

Chapter I. Diplomacy through Performances

Of all the different Ranas who ruled Nepal from 1846 to 1950, it is Janga Bahadur Rana who is the most famous and who had the greatest impact on the history of Nepal. Himself the founder of the Rana oligarchy for over a century, Janga's role in history has attracted various viewpoints, ranging from depicting him as a true statesman responsible for one of the foundations of the nation to a tyrant responsible for pushing the nation to a long dark period of internal conflicts, power-game and nepotisms. Janga undeniably appears a powerful man who saved the nation during its most dangerous and vulnerable time since its unification in 1825 BS. As this dissertation will show in the coming discussions, there are a very few critics and historians who have paid their attention to the creative part of this marvelous man. This creative-performative part of Janga is what attracts the researcher to carry out this research work.

Janga succeeded in doing what he wanted to do. He wanted to be a powerful man, even more powerful than the king of Nepal, and he also wanted to remain on power not only throughout his life but also in generations after his death. Behind this success lie a number of factors and his performances appear much more predominating than other factors like feeble king, vacuum of power structure, British role etc.

Janga utilized a number of performance techniques in his 40 years long politically active life to give an impression to everyone that he was somebody of a higher kind than who he was in reality, and thereby lived a politically successful career. Literally an impersonation, Janga Bahadur's personality assumed from the very beginning of his political career has a number of far reaching functions, including his political longevity, benefit of doubts on his part and friendships with the immediate neighbours, most importantly with the British India, and securing and maintaining national sovereignty and independence. Seemingly a little farfetched idea, this is

particularly evident in the travelogue named *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* and generally in his all non-fictional and other accounts written so far.

This dissertation by laying its focus on *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* discusses, on the one hand, the assumed image of Janga Bahadur as evident in the travelogue by putting a special emphasis on the type of performance techniques, like his histrionics, theatricality, acting, lying, clothing, naming, art etc. that are so interestingly used by him, and on the other the type of diplomatic functions, particularly with then powerful British India whose more than 1800 km long border in the aftermath of the Treaty of *Sugauli*, 1815 was shared by Nepal, too.

This study therefore brings two different areas of studies, *viz.* performance and diplomacy, together and explicates the long, inextricable and also formidable use of performance techniques in diplomacy from the very beginning of this practice even before diplomacy as such came into a more visible form in the 14th century Italian city states. Today's diplomatic roles played by various multilateral forums also involve a number of performance techniques, but the performances played more important roles when and where the individuals, societies, nation-states and empires at large were more isolated and unfamiliar to each other. This is particularly true as “diplomacy is an essentially political activity” which according to G.R. Berridge is “well resourced and skillful” because it is “a major ingredient of power” (1). How important the role of diplomatic activity was during nineteenth century, basically for the country like Nepal is very aptly explained by Ramesh Dhungel:

The current confusion in Nepal is not unique in the context of the chaotic nation-building processes of the rest of Southasia. Yet, the country's 19th-century history was significantly different. At that time, most of the smaller but stronger states of India were disappearing, one after another, from the political geography of the

Subcontinent. British power in the region had reached its height, in large part due to its unchallengeable military supremacy. In this scenario, Nepal was the only country in the region that was able to maintain an independent existence, by resisting the military hegemony of the British colonial might in India. (1)

Dhungel explicitly links Nepal's independent existence to Janga Bahadur but he does not go into the details on how Janga could perform such important historical duty. Nor does he give any clue to the performativity of Janga Bahadur either, let alone linking this idea with diplomatic endeavors. The account of Janga Bahadur as it appears in the subject entry "Janga Bahadur" of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, makes a passing remark which is closer to the reality as it gives some links to Janga's contribution to Nepal's national integrity and sovereignty:

Janga Bahadur's diplomatic skill and conciliatory policy helped Nepal remain independent while the rest of the Indian subcontinent came under British rule. During the Indian Mutiny of 1857–58 he sent a contingent of Gurkha soldiers to aid the British, thus establishing a tradition of Gurkha military service in the British army. He also did much to improve and modernize the administration of the country and revised the old penal code. Although he attempted to abolish *suttee*, three of his widows immolated themselves on his funeral pyre. (1263)

This entry recognizes Janga Bahadur's "diplomatic skills" that helped Nepal "remain independent while the rest of the Indian subcontinent came under British rule" and makes it more tempting to go further and explicate this skill or skills that are so paramount in history. One fundamental question should now inhabit in the mind: What "diplomatic skills" did Janga Bahadur utilize to perform the historical responsibility of protecting and maintaining national independence of Nepal? This dissertation is an attempt to unbury the facts lying beneath the

telling and retelling of history, and for this purpose a travelogue based exclusively on the account of Janga Bahadur's visit to Britain in 1850 named *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* has been scrutinized.

Here is a short introduction to Janga Bahadur and the travelogue before moving onto some scholarly ideas of some critics on him and his works, particularly his travelogue. He appears a very multifaceted figure in the history of Nepal, who was born on June 18, 1816 in Borlang, Gorkha and died on February 25, 1877. Not Janga Bahadur but Bir Narsingh Kunwar was his actual name and he became famous by the same assumed name, which given to him by his maternal uncle named Mathwar Singh Thapa. Though never officially declared, it is almost certain among Nepalese historians that Thapa himself was cunningly killed by Janga Bahadur.

The travelogue *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* is an account of Janga Bahadur's visit to *Belait* i.e. Britain in the spring of 1850. It was first published by Kamal Mani Dixit in 2014 BS (1954) from Madan Puraskar Library in Kathmandu under the name *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*. Believed to have been written by one of his travelling companions, most probably by Subba Siddhiman Rajbhandar as mentioned by Dixit and Whelpton, the author drew on the Prime Minister's own diary in compiling his account of the journey. John Whelpton translated the travelogue into English and published it in 1983.

This travelogue gives an interesting picture of Janga Bahadur Rana: Janga is seen in performance. A closer reading of the travelogue reveals the idea that he is playing a game, putting himself in action and above all exposing theatricality that is nowhere seen in his accounts published so far, and also that such histrionic activity of Janga is seldom found in the accounts of other people. The travelogue presents a unique performative art of Janga Bahadur. This image of

Janga as projected in the travelogue can be taken as something contributive to rightly configure his role in history, as the travelogue plays a crucial role in filling many gaps many historians have left open.

It is not surprising to see that most of the written accounts of Nepalese history portray Janga Bahadur as a ruthless killer and the founder of disgusting Rana oligarchy, almost equivalent to the Miltonian satanic hero in the *Paradise Lost*. Most of the reference materials written on Janga Bahadur have stereotypically presented him as merciless Machiavellian man. This is often complained by Kamal Mani Dixit in many of his writings, including his *Janga Bahadurko Belaiti Kapi* (British Notebook of Janga Bahadur), saying that Janga still awaits a right judgment (2). From this angle, it is further interesting to see and analyze the role of Janga Bahadur for the reason that the account we read in the *Belait-Yatra* takes the readers to a different direction: an actor performing something that has to do with among other things his style of diplomacy to maintain a friendly relations with one of the most powerful contemporary world power. His diplomacy results from something like tact and shrewdness presented in a very unique and noticeable way.

Janga Bahadur snatched unprecedented power and privilege and could prolong it for about a century, i.e. into generations after his death. Why he got the type of support from the king and other people in Nepal and more importantly from the British Empire is a question worth pondering. Historians have put many hypotheses to answer this question, including Baburam Acharya in his *Aba Yesto Kahilehi Nahos* and Chittaranjan Nepali in his edited *Nepalko Itihaska Bibidh Pakchha*, among others. Kamal Mani Dixit, the editor of *Belait-Yatra*, John Whelpton, the translator of it into English and Prof. Dr. Abhi Subedi, a critic and scholar who has also written about Janga Bahadur, have amply discussed about him but the line of thought for Dixit is

to redraw the understanding of Janga in popular culture and for John Whelpton just to “open a new area of interest” by translating the book and for Subedi inverse perception of coloniality, though the last of these writers sees various possible interpretations including Janga’s performativity.

Commenting on the situation in the aftermath of the premeditated murder of General Mathwar Singh Thapa in the night of the 17th May 1845, Baburam Acharya in the aforementioned book makes it clear that Janga Bahadur was a very clever person, who after killing his own maternal uncle from the back of a curtain (88). He says that Janga Bahadur rises from the separate but mounting ambitions of both the King Rajendra and his wife Rajyalaxmi, as both the latter were blind in their own dreams. Baburam Bhattarai recognizes Janga’s shrewdness but nowhere does he link this to diplomatic roles.

Subedi in his *Inverse Perception of Coloniality* comes closer in linking Janga Bahadur’s deeds to Nepal’s sovereignty and independence by his unique performative art of diplomacy but he does not go into the details (19). In fact, he opens up a variety of possibilities for the researchers and raises an array of problems for historians. Another prominent critic, Dr. Sanjeev Upreti discusses both Janga and Chandra Samser from the point of view of construction of masculinity and mimicry, who except making some passing remarks does not touch this issue.

In Nepalese history, there is always a wave of thought that Janga appeased the British Empire and British people simply treated him as an ally, a friend not a foe. They also claim that the Treaty of Sugauli concluded in 1816 between Nepal and the British India was a foundation enough for the succeeding generations to work in the shadows of it, and Janga was there simply to step into the formats already laid down by Kaji Bhimsen Thapa and other brave Gorkhas.

This dissertation, therefore, lays its focus on Janga's performances –his art, roles, histrionics, naming, acting, lying etc.-- and links them to his form of diplomacy used so successfully to garner the support from the British Empire throughout his life. Janga's performative art stands above all his strategies and tactics that he used from time to time. Furthermore, correct understanding and interpretation of the travelogue make it tempting to revising and rewriting of the history of Janga Bahadur, including his role, his source of power and every aspect worth exploring for further understanding of such issue.

This dissertation, thus, identifies answers to some of the most important questions like how Janga Bahadur Kunwar and his brothers “emerged victorious from the power struggle”, maintained so good relations with the British Raj and thereby succeeds in securing and maintaining the sovereignty and independence of this tiny Himalayan kingdom in the faces of so dangerous and turbulent times in history. One should not forget the fact that the time Janga lived was also the time many empires like Ottomans, Persians, Bengal, Punjab, Maratha, Malaya, Khmer and many other in Asia, and Germany, Anatolia, Prussia, Russia and Poland were busy constantly rising and collapsing in the waves of history.

By focusing on performance and performance art, and also on diplomacy, this research work makes a detailed study of *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* in light of these concepts in order to shape a tacit understanding of performance and diplomacy, as it is generally conceived that diplomacy is one of the most performative art, involving various arts, techniques, lies and tactics. Wit is always permeating all such acts. Janga Bahadur's wit in performing the roles and thereby creating its desired effects lies at the centre of the study. In order to be more focused on these issues, the dissertation has neatly excluded issues related to gender, postcoloniality, language (except name and naming instances), recent concepts of power and politics, historical truths, and

culture and identity, otherwise Janga's performativity would be not less interesting to study from the point of view of Performativity as explained by Judith Butler in her *Gender Trouble* (1990) and its sequel *Bodies That Matter* (1993).

Structurally, the Chapter Two as a theoretical modality drawn from a number of recent theorists of Performance Studies except a couple of others brought from the fields of diplomacy and international relations for the purpose of this research work, provides a survey of major concepts like performance, performativity, various forms of performance, performance studies and diplomacy. One aspect of this Chapter is that the theoretical modality is based on many theorists but its orientation is of its own kind, because the research project required an original idea to better explicate the issues. It stipulates the concepts of performance and diplomacy in the way useful of the research work, respecting the idea that there are no universals in performance studies. The Chapter Three presents a discussion of *Belait-Yatra* seen from the angle of performance studies. This is a kind of textual analysis but goes beyond traditionally understood concept of it as the subject matter itself requires many departures from the chosen text to various other texts in order to better present the ideas and support them. It goes that way because the original intention of this research work was not to make a study and find something interesting, rather it was to link performance activities to diplomatic functions. In this sense, the chosen text *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* is interestingly important to better support the idea discussed in the thesis.

Finally, Chapter Four presents a capsule summary of the findings, echoing many of the points raised in this Chapter which correspond to the hypothesis mentioned in the foregone paragraph. The chapter while keeping its focus on the findings that are related to performance acts and diplomatic overtures opens an array of areas for further research. It will neatly try to

summarize the idea that stimulates Janga Bahadur to do what he does in this travelogue. It will discuss Janga's personal ambition and its impressions and influences, and resulting inspirations. One such important inspiration pertinent for inspiring the readers is the need to protect national independence and enhance Nepalese identity.

Before closing this Chapter and moving onto the theoretical one, one point should not go without its mention here. The impression on Janga Bahadur and his actions, after going through the text of this research work as well as other works where there is Janga's reference, is expected to be something like what Alexander Pope says in the middle of his famous *Essay on Criticism*:

True wit is nature to advantage dressed;

What oft' was thought, but ne'er so well expressed;

Something, whose truth convinced at sight we find,

That gives us back the image of our mind. (301)

Janga Bahadur's true wit to so neatly and so successfully perform the roles in his political life reminds the famous quote above, as such wit is "nature advantage" for him, which was often thought but not so well expressed. Janga's use of wit and his nature bestowed acting is so remarkable that the Londoners feel in very deeply. Therefore, Janga's leave from London and the people there is described by the writer of the travelogue, *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* as "filled with tears and their hearts became so heavy" that they were finally unable to speak (197).

Chapter II. Performance, Performance Studies and Diplomacy

2.1 Introduction

Performance and diplomacy in the title of this Chapter would seem in any traditional discourse two different words in an improper order. Everybody irrespective of his or her academic field would be tempted to put them reversely to read as “diplomatic performance” so that they would find something meaningful, most probably to mean diplomatic act and its efficiency. This order is still meaningful, but it will mean something not envisaged in this research work, though some kind of a roundabout link can also be found discussed lengthily in the last part of the Chapter Three and in the middle of the Chapter Four to mean Janga Bahadur’s diplomatic performance in the literal use of the terms.

In order to make a ground for analyzing the chosen travelogue entitled *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*, this Chapter lays its focus first on performance and give it a considerable degree of emphasis because the main objective of the study is to see the performance art of Janga Bahadur Rana in the chosen text, before moving onto some general understanding of diplomacy. This last topic in the Chapter *viz.* diplomacy is limited in meaning and function only, and also the research work will leave various aspects of diplomacy untouched, lest the project should be a kind of diplomatic study rather than performance study.

The type of considerable degree of overlapping and connections between them will make the Chapter including the coming one a two-way traffic of back-and-forth between them. It goes that way as the research work concludes by saying that the roles of Janga’s performance have a profound diplomatic function, both in the book and in his life. Therefore, this chapter starts with the concept of performance and then goes to diplomacy and other related concepts. A

considerable degree of emphasis on performance studies, together with various concepts related to it, is more useful to start with, rather than giving any lengthy details on diplomacy.

2.2 Performance

A performance literally refers to an event in which a performer or group of performers behave in a particular way for another group of people, the audience. In this traditional sense of the term, the performers involve into a form of rehearsal and they repeat the same in front of the audience, which can be either closed or open theatre audience. Rightly pointing to such kind of performances in his “Introduction: Performing Culture”, John Tulloch calls it “formal performance” as it involves some art as in the theatre, as opposed but intricately interwoven to “everyday performance” as in the domain of anthropology (2).

Tulloch’s interest in everyday performances takes him to think of “performing culture, as a whole way of life” which was already explained in details by two important performance studies giants *viz.* Victor Turner and Richard Schechner and was “brought to life” by Daniel Goffman (2). Tulloch’s reading of “everyday as performance before an audience” gives an interesting insight into understanding performance. This interesting idea of performance as explained by these important founders of performance studies is briefly discussed here.

Different cultures have different ways to mean the same thing: the means of expressing appreciation can, for example, vary by culture. Chinese performers will clap with audience at the end of a performance; the return applause signals “thank you” to the audience. In Japan, folk performing arts performances commonly attract individuals who take photographs, sometimes getting up to the stage and within inches of performer’s faces and in Nepal clap means not only appreciation but also encouragement. People in society are, according to Raymond Williams,

“their own cultural agents, transforming those situations by acting *on* and acting *in* them, in short, by performing them” (*Culture* 23). This idea finds an elaborate discussion in the anthropological works of Victor Turner, particularly in his “Are there Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual and Drama?”, which is not the focus of this research work here.

As seen in practices, the theatre performances can take place daily or at some other regular interval. Performances can take place at designated performance spaces (such as a theatre or concert hall), or in a non-conventional space, such as a subway station, on the street, or in someone's home. Performance from the point of view of the advocates of social drama like Turner, is so pervasive that there is nothing beyond performance. The space for performances is now understood as something blurred and interdisciplinary as discussed by Conquergood, which is elaborated in the “Performance Studies” topic below.

Performance has found a much extended space in the contemporary scholarly articles, some of them are discussed here, to mean “any structure or event repeated” and the event of structure “doesn’t necessary need a theatre or any other space as understood traditionally” (Comitee 3). It then includes any activity embedded in various cultural practices like festivals, rites and rituals of birth and death, marriage ceremonies with a fixed rules of its own kind, but such rules as described by Schechener are culture specific and therefore not universal (47). But he says that performance itself is universally found in all cultures, irrespective of old or new, primitive or modern, rural or urban, developed or developing. Schechener further says:

The phenomena called either/all “drama”, “theatre”, “performance” occur amount all the world’s peoples and date back as far as historians, archeologists and anthropologies can go. Evidence indicate that dancing, staging, wearing masks

and/or costumes, impersonating either other men, animals or supernaturals, acting out stories, presenting time, at time, isolating and preparing special places and/or times for these presentations, and individual or group preparations or rehearsals are coexistent with the human condition. Of countless examples from Paleolithic times none is more interesting than the cave of Tuc d'Audoubert. (5)

As pioneer in the field of performance studies, Richard Schchener brings the trope of Tuc d'Audoubert, a 15 thousand year old cave in France remembered for its majestic three layer of water tunnels to simplify the concept of performance. Performance, according to Schechner, has been “employed as a heuristic principle to understand human behaviour” (6).

The assumption is that all human practices are 'performed', so that any action at whatever moment or location can be seen as a public presentation of the self, for example a school activities. This way of understanding human practices entered the social sciences and humanities in the 1990s but is rooted in the anthropological and theatre studies of 1940s and 1950s. It stresses the active, social construction of reality as well as the way that individual behaviour is determined by the context in which it occurs. Performance functions both as a metaphor and an analytical tool and thus provides a perspective for framing and analysing social and cultural phenomena (Turner 9).

Performance is an equivocal concept and for the purpose of analysis it is useful to distinguish between two senses of 'performance'. In the more formal sense, performance refers to a framed event. Performance in this sense is an enactment out of convention and tradition. Founder of the discipline of performance studies Richard Schechner dubs this category 'is-performance' (qtd. in Comitee 6). In a weaker sense, performance refers to the informal scenarios

of daily life, suggesting that every day practices are 'performed'. Schechner called this the 'as-performance' (6). The two senses of performance should be seen as ends of a spectrum rather than distinct categories.

In his highly influential *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), Erving Goffman emphasized the link between social life and performance by stating that “the theatre of performances is in public acts” (78). The dramaturgical model of performance evolved from the classical concept of 'society as theatre' into a broader category that considers all culture as performance. Similarly, both Schechner and Turner worked on finding various structures in everyday life that resemble performances. In fact, it was a great leap first from theatre to rituals and then from rituals to everyday life, for the latter Turner uses “social drama” (10).

2.3. Performativity

Performance and Performativity are often interchangeably used, though the concept of the latter in the corpus of Judith Butler is found stretched to mean “gender and possibilities for performing gender differently” (11). From the point of view of Judith Butler, one of the pioneers in the field of performance studies who turns this concept to gender studies, performativity refers to a more political aspect of performance. Performativity for Butler denotes the idea that “the acts of social agents reinforce the rules of a certain discourse” which has a links to subjectivity and the self which is often “repeated and dependent upon a social audience” (103). In this way, these unfixed and precarious performances come to have the appearance of substance and continuity.

A key theoretical point that was most radical in regards to theories of subjectivity and performance is that there is no performer behind the performance. Butler derived this idea in her

Gender Trouble from Nietzsche's concept of "no doer behind the deed" (qtd. in Butler 105). This is to say that there is no self before the performance of the self, but rather that the performance has constitutive powers. This is how categories of the self for Judith Butler, such as gender, are seen as something that one "does," rather than something one "is." (105). This distance between doing and being is particularly useful in studying *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*, where the doing/acting and being of the actor are very much distanced: who Janga was (being) and what he performed (doing) are quite striking to study.

Does performativity mean all about gender alone, then? This question is rightly answered by John Tulloch in the last part of his "Introduction: Performing Cultures", that performativity "has emerged as a concept focusing attention on both the subject's (compulsory) performance of gender, age, race, class etc, and the possibilities for performing them differently" (19). It is certain that Tulloch would definitely stretch the interesting critical analysis of Janga Bahadur's masculinity by Sanjeev Upreti in his "Masculinity and Mimicry: Ranas and Gurkhas", to include the areas of age, race and class, that are so reflexive in *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*. This idea is explored in the coming chapter.

2.4 Performance Studies

Performance has been a catchword in a range of disciplines namely anthropology, sociology, theatre studies, literature etc. Its emergence in the late 20th century from an array of roots and its interdisciplinary nature thereafter make it a much contested term. Pointing to its complex nature, Lois Weaver says, "Performance Studies is not one-size fits all, but all sizes try to fit in it" (1). If we ask any two performance studies pundits that what literature is and how this new approach studies it, then we will get three different answers, or they turn the question into

another question. If they answer the question, then it may sound as elusive as *the oracles of Delphi*. Asked to Richard Schechner, who is supposed to be the pioneer in this field, the answer is equally elusive:

Is performance studies a 'field' or an 'area', a 'discipline'? The sidewinder snake moves across the desert floor by contracting and extending itself in a sideways motion. Whenever this beautiful rattlesnake points, it is not going there. Such (in)direction is characteristic of performance studies. This area/field/discipline often plays at what it is not, tricking those who want to fix it, alarming some, amusing others, astounding a few as it side-winds its way across the deserts of academia. (2)

Such remark from one of the founders of Performance Studies makes the area of the more contested and more confusing. This inability of the pundits of Performance Studies to precisely pin down its area has given rise to a sizeable number of literature in this field, all drawing various issues in it and giving a multitudes of, and sometimes quite heterogeneous, ideas and speculations. Before making a summary of various ideas and focus on a few of them as per the requirement of this thesis, Henry Bial, a professor at New Mexico University, has the following remark, which is often cited by the critics to prove the ephemeral nature of the field:

It is a special kind of rush to set out in pursuit of an object-of-study that is as elusive, temporal, and contingent as performance. To be a performance studies reader is to work without a net, to walk on hot coals, to search in a dark alley at midnight for a black cat that isn't there... We are the lovers on Keats' Grecian urn,

eternally in pursuit...For the most part, those of us who consider ourselves
 ‘performance studies people’ like it that way. (3)

It is so precisely because it prefers questions to answers, flux to order, expanding boundaries to fixed limits. Unlike another academic field that might exclude certain questions from its range of purview, Performance posits an underlying dimension of art and acting to all human behavior—from Australian aboriginals and their musical rituals to jungle lovers of Nepal called Rotee people performing their jungle safari arts. Performance then houses a vast array of material under one roof, then, it defies the traditional separations that commonly exist between university departments. It celebrates projects that fall between the lines. It puts previously alienated scholars and artists into conversation. It would sooner put up a fight than submit to ready-made categories.

Performance Studies appears uncoordinated, often playful and always ambitious, which is an emerging field still in the making. Given its responsiveness to ever-new areas of inquiry, it can be safely said that it’s a field that wants always to be in the making. Precisely suited to a dynamic world, performance studies never ever offers something called fixed truths because none of the phenomena it studies appear in black and white either (Komitee1).

The one overriding and underlying assumption of performance studies,’ Richard Schechner states, “is that the field is wide open” (qtd. in Komitee 1). Because of its democratic spirit, its invitation to hear many voices—you should feel free to dive right in. Regarding the subject matter of the Performance Studies one thing can be said for sure: Performance Studies takes performance itself as the object of inquiry. That is, performance study scholars do not begin by asking questions of ‘Being.’ They do not inquire into ‘essences’, as if beliefs and social

values are natural or God-given. Instead, Performance Studies scholars see all of social reality as constructed by ‘Doings’—actions, behaviors and events (Komitee 2).

As described in details by Victor Turner and many other theorists, no aspect of human expression— religious, artistic, political, physical, sexual—descends from some high or fixed eternity. Instead, the various features of a culture’s life are contingent— they are shaped and reshaped in particular social and historical circumstances, in complex and lengthy processes. By way of analogy, then, a group’s alleged ‘nature’ is actually a series of performances: behaviors which are learned, rehearsed and presented over time. Thus, Victor sees a “characteristic developmental relationship from ritual to theatre” that links to “social drama” (9). Not only Victor Turner, there are a host of thinkers arguing through this passage of logic, and bringing their concepts here would be unnecessary and redundant.

Because these performances are the building blocks that structure the reality, these scholars work to understand and comment upon how they function— to explain what any given performance does, and how it is doing it. Among other questions, they ask: What circumstances helped create this performance? How is it structured? What relationships does it enable? What effect does it have in a society, and has that function changed over time?

Some performance studies projects do focus on great theater, dance, or music performances. But it’s decisive initiative, however, was to disentangle the terms ‘play,’ ‘act,’ ‘acting’ and ‘performance’ from an exclusive association with the performing arts. Any event, action, or behavior can be studied as a performance, and a scholar can investigate the various processes that go into making it up. Ultimately, Performance studies asserts that all aspects of

everyday life, even the seemingly spontaneous or mundane, reveal a ‘performative’ component—a component that makes them like a performance (23).

Like good theater scholars, performance studies scholars investigate any performance’s ‘dramaturgy’—the processes by which it was composed, prepared and presented. And why study Performance? As cultures are often most fully expressive in their performances, many curtual critics, anthropologists and scholars of other related disciplines are very much interested in performances. Performance studies scholars hope to comprehend and explain what such behaviors might indicate about the individual, group or culture that enacts them. Richard Schechner has outlined seven functions of performance:

- To entertain
- To make something that is beautiful
- To mark or change identity
- To make or foster community
- To heal
- To teach, persuade or convince
- To deal with the sacred and/or the demonic (4)

In his book *The Future of Ritual*, he writes that, in any of these varieties, ‘Performance’s subject [is] transformation: the startling ability of human beings to create themselves, to change, to become—for worse or better—what they ordinarily are not” (qtd. in Comitee 5). By means of performance, then, something is created, born, changed, celebrated, or ended. It is this

transformative site like the *Belait-Yatra* that performance studies scholars study and more closely understand the culture and practices in which it was “baked”.

Before moving onto a brief history of performance studies, it would be appropriate to bring Dwight Conquergood’s idea of performance studies as given in his famous “Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research”:

The performance studies project makes its most radical intervention, I believe, by embracing *both* written scholarship *and* creative work, papers and performances. We challenge the hegemony of the text best by reconfiguring texts and performances in horizontal, metonymic tensions, not by replacing one hierarchy with another, the romance of performance for the authority of the text. (151)

Conquergood identifies Performance Studies embracing “*both* written scholarship *and* creative work, papers and performances” as the “most radical intervention” in this field and concludes that the ongoing challenge is to “refuse and supersede this deeply entrenched division of labor, apartheid of knowledge, that plays out inside the academy as the difference between thinking and doing, interpreting and making, conceptualizing and creating (153). Analyzing any text like *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* from this angle would be an idea to see many possibilities in one.

2.5 Performance Studies: Past to Present

There are multiple origin narratives of performance studies, However, two American anthropologists, *vis.* Victor Turner and Richard Schechner, can be considered as the pioneers in this field. This fact is also confirmed by many theorists, teachers and students of this ever-awake field. It would be interesting to see these two scholars and many others, and then draw the similarities in their conclusions because these two principal theorists represent most important

paradigms of this field, and studying them will definitely enrich the understanding. In most of their mature works, they have collaborated in reaching the same or similar conclusion, though Schchener and Turner can be found little tilted to theatre and anthropology, respectively.

In his research in the late 1960s, Turner began to see a universal theatrical language at play in the various cultural rituals he studied. He determined that all groups—be it the Ndembu people of north-western Zambia or tree-painters in Medieval China— perform rituals that dramatize and communicate stories about themselves (Turner 21). They all, for example, engage in some form of coming-of-age ceremonies, exorcism rites, or warfare, behaviors which contain a theatrical component and which enable the actor(s) to achieve a change in stature, manage crisis or give birth to a new state of affairs. Turner noted that such rites tend to occur in a ‘liminal’ space of heightened intensity separate from routine life, much like a dramatic theater performance (22). Given that these ritual acts exhibit many of the same means of expression employed on a theater stage, Turner termed them “social dramas”:

Each culture, each person within it, uses the entire sensory repertoire to convey messages manual gesticulations, facial expressions, bodily postures, rapid, heavy or light breathing, tears, at the individual level...stylized gestures, dance patterns, prescribed silences, synchronized movements such as marching, the moves and ‘plays’ of games, sports and rituals, at the cultural level. (41)

Schechner, who was already on the way to seeing performances beyond theatre from the time he completed his PhD from Tulane University in 1962, and Turner collaborated in a series of 3 conferences to investigate further whether there was a common theatrical basis to a Broad Spectrum of human activity, from rituals to games to sports.

Our intellectual goal in the conferences...was to approach the genres of theater, dance, music, sports and ritual as a single, coherent group, as performance. The underlying question became whether or not the same methodological tools and approaches could be used to understand a noh drama, a football game, a Yaqui deer dance, a Yoruba masked dance, and a postmodern experimental performance...? (42)

At these early conferences, Turner and Schechner wondered aloud whether this theatrical behavior that everywhere displayed itself was a kind of language—structured by ‘letters’ in the form of physical movements, sounds, and other bodily expressions.

The first theater-person to formulate a notion of a new physical language was Antonin Artaud, the French actor and theater theorist. Let’s listen to the thoughts he offered after watching a troupe of Balinese dancers in Paris:

Through the labyrinth of their gestures, attitudes, and sudden cries, through the gyrations and turns which leave no portion of the stage space unutilized, the sense of a new physical language, based upon signs and no longer upon words, is liberated. These actors...seem to be animated hieroglyphs. (12)

For Artaud, Turner and Schechner, the ‘text’ under analysis ceased to be a static written record, but became the animated languages of human expression— movement, body posture, sound, voice, pace, activity. In these early years after the first conferences, performance studies scholars set out to investigate embodied, live events as they are performed. They tried to ‘read’ the structure of a performance, how it behaved *vis-à-vis* its environment, and what insight about its practitioners these first two findings might make possible.

When Richard Schechner first coined the term ‘Performance Studies,’ he postulated that a performance is any behavior that is “twice-behaved” or “restored” (qtd. in Comitee 4). For him, performances are human actions or events that have been constructed through a multi-stage process: they have been rehearsed and prepared, and are then “framed, presented, highlighted or displayed” in a heightened fashion. Certainly, this seems true enough for a dance performance, for instance, in which dancers train for years, constantly revising and then re-presenting their craft.

It is easy to see the complex dynamics that help structure such a highly staged event. In fact, all behaviors have been subjected to such a rehearsal process, having been learned, revised and presented in a particular milieu over time. Therefore, in a performance studies project, behaviors are not studied as mere objects in the abstract, but instead in relation to the individual or group that exhibits them. Performance studies scholars are interested in the ‘interactions and relationships’ that performances create (Schechner 33). As Schechner further writes, performance studies can best be used:

To treat any object, work or product ‘as’ performance— a painting, a novel, a shoe, or anything at all—means to investigate what the object does, how it interacts with other objects or beings, and how it relates to other objects or beings. Performances exist only as actions, interactions and relationships. (45)

Schechner’s idea of performance as twice behaved or rehearsed makes it “actions, interaction and relationships”. Victor Turner also offered a similar statement, “By their performances ye shall know them,” at the opening of the 1981 World Conference, and Schechner’s book that emerged from that conference is entitled *By Means of Performance*. Both these phrases conclude

that only by studying performances in their various contexts, expressions and historical Performance is always performance for someone, some audience that recognizes and validates it as performance even when, as is occasionally the case, that audience is the self (Carson 23).

When people play this same part to the same audience on many different occasions, the ‘realness’ of role is cemented, and a social relationship—doctor to patient, police to criminal, parent to child—arises. Just like in the case of Janga Bahadur Rana, whose details are elaborated in the coming chapter, the social relationship as such is established through certain art and techniques. Janga Bahadur employs a number of techniques to make other people feel differently with a clear motive of some political ends in his mind. Similarly, Daniel Goffman helped demonstrate that the rehearsal process of learning and repetition so familiar to us in theater and ritual likewise structures each every-day action and behavior.

Goffman’s insights into the structures in daily lives expanded performance studies’s lens of focus to allow every facet of social reality to be seen as a performance, constructed through behaviors, actions and events. Nothing about the personae we saw above is natural, inherent, or necessary. Behaviors and selves have been constructed through acts which are learned, valued, revised and repeated over time. Goffman is found interested in making the areas of Performance studies far and wide.

Schechner has identified two strands of performance: one as entertainment (i.e. theatre) and the other as performance efficacy. His efficacy is defined as "producing an effect; effectiveness" which further emphasizes the view of performance as an evaluative outcome, and the realization of an end and observable product (47). Schechner claims that performances of efficacy are the result of ritualistic behaviour practiced by participants in particular roles.

According to Victor Turner rituals develop in response to social dramas: "By exploring ways in which social dramas get played out in all societies, Turner sets ritual in relation to the drama of all human behavior, giving the anthropological construction of ritual a decidedly humanistic turn" (48). To Schechner's performances as efficacy' are therefore 'twice-behaved behaviors' that are "rehearsed [or] previously known" (84). This understanding of a repetitive action and outcome suggests a belief in 'sameness', that a performance is one outcome repeated many times.

People, according to Schchener, do learn through their performances and then alter how they perform. The ritual in this sense then is not the action itself but the performance procedure. People act, reflect, and are transformed, and this process constitutes a ritual. Yet, in the case of the figure-skater, was an action being learned, or was it that the action showed a varied interpretation? Whether or not we are conscious of actions and that we can learn through ritual remains problematic. Schechner's claims leave unquestioned the background influences that construct the self, and from this, one's actions. Inherent in the theatrical metaphor, is the acceptance of 'roles' as part of everyday life. Goffman states that "a performer who is disciplined, dramaturgically speaking, is someone who remembers his part and does not commit unmeant gestures or faux pas in performing it" (190).

In this chapter before the discussion of diplomacy and its various concepts, the review of various understandings of "performance", particularly within the context of theatre and the metaphors that have been attached to everyday life are contrary to the notions that it is a visible display and outcome, performance "signals a shift from product to productivity" (Pineau 16). It is a process that reflects the social construction of self, and "expression" is only its visible dimension. It will be interesting to see the profound image of Janga Bahadur in his *Belait-Yatra*,

so that it will enrich on the one hand the understanding of performance and on the other the use or the function of Performance i.e. diplomacy in this context.

The shift in paradigms from the understanding of theatre as a metaphor for life to understanding performance as a social process may well have been induced by the postmodern understanding of self. Gergen argues there is no one 'real' self, therefore the conception of a movement from 'self' to 'other' (i.e. role) is undermined. The 'teacher', for example, is an aspect of self; we don't take on the 'role' of teacher. Through this interpretation we can see the importance of knowing how we are constructed, and research the elements which determine the interactions. Performance, in this context, can be either apolitical or political depending on the level of learned awareness.

Performance, therefore, is both an object of inquiry and as a lens to view the world. It prioritizes process, both in understanding performance activity, and identities, cultures, and representation. Any practice is not only an important counterweight to theory, but as a mode of inquiry in its own right. This gives a focus on a broadly inclusive definition of historical and contemporary performance forms, including consciously staged performances in theater, dance, film, new media, ritual, political activism, public demonstrations, music and everyday performances in virtual and real life. Studying performance is also studying a way of doing, and that bridging the theoretical and the practical within disciplinary and transdisciplinary formations is a powerful means of enhancing both theory and practice.

2.6 Diplomacy

Diplomacy is defined as an instrument or a tool to exercise foreign policy of a nation, which is subject to the domestic policy of the same nation. Some people even say that foreign policy is a reflection of the internal policies and this reflection needs an effective way of dealing—diplomacy—to garner support from the international community, and in many cases successful conduct of diplomacy itself will be an actualization of interests of a nation. Foreign policy therefore always comes with diplomacy and vice versa, sometimes in an interchangeable manner. In this connection, Kishan S. Rana writes:

While recognizing the close interconnection between foreign policy and diplomacy, it is appropriate to separate the two. Classic way of looking at the distinction is that in a democracy, the Cabinet representing the political leadership determines foreign policy, and is answerable to Parliament. The Foreign Service civil servants implement this policy through the diplomatic apparatus, of which they are part. (25)

Rana shows the close relationship between these two terms and highlights the fact that foreign policy is a part of politicians and diplomacy on the other is the part of the professional civil servants who execute it.

This execution of foreign policy is essentially a diplomatic activity. He further says, “In practice, the process of implementing a set policy through diplomacy affects the content of the policy” (25). Rana before coming to his version of difference, says: “Diplomats, as civil servants, operating under political control, and theoretically not the determinants of foreign policy, provide inputs that lead to the framing or modification of the policy” (26). Rana concludes: “Diplomacy deals with the articulation of foreign policy in the real world, where high principles

and objectives set out in the policy are fleshed out and put into effects” (26). As quoted by Rana, K Shankar Bajpai says, “diplomacy is to foreign policy what tactics are to strategy” (27). Thus, diplomacy involves art to effectively execute foreign policies.

While these two scholars don’t come to the real nature of diplomacy, there are a number of scholars, chiefly from the west, who think in the same line discussed above but go into the details of seeing into diplomacy itself a whole range of activities. In his classic textbook, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, Sir Ernst Satow declares:

Diplomacy is the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states, extending sometimes also to their relations with vassal States, or more briefly still, the conduct of business between States by peaceful means. (25)

It is interesting connect this “application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations” to Smith Simpson’s idea that “foreign policy is heard and diplomacy is overheard” (27).

Managing relations with individual foreign countries, problem solving, handling regional and global issues, and advancing the country’s external interests across a wide front is a seamless task of effective diplomacy. Dr. John Coleman has a different point to make in this regard:

The history of how the United Nations was created is a classic case of diplomacy by deception. The United Nations is the successor to the defunct League of Nations, the first attempt to set up a One World Government in the wake of the Paris Peace Conference which gave birth to the Treaty of Versailles.

Dr. Coleman gives the accounts of bloody wars like WW I in which Britain alone suffered 1,000,000 deaths and more than 2,000,000 wounded. It is also worthwhile to remember that H.G. Wells and Lord Bertrand Russell foresaw this terrible war in which millions — the flowers of the mostly Christian — nations died needless deaths. The Committee of 300 planned the war so that international bankers would profit greatly.

H.G. Wells was known as the "prophet" to the Committee of 300. It is true to say that Wells merely brought up-to-date the ideas of the British East India Company (BEIC) which were carried out by Jeremy Bentham and Adam Smith, to name two of the wreckers used by King George III to undermine and scuttle the economic future of the North American colonists seeking to escape the economic toils of the Venetian Party of the North in the late 1700s (Coleman 1-2). Coleman comes to a conclusion that the establishment of United Nations was result of various background activities to prevent "the bloody scourge of war" (*UN Charter* 1).

The idea that the whole world came all the way through a bumpy road to the establishment of the United Nations has involved an array of thoughts. Henry Kissinger in his book *Diplomacy* says that it is a "tacit bargaining" (753). He says that the nineteenth century diplomacy from its realist orientation suffered a lot and a new orientation was to be conceived. He says that diplomacy has to do with peace and friendship.

How the tactics of performance come in play in the travelogue *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* and what meanings they bear needs a detailed textual analysis of the text. How Janga Bahadur projects himself, presents himself and thereby achieves what he was aspiring require all these concepts of performance, performativity, acting, stage, theatricality, histrionic and social drama, roles and other concepts elaborated in this Chapter.

2.7 Performance and Diplomacy

As discussed in the foregone paragraphs, performance studies can be used as a tool to approach different fields of knowledge and modes of doing, as well as various economies and cultural industries, institutions and even individuals. When Richard Schechner first coined the term ‘Performance Studies,’ he postulated, which is also discussed above, that a performance is any behavior that is “twice-behaved” or “restored” (qtd. in Comitee 4). For him, performances are human actions or events that have been constructed through a "multi-stage process": they have been rehearsed and prepared, and are then “framed, presented, highlighted or displayed” in a heightened fashion (4). It appears true enough for a *dohori* performance in western Nepal, for instance, in which singers train for years, constantly revising and then re-presenting their craft. So is the case in dances to various other performances.

All forms of diplomatic activities stretched over different spatial and temporal dimensions are highly performative, as they involve various activities which are “twice behaved” or well rehearsed or practiced to have certain effects. Protocol part of diplomatic activities are more explicitly performative than other forms of diplomacy, where an elaborate and ritualistic performance would take place.

In the protocol part, there are certain forms like communicating, entertaining, dressing, socializing etc. Well rehearsed ways of communication, distinct ways to entertain, formal dressing, and certain structured social events are some essential elements in protocol. All countries have distinct ways to receive or farewell high ranking diplomats like head of state/government or ambassadors or other senior officials. This is particularly important and interesting when an accredited ambassador-designate comes to assume his duties in a foreign capital: s/he goes for a rehearsal before presenting her/his credentials to the head of receiving

state. This part called credential presentation is very much like a structure witnessed at a theatre or any other performance art.

Janga Bahadur Rana visited *Belait* in 1850 not as an individual but as the *de facto* head of state of Nepal. He reveals his status in various occasions in the travelogue as the writer addresses him as “*Maharaja* of the east”. A number of issues are pertinent to study them from the point of view of performance studies, as the field itself is highly rich in performances. Janga Bahadur involves himself, as discussed in the coming chapter, in various performances right from the beginning of his journey till its end after several months.

Mervin Carson’s definition of performance in his famous “Introduction” to *Performance and Postmodernism* guides some of the actions described in the following pages: “the recognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behavior raises the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as ‘performance’ (4). This is somewhat a Carsonian version of Victor Turner’s famous idea of “social drama”.

The focus of the coming discussion is laid on the types of performance activities of Janga Bahadur and the sustenance of national image he succeeds in materializing as a result of his diplomatic endeavors. Janga maintains very good relations with Great Britain, the most powerful empire of his time, and protects national sovereignty by appeasing them. Once such truth of Janga Bahadur’s performance is unburied, it severely disrupts the way many historians have portrayed him as a ruthless dictator responsible for various ailments in Nepal including poverty and backwardness on the one hand and on the other, opens avenues for fresh discussion of some of the most salient facts of history and give justice to figures like Janga Bahadur who are still

buried in the cultures making knowledge through stereotypes and various telling and re-telling and also writing and rewriting cycles of historians.

Chapter III. Performances in *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*

3.1 Janga Bahadur and His *Belait-Yatra*: An Introduction

In one of the interesting events in the travelogue, *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*, Janga Bahadur Rana applauded gustily to an opera singer's melodious aria in Covent Garden in 1850, Queen Victoria, bemused, was said to have leaned over to ask whether the Maharajah of Nepal understood the music or not. Janga "replied that he liked it very much" (192). She again asked him whether he understood the words of the song. Janga Bahadur replied very wittily saying that though "he did not understand the meaning, he enjoyed listening to it, in just the same way that men enjoy the song of the nightingale". It is also said that Janga Bahadur threw gold coins to the singer after the song was over. His reply and action both exhibit his tact, wit, lie, acting, and a purpose because "he was his own master" who could devise many things and create many situations in his favour (*Janga* 158).

Janga Bahadur's above performance has a number of interpretations. The interpretations will be brought into discussion in the coming topics in this chapter but before such discussion here is a simple and short background of Janga and the travelogue, *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*. The travelogue *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* translated into English by John Whelpton as *Janga Bahadur in Europe* presents Janga Bahadur Rana as a very multifaceted figure in the history of Nepal, who lived from June 18, 1816 to February 25, 1877. In the travelogue, the purpose of Janga's visit to Europe is stated, thus: "By understanding the sea he would become a wiser man, and en route he would be able to see the countries of five or six sovereigns" (153).

Originally from Borlang, Gorkha, he was a ruler of Nepal and founder of the Nepalese historical period known as Rana Dynasty of Nepal, whose actual name was Bir Narsingh Kunwar but later became famous by the name Janga Bahadur, given to him by his maternal

uncle, Mathwar Singh Thapa. The travelogue, mentions his full name with royal epithets as “Srimadraj Kumaratmaj Sri Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief General Janga Bahadur Kunwar Ranaji” (149).

The fact is that Janga Bahadur Kunwar and his brothers “emerged victorious from the long power struggle” by the year 1846 which John Whelpton mentions that he “had followed the fall of Bhimsen Thapa, and for century afterwards the history of their family and the political history of Nepal were virtually synonymous” (1). Kunwars had a very significant role in the “making of Nepal” which prompts Whelpton to see Janga as important as the history of Nepal itself. Whelpton has written many works about the history of Nepal and has given an ample space to Janga Bahadur, just like other historians. This making of Nepal by Kunwars has a link to performance Janga performed during and after his visit to England.

During the time Janga Bahadur was in his heyday, he eliminated the factional fighting at the court, introduced innovations into the bureaucracy and the judiciary, and made efforts to "modernize" Nepal (Whelpton 6). He remains one of the most important figures in Nepalese history, though modern historians have also blamed Janga Bahadur for setting up the dictatorship that repressed the nation for more than 100 years and left it in a primitive economic condition. Others exclusively blame his nephews, the Shumsher Ranas, for Nepal's dark period of history. Dixit says that many historians as well as the common readers have misunderstood him and therefore his portrayal in Nepal is embedded in various false stereotypes (66).

Janga Bahadur Kunwar joined the Nepalese military service in the year 1832 at the age of sixteen. Janga Bahadur lost his job and his property as his maternal grandfather Bhimsen Thapa fell from power. After wandering in north India for several years, he was called to Nepal as a captain in the artillery in 1840. In November 1841, he was asked by the king to join his

bodyguard, and in January 1842 he began work as Kaji in the palace. When his maternal uncle Mathwar Singh Thapa returned to power, Janga Bahadur rose with him. However Mathbar Singh disliked Janga Bahadur's ambition and had him removed to a lesser position on the staff of the heir apparent. When Fateh Singh Chautaria came to power, Janga Bahadur became fourth in the hierarchy of the coalition government and took pains to flatter the queen while showing no signs of ambition to Gagan Singh. A career opportunist, he was ready and waiting when the time came to act at the *Kot* Massacre.

Queen Laxmidevi, the favorite wife of King Rajendra Bikram was not pleased by the new prime minister. She conspired to eliminate Janga Bahadur Kunwar and elevate her son to the throne. The Basnyat Conspiracy -- so called because many of its participants belonged to one of the last leading noble families, the Basnyat -- was betrayed and its ringleaders were rounded up and executed in 1846 at *Bhandarkhaal* Massacre. A meeting of leading notables packed with Rana supporters found the queen guilty of complicity in the plot, stripped her of her powers, and sent her into exile in Baneras along with King Rajendra. The king still had delusions of grandeur and began plotting his return from India. In 1847 Janga Bahadur informed the troops of the exiled king's treasonous activities, announced his dethronement, and elevated Rajendra's son Surendra Bikram Shah to the throne. King Rajendra Bikram Shah was captured later that year in the Tarai and brought back as a prisoner to Bhadgaun, where he spent the rest of his life under house arrest.

Janga Bahadur had eliminated all of his major rivals by 1850, and had installed his own candidate on the throne, appointed his brothers and cronies to all the important posts, and ensured that major administrative decisions were made by himself as prime minister (Acharya 21). At this point, he took the unprecedented step of travelling to *Belait* and France, leaving

from Calcutta in April 1850 and returning to Kathmandu in February 1851. Although he unsuccessfully tried to deal directly with the British government while he was there, the main result of the tour was a great increase in goodwill between the British and Nepal. Recognizing the power of industrialized Europe, he became convinced that close cooperation with the British was the best way to guarantee Nepal's independence.

From the time Janga Bahadur returned from Britain and France, European architecture, fashion, and furnishings became more prevalent in Kathmandu and among the Nepalese aristocracy in general. Before he went to *Belait*, he was in the mood to show who he was, i.e. through a kind of performance that would have an effect in Nepal's contemporary foreign relations, chiefly with the most powerful, most belligerent and most adjacent enemy of Nepal. But Janga returned from Britain and France with a feeling to further strengthen the friendly relations with Britain. He realized that "the territory of the English sovereign" and the "empire's seat of government" were a kind of his journey from imagination to reality, where the reality was found much more different than it was imagined (149). Janga Bahadur's *Belait-Yatra* thus catches this important historical transition, not a mere transition in Janga's thought, prompting its central character to resort to various performance techniques with a view to creating an impression authority, power and superiority.

With such important background, the travelogue *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* is important to see the contemporary Nepali power and politics and Janga Bahadur's role. The travelogue is known in several versions; the present volume, the first English translation, is based upon the version published in Nepali in 1957 by Kamal Dixit. There has been much discussion of the authorship of the *Belilit-Yatra* but the consensus of scholarly opinion is that it was written not by Janga Bahadur himself but by one of his travelling companions, although the author

probably drew on the Prime Minister's own diary in compiling his account of the journey. John Whelpton, the translator and editor, shares this view and suggests that Subba Prithvidhar Padhya, Janga Bahadur's travelling secretary, was the most likely author.

The introduction to the translated copy of the *Belait-Yatra*, written by Rishikesh Shah concentrates upon the circumstances leading to the so-called Kot massacre of 1846, the critical and controversial event in the assumption of power by Janga Bahadur. In his background, Whelpton, too, examines the faction-ridden politics and the series of murders which led to the political system that came into being after 1846's system in which power rested with the Prime Ministers of the Rana family and the name of king alone was retained by the monarchs of the Shah dynasty. Whelpton also provides a general account of the history of Nepal and a review of Anglo-Nepali relations. There is nothing very new in these parts of the book and the main interest resides in the account of Janga Bahadur's journey. Whelpton discusses three reasons why, so soon after the crisis which brought him to power but nowhere does he mention Janga's role as an actor or performer.

Regarding the purpose of the visit, John Whelpton writes that "the new Prime Minister should have left an unsettled Nepal and travelled to Europe" and his "simple curiosity and another to show goodwill to Britain" (11). Whelpton lays greatest weight on a third reason, arguing that Janga Bahadur believed that to be received by the Queen of England would strengthen his position in Nepal although this view seems to rest with such superficially improbable assumption that Nepalese might regard such British blessing upon Janga Bahadur's rule as a form of legitimization. A fourth possibility rises above the three, which the editor does not discuss, is that Janga Bahadur was simply following the growing practice among rulers of Indian states of seeking some direct contact with the source of power.

Whelpton also considers the results of Janga Bahadur's visit. Certainly, one effect was to impress Janga with the strength of British power and to influence his decision to support British rule in India during the Mutiny crisis seven years later. More interesting is Whelpton's discussion of subsequent reforms in Nepal and his reflections on the connection of these with Janga Bahadur's observations in Europe. It is certain that Janga Bahadur derived a powerful impression of the wealth of Britain and France but he also imbibed mistaken notions concerning the political system, the role of Parliament, and other matters.

One of the most surprising impressions concerns the prevalence of cleanliness and good order, "The English lead a very happy life. Nobody wears dirty or torn clothes", writes the Nepali author and there is "no weeping, rioting or fighting, no one assaults, insults, curses or upbraids his neighbour" (164). The writer further writes that the British people are "always happy and nothing is ever wanting" (202). The description of Britain and writer's saying that "Janga Bahadur wanted to remain in this Earthly Paradise" surprises John Whelpton because he thinks that Nepalis derive "so false an impression of mid nineteenth century Britain" (203). He also says that there were some other travelers from Asia who also came away with false notions.

By contrast Janga Bahadur and his companions seem strikingly naive. It appears from the account and more discerningly from the contemporary news articles that these Nepalese Hindu travelers ridicule the westerners much more than any other travelers, not even a Muslim traveler from the east. The lifestyle of the "Maharaja of the east" is shown very much embedded in Hindu relations which was already stereotyped to that effect, and it is very surprising that a killer of hundreds of innocent Nepalese at various occasions appears such a religious man! This acting of Janga Bahadur was noticed by many but was not explored into its whyness. The coming topic

lays its focus exclusively on the travelogue in which the actions and words of its central character make it more a performance art.

3.2 *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*: Janga's Performance Art

A thorough study of the travelogue, *Junga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*, reveals the fact that the whole account of Janga from its beginning to its end is more a live script of a play directed and acted out by Janga more than a travelogue, a book or a story in a traditional sense. If his whole life is analyzed from this perspective, we find him using various techniques, arts and innovations, and thereby acting them out in such a way that he gave an impression of what he was not, and pragmatically a form of diplomatic overture used by various emperors, kings and *nawabs* for centuries to satisfy or appease for themselves on the one hand, and create a sense of doubt where the benefit of doubt would simply go to the creators of such doubt. This would usually happen, as seen in the *Chanakyaniti*, because those who listen to such histrionics of behavior and overstatements would resort to submission and at least friendships, if not surrender.

Janga played the role in the Nepalese history, particularly at a very crucial juncture of times, crucial as the small then kingdom was at the mercy of big powers like British Empire, and save its sovereignty which for most Nepalese is still a matter of pride. This last point may be debatable to the extent of the degree of nationalism in the present context, but for the contemporary nationalistic wave of thought, independence of any nation was more than their lives. The result was that many people were ready to die for their national egos, let alone extending their national boundaries. As argued elsewhere in this dissertation, the argument in this section will be to prove Janga an actor and its multifaceted domestic and external effects.

A sad thing is that such important issue lay beneath the corpus of historical, non-fictional and fictional books as well for decades. This does not mean that this dissertation alone is an

attempt to see these issues here: only few writers who have paid attention to this important issue are Kamal Mani Dixit and Abhi Subedi. John Whelpton, the translator of *Belait-Yatra* into English as *Janga Bahadur in Europe*, sees this issue but does not discuss it. Dixit in various occasions has raised this issue and the credit of raising this issue goes to him together with the credit for finding the manuscript of this marvelous travelogue and establishing it as the first of such kind in the eastern part of the world.

The name of the book in Nepali as *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* was his own coinage based on the use of these terms throughout the travelogue. When he saw the type of histrionics of Jangabahadur so vocally expressed in this travelogue, he further went into discovering more facts, interpreting them from this angle and even publishing them if possible. So, there is *Janga Geeta* published in 2040 BS, and the title of this book is more than enough and no arguments are required for those who have gone through the epic *Geeta* from the *The Mahabharata*. Dixit also published a diary written by Janga Bahadur and published it under the name *Jangabahadurko Belaiti Kaapi* (i.e. British Notebook of Janga Bahadur). The crux of what Dixit has done and is doing is that he disliked the way Janga Bahadur Rana was portrayed in Nepalese history and literature and wanted to uncover the circumstances responsible for Janga Bahadur to act in certain way, while making a request to the readers not to give him a stale look to this miraculous man.

Abhi Subedi helped John Whelpton translate the book *Janga Bahadurko Belait Yatra* and has surveyed the book as well the whole of Janga's political career and has come to this conclusion:

He always felt himself as an actor in a play that he himself had written silently and acted; this play attracted an audience the nature of which is captured by the

writer in the following very dramatic manner. The deck is the stage where Janga is the main actor and the British subjects are the audience. The travel writer is the chorus. (18)

Subedi has very succinctly put his above opinion in the book review essay entitled *Belait-Yatra: Inverse Perception of Coloniality*. He sees Janga who started family rule in Nepal as a man with the “texture of Nepali historicity in relation to power, coloniality and the institution of autocracy in Nepal” (15). He further says that the image of Janga “as a hero who combined romantic attributes of character with his political successes achieved through his histrionics, courage and shrewdness” (15). He aptly links it with the type of relation Janga had maintained with British empire throughout his political career, leaving footsteps for the coming Rana prime Ministers thereafter. As his point in the essay is to “highlight upon one important aspect of Janga’s personality – his perception of the British coloniality...Janga’s response to British colonial power—his overtures to friendship and his performance art” and further “his histrionics, lies, manipulative style, showmanship, extremely clever way of reading the minds of the British rulers and people, and his interpretation of their culture and taste have interestingly become the trope of a post-colonial perception” (16). Subedi sees, shows but leaves behind a very interesting and important note in his writing: Janga’s acting, his art. He says:

Janga’s entire *modus operandi* concerning his relationship with the British colonial power was this drama, this acting, which whether we like it or not is like our own mode of post-colonial interpretation. We mould it according to our need just as Janga did including his *chhuwachut* or caste based eating habits that he turned into his majestic manners. He was a plebeian who combined, milking cow

with his demeanor as an emperor of the east, who unrivalled in his independent state...was his own master. (16)

Subedi sums up by saying that the travelogue is a “unique mélange of historical romance and reality and creates a unique discourse of great significance in the history of Nepal writing” (19). Therefore, this travelogue creates a “hallow around a historical and the real Janga Bahadur and projects a Nepali sense of independence and uniqueness” (1). This way then Janga Bahadur Rana “saved the nation by appeasing the British” (16).

As evident in his discussion of Janga’s approach in his political and diplomatic affairs with the waging and rising British power in the east, a set of techniques molded in art and histrionics are successfully used by Janga Bahadur Rana, which are very important to understand for all readers of history, particularly Nepalese history, and critics, diplomats and amateur readers as well.

The techniques used by Janga Bahadur Rana as evident in the travelogue exhibit pragmatic function, namely, diplomatic function. This diplomatic function is largely responsible for sustaining the pride of independence and sovereignty of Nepal, which is no way less important than family rule, autocracy and various other epithets the history has put on the face of Janga Bahadur. As Subedi says “visiting the court” of power “is essentially a diplomatic activity” this research dissertation therefore takes the present travelogue to support the foregone claims.

Before the discussion of the travelogue chosen for the purpose of supporting many of the claims, here are some questions attempted to answer before concluding the dissertation. Why did Janga kill so many people in one after other killings and massacres, including some of his close

blood relations? Was his prime motif to be a *de facto* ruler of Nepal, alone? Why did he change his name from something culturally acquired to something that takes him away from his clan too? Why internal power he used to obtain *panjapatra* that prompted him to rule the whole of Nepal? Why was the King so silent to what he was doing? Why did he drop the plan to attack some parts of the British India, and take an initiative to push them away from *Hindustan*, and instead took the trip to the heart of colonial power? Why did he lie so many things on the way, in Britain and on the way back to Nepal? Why was he so performative on the way and then in Britain? What was the meaning of caste and creeds for a murderer of hundreds of people, some of them being very innocent and some other being his close relatives like Mathwar Singh Thapa? Why does he show his most clever image in Britain and project an image of *maharaja of the east*? Was it a coincidence or his psychological depth to read the mind through the faces of people, including that of the Queen Victoria in the travelogue? Why does he appear more romantic and passionate in France than in Britain?

There are still more questions the answers of them are very pertinent to making a claim that Janga Bahadur was a performer in reality and this travelogue is the best expression of it. How does he succeed in foiling any attempt to kill him/or harm him? Why does he support British people suppress *sepoy mutiny* of 1857? Why the British return some of the western and eastern Teria lost by Nepal in the Treaty of Sugauli? Why he appears so successful and always one step ahead of others? Why his life appears more an art or performance than a real, genuine and natural living? This dissertation will seek to answer these questions in an intricately interrelated answer, that he was a great performer, an artist who used various techniques to maintain a good friendly relation with British power and thereby save the sovereignty of Nepal.

3.3 Name and Naming: Janga's Power and Performance

The first structure of performance as stated in the beginning of this chapter results from the name and naming. Name, as argued by Christopher Hughes in his *Kripke: Names, Necessity and Identity* aptly says, carries with it a number of meanings (2). Naming in Eastern cultures as well as in western and various other cultures has significance and meaning. Following Kripke, Hughes says that such naming has a profound philosophical underpinnings and aspect should be understood in light of context (53). The popular idea of the time that names should reflect the type of grandeur, power and prestige finds an interesting place in Janga's life and career. This structure of performance has to do with two different but superimposed process of name and naming. First, as seen in the first chapter namely "Introduction" of this dissertation, Janga changed his name Bal Narsingh Kunwar into "Janga Bahadur Rana". According to *Online Sanskrit Dictionary*, the surname univocally refers to some kind of serious form of war in Sanskrit, hence one who battles and even a winner of such war can be named "Janga" (31).

This name of Janga Bahadur reflects power, courage and adventures, and also the one who unfailingly deserves such status. "Bahadur" in his name is suggestive of similar renderings from a Mongolian word meaning "brave". This name was preferred by many Muslim emperors from Persia to Bengal, and therefore would mean something more than just brave in the contemporary socio-political reality. Seemingly a surname, Rana refers in Sanskrit to a princely title of royalty and bravery. This name was earned through valiance, but very occasionally it was transferred from generation to generation. Rana Pratap Singh is probably the most famous person to have ever had the title who fought numerous wars with Mughals.

The name and naming process is much more elaborated in the book, *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra*. The opening words of the book, "Swasti Shreemadraskumar Kumaratmaj Shree

Primeminister and Commander in Chief General Janga Bahadur Kunwar ranaji” give us an impression that we are going to read a great account of a great person, if not the great person (1). This account is more interesting to read in its original Nepali language as it appears in the edited version of Kamal Dixit, “स्वस्ती श्रीमद्राजकुमार कुमारात्मज श्री प्राइमिनिस्टर याण्ड कमांडर इन्चिफ जनरल जङ्गबहादुर कुवर राणाजी” i.e. Swasti Srimadrajkumar Kumaratmaj Shree Prime Minsiter and Commander in Chief General Janga Bahadur Kuwar Ranaji” (150). The purpose of this man with his great name, one of the longest too, is stated so importantly. The full quote of the text in the very beginning of the travelogue is important to see a number of things, not only name and naming, but also a mood, purpose, need and importance of the visit:

The territory of the English sovereign, visited in 1906 by Srimadrajkumar Kumaratmaj Sri Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief General Janga Bahadur Kunwar Ranaji borders on our own; yet its army, arsenals and weapons, the country and its wealth, its revenues and expenditure, its institutions, the whereabouts of the empire’s seat of government, Belait, the nature of city of London, and the character of the nobility and of the population as a while were all unknown until then since nobody from Hindustan had visited London Belait. (150)

The writer of the travelogue continues this strain of idea into the purpose of the visit by saying that Janga Bahadur wanted to see Britain from his own eyes:

Although something had been learned from the English people’s own words and from newspapers, and although the lands of all the rajas and nawabs of Hindustan were included in the empire, still no one from Hindustan, from plains, from hills,

from Tibet or from China had been able to examine the home territory of the English and the power and splendor of the English sovereign. The Prime Minister now resolved that, God willing, he would visit the four shrines of Hindustan and would then learn about the rulers of the eleven islands of Belait and their industries and that after gaining that knowledge he would make the rulers his friends. (151)

The starting of the book with these lines give at least five clear but interrelated points of view to any novice reader: elaborate and exotic name, adventurous visit, purpose and need of the visit and finally a strategy i.e. “friendships after knowing the reality” of the British emperor (151).

The strange sequence of these five points leading to possible friendship with the warring British side leaves a diplomatic note that if the British Empire is less capable and vulnerable to external forces, Janga could wage a war after his return. This point will be discussed in details in the coming pages of this Chapter.

The name and naming process continues throughout the journey. Whosoever is the writer of the account who tacitly gives the fascinating names, he should be one of the visiting members of the group. More particularly, John Whelpton, the translator and editor of the book in English, shares this view and suggests that Subba Prithvidhar Padhya, Janga Bahadur's travelling secretary, was the most likely author (3). Dixit also thinks the same and says that the whole Nepalese history is biased to Janga (iii). In his editorial to a book entitled *Janga Bahadurko Belaiti Kapi*, he clearly mentions that many historians, royalists, experts and also the Ranas themselves portray Janga Bahadur as eccentric, moody, arrogant, cruel, pitiless and a person without any conscience but a very few including himself see him positively and objectively (iii).

Dixit wants to prove that Janga Bahadur would always maintain a diary and his impressions to the people and places, his strategies, his opinions and thoughts have been clearly mentioned. It also applies to Janga's *Belait-Yatra* and therefore it can be safely said that Janga maintained a diary for such adventurous *yatra* and the writer of the account certainly borrowed most of the accounts including the words and language from Janga's diary. It was also not possible to complete the account without Janga reading the account. Hence, the words, names and other accounts in the book are similar to any book that could have been written by Janga himself.

The naming of the places from Janga's perspective is very interesting. He has given some names that were/are never used for those places, whereas some names are his Nepal-ized versions only. Some such interesting names are *Alakhajanjarinadi* for Alexandria where the Nile river empties into the Mediterranean sea. He was performing the act of naming as most of the rivers in the Indian subcontinent can include *nadi* after their names; *Sautanghat* for Southampton as he saw that places like Southampton with the inlets of water should be named as a *ghat* i.e. place for Hindu cremation and worships. The sounds in English name also contributed in making the name.

A couple of questions that overrun all other speculations here are: why Janga took or preferred this name? What role was he assuming to perform? What new roles were there that he needed a new name to perform those roles? These and many other questions were never asked by the historians, nor were they taken by them as important to understand. In lights of performance studies recently launched in the western and eastern universities as well, this naming process has a profound historical and cultural significance. It was the reflection of the time, the age and in some sense "historical sense" as Hypolite Taine and Hegel would aptly call it (Adams 665). So

was the spirit of time, and Janga was not the first to perform this action of changing his name. As far as the performativity in cultures is concerned, the names get changed and new names and various new honorific titles are awarded to the individuals, like knighthood in Britain, Mulla, Wostaz, Nawab in Islamic cultures and Raja, Rathi, Maha, Param, Mahatma in Hindu cultures. With the changes in the names, new roles are assumed and performed.

3.4 Liar, Lying and Lies: Janga's Acting

As seen in the above paragraphs, Janga Bahadur Rana with his new name and role acts as an actor to whom the whole Britain was a stage and the British people, chiefly the British ruler, kinsmen and other high ranking officials, were his audience. The subtle diplomatic purpose underlying his performance is to move the audience by giving an impression that he was from some country equally powerful, if not from a more powerful one. So, Srimadraj Kumar Kumaratmaj Sri Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief General Janga Bahadur Kunwar Ranaji's meeting with the British Prime Minister and other high ranking officials of Britain, is marked by similar histrionics.

During the meeting, the higher officials welcome him warmly and said, "your coming here is an excellent thing...excellent for both the Gorkha and the English Governments" (174).

They further say:

No person as distinguished as yourself has ever come here from Hindustan.

Because they have seen what a great man you are, people here of all classes now have a high impression of the Gorkhas. You have also endeared yourself to our nobles and our government. (174)

This warm welcome by the British higher officials comes out of the benefits of doubts that stem from the performances of Janga, and all of them virtually go to himself. As said above, the writer of the travelogue has heavily drawn impressions of Janga as he writes that the Parliament building in London was built out of three *crore* rupees. When they first saw the *Rippon* ship, the writer describes its lengths, height etc. as if he measured it one at a glance. Such lies are found abundant in the travelogue.

The lies can be found in all aspects of their visit. The meeting with Queen Victoria is yet another important occasion where Janga's art finds its expression. At the first meeting of Janga with British Queen, there were his two brothers and other officials on his side whereas there were many more on the other side. During the meeting Janga Bahadur handed over the letter from the king of Nepal. She asked him how the journey was and also whether he faced any problem. Janga replies, "under Her Majesty's protection neither he nor his companions had had any difficulty and that with her help they had travelled comfortably" (189). Janga Bahadur's polished and eulogizing language makes her very happy and therefore commented that his visit was "an excellent thing, that the two governments were now of one mind, that there would always be affection between them and that there would never be any hindrance to their friendship" (189).

In yet another performative occasion, Janga Bahadur Rana applauded gustily, as given in the beginning of this Chapter, to an opera singer's melodious aria in Covent Garden in 1850, Queen Victoria, bemused, was said to have leaned over to ask whether the Maharajah of Nepal understood the music or not. Janga Bahadur Rana "replied that he liked it very much" (192). The Queen again asked him whether he understood the words of the song. He said that though "he did not understand the meaning, he enjoyed listening to it, in just the same way that men enjoy

the song of the nightingale” (152). The culmination of such lies is something like catharsis at the point when Janga and his troupe plan to return from Britain:

They asked him when he was returning to Nepal, and when he said he would leave soon, they asked him why and begged him to stay for good if possible, or failing that for ten years or at least for one year. Their faces fell and they said it was hardly worth having come at all for such a little time and that when they heard him say he was going, they felt as if arrows were piercing their hearts. They asked whether, if he had to go, he would at least leave a portrait with them so they could look at it and always be reminded of him. (197)

It sounds likely that Janga could create such an effect of his visit. Even if these details were just an exaggeration, the writer of the travelogue, and certainly Janga himself, wanted the things to happen that way. It is further described that the moment of departure was “filled with tears and their hearts became so heavy” that they were finally unable to speak (197). Janga gives an impression to the readers of the travelogue that he is a living actor, who never separated acting from his life.

3.5 Performing the Roles of a Hindu Sovereign

The second structure of performance in *Janga Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* as stated above results from the costumes and actions oriented towards establishing Janga a great princely Hindu king. This fact is revealed when he starts his journey from Kathmandu; “caught four elephants, killed 2/4 tigers and many deer”:

Srimadrajkumar Kumaratmaj Sri Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief

General Janga Bahadur Kunwar Ranaji set out on his journey on the 4th of Magh

in the year 1906 travelling by the road that leads to the fortress of *Chisapani*. Hunting as he went, reached the forest of *Patharaghata* and captured four elephant. He killed three or four tigers and many deer. From there he went to the cantonment of Kavarawana Gadhi where the local peasantry had assembled. The Prime Minister greeted them and after leasing them by distributing gifts of cash he left his own country and made camp with his troops at the village of Dhaka in British territory. (151)

These lines show that many people from the local areas came to greet him, in fact to serve as audience, and Janga left some money for them. He acted like a mythical king or prince who gives some amounts to people not as something required for some particular purpose but for confirming the fact that he was a royal person (2). The language used to describe the actions of Janga also reflects the same spirit of royal visit. Before taking a ship bound from India to Britain, he performs many such actions. While on board, he performs many tricks, chief among them being shooting the bottles thrown to the sea-water, and proves his performativity of great shooter. For this particular performance, he fires 200-300 bullets each day (6). The report of the audience responding to such regal and extravagant action with the remarks like “he is not like feeble Indians” takes us to the idea that he was above all other, in fact “prime minister of a sovereign king” of Nepal (6). In every port the living troupe of the performers led by Janga reaches, there are people crowded to see them, enjoy and at time laugh at them.

An accurate version of Janga’s role of the sovereign comes from the side of the audience. As already developed empires, media coverage of important and interesting events was part of British and French People. An edition of Monday, 27th May 1850, of *The Times* reports that the ship called *Ripon* arrived in Britain with many letters from China, India and other eastern

parts. The *Ripon* carried 162 passengers including “His Highness General Janga Bahadur Kuwar Ranaji, Extraordinary ambassador sent to the Queen from Nepal” (47). He is first such “high class Hindu” to meet with the Queen (47).

The Prince Janga Bahadur is shrouded in the eastern styled expensive clothes. His crown is plated with gold and silver, and diamond is shining. People say that the diamond and other stones placed in the crown cost around 150,000 pound sterling. The various types of attractive clothes of the servants and the extraordinary and costly uniforms of the body guards of His Highness attracted the attention of all people there. This rare scene that cannot be seen so easily in this land could be seen in the deck of the Rippon Ship. (48)

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The general about 32 years old is a handsome and very clever person. His colour is very light but his hair is deep dark and long. He is the first high class Hindu to step into this country. He is a pioneer figure in Hindustan with his strong and far

reaching influence in the northern part of Hindustan. Of so your age, he is great and successful warrior and is the best in his area. (49)

A sense of wonder and of appreciation of Janga delineates all the accounts, news or whatever, in London. Why there was such a positive note left in all accounts will be a matter of discussion in the latter part of this Chapter. It does not mean that the Londoners were deaf to the type of contradictions the group of visitors was exposing in all the things they were doing there. One peculiar thing for the Londoners was their sanitary behavior, which was more concerned to rituals than to hygiene (50). This description is very interestingly reported in the contemporary English media, thus:

They would keep their cooking and eating secret but they never cared about their strange open sky bathing no matter whoever sees them. They wash their hands every time they touch something. This bathing for them was for religious reasons not for cleaning. Not only those servants some officers too were seen all the time washing. They would unclthe themselves except their simple cloth wrap round their waist and sit and a jug of water was enough for them to complete their bath. The servants are of lower caste and their feet are without any shoes. There was a striking contrast between the clothes of the servants and those splendid ones of their officers. (50-51)

Where there are more differences among people, there are more roles to perform. This idea is particularly striking in the Hindu cultures as by religion the Hindus believe in various ways and stages in life and also various *karma* people have to perform in their daily “social drama” to borrow the phrase from Victor Turner, in order to attain “higher spiritual benefits” in their

afterlives. In short, these people were performing their socio-cultural roles as truly as possible. Their roles were definitely different than those of the western cultures, here British Christians, and therefore the differences were a part of interest for them. In other words, if these performers were from the same cultures, the performances would have been less interesting and less reportable.

This line of argument gets a bitter turn but still gives a more accurate description in the French media. There are a couple of reasons why it happens that way, as Dixit says, because the French were rivals to the British; French border didn't touch Nepal, and therefore diplomatically they had nothing to do with them; Janga's stay in Britain was longer and he was already a man of concern to the French people, the latter knew about him before he reached there; and a number of reasons related to difference in taste, culture and thoughts (55-56). In comparison to their English audience, French people appear more direct, more accurate and therefore more acerbic than the English people. It was also because Janga was not their direct guest, but just a visiting delegate on his way back to India (Nepal).

Dixit mentions in his account that Janga was very much involved in merrymaking, drinking and girls in Paris, may be because he thought himself freer to act in comparatively more open society in Paris (58). While explaining his passionate behavior, Dixit says that Janga Bahadur wanted to bring countess of Lancefield as his wife, and comes to support Openia Pyublic's idea that if possible, Janga would bring 200 wives from Europe (58). Janga as a person who brought a daughter of Kutuk Maharaj as his wife from Benares to Kathmandu, could certainly bring more wives from anywhere he visited. Janga had read in Hindu epics and mythologies, particularly Lord Krishna's 1600 *gopinis*, that having more wives in life is a matter of both satisfaction and glory.

It is found that there were many news coverage of Janga's visit to France. Almost all such coverage is related more to the exotic nature of this visit than to the visit of some kind of king, maharaja or prime minister. *La Constitutionale*, a popular news paper published from Paris, had the following coverage of the visit:

We had heard about news that a large delegation sent by the King of Nepal to the palace of Victoria reached Britain. Before leaving Europe, these foreigners wanted to visit France. More than 12 in the delegation including the Prime Minister of Nepal and Chief Janga Bahadur Kunwar, other high ranking officials together with English Captain Fosh as translator visited the museum and observed the *livre paintings*. (68).

While in France, the delegation members visited various places including theatres, museums, painting exhibitions, pubs and many more. Their extravaganza and flamboyance continued in France, too, and before they left for Alexandria on an English ship, their being there was variously narrated and described. The roles they performed in France were less restrictive and less controlled.

Janga Bahadur's performances in the travelogue find a completion with the wedding in Benares in which Janga Bahadur finally marries the daughter of the Kutuk Maharaja before leaving for Nepal. The writer of the travelogue does not give any further details on this, but this wedding itself for a Hindu sovereign with a king's daughter from Benares should be a pleasing one, at least spiritually. Victor Turner would redefine his concept of aesthetic drama and social drama, had he read this before writing his "Are there Universals of Performance?" (18).

3.6 Diplomatic Protocols and Courtesies

Protocol refers to at least three meanings, and therefore three different practices, all of them virtually related to diplomatic practices. First according to G.R. Berridge and Alan James is the rules of “diplomatic procedure, notably those designed to accord to the representatives of sovereign states and others, as well as different classes of officers within them, the treatment in all official dealings to which their recognized status entitles them” (176). Public occasions such as the ones faced by the troupe of Janga Bahadur “present the most testing times for such rules, and it is for this reason that a state’s chief of protocol has in the past sometimes been known as its ‘master of ceremonies’” (176).

Second meaning of Protocol refers to an “annex to a treaty” and finally the third one refers to an “agreement of a less formal kind than is usually connoted by the word ‘treaty’” and sometimes the fourth meaning of the term may mean the “minutes of a conference or a formal record of what has happened, e.g. a protocol of deposit of an instrument of ratification” (176). None of these last three meanings of the term will be discussed here as the primary use of the term here is to just show how multifaceted and performative the protocol, one of the chief component in traditional as well as present day diplomacy i.e. the first usage of the term given above. This is largely because Janga Bahadur Rana sets out from Nepal to “know the British” and thereby determine whether to extend friendly hands, and otherwise attack them and force them to leave *Hindustan*.

Protocol in practice is found to be very consciously observed in many occasions. This is the reason why many countries have a separate division to deal with such matters in their governance system. Different formats are in practices as to how to go ahead with this matter of

protocol. Counting its role in modern diplomacy, G.R. Berridge in his *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* says, “States have grown tremendously” and because of “much greater ease of international travel” the number of visiting dignitaries is also increasing day by day, and therefore “it is not surprising that all Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) should have either a separate protocol department or one that embraces protocol together with some other closely related function” (16-17).

How was Janga treated by one of the founders of diplomatic practices including protocol affairs? How was his response to them? Here are some of the most important clues to protocol matters that sides both carefully and inadvertently deal with each other.

First of all, Janga Bahadur Rana wanted to visit *Belait*, and there was certainly a written invitation from the British government submitted to him via then resident diplomatic mission of Britain to Nepal, i.e. the first resident mission of foreign country in the soil of Nepal. This act is part of protocol because the fundamental function of protocol is to make other side feel happy and make their journeys more comfortable. Even the exchange of goods and souvenirs are part of protocol because they also work towards creating goodwill and friendly relations. When Janga Bahadur Rana reaches Patna, 17 gunfires are offered as *salami* in his honour (2). The high ranking officials of British India make all the arrangements of the journey. Upon arching the coastal city of Calcutta, he observes a parade of many British soldiers, where some were seen beating their bands. The writer says that one hundred and twenty five thousand people gather there to welcome him.

The Government of British India has also sent a group of people including translators to Britain and on his return, too, there are people helping him on various occasions so that his

journey has become very comfortable. During his visit, the British Government took care of their food, accommodation and other necessities. They also act on Janga's request to visit and pay his respects to Sir Dwarkanath, a place that could be reached in three days from Bombay. So the courtesies and protocols extended to the entourage at the time when there were no such effective international laws to guide such visits as *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Mission 1961* and various other legally binding international laws prevalent today.

3.7 Histrionics of Janga Bahadur

Hammy Janga takes the journey as a self-conscious game, a play acted than as something that is genuinely lived. Just like Subedi says about Janga Bahadur, he appears so histrionic and dramatic in the travelogue that it is very hard to leave it as a simple traveler setting out from his home to understand the world. He has intent not only to understand the world as he says in the very beginning of the book “to understand the heart of empire”, but also to make the situations favourable for him wherever and whenever possible. His name so elaborated with the suggestive epithets of various kinds, his crown with more than 4 million rupees value, wearing the crown all the way to/in Britian and his way back, his demonstration of casteism and untouchability, ambivalence of eating meats on the one hand and milking holy cow on the other , his sharp and quick repartees, flamboyance in behaving, foregrounding in every aspect of his behavior, *chardham* and marriage etc. refer to a unique man in action, a great actor in performance. Here are as many as five histrionic behaviours of Janga Bahadur, enough to call Janga a performer.

Janga Bahadur goes to the “forest of Patharaghata and captured four elephant”, and “killed three or four tigers and many deer” (151). This is just like in the beginning of many great stories in the west as well as in the east that a great hero or a warrior begins with something

heroic. Here the success in capturing and killing foreshadows the coming series of successes the hero will be undergoing. Janga has never left the situation to turn good for him, instead he has acted and struggled to turn the things good for him. This journey itself is Janga's attempt to that end:

The nobles, the merchants, the common people, everyone on both sides would be delighted. Up till then no sovereign, nawab, raja or nobleman from Hindustan had *conceived* the idea of travelling to Belait. How His Excellency's great prowess and intelligence had enabled him to do so and he would profit great from it...By understating the sea he would become a wiser man, and en route he would be able to see the countries of five or six sovereign. (153)

This profundity of thought of Janga Bahadur comes from the socio-cultural thought of Hindu people, whose ancient texts reveal that traveling far and wide corresponds to extending the horizon of thought as well. The cultural story does not stop there, it further says that such activity is very hard and only courageous persons can do it. Janga always thought himself more powerful and adventurous than others, and this conviction is responsible for boosting him from inside to take this errand. When the ship was bound to Europe, there were many Englishmen and their wives talking to each other on deck. Janga wanted the attention of all the crew members and passengers to him. Here is what he did:

When the wind was not blowing, however the Prime Minister passed his time pleasantly, listening to the Englishmen's conversation, making amusing jokes, watching the dancing and other entertainment, taking the air on deck and so on.

Each day he shot two or three hundred rounds from his rifle, either at a bottle thrown into the sea or at one hung from the mast. (158)

When this is seen by other people in the deck, they join him to do the same. Janga Bahadur was a real shooter, so no one of them could do what he would do there. Certainly they were very impressed with what he would often do, and the writer mentions their response thus:

The Englishman said that they too were good at shooting and confidently came up to join in, but none of them were a match for him. Everyone was very impressed. Those Englishmen and their *memsahibs* discussed him among themselves. This Prime Minister, they said, is a young man, yet no skill is beyond him. His conversation is clever and he has great courage, when he talks he is able to captivate everyone. (158)

These details come out at a very crucial point of their journey i.e. they are at the ships' deck and therefore a right time to delve into conversation and other recreational activities. Hence, this is a time unfamiliar turn into familiars, at least for a passage of time, basically for enjoyment. The judgment that comes from the Englishmen travelling together is more than the sycophancy of the writer of the travelogue, as most of such things are possible and therefore they can be taken for granted. One more thing that appears very interesting for the modern readers as well as for those from other cultures at that time too is his cautious activity, in moving, in speaking, in eating:

When he eats he allows no one to watch and he lets no one touch his drinking water. If dried fruit, fried or fresh vegetable is taken from the store he is particular to see that they are not polluted. He even milks his cow himself. He has the aspirations of a great emperor. His speech is full of self-confidence. The

discerning among the English remarked to one another that he was not subservient like an Indian: he was Prime Minister to an independent king. (158)

It was a very unique experience for those who were there. Janga Bahadur's clever and shrewd activities as seen in the above quote highlight three important facts:

1. Janga's Doubt: Food and drinking water are the easiest ways to destroy any enemy. As Chanakya writes in the last chapter of his *Chanakyaniti*, crafty way to "destroy any enemy is to use poisons" and goes into the details of "use and misuse of poison" and a "safe and easy way of use" of it (67). As a high ranking dignitary, Janga Bahadur was always conscious of what he eats and drinks.
2. Janga's Casteism and Untouchability: Janga Bahadur is seen very much conscious of his class, both in political and social ladders, and perform things in such a way that it is reflected in whatever he does. He thought himself belonging to ancient *kshetriyas* and some like John Whelpton have written a long account that he falls in the direct line of *Kshetriays* of Ayodhya, i.e. to Ram in *Ramayana*. It is quite impossible to think that any such line of connection exists, and there is no book, no proof to prove this claim. Such acts can only be interpreted as Janga's performance based on his caste and casteism.
3. Hygiene Factor: Closely related to the idea given above in number two is Janga's conscious act of eating and drinking. He knows that he is on the way to Britain and what it would mean to fall ill on the way. He has left a big unfinished project back home and his death or any form of disability will put many things in verge of danger.

These three reasons why Janga appears so conscious about eating and drinking can be summed up by saying that his actions appear overplayed—kind of performance. These and many other

activities make the audience of Englishmen and their *memsahibs* note “that no one at court ranked higher than he except the king himself and that he headed the council, performing both civil and military functions” (158). The conclusion drawn both by the writer of the travelogue and audience, and here in this research work is this: “In short the discerning realized that he was his own master” (158). Janga in fact was “his own master”, as Subedi aptly says he “always felt himself as an actor in a play that he himself had written silently and acted” (17).

It is generally believed that Janga Bahadur would always maintain a diary of his own for writing important events and plans, impressions and interpretations, so that he would aptly retain the things if forgotten, or simply manage them with the aid of written words. This was the reason why Kamal Mani Dixit searched for the notes of Janga Bahadur in the old houses of his offspring, and luckily found a couple of them, including the *Belait-Yatra*. This idea is better reflected in a book edited by Dixit himself, entitled *Janga Bahadurko Belaiti Kaapi*. So just like John Whelpton, it is safe to assume that most of the details in the *Belait-Yatra* come from Janga Bahadur’s diary, including some very important and the most interesting that are discussed and interpreted throughout this dissertation, and one such dramatic description is given below which is from the last quarter of the travelogue:

As they neared Hindustan birds also began to be sighted, as well as fish of various sorts and pearl-insects. Things became pleasanter. In the early morning the ship reached the port of Bombay and guns were fired in salute. When they saw Indian people and the city of Bombay it felt as if they were back at home with their own families and they were very happy. (218)

The travel writer nowhere mentions any difficulty faced either by Janga Bahadur or by any of his fellow members, but the above mood at the last quarter of the travelogue is highly dramatic, suggestive of various meanings including a principle of diplomatic activity: do not speak what you think and feel, but speak what you think should be. A simple and even textual new critical method of analysis of the above quote reveals the fact that the travelers were very happy to see the “Indian people and the city of Bombay” as they found these two objects so good to see that they “felt as if they were back at home with their own families and they were very happy”.

A question here is left unanswered: Why were they so happy? The answer is simple as given in the foregone paragraph. But if we make a chain question like this then the answer will be something really surprising: why at this particular time and place do they change their mood so abruptly? It speaks the fact that they were not so happy to stay for such a long time in the west, mostly in Britain. This fact that they were unhappy at least at the latter part of their journey, that they were homesick or that they no more enjoyed staying any longer there gets revealed here. But this sense of homesickness or repulsion or unhappiness they never reveal in Britain or in France. This also contributes the fact they Janga together with his troupe of actors were quite histrionic. This kind of abundance of theatricality and power of acting is seldom found in other literatures, even in those that are meant for some sort of acting or performance.

3.8 Purpose of Janga’s Performance

Janga’s performances such as the ones performed in *Belait-Yatra* have a profound historical importance, as the fact is that Nepal began to experience some successes in international affairs during the tenure of Janga Bahadur. To the north, relations with Tibet had been mediated through China since Nepal's defeat in 1792, and during the early nineteenth century embassies had to make the arduous journey to Beijing every five years with local

products as tribute to the Qing emperor (Hamal 23). By 1854, however, China was in decline and had fallen into a protracted period of disturbances, including the Taiping Rebellion (1851-64), revolts by Muslim ethnic groups north of Tibet, and war with European powers. The Nepalese mission to Beijing in 1852, just after the death of the sixth Panchen Lama, was allegedly mistreated in Tibet. Because of this slight, the Nepalese government sent a protest letter to Beijing and Lhasa outlining several grievances, including excessive customs duties on Nepalese trade. In 1855 Nepalese troops overran the Kuti and Kairang areas. According to Hamal, the Nepalese-Tibetan War lasted for about a year, with successes and failures on both sides, until a treaty negotiated by the Chinese resident and ratified in March 1856 gave Nepalese merchants duty-free trade privileges, forced Tibet to pay an annual tribute of 10,000 rupees to Nepal, and allowed a Nepalese resident in Lhasa (9-10). In return, Nepal gave up territorial gains and agreed that it, as well as Tibet, would remain a tributary state subject to China. As the Qing Empire disintegrated later in the century, this tributary status was allowed to lapse, and even Tibet began to shake off its subordination (10-11).

It was in such an important context that the Prime-Minister of Nepal and Maharaja of Kaski and Lamjung, Janga Bahadur Rana was the first Rajah and Prime-Minister to get state honors in the court of Queen Victoria in 1850. Nepal and Britain became strong allies after Janga Bahadur's return from England visit and this close relation is still maintained today.

The outbreak of disorder to the south also allowed the Nepalese army to take a more active role in international affairs. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 (*sepoy* Mutiny) beginning in May 1857, was a series of related uprisings throughout north India that threatened to topple the power of the British East India Company. The uprisings began with widespread mutinies in the company's army and spread to include peasant revolts and alliances of the old Mughal

aristocracy against the foreigner. Most of the major cities west of Bengal fell into rebel hands, and the aged Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah II, was proclaimed the leader of a national revolution. Initially there was some fear in British circles that Nepal would side with the rebels and turn the tide irrevocably against the British East India Company, but Janga Bahadur proved to be a loyal and reliable ally. At that point, immediately following hostilities in Tibet, the army of Nepal had grown to around 25,000 troops. Janga Bahadur sent several columns ahead and then marched with 9,000 troops into northern India in December 1857. Heading an army of 15,000 troops, he fought several hard battles and aided the British in their campaigns around Gorakhpur and Lucknow. The prime minister returned to Nepal triumphantly in March 1858 and continued to aid the British in rooting out "rebels" who had been dislocated during the chaos and sought refuge in the Tarai (Hamal 13).

After the Sepoy Rebellion had been crushed and Britain had abolished the British East India Company and taken direct control of India in 1858, Nepal received a reward for its loyalty. Western sections of the Tarai that had been ceded through the Sugauli Treaty in 1816 were returned. Henceforth, the British were firm supporters of Janga Bahadur's government, and Nepal later became an important source of military recruits for the British army (Hamal14).

In 1858 King Surendra Bikram Shah bestowed upon Janga Bahadur Kunwar the honorific title of Rana, an old title denoting martial glory used by Rajput princes in northern India. He then became Janga Bahadur Rana, and the later prime ministers descended from his family added his name to their own in honor of his accomplishments (15). Their line became known as the house of the Ranas. Janga Bahadur remained prime minister until 1877, suppressing conspiracies and local revolts and enjoying the fruits of his early successes. He exercised almost unlimited power over internal affairs, taking for his own use whatever funds were available in the treasury. He

lived in the high style of an Anglicised native prince in the British Raj, although unlike the Indian princes he was the ruler of a truly independent nation, an ally rather than a subordinate of the British.

3.9 Janga Syndrome

The type of theatricality of Janga Bahadur throughout his lifetime has a significant internal function, at least for the support of family rule in Nepal for a next hundred years, and his theatricality and performance art in exposed in his *Belait-Yatra* has an external function which is even more important than the internal function. Both functions are inextricably interwoven. This is particularly important if we see the contemporary “texture of Nepali historicity in relation to power, coloniality and the institution of autocracy in Nepal” (Subedi 15). The success of his political career rests on the constant support he got from the British Empire, which helped him garner internal support and therefore the King had to upgrade his political ambitions to the level of *Maharaja of Kaski and Lamjung* with an honorific title of “Shree 3” when the king himself would write “Shree 5” on 1913 Shrawan 24 (6 Aug. 1856). Such privilege was never granted in the history not only of Nepal but also of the whole Indian subcontinent.

It may be possible to a ruthless killer like Janga Bahadur to snatch unprecedented power and privilege, but why the type of support he gets from the British Empire is a question worth pondering. Historians have put many hypotheses to answer this question, including Baburam Acharya in his *Aba Yesto Kahilehi Nahos* and Chittaranjan Nepali in his edited *Nepalko Itihaska Bibidh Pakchha*, among others. There is always a wave of thought that Janga appeased the British Empire and British people simply treated him as an ally, a friend not a foe. They also claim that the Treaty of Sugauli concluded in 1816 between Nepal and the British India was a foundation enough for the succeeding generation to work in the shadows of it, and

Janga was there simply to step into the formats already laid down by Kaji Bhimsen Thapa and other brave Gorkhas.

These speculations and conjectures on Nepalese history, particularly the epoch immediately after the Treaty of Sugauli, needs to be written after the discovery by Kamal Mani Dixit of the text of *Belait-Yatra*. Dixit himself writes in the introduction to the first edition of *Belait-Yatra* that the manuscript of this travelogue that was copied from the original by a certain scribe was found under the custody of Rudra Bikram Rana. The contention in this research work is that the finding of this book and correct understanding and interpretation of the book make it compulsory to revising and rewriting of the history of Janga Bahadur, including his role, his source of power and every other thing related to him.

Any reviewing and rewriting of any part of history and for that matter anything already established as historical truths should come along with new theoretical lights, newer perspectives and newer justice-making efforts. Performance Studies, a recent outlook to find everything playful by uncovering the biases of history, can do justice to such understanding and interpretation. Therefore, this is not an effort to alter something and establish other, but a genuine nature of things that is always there, which negates time. Just like Victor Turner says, the acting was always there and will always remain there as long as we humans live in the world.

Janga Bahadur as a self-conscious actor designed things for himself. He made the British people act in certain way for which he designed certain course of action, and this *Belait-Yatra* is of paramount importance to reveal such syndrome of Janga. His acting has a major role in unfurling how he understood others and how others understood him.

Subedi in this connection says that the “post-colonial perception in history writing in English and defining a hybridity in literary and cultural practices associated with English language and literature will be called a Janga-Syndrome” (16). If elaborated further, Janga-Syndrome would be the vigorous acting in which the actor is very self-conscious and histrionic so that the audience of such performance presumes the lies for truths and emulation for friendships. Janga’s all accounts if read in line with the image he gives in his *Belait-Yatra* clearly reveals the magnitudes of performance in life.

A very extreme understanding of diplomacy is that it is an activity to make people willingly go to hell. Janga Bahadur does not make British go to hell, nor does he make them go at least to their territories just like the ambition of various Bengali sultans in their efforts to drive them off. One note is to be highlighted here: Janga succeeds in securing and maintaining the sovereignty and independence of this tiny Himalayan kingdom in the faces of dangerous and turbulent times in history. One should not forget the fact that the time Janga lived was also the time many empires like Ottomans, Assyrians and Persians in the middle east and Bengal, Malaya, Khmer and many other in the east Asia and Germany, Anatolia, Prussia and Poland were busy constantly rising and collapsing in the waves of history.

Finally, Janga Bahadur Rana’s contribution can be equated as preserver with the founder of modern Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah. If founding of a nation and preserving it are equal, then their roles definitely correspond to each other, i.e. one cannot stand without the other. This unique perspective through the *Belait-Yatra* to look at the lives and works of Janga Bahadur clearly makes people refresh their understanding on the one hand of travel writing and on the other of his role in the modern Nepal.

In Mahabir Poudyal's article entitled "Historically Incomplete Janga Bahadur Rana", Janga is portrayed as an historically incomplete figure because there are many points missing. Positive sides of Janga Bahadur are seldom discussed and analyzed, which is so evidently given in the travelogue. Therefore, it will be an awe response of many readers of the travelogue that Janga like figure had such a brighter and useful side, to reckon the past and to understand the present. In the present political turmoil of Nepal, Janga's space is being realized by many. Analyzing the political situation of Nepal in the last 20 years after the revolution of 1990, here is what Satyamohan Joshi spoke of him in frustration: "the possible leadership in Nepal" should be like Janga Bahadur because "he did a lot for the country" because he had a "quality of leadership" (Muluklai).

Chapter IV. Diplomacy in Performance

Performances can be used for various purposes, one such purpose as seen in the roles of Janga Bahadur in the travelogue is diplomacy. His role in the travelogue *Belait-Yatra* interestingly makes diplomacy and performance as two sides of the same coin, though in different contexts they may not appear the same again. The type of theatricality of Janga Bahadur not only in this travelogue but also throughout his lifetime has significant diplomatic and political functions in the contemporary Nepal.

The first and foremost function was to protect national sovereignty and independence, as the time was very turbulent in terms of rising and declining of nations with visibly rapid changes in the national borders of nations. More importantly, the advent of British Empire in the Indian subcontinent from then Persia through whole of today's Afganistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Myanmar to Malayan peninsula had jeopardized the existence of various tiny nations like Nepal, and the birth of a politician and a diplomat like Janga Bahadur at such juncture of time was a great event in Nepalese history.

Janga Bahadur had done many heinous crimes, susceptible to the investigations by the Human Rights Commissions if he were living in the present times, and this dissertation should not be taken as a defense of such acts of Janga, as the point of departure of arguments here is oriented towards finding a link between Janga and Nepal's independence. In this connection, Abhi Subedi says that Janga should be analyzed in relation to the contemporary "texture of Nepali historicity in relation to power, coloniality and the institution of autocracy in Nepal" (15). So does Kamal Mani Dixit in his various writings including *Janga Geeta*. Dixit's *Janga Geeta* presents Janga as a multidimensional leader.

The success of Janga Bahadur's political career rests on the constant support he got from the British Empire, which helped him garner internal support and therefore the King had to upgrade his political ambitions to the level of *Maharaja of Kaski and Lamjung* with an honorific title of "Shree 3" when the king himself would write "Shree 5" in 1913 (1856 AD). Such privilege was never granted in the history not only of Nepal but also of the whole Indian subcontinent.

It might be possible to a "ruthless killer" like Janga Bahadur to snatch unprecedented power and privilege, but why the type of support he gets from the British Empire can thus be understood as something resulting from his diplomacy so neatly executed through performances. Historians have smeared his image as a dictator, a tyrant, a naïve, power-hungry potentate devoid of reason and vision, and also a mastermind and chief actor of bloody massacres which have "eclipsed various other aspects of Janga's life and deeds" (Poudyal "Historically").

Nepalese people still remember him as a founder of modern legal system (*Muluki Ain*, 1854), education systems, art and architecture as seen in some buildings some of which are still used as important government offices in the Kathmandu valley and various others. Still many others remember him in some anecdotes such as a boy who jumped into the Bagmati River at the age of ten or a poisonous serpent catcher or one who clambered upon the horse which galloped off before he could hold the bridle uninjured or the one who was seen under the umbrella of a poisonous cobra in Chitwan or the one who tamed a leopard or the one who leaped on horseback into the Trishuli River or leap off from the Dharahara. Diamond Samser Rana's novels *Seto Bagh* (white tiger) and *Grihaprabesh* (entering home) are replete with such anecdotes.

John Whelpton says that these anecdotes have a “core of truths” and a person who went through “many life and death situations” in the whole life in the words of Mahabit Poudyal, and fought with the imperialists and colonialists in a different way than others i.e. through histrionics as seen in his visit of Europe, prompt readers and critics to rewrite his history (Historically). Poudyal goes further to argue that there are only three prime ministers in Nepales history who could rule for three decades, and the “rest of Nepalese history is one of instability, formation and fall of governments, intrigues and foreign dominance in internal affairs” (Historically). This idea can be backed by the surprising fact that the democratic era of the post-1990 has witnessed as many as 18 governments.

Ramesh Dhungel in his “Janga Bahadur Revisited” very aptly writes that Nepal’s 19th-century history was “significantly different”. He further writes that most of the smaller but stronger states of India were “disappearing, one after another, from the political geography of the Subcontinent” because the “British power in the region had reached its height, in large part due to its unchallengeable military supremacy”. In such time “Nepal was the only country in the region that was able to maintain an independent existence, by resisting the military hegemony of the British colonial might in India” and its credits definitely go to Janga Bahadur Rana.

There is always a wave of thought that Janga appeased the British Empire and in turn the British people simply treated him as an ally, a friend not a foe. They also claim that the Treaty of Sugauli concluded in 1816 between Nepal and the British India was a foundation enough for the succeeding generation to work in the shadows of it, and Janga was there simply to step into the formats already laid down by Kaji Bhimsen Thapa and other brave Gorkhas.

These speculations and conjectures on Nepalese history, particularly the epoch immediately after the Treaty of Sugauli, and the performances and their diplomatic overtures as evident in the travelogue analyzed in the preceding chapters throw a unique light on Janga Bahadur, which is quite different from so widespread depictions of him. The fact is that over-generalized characterization of Janga Bahadur Rana still persists in Nepali historical memories.

Any reviewing and rewriting of any part of history and for that matter anything already established as historical truths should come along with new theoretical lights, newer perspectives and newer justice-making efforts. Performance Studies, a recent outlook to find everything playful by uncovering the biases of history, gives justice to such understanding and interpretation. Just like what Victor Turner says, the acting was always there and will always remain there as long as we humans live in the world. This very aptly applies to the performative nature of Janga and his depiction in history.

Janga Bahadur as a self-conscious actor designed things for himself. He made the British people act in certain way by his certain performative course of actions and this *Belait-Yatra* is of paramount importance to reveal such syndrome of Janga. His acting has a major role in unfurling not only how he understood others and how others understood him but also how he managed to do something that could only be done by very great diplomats/politicians.

A very extreme understanding of diplomacy is that it is an activity to make people willingly go to hell. Janga Bahadur does not make British people go to hell, nor does he make them go at least to their territories just like the ambition of various Bengali sultans in their efforts to drive them off from the Indian subcontinent. The point should not go without saying here: Janga succeeds in securing and maintaining the sovereignty and independence of this tiny

Himalayan kingdom in the faces dangerous and turbulent times in history. One should not forget the fact that the time Janga lived was also the time many empires like Ottomans, Assyrians and Persians in the middle east and Bengal, Malaya, Khmer and many other in the east Asia and Germany, Anatolia, Prussia and Poland were busy constantly rising and collapsing in the waves of history.

Finally, Janga Bahadur Rana's contribution can be equated as preserver with the founder of modern Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah. From the very beginning, Janga Bahadur began working to establish a tactful diplomacy with the British authorities, both in India and England. Janga was, then, able to gain international recognition for himself and Nepal, by establishing and maintaining a special relationship with England. Janga Bahadur therefore comes across as the most significant historical personality after Prithvi Narayan Shah. The former established the country, with the capital in Kathmandu; the latter ensured its independent existence through a correct reading of geopolitics and the growing power of the East India Company.

It might be possible to just get entertained from the performances, as there are many performances for performance sake alone, but a little scratch into the surface of Janga Bahadur's performance—his new name and new roles, his histrionics, his lies, his acting etc. as seen in the previous chapter—reveals the fact that there is a diplomatic note of what Janga does. What he did is less for himself and more for the country and people. Of course, there was his personal ambition stimulating him to do what he did, but this personal ambition dies with the person and what are left are the imprints in history and the inspiration people get from such acts. Based on such inspirations, history needs to be valued, reviewed and if needed then rewritten, for it to be history as such, because history cannot be a dead object. The protection of national independence

and maintenance of Nepalese identity even today has its foundation in the performances of Janga Bahadur Rana.

This unique perspective through the *Belait-Yatra* to look at the lives and works of Janga Bahadur clearly makes people refresh their understanding on the one hand of travel writing and on the other of his role in the modern Nepal. It will be an awe response of many readers of the travelogue that Janga like figure had such a brighter and useful side, to reckon Nepalese past and to understand the present. From this angle, many new lines of historical and cultural understanding can be redrawn, revisited and researched, which the present research works keeps open for the future researchers to go deeper into the playfulness of understanding and interpretation along with newer and fresher ways to find more serious meaning.

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