

Chapter I: Introduction and Review of Literature

Photography has become a part and parcel of life, a culture, in the modern world. Photographs, digitally produced and disseminated, determine and define our understanding of reality. Appreciating its constitutive and informative power, photography has been used in art, literature, political science, economics, media and advertisement, and almost all the domains of knowledge. Photography is defined as ‘the art, process or the job of taking photographs or filming something’. It means photography is directly connected with craft, hobby, joy, science, and vocation or means to earn subsistence. Simply put, photography is nothing more than the art of capturing the factual world in the photographic images for whatever ends, be it professional or amateur.

Today, photography enjoys significant presence in many spheres of human life ranging from entertainment to information and education. Without it the achievement of modern development would not flourish. Photography in the developed world has assumed an identity as a separate discipline and developed in the similar fashion. However, in the less developed world the photography is often considered as only the hobby of the elites, thereby accruing pejorative attitude of the mostly poor society. Consequently, the art of photography has not developed in those spaces as it could have.

As Nepal is a developing country, photography has not flourished due to political, social, economic and educational underdevelopment. Though Nepalese photography developed in 60’s decade of 19th century; it could not keep to the pace of transnational photographic development. While other countries progressed in this field, Nepal remained much behind. For instance, the cinematography, a branch of photography, used in Indian film for last three decades, has just made entrance in

Nepali film industry. Given this context, it is not surprising that Nepali photography has not proved its importance in national spectrum.

As is well-known to all, photography is equally important to arts, literature, natural sciences, and pure sciences as well as to various disciplines of social sciences. In this context, photography is important for the comprehensive study of any discipline, because photography enables us to describe, narrate, predict, imagine, communicate the facts and shape setting, atmosphere, events and so forth.

This research tries to illuminate various dynamics of the Nepalese photography with the help of colors, lights, ideologies. Meaning, it tries to explore the significance and signification of the select photographic images in terms of what they represent ideologically, in terms of texture and color. It has, however, limited itself to a study of the photographs of mass movement 2046 B.S. and 2062/063 as viewed from the vantage point of the revisionist new historical perspective.

1.1 Photography: Genesis and Development in Global Context

McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology defines photography as the process of forming visible images directly by the action of light or other forms of radiation on sensitive surfaces. In the traditional sense photography utilizes the action of light to bring about charges in silver halides. It is the process or art of producing images of objects on sensitized surfaces by the chemical action of light or energy. But in the present time the dictionary describes photography not only in general sense but also indicates in various branches including amateur and professional photography as well as action, commercial, educational, press, scientific and technological and cinematographic photography.

For vigorous and effective communication, the photographer must know the technique and acquire the vision. Technically speaking, photography is nothing more

than fixing an image by chemical means. It is possible to take technically good photographs by simply pressing a button. But if the resulting photograph has to communicate itself to the viewers, it has to be more than literal image on a piece of paper or film. It is the human elements of imagination, understanding and taste which offer us some new revelations of reality. It is only then that photography can be successful in sending its messages into the mind of the readers and viewers.

1.2 Historical Development of Photography in Nepal

The photographs capturing scenic landscapes of Nepal – ‘medieval’ towns, terraced hill-sides, verdant fields, closely clustered village homes, mighty peaks, arid landscapes of the rain-shadow region in the western part of the country and of people who live in these sites, have been an intricate part of the Shangri-la story associated with Nepal until very recently. In the world of travel glossies, two of the most important activities that characterize our times – travel and photography – come together. In her well-known book, *On Photography*, (1997) critic Susan, Sontag suggests that photography has developed in direct conjunction with tourism where it documents “sequences of consumption carried on outside the voices of family, friends, neighbors” (1977-9). This association of photography with the packaging of Nepal as a mountain country in tourism-related literature is relatively well-known. What is less known, however, is that the Nepali subjects of these glossies themselves have been consuming photography for over a century in ways that are historically significant. (Onta.181, 1998.)

One can see photographs just about everywhere in Nepal today. Urban middle-class Nepalese usually have several framed photographs adorning the walls of their rooms and hundreds more in orderly kept albums or disorganized piles. While they might complain that photographs are taking too much of their cramped urban space,

they continue to take more of them. There has been a huge growth in the number of color photograph processing laboratories in urban centers like Kathmandu, Pokhara and Biratnagar. Journalist Shankar Kharel (1994) reported that such labs in Biratnagar were doing so well that many small studio-owners have already been forced out of business. However, itinerant photographers or those with studios in different non-urban locations within the same district (i.e. Morang) are reportedly doing better business. What Kharel has reported for Biratnagar and its surroundings probably holds true in many other urban Tarai locations even as it has been recently reported that business has gone down for such labs located in the Kathmandu Valley (Poudel 1998).

Photographic consumption is not limited to the urban centers of Nepal. Throughout the Nepali countryside, one can routinely see photographs – usually of the members of the family – hung on room walls. Hence one need not be surprised if one sees the photograph of a couple who are hosting one in the village of Madan Pokhara in Palpa district, hanging on the wall of their room. Capturing an earlier moment in their shared lives the photograph was probably taken in the nearby motor-accessible town of Tansen just as routine would be the encounter of a photo-studio in Setibeni, a small bazaar by the Kali Gandaki. The studio-owner who also takes color portraits would be happy to tell his customer that although he does not have facilities to develop them in his premises, he sends the photo-reel with a foot-carrier to Galyang bazaar in Syangja district, a four hour walk, and then to the labs of Pokhara in a five-hour bus ride. His customers pick up their photographs in four days' time back in Setibeni.

Apart from the growth in personal consumption of photographs, their increasing use in the Nepali media is also remarkable. In the print media boom,

especially in the context of relatively freer past eight years, photojournalism has played no small role (*The Kathmandu Post* 1997: Onta). Photographers have not only managed to earn full staff membership in daily newspapers, but also in weeklies and in magazines and periodicals that have inundated the Nepali-reading market. In addition to mundane photographs of the political newsmakers, the printing of poignant photographs depicting various moments in the life of our country and people is now routine. Many photographs that have recently appeared in the newspapers and newsmagazines constitute a new genre of visual-based social criticism. Offset printing technology, which does away with many of the difficulties associated with the earlier photo-printing methods, has greatly facilitated this growth. Photographers themselves have been the subject of discussion in the print media (e.g., Janamanch 2054 B.S.) and many photography training institutes have been in operation for some time now. In addition, a small number of Nepali freelance photographers specializing in fields such as art, fashion, wildlife, and other allied subjects are also beginning to establish themselves in the market (e.g., Lawoti 1998). Photo exhibitions have been held regularly and such collective displays of photographs have not only highlighted different themes, but they have also become a source of education and social activism.

What explains such level of photographic consumption in Nepal today? While this question deserves more serious attention than is possible here, there seem to be two main reasons that seem to bolster such consumption levels. First is the flexible association of photography with a notion of social identification based on the consumption of decidedly 'modern' commodities. Photographs happen to be one among a wide array of possible 'modern' things that one can consume to claim and exhibit one's class position, among other identities. In contrast to other goods, photographs embody an element of self-objectification that adds to its consumption-

attractiveness. They document the modalities of one's participation in internal or external travel, family or public celebration, marriage negotiation and allied occasions which have all become constituting elements of this new 'modernity'.

Closely tied to the first point is the wide-spread requirement by the Nepali state of photographic evidence as part of its effort to control membership in legitimate Nepali nationhood. The rule that one's photograph be part of one's citizenship paper best embodies this requirement even as photographs have become a part of many other routine dealings that we do with the state apparatus. Here one need just think of passports and job applications. In addition, the state also uses photography for explicit surveillance over its citizens (e.g., mug shots as the way the decoits are snapshot). Photography for explicit required as part of one's identification in other domains of our life (e.g., student identity card, club membership, etc.). This social use of photography began to gain importance after 1960 in Nepal.

Over the past two decades, a few hundred photographs taken in Nepal prior to 1960 have been published. These have been included in several books and collections. One can, for instance, think of *Nepal Rediscovered: The Rana Court 1864-1951* edited by Padma Prakash Shrestha (1986) containing 90 photos from the Rana era selected from the archives of the UK-based Nepal Kingdom Foundation. Similarly, in the 2-volume narrative *Shree Teen Haruko Tathya Britant*, Purushottam SJB Rana (1990) has published about 300 photos of the Ranas. In *Nepal Under the Ranas* written by Adrian Sever (1993), we can find more than 270 photos selected from the private collection of Jharendra SJB Rana. We can also think of *Portraits and Photographs from Nepal* by Prakash A. Raj (1994), and more recent publications such as *Images of a Century: The Changing Townscapes of the Kathmandu Valley* edited by Andreas Proksch (1995) and *Changing Faces of Nepal*, containing the photos

taken by the father and son duo of Dirgaman Chitrakar and Ganesh Man Chitrakar (Heide 1997). Similarly travelogues and other books written by non-Nepali who visited Nepal during the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries usually contain a few photographs. In addition, many of the more recent monographs from on modern Nepali history contain some photographs from the pre-1960 period. Unknown number of unpublished photographs from this period are also to be found in many personal collections.

Substantive analytical histories of pre-1960 photograph in Nepal are yet to be written. The first four books mentioned above treat the photographs they print as evidence that is simply ‘there’, sometimes to augment their respective narratives, but say very little in the form of a social history of the first century of photography in Nepal. *Images of a Century* was described by one reviewer as “a visual feast” to everybody interested in Kathmandu, an extremely useful record of the historical layers of the city” (Shah 1996), but it is also not a work that examines the photos it exhibits. In contrast *Changing Faces of Nepal* comes with a substantial essay on the work of the early Nepali photographers and their patrons, written by Susanne von der Heide. Yet many questions go unanswered or are still waiting for more detailed answers. Such questions include: who had social access to photography as consumption item and how did that access change over the century long period under consideration here? Toward what ends was photography put to use in the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries in Nepal? What kinds of cultural capital did photographs embody during those two half-century periods? And of what use are these photographs to social historians today?

At this preliminary stage of research, it is not possible to answer all the above questions adequately for all of Nepal. Nor will it be possible to provide an analytically

descriptive account of the entire corpus, published and unpublished, of photographs from the pre-1960 period. For such a project to be realized, not only will we have to look at all the available photographs, but also at the related voluminous non-photographic sources that will throw light on the contexts surrounding their creation. For obvious reasons, this kind of project is well beyond the intellectual and financial means of an individual researcher. After the establishment of local studios in Kathmandu around that time, the exclusivity of this mode of consumption was broken and Kathmandu's proto-middle class began to seek photographic portraits of itself. Once cameras became portable and affordable to members of this middle class in the 1920s, photography gradually became a part of the self-representing practice of this class. This practice began to assume normalizing proportions after the end of the Rana regime in the early 1950s.

In the preface to *Nepal Rediscovered: the Rana Court 1846 – 1951*, Padma Prakash Shrestha writes that it “was probably Jang Bahadur Rana's European tour in 1850 that brought the new automatic picture-taking machine – the camera – to his notice” (1986:vii). Available evidence that portraits of Jang Bahadur were made while he visited Europe in mid-1850 (p.SJB Rana 1998) indicate that there are good reasons to believe that he was not photographed there.

After Louis Jacques Mande Daguerree's discovery of what was later called the daguerreotype, photographic process was officially disclosed in August 1839, interest in photography among Europeans began to rise (Newhall 1988). However, due to the primitiveness of the technology, initial exposure times – upwards of twenty minutes – were only suitable for architectural photographs. But by the end of 1840, improvements in camera lens, the light sensitivity of the plates and the tone of the daguerreotypes made portrait photography attractive and many studios came into

existence in the Euro-American world. The discovery of a calotype negative by the Englishman William Henry Fox Talbot in 1841 made it possible to make multiple prints. Although collodian sensitized glass plate negatives that would eventually replace both of these technology was introduced only in 1851, studios using either the daguerreotype plates or the calotype negatives were plentiful in Europe by 1850.

Therefore the silence maintained by the accounts of Jang Bahadur's visit to Europe with respect to any encounter Jang might have had with a camera must be considerably noteworthy. Photos of Jang Bahadur taken in Europe have not been seen. Given the way in which his activities in Europe were covered by the press (Whelpton 1983), it is highly inconceivable that a photo session, had it taken place, would not have been reported. It would have been an activity with a novelty level, both for the host and the guest that would have been worth reporting. Given that no mention is made of such an encounter, we can conclude for the moment that Jang Bahadur was not photographed during this trip. Even then it is entirely likely that the presence of the technology was made known to him verbally. Even if that were the case, there is no record that suggests that Jang Bahadur brought back cameras with him to Nepal. Had he done so, it would have surely precipitated an earlier encounter with the medium inside Nepal.

Some photo collectors' encounters in Nepal have verbally claimed that they have photos in their possessions that were taken inside Nepal in the 1850s. However no one has been able to prove this in writing with evidence. Shrestha speculates that 'increasing knowledge of photography might have been obtained from British visitors to Nepal in the early 1850s' (1986:vii). This research is unable to provide a complete inventory of foreign visitors to Nepal in the 1850s and indicate who among them were photography-buffs, but it is interesting to note that at least two photographs in Adrian

Sever's *Nepal Under the Ranas* (1993:81, 88) are dated as being from the 1850s. If the years given for these photographs are correct, then they antedate the first incontrovertibly dated photographs taken in Nepal by a decade or so. But there are reasons to suspect that Sever has made a mistake here.

In response to a request from Calcutta for photographs of the 'principal hill tribes' of Nepal, George Ramsay, the then British Resident in Nepal, wrote on 3 July 1861 "there are no amateurs in the art of photography here, and the inducements to professionals to visit Kathmandu are so very small, that none have ever come up here' (quoted in Losty 1992:318). Except for an occasional absence, Ramsay had been in Kathmandu since 1852. Given that the few foreigners who came into Kathmandu during the 1850s would have been either the guests of the Rana premier of the resident, Ramsay was in a good position to know and remember if any of them had been photography- enthusiasts. In addition, no other archival or secondary source has succeeded in raising a credible doubt about Ramsay's statement regarding the absence of photographic activity in Nepal in the 1850s. From his letter we know that no Nepali practiced photography then and not foreign photographer had come to Kathmandu during the 1850s. Jharendra SJB Rana (personal communication), the owner of the photo collection from which Sever has selected the photographs for his book, was unable to say how they had been dated as such. Unless Sever has a convincing explanation (not included in his book), he has made a mistake while dating these specific photographs. Hence, in the current state of our knowledge, we can conclude the Kathmanduites did not see any photographic activity in the 1850s.

Based on indubitable evidence thus far available, the first photograph inside Nepal was taken in 1863, and the photographer was a British man named Clarence Comyn Taylor (1830 – 79). Those interested in the early history of photography in

Nepal are indebted to J.P. Losty (1992) for introducing us to Taylor's photographic work. In an article published in the journal *History of Photography*, Losty identified Taylor as the first person to take photographs in Nepal during 1863-65. Based not only on the photographs taken by Taylor, some of which comprise an album acquired by the Oriental and India Office Collections of the British Library in London, but also on the study of relevant archival documents, Losty has presented a preliminary survey of Taylor's work. In addition to providing a profile of his career, Losty reproduces and discusses some of Taylor's photographs.

Taylor was born at Vellore in 1830 and joined the Bengal Army in late 1850. He was severely wounded during the 1857 uprisings. He seems to have spent the next three years in Europe recuperating before returning to India in late 1860. In early 1862 he joined the Political Service and was made the Officiating (i.e. temporary) Assistant to the Agent of the British Governor-General in Rajputana, Sir George St Patrick Lawrence. We do not know when Taylor got interested in photography, but Losty's research has proved that sometime in 1862, Taylor passed through the city of Udaipur, the capital of the Maharanas of Mewar, and took at least fourteen photographs of temples and other monuments. According to Losty, these photographs, which were first taken in that city, "lack the brilliancy of detail" that one can see in Taylor's later architectural studies in Nepal (quoted in Onta 1992:321). The reason for improvement in his skills could partially be attributed to his meeting with two highly competent photographers, John Murray and Eugene Impey, before the end of 1862. In December 1862 Taylor was promoted to Captain and in early March 1863, appointed Assistant to the Resident in Nepal, George Ramsay.

Almost two years before Taylor's arrival in Kathmandu on 19 March 1863, George Ramsay, the British Resident in Nepal (who held this position from 1852-67),

had received a request from Calcutta asking him to make photographs of the different tribes of Nepal available as part of a project that sought to put together such photographs for the whole of the subcontinent. Lord Canning, Governor-General of India between 1856-63 and his wife had taken personal initiative to record through photography the people and the architectural monuments of India. The eight-volume book *The People of India*, published between 1868-75 by the India Museum in London, is the outcome of this project. As quoted above, Ramsay had sent a reply to this request by stating that no one practiced photography in Kathmandu and no outside photographer had visited Kathmandu. On that occasion he had also added that unless a professional photographer was sent to Kathmandu from India, the request for photographs from Nepal could not be complied with. Even then, he said such a person 'would meet with no encouragement from the Sirdars (Nobles), who would prefer the rudest highly colored daub by one of the native artists of the Valley to the best and most perfect specimen of photography that could be produced' (quoted in Losty 1992:318). We must note that the alacrity with which Jang Bahadur responded to photography proved how wrong Ramsay had been in his latter assessment. On 10 September 1863, Ramsay wrote to Calcutta that Captain Taylor was ready to take the requested photographs and sought sanction for the expenses that would be incurred in the process. A year later, on 24 September 1864, Ramsay reported that four identical sets each consisting of twenty photographs of the tribes of Nepal prepared by Captain Taylor had been mailed to Calcutta.

These 20 photographs by Taylor, taken some time between October 1863 and August 1864, can be found in the second volume of *The People of India* published in 1868 along with brief descriptions, called mostly from the writings of Brian Hodgson, highlighting 'the peculiarities of the tribe'. The prints used for this volume were not

the ones made by a certain W. Griggs. The people photographed are identified as being members of the Sunuwar, Limbu, Magar, Gurung, Khas, Newars, Banras, and Moormis 'tribe'. These include nine half-length portraits of individuals (reproduced in the volume in oval shape), four formally arranged in rows and seven informal group portraits. As Losty has noted, these photographs are evidence of Taylor's matured skills as portrait photographer. The four formal group portraits are said to capture Limbu, Magar, Gurung and Banras in their 'traditional' attire (and weapons in the case of the first three). Among the seven informal group portraits the ones showing a Sunuwar family outside their hut, three Newar men in a marketplace and two 'Gorkha' workmen relaxing are more remarkable.

These photographs, however, are not the first ones taken by Taylor inside Nepal and are not included in the Taylor album acquired by the British Library. This album instead consists of 18 photographs, 14 of which show different views of the three cities of the Kathmandu Valley. The remaining four are single or group portraits of ruling elites. At least a few of these 18 photographs had already been taken by September 1863 letter mentioned above where he states the several of the Ranas including Jang Bahadur had asked for copies of Taylor's photographs. Thus we can be sure that within six months of his arrival in Kathmandu, Taylor had already taken some photographs of the Kathmandu scenery and done some portraits of Jang Bahadur and his court, and had made Jang and others interested in his work. Losty thinks that given 'the general superiority of the group both in composition and technically to his Udaipur work' some of the other photographs in this album were taken in 1864 or 1865 (1992:325).

The 14 scenery photographs include three views of the Kathmandu Darbar square area, three of Pashupati temple area, two of Patan Durbar Square, four of

Bhaktapur, one of Swayambhu, and one of Kathmandu from Swayambhu. The four portrait photographs include a single portrait of Jang Bahadur wearing a full formal dress, Jang with his sons Jagat Jang and Jit Jang sitting on a chaise longue, Jang with his wife Hiranyagarbha Kumari, daughters and attendant 'slave girls,' and king Surendra with Resident Ramsay and other Nepali high ranking officials. Taylor left Kathmandu in mid-November 1865 for a year's leave but never returned to the valley. Unless new evidence suggests otherwise, we should conclude that the photographs taken by C.C. Taylor in 1863 constitute the first dated photographs taken inside Nepal.

After the photographs taken in 1863-65 by C.C. Taylor, the next dated photographs come from Jang Bahadur's visit in November-December 1871 to the great fair at Hajipur (on the Ganges opposite Patna) where he met Lord Mayo, the viceroy of India. One photograph from this occasion, showing some members of the entourage of both Jang and Lord Mayo, has been published in *Life of Jang Bahadur* written by his son Pudma Jang Bahadur Rana (1909). The 187 photos, according to Losty (1992:333 n 35), were taken by Messers Bornee and Shepherd, who were also the official photographers when the Prince of Wales came to the Nepal terai in early 1876 for a sixteen-day hunting trip. These photographers, it seems, had visited Kathmandu in 1875. Several other non-Nepali photographers, some of whom are mentioned in the next section, made it to Kathmandu before the end of the century.

The compiler of *Changing Faces of Nepal*, which was prepared as a catalogue for an exhibition at UNESCO in Paris (December 1997) of selective photos taken by the father and son duo of Dirga Man Chitrakar (1877-1951) and Ganesh Man Chitrakar (1906-1985) of Kathmandu, Susanne von der Heide (1997), provides substantial information on pioneering Nepali photographers and wealthy Rana

individuals who patronized them. In an essay spiced with relevant photos entitled “Pioneers of Early Photography in Nepal: Photographers, Artists and Patrons,” she identifies Dambgaar Shamsher (1858-1922), younger brother of Rana PM Bir Shamsher (r. 1885-1901), as the first Nepali photographer. He had set up a photo studio in his Darbar with money provide by his father Dhir Shamsher. It seems that he had learnt the art in the mid-1870s from Bourne and Shepherd. Later Dambar Shamsher’s son Samar Shamsher (1883-1858) became a first-rate photographer.

Heide names Purna Man Chitrakar (c. 1863-1939) as an important early photographer who was patronized by Dambar Shamsher and Gehendra Shamsher, son of Bir Shamsher. Purna Man is said to have learnt photography from the former around 1880 and was sent to Calcutta in the early 1880s for further training. Even as he continued to paint, Purna Man also received instructions form a Bengali photographer Neel Madhaba Deen who was invited to Kathmandu in 1888. Dirga Man Chitrakar came under the tutelage of Purna Man in the early 1890s when he was in his early teens. Later he was patronized by Chandra Shamsher (1901-1929) who gave him a job in the art department in Singha Durbar and took him in his entourage to Europe in 1908. Whether Dirga Man took any pictures while he was there has not been ascertained but it is known for sure that many cameras were brought back to Nepal at the end of that trip. It is with them that Dirga Man began to photograph. He set up an enlargement studio in his house in Bhimsenthan around then as well and later taught photography to his son Ganesh Man.

According to Heide (1997), Purna Man taught photography to many Chitrakars: his borther Badra Man, Badra Man’s brothers-in-law Ratna Bahadur and Hira Bahadur; Kraishbna Bahadur, Tej Bahadur and possibly Haka Lal Chitrakar and his son Pritivi Lal. Other pioneering Chitrakar photographers mentioned by Heide

include Chaite Chitrakar and his son Purna; Prithvi Man Chitrakar, the brothers Laxmi Bahadur and Tulsi Bahadur (grandsons of the famous artist Bhaju Man Who Jang Bahadur had taken to Europe in 1850) and the latter's sons Buddhi Bahadur and Krishna Bahadur. Other early photographers included Chakra Bahadur Kayestha and his three sons: Tej, Darsan and Sahilu; Mand and Sri Man Kayestha; Ghyan Bahadur Karmacharya and his brother Shanta Bahadur, latter's son Samar; Narayan Prasad Joshi, Pashupati Lal Shrestha, Bharat Shrestha and Tirth Raj Manandhar, Govind Baidya, Bishnu Dhoj Joshi and his son Hiranya Dhoj.

According to Heide (1997) Chitrakars who had access to Rana courts had to redefine their traditional role as painters and artists. When photography entered the scene in late 19th century, some took it up even as they continued to paint. The new technology also gave birth to the hybrid product of 'retouched' photos (photos that had been reworked with the painter's brush) which were quite popular with the Rana elites. Photography began to coexist with water color painting and the art of engraving and powerful Ranas competed with each other to patronize the more skillful painters and photographers.

In the 1880s several foreign photographers made it to Kathmandu: A certain Henry Ballantine was visiting Kathmandu when the Rana premier Ranaudip Singh was killed by the Shamsheer brothers on November 22, 1885. In his *On India's Frontier of Nepal, the Gurkhas' Mysterious Land*, Ballantine (1896) describes how he filled up his leisure hours taking photographs after having borrowed a few negative dry plates from a certain Mr. Hoffman of the firm of Messrs. Johnson and Hoffman of Calcutta. According to Ballantine, Hoffman had come to Kathmandu with European artist assistant "to photograph the carvings and other curiosities that were being collected under the supervision of the Residency surgeon for the Indian and Colonial

Exhibition to be held in London as well as to take what pictures he could of the Nepalese officers and their court” (1896:109). Hoffman reportedly was well patronized by the Ranas. On Ballantine’s own admission, we know that the photographs of the Rana included in his book were taken by Hoffman¹.

While photographing in Swayambhu, Ballantine was disturbed by the monkeys: “when we went at them for trying to upset our camera, and especially when one old, red blackguard... thought of appropriating our camera cloth!” (1896:122). He adds, “we here saw and photographed the finest bit of elaborate wood carving forming the side of one of the temple buildings (unfortunately damaged by age) that is to be found in Nepal, and that is saying a good deal” (1896:112). Helped by a coolie who transported his camera around the city, Ballantine also reports photographing Pashupatinath from a distance, Boudhnath, Balaju, and says he took some pictures from the top of the Dharahara. He writes, “Our rambles in the city itself secured us some characteristic pictures, and much insight into Nepal daily life” (1896:122). He describes the image of Kal Bhairub in central Kathmandu as the ‘most hideous object’ he saw or photographed- ‘an unmistakable god of death that might well stand to personify cholera’ (1896:128), before adding that while taking the photograph of Bhairub, he and his team was ‘surrounded by an inquisitive crowd that almost crushed us and our camera in their eager curiosity’ (1896:129). Of the 34 photographs given in Ballantine’s book, eleven are portraits of the ruling elites, sixteen show various sceneries from the Valley, and the rest seven are shots of ‘common’ folks. The portraits of the Rana elites seem commonplace to our eyes as plenty of similar photographs have been seen before. The scenery photographs taken by Ballantine

¹ It is also likely that some of the photographs in Shrestha (1986) and Sever (1993) identified as being from this period were also taken by Hoffman. In *Nepal Under Jang Bahadur 1846-1877* by Krishna K. adhikari, we find a photograph of Siddhi Man Singh Rajbhandari, an important non-Rana official in Jang Bahadur’s administration, that was obviously taken by Hoffman (1984: page facing p. 210). The photo plate is identified as being from “Johnson and Hoffman.”

contain nothing spectacular and those of the common folks are only slightly more interesting.

Photography during this period was also used to document scientific research in Kathmandu. The evidence for this comes from Cecil Bendall's *A Journey of Literary and Archaeological Research in Nepal and Northern India during the winter of 1884-5* (1886). Bendall mentions photographing several inscriptions and reproduces photographs of them and of several temples from the valley. While he does not comment much on his photographic activities in Nepal, Bendall complains about the unsatisfactory condition of photography in India and describes the prices charged by European firms there as 'most exorbitant' (1886:xifn2).

1.3 Pre-modern to Modern Nepali Photography: A Shift from Amateur to Professional Photo-journalism

Nepali photography started with the new automatic picture-taking machine – camera that was introduced after Janga Bahadur Rana visited Europe in mid- 1850 (P. SJB Rana 1998). Though it saw limited development in the pre-modern time, that is the Rana era, it had bifurcated into subgenres like action photography, personal photography and family albums. But in the present time it has developed as academic research, photographic education and profession.

Despite the social and cultural importance of photography in modern societies, photographic education is an area that has inspired very little in the way of academic research in Nepal. Photographic education is generally perceived in very narrow terms, as an area of technical training, lacking any broader intellectual significance. This paper argues that in the present photographic education has developed as a separate field in itself, and has been used in various fields such as photo-journalism, photographic education, profession and research. More to this, photo-journalism,

owing to its effectiveness, has been a means of propaganda, of discourse creation, of giving the impression and illusion of reality to the masses. And this very capacity renders it into a powerful political tool, dangerous too if in the hands of wrong power centers, as has been proved in the world by the Nazi propaganda previous to and during the Second World War. This issue makes a veritable reading for one interested in the socio-political implication of seemingly so technical and non-political an art form as photo-journalism.

One important aspect of the paper is to examine the relationship between photography used in the pursuit of general educational objectives and photography as part of vocational and professional education, culture, training, and direct roots into employment. In this respect the professional and educational photographic courses offer a key position, and provide one particular focus for further enquiry.

It is incumbent here to briefly draw a sketch of the history of development of journalism per se before one finds oneself able with any degree of ease to talk about the rise of photo journalism. Before 1950, the plight of news and information in Nepal was in a pitiable state. A few house journals published were of sectoral importance in Nepal. Human right was unknown to Rana rulers. Neither had there been any attempt to respect the rights of the people until 1990. It was, in fact, a complete Jungle Raj tied up with Great Britain, which continues to praise its press as the most independent, impartial and fair organ in informing readers, listeners and viewers. To define, in short, the Rana oligarchy was a regime that kept its complete faith in totalitarianism, theologically mixed with pious frauds and holy cheats. There was no space for a truthful system of information and communication about the happenings in the country or the world outside. The citizens were treated as the private valets and slaves of the Ranas; they were denied the right to information and communication. At such

times, to think of the development of photography into photo-journalism would have been a sheer reverie. The virtue of an individual culture was never allowed to develop, nor did the regime entertain any contrary opinions and experiences. Until 1950, the only Rana's master voice, *Gorkhapatra*, had cultivated the habit of merely reading newspapers rather than catering genuine information to its readers. The newspaper preached "deceptive virtues" of the oligarchy instead of feeding the oligarchy about the basic needs of the people. Therefore, there was no possibility of the government's mouthpiece newspaper to act significantly for the upliftment of the people.

When one considers the history of photo-journalism in Nepal, it must be noted that the Gorkhapatra Corporation employed a press photographer for the first time in 2030 B. S. Similarly, Shridhar Lal Manandar and Binaya Guru Bajracharya were appointed press photographers for UPI news agency and Associated Press (USA) respectively in 1968 - 69. Information Department of then Majesty's Government used to supply photos relating to royal palace and government activities to the local newspapers since 1951 to 2006.

Photo-journalism² plays a special role in the dissemination of news. It takes a long time for the readers or listeners to read or listen to news in details. But a picture reveals the whole sense of an incident or accident. The language of the picture is easily comprehended even by an illiterate person. The printed pictures enhance credibility of paper. As a means of visual communication and expression photography has marked aesthetic capabilities (Shakya, TRN P. 4). The tag of objectivity ascribed to photographic images is still greatly trusted upon. If a photo shows something, people tend to take it as it is, as a reality. One could venture so far as to claim that the power of the bullet in a photograph is far greater and sensational than an actual bullet.

² Photo-journalism is for newspaper and magazine illustrations of topical events.

Say, for example, a photo captures a security personnel, amidst a seemingly calm milieu, targeting and then shooting at a civilian who has not displayed any sign of having broken the law and order situation, the viewers/readers of the paper get indignant at the government and the security force for taking law at their disposal for no reason at all. For all one knows, and as it not infrequently happens in Nepal, there might be calls for all strike and close-downs in protest to the brutality. The image of the bullet photographed and circulated thus comes to exert tremendous impact upon the psyche and activity of the people at large. The actual bullet might have killed one person, mistakenly on the part of the security personnel, and the vent might have been dismissed at the local level, with due, if ever any such thing is possible to recompensate, recompensation of some sum to the poverty-hit Nepali family. In a funny-sounding but real way, the reel seems more real than the real.

Traditionally photography had been taken as technician-based project and direct route into employment but in the present it implies that people have made a definite decision to seek a career in photography. Now it becomes the source of prosperity and securing place for survival. According to the photographers and photo studio-setters, photography can be successful in securing its rightful place and position, even though traditionally a narrow and limited concept about photography narrow and limited concept about photography existed there.

The first hundred years of publication were largely devoted to technologies and techniques. Aside from any other consideration, a number of the papers published in the early years of photography made assertions about the intrinsic nature of the medium and speculated on its potential uses (Liz 12).

The present thesis addresses the various genres developed in the modern time which study culture, political moment, economics growth, advertisement and the

world of profession. This researcher represents in their own terms the most salient features of photographic academia which can attract million people's technological knowledge research and profession. As the photo journalists are paid by the government and they get profession by establishing their own photo studio. Attention to photography as a cultural and academic research, not simply as a set of skills and a body of knowledge, is essential for the development of photographic profession and research. It is not only useful to proceed with technician-based on the observation and the importance of the technical dimension itself, rather photography should develop with the representation of culture, identity and academic exploration. With the commencement of Nepal Television, it includes fashion photography, advertising photography, war photography and the photography of advertisement. (Naya Patrika, August 7, 2008)

In the preface to *Nepal Rediscovered: The Rana Court 1846 – 1951*, Padma Prakash Shrestha writes that it “was probably Jang Bahadur Rana's European tour in 1850 that brought the new automatic picture-taking machine- the camera – to his notice” (1986: vii). Available evidence does not allow us to say for sure whether or not Jung Bahadur saw a camera while he visited Europe in 1850. While we have evidence that portraits of Jang Bahadur were made during his Europe visit (P. SJB Rana 1998), there are good reasons to believe that he was not photographed there.

Regarding the lack of any reference to Jang Bahadur's photograph while in Britain, one can safely assume he did not get any photo taken of him. Given the way in which his activities in Europe were covered by the press (Whelpton 1983), it is highly inconceivable that a photo session, had it taken place, would not have been reported. It would have been an activity with a novelty level, both for the host and the guest that would have been worth reporting. Given that no mention is made of such an

encounter, we can conclude for the moment that Jang Bahadur was not photographed during this trip. Even then it is entirely likely that the presence of the technology was made known to him verbally. Even if that were the case, there is no record that suggests that Jang Bahadur brought back cameras with him to Nepal. Had he done so, it would have surely precipitated an earlier encounter with the medium inside Nepal.

Some photo collectors in Nepal have verbally claimed that they have photos in their possession that were taken inside Nepal in the 1850s. However no one has been able to prove this in writing with evidence. Shrestha speculates that “increasing knowledge of photography might have been obtained from British visitors to Nepal in the early 1950s” (1986: vii).

The way that the people talk about photography in the present society has a great importance. They speculate that one day million of the people would join in photography club and study its professional and industrial development. This researcher was particularly struck by the way that the lover of photography used words such as realism and realistic items. Photography never speaks false, rather it reflects only truth. For example, one young photography lover Miss Teena Gurung, 20 year old unmarried college student, described her favorite genre of photography this way:

I like personal photography, especially family photography. I have collected more than 300 photos. All the photos please me and they instruct me about my childhood days and my parents' youths and relatives. I have decorated my late grand father's picture hung on the wall which inspires me to be smiley and active. I take it not simply reflective of reality but also of enlivening and bringing the history of our lineage. Therefore I like personal photography instead of war

photography, animal photography and landscape photography.

(Gurung)

Photographic consumption is not limited to the urban centers of Nepal.

Throughout the Nepali countryside, one can routinely see photographs – usually of the members of the family – hung on the walls of room. Hence we need not be surprised if we see the photographs in the remote part of Nepal. The ubiquity of this art is incontestably established.

In the pre-modern era photography was only used by Rana rulers³.

Incidentally, by pre-modern era in terms of photographic development, we mean the period between 1863 to 1951 A. D. Pre-modern era of photography had singular, homogeneous and fixed meaning. There was no symptom of the commodity culture and advertisement. The people understood and interpreted photography as the images of person. And it was taken as the luxury of the Ranas and aristocratic family. It was only the source of recording family and their specific entertainments. It was not developed in generic forms as fashion, advertisement and profession. Traditionally, images had been analogue in nature. After the end of Rana monopoly the photography entered into the middle class, who were identified as common people. In the modern period the photographers and the photo studio have become routine in more remote parts of the country. It has developed in digital forms. Modern photography of Nepal can be a strong source of commodity culture and advertisement. It has generic relation with media, fashion and profession. Similarly modern photography dismantles the reality, truth and singularity. It is highly plural, heterogeneous and multiple. It gives various definitions due to the distortion of images and multiplicity.

³ Pre-modern photography of Nepal has fixed meaning, homogeneous and limited area of learning. The images were analogue in nature and professionally they were limited.

According to one survey undertaken by Deepak Aryal, a researcher in Madan Pustakalaya in Kathmandu, the Nepali photography has shifted from Kathmandu via Palpa, Birgunj and Dhankuta. Nowadays thousands of people get employment by establishing photo studios. Dozens of photographers are involved in maintaining governmental visual records. Dozens of photographers are photo-journalists, who are paid by the government. Due to the commencement of digital photography in Nepal from early 1990s, the industry of photography has stepped forward dramatically. According to Ramesh Basnet, photographer of Okhaldhunga Photo Studio, there were more than 100 practicing photographers alone in Okhaldhunga district in 2007. He said in modern days people took photos easily with the help of digital technology that has become the strong source of visual culture, and which has promoted the visual identity of different ethnic communities. He said their photos could be reflected in the screen of the digital camera.

Digital photography is a method of making images without the use of conventional photographic film. Instead, a machine called scanner records visual information and converts it into a code of ones and zeroes that a computer can read. Photographs in digital form can be manipulated by means of various computer programs. Digital photography was widely used in advertising and graphic design in the late 1990s, and quickly replaced conventional photographic technology in areas such as photojournalism.

Whenever a new art form comes along, it is usually accompanied by a classifier, such as "video art" or "digital art." Today's qualifier of choice, "new media," renders the newness of yesterday's new art form obsolete and already implies its own datedness. The new media of the late 20th century were video art and its hybrid forms and derivatives. Multimedia and hypermedia were terms applied to

digital art forms, while intermedia was used to describe interrelationships between different forms of media (such as video and digital technologies). In the early 21st century, the term "new media" is mostly used for digital arts in its various forms. It takes a while until the "new" digital art becomes an Art, integrated into thematic surveys and exhibitions that include all kinds of media. This doesn't mean that the qualifier forever vanishes, but that the art form moves beyond the medium itself and the way in which it complements augments and/or challenges traditional concepts of art. This requires an introduction to the public. (Edwards 422- 25)

In the decades since 1960 when multiparty democracy was scuttled by palace intervention in Nepal, political parties launched several major struggles for the restoration of political pluralism. The success of the 1990 mass movement to restore democracy was because all democratic forces in the country including the Nepali Congress and Communists, realized the need to pool their strength and launch a unified struggle against the Panchayat. The decision was wise. The Panchayat system crumbled within two months of the mass agitation.

The people's movement and subsequent political changes have had a dramatic impact on journalism in Nepal. The number of newspapers has almost doubled in the past two years but the number is expected to be reduced to a more realistic level soon. The quality of journalism is improving with many young, trained journalists manning some of the more prominent newspapers. Circulation of a number of weekly newspapers have grown beyond expected levels, the distribution of newspapers has improved with growing readership in different parts of the country, and editors and publishers are becoming aware of the need to market their products through publicity as well as better content, layout and design. More and more journalists are looking for training facilities to sharpen their skills and improve the quality of journalism to meet

the growing demands. In order to meet these challenges the government has come out with a communication policy that is regarded as being more liberal.

Public memory is said to be short-lived. People are heard complaining that those who were brought to power by the people's moment are already forgetting the moment and the sacrifices of its martyrs. The books, the newspapers, the journals of the nation of particular time remind us that we owe a lot to the events of 1990 to 2007 in our efforts to further foster democracy and pluralism.

The books, newspapers and journals are the records of past and present. They record the entire events of the struggle of mass movement of 1990 and 2007. This is, of course, not only a record of the entire events but also the representation of the history, people mass awareness and unity for freedom against autocracy. Such documents provide a fairly comprehensive account of Nepal's unique struggle for political and economic freedom. Photography provides a valuable record of the historic movement and speak more than a word in a clear way.

Photography has become the means of recording images of individual, groups, past and present. None of the programmes can be completed without it. Its journey starts from womb to tomb. When the baby lies in the womb of the mother the doctor looks at what gender the baby is. It has been used in each and every spare of life. In Nepal photography serves only the interest of the rulers in the earlier decades. After the mass movement 1990s it became the means of production and strong source of records of all level of the people. Like the middle class people, lower class people, too, use camera as a means of recording their happy movements. Female photographers, marginal photographers, professional photographers emerge one after another. It is common to all. It remains not only the property of rulers but the property of all Nepali people. The zone the photography has taken is very broad. It is the part

of film, geography, map, doctor, engineer, direction, recording past, memory etc.

Whether we talk about Hollywood, Bollywood, Kalliwod and Taliwood, photography is first and foremost element that comes into the foreground. Nobody imagines any film without photography. School going children love watching visuals rather than reading words. They have smile to their face in seeing.

Now it develops as industry. Industry refers to the long-term changes in types and distribution of global economic activity. In everyday usage, the term 'industry' refers to large manufacturing companies, such as the big multinational car companies. A broader definition of industry includes all economic activities, in all sectors, and groups then into three broad categories; primary, secondary and tertiary.

Photo-industry consists of the technological, visual and commercial institutions of photo-making; i.e. photo production companies, photo studios, cinematography, pre-production, post-production of the historical records of the events.

1.4 Going Global with Digital

It is debatable when exactly the history of digital art began. Artists started experimenting with computers in the 1970s, engaging in what was then known as "computer art," and using now-archaic technology such as punch cards. With digital technology, color and texture could be created and manipulated instantly. Painters, sculptors, architects, printmakers, photographers, and video and performance artists began to experiment with computer imaging techniques that allowed for the manipulation of scale, color, and texture in ways that were not possible with physical mediums.

Using new technology such as video and satellites, artists in the 1970s also began to experiment with live performances and networks that anticipated the

interactions currently taking place on the Internet and through the use of streaming media. (Paul 471–73)

Digital cameras are now available for both professional photographers and amateur enthusiasts. The more expensive professional cameras function as sophisticated 35 – millimeter cameras but record the picture information as pixels, or digital dots of color. There can be several million pixels in a high-resolution, full-color digital photograph. Some digital cameras are able to transfer their large picture files directly into a computer for storage. Others accept a disc or similar portable storage unit to achieve the same purpose. The original high-resolution image can later be reproduced in ink or as a conventional silver halide print. (Liz 204)

We can see photographs everywhere in Nepal today. It can be found in urban middle-class, lower middle class and lower class. Nepalese people usually have several framed photographs adorning the walls of their rooms and hundreds more in orderly kept albums or disorganized piles. Even in the remote part of country Nepalese people take photo of them and save in the album. There has been a huge growth in the number of color photograph processing laboratories in urban centers like Kathmandu, Pokhera, Biratnagar, including all the headquarters of the districts, reported by journalist Shankar Kheral. (Kantipur, August 4, 1994)

There are several consequences of canonization: first changing attitudes to photography as a set of practices have tended to become obscured behind the eulogisation of particular photographers, their photographs and their contributions. Second, the focus has been upon male photographers, with the consequence that the participation of women has been overlooked or obscured. Third, there are relatively few accounts of popular photography or of more specialist areas of practice, such as architecture and medicine. Fourth, photography history has tended to priorities

aesthetic concerns over broader and more diverse forms of involvement of photography in all aspects of social experience, including personal photography, publishing and everyday portraiture.

Lady Elizabeth Eastlake points to the many social uses to which photography has already been put:

.. photography has become a household work and a household want; it is used alike by art and science, by love, business and justice; is found in the most sumptuous saloon and the dingiest attic – in the solitude of the Highland cottage, and in the glare of the London gin palace – in the pocket of the detective, in the cell of the convict, in the folio of the painter and architect, among the papers and patterns of the mill owner and manufacturer and on the cold breast of the battle field. (Eastlake 24: 1857: 81)

Photography, therefore, is the democratic means of representation and the new facts will be available to everyone. It concerns with facts and presents social reality. Nepalese photography became professional when Gopal Chitrakar and Bindu Raj Singh Suwal were appointed in the Gorkahpatra Corporation in 2030 V.S. They were pioneer photo-journalists who had been paid by the government. As a result, photography of Nepal would develop into profession. Slowly, photography captured the images of the poor people and the working-class people. (Naya Patrika August 7, 2008) After the development of Nepal Television, photography developed as an industry. Hundreds of photo studios were opened all over the country. Although it was used only in citizenship cards, later on it was used everywhere like in the identity cards and library cards. In addition the state also uses photography for explicit surveillance over its citizens. Photographs are also required as part of one's identification in other domains of our life especially in social life. After 1960, its

business strongly spread all over the country and hundreds of people took photographs as professional photography.

Indispensable to the development of photography and photojournalism is the development of internet and its relation to the digital art. This section traces the genesis of the nomenclature of the current qualifier of choice, "new media," by explaining how this term is used to describe digital art in various forms. Establishing a historical context, the researcher highlights the pioneer exhibitions and artists who began working with new technology and digital art as early as the late 1960s and early 1970s. This section proceeds to articulate the shapes and forms of digital art, recognizing its broad range of artistic practice: music, interactive installation, installation with network components, software art, and purely Internet-based art. This dissertation examines the themes and narratives specific to the selection of artwork, specifically interactive digital installations and net art. By addressing these forms, this paper illustrates the hybrid nature of this medium and the future of this art practice.

During the past ten years, we have seen a technological development of unprecedented speed for a medium that was conceptualized and envisioned decades ago. Digital art did not develop in an art-historical vacuum, and incorporates many influences from previous art movements (ranging from conceptual art to Fluxus and mail art) and experiments with art and technology. The year 1966 saw the foundation of E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology), which in the words of its founder, Billy Kliiver, was formed out of a desire to "develop an effective collaboration between engineer and artist. The *raison d'être* of E.A.T. is the possibility of a work which is not the preconception of either the engineer or the artist, but is the result of the exploration of the human interaction between them." The joint projects developed

over a decade between Kliiver and artists such as Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, Jean Tinguely, John Cage, and Jasper Johns were first seen in performances in New York (Tinguely in the garden at the Museum of Modern Art, and Rauschenberg at the Armory). These were later featured in an exhibition called "Some More Beginnings" (at the Brooklyn Museum and MoMA) and lastly at the Pepsi-Cola TM Pavilion at the 1970 World Expo in Osaka, Japan. E.A.T. was the first complex collaboration between artists, engineers, programmers, researchers, and scientists that would become a characteristic of digital art.

In 1968, the exhibition *Cybernetic Serendipity* in London presented works ranging from plotter graphics to light and sound environments and sensing "robots." These now seem only like the humble origins of digital art. Yet at the same time they still show characteristics and narratives of the medium today. Now there are works focused on the aesthetics of machines and transformation, such as painting machines and pattern or poetry generators. Others are dynamic and process oriented, exploring possibilities of interaction and the "open" system-a "post-object." In his articles "Systems Esthetics" and "Real Time Systems" (published in *Art forum* in 1968 and 1969, respectively), Jack Burnham already explored a systems approach to art: "A systems viewpoint is focused on the creation of stable, ongoing relationships between organic and non-organic systems." In modified form, this approach still holds a noticeable position in today's critical discourse on digital art.

It is debatable when exactly the history of digital art began. Artists started experimenting with computers in the 1970s, engaging in what was then known as "computer art," and using now-archaic technology such as punch cards. With digital technology, color and texture could be created and manipulated instantly. Painters, sculptors, architects, printmakers, photographers, and video and performance artists

began to experiment with computer imaging techniques that allowed for the manipulation of scale, color, and texture in ways that were not possible with physical mediums.

Using new technology such as video and satellites, artists in the 1970s also began to experiment with live performances and networks that anticipated the interactions currently taking place on the Internet and through the use of streaming media. In 1979, a collaboration between artists in New York (Liza Bear and Willoughby Sharp) and San Francisco (Sharon Grace and Carl Loeffler) resulted in *Send/Receive*, a fifteen-hour, two-way, interactive transmission between the two cities through the use of a CTS satellite. The world's first interactive satellite dance performance—a three-location, live-feed composite performance involving performers on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts of the United States—was organized by Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz, in conjunction with NASA and the Educational Television Center in Menlo Park, California. These performative events were initial explorations of the connectivity that is characteristic of networked digital art.

The term "digital art" has become an umbrella for a broad range of artistic practices and does not describe one specific aesthetic. Artists have used digital technologies as a tool for creating an art object, such as a sculpture created through rapid prototyping, a print, or a digital photo and video. In some cases, these works display distinctive characteristics of the digital. In others, it is not easy to tell whether the work has been created by means of digital or analog technologies. Digital technology also has had a profound influence on music composition and audio, which have reached new levels of experimentation through the instant remixing, sampling, and reconfiguration that current technology enables.

The employment of digital technologies as a medium implies that the work is produced, stored, and presented in digital format and makes use of the inherent possibilities of the medium. However, this art can manifest itself as everything ranging from an interactive installation to an installation with network components to software or purely Internet-based art.

The digital medium exhibits distinguishing characteristics, which are often used in varying combinations. It is interactive, allowing forms of navigating, assembling, or contributing to artwork to go beyond the mental event of experiencing it. It often is dynamic, responding to a changing data flow and real time data transmission. The art is not always collaborative in the original sense of the word, but often participatory, relying on multi-user input. Another distinguishing feature of the digital medium is that it can be customizable and adaptable to a single user's needs or intervention. While some of these concepts have been explored in performance art, happenings, and video art, the possibilities of remote and immediate intervention are unique to the networked digital medium. The interactive, digital medium has challenged traditional notions of the artwork, audience, and artist. Developments in this object suggest a paradigm shift for art practice from the art object to the postobject conditions of possibility and a fluid interaction between different manifestations of information.

Since the advent of the World Wide Web, there have been various Net activism or "hacktivism" projects that use the network and its possibilities of instant distribution and cloning of information as a staging platform for interventions, be they in support of specific groups or a method of questioning corporate and commercial interests. There are many other themes in Net art and digital art, such as narrative environments or networked, live performances etc. Nevertheless, it hopefully

illustrates the hybrid nature of this medium, establish a historical context and point to the future of this art practice. Visual art has come a long way and has become a part of modern life. Now it is a necessity, not a luxury, not the unattainable sour grapes for the public. In this global context, the historiography of Nepal photography also makes sense. Now photography and photojournalism in Nepal have become a part and parcel of life.

Digital photography in Nepal developed only during and after the Mass Revolution of 1990, though it had been introduced some time during the establishment of Nepal Television in 1885 A. D. Thus after the state-held media and the subsequent media houses that came into play in the free democratic ambience, digital photography and photo-journalism took on a professional form.

Modern photography has become the source of earning, profession, academic research and education. It has developed as mass produced instruments and has depended upon a convergence of photography with print, graphic, electronic and telegraphic technologies. In the newspaper photographic images have become the text, the title, the caption, the layout, and even the title of the news paper or publication itself. It brings past to reflect present as it is but other literary genres can only exaggerate and twist the reality. Photographic image in the modern era in Nepal has long been used in the production of news, in the making of art, in advertising, in military and civil surveillance, in the production of spectacle and entertainment, education, business and film genres like pornography.

Thus, this paper presents the relationship between photography used in the pursuit of general educational objectives, photography as part of vocational and professional education, academic research and training, generic development and direct roots into employment. In this respect the modern photography highlights the

professional, educational and research based visual culture and provides one particular focus for further enquiry of generic development. In comparison to pre-modern photography it is multiple and professional. It is hoped and expected that scholars and researchers in the days to come will be benefitted by the bulk of information amassed and analyzed in this dissertaion regarding the inception and development of photography in Nepal.

Chapter II: Theoretical Modality

“The medium is the message.” So said Marshall McLuhan, regarding the inextricable relationship between the content and the way it is communicated. What he was saying actually was, among other things that the way some ideas or information presented does not only make a difference in their import but rather the way of presentation itself becomes of central interest. Recognizing this fact, this paper uses some socio political frameworks to look at, to analyze and to interpret the origin and practice of photography. Seemingly a mere technical skill or art, photography is often complicit in the making and dissemination of particular kinds of images which ultimately partake in the creation of reality or at least, an effect of reality. Therefore it is important to have a clear vision and perspective from which to look at and analyze some historical moments captured in the camera, a vision and a perspective informed by consciousness derived from such critical approaches such as feminism, Marxism, new historicism and post colonialism.

As in the case of the east west dichotomy in which the colonizing Anglo-Saxon white Christian male is the dominant agent of doubt control over the non European or non-white, non-Christian races, so in the case of a political reading of the practice of photography and photo-journalism we see that the photographer assumes the role of the master, controller and the designer position whereas the photographed, whether it is some non human object or some human person is consigned to the object position like that of the colonized subjects.

The person who looks at the objects or persons from a vantage point most has something to have controlled over the objects he or she represents. In a patriarchal setting, the female body is an object of desire, a subject of discussion and a responsibility of giving and significance. Similarly in a political setting the female

members of the society are the objects of desires. They are to be controlled and manipulated, whereas the male, the patriarchal agent or the photographers, while assuming the role of objective executioner of the pure act of taking images, actually manipulate the others as per their interests and affiliations.

Within the micro-political context of power the clicking of camera is full of far reaching political consequence. The photographers assume the role of a controller or guide or director while the other parties, ones who are photographed, are recorded endlessly as object to be produced, reproduced and circulated. This issue has been raised and analyzed in the gender study of the camera culture. It is not merely the clicking of photos; much more things are drawn into play in the seemingly simple mechanical act. First, the person who uses the camera to photograph somebody else is in the subject position, the power-wielder. Normatively, it is a male figure who thus exercises power over the other, the female, in a patriarchal society. And the world societies are patriarchal, with the exceptions of too few societies to be noted as matriarchal.

Next, for over two centuries, the world saw the domination of the colonial powers over the natives in Asia and Africa. The dominant party was the white, male, colonizing power of the west. Actually, it was the westerners who took camera to the hinterlands of Asia and Africa to capture the exotic sights. Thus, it has become customary in the academic circle to characterize the situation in terms like 'the colonizing camera', the 'click in the nip' to designate the power of the art to capture the fleeting, unrepeatable events and actions. The simple act of snapshotting a picture is thus vastly connected with the idea that one party is literally beholding and holding the other in their power. The camera is a token of power and control over the others.

2.1 Nepali Photography: A Critical Review

Though the history of photography in Nepal began more than one hundred and four decades ago, its progress until recently has been relatively very slow. For more than half century, since its inception in Nepal photography was primarily used only by Rana family. After the common people gained access to it around 1909, however, the general middle class of the nation found and adopted it rapidly, and it spread quickly through the cities, especially valley along with cities of Birgunj and Dhankuta.

The present paper argues that photography has developed its intrinsic genres since the early and the late twentieth century like family photography developed by Ranas family; action photography practiced by Ranas during hunting trips; civil war photography which recorded people's movement of 1990s, and the early 21st century of 2006 of Jana Andolan against monarchy; advertisement photography and finally photojournalism popularized by newspapers like Gorkahpatra, The Rising Nepal, Kantipur, The Kathmandu Post, Samachar Patra and other national dailies, and fashion photography from the late of 20th century onwards.

Photography acquired wider viewership after the opening of Grand Studio in 1909 by the middle class photographer after Ranas, Dirgaman Chitrakar. At that time, even in the middle class families found it very expensive. They took photographs as the means of entertainment and began the practice of maintaining family albums. I would suppose that life cycle rituals and other ceremonials of these families were photographed extensively, although very few of them have been published thus far. These Ranas also included their family photographs in Vijaya Dashami, Christmas and New Year's Greeting cards they sent their relatives and foreign friends. (Onta, *The Katmandu Post* 18, September 1994). After the end of Rana monopoly on

photography, the urban middle-class and lower class Nepali began to keep several framed photographs adorning the walls of their rooms and hundreds more in orderly kept albums or disorganized piles. These days at even in the remote part of country, Nepali people take photo of themselves and save them in the album. There has been a huge growth in the number of color photograph processing laboratories in urban centers like Kathmandu, Pokhera, Biratnagar, including all the headquarters of the districts, as reported by photo journalist Gopal Chitrakar. After the development of Nepal television and Nepali cinema, Nepali photography has been established as an industry. In the recent years the genres of photography have continued to evolve. There includes photojournalism, civil war photography, advertisement photography and educational photography.⁴

Photography functioned as an important means of depicting the mass-movement during Jana Andolan of 1990. Many illustrated journals of the day carried photographic images that influenced in shaping people's view of the war. The revolution time pictures aroused the people to join in the anti-establishment uprising in the revolutions in Nepal. Photo-journalism played an exciting and provocative role ion fuelling the mass rebellion during the move of 1990 and 2006.

War has been considered as an important subject for photography for a number of reasons: the photographer might reveal scenes and actions which would not otherwise come to the attention of the public, and war inevitably throws up scenes of great emotional force which can best be captured by the camera. The person who has most mused on this ambivalence is the Nepali photographer, Gopal Chitrakar, who has documented many wars and violent uprising since the early 1990s.

⁴ Educational photography is devoted to teaching and visual education; press is for newspaper and magazines illustrations of topical events.

In this context, it is instructive to remember that most people's understanding of the nature of war comes from photographic images rather than the literary representation of the event. The mass movement of 2062-63 motivated millions of Nepali people to fight against monarchy. The photographic images of the event inspired many people become ready to join in the struggle for participating in people's rights. As a result, for liberty and freedom, million of the people poured down on the road of all cities of Nepal especially in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Chitwan, Pokhara, Biratnagar, Nepalgunj, Butwal and all over the country. All the images of the struggle were captured in the photos which were greater than the words.

In the post war period of 2046 and during the 2062-63, starting with Chitwan uprising against King's direct rule, the immediacy of war photographs began to produce significant effect. Since then, a stream of authentic images has overwhelmed us with cumulative power. The photographic images from the said cities have left their indelible mark on our imaginations.

Kundan Dixit in his collection of photographs in *People in War* (2007), has said that the stream of images revealing the death, injury and the sorrows of the people of people's war 2062-63, was a major factor in the public eventual repugnance for that war. In the sophisticated photographic work of the time the themes of martial conflict and civilian anguish are intertwined. An excellent example is given in the work of Gopal Chitrakar and Kundan Dixit who produced one of the most important photographic records of the war. (Naya Patrika, 7 August 2008)

When we consider the history of photo-journalism in Nepal, it must be noted that the Gorkhapatra Corporation employed a press photographer for the first time in 2030. Similarly, Shridhar Lal Manandar and Binaya Guru Bajracharya were appointed press photographers for UPI news agency and Associated press (USA) respectively in

1968 - 69. Information Department of his Majesty's Government is known to have been supplying photos relating to royal palace and government activities to the local newspapers since 1951.

Rabin Man Shakya, a photojournalist and the lover and collector of photography, describes how a photo is worth a thousand words. The relation between the pictures and print media is so profound that, at present, we can not imagine modern newspapers and magazines sans photographers. The pictures give newspapers a dignified look; moreover, pictures and photographs are profusely used by other media, such as, television, cinema and documentary. In addition for newspapers and magazines photographic images function like ornaments creating an aesthetic effect that beautifies their appearance. Pictures are indispensable for advertising business too.

It was D.B. Thapa who emerges as a crucial figure as we consider the beginning of photographic consumption by common mass. It is he who first set up "Photo Concern" in the 50s at New Road after completing training on photography from Calcutta and Bombay, India. At present there are over 300 photo studios in Kathmandu alone. Likewise, the number of photo studios all over the country is estimated to be more than 9000. Also, it is said that over 30,000 people are involved in the business of photography.

According to late Grisham Bahadur Devkota, the first Nepalese newspaper to publish a photo was the *Gorkahpathra* which did it on Baishak 13, 1984 B.S. (1927 AD) prior to this, no newspapers and magazines had endeavored to publish photos. There was no single daily paper at the time. Even the *Gorkhapatra* was a weekly newspaper. In the past, photography and cameras were handled only by the members of the ruling Rana family. It is said that the first snaps in Nepal were taken, developed

and printed by the foreigners at the special order by the Rana family. It is because no one among the Nepalese had the technical know-how about photography, its developing and printing process.

With the re-establishment of democracy in 1990, many newspapers and periodicals came into publication. They also brought the latest photography technology into use and helped in developing photo-journalism. During the last few years, there has been a welcome surge in the use of pictures to illustrate news stories both in the dailies and in the periodicals. There is no doubt that there are some problems accompanying such development. The most glaring among them is the lack of professional expertise in majority of our photojournalists⁵. Of late, some improvements have been visible, but they are taking place at a snail pace. However, in comparison to the past, its practices cover a large territory like advertisement, reporting of the events, commercial⁶ and educational performances.

Photo-journalism plays a special role in the dissemination of news. It takes a long time for the readers or listeners to read or listen to news in details. But a picture reveals the whole sense of an incident or accident. The language of the picture is easily comprehended even by an illiterate person. The printed pictures enhance credibility of paper. As a means of visual communication and expression photography has marked aesthetic capabilities. (Shakya, TRN P. 4)

One aspect of the problem is related to that of economic reasoning. In Nepal, unlike in many other countries, poor people can not become photojournalists, as the materials needed in the making of a photo, such as, photo reels, photo papers, photo chemicals, not to speak of a professional camera, are very expensive. The problem is affecting the freelancers, especially as the photojournalists are one of the underpaid

⁵ Professional photographer is concerned primarily with portraiture for commercial purpose

⁶ Commercial photographs deal with advertised and industrial illustrative

groups of technicians in Nepal. This is only the photo-journalists; especially the freelancers have other permanent job that feeds them. Another problem, as even the cursory perusal of our national dailies will corroborate, is the one concerning frequent publishing of photos on the front page relating to one official function or other. Of course, high officials are sources of news. But frequent use of “official photos” could dampen the readers ‘interest in the long run’ (Shakya, TRN January 3, 1996). It is high time that our newspapers should give priority to photos of human interest that depicts the reality of life of people.

We do not have any established training institutes for photographers and photo-journalists in our country. Photo-journalists have to go abroad to increase their skill, qualification and the theoretical knowledge. Many of our photo-journalists can not afford it owing to financial constrains. The press photographer has one of the most demanding jobs in the print media. The journalist may watch and listen to an incident or an accident. He has time to think in prepare his news story whereas the photo-journalist has to get a shot of any event at precisely the right second. There is no chance to turn back time or incident to capture the missed moment again.

Therefore, press photographer’s dexterity consists in training himself to perceive the important moment within the fraction of seconds and to utilize the camera with such pace and precision that the instantaneous perception is saved forever is a big creative gift. Press photographer, therefore, should be dynamic and mobile. He should enjoy moving around and should not hesitate traveling distance to get life coverage of interesting stories. Nepal is a country of ethnic diversity having so many festivals and folklores in different parts of country. This has not been adequately represented by the photo journalists of Nepal.

In terms of mass communication, photography with its visual symbols is overcoming the barriers of language. It is in fact, becoming a new world language. Can this universal language be used more effectively for communication in a country like Nepal with its diverse ethnic groups, cultures and languages? Yes, without any doubt.

For vigorous and effective communication, the photographer must know the technique and acquire the vision. Technically speaking, photography is nothing more than fixing an image by chemical means. It is possible to take technically good photographs by simply pressing a button. But if the resulting photograph has to communicate to the viewers, it has to be more than literal image on a piece of paper or film. It is the human elements of imagination, understanding and taste which offer us some new revelations of reality. It is only then that photography can be successful in sending its messages into the mind of the readers and viewers.

Photography has not only the capability of presenting reality; but also the capability to throw light on many aspects of human life. The special gift and endowment of photography lies in its power to explore and inform, entertain and interpret. Herein, the photographer's competence and skills in utilizing his camera to communicate and interpret what he sees also play a major part in entertaining and informing the newspapers and magazines. (Shakya, TRN, January 3, 1996)

Like photo journalism, the genre of action photography⁷ has also evolved, though it has a longer history in comparison to photojournalism. Action photography started in Nepal from the time of Rana rule. The 1876 hunt was officially photographed by Messers Bourne and Shepherd and more photographs than the few that have been published of that hunting occasion. With respect to Lord Curzon's

⁷ Action photography in general studies the photography of hunting, marshal arts, and warfare. Now this genre of photography is also used extensively in cinematography.

1901 hunt, an entire album of photographs taken by the Calcutta firm of Herzog and Higgins, entitled “H.E. the Viceroy’s Shooting Tour Nepal, Terai April 1902”, can be found in the Kaiser Library. The remarkable photographs from this album include those showing elephants lined-up in preparation for the hunt, tiger skins testifying to its success, and big birds scavenging through the carrion. Another form of action photography from this period is related to travel and tourism. An album covering Chandra’s 1908 trip to England can also be found in the Kaiser Library.

Photography’s association has also collected the most important issues in its album⁸.

There was, however, yet another form of action photography commissioned by an elite Ranas that is somewhat surprising. In the European manuscript section of the Oriental and India Office Collection’s of the British Library in London, one can find three boxes of personal papers belonging to major-general Sir William G.L. Beynon. Beynon, who was associated with the third Gurkhas, commanded the South Waziristan Field Force against the Mashuds in 1917 in which Nepali troops (including Mahendra Dal) loaned to British India also participated. This troops were commended by Baber Shumsher, second son of Chandra) who seems to have been and abide photography-fan. (Onta, The Kathmandu Post, September 18, 1994)

While the details of this operation can be found in Prem R. Upreti’s *Nepal A Small Nation in the Vortex of International Conflicts* (1984), what interest me here is a photoalbum entitled “Wasiristan 1917” contained in box of the Beynon collection (cited it from Onta’s article of September 18, 1994). This album contains 48 photographs with captions and was given by Baber Shamsheer to Beynon at the conclusion of the operation. It is not known who took these photographs. Nevertheless they scrupulously record the participation of Nepali contingent during the operation,

⁸ Photo Concern Private Ltd. (1960)

they depict among other things, captured Mahsud spies, corpses of soldiers from Mahindra Dal who were killed during the operation, and wounded soldiers of the Gorkhas being transported to a relief camp. The last but one photograph is captioned “at the Shahur Tangi- 16th July 1917. (The Kathmandu Post 18 September 1994). Put this way, one suspects that the photographing of the operation was not meant to show the ugliness of the military campaign but rather to celebrate, once again. Anglo-Nepali ‘friendship’ in yet another ‘theater’ of action. Apart from these action photographs many portraits of Chandra Shumsher and his family have already been published. Since local photography had become available to Kathmandu some time during the first decade of the century the logic of internal differentiation within the Rana subculture propelled its more influential members to consume photography at a greatly increased volume level. It is now not enough to be photographed once in a while by a photographer who came from India.

Another genre of photography is advertising. The history of advertising takes us into the dim past many centuries ago. Advertising by word of mouth was probably the earliest form, and we may assume that it began as soon as one man desire to barter with another.

So far as advertising of Nepal is concerned, Nepal economy is mainly dominated by agriculture. There are very few industries and industrial activities are very limited. Most commodities for daily requirements have to be imported from India and other countries. The size of the market is limited and purchasing power of people is also low compared to those in other countries. In addition, businessmen import goods mainly for sale in urban areas. It was in order to sell their goods that businessmen in Nepal started publishing notices in newspapers from 1960s. Since the most important newspaper was the Gorkahpatra, it enjoyed the largest share of the

advertising. However the rates of the advertisement were very low because the paper was published and managed by the government.

After the political change of mass movement of 1990 in the country the Nepalese people had better access to the rest of the world. The change also encouraged the Nepalese business community to established industries. Employment opportunities also increased in the country, and purchasing power in urban sectors grew. Gradually the industrialists also realized the importance of the advertisement using photographic images. Foreign manufactured also started to advertise in the form of photography.

Newspapers being very popular among advertisers, newspaper revenues through advertising increased. The average total expenditure in the media in the form of advertisement in Nepal is as follows: - 1. Newspapers and periodicals 57% television 23% radio 20%. (Rajbhandari, The Kathmandu Post, February 18, 1997). According to their origin, we can divide advertisement into two sectors:- government-tal and commercial. The differences of advertisement can be elaborated in coming paragraphs.

Most government notices like educational, commercial, job vacancies, public awareness programme from Nepal television and newspapers appear in government controlled media. Only a negligible percentage of these notices are given to the private media sectors. In fact, government notices have played a very big role in the development of government newspapers because most people subscribe to government publication and not for their news but also for the notices. The number of the government notices in government media is comparatively greater than commercial advertisement. In private sector companies like Kantipur publications, the commercial advertisements dominate. Industrialists and businessmen are interested in

advertising to get maximum mileage from their investment. And the Kantipur publication also exists as a result of the growing share of commercial advertisements.

The history of advertising began in Nepal in 1960s. At present there are about more than 200 advertising agencies in Nepal. All of them take the support of photography to sell their products and messages. Most advertising agencies are established in Kathmandu. Some Indian advertising agencies are also providing their services through Nepalese advertising agencies and also directly to clients. Advertising agencies have their own association⁹. (Rajbhandari, The Kathmandu Post, 18 February 1997).

McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology defines photography as the process of forming visible images directly by the action of light or other forms of radiation on sensitive surfaces. In the traditional sense photography utilizes the action of light to bring about charges in silver halides. It is the process or art of producing images of objects on sensitized surfaces by the chemical action of light or energy. But in the present time this dictionary describes the branches of photography like, amateur, professional, action, commercial, educational, press, scientific and technological and cinematographic photography.

In the context of Nepal photograph has developed its own generic forms. We can see photographs everywhere in Nepal today. Thus this paper illustrates to discuss how generic photography might help give research participants a louder voice in visual culture and enable their multiple voices to be represented through the technique of “native image making” especially through the genres of family photography, war photography action photography, photojournalism and advertisement photography.

2.2 Holding and Beholding: Politics of Role Relations

⁹ The Advertiser 's Association is known as “Advertising Association of Nepal (AAN)”

The nineteenth-century debate about the nature of photography as a new technology was how far it could be considered as Art. Since it was basically used and praised for capturing accurate images, which were seen as being mechanically produced and thus free of the selection discriminations of the human eye and hand, one argument was that photography was therefore outside the realm of art; and especially so because of its power of accurate, dispassionate recording that stood against the artist's compositional creativity.

Charles Baudelaire attacked those who confused photography with art and were excited by the new discovery, seeing in it the possibility of the exact delineation of nature. He linked the invasion of photography and the great industrial madness' of the 19th century and asserted that 'if photography is allowed to deputize for art in some of art's activities, it will not be long before it has supplanted or corrupted art altogether'.

Supporters of such news argued that photography should be confined to its position as handmaid of arts and sciences, their very humble handmaid, like painting and shorthand that have never interfered with literature. Straight photography and its practitioners did not want to treat the medium as a kind of monochrome painting. They were interested in photography's ability to provide apparently accurate records of the visual world and tried to give their images the formal status and finish of paintings while concentrating their attention on the intrinsic qualities of photography. Most of the photographs were displayed on gallery walls.

Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, like Baudelaire, believed that photograph was not an art. Eastlake saw photography as the 'sworn witness' of the appearance of things. It is the inability of photography to choose and select the objects within the frame that locates it in the factual world and prevents it from becoming art. It is not concerned with 'truth

and beauty', rather it voraciously records anything in view not the underlying appearances.

'Pictorial' photography, from the 1850 onwards, worked with the notion that photography was more than a mechanical form of image-making, and that it could be worded on and contrived so as to produce picture. Their produced images that were out of focus, slightly blurred and fuzzy, and those who worked with the gum and bicarbonate process scratched and marked their prints in an effort to imitate something of the appearance of a canvass. If the photography aspired to be Art, their makers aspired to be artists and they emulated the characteristic institution of the art world.

Jobbing or professional photographers earned a living by making simple photographic portraits of people. But the painters reacted aggressively. They said that he cheap portrait painters whose efforts were principally devoted to giving a strongly marked diagram of the face, in the shortest possible time and at the lowest possible price, has been to a great extent superseded.

Modernism, with its celebration of machine ethic and its contempt for the art of the past, argued for a photograph that was in opposition to the traditional claims of Art. A number of critics have suggested that photography not only echoes post-Renaissance painterly conventions, but also achieves visual renderings of scenes and situations with what seems to be a high degree of accuracy that was possible in painting.

According to Walter Benjamin, changes brought about by the introduction of mechanical means of reproduction which produced and circulated multiple copies of an image shifted attitudes to Art. Formerly unique objects, located in a particular

place, lost their singularity. The 'aura' that was attached to a work of Art too was lost as it was now open to many different reading and interpretations.

For Benjamin, photography was inherently more democratic. Umberto Eco argued that the photography reproduced the conditions of optical perception. In recent years, developments in computer-based image production and the possibilities of digitalization and reworking of the photographic image have questioned the documentary relation.

Photography was a major carrier and shaper of modernism. Not only did it dislocate time and space but it also undermined the structure of conventional narrative. Its relationship to the contingent destroyed traditional hierarchies of meaning and it was central to the creation of particular forms of the world of goods. Modernism aimed to produce a new kind of world and new kinds of human beings to people it.

The photo-eye was seen as revelatory, dragging facts, 'however distasteful or deleterious to those in power, into the light of day. Photographs brought unfamiliar scenes to familiarity, capturing the authentic experience of a strange place; photographs are records and documents which pin down the changing world of appearance.

European modernism, with its contempt for the aesthetic forms of the past and its celebration of the machine, endorsed photography's claim to get the most important form of representation. Photography would present a world cleansed of traditional form.

The holder contains, holds, and exercises authority over the held. Beholder looks at, and in numerous ways, holds the beheld in his judgment. Incidentally, this topic I related to the fact of photo taking and at the same time, debatably, with the

political mission of the last two centuries of colonization. The analogy between the seemingly purely technical field of photography on the one hand and the notoriously power political project of colonialism on the other is interesting enough to draw one's attention keen at analyzing terminologies used in the two discrete and distinct fields.

The pithy but richly suggestive phrase: "colonizing camera" evokes in one's mind the white European with a camera obscura or camera Lucida, (borrowing specifically from Barthes) dangling from his shoulder onto his chest. Needless to say, though we dare say here, the camera is the weapon – much like the military ones the colonizer invaded the natives with. – With which to shoot -amazing, is not it? The registers used in this field: load, shoot etc which again reinforce the idea of a hunter and hunted –is it a sheer coincidence or is there something more to this linguistic similitude photography shares with military maneuvers and logistics?- the photo of the native be it people, scenes, or objects, that would prove exotic therefore marketable and/or artistic!

That irrespective of a deliberately undertaken assumption the photographer assumes the power and position of the holder, beholder and undertaker while the object of photography, the person being photographed, the other, of held, beheld and undertaken, is implied by the suggestive phraseology, to wit, load, shoot, shot, action, go, ready, target, lens, etc.

If this stand seems purely hypothetical, theoretical one would do well to verify it with experiment. Banal as it may seem, this scribe went through an exchange of roles—became the subject of photograph after first having undertaking some snapshots of someone else (the Other) and then got the Other (deliberate capitalization) to photograph himself (this scribe) instead to literally feel and see how it is to be the subject of photograph. The experiment came off with rich and I would

rather say, enriching experience in that it enabled the experimenter to sharply delineate, not only in some abstract terms deployed to describe the complex power politics of the controller and those in control, but a lived sensation, even if only for brief moments, of being held, beheld and upheld, (after the photo is ready, one is upheld to be beheld!). One unmistakably got the sensation of being at the Other's disposal.

Interestingly enough, this experiment led the scribe to the lived experience of what we call the constitutive power of language and by extension, of photography. The self, as one is not infrequent in wont to say in the structuralist and subsequent theoretical parlance, constituted, contained and expressed of, in, and by the language deployed in expressing the self. Similarly, the self is created, constituted and defined by the Other this time, with the shooting camera. The subject of photograph, the individual being photographed as such, feels S/he is being controlled, captured and redefined as to who S/he is or by obverse reasoning, is not. S/he is at the disposal, literally once again, of the photographer: the photographed image may be disposed in any way the photographer desires.

This observation then leads one to see who and how the photographer is likened with. He (I take it deliberately to use the male pronoun, accepting that the colonial explorers were exclusively males, and the position held by photographers is similar to that of males too) he is much like the colonial agent vanquishing and subduing the native, by temptation or mostly by trepidation. The gender consideration also leads one to see how the colonial people are presented in the role of a woman as the colonizer assumes the office of a man. As the colonizer captures land, people and the whole space and demarcates, redraws the boundaries, and defines, often conferring new nomenclatures (which would be done only by God, as is known in the

Jewish religion, continued in Christianity: Christ renamed Simon into Peter), he is acting in the capacity of a demi-god, a power to give name to people and places.

Photography grew up in the day of Empire and became an important adjunct of imperialism, for it returned to the Western spectator images of native people which frequently confirmed prevailing views of them as primitive, bizarre, barbaric or simply picturesque. The people who were subjected to the colonizer's gaze were often seen as merely representative of racial or social groups, and were usually posed so as to embody particular kinds of dress, social roles and material cultures.

These people were photographed as 'other; and their photographic images were sold to a metropolitan and international consumer market. Photography is not merely handmaid of empire, but a shaping dimension of it; formal imperial power structures institutionalized the attitudes and assumptions necessarily entailed in viewing another individual as a subject for photography.

Unlike the body of painting and engravings of 'exotic' peoples that had been popular Victorian subjects, photography claimed to be able to create objective, 'scientific' records which were free from the bias of human imagination. However, both photography as a medium and anthropology as a discipline masked their ideological standpoints and connotative potential with the appearance of scientific objectivity. The camera and travel became linked together and as tourism slowly developed into a mass industry, photography functioned both as the set and the scene in advance of a trip and to provide a record of the journey when it was over.

Soon there were few places in the world that had not been surveyed by the camera. Photography has been used as a way of consuming the world in a manner that gives us power over it, and a way that allows us to discipline and naturalize what might otherwise seem strange or frightening.

2.3 Objective Camera: Subjective Camera Person

As has been commonly perceived, no artifact possibly can remain free from human intervention either, in its production or various stages of circulation and or transmission. By the same logic, one could speak of cameras and the artifacts produced with their help, that is, the photographic images, to be somehow or other colored by the person hiding behind the lens and producing them. In candid terms, the theoretical assumption that politics is pervasive is seen operative in this field once held to be objective, and, as such, phrased “the objective camera”, “documentary”, “photo speak themselves” etc.

By and large, it is true, that photographs are not representative of reality/truth per se. Yet, it does not mean that no photograph is objective or true. In fact all photographs, provided they are not technically/digitally manipulated, are true to their subject; true at least for those who want to propagate a particular perspective. Moreover, provided the photos are not unduly manipulated, they have the documentary quality--- they document the reality albeit from a particular technical, and at times or vent mostly, from an ideological vantage point. That said, it remains to decide for oneself if certain photographs, say, those taken by the police and criminologists, and by journalists at rallies or demonstrations etc while people are stampeding, are reliable/manipulation free to be called objective. This writer, with all due reverence to his own political affiliations and the pervasiveness of the political even in such seemingly apolitical an act as the clicking of the cock of camera, holds that some photographs such as proposed above are and can be designated objective. May be their instances of being objective are too few, but that does not invalidate the fact of their objectivity.

The problem with the all pervasiveness of politics, including in the sphere of the camera cock clicking, is that after one has established this premise, one is not logically entitled to talk about the reliability of photographs in terms of their truth representation and effects. All is seen to be already too tainted to be true even to the barest degree. One is in a Derridean plight---questioning the capacity/validity of human language to communicate ideas while at the same time having to have recourse to the same questioned means to get the doubt across the reader/recipient

Sometimes, may be with a chilling compunction, trusting that the discourse is being conveyed in and/or by the same language which is called into question, one is forced to rethink about the fidelity of photographic images. Meaning, if even the camera production is not overtly manipulated, or is not a cinematic one, but is taken to be already far-removed from reality, then what possibly could we produce and present as a specimen of reality, let alone the reality itself! But reality, things in themselves or noumena, is understood and presented by and through our perception, sensory organs performing the mediating task, thereby what we have at our disposal as end result are phenomena, things as perceived. This applies to all human understanding, save the exclusive ones, if ever there are any, like the visions, epiphanies of divine revelation.

The situation as such seems utterly hopeless. Yet, it may not be so. For all theorizations we have about the infiltration of and play of politics and power, personal predilections and preferences, it remains that the very act of arresting the moment or objects in box of camera per se is/can be objective. The cure of all this theoretical debate is crystallized, albeit from one perspective at least, providing we come to the discretion of differentiating -- not between objects in themselves or noumena an objects as perceived or phenomena—for that is simply not possible, leading only to

Husserl's baring down of things to their impossible essence – but between what the concrete reality is and how it is snapped by the camera person. Disambiguating between the tool, the camera, and the manipulator of the tool, the camera person, is essential. May be, the camera-wielding person is dishonest or a manipulator, but the machine in itself is not so. The two are distinctly different entities.

This distinction then leads one to review such apparently flagrant assertions like “the colonizing camera”, “the colonial gaze”, and “the othering camera” etc from a more objective vantage point. Apparently the camera itself is not colonizing, no more than the reel has colonial gaze, and no more than the pen in itself is the creator of falsified or rarified versions of history. The question is how far the tool is manipulated by the user/owner to suit their particular advertent/inadvertent interest. This paper holds that this observation in effect removes many ambiguities as regards the objectivity of the act of recording of facts, and clicking of cameras. Camera, and photos are and can be objective, the camera person may not always be so.

2.4 Women in Photojournalism: Prospects and Challenges in Nepali Context

It is somewhat of an anomaly, despite the loud hue and cry for women rights and empowerment, that a woman should pretend to be a professional in any field, not least in photojournalism. The cameras on the shoulders of women photojournalists seem quite heavy, threatening and improper. Yes, the use of the term \improper here is not mere value judgement or coincidence; it's a literally improper, not their own, filed for women to take on the job of photographer and photojournalist. The word 'proper' signifies that something is inherent, vary natural, to something or somebody. People readily accept it as the way it should have been. From the word we have 'property' which again means somebody owns something as her/his own. Also, one has the example of 'propriety', meaning how one should behave oneself as it befits

one. This is testified by the fact that when people see woman as a photographer, they as a rule make a double check and fail not to notice the peculiarity of the woman being a photographer. Somehow, the woman too is conscious that the people around her are conscious that she is conscious of her out of the way status as a photographer.

In this busy world, where so many nursing things engage one's mind, one would not want to bother about some camera wielding women anyway. Yet, if any one of this aspiring breed of photographers pops up at one function or the other one can't help noticing them. There would be a mixed feeling of approbation and disapproval, complex though it is, towards the women photojournalist. Approbation for the daring she has shown by the very fact entering the field which many thought was not quite her and apprehension because the supposedly frail lot has ventured into the hitherto so called male domain.

A brief revelation of the pain and pleasures women photojournalists have harbored in this field is presented here, largely based on an interview conducted by Anjoo Pokherel, herself a woman photojournalist. "General response is that of appreciation", says Usha Tiwari a freelance photojournalists. "Some even so concern whether I would continue in the field after marriage. They emphasize that I should."

Tiwari frequently takes photographs mostly at political functions and her friends say she clicks like there is no tomorrow. "I have to catch the moment. The opportunity once missed is missed altogether. Therefore some times it becomes necessary to hold a camera for long duration at a time," says Tiwari. The girl can chat like a veteran and explain why she avoids using flashes and why she tries to take photograph with low shutter speed for better picture quality. (Anjoo Pokherel 'The Rising Nepal' Friday Supplementary)

Still in her early 30s, Tiwari is young in more than/ways in one. At, when one talks to women in photojournalism, her name is prominent. The girl's interest in photography started since her school years. Her hobby took a professional dimension. Photography started since the popular movement of 1989-90.

'I'm an adventurous sort- I like to cover political events,' says Tiwari, who is frequently spotted climbing up walls and fences to take photographs prompting many heads to turn in the direction. "My height is a disadvantage so I should seek higher platforms which would also ensure better coverage", explain the five feet-three inch tall, Tiwari. The Nepalese society often terms such climbing or jumping activities unsuitable and even distasteful in women. Tiwari is lucky to have remained untouched by such concerns. The girl, it seems, is happier climbing on the roof tops to get her pictures than remain on the road side hoping for the crowd to disperse.

The stunts may look spectacular but not always wise and necessary. "If the situation requires for me to climb up on the walls, I would. But that should not be yardstick with which to measure a photojournalist", says Sharmila Sharma, a freelance photographer who is in the field since the last three years. Sharma is practical in her approach. She usually does photography for special functions besides taking pictures which she thinks has news value.

"Photography is too expensive – I need to be choosy" explains Sharma. The girl who is a communication course co-ordinator at Center for Women and Development (CWD) and executive member of Nepal Photojournalists' Association says she maintains her expenses for photography through her job at Natural History Museum.

Shobha Gautam, who had worked on a photography project for a year, is of the view that an average Nepali cannot afford to go full swing into photography

unless she is sponsored or is associated with some organization. Gautam had worked on a fellowship through Nepal Press Institute sponsored by Carlos A. Arnaldo of UNESCO/France.

“It would cost 20 rupees to bring out a single black and white postcard size picture. So imagine the cost of photography in which being able to produce two or three good pictures from the whole reel is considered good achievement,” Gautam says. She has now switched to audio-visual sector.

Tiwari says she had no sponsors “but I have managed”. She agrees that photography is expensive and she advises new entrants in the field to take it as a career and not as a mere hobby. The difficulty is not just financial, most photographs carry value only if used when the event is still hot. Here, timeliness becomes important which is often difficult to cope with.

Tiwari is less cautious in this regard. “You never know when a not-so-important picture turns out to be valuable in the future,” she says. Tiwari tells of the time when she had pushed back her desire to take a picture of the whole family of Pasang Lhamu Sherpa-the first Nepali woman to conquer Mt Everest- before she took off for the expedition.

“I had planned on taking the picture when she returned from her venture thinking that to be more appropriate and when she died (during her descent). I was shocked,” explains Tiwari who prefers to carry along her bag of camera equipment wherever she goes (qtd. in Pokherel).

With time women have become more comfortable with their cameras and more focused on their efforts. Tiwari says she is still in the learning phase. “But now, I know what I want to do- a certain concept has more or less developed in me,” says the confident photographer, who is presently concentrating more on political and

social movements to prepare a photo feature in the future. “It is just a try. Let’s see how it turns out to be,” (ibid.) says the girl who has often been accused of being more political than professional.

Everybody has a right to endorse one or the other political ideology but I have never let that factor influence my photography,” says Tiwari who likes to relate an incident of around 1989 when a row broke out between the student unions of the Law Campus and the R.R. Campus here. The girl had been taunted and harassed for taking pictures of the riot but the strength within her surfaced when she refused to be deterred by such activities.

Women photojournalists have still a long way to go. Since they are just a handful of them at present, their works will be watched more closely than their male counterparts the quality of their pictures have frequently been questioned. Sharma is indignant. “Then why are they using our photographs-sometimes even without the photographer’s credit like?”

All is not smooth sailing in photography. Of course women are enjoying the freedom of a freelancer but not without being bruised at one time or the other by its drawback-the most painful being getting access to newspapers that can value their pictures.

Some of the photographs of Sharmila Sharma published in *The Rising Nepal* have focused on Child issues of exploitation and yearning for literacy. The underlying points which the observers wish to know is are women in photojournalism also expected to cover only the child and women issues?

Sharmila, whose photographs have also figured in *Gorkhapatra*, *Mahanagar*, *Nepal Times*, *Sadhana*, *Nawa Richa* and other publications, has a mixed reaction on the subject. “When I take photographs I am not guided by this notion. I take pictures

when I see meaning in my objects. But if the editors want pictures on such issues I have nothing to complain.”

Sharmila works with a pen as well as a camera lens. Yet, she opted to concentrate more on photography when she realized that she had the potential to show her skill in the field. Her first photos done for a class exhibition during her journalism course at Center for Women and Development (CWD) were received well. This inspired her to drive ahead in the field.

Since photography is not a battle of muscles, women can fare well in the field. To doubt their ability just because they are women would be entirely childish. “Photography can’t be a men’s or a woman’s profession. It can be handed by any one who has the interest in the subject,” says Javed Shah,” a camera expert and a photography trainer at CWD. “It is an art-technical aspect is a just a support,” Shah says, explaining that it is a misguided notion that photography is too technical for the fairer sex to really make a headway into the profession.

Since women are so few in this field, they have less competition with their own kind, but rubbing shoulders’ with male counterparts can be a challenging experience. The society does not want their daughters to walk around in the night or move around to places be it for professional reasons or otherwise. But the same society has the weird desire to place higher importance to these secondary factors which may not be as an essential as they seem in their respective professions. In photography too- which is more an outdoor affair than in-house-the strain can be heavy on aspiring talents.

Shah, a keen observer of women in photo journalism, says that those are just “show activities”. A good photograph can be taken without making a scene out of it.

Quality of photographs depends on how you choose your angle and you have to decide what is good from the situation” says Shah.

Some critics point out that women start blowing their own trumpets just when they are beginning to get a feel/reel of the profession. Shah says he hasn't confronted this attitude. “ However, I tell my students that taking up photography as profession is like entering into the ocean – never think that you have learnt enough,” he says. Shah is of the view that with patience and struggle any women in photojournalism can come to the fore. Shah agrees that women should explore the outlets. “Opportunities are not served in plates,” he tells. Sharmila, however, has a different story to tell. She likes to relate of handicraft fair of 1994 when king Birendra along with other members of the Royal Family attended the fair unannounced and she was the sole photographer who caught the rare moment:

It was the last day of the fair. My camera films were running out and the battery was already down. I tried to make my best efforts. And I don't know why, but I was sort of given the liberty to click form whichever angle I chose to. Once, the king even noticed that the flash did not work and he cared to tell me. Flash *ta balenani*. (Pokherel)

Sharmila tells adding that the opportunity boosted her morale. The patronage, brief though it was, had inspirational effect on the photographer.

However, all this initial vigor seem to bet clouded especially after women get married and have children. “This is only a temporary slowing down,” says Charu Chadda, a one time active photojournalist and now a mother of a baby son. “I am still in touch with the media. And I have no intention of leaving the field. I will continue actively. At present, I just want to give myself to the baby,” explains Chadda. The

young photographer denies that matrimony and motherhood destroys the zeal of a professional.

Alongside the professional photographers, increasing number of women in print journalism are also seen wielding cameras when they move around on assignment. “The problem with photographers is they take their photographs may not match the reporters’ story angle,” says Manisha, who is essentially an environment journalist. “When I can take photographs myself I don’t need to depend on other photographers for my story, says the girl who has come to prefer this approach.

If a woman has talent and the will, competent men in the sector do not hold backs their support for the womenfolk. With a dint of hard work and willingness to learn, women professionals can give justice to their potential in photojournalism. Photojournalism is not exclusive to male only. Women can also make a mark in this field.

Chapter III: Some Visual Images and Their Readings

This section is devoted to studying some specimen photographs taken during the very early phase of photography and photojournalism in Nepal. The rest are chiefly related to the Mass Movements of 1990 and 2006. Some of the pictures are selected for the significance of their content while others for their capacity to reinforce the past that would otherwise have been cast into oblivion.

3.1 Do Photos Speak for Themselves?

Having treated the issue in the foregoing chapter, it is the time to make a check on whether photographs can be the vehicle for carrying and conveying reality or truths as they were or are. Despite the premise that the subjectivity of the photographer somehow intervenes the scene to distort reality, it is fairly a case that the photograph captures the real without the distorting presence of the camera-holder. If it were not so, it would not be possible to trust any photographic image as true. If every single photograph is seen as a play of power politics, then there will be no hope of objectivity, no possibility of meaningful and truthful communication via photographs. The situation would be utterly hopeless and hapless. But, that is not the case; certainly not to an alarming degree. That is why we trust something which is supported by photographic evidence; and can still make ponderous statements in this regard like, "A photo speaks more and better than thousand words." Photographs capture the reality and convey reality without discoloring and distorting their contents. The photographs observed here below testify to this assumption.



First stones, then bullets. A policeman in action during the movement.



Police aim pistol at demonstrators in Kathmandu.

There are two pictures here. In the first one, a police man is seen pelting stones at the rebels, with his revolver on his left hand. It is a stark image effectively revealing how power, brutal and naked one at that, was exercised by them establishment to suppress the agitation.

The next picture also shows four policemen, three of them whistling, while one in the front is aiming at the demonstrators in down town Kathmandu. The warning of the whistle seems to be serving two purposes: it is being used to cow away the agitators, and it is threatening them of dire consequences. The third policeman is seen picking stones or pebbles to pelt at the agitators. Despite the combined physical and psychological pressure exerted by the police and the ‘Mandale’ – the hooligan group, paid agent of the establishment – elements against the agitators, there is here a sense of having already failed to exercise an equitable and fair legal authority delegated by the people to the rulers for the welfare of the people. If the government is in a situation to exert brutal power over its people, then it is no government of the people at all. It is merely a lording over upon the subjects. And rightly so: in the Panchyat regime that boasted of partyless democracy, Nepali people were not conferred the status of citizens; they were mere subjects, the laity. The photograph here speaks out loud and shows that this is exactly the case. Thanks to the technical power of photography and the passion of photojournalists who took to capturing the unforgettable moments in the history of the nation.

The photograph was taken after the restoration of multiparty democracy in June 1990. The caption there read “Let’s make the dream of the martyr’s true”, “Down with the Royal plot”, “Long live democracy; down with autocracy” “Regressive palace elements, beware!” etc. The rally was organized by United leftist Front, Valley Committee.

This photo is significant in many ways. First, it represents the possible danger of the royal elements attempting any regressive move. The people were not sure, let alone be complacent, that the palace would digest the change. There was in the air a heavy and uneasy feeling that the crooked elements would some how try to subvert

the recently gained democratic system. This is not to say that the people and political parties were so unsure and insecure of their own power to safeguard their favored system and interest. Yet, they had the premonition that there would be plotting and machination. The vigilance exhibited by the people then is indicative of the nature of the royal family which has always proved unreliable and anti-democratic. History bears witness how then King Tribhuvan recanted his vows to hold a free and fair election for Constituent Assembly immediately after the success of the democratic movement in 2007. Then after the death of Tribhuvan, his successor Mahendra went so far as to depose the first popularly elected government led by Visheshwor Prasad Koirala.



The grins are there even as police round up agitators.

The caption reads ‘the grins are there even as police round up agitators’ which is a telling one: the revolutionaries knew well in advance that they were fighting victorious battle. The confidence and complacency exhibited by the youth is

unparallel and rare. The power of photojournalism here lies in that it has captured the rare moment and treated it with an equally rare sympathy, thereby ascertaining the hope and assurance of the demonstrators regarding the successful outcome of the movement even as things do not seem very bright. The policemen seem to have the realization too, or rather the premonition that the movement would turn into a historic success; therefore their attempt too consists in performing their duty of controlling the riot but without the use of unnecessary brutal force. These exegetical endeavours apart, the photographs are in themselves a documentary work for what they have done: they have captured, to reiterate, a rare moment in the course of the people's movement with such a rare insight on the part of the photographers. The photographer here is a photo-journalist par excellence. S/he has captured a telling scene indeed.



Police and panchayat workers throw stones at demonstrators at Ratna Park.



Yet another arrest. Agitators were beaten by the police and released later.

The pro-Panchayat activists were so keen to protect their system that they stooped as low as to come to the street tops side with the security personnel to chase the demonstrators. The picture states in an ironical vein the failure of the security forces to control the agitators. This has two implications: either the governance that

time was so bad that the hoodlums out-powered and outsmarted the security system; or the government was so detached from and disliked by the public that it had to take recourse to recruiting the so-called *mandale* elements to hit back at the agitating people. If the police force, representative of the government, was on the side of the people (meaning, if the government was of, for and by the people), it would not have taken help of the hooligan elements in reactionary fighting against the very people for whom the government is supposed to exist.

The battle was fought, in effect, between the democratic and the oligarchic, reactionary forces. In this battle, the police force, actually composed of the personnel from the commoners, is made to charge at the very group from which it has come. Here, one can see how the 'economy of economy' comes into play. The hired, recruited police personnel are forced to take action against the people, though they have sympathy for the demonstrators. They both share the same class interest. But owing to their job security, that is their economy, the police personnel are bound to fight back the same people whose tax is their source of sustenance. Karl Marx was not entirely wrong, looked in this light, when he said the modern day worker in a capitalist mode of economy is rendered a mere cog in the wheel of the capitalist society. S/he cannot exercise her/his free will and judgment regarding what is right and wrong. One's conscience is circumstanced, bound up, manipulated, and one cannot act independently in line with one's conscience.



The royal palace serve as a backdrop to an agitating crowd of seven thousand intellectuals and professionals demanding the immediate promulgation of the constitution.

The movement proved, as it was bound to, successful. The participation of the commoners, and the professionals, in short, of the people at large, made the movement a success in forcing the palace to lift the ban on political parties and thus opened the avenue for multiparty democracy. But, the people were so distrustful of the palace in its acceptance of the democratic system that they kept on organizing

awareness and vigilance demonstrations in the months after the lift on the ban on the parties and before the promulgation of the Constitution of 1991.

One among such demonstrations is presented here. Banners in this picture read “We should get pre-information about the constitution”, “Sovereignty in People”, “People are sovereign”, and of course, the grammatically odd” People is sovereign”. The royal palace serves as a backdrop to the photograph, and makes a contrasting striking image. This photo is once more indicative of the vigilance that people of the professional domain have shown regarding the possibility of a new constitution being manipulated by the palace and its being promulgated without accommodating the interest and opinion of the people. There are government workers’ organizations, teachers’ organizations, engineers’ organizations, medical workers’ organizations among others here in the picture. One could have written a thousand worded articles on the issue, but it would not have conveyed the awakened consciousness of the people of the times. As it goes by without saying, pictures speak volumes.

3.2 A Historical Backdrop of Mass Movement of 1990 and 2006: A Review of The Gruesome Moments

More than 12,800 people were killed (4,500 by Maoists and 8,200 by the government) and an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 people were internally displaced as a result of the conflict. This conflict disrupted the majority of rural development activities and led to a deep and complex Left Front which, together with the Nepali Congress, was the backbone of the broad based movement for democratic change. However, communist groups, uncomfortable with the alliance between ULF and Congress, formed a parallel front, the United National People's Movement. The UNPM called for elections to a Constituent Assembly, and rejected compromises

made by ULF and Congress with the royal house. In November 1990 the Communist Party of Nepal (Unity Centre) was formed, including key elements of constituents of UNPM. The new party held its first convention in 1991, the adopted a line of "protracted armed struggle on the route to a new democratic revolution" and that the party would remain an underground party. The CPN(UC) set up Samyukta Jana Morcha, with Baburam Bhattarai as its head, as an open front to contest elections. In the 1991 elections, SJM became the third force in the Nepalese parliament. However, disagreements surged regarding which tactics to be used by the party. One sector argued for immediate armed revolution whereas others (including senior leaders like Nirmal Lama) claimed that Nepal was not yet ripe for armed struggle.

The government responded to the rebellion by banning provocative statements about the monarchy, imprisoning journalists, and shutting down newspapers accused of siding with the insurgents. Several rounds of negotiations, accompanied by temporary cease-fires, have been held between the insurgents and the government. The government has categorically rejected the insurgents' demand for an election to the constituent assembly; it would result in the abolition of the monarchy by a popular vote. At the same time, the Maoists have refused to recognize the installation of a constitutional monarchy. In November 2004, the government rejected the Maoists' request to negotiate directly with the King Gyanendra rather than via the Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba; their request for discussions to be mediated by a third party, such as the United Nations was dismissed.

Throughout war, the government controlled the main cities and towns, whilst the Maoist dominated the rural areas. Historically, the presence of the Nepali government has been limited to town and zonal centers. The only state apparatus present in most small villages, where most of the inhabitants of Nepal live, were a

health post, a government school, a village council, and a police booth. Once the insurgency began, the schools were all that remained, indicating that the Maoists had seized control of the village. The Royal government powerbase is located in the zonal headquarters and the capital Kathmandu. Unrest reached Kathmandu in 2004 when the Maoists announced a blockade of the capital city.

Intense fighting and civic unrest continued well into 2005, with the death toll rising to 200 in December 2004. On February 1, 2005, in response to the inability of the relatively democratic government to restore order, King Gyanendra assumed total control of the government. He proclaimed, "Democracy and progress contradict one another... In pursuit of liberalism, we should never overlook an important aspect of our conduct, namely discipline."

On November 22, 2005, the joint CPN(M)-United People's Front conference in Delhi issued a 12-point resolution, stating that they "...completely agree that autocratic monarchy is the main hurdle" hindering the realisation of "democracy, peace, prosperity, social advancement and a free and sovereign Nepal." In addition, they also described their clear view that without establishing absolute democracy by ending autocratic monarchy, there is no possibility of peace, progress, and prosperity in the country. An understanding had been reached to establish absolute democracy by ending monarchy with the respective forces centralizing their assault against autocratic monarchy thereby creating a nationwide storm of democratic protests.

Then King Gyanendra represented the elite, Hindu pious fraud by his public appearance in places of worship and shrines. Wherever he went, he used to attract the attention of the people by getting lavish honours and preparation for his reception. The photograph below shows how servile his mentality was: he gets his hoe-lace tie and untied by the army officer. And crossing the limit of common decency and

decorum, the photograph of the act is taken, and published. One can assume, it all did not happen without the knowledge of the king.



प्रजासिद्ध राजवंशी संसदको उदघाटन गर्ने क्रममा नेपाली सेनाको एक सैनिकले आफ्नो सैनिकी बलको रूपमा नेपालको राजवंशी संसदको उदघाटन गर्न सफल भएका थिए।
 (संस्कृत) यो छ, राजवंशी संसदको उदघाटन गर्ने क्रममा नेपाली सेनाको एक सैनिकले आफ्नो सैनिकी बलको रूपमा नेपालको राजवंशी संसदको उदघाटन गर्न सफल भएका थिए।
 राजवंशी संसद

This picture, on the face of it, captures simply a visit made by the then King to a Hindu shrine to offer oblation to the deity in the form of sacrificing a goat. But even a descriptive exposition of the photograph will reveal, as is outlined in what follows below.

First, the color combination. Red is the prevailing, so to speak, ubiquitous color here. Blood-shed of the sacrificial beast is red, a portion of the army officers' badge is red, and so is the carpet spread for the royalty's visit. Red, incidentally is also the color of life, vitality, conjugal fortune of Nepali women.

Red carpet is a very high reverence welcome extended to dignitaries of no less status than a monarch, or a president; it is rarely extended even to the prime minister. Here the King, even in such an unofficial a visit as to a shrine is lucky enough to soil

the red carpet. Its implications are manifold: the King is respected wherever he goes, he deserves no less welcome than one accompanied by such flamboyant and costly one, and that it is matter of pleasure to the public, be it religious vicars or the army or the commoners, to welcome him anytime any where. But what about the lavish expenditure? What about curtailing it for supporting the poor orphans and the less fortunate strata of the nation? But as things stood then, the upper stratum had no such philanthropic notions. May be, for all we know, the royalties do not take the poor as human beings even. The ultimate decline and fall of the Shah dynasty as the monarchy of Nepal can be well comprehended with a reference to a scriptural text. As Jesus advised his disciples in (Matthew 18:4), if one wanted to be called great, one needed to humble himself/herself; so that God would lift up the humbled one. The reverse is seen in the picture above. Then King Gyanendra, after sacrificing a he-goat at the famed goddess of power and victory, gets one of the aide de camps Colonel Tika Dhamala, fasten his shoe lace. Needless to say, the majesty of the king, His Royal Majesty, was not supported by the power of the deity, despite the ritualistic homage the king had paid to the goddess. Nine months later, the king had to reinstate the parliament on the face of the mounting pressure exerted by the famed Mass Movement II 2062-63, or The April Revolution 2006.

For one with a bit of sensitivity and political interest, the photograph speaks volumes. In the first place, it posits the so-called divine power vis-à-vis the people power. And, interestingly enough, the people power came off victorious eventually.

Next, the image is of profound significance in that, though in a very technical way, it has exposed the mentality of lordship of the royalty over the commoners: the Colonel here is, after all, just a common Nepali citizen. It was not infrequent in the upper stratum to lord it over on the people on innumerable pretexts. Of course, a

common citizen can pay homage to the royalty or to any one holding so dignified a post as the monarch (or president presently). But to let such pictures be taken of the royalty when they are getting their shoe laces tied up by one of the public servant, is something unsavory. To speak without mincing the words, the royalty till then had presumed Nepal meant themselves, and nothing or nobody else. They thought, they represent Nepal, that without the monarchy Nepal cannot be conceived of. But this same presumption proved costly to the royalty.

At yet another level, the photo in a telling manner, obviates the class issue. The king was, after all, only a person, nothing more nothing less. Had he really been divinely ordained, he would have naturally garnered a secure and deep reverence and obedience of the people. He was not, so he could not. Then what made the whole dynasty retain their political and religious influence over the public for centuries? The question is addressed by the Marxist awareness with its foundational premise: you are what you own up! Meaning, one's identity is determined by one's economic status. The royalty is royalty not because they have any more favour with the divinity or they were predestined to be the highnesses by providence; they were so simply because they commanded military and customary power by dint of their economic power. Or to phrase it a bit differently, the hard power of the military and political influence was funded, literally, by material base of their power, which again accrued the soft power of customs, religious reverence and general respectability of the public. To sum up, the king's power was a natural fall-out of the unnatural wealth accumulated around the royalty.

“Dekhnele boldaina, bolnele dekgdian, tara photole dekhao, boloyo!!!”



दशरथमर्त्यामा गृहको बाह्य अति-भक्त फिरोजशाहको मुद्रि
 कर्मका जगतका बाबा र वरणा । अर्थात् २००८ मा राजाको
 मर्त्यो बाह्य अति-भक्त गृहको बाह्य अति-भक्त अर्थात्
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दशरथ अर्थात्

There is pithy maxim in Nepali, a wisdom-packed Nepali proverb; which roughly translates in English as: The one which sees does not speak, and the one which speaks does not see. Then King Gyanendra had declared in the wake up the royal massacre that made way for his crowning as the 12th king of the Shah dynasty that he would not keep mum watching the people suffer under his nose. Ironically, he advertised his kingship with much media hype and ceremonies, all the while accruing negative opinion of the public.

In the picture here, against the backdrop of the king's larger than life photograph, a beggar woman is seen, nursing her suckling baby while another, in a not-happy way, seems busy with something in his fingers. The mother, who may be hungry with sucking the child at her lap, is apparently amazed by the very fact that she is being photographed, and looks at the direction from which she is observed by

the camera, in an abstract and abandoned fashion. Or another angle of interpreting her abstract, though not without a glow-of-life gaze: she is looking up to the providence, expectant of succor. Though we do not have any decided proof to disprove the justice and providence of God, the naked eye, therefore blind to the deeper truth that calls to the deep, fails to see why there is such an abject poverty. Whatever else one might be tempted to interpret, this scribe holds that the picture satirizes the failure of then monarch to see and redress the lack the poor people were suffering from. The woman, including her siblings, seems to have no meaning or appeal to the establishment saves as a foreground for the exhibitionism of the royalty's opulence.

The picture makes fun of the king's declaration that he would step forward to redress the grievances of the people. He is not there to see and help her, and his photo does not see her plight. She is actually, not programmed in any political party's manifesto either. There is no mention of addressing the problem of joblessness, begging and mendicant in their socio-economic programs. She is out-of frame, literally of the state mechanism, though she had the chance to be framed in by a photojournalist Dipendra Vajracharya.

The economic poverty portrayed here is pathetic. The pompous regalia of the monarch strike a repugnant counterbalance to the ragged poverty of the street-bred life. The difference between the two is not because of some other fatalistic preordination; but simply because of the difference between the material possession and/or non-possession.

Nothing short of the picture would have drawn the deep sympathy of the viewer. Where words fail to speak, a photo speaks volume, literally, sincerely.

The picture below is of a woman with a suckling, watching the Maoist guerrilla attending a meeting. These guerrillas were birthed by the party to fight

against the state forces. One is forced to ask why people fight, and against whom. Sure enough, for their rights: human, economic, social, political and religious/ethnic promotion and protection they deliberately fight. The center had never recognized the marginalized groups as such, as complete human societies. Therefore, incumbent became the mass uprising against the establishment as expressed in Mass Movement II.

As the pictures studied above inarguably indicate, the establishment was, literally cut off from the rest, the masses. The ruling elite, whether they be from the long time ruling parliamentary parties or the royalty, had no idea of the depth and pang of suffering of the people. In this context, it is easy to make sense of yet another picture presented below. A sucking woman is watching a drill performed by the Second Battalion of the CPN Maoist Party in 2061 Baisakh. We do not know from the picture itself if the child too is watching the drill; the caption by the photographer Elizabeth Dyaljial, however, says it is.

No human being sensitive to the import and importance of life would dare go against the establishment jeopardizing their life. If so, why people take to rebellion? Why the milk-lipped teen-agers and sucking mothers joined the Maoist insurgency, so to speak? The answer is suggested by the aforementioned pictures. Revolt is the last resort for a people laden heavy with poverty, deprivation and repression. Rebellion is the path for a people who have no other option but whose sufferings are rendered unbearable by the last straw of tyranny and indignity



Photo: Pradyumn Singh / Anandabazar Photo Agency

It is not for nothing that the Maoist rebellion gained momentum despite the massive military and political opposition from within the country and without. When the limit of what is bearable is crossed, the rebel in every human person ventures out. The drill is a power show-off on the part of the Maoist who claimed to be the authentic representative (and they proved too, in the election, by gaining the trust of the people).

To put it bluntly, the so-called people's war of the Maoists (in the parlance of the so-called bourgeoisie intelligentsia, that is) was a direct fall-out of the ages of suppression inflicted upon the people by the elitist rulers whether they be the Ranas, or Rajas/Maharajas or the royal parties.

In this context, the role played by the media, in particular by photojournalism, can be well grasped. It aroused and united the people across the then kingdom around the consensus of consciousness, one against the monarchy, towards a pro-republic polarization. The people's wrath against monarchy and enthusiasm for republic was

corner notice which fixed the price of their head against a sum of five millions for the top brass leaders. It was a time immediately after the declaration of the then king Gyanendra who had stated that he could not remain a dumb onlooker of the sufferings of the people as his brother had been. Then he mobilized the army in an attempt to crush the Maoist rebellion. In this context, this photo was retrieved from a Maoist rebel killed in a confrontation.

Now, after seven years, the same people are at the helm of the government. Tagged number one is incumbent Minister for Finance, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. The second tag is for Hisila Yami, Minister for Physical Planning and Construction; and the third is for Ram Bahadur Thapa “Badal”, presently Defence Minister. The fourth tag is for, the incumbent Right honorable Prime minister Puspa Kamal Dahal “Prachanda”. The one-time terror-awakening rebels are now no longer the forest-dwellers they were supposed to be. This is the power of time that makes the whole difference. And this is in the power of photojournalism to catch the different stages of life and present them to the viewer for a gainful comparison and the insight, even if at times only hindsight, into the nature of things, people and events.

The very posture of the leaders there, their numbered and tagged and priced plight, and the way they look far, may be over the future so unsure to them but for which they have so committed and compassionate zeal, is deeply suggestive. The photo suggests that leaders have a long vision, not easily communicated by words. But a photo can convey the aura, the depth, the seriousness. This very thing is the essence of the art of photography here, for photojournalism was not the primary source of this picture. It was meant for secret keeping, but was only accidentally found by the army.

3.3 Intimidating and the Encouraging Snapshots

Revolutions are not occasions for celebrations, though celebrations naturally follow the successful ones. Revolutions are not meant merely for the purpose of making artistic photographic specimens of, though such specimens are cherished long after the eventful times. Presented here below are some images related to the dire as well as celebrating moments of the revolutions of 1991 and 2006.

But photos capture and convey the gruesome scenes too. The scenes of war, crime, murder and sabotage are too easily preserved and communicated by photos.



There was hundreds of death news during the two months long movement in 2046 B.S. the picture above is one among such incidents. The dead bodies remain unidentified in an unidentified hospital floor, as the caption reads. But one thing is mentioned with certainty: they were the members of the public who went out on the roads to demand democracy, raising voice against the Panchayat system. The

reinstatement of democracy in 2046 Chaitra was the result of sacrifice made by hundreds of Nepalis in the course of the movement and prior to the formal declaration of the movement as well. Those in this picture were killed by the police in action against the demonstrating crowds.



This picture is of the dead bodies of the Maoists guerillas who were delivered fatal counter-blows by the Nepali Army in 2059 at Gam of Rolpa. The Maoist rebels, representative of the revolutionary personality of the people of Nepal, suffered reverse casualties in their attacks on the then Royal Nepali Army. Hundreds of the militants were killed in the counter attacking actions of the state forces, though it was reported that a great number of the army also were killed.

Whoever killed and whoever was killed, both sides were composed of the same Nepali people. And the commoners became the ultimate scapegoat; they suffered doubly from the suspecting act of the two armies, from the strike, and cordon

and search and shoot at sight actions of the Maoist rebels and the Nepali Army respectively.

The picture shows the death caused by the Maoist rebels among the Nepal Police force. The incident happened in at the Police Post at Naumule, Dailekh in 2057. The horrific scene shows the brutality of a war, whether it be civil war or war at large between nations. In the picture, we see the security mechanism of the country itself impaired owing to lack of its own security. The horrendous plight of the police force amidst a growing Maoist onset was pitiable. This photograph is a sample of the brutality a war can cause.

The reason behind this is rather too long a story to relate. The backdrop of the historic democratic movement of 2007 B. S., its death at the gripping hands of then King Mahendra in 2017 B.S., its restoration of democracy in 2046 B. S., and the

failure of the parliamentary system to deliver all-round development as per the expectations of the people lead to the formal declaration of the People's Movement in 2052 B.S. Then began a series of sabotages by the Maoist rebels on the police camps and other government bodies, leading to frontal attacks on the national security force itself.

As the rebel groups attacked and caused much harm on an army barrack, it caused a serious setback on military force. The reason behind may be rationalized not so much lack of efficiency as the lack of preparedness on the part of the army force against the possible rebel sabotage on the camp. The great number of casualty of the military of a country which had not seen any such thing for over two hundred years except in the cases it partook in the United Nations' mission for world peace in various nations, certainly went far deep.



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After the three weeks of intense agitation, the then royal regime was forced to reinstate the dissolved parliament. The joy people felt, and the solidarity they exhibited in the wake of the successful movement, can be seen in the representative fist raised by a commoner from the roof of Bir Hospital, the first modern hospital of Nepal, watching the first victory mass assemblage. Two hundred thousand people participated in the assembly, as reports went by. The raised tight fists of the onlooker at the victory mass assemblage in the wake of the downfall of the royal regime speak the vigor people expressed at the success of the revolution. The unity for people's war against all forms of tyranny represented by the fist here reminds one of the plea made by Messianic communist ideologue Karl Marx in the nineteenth century. If people, the working class people, become united, their victory is sure. This is an inspirational scene for those who may have to launch further movements for democracy and people's rights. The photograph has captured and conveyed the buoyant spirit of the people. It has done its job par excellence.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

The history of photography and of photojournalism in Nepal has been a rugged one. The thesis began with the premise that in Nepal the art of photography has both served the elite classes by masking and moulding reality and yet it has served the commoners by exposing the reality and arousing mass consciousness. As brief observation of the historical development of photography and photojournalism in the country has indicated, and as the photographs pertaining to the Peoples' Movements I and II also speak, photography has greatly helped in the democratic process, democratization and overall development of the people's consciousness.

Despite the proposed assumption that photography cannot be a pure technical act, that it is art, that it allows for the distortion of reality, it is found by the end of this dissertation that photography is a powerful tool in preserving and conveying the sense of reality, of history, of the opinion of people at large. Though there is always the possibility of the misuse of this technical device and art to mislead the people and their opinion, and to distort or conceal truth, photography in general has come to be accepted as a reliable means of capturing and conveying truth. For its capacity to convey the image as it happened, photography has been developed into photojournalism. Photojournalism in this sense is nothing more than the attempt of the professional photographers, who are committed to conveying the news supported by photographic images, to the commoners.

Paper like this one rely on the assumption that nothing amounting to a substantial endeavors have been put into the research of this field, of the development and power-political affiliation of photography and photojournalism in Nepal. Though there were some articles on the history of introduction of photography and photojournalism in Nepal, no focused study has been carried out on the issue of the role of

photography in the construction of the elitist discourse of the kings and the ruling classes. This paper has made the same study and has come to the conclusion that though Nepali photography started with the aim of magnifying the ego of the Rana and Shah rulers, it slowly lent itself onto the hands of the upper classes, then middle classes and then to the commoners. Thus it turned into a common tool, and a means of generating and feeding mass awareness, as it was seen in the circulation of photographic images during the mass movements in the country.

Previously Nepali photography served only the Ranas and the aristocratic people, It was like the proverbial sour grapes for the common people to access this new technology till the end of the Rana oligarchy. So its development remained nominal and parochial throughout the period. But after the establishment of democracy in 2007 B. S., it became a common sight to see people wielding cameras on every day occasions.

Yet, the real dissemination and accessibility of the art, profession and amateurship of photography became palpable only after the restoration of democracy in 2046 B. S. The emergence many privately owned photo studios at several parts of the country took this technology to the nooks and corners, and the common people felt a desire to capture the moments of their life in the form of photographic images. Thus, photography took on the mass and public form that it has come to assume today in the wake of the Mass Revolution of 2046 B. S.

But, with the unprecedented development in the field brought with it a dangerous possibility. The danger lied in the fact that now the media persons and houses could manipulate this technology to feed the mass with a perverted and filtered version of reality. For, the common people generally accept the photographic representation as the truth. It is in this context that this paper has explicated how

photojournalism can be a misleading. Yet, the very fact that people take photographic images to be true in themselves can be used by the pro-public and democratic forces to educate and encourage the people to be prepared for participating in the movements launched for their rights.

The photographs taken during the Mass Movement testify to this fact. One can see the common people agitating, pelting stones against the security forces, and donning anti-establishment slogans and catchphrases in big banners. This heightened level of public consciousness can be accounted for the development of journalism and photojournalism, specifically speaking.

Overall, photojournalism has functioned both a medium of the message and as the means of livelihood of the working photographer and photojournalist. Therefore, its significance cannot be undermined, given the historic and contemporary role it has played in the development of modern Nepal as conscious and fruitful nation, at least to some degree when all other political and governmental apparatuses are practically dysfunctional. Photojournalism has positively educated, informed and shaped the mass consciousness in Nepal. As a result common people attract to participate in photo-studio. Different genres too develop for livelihood. Though which genres when and how exist is not a matter, its area of work is important then photography in Nepal develop as the main industry, main study of history, study of tradition, study of value judgment and the key source of awaring the mass for livelihood and change.

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