

Tribhuvan University

B.P. Koirala's *Atmabrittanta* : Politics of Autobiography

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English**

By

Deepak Subedi

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

June, 2011

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Deepak Subedi has completed his thesis entitled **B.P. Koirala's *Atmabrittanta* : Politics of Autobiography** under my supervision. He carried out his thesis from September, 2010 to June, 2011. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma

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Letter of Approval

The undersigned members of the Research committee have approved this thesis entitled "**B.P. Koirala's *Atmabrittanta* : Politics of Autobiography**" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Deepak Subedi.

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Deepak Subedi

Abstract

Atmabrittanta is a remarkable autobiography of B.P. Koirala (1914-1982) a thinker and politician. Politics of autobiography is the prime issue of this text. In it B.P. not only incorporates personal life but also endeavors to include the then period of national and international political scenario trying to present him as a national leader. While presenting *Atmabrittanta*, he compares it with Gandhi's autobiography, *An Experiment with Truth*. It is the politics of Koirala to show himself supreme leader. B.P. was the diplomatic political leader who wanted to hold the power in Nepalese politics. He is the advocate of nationality but unsuccessful to form the separate national identity. B.P. developed the political theory of democratic socialism in the context of Nepal, but it was not implemented into practice. In *Atmabrittanta*, B.P. highlighted socio-political movement and reformation lead by him which makes the text more political than personal.

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I. B.P. and the Then Political Scenario

From the ancients to the moderns, those engaged in political leadership have endeavored to leave some sign or record of their deeds, that would make future ages remember their names and accomplishments. No doubt, this political memoir of B.P. Koirala is also the same practice. This research aims to unveil B.P.'s politics behind compiling this autobiography even if he was in hospital bed.

B.P. Koirala, statesman, political leader and literary figure, expresses his view of politics and nationality in *Atmabrittanta*. *Atmabrittanta* is the recorded memoirs of BP Koirala dictated into a microphone held by his friend and associate Ganesh Raj Sharma and published by Jagdamba Prakashan in 1998, later it was translated into English by Kanak Mani Dixit and published by Himal Books under the title.: *Atmabrittanta: (Recallings of the self)*. *Atmabrittanta* is a remarkable document of personal and social history, a vivid account of exile and rebellion that provides acute insights into the history and power politics of the 20th century (Guha Ramchandra). In *Atmabrittanta*, he not only incorporates personal life but also endeavors to include the then period of national and international scenario trying to present his as national leader. While presenting *Atmabrittanta*, he compares it with Gandhi's autobiography '*An Experiment with Truth*'. It is the politics of Koirala to show himself supreme leader. B.P. was the diplomatic political leader who wanted to hold the power in Nepalese politics.

Atmabrittanta although being autobiography, it tries to deserve the national, socio-political and historical qualities rather personal. B.P. Koirala contextualizes and politicizes his personal view in it. He is the advocate of nationality but unsuccessful to form the separate national identity. He developed the political theory of democratic socialism in the context of Nepal but it was not implemented into practical. He tried to merge Marxism, socialism,

Gandhism, and democracy but there is some inherent problem while combining these. Nepalese political event of 1950/51 has been praised as a people's revolution but in reality that political change was brought by the cooperation of internal and external forces for power sharing.

There was a lack of clear forward policy to address transitional period of 1950-60.

The famous and best selling autobiography *Atmabrittanta*, late life recollections is the recorded memoirs of B.P. Koirala. It is not written but spoken in microphone by the help of Ganesh Raj Sharma. The speech is given from the hospital bedroom in 1981 because the politician, Koirala was suffering from throat cancer. *Atmabrittanta* not only includes the Koirala's family history, his personal struggle and his relation with other national and international political leader but also includes the social, political, national and international events and movements. He is the national figure who fought for freedom and the democracy against Rana rules. He was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and Indian National movement. He believed Rana regime was directly supported by British Raj of India, so he directly participated in Indian national movement. After the successful deathroning of Britishers from India, Nepalese political leader inspired and started people's revolution (Janakranti) as a result tripartite agreement held among Ranas, King and young party politicians and ended the Rana autocracy but at the same time gave India direct control over the political affairs in Nepal.

This autobiography also sketches the condition of transitional period of 1950-60. In it Koirala reveals the bitter and friendly relationship as well as political struggle between him and King Mahendra.

Autobiography is the form of literature which is not logically ordered and connected. There is not a linear plot structure. It is written through memory so it may be incompleting. Dr. Johnson marked "Every man's life should be best written by himself" (qtd. in Guha).

Autobiography is the controversial literary form because there is the chance to present only positive side of the life. So, Andr Maurois said "autobiography is a literary genre marked by a lack of sincerity" (qtd. in Guha).

If the impulse to generate political memoirs has seldom abated since the rise of literacy in human civilization, so also this type of literature, where history and politics are narrated in personalized form, has presented powerful attractions to readers across many centuries and cultures. B.P.'s political memoir constitutes the most popular form of historical literature. Political memoir denotes the endeavor by a retired politician to recount the important political engagements of his career to explain and interpret the choices made and forces encountered to portray the relationship experienced in the course of political activity while assessing the qualities of cohorts, and perhaps to offer some percepts or wisdom to assist political successors. It is this type of political memoir which has served as the principle focus for the memoirs project.

Political memoir represents, as will be argued, a complex and predatory genre. It is perhaps this very unconventionality and polymorphous composition which contributes most to memoirs multi-faceted popular appeal. Moreover, the parameters marking political memoir off from other genres or types of writing often appear indistinct.

Great men record their accomplishment there have been critics ranging from Cicero, who contended it was ill-judged for a man to write his own life. Moreover, political memoir has functioned in some form as a recognized category of historical writing for many centuries and in all literature cultures, and it shows no sign presently alternating. However, problematic this genre may be, participants in the political memoirs project were agreed that without such records of their deeds by political leaders or their scribes, knowledge of vast tracts of the past, as well as many facets of contemporary history, would be inaccessible to historians. The

literature of nearly every human culture contains superlative records by politicians of their lives and times that have fascinated contemporaries, instructed subsequent generations, and contributed immeasurably to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

A survey of the history of self authored records by political leaders immediately indicates that political memoir in various forms is as ancient as politics and literature themselves. Indeed, the quest of political leaders to memorialize themselves precedes the rise of literacy as in both ancient and modern pre-literate cultures leaders have had their lives and deeds memorialized through oral narration passed across generations and in graphic representation on stone, wood, and other physical media. While the forms the political leaders have used to tell their stories have changed over the epochs of time, developing to express and explicit changing cultural needs and opportunities, the genre of political memoir is not essentially a product of a long, secular evolution, progressing to find its perfection only in modernity. The narration and recording of the political history of a people by or through its leader presents a natural vehicle for both the construction and reception of history which it seems, all literature cultures discover sooner or later and express in varying forms.

Many third world leaders have used political autobiography to convey a political agenda and to enhance their personal appeal among potential followers. Political leaders are drawn to contemporary memoir out of curiosity about what judgments are being passed on the themselves and their political cohorts, concurrently, the appeal of political memoir to mass readerships is apparent from the commercial interest of publishers, the mass media and the data from book sales and readership surveys.

Political memoir is by nature personal; it records personal, political engagement and experience, or what has been witnessed. The personal linkage between the author and the past in memoir transforms the description of events, behaviour, and circumstances in the narration

of personal experience. The resulting memoir has the potential to appeal with greater immediacy and drama to a leadership whose own categories of recognition, empathy, and reception are powerfully predisposed to the persona, than other forms of historiography where the style is more abstract and impersonal.

The personal element inherent to political memoir represents the feature it shares most closely with the genres of biography and autobiography. Political biographies drawing heavily on personal knowledge and relationships have often been entitled the "memoir of" the subject, equally political memoir is regularly termed political autobiography in common usage. No doubt, memoir usually presents a more appropriate venue for the politician in reviewing and reflecting on political engagements. Political memoirs composed largely from reminiscence, without the assistance and control of supplementary documentation, are unlikely to stand as credible or substantial records.

B.P. was the advocate of nationalism. Though, nationalism attempts to obtain essence, origin and homogeneity, it's inability to combine the contending forces into some or single one leads to the failure of national ideology. The main cause of the failure is the exclusive mentality. Instead of embracing the people from all walk of life it becomes a weapon for those who are in power. Therefore nowadays critiques of nationalism have become extremely influential among many intellectuals. Nationalism is a politics, which can't address all group of people. It has become a weapon to get the power to the leaders. They use this issue according to their interest. When they are in power they become deaf towards the nationalism, and ready to do anything to save their past, and dump even if there is foreign intervention. But when they come out of the power they raise the issue of nationalism because they always want to hold the power. Therefore they manipulate the poor and working class people to accompany them and make them the ladder to accomplish their purpose.

Nationalism in non-western countries has become more exclusive rather than inclusive. It has excluded the people in terms of class, race, religion, caste, and ethnicity. Instead of unifying/including all the people and working as a unifying force, it has become exclusive and has brought division among the people in terms of class, race, ethnicity and caste.

The political memoir of Koirala's *Atmabrittanta* uncovers the hidden function of legitimizing and maintaining the position, power and economic interests of the author himself. B.P. Koirala in *Atmabrittanta* purpose to discuss various aspects of the process of political change in Nepal, since the fall of the Rana oligarchy in 1950-51. The autobiography incorporates the period between late 1920s to 1970s, the period of turmoil and political upheavals in South Asia as well as in the whole world. It was the period when India got independence from British empire and Nepal got freed from 104 year-long Rana oligarchy but again underwent the severe blood of king's direct rule for thirty years.

Atmabrittanta although being autobiography, it tries to deserve the national, socio-political and historical qualities rather personal. B.P. Koirala contextualizes and politicizes his personal view in it. He is the advocate of nationality but unsuccessful to form the separate national identity. He developed the political theory of democratic socialism in the context of Nepal but it was not implemented into practical.

Democratic socialism is a broad political movement propagating the ideals of socialism within the context of a democratic system. In many cases, its adherents promote the ideal of socialism as an evolutionary process resulting from legislation enacted by a parliamentary democracy. Democratic socialists believe that both the economy and society should run democratically to meet public needs, not to make profits for a field. To achieve a more just society, many structures of our government and economy must be radically

transformed through greater economic and social democracy. Democratic socialists do not want to create an all -powerful government bureaucracy.

Atmabrittanta as an autobiography recuperates the technologies of self-representation present in the confession and deploys them to authorize and deauthorize certain "identities". Indeed *Atmabrittanta* draws its social authority from its relation to culturally dominant discourses of truth-telling and not as has previously been asserted from autobiography's privileged relation to real life.

Guna Ramchandra states that the autobiography of Nepali politician and sometime prime minister B.P Koirala is a vivid account of personal and social turmoil and of exile and rebellion that provides acute insight into the history and politics of the 20th century.

The autobiography is the most perilous of literary forms. As the French Scholar Andr Maurois pointed out many years ago, it is marked by a "deliberate forgetfulness, a willed failure to remember failure, a desire to omit from one's authorized account events that were unpleasant or that might undermine one's reputation" (qtd. Guaha Ramchandra). The autobiography writes Maurois, is a genre marked by a lack of sincerity.

Atmabrittanta of B.P. Koirala stands as a stunning exception to the rule. This is a remarkable document of personal and social history, a vivid account of exile and rebellion that provides acute insights into the history and politics of the 20th century. Koirala's memoirs were not written but spoken dictated into a microphone held by his friend and associate, the Kathmandu lawyer Ganesh Raj Sharma. When he began the exercise, in December 1981, the politician was already in the advanced stages of throat cancer. The transcripts remained with Sharma for years; only when Nepal renewed its acquaintance with democracy, in the 1990s, was it deemed safe to place them before the public. A Nepali edition appeared in 1998, published by Jagdamba Prakashan in Lalitpur. Now, three years later, we have an English

version, translated by Kanak Mani Dixit and published by Himal Books under the title : *Atmabrittanta*: late Life Recollections.

B.P. grew up in the India of the 1920s, a place and time with a plenitude of political choices. After hearing the Mahatma speak he told his father he would now join an ashram school. He believed that the Indian National movement "was also our movement because the autocracy of the Ranas was supported by British imperialists."

Along with the brother Matrika Prasad Koirala, B.P. was arrested during the 1930 movement. Suspected of being part of a terrorist ring. He was however, released for lack of evidence. He read Marx, listened to Radio Moscow, and hung about with the communists. Koirala was impressed by Marxist theory, but less so by communist politics. He could not accept the communist party of India's view that the national movement was nothing that it was being master minded by the British themselves, and that Gandhi was an unknowing agent of the British." Koirala was released in 1945, and began plotting a successful return to his native land. The war was over and Indian independence seemed imminent. The formation of an interim government led by Nehru in September 1946 encouraged the Nepali exiles to think seriously of fighting for democracy themselves. Their country had for a century been in the control of Ranas. As the historian Anirudha Gupta has written, "the survival of the Rana rule mainly depended on his capacity to suppress the growth of political awakening in the country. The most effective way of retaining control was to deny the privileges of higher to commoners" (24).

In 1955, King Tribhuvan was succeeded by his son Mahendra, a man of greater ambition and resolve. The politicians were dismissed to the margins, with power centralized in the hands of the monarch. After half a decade of rule of puppet prime ministers, the king was forced to call a general election in 1959, Nepal's first. The Nepali congress swept the

polls, winning 74 out of 109 seats. B.P. took office as prime minister. Koirala became very much popular while he was in the post. By seeing this, in 1960, the King organized a coup, sending his royal guards to arrest the prime minister and put him in jail.

Koirala came of age while in exile in India. He first went to prison fighting for the freedom of a country not his own. He struck close relationships with Indian politicians. Jaya Prakash Narayan and Jawaharlal Nehru were to him like big brothers. But after his return to Nepal, India itself reappeared as Big brother. As home minister and prime minister, writes Koirala, he had to fight against three forces: the royal palace, the land-holding elite, and India. Nehru might have been kind and polite, but his government deeply resented Koirala's independent foreign policy. The Indian ambassador in Kathmandu "believed that he was even greater than the king." One envoy, C.P.N. Singh, so readily threw his weight around that Koirala was constrained to tell a press conference in Benares that "the Indian ambassador wishes that our country be life his district board". Once in New York, U.K. Krishna Menon asked Koirala, a sovereign prime minister himself, to accompany him to the airport to receive Nehru, a gesture that would tell all the world that Nepal wished to be seen as a client state of India. Naturally, he declined, but the wound fostered: 20 years later he mentioned the incident in his memoirs, as an example of how "they (the Indians) just did not understand clean diplomacy".

B.P. Koirala's *Atmabrittanta* was formally released in New Delhi in April 2001. It's themes are compelling any way, but have been made more Poignant by recent happenings in the Kathmandu palace. The facts and facets which B.P. Koirala had presented in his memoir only highlights his position, will to power and quest for authority. The polygenre of autobiography's main function is to speak about the person. No writing is impersonal any

writing is guided by certain ideology disclosing the social, cultural, political, religious and economic positions and stands all over it.

Atmabrittanta, although being autobiography, it reflects the ideology of B.P. Koirala in which he relates the text in certain context. B.P.'s autobiography *Atmabrittanta* recuperates the technologies of self-representation present in the confession and deploys them to authorize and deauthorize certain "identities". Indeed autobiography draws its social authority from its relation to culturally dominant discourses of truth-telling and not as has previously been asserted, from autobiography's privileged relation to real life. The extent to which the discourses of "truth" and "lying" underwrite aesthetic production and judgment is further explored through an analysis of how critical language participates in policing truth.

Although the problems that constitute interest in autobiography have undergone major epistemic shifts since the "first" autobiography in English little contemporary attention has focused on a relationship that surely underwrites the autobiographical project: the relationship between truth telling and agency. Authority in autobiography springs from its proximity to the truth claim of the confession, a discourse that insists upon the possibility of telling the whole truth while paradoxically frustrating that goal through the structural demands placed on how one confess. "Telling the truth" so totalizes the confession that it denotes the imperative to confess, the structure of that performance, and the ground for its judgment.

As a mode of truth production the confession in both its oral and its written forms grants the autobiographer a kind of authority derived from the confessor's proximity to "truth". Autobiography cannot in this context be seen to draw its social authority simply from a privileged relation to real life. Rather authority is derived through autobiography's proximity to the rhetoric of truth telling: the confession. If the legacy of the confession for

self-representation persists , it does so by virtue of the confession's still-effective history, the policing it engenders, and the disciplinary power it maintains. Autobiography is rooted in the confession, a form in which telling the truth or not telling the truth can meet with dramatic and occasionally fatal results. After Foucault, we can see how confessor and penitent are positioned in a differential power relation, though they should not be thought of exclusively as producer and consumer of truth but also as enjoined in a mutually productive performance of truth telling. Their mutual performance locates a cultural and discursive site of truth production in relation to the disciplinary boundary of punishment. In 'History of Sexuality' Foucault mentions about truth production in this way:

The confession is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console and reconcile; a ritual in which the truth is corroborated by the obstacles and resistances it has to surmount in order to be formulated; and finally, a ritual in which the expression alone independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it, exonerates, redeems, and purifies him: it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises salvation. (162)

As an enlargement of the confession autobiography retains many of its characteristics, though its historical transformations are critical. A contemporary example of the intertextualization of confession and its rhetorical apparatus of truth telling indicates the persistence as well as the historical contingency of the relationship between autobiographical authority and the forms of policing that regulate it.

Because the subject of autobiography is a self-representation and not the autobiographer himself, most contemporary critics describe this "self" as fiction. When we locate the pressure to tell the truth in the context of the fictive self accountable for producing truth, the problematical alliance between fact and fiction in autobiography begins to emerge. For autobiography's roots in the confession spiritual and juridical continue to mark it as a form in which it is both possible and necessary to tell the truth.

For both its writers and its critics, autobiography is driven by an authorization complex. Its writers attempt to situate themselves in relation to discourses of "truth" and identity while recognizing, in various ways, the insufficiency of any single discourse to express the "subject" of their writing. In the absence of a single, unified model of "autobiography", they weave testimonial texts from disparate discourses. The effect of this positioning defines autobiography's characteristic weirdness and accounts for its problematical status as a genre. Somewhere between reporting and fiction writing, autobiography challenges the limits of generic definition through its bricolage like bravado. Critics and scholars of autobiography attempt to authorize their texts with introductions that contextualize their arguments within a comprehensible and already authorized field of study. Indeed, autobiography studies even reveal traces of "canon envy" as they attempt to establish autobiography's legitimacy and authority through a series of familiar moves: claiming an origin, invoking formal continuity, stabilizing a canon, constructing alternative traditions, and so on. But we should consider these moves more closely: Under what circumstances could a kind of writing such as autobiography, a practice also diffuse as self representation, be seen to take on thematic continuity ? From what project must autobiography be distinguished such that it can be said to begin ? That is, how did autobiography become recognizable, as such, to the point it could require history, a narrative of it's development ? These questions indicate an

issue in the study of autobiography which has largely been obscured; namely, that critical practices have organized and continue to organize autobiography and are bound up with and indeed generate "authority" in autobiography.

Autobiography is a form in which the self is authorized, although autobiography is not itself simply a self-authorizing form. Those who seek to interpret autobiography as a self-authoring form, place its roots in the Romantic concept of self. Paradoxically, the influence of confessional practices has been minimized by tracing a autobiography's literary history and formal characteristics from Augustine and subsuming him into a discussion of autobiography as an Enlightenment project. Autobiography can then be seen as a literary discourse that develops in line with the emergent political discourses of individualism.

The autobiographies to a large extent are based on the writer's imaginations the autobiographies of politicians have the advantage of providing personal experiences, especially the inner life, and that even if a politician's autobiography tends to beautify the personal history, it is usually very valuable as a mode of recording history. The autobiographies mostly are doubtful that there exists any fully unalterable and reliable history of facts.

Atmabrittanta also reflects Koirala's politics and his ambitious nature for power and fame. he wanted to be national leader but his weakness of gullibility becomes the enemy for his success. He was not clear in his political vision. He said to Bhola Chatterji "I began with Gandhi had an intrude with Marx and turned to Gandhi (Translator vi). The mission to establish democracy was postponed because of the internal power struggle. B.P. Koirala assimilates the Nepalese nationality with Indian nationality at first when he got help from India." Nepal was always a part of India, thus Nepal's economic and political development is dependent upon free India (Prem R. Uprety). Later when India did not support him, he

assimilated his political vision with King Mahendra with the name of "Policy of National Reconciliation". So he defined nationality, democracy, socialism according to self interest to hold power in Nepalese politics. That's why the project of democracy become unfinished and the initial euphoria has been replaced by disillusionment and frustration. The fruit brought by political change of 1950/51 has been rotten with inter and intra party struggles caused by different leaders striving for power. So B.P. also could not remain untouched by power politics.

II. *Atmabrittanta* of B.P. Koirala: A Manifestation of Power Politics

Many politicians in the world write less and speak more. Only a few political figures have spared time to devote for writing. If they write, they excel. Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala is among the few politicians in the world who has pursued both politics and writing hand in hand. BP is a political icon and literary giant in Nepal. His genius and contribution in Nepali literature is equally important on his role and significance in Nepal's democratic movement.

'Autobiography is indeed everywhere one cares to find it, Candace Lang wrote in 1982, thus acknowledging a major problem for anyone who studies this topic. If the writer is always, in the broadest sense, implicated in the work, any writing may be judged to be autobiographical, depending on how one reads it (Lang, 1982). *Atmabrittanta*, although being autobiography, reflects the political identity of B.P. Koirala. B.P. states:

I have never tried to write about myself what I have felt, and I feel no different today is that I have not done anything that needs to be recorded in a history book. During the long period I spend in jail with time on my hands. I did attempt to write about myself a couple of times. In doing so, I tried to describe the social and political system of the day. I found that I was writing more about other than about myself. Another reason I have not written about myself is due to my belief that the time has not yet come for such an exercise. I have always felt that there is a lot left for me to do. To attempt to write an autobiography would, therefore, be quite out of context. (1)

However, autobiography has been recognized since the late eighteenth century as a distinct literary genre and, as such, an important testing ground for critical controversies about a range of ideas including authorship, selfhood, representation and the division between fact

and fiction. The very pervasiveness and slipperiness of autobiography has made the need to contain and control it within disciplinary boundaries all the more urgent, and many literary critics have turned to definitions as a way of stamping their academic authority on an unruly and even slightly disreputable field. Born in an ordinary Nepali middle class family, BP rose to international fame by his humanism, his magnanimity, outstanding leadership, political achievements and above all international outlook. He had a multi-faceted personality. A believer in Gandhian Philosophy and method of non-violence in the struggle for human liberation, he was influenced by Marx's dialectics and historical materialism. He was revolutionary who successfully led Nepali congress party in an armed struggle against the Rana Regime. His contribution to the establishment of democracy in Nepal in 1950 and again as an inspiring beacon in it's recent restoration, not withstanding the dark period from 1960s to 1980s, remains incomparable. He had his failings too, as no man is given to roses all the way.

Regarding the definition of autobiography another critic Philippe Lejeune considered the problems and in 1982 produced the following judicious and widely quoted definition:

A retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his own existence, focusing on his individual life, in particular on the development of his personality. (Lejeune, 193)

While presenting the real composition of the world B.P. in autobiography includes various international political movements which was influence for him heavily. Influenced by the political atmosphere of the early thirties and Mahatma Gandhi's call for civil disobedience movement, BP stood up in his class at the school in Banaras and Said, "I leave my school" Remembering his elder brother, prime Minister Girija Prasad recalled in an exclusive interview. "We lost our father when I was quite young. BP was a father figure to me. He gave

me political training. As a young boy, I used to love listening to his exploits as congress socialist party workers." Indian National Congress wanted only those who believed in non-violence to join the freedom movement. BP was very much aware about national consciousness aroused after the second world war all around the world. Ganesh Raj Sharma comments:

The period of exile was a time when revolutionary movements were gaining round world-wide, even as the cold war between the democratic and communist forces was at this peak. In Europe, student movements were heralding a heightened awareness of changing social realities. With student power emerging revolution everywhere, perhaps that was the source for BP's inspiration to start the Nepal student union. In Nepal, India and Pakistan, too new and revolutionary demands were being made for social transformation.

(x)

In BP's vision, students power is the decisive power for the social transformation. B.P. was there where there was domination, exploitation and injustice. He supported the revolution whose aims was to overthrow autocracy anywhere in the world. Sharma evaluates:

BP started analyzing what to saw as a new departure being made by young people in the west who were engaged in leftist movement that fully accorded with democratic values Lenin's interpretations of revolution once again began to attract him. Even though che Guevara's revolution was still in it's infancy, it provided BP with inspiration. But BP was hardly due to follow others blindly and he studied Gandhi, Lenin, Jefferson and Che. He was deeply committed to democratization, economic development and social justice not only in Nepal but in all other similarly placed developing countries. (X)

In *Atmabrittanta* B.P. expresses the change in the nature of the global politics that took place after the second world war, inspired Asians and Africans for freedom, democracy and human rights. After India's independence in 1847, it was logical on the part of the politically conscious Nepali to assume that a free India would be certainly more helpful to Nepali people in achieving freedom from the autocratic Rana regime in Nepal. Indeed the freedom achieved by India had a great impact on Nepali. B.P. says:

The Nepali community was continuously discussing politics. One thought was that the Indian National Movement was not our movement. My father's point of view was that this was also our movement because the autocracy of the Ranas was supported by British imperialists. For that reasons, the fight against British imperialism was the biggest obstacle to democracy in Nepal and that the Indian independence movement was not only for the benefit of India. (8-9)

B.P. and his father Krishna Prasad Koirala had the same view that Nepal could not be liberated from the Rana rule unless British rulers were driven away from India. Nepal's Ranas had every support from the British. But what shocked the Rana regime and gave its opponents their opportunity was the British withdrawal from India in 1947. This meant the end of British protection, which had also had the effect of protecting the position of Ranas. On the other hand, with India's gaining independence, the Nepali radicals felt secure and were enthused to organize anti Rana activities. On the other hand, "The Rana rulers were alarmed at the likelihood of their family oligarchy being in danger because with the eclipse of China, India stood in 1950 as a foremost Asian country, the natural leader of other Asian countries in the task of liquidating imperialism and colonialism" (Brown, W. Norman). So, B.P. became active in politics and was jailed several times for organizing and participating in the movement against the Rana and mobilizing people for democratic rebellion in Nepal. But the

real momentum started when British Colonial rulers were overthrown and India attained independence and self rule. B.P. had a strong impact of Indian National Movement. So, he participated in that movement. B.P. states:

Gandhi had just arrived in India then and his non-co-operation movement was in preparation. The events of those days left a deep mark on me. I remember three or four events of those days which were of international significance one was the Russian Revolution about which there was a lot of emotional reporting, now poor, the proletariat, had got to rule. (6)

As a recent critic of autobiography, Laura Marcus, has noted, the concept of 'intention' has persistently threaded its way through discussions of autobiography (Marcus, 1994:3).

Attacked by the new critics of the 1930s and 1940s as a fallacy, 'intentionality' signals the belief that the author is behind the text, controlling its meaning; the author becomes the guarantor of the 'intentional' meaning of truth of the text, and reading a text therefore leads back to the author as origin. Within critical discussions of autobiography, 'intention' has had a necessary and often unquestioned role in providing the crucial link between author, narrator and protagonist. Intention, however, is further defined as a particular kind of 'honest' intention which then guarantees the 'truth' of the writing.

B.P. developed into a serious dialectician. He had accepted Marxist dialectics. He said, "I am Marxist in the sense that I have accepted the Marxist methodology in enumerating how a society evolves." He further observed, "I was on probation in the communist party but my progress was very tandy. I was not very happy in that company for two or three reasons; one of which was that my natural sympathies were with Trotsky who I thought was more of an internationalist than Stalin who was a nationalist. The manner in which Stalin dealt with Trotsky was very distasteful to me." BP states:

However, it was Gandhi's movement which affected me the most. There were two or three political streams in India back then: one that took a soft line, another that was Gandhi's and a hard line faction which favored militancy. In our house we used to discuss all these tendencies, and people representing all these streams used to call on us. Professors come by, and lawyers, and our house was like a centre, one reason because we were Nepali, and another because of my father. (7)

BP's ideological goal was to establish 'democratic socialist society' as a synthesis of realism, Gandhism and Marxism, which was also the cherished goal of congress socialist party of India from its very inception. B.P. Wants to bring democratic socialism to his country with a view to establishing social system where a common man could aspire with honor for economic, political and social justice in the society. However, he and his colleagues had felt that unless India got her independence from the British imperialism, it was difficult to bring about such a social transformation in Nepal. Therefore for a long time, BP had made India his battle ground and fought along with the Indian nationalists for India's independence.

The talk was now about organizing a political conference. Dr. Rammonohar Lohia was an expert at publicity, and he advised me on the statements to put out, the kind of publicity campaign, we must conduct, calling the press, and so on. the conference was confirmed for Calcutta. Dr. Lohia said, "I will also come. Send me an invitation". I had also met and talked to others. For examples, I had a nice chat with Jawaharlalji's younger sister, Vijaya Laxmi Pandit, then a minister in UP of course, I met Acharya Narendra Dev and Jaya Prakashji, Rammonohar Lohia, and so on. I had written to them all to wish us well and to try to attend the Calcutta conference. (36)

Roy Pascal, an early critic of the genre, autobiography depends on the seriousness of the author, the seriousness of his personality and his intention in writing (qtd. in autobiography as a self narrative genre). For Karl Weintraub, an autobiography can only be understood if the 'place' the authors themselves occupy in relation to their lives can be reconstructed by the readers. Reading an autobiography 'priority' means reading with an already existing knowledge of the text's meaning: 'this moment, this point of view, needs to be recaptured for a proper understanding of the autobiographic effort; so must the motivation and intention of the author for writing autobiography as at all' (Weintraut 1978: xviii). For these critics autobiographies are seen as providing proof of the validity and importance of a certain conception of authorship: authors who have authority over their own texts and whose writings can be read as forms of direct access to themselves (Olney 1972: 332).

However in spite of BP's efforts, the democratic forces in Nepal could not gather momentum. The lack of maturity of Nepali politicians, their constant intrigues and scramble for power never permitted the popular forces to merge into effective unit against their enemies. In the resulting remarkable group politics and pettiness, the larger goals of economic and political reforms were completely forgotten. Instead, there was a general scramble by the politicians to gain the favor of the Monarch. Some of them succeeded in entering the ministry. This only strengthened the Royal hands. Average Nepali became more and more apathetic towards politics and political parties in general. BP further expresses:

Padma Shumshere seemed to be facing a difficult time in Kathmandu. He had sent a note to India saying that Mohan Shumshere was planning to kill him, that his life was in danger. He had gone to India on a state visit, and Jawaharlal Nehru told me, "I am pressuring him to return, for it will be easier for you all if he remains in power. If he goes, it will get difficult. Thus, you

too must make him return, providing some assurance or other." This was why

I went to meet Padma Shumshere when he come to Calcutta. (64)

"Every man's life", remarked Dr. Johnson, "should be best written by himself" (qtd. in Guha Ramchandra). This political memoir *Atmabrittanta* denotes the endeavor by a retired politician to recount the important political engagements of his or her career, to explain and interpret the choices made and forces encountered, to portray the relationships experienced in the course of political activity while assessing the qualities of cohorts, and perhaps to offer some percepts or wisdom to assist political successors. It is this type of political memoir which has served as the principal focus for the memoirs project. This autobiography's compelling themes have been made more pregnant by the recent happenings in Kathmandu palace, says historian Ramachandra Guha. Guha evaluates:

The autobiography of the Nepali politician and sometime prime minister B.P. Koirala stands as a stunning exception to the rule. This is a remarkable document of personal and social history, a vivid account of exile and rebellion that provides acute insights into the history and politics of the 20th century. Koirala's memoirs were not written but spoken, dictated into a microphone held by his friend and associate, the Kathmandu lawyer Ganesh Raj Sharma. When he began the exercise, in December 1981, the politician was already in the advanced stages of throat cancer. The transcripts remained with Sharma for years; only when Nepal renewed its acquaintance with democracy, in the 1990s was it safe to place them before the public.

The political environment of Nepal in the 1950s was characterized by constant political changes. Changes in the government, splits, merges and disintegration of political groups and parties. It was a decade of political stalemate and economic stagnation. The Delhi agreement

was a compromise between the king, the Nepali congress and the Ranas. It gave the country an interim constitution and guaranteed democratic rights to the people. However, it could not wipe out the discontent among the different groups. Some dubbed it as "in famous" and others called it as "total surrender to Indian pressure". Referring to the Delhi Agreement BP says "I don't think it is fair to dub the Delhi Agreement in famous." As a matter of fact, it laid the foundation of democracy in Nepal.

King Tribhuvan's participation in the anti-Rana movement had enhanced the prestige of the crown. During the course of their long despotic rule, the Ranas themselves had reared up a tradition of monarchy and its divine theory which later paved the way for their downfall. B.P. says "On question for power the king did not want to relent. In fact he wanted to get more power for himself, for the crown, for the king, where as I wanted that the King should start functioning as a constitutional monarch right from the onset." BP says:

What was going to be the position of the king when we began our armed revolution ? If we fought in the name of the king, they would certainly put him in custody. For that reason we had to spirit him away. The easiest would be to fly him out in a helicopter, if we could get it to the airport. We would be able to form a government after we got the king to Palpa. We would get India to recognize continuing to proceed with the insurrection. That was the plan and for it to succeed it was important to get the commander-in-chief of Palpa on our side. Who would go to Palpa ? (100)

The term 'autobiography' is commonly thought to have been coined by the nineteenth century poet Robert Southley in 1809 when he was describing the work of a Portuguese poet, Francisco Veura; however, there is evidence of slightly earlier usage, at the end of the eighteenth century, in a review attributed to William Taylor of Isaac D'Israeli's *Miscellanies*,

where he ponders whether 'autobiography' though 'pedantic', might not have been a better term than the 'hybrid' word 'self-biography' employed by D'Israel (Nussbaum, 1989: 1; Marcus 1994: 12). Felicity Nussbaum argues that by the 1830s the word had become a matter of established usage, though definitions of what it might mean were by no means stable. From her perspective, focusing on a range of eighteenth-century autobiographical writing, the pressure to read these texts in conformity with 'dominations of a unified self' comes later, indeed can be dated to the more perspective approach to autobiography adopted by those modern critics. According to Laura Marcus, the nineteenth century saw a gradual alignment of autobiography with the value accorded to authorship. *Atmabrittanta* as an autobiography focuses on BPS personal life, his political struggle and his relationship with king.

This political memoir should be read for its insights into Nepali politics. It should be read for what it tells us about India and Indians. It should be read for what it tells us about India and Indians. It should be read as a moving testament of one who was caught, on the right side, in the great battle of the modern world, that between autocracy and democracy. And it should be read for its literary qualities. For B.P. was one of the country's finest writers as well as its most prominent political rebel. As a critic C.K. Lal points out, B.P. was a literary innovator, perhaps the first Nepali writer to sensitively portray women and to look towards local dialect rather Sanskrit for this inspiration. "It is baffling", writes Lal, "that no writer in Nepal to date has been able to reach the depth of mind of characters in a story the way B.P. did."

The seeds of discontent against the Rana regime often grew among the fast expanding families of the Ranas themselves. Even during the reign of Jang Bahadur, a plot to assassinate the mighty prime minister was hatched by his own brother. Badri Narsingh, known as Bhandarkhal Parba. This dastardly act cost Badri Nar Singh heavily. He forfeited

his right for succession. Janga Bahadur's role of succession provided for the eldest among the living brothers to succeed as prime minister. It had many flaws. The worst was that it gave an opportunity to different but related families to plot against each other in order to gain maximum advantage on path to succession. BP regarding the case of Rana comments in the following way:

The Ranas then came out with a group called Gorkha Dal. I was the home minister but without experience in these matter. The report they generated gave the impression that we would be finished off tomorrow if not today. But they all turned out to be false. A police report would come in stating that 'Nati Jarnel'. Bharat Shumsehre's Limousine was seen at night at a certain place. Another report would state that there were some others gathered there. A third report would state that guns and pistols were also being assembled. Three reports would come to me through three different channels. That was the real situation on the ground. (135)

In 1965, with B.P. in jail, the Oxford University Press published a book called *Heroes and Builders of Nepal*. The author, the civil servant and diplomat Rishikesh Shah, began his narrative with Janak and Buddha and ended it with Tribhuvan and Mahendra, paying his dues en route to the great medieval warrior kings such as Pratap Malla and Prithvi Narayan Shah. Given its author's position and the timing of its publication, the book makes no mention of the Nepali congress or of that hero and builder of modern Nepal. B.P. Koirala, the narrative of the *Atmabrittanta* perceptibly flags after Koirala's arrest. The eight years in Sundarimal Jail are quickly glossed over. B.P. spend many years in different jails which became a agonizing memory for him. He remembers his jail life in this way:

The jailer came when it was already bright and he said, "This is your home now. This is where you will remain. Every day you will receive from the government, like the rest of the prisoners, a pound of rice, one paisa, three red chilies, some salt and two bundles of firewood." The firewood come in two bundles and was thin and spindly, like the kind you use in ritual fires. In a small container, I would receive the grain, chilies and salt in a packet of rice-paper, with one paisa on top. And, of course, the two bundles of firewood. The jailer said, "you have to prepare your own meals, and for that I will have a fireplace set up. You will not be allowed out." (84-85)

Petty interest played significant role for almost five years in the politics of Nepal. In the midst of this chaos, the king vested all royal power to the crown prince on the 18th February 1955 and left for his treatment abroad. On 2nd May, 1956, Crown Prince Mahendra was coroneted as proclaimed as the king. The crown prince with full royal authority boldly stated:

It has been almost four years since the inception of democracy in our country. But we have search and research to find even four achievements to our credit in the mean while. It is really a matter of great pity. Should we say that democracy is in a state of infancy ? Evil propensities like selfishness, greed and envy are very much noticeable in it, which are unnatural for infant

On 16th March, 1957, King Mahendra appointed a commission consisting of five members to draft a constitution. This commission presented to him what he had worked for. In the preamble to the draft constitution, it was stated that "Sovereignty continues to reside in the king." A happy king Mahendra declared, "It was designed to promote the welfare of this generation and also those to come and deemed suitable for this ancient land of ours."

Contrary to this, the Nepali congress had worked and hoped for people's sovereignty. But the

Nepali congress quickly accepted the constitution. BP embossed by peoples power and king Mahendra by his own power, the tussle ensued. Both were insuflated. If they have combined their efforts, Nepal would have been a different country today.

King Mahendra, as crown prince, had seen his father languish in the palace prison for years together, where there was always a threat to his life lurking behind. There was always a kind of subdued hostility between King Tribhuvan and the crown prince. Many a time BP had to intervene to diffuse the tension between them.

The steps taken by Koirala government to abolish Birta land and it's policy of land reform annoyed the reactionaries in Nepal, who were perpetually insinuating the King to do away with the popular government. King Mahendra who was not a democrat wanted to establish his own authority and got the opportunity that he was looking for. He dismissed the elected government on December 15, 1960, imposed his own direct rule and called for a partyless Panchayat System. The Nepali Congress till then had not gained the status of a dominant national party. It had brought a revolution in Nepal.

BP was badly disappointed by the dismissal of the government. He had been throughout apprehensive of the destructive forces working against national reconstruction. He further cautioned: "The Nepali Congress must try to bind all other national forces into a single strand by means of which the problems of present day revolution may be solved, and the country may proceed on its appointed path for economic development and national reconstruction" (qtd. in Mishra Kiran, B.P. Koirala life and time).

While replying to a question about the difficulties on the way of building up parliamentary democracy in Nepal, BP puts forward his view in this way:

The first difficulty we face is that of a learner. We have suffered a century of autocratic rule and there was no popular institution worth the name. The

problem therefore, is a psychological one that of adjusting to the democratic ways now being introduced in the country. Our second difficulty is administrative formerly, the Rana prime minister's word was law in the country and his orders were implemented unhesitatingly. But the situation today is different since prime minister cannot do anything without consulting other departments . . . The congress therefore cannot work quickly, but the people are not going to be satisfied with such excuses. In view of our limited resources and backward social economy I also think that for a few years we must give up socialism. Our first problem is the utilization of all our available resources of the country in a planned way. We must do everything to build up our capital forming capacity. (132)

A survey of the history of self-authored records by political leaders immediately indicates that autobiography in various forms is as ancient as politics and literature themselves. Indeed, the quest of political leaders to memorialize themselves precedes the rise of literary as in both ancient and modern pre-literate cultures leaders have had their lives and deeds memorialized through oral narration passed across generations and in graphic representation on stone, wood and other physical media. While the forms political leaders have used to tell their stories have changed over the epochs of time. The narration and recording of the political history of a people by or through its leader presents a natural vehicle for both the construction and reception of history which, it seems all literate cultures discover sooner or later and express in varying forms Mary Jean Corbett Sees that 'writing autobiography becomes a way of attaining both literary, legitimacy and a desired subjectivity. Autobiography resituates the writer in his work. Thus mitigating the dangers of the anonymity and alienation of modern authorship.

BP Koirala achieves a coincidence of the artistic and the political, a unity that is neither automatic nor mechanical in *Atmabrittanta*. *Atmabrittanta* fills up with political conflict and struggle which is presented in a artistic way. BP in *Atmabrittanta* mentions intra and inter political conflict and problems in this way:

We had so many challenges that we should have been facing united. There was the challenge of the feudal classes represented by the Ranas the king was trying to expand his own reach which had to be stopped, meanwhile. India was trying to get involved, which too had to be halted. Most immediately, there was the breakdown of law and order. In the meantime, the public sought some progress, for this was why we had conducted the revolution. The tiller must hold the land he works on. I did not get the full support required to get this done. the only people who backed me fully were Subarnaji and Ganeshmanji support was of the ignorant and emotional kind. Real and effective support. I did not get from the party. The attacks on me continued. (146-47)

BP is a revolutionary hero like the hero of Maxim Gorki's mother who over threw the exploiters and wanted to recognize society in his own socialist model. B.P. interpreted events in his lifetime as significant steps toward the revolutionary outcome B.P. was indeed stunning one appeared like the dark shadow of the events to come and led the politics of Nepal into new phase of its development. BP was a popular and radical leader with magnetic personality. His advocacy of progress reforms and insistence on their ruthless implementation had made the king restive. His uncompromising nature had earned despite for him from the leader of other political parties. His early success in Nepali politics had made him over-confident and flam boyant. Three big victories have been to his credit. (1) the overthrow of the Rana regime (2) his being consulted at the tripartite agreement, and (3) his becoming the leader of the part

in the coalition government and King Tribhuvan's banking on his advice during the period of coalition government. Because of the negative and positive features of BP Koirala, King had to keep him away from power. On the other hand, among the Nepali Congress leaders only Matrika Koirala had the desired quality of accommodating himself with the traditional authority. He served the King with courteous manner without indulging in the new fangled practices of egalitarian speech and arrogant behavior. Moreover, Indian ambassador who had been in touch with the king and whose advice the king needed was also against B.P. In Atmabritta, B.P. criticizes the Indian ambassador for taking undue interest in the domestic affairs of Nepal:

I had stated earlier that an ambassador should remain an ambassador. I had issued a public statement that he should not as if he were chairman of a district board in India... I said that he could not do here what he would as a district chairman, and that he must know his place. (148-49).

BP had been quite consistent from the beginning, way back in 1950 during the merger of the Nepali congress and Nepal democratic congress he had said:

Political democracy, however vital in the present context, is just a means to an end, a means in which although, a part of the aim is already achieved. We want political freedom because we want to build up a society after our heart, a society in which the citizens are not exploited, where there is no poverty, no inequality, where education is free and human personality is not stunted from wants. As a matter of fact, really free society cannot exist in the midst of poverty. Eradication of poverty will be the first concern of the future government of Nepal. (285)

BP had a clear vision of Nepal's future. He visualized a political democracy in which "monarchy. . . will indeed continue, but it will be adjusted to the requirements of democracy as in the United Kingdom" (qtd. B.P.'s *Afno Katha*, 16). The monarch in Nepal however was not prepared to play a second fiddle. A clash between the democratically elected prime minister and the king became inevitable and thinking emerged Victorians. The Coup enacted by King Mahendra, incidentally, was not against BP personally, King's enemy was rapidly changing the socio-economic life of the Nepalese people. But king Mahendra's alibi for the takeover was that "the very existence of the country was endangered and the omens of a fratricidal civil war among the Nepalese people become visible in the horizon." In fact, rather than the existence of the country was king Mahendra's throne that was at stake as perceived by him. In this connection BP states:

Once King Mahendra requested us to form the government there was a grand event and I spoke over the radio immediately afterwards. It was message to the nation, and that is another of the speeches I have given that I feel is worth studying. There must be a copy of it somewhere. In it, I outlined the goals of our government. We then set about forming the council of ministers, which also yielded some significant moments. One had to do with Surya Prasadji. He had run from two constituencies, one in Kathmandu valley and the other in East no. 1, Ramechhap. He had expected to win with a large margin in his both places. During my election tour I had said I would campaign in his districts as well, but we had said, "No, there is no need. You concentrate on the villagers. I will manage." (191)

King Mahendra was scared that BP would emerge as a world leader. It was evident that gradually he was getting out of Indian influence. If New Delhi could not control him how

could the palace ? In this connection Paul de Man argued, autobiography was plagued by a series of unanswerable questions, which arose from the fundamental attempt to conceive of autobiography as a separate genre at all. According to de man, Autobiography always looks slightly disreputable and self indulgent' in the company of the major genres - the novel, poetry and drama-never quite attaining aesthetic dignity nor even providing an empirically useful way of understanding texts since each specific instance seems to be an exception to the norm' (de man 1979b: 919). As his own alternative point of departure, de men proposes that autobiography is not a genre at all but 'a figure of reading or understanding' that is in operation not only within autobiography but also across a range of texts. He identifies autobiography with a linguistic dilemma which is liable to be repeated every time an author makes himself the subject of his own understanding. The interest of autobiography, according to de man, is that it reveals something which is in fact much more generally the case that all knowledge, including self-knowledge, depends on figurative language or tropes. autobiographies thus, produce fictions or figures in place of the self-knowledge they seek. What the author of an autobiography does is to try to endow his inscription within the text with all the attributes of a face in order to mask or conceal his own fictionalization or displacement by writing.

BP in *Atmabrittanta* talks about his jail life where he produced a lot of works/ texts. Sundarijal, a camp jail, eighteen kilometers away from Kathmandu, had become a second home for BP during long years of his imprisonment. Nepal saw many ups and downs during this period. King Mahendra's royal proclamation had put BP ministry under framed up changes of misuse of power. BP says:

However, the King did something unexpected and not according to my suggestion: he nominated Saneybabu, my opponent from the Biratnagar

constituency. Even outside observers could not stomach that. Foreign ambassadors said to me. "This was most inappropriate from the King's side. It was not correct to nominate someone solely because he had opposed you, and who has no other forte or contribution. "I replied." This king has done what he has done I do not wish to comment on it." However, I did protest to the kind, for that nomination showed his narrow mindedness. Besides, Saneybabu emerged as a negative presence in parliament, where he would noise needless obstacles. Sometimes he would say that he was sick and could not stand up as he spoke. (194)

BP's only strength was people's faith in him, and his honesty and integrity. People refused to believe the false propaganda unleashed by the despotic king because they knew their leader well. A letter which he wrote to his wife, Shushila from Sundari jail has an important tale to tell about BP's character and integrity: "As I am now a plain and simple Bishwesar Prasad Koirala, whom the king does not know and no more his prime minister to whom he had lavished those gifts. I feel I have no right to keep them." (King Mahendra and his wife Ratna had presented a watch, a record-player and a bracelet to Koiralas).

Having sensed the dangers of chaotic political situation. BP wanted to have reconciliation with the king. the logic behind the reconciliatory posture taken by BP was explained by him as "In the situation of Nepal today we are unable to cope up with big dislocation and instability. We have to depend on peaceful method of transformation, political as well as social. We need the co-operation of the King for this. In case if we say we don't need his support then perhaps the instability and revolution which takes place will create such chaos that we may not be in a position to steer it." As L.R. Baral writes, "with all blames put on him following the detect of multi-party side in the referendum, BP's charisma

suffered a considerable set-back, but he once again emerged as unquestionable leader of Nepali congress. Koirala was equally praised for his intellect and maligned for his miscalculations and intransigence. Moreover, he had been criticized as the most contradictory politician who, for all practical purposes, could neither comprehend Nepal's political context nor did he ever try to take his political stand to a logical end. "He further writes." In 1968, he was released from he would give fair trial to the party's decision to accept the development of the constitution under the guidance of the king. Not satisfied with the 1968 decision of the party, he, however reverted to the line of confrontation, which he advocated and practiced from India since 1969. When he found that his pressure tactic was not going to pay any dividends to him he made his national reconciliation offer of 1976." To this criticism one can only add BP was not a Pandit who could foresee the future. He could only analyze a situation as it arose and find a solution to a problem in a democratic way. BP respects other's opinion and also make believe in his view in the following way:

I replied, "I may be able to accept your suggestion at a personal level, and I do accept it. There is nothing riding by a name. As Shakespeare has said, you may give the rose any name, its aroma remains the same. My interest is not in the name but in the substance. But the fact is that our party is presently engaged in a movement, an armed struggle. At present, I am only a prisoner. You are not talking to someone active in the party hierarchy. You should therefore give this suggestion to Subarnaji. You must convince Subarnaji, and I do not doubt he will agree." (274)

BP is a revered democratic politician, who has been a source of inspiration for Nepali youths. At the same time, his literary work also has earned high degree of reputation and respect in Nepal. BP has twin personality a visionary politician and a legendary writer. It is said that

loss in politics is a gain in literature. It is applied to BP as well. His long years in jail proved to be productive for Nepali literature as he wrote several fictions during his jail years. His imprisonment in Sundarijal jail was the most productive period of his literary life.

In a society characterized by poverty and socio-religious inequalities the people are looking for a kind of political representation that opens up perspectives and hopes changing their fate. BP's observation of the people's lives of the then Kathmandu is shown in the following line:

With Kedarman Byathit's help, I constantly moved from place to place, staying a day or two at each. Everywhere, it was at the house of lower class Newar families, with men engaged in the lower levels of government service. It was during this time that I learnt about the level of poverty in the city. It was hard for us, used to life on the plains, to imagine this kind of destination. Sure, you saw the anyone drinking milk. I must have stayed with 10 or 15 families during that period and among them drinking milk seemed unheard of. They consumed a lot of rice, with a little daal and chilli, pepper and since it was winter, some mustard greens. (72)

Man cannot be a Solitary, a historical being man is social animal and literature should carry his activities. Man is a social animal where ontological being can't be separated from his social and historical surroundings. In society there are conflict, contradiction, domination, poverty etc. The world is not heavenly body so it is rounded by so many problems.

Atmabrittanta as an autobiography depicts the true account of BP's family life and personality matching by a disintegration of outer world. Koirala family was representative family of that time who are compelled to exile, lived in a difficult situations:

During this period, my father's life, too, was undergoing a dramatic phase. At home there was no food and one often had to go hungry. I had a brother Harihar, when he died of cholera, the family did not even have money to buy a cremation shroud. My family was then based in Bettiah, but the members were scattered. My mother was all alone, my father was elsewhere. The men folk sold newspapers, and with the small income it was possible to make Khunde, mixing flour and vegetables to make meal. Sushil's father, Bodh Prasad worked in a shop and sold newspapers in the evening. I also sold papers. That was how we lived. (16)

From this tear brusting statement we know that hardship exile life under the poverty. All of the property of Koirala's family was confiscated by the Ranas as a result Koirala family had to suffer a great financial hardship in exile. BP was brought up in the state of scarcity and financial difficulties. BP's brother died because the lack of medicine and proper nutrition. His father is psychologically breakdown because of poverty and rendered here and there to collect financial support. Mother always remain in house caring child in the absence of matter to fulfill their needs. Working Sunshine to sunset with earning little to join hand and mouth was the concrete reality of exiled Nepali family. In *Atmabrittanta*, how BP takes the economic base for the political movement is clarified in the following statements:

We saw great poverty along the way, and this served as the background for our deliberations an economic aspects of our political movement. My own socialist convictions became quite apparent. The others also had the opportunity to present their own perspectives. (42)

The emancipator movements which BP was going to initiate, aims at abolishing the concentration of wealth in the hands of tiny minority by seizing political and legal power

from the hands of Rana and Shah class. Thus, BP being a socialist, advocates class struggle of the people against the ruling class until the political power is seized and socialist emancipatory society is established.

Because the subject of autobiography is a self-representation and not the autobiographer himself, most contemporary critics describe this "self" as a fiction. When we locate the pressure to tell the truth in the context of the fictive self accountable for producing truth, the problematical alliance between fact and fiction in autobiography begins to emerge.

Autobiography is rooted in the confession a form in which telling the truth or not telling the truth can meet with dramatic and occasionally fatal results. As Foucault explains, the autobiography is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship. Autobiography cannot in this context be seen to draw its social authority simply from a privileged relation to real life. Rather, authority is derived through autobiography's proximity to the rhetoric of truth telling the confession.

According to Michael Fischer, autobiography offers a way of overcoming the limits of traditional social theory that would require the autobiographer to construct a life account according to the researcher's limited self-representational models.

Autobiography is an elusive and ambiguous genre that is very difficult to define. Philippe Lejeune (1989: 4) has defined autobiography as "Retrospective prose narrative written by real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life in particular, the story of his personality." Indeed, despite varying degrees of fictionalization in individual works and despite the difficulty, if not impossibility, of accessing or tracing the real-life experiences of the autobiographer, autobiography does have a different ontological status, for, as we all know, the criterion of "truth" is applicable to this genre. Indeed, the

discovery of various kinds of degrees of fictionalization in autobiography is based on the very fact that there exists an extratextual reality for distinguishing the fictional from the factual.

Atmabrittanta also explores BP's relation with national and international communist party and their leaders. About Nepal communist party's attitude towards Nepali congress BP had said "The pro-Moscow groups have been sometimes very friendly and sometimes very hostile. It is more or less the same with pro-peking groups. The whole problem with pro-peking groups, I don't know whether they are pro-peking or not, but they call themselves Maoist, is that there are five or six groups. They find among themselves more bitterly then against others. And there are severe differences between the pro-peeking and pro-Moscow lines. So far as Nepal's politics is concerned they are not much of consequence at present. They may have the potentiality but that is about all. In the context of the referendum or of the election that would follow they are of no consequence. BP explains his meeting with Mao Tse Tung in the following sentences:

We talked about this and that for about an hour and a half. That was the only time that I met Mao Tse Tung. He then called photographers over to take pictures. These were the few points we discussed, Mount Everest, the relationship between small and large states, and the need for an indigenous strategy in a country with a low capital base. I was very impressed with Mao Tse Tung, for he did not try to put pressure on me though his behavior was like that of an all knowing intellectual. I was struck by his statement. "It was only after we got rid of the Russian influence that we managed to come to power" (227).

With China consolidating it's position in Tibet, Nepal came to acquire a sensitive and strategic importance. The king of Nepal for long a puppet in the hands of the Ranas, came to

Delhi and sought political asylum. He was given a rousing welcome. Nehru took this as an opportunity to show to the world community his statesmanship and liberalism. Nehru's policy was to compel the Ranas to carry out political reforms which would redeem autocracy and to receive the king back and to effect this by pressure rather than open support to Nepali congress. It was not that Nehru disapproved of the Nepali congress, but he did not wish to promote a messy and drawn out situation of fighting between popular elements and the Royal Nepal Army. So, when Nepali congress started a revolt and B.P. Koirala come to Delhi seeking military support, Nehru declined to see him but kept Koirala informed, to prevent a civil war and establishment of constitutional government. BP further expresses:

Gandhiji said, "I cannot help you in any way. If my own people will not heed me, will the Ranas listen ? I do not think I can help in any way, "I replied, "I have not come seeking any material support from you. We need your sympathy and moral support for our struggle. You are not only a leader of India but a beacon for wherever there is exploitation. You must give your support to wherever people are struggling for freedom." When I said that, he responded, "Whenever there is struggle against injustice, exploitation and repression, it will have my support. But I can't do anything more than that. I myself-I only see darkness." (66)

Pandit Jawaharlal, the prime minister of India could characterize the Nepali congress leadership including Bp as an amateur adventurist and get away with it. There is no doubt that, in reinstating king Tribhuvan, Pandit Nehru played a key role. In fact, Panditji informed the British Government that it might become almost impossible for him to attend commonwealth prime ministers conference in January 1951, if they recognized boy King whom Ranas had enthroned in the place of his grandfather, Pandit Nehru's tactics paid. Ranas lost their

first battle. Ranas could not do anything without the support of the British and the British had to depend on Nehru for the success of common wealth. Later events show that Pandit Nehru Succumbed to his role of being a mentor and behaved in a way that the revolution of Nepal was way laid. Nepali congress which had started a revolution, tamely settled down to a coalition government with the same Ranas against whom they had picked up arms. BP's plotting against Ranas is clarified in the following lines:

I went by train to Calcutta that very night, on the 28th, and arrived on the morning of the 30th. I made my contract, and the man said he would have the grenades ready for transfer at 6 o'clock. He told me to be standing at a particular place. I arrived at the appointed hour, and the contact came over and handed me the six hand grenades, wrapped in a white towel. I had called Basanta Shumshere on the phone and asked him to come over. He was staying at Park Street with his daughter. (67)

In 1959, when tension with China was building up, Nehru declared in one breath "In case of an aggression India would defend Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal." These utterances immediately led to uproars in Kathmandu. There were demonstrations, protests, meetings and agitations witnessed everywhere. The sovereignty of Nepal was sacred to BP and he would not permit any one to take liberty to undermine it. At that time BP thought:

The Indian side believed that I was leaning a bit towards China, and so the newspapers were very critical of me. I felt the need to clarify my position, and in public rather than with the government, and so used the public reception given in my honor at the Red Fort for the purpose, Jawaharlalji had accompanied me to the program me which had been organized there. (125)

Immediately after the upheavals, the Indo-Nepalese treaty of 1950 was signed. This treaty in appearance was almost a copy of the treaty of 1923 which was signed between imperialist Britain and the Ranas. In fact much the irritation in the Nepalese mind was caused by this treaty. It was considered undignified on the part of free India to follow in the footsteps of her imperialist rulers. In 1950-52, India was in a position to give a more positive and perhaps less interfering lead to Nepal on a steadier path for democratic reforms. At that time India's prestige was high and for all practical purposes Nepal was dependent on India. A chance, however, was missed. In the end, India was neither able to win back the confidence of the people of Nepal nor serve the cause of democracy. India's confusion was fully exploited by the Monarch and his clique, while the revolutionaries who had sacrificed everything felt hurt and neglected by India. Later on, India on her part naturally felt cheated. To maintain good relation between the two countries BP was always positive:

I was facing a challenge, that of defining the relationship between Nepal and India. I always used to say, and this must be recorded somewhere, that our ties should not be interpreted only on the basis of ancient history and culture. That is not an important aspect. Look at Europe, it may be one culturally, but they were always fighting and killing each other there. It was clear that good relations cannot be maintained on the basis of cultural affinity alone. Distrust does not disappear just because there is cultural unity. Relationships are dependent upon differing perspectives on society and different expectations we have of the future.(216)

BP's socialist thinking perhaps did not appeal to Pandit Nehru, for he already had shown his reservations regarding the socialist leadership of that time. Otherwise how could Pandit Nehru be unaware of the only leader of Nepal who had an untarnished life of sacrifice and

working tirelessly for the upliftment of the down trodden. The objective of India's policy towards Nepal seems to have been ambiguous from the very beginning. The idealist approach of prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru to see Nepal moving towards a progressive democratic order got mixed up with highly utilitarian purpose to include Nepal as a vital partner in India's defense. These two considerations have alternated according to the variations in the situations. By and large, by this time border security seems to have become Pandit Neharu's primary concern. Every, if there seems a large dispute regarding different issues concerning Nepal and India BP was highly appreciated by Indian rulers

I was much heartened by that visit to India. Jawaharlalji and Indira Gandhi had exhibited a fine and personal sensibility. I told them that I wanted to see two or three things. I was not interested in visiting large factories as we were not in a position to set those up in Nepal. I wanted to see, for example, small sugar mills, and also try and understand how India's hill regions were being developed. (218)

It was due to the personal efforts of BP that the first conference of Nepali Rastriya Congress held in January 1947 passed a resolution expressing solidarity with the people of Indonesia in their struggle against the Dutch colonial rule. Nepal similarly stood for Algerian independence. The world in the sixties was full of distrust. Many third world countries remained non-aligned for the more fact that they wanted to retain their independence arose with unbiased mind. BP was very apprehensive about big power politics:

I developed a liking for quite a few of the people I met. At the United Nations in New York, I met many Arabs; with Israel I already had a good relationship. There was a diplomat from Sand Arabia who used to give very long speeches. When I met him once in the lobby, I asked him, "What are you doing ? No one is listening to your speech." He replied, "I am not talking to the people in the

hall. I was speaking to the people in Saudi Arabia. My speech was meant for them." I liked talking about such things, and I realized that suited my personality.

While addressing the 15th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly, B.P. Koirala said, "The drafters of the charter hoped that the great powers would continue to move ahead and strengthen the United Nations with sufficient measure of unanimity. But this hope has not always been realized and serious deadlocks have arisen between the contending power blocks on many international issues of peace and security. Under the impact of such new demands the function of the United Nations have undergone some transformation and the role of the General Assembly has acquired a new dimension. As was proved by the part it played in resolving the crisis in Egypt and Lebanon. Nowhere is this fact more clearly evident than in the affairs of the Congo republic, where United Nations has taken itself the responsibility of restoring order in an other wise chaotic situation." In the assembly he visits the head of many nations which he remember in this way:

I remember a few things from my visit to the United Nations. When a head of government visits, the treatment he receives can be very significant. That was an important session of the General Assembly, and many heads of government were there, with me representing Nepal. (252)

BP was accused of being biased against foreign powers and their aid-related influence. BP's skepticism regarding foreign aid has come out to be true. When foreign money started flowing easily to Nepal, a class of vested interests developed around it. They channelized this aid money for their own betterment unless common people keep a vigilant watch on the utilization of aid through political process Aid serves no useful national purpose.

Regarding immediate neighbors, India and China, BP had a clear understanding about the path Nepal had to follow. Sandwiched between the two big neighbors it was not always

easy for Nepal to maintain a non-partisan stand, especially after 1960, when India and China became more hostile to each other. In his efforts to maintain a balanced relation with India and China. BP faced problems by the community groups. BP's nationalism and pro-Indianism went well together. He said:

I am of the opinion that relationship between neighbors is governed by the mutuality of self-interests. If there are more points of contact or mutual interest with one neighbor than another, then necessarily there will be more treaties and agreements with the former than the latter. (253)

As far as BP was concerned, way back in 1956, he had criticized Tank Prasad Acharya for his policy towards China BP maintained a balanced approach. In 1959, the leader of Gorkha Parisad, Bharat Shumshere, claimed that a Chinese survey team had entered Lipu area of north-western Nepal and had collected tax from local people. BP remained unmoved. BP's clarity of vision gets manifested when he emphatically says:

All this means that the people of Nepal have two fold responsibility- achievement of Democracy and defense of National integrity. If, however, we consider one of the two responsibilities as our only task. We would be one sided and commit grave blunder. And if we lay stress on the achievement of democracy alone, we may not effectively participate in resolving the national crisis. (287)

Atmabrittanta highlights the struggle of BP throughout his life for the emancipation of people. *Atmabrittanta* also explores BP's belief on Democratic socialism which according to him was the only solution for mankind throughout the world. It was due to his efforts that Nepal came closer to international socialist movement. He was representing Nepal at different world forums. BP was a great believer of tradition, that is the why he said:

We have reached a point in Nepal's history when the king has to make up his mind whether he wants to save his throne or be an authoritarian ruler, kingship in Nepal has been a traditional institution the difference now is he has to like whatever is liked by the people. He should have no choice in the matter. He can't indulge in his personal likes and dislikes. (305)

Atmabrittanta although being autobiography, it includes the then socio-political conflict, struggle and movement for freedom and democracy. B.P Koirala contextualizes and politicizes his personal view in it. *Atmabrittanta* depicts the politics of monarchy, the fragility of Nepal's democracy, the endemic hostility towards India and the disparate inequality in the country side. *Atmabrittanta* was the result of the collective struggle to wrest a realm of freedom from a realm of necessity, B.P. Koirala dramatizes the dichotomy between ruling royal elitist and common people. the text remains coincidental with the individual literary work but functions as a symbolic act providing social problems, the entrance enter political struggle, ambiguities and inconsistencies.

III. B.P.'s Politics

Atmabrittanta reveals the politics of B.P. associating him with the then existing national and international political scenario. *Atmabrittanta* is the expression of B.P. Koirala's consciousness which is characterized by the power politics and the tussle between the King and his subject. In it, B.P. achieves a coincidence of the artistic and the political unity that is neither automatic nor mechanical.

The political environment of Nepal in 1950s was characterized by constant political changes. Changes in the government, splits, mergers and disintegration of political groups and parties. It was a decade of political stalemate and economic stagnation. The Delhi agreement was a compromise between the king, the Nepali congress and the Ranas.

In *Atmabrittanta*, B.P. not only incorporates personal life but also endeavors to include the then period of national and international scenario trying to present him as a national leader. While presenting *Atmabrittanta*, he compares it with Gandhi's autobiography '*An Experiment with Truth*'. It is the politics of Koirala to show himself supreme leader. B.P. was a diplomatic political leader who wanted to hold the power in Nepalese politics.

Because B.P. was a statesman and social reformer, his *Atmabrittanta* though initially intended as a record of personal and family history; ultimately turns out to be socio-political document revealing the society as constituted by class conflict, economic and social contradiction and exploitation as well as domination of the common people under Shah and Rana regime, so *Atmabrittanta* reflects the hidden function of legitimizing and maintaining the position, power and economic interest of the ruling classes.

B.P. Koirala is the national figure who fought for freedom and the democracy against Rana rules. He was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and Indian National Movement. He

believed Rana regime was directly supported by British Raj of India, so he directly participated in Indian National Movement. After the successful dethroning of Britishers from India, nepalese political leader inspired and started people's revolution as a result, tripartite agreement held among Ranas, King and the young party politicians and ended the Rana autocracy.

To put it in a nutshell, BP's *Atmabrittanta* though initially intended as a record of personal and family history ultimately turns out to be more of a socio-political and national document which in turn seems to cloud the fact that the desire for power and self-valorization are predominant underneath as in palimpsest.

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