s Government so as to recommend me for their help and assistance in enabling me to support myself with the honour and dignity I deserve. I have sent for my family to come over and live in the Company’s protection. Even though we may have to be in Kathmandu on business, we have decided to make our home in the Company’s territory. As a good friend of mine you are my only support to depend upon in such times as this. I shall be writing to you off and on as to the news of what will happen in Nepal in days to come. In my opinion, you had better write to Mr. Thoresby, the Resident in Nepal, about what you consider to be necessary. Well you know better than I do. More next time.

With best wishes and regards,

Yours Sincerely,

Shri Guru Panditraj Shri Ranganath Pandit
2. To Mr. B. H. Hodgson

My dear friend,

I am quite well here and I shall be happy to know you are well too. Regarding news here, it is all right.

On Poush badi 12 Tuesday Major Kapinder Saheb Bahadur was kind enough to come over with your letter to me. He read over the letter to me explaining the contents in Hindi all to my satisfaction. He made me learn everything that was significant. I was extremely delighted to learn that as a real friend you have done me a big favour. May you live long and obtain honour and respect. So do I pray to God.

As regards news here, His Majesty and Her Majesty the Queen both came to the Goverment Headquarters in Barewa, and on Poush badi 3 they left for Katarbana. Jang Bahadur is in Nepal working under the orders of the son of His Majesty. Old nobilities with their families are living in different parts of the Company’s territory.

There is a rumour that His Majesty has started (to go) back to Nepal. That is not known for certain. I shall let you know about this later. I hope the Resident in Nepal as well as your good self have come to know of my intentions to go on pilgrimages as much as I can, to live in a right place and to be wishing good of the Goverment as best as one could in accordance with your good advice, and to think of God always for me and for my sons and brothers to work in obedience to the orders of the Goverment. This will be possible through your kind efforts. I shall leave my family behind in a certain place and shall go on a pilgrimage to Kaushika in the east. Also I intend to pay you a visit. Till that time I hope you will be writing to me so as to make me happy.....

With best wishes and regards,

Yours Sincerely,

Shri Guru Panditraj, Shri Ranganath Pandit
Nepali Text of the Letters

स्वतन्त्रराज स्वरूपमार्ग राजभारोंकारण समय परमाणु श्री श्री वराहन होटन हाजीसन साहब बहादुरके इत श्री गुरू पवित्रतार श्री रज्जुनाथ पवित्रतायु शुभारामिवैर पूवक पत्रजयदृश्यै हैहा कुशल छ तहा तपाईको कुशल क्षमराहु चित्तसानन्द होला अगे ईहाको समाचार भतो छ। उप्रान्त कालिका बाह ९ रोज ४ का तीकोपत्र कालिका शुद्धि ९५ का दिन आई पुस्तीले तपाईको कुशल क्षम र समाप्त वातिलमा पाउँदा मनमा बडो आन्दौ भयो अविरो नेपालको हास मुख तपाइलाई मालुमे छ मेरा छोरा २ समेत म बनारसमा छु जनाना मानै नेपालमा छन् शाहिला काँडामाई र माहीला भाइको छोरा नेपालमा चियो उहाँबाट निकाली दिया छन् र शाहीला भाइ रामनगरका इलाकामा बाडै पुस्तीले तपाईको फला जगा छ भन्ना ठगाना छन माहीला भाइको छोरा अर्क एस मुलखमा आई पुस्तीले छन बोझारु गुरूप्रार धार भाथा जनाना र बड़हाँ कोरा भाइ बोझा गरेछ समेत भागी गोरखपुरमा आई रहाँछन्छ भीमसेन धामाका भाइ फकिर धामाका रणवीरसिंह धामा काँडामा छोरा समेत र सिबिलर पड्दे छोरा समेत बनारस आई रहाँछन्छ सीरज्जु धामा रणवीरसिंह धामा गरेछ भीमसेन धामाका नाती गरेछ धामाभरू र तल भजन पिडिका नाती गरेछ मलानिस घरै वेतलामा जिल्लामा आई रहाँछन्छ बाजनाल फेरी ज़ख़्मशुरुःले...का जेठ पुन रिक किली...ले हुँदुहुँदुलाई मारी आफ्ना छोरालाई राज्यमा वसाउँ लामाखाछन् भन्ना कुरा पारी...लाउँदूँ गरायो...का तरफका १०१२ जना मलानिस मनि छाट्यो अर्क हुँदुहुँदु छद्दै छ अर्क उप्रान्त भलामानिसले जीउ घन बचाई त्यस मुलखमा बलन गाड्नो पन्नो सबै भारादार बढोलिया पैदै उनको आशय बिस्तार बुरी याहाँ बढासहाय रिक मनि भनेला तर्क पनि लेखी पठाउँला मेरो अर्ककन याहाँका बढासहायनिस पनि बिस्तार गर्नो हास तस्वीर साहुव रजीड भने नेपाल जान्छु इ साहुवाना छन्छु इन्सने बहेन पुगी-कन ब्याक वस्तोवस्त गछन्छु २०२५ दिन विचार गरि हाजीसन साहुवा र मेरा ललाहुले आफ्नो रंग छलोमा आफ्नो सर्मार हुँया काम गरेला बाहाँ साहुवालाई यसै लेखी पठाउँला त्यस धामा याचना धामाका वातिलमा दिया अधि पनि तक्को कम्पनिका दोलको मध्यस्थताको निर्मल गर्यो तपाई दोस्तले वेसगरी जानु बुरुनौ भयाको छ धार पनि सकरिको पना आफ्नो छ आफना बुरौ वर्त्तमान नेपालका सम्म तबै तक्कोर मिलान रहन्ता काम गरिने छ तपाई मिल्ने याहाँका बढा साहुवालाई बरु आफना दोस्त साहुवाला छन्छु मदत सिफारिस गरी इन्जेक्शन हुँभएको हास्ना पालना हुँया पाठ गरी विचु होला नेपालका परिवार पनि कम्पनिका तलाहुमा तिकी पठाउँला कामले नेपाल जानु बाँटु पन्नो पनि घर कम्पनिका पनाहमा राख्ने छ सब
फुराको भसोसा तपाईंको पिन्चको छ अब उग्रांत नेपालको जो हुँसल्छ होला खेख्ने रहेबार नेपालका रजी-बंड मस्तो साहवलाई पनि लेर्न्याखुन मुनासीव लेर्न्याखुन बढियो होला भनिने मेरा मन्त्रमा बाँधेछ जान्या बाँधु ह्युँस्प विषयु विश्वेत्रु किमिस्कु मिति मार्गी शीर्ष गुदि जरूर रोज ४

स्वाति श्री सर्विचमायोग्य राजभारोढङ्ग यसम्य परमापा श्री श्री धरमसात होठन हाजसन साहव बहादुर केहु इत श्री गुरु पश्चिमतराज श्री रङ्गनाथ पश्चिमम्य शूभाशीवको पूर्वक पश्चिमम्य इत्या कुश्य छ तर्को तपाईको रुथल्छ क्षेत्र राज्या विकसान्न होला भने यहाँको समाचार भनो छ उग्रांत पौष रोज १२ रोज ३ का दिन सेव्न कौंडुर साहव बहादुरले मेहरवाणीको सारी मेरा घरमा आई तपाईं मिट्रको पनि ज्यांमा बांधिदैर्न सब चित्रको हुँसल्छ मलाई बुझाउने मेरो बुझाउने तस्ल्दहा गरेको भयो अब विस्तार मुनि तपाई परम मिट्रको बुझाउने धरोवाको मेहरवाणीको राहुहो छुँदी मन्नना बहुँ आन्द्र भयो व्यस्तान्नम्य अनुभवको आगु र मान ज्यादा बढाउन यसे फुराको प्राचेन्मा गरिस्कु यहाँको ह्युँस्प छुँदा सुरत भयाणो २ को थेरा ३ समेट वारा जिल्लामा बरेका नेपालका कबरीको जगामा आई पौष रोज ३ का दिन कैटर्न राख लाग्नु भयो ज्युँबहादुरले छोराको ह्युँस्पले काम गरी नेपालमा रहुँको छ पुराना भारादार सबका परिवार समेट सकोर कम्पनीको मुलुकमा जगामा रहुँको छन्। जान भनी पाउ लाग्नु नेपालको छ भनी वाॉपाउ चन्द्र भनेको अरु निर्माण घराको छेन जो होला सो पछि लेखी पठाउन्छ। नेपालका रजीबंड महात्मा पनि भयो हो मेरा र तपाईहुँले भयाको बुझाउने सक्न्याको सक्न्याको प्राय चित्तम गरी ह्युँस् सार्ध खुँडर्न्याखु स्न्यायाको तीर्थ गनुँ १ को भजन गनुँ छोरा भाउहुँले सक्न्याको भन्नुको काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रहँ ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ रही ईरावा छ छोराको तपाई सर्कारले भनाहुँले काम गनुँ ।