

From Childhood to Power: The Formative Years of Jung Bahadur Rana

Saroj Pratap Rana

MPhil/PhD Scholar at the Central Department of History
Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal
Email: sarojprataprana@gmail.com
Doi: <https://doi.org/10.3126/hisan.v11i1.92743>

Abstract

This study explores the formative years of Jung Bahadur Rana, tracing how ancestral legacy, personal adversity, and strategic action shaped his rise in nineteenth-century Nepal. It emphasizes Bal Narsingh Kunwar's court access as crucial to Jung Bahadur's early positioning, starting with the Kunwar family's martial and administrative heritage. The contested narratives of his birthplace, such as Borlang, Mathura Benshi, or Thapathali, are examined as indicators of elite identity and historical legitimacy. After the Thapa faction fell, the study traces his fall into poverty and makes the case that these adversities strengthened his resolve and political instincts. His re-entry into Kathmandu's court politics, marked by bravery and tactical alliances, laid the groundwork for his ascent. Drawing on Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory, the paper argues that Jung Bahadur's childhood experiences were not incidental but foundational to the emergence of the Rana regime and the shaping of Nepal's modern political history.

Key words: Birthplace of Jung Bahadur, Chittorgarh, Court politics, Kaji, Martial skills

Introduction

Jung Bahadur Rana's rise to prominence in nineteenth-century Nepalese politics was the consequence of a convergence of institutional, familial, and personal factors. His rise to power must be understood through the lens of his formative years shaped by ancestral legacy, court proximity, personal adversity, and strategic re-engagement with the state.

Jung Bahadur Rana was born into the Kunwar family, a lineage with deep military background and historical ties to the Gorkhali court. The Kunwars, originally of Rajput descent, had migrated to Nepal and gradually embedded themselves within the military and administrative elite. During Prithvi Narayan Shah's reign, his great-grandfather, Ramkrishna Kunwar, gained recognition. In a similar manner, his grandfather Ranjeet Kunwar made a major contribution to Nepal's unification. Furthermore, his father Bal Narsingh Kunwar, further solidified the family's position through decisive service,

particularly during the assassination of Rana Bahadur Shah. These acts of loyalty and courage placed the Kunwars as trusted nobles, allowing them access to the palace and its inner circles.

The location of Jung Bahadur's birth, however, is still up for debate despite this established lineage. Competing accounts place his birth in Borlang, Mathura Bensi, and Thapathali, each with its own symbolic and logistical implications. Archival records and common-sense point to Thapathali as the most likely location, despite conflicting claims from genealogical memory and some narratives. This debate is not merely geographic, but reflects deeper tensions around legitimacy, and the politics of historical memory.

Jung Bahadur experienced both privilege and trouble in his early life. Following the fall of Bhimsen Thapa and the collapse of the Thapa faction, his family lost their positions, income, and property. The experience of poverty and sidelining was life-changing for a child born into royal closeness. These years of wandering, hardship, and survival, whether in Tarai, Banaras, or Kathmandu sharpened his insights and deepened his determination. His early struggles were not just personal, they were political, setting the emotional and experiential foundation for his later ambitions.

His return to court politics was calculated and well-deserved. A daring act during a royal elephant hunt brought him to the notice of King Rajendra Bikram Shah, leading to his appointment as captain in the Artillery division. Jung then handled the dynamics of the court with increasing confidence. He served as bodyguard to both Prince Surendra and the king Rajendra, developing relationships, and securing key administrative and military roles. His ability to read the situation, build associations, and place loyalists in positions of influence marked the beginning of his consolidation of power.

This paper follows Jung Bahadur from his early years to his rise to political prominence. It examines how inherited legacy, personal resilience, and calculated engagement with court structures converged to shape the early trajectory of Nepal's first Rana ruler. By exploring his formative years and experience gained at various stages of his childhood through Erikson's lens, we gain insight into the foundations of a regime that redefine Nepal's political landscape for generations.

Objectives

This paper primarily explores the formative influences that shaped Jung Bahadur Rana's rise to power, focusing on his ancestral legacy, early adversity, and strategic re-entry into court politics. It examines how the Kunwar lineage and Bal Narsingh Kunwar's royal closeness positioned him within influential circles, while birthplace debates reveal conflicts in historical authenticity. His experience of poverty and exclusion sharpened his

determination, concluding in tactical alliances and administrative success. Mostly, the study seeks to understand how these early experiences laid the psychological and institutional foundation for the Rana regime and Nepal's modern political transformation.

Research Methodology

This study has been based on qualitative historical research methodology, incorporating a triangulated approach to source analysis. It draws upon both primary and secondary sources to construct a comprehensive and critically grounded narrative.

Primary sources include archival documents obtained from Aitihāsik Abhilekh Sangraha, which provide firsthand understanding into the birthplace of Jung Bahadur Rana. Additionally, open-ended interviews with subject matter experts were used to validate primary sources, enabling contextual nuance and interpretive depth. Secondary sources comprise published materials such as the Brihat Bānshawālī of the Kunwar Rana lineage, published by Panchayan Prakashan, alongside dissertation and relevant historiographical literature.

Both descriptive and analytical techniques have been used to analyze the gathered data, allowing for the derivation of well-informed conclusions. This methodological framework ensures that the study not only reconstructs the ancestral and political trajectory of Jung Bahadur but also critically engages with the broader historical processes that shaped his diplomatic and administrative legacy.

Discussions and Findings

Family background and Ancestral Legacy

The story of Jung Bahadur begins not with his own actions, but with the long arc of his ancestry, a lineage shaped by migration, military service, and strategic adaptation. To understand Jung Bahadur's early years, one must first comprehend the Kunwar family's journey, which spans from the fortress of Chittorgarh the hill kingdoms of western Nepal, where identity was formed not only by blood but also by military expertise and political closeness.

The Kunwar trace their roots to the Suryavanshi Rajput of Chittorgarh, a warrior clan renowned for its courage and royal affiliations. Ram Singh, son of Fakat Singh, fled his native country and moved north with four of his supporters after Chittorgarh fell to Muslim forces (Wright, 2007). These Rajput migrants entered the service of a hill kingdom, assumed as Jumla then ruled by the Kalyal dynasty.

Ram Singh's military skill quickly earned him a place on Jumla's court as an instructor. He wed a princess from Bagale Chhetri. In the social and political structure of

western Nepal, it not only validated his existence but also linked him to the Kunwar ancestry. Ram Singh's son Ratan Jeet Singh was well known for his valor in combat. He was conferred with the title "Kunwar Khadka," which represented both local assimilation and martial distinction (Wright, 2007). In addition to gaining political legitimacy and military weight, this showed the official emergence of the Kunwar surname.

The family's strategic mobility continued through generations. Rising to reputation as a commander in Jumla's army, Ratan Jeet Singh Kunwar served faithfully until his death. Later, Ahiram Kunwar, his own son, worked for King Siddhi Narayan Shah of Kaski. A dramatic event developed when Ahiram's daughter, renowned for her beauty, caught the attention of the king. The king's marriage proposal, symbolized merely by a ceremonial kalash, was rejected, triggering a confrontation. The local villagers successfully repelled the king's army and Ahiram moved to Gorkha with his family. King Nar Bhupal Shah welcomed them with dignity that made further assimilation of Kunwar into the Gorkhali court.

At the young age of fourteen, Ahiram's eldest son, Ramkrishna Kunwar, was appointed as a subaltern in the Gorkha kingdom (Rana, 1974). After demonstrating bravery in several battles, he was honored with the rank of Sardar. He was bestowed the special status of Mukhya Sardar after the 1773 capture of Chaudandi (Whelpton, 1987). His son, Ranjeet Kunwar, was appointed governor of Jumla at the age of twenty-one (Wright, 2007), a region newly annexed into the Nepalese state. After successfully defending the region against threats from former Jumli rulers, Ranjeet was given the title of Kaji. Later he became one of the four chief Kajis of Nepal. His death in the Kangda campaign left his son, Bal Narsingh Kunwar, to take over both the legacy and the load of responsibility.

The Kunwar family's strategic mobility, martial prestige, and politically adaptation is all enhanced by this ancestral legacy from Rajput origins to integration within Jumla, Kaski, and Gorkha. These ancestral experiences shaped Jung Bahadur Kunwar's identity as a military strategist and court insider, laying the foundation for his subsequent ascent.

Bal Narsingh Kunwar and his Access to Court

Bal Narsingh Kunwar's early education was based on the traditional approach of his time. As a member of the Chhetri caste, whose primary duties revolved around royal service and martial skill, he was trained from childhood in the handling of weapons. An expectation was reflected that young Chhetri boy would eventually serve the state in both military and administrative capacities.

His father's prior service to the palace made it easier for him to enter the royal court. The Kunwar family had already gained respect from Nepal's Bhardars (nobles) by the time Bal Narsingh reached adulthood. This status had been developed during the reign of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, when Ramkrishna Kunwar, Bal Narsingh's grandfather, had laid a solid foundation for the family's reputation through loyal and selfless service. As a result, the Kunwars were viewed favorably by other courtiers and enjoyed a stable position within the palace order.

In such environment, Bal Narsingh came under the patronage of King Rana Bahadur Shah. He developed close ties with Bhimsen Thapa, the powerful Mukhtiyar. These relationships turned out to be crucial. Bal Narsingh was put at the center of court politics when he was appointed as the king's personal bodyguard. On Jestha 8, 1857 B.S., when Rana Bahadur departed for Banaras, Bal Narsingh accompanied him as a key member of his entourage (Kunwar Ranaji haruko brihat bansawali, 2052). He gained firsthand knowledge of British policies and regional diplomacy during this trip, which also exposed him to the political climate of Banaras. This experience would subsequently influence his own political instincts.

Bal Narsingh was made a Sardar after Rana Bahadur returned to Kathmandu in 1861 B.S. Afterwards, on the night of Baisakh 14, 1863 B.S., during a Bhardari council meeting at the residence of Kaji Khajanchi Tribhuvan Pradhan, a violent dispute erupted (Kunwar Ranajiharuko Brihat Bansawali, 2052). Sher Bahadur Shah, Rana Bahadur's stepbrother, killed him with a sword. Hearing the king's cry for help, Bal Narsingh rushed to the scene and, upon witnessing the gruesome act, immediately retaliated and striking down the assassin with his khukuri.

This decisive act earned him the title of Kaji, further solidifying his position in the court. Furthermore, a close relationship with Bhimsen Thapa was formed by Bal Narsingh's second marriage to Ganesh Kumari Devi, the daughter of Nayan Singh Thapa. From Ganesh Kumari, Jung Bahadur Kunwar was born into a household already infused in political proximity, martial tradition, and elite service. The Kunwar family had already established itself in the upper echelons of Nepal's courtly elite by the time of his birth. Bal Narsingh's proximity to King Rana Bahadur Shah, his decisive role in moments of crisis, and his elevation to the rank of Kaji had positioned the family not only as loyal servants of the crown but as influential actors in the shaping of state affairs.

The Debate Over Jung Bahadur's Birthplace

While Jung Bahadur Rana's lineage and family status are well established in historical records, the question of his exact birthplace remains a subject of ongoing debate.

Various accounts such as genealogical and anecdotal have placed his birth in Borlang (Gorkha), Mathura Benshi (Arghakhanchi), and Thapathali (Kathmandu), each carrying its own symbolic and contextual significance. But these competing narratives reflect not only geographical uncertainty but deeper conflicts around legitimacy, and the construction of historical identity.

Jung Bahadur was born on June 18,1817 A.D. (Ashar 7,1874 B.S). According to one version, Kaji Bal Narsingh Kunwar was traveling from Jumla to Gorkha, his wife's parental home with Kajini Ganesh Kumari (KC, 2025). While passing through Mathura Benshi, Ganesh Kumari went through severe labor pains and that same night gave birth to a son. Due to her postpartum condition, the couple remained in the area for several days (KC, 2025). Bal Narsingh celebrated the sixth day by performing the Shasthi Puja and giving food and presents to Brahmins and the underprivileged. The naming ceremony was held on the eleventh day in Balkot, where the child was named Bir Narsingh. This narrative has been fully embraced by local intellectuals and officials of Chhatradev Rural Municipality (Chetri,2025). In a meeting with the author, the locals and officials expressed their belief in its authenticity, citing that their ancestors had conveyed it as oral history and they themselves had heard it repeatedly over time. However, they failed to produce enough evidence to support this claim.

According to a different account, Jung Bahadur was born at his mother's house in Borlang, Gorkha district. This version states that Ganesh Kumari had returned to her parental home for childbirth, a customary practice at the time. It carries a symbolic weight due to its association with Bhimsen Thapa, whose birthplace is often linked to Borlang (Kankai Desk, n.d.), now designated Bhimsen Thapa Gaunpalika.

A third and more logical account suggests that Jung Bahadur was born in Thapathali, Kathmandu. Famous Nepali historian Rana (1998) point out that the birth occurred at Bal Narsingh's home in Thapathali. This version gains credibility when examined against administrative records and the socio-political context of the time.

Archival documents show that Bal Narsingh was actively serving in Bijayapur around the time of Jung Bahadur's birth. He and other courtiers from Bijayapur had sent a petition to King Rajendra on 8 Mangshir 1873 B.S. expressing their grief over the passing of King Girvan Yuddha Bikram Shah and their obligation to notify and warn people in all areas (Thapa, 2082). One more document corroborates this fact further. On Falgun 2, 1873 B.S., Mukhtiyar Bhimsen Thapa addressed Bal Narsingh in a letter, instructing him to send attendance reports and informing him about the dispatched courtiers to border duties

(Thapa,2082). These above records indicate that Bal Narsingh was stationed in Bijayapur until the month of Falgun.

The claim that Bal Narsingh was moved to Jumla in just four months is unsupported by any documentation. Even by the standards of the time, the journey from Bijayapur to Jumla would have taken over two months. Travelling on horseback and men's back were the only main means of transportation during that time. Furthermore, the idea of escorting a pregnant wife to Jumla or later transporting her from Jumla to Borlang seems logistically implausible and contextually problematic.

Besides, Bhimsen Thapa himself was not born in Borlang but in Pipal Thok, Gorkha. His connection with Borlang began only after purchasing land from Laxmiraman Upadhyaya Dhakal on Jestha 9, 1874 B.S. (Thapa, 2082). Thus, the claim that Jung Bahadur was born in Borlang lacks factual grounding.

The circumstances surrounding the birth of Jung Bahadur were described by his son Padma Jung, but he did not specifically mention the birthplace. He narrates that due to feared for Ganesh Kumari's life, Bal Narsingh prayed for his wife's safety, and soon after, a maid delivered the news of a healthy son (Rana, 1974). High-ranking royal officials visited Bal Narsingh's residence to congratulate and present gifts in the newborn's name, a gesture far more reasonable in Kathmandu than in remote regions like Mathura Bensi or Borlang.

The genealogical records states that after marrying Ganesh Kumari, the eldest daughter of Kaji Nayan Singh Thapa, Bal Narsingh received a house and land in Thapathali as part of the dowry (Kunwar Ranajiharuko brihat bansawali, 2052). It was on this property that Bal Narsingh constructed a grand residence, which became a prominent family estate. When combined, these facts lend acceptance to the belief that Jung Bahadur was most likely born in Thapathali, Kathmandu. This conclusion is supported by the convergence of administrative records, logistical reasoning, and elite social dynamics.

Jung Bahadur's Early Struggles and Growing Ambitions

Jung Bahadur Rana's early life was shaped not only by privilege and proximity to power but also by personal hardships, shifting fortunes, and a growing awareness of his own ambitions. Born into a household embedded in the elite circles of Kathmandu, his upbringing followed the rituals and expectations of high-caste Chhetri families. However, his journey to power was anything but straightforward; it was characterized by obstacles, tenacity, and an insatiable quest for meaning.

Jung Bahadur had a fearless and self-assured personality from a young age. His maternal uncle, Mathbar Singh Thapa, recognizing these traits, affectionately referred to him as “Junge,” a name that eventually formalized into “Jung Bahadur.” His family followed Hindu tradition by performing the Karnabheda (ear piercing) ritual at age three and the Annaprashan (rice feeding) ceremony at age six months. On this occasion, Maharani Tripurasundari gifted him a pair of precious earrings (Rana, 1974). This was a gesture that symbolized royal favor and social recognition to Jung Bahadur.

He was given a tutor when he was five years old to teach him the alphabet, starting with Sanskrit. Jung Bahadur, however, had little interest in formal education. He had an innate sense of his future role, as evidenced by his inclinations toward physical pursuits like sports, swordplay, and wrestling. Pudma Jung, his son, with the help of family annals later described his boyhood as fearless, daring, and physically gifted even in childhood, traits that would later define his leadership style.

At eleven, Jung Bahadur underwent the sacred thread ceremony, marking his formal initiation into Kshatriyas adulthood. He later wed Prasad Lakchmi, Kaji Prasad Sing Basnyat's daughter, in May 1828 (Rana, 1998). His connections to the ruling class were further cemented by the marriage. When his father, Bal Narsingh Kunwar, was transferred to Dhankuta as governor, Jung Bahadur accompanied him. In Dhankuta, he immersed himself in martial training like hunting, wrestling, boxing, swordsmanship, and archery. He enlisted in the military and gained real-world command and discipline experience.

On, Ashwin 12, 1887 B.S., Jung Bahadur sent a letter to Bhimsen Thapa addressing him as General father Bhimsen Thapa and referring his name as Subedar Jung Bahadur. It reveals that at the age of thirteen, he was already a Subedar in the Army. The letter included an emotional statement:

My mother once said that when I was in distress, tears came to your eyes. By the same management I have survived until today. You must comply with it in the future too. I am ready to sacrifice my life for you. You are like a father in faith. Please show me your compassion. (Thapa, 2082, p. 205)

The emotional depth of Jung Bahadur's bond with Bhimsen Thapa and his early allegiance to Thapa are shown in this expression.

Bal Narsingh was moved to Dadeldhura during the winter of 1832–1833 A.D. There, Jung Bahadur was trained in conventional warfare methods (Rana, 1974). He also became proficient in target shooting and musketry, which helped him advance to the rank of Second Lieutenant. A restless spirit is evident in Jung Bahadur's nature. He was never

content to remain fixed in one place and was always eager to explore new experiences. He even committed the unpardonable crime of abandoning his military duties one day, fleeing across the border into Ranjit's territory in Lahore (Landon, 1928). Bal Narsingh moved to Jumla once more in January 1835, and Jung Bahadur went with him. His physical strength, sharp intellect, enthusiasm, and innate administrative ability proved to be a great asset to his father's governance.

But in 1837 A.D., the political climate drastically changed, and Bhimsen Thapa was overthrown because of a significant upheaval (Rana, 2076). Bal Narsingh was stripped of his rank for his support of the Thapa, and Jung Bahadur lost his military position. Their property was confiscated, and the family faced sudden financial ruin. For Jung Bahadur, the loss of position and prestige was a profound blow. He was born into a family accustomed to royal favor, but now he lived in poverty and was shunned by society.

Disheartened and frustrated, Jung Bahadur turned to gambling. After losing a significant sum, he vowed to repay the debt and did so honorably afterwards. He eventually had to leave the nation and travel to India due to his deteriorating financial circumstances. He briefly resided in Tarai with the intention of making money by catching elephants, but this endeavor was not successful. He then traveled to Banaras to try his luck but found only hardship there. When Jung Bahadur returned to Kathmandu in January 1839, he learned that his wife had died a month earlier (Rana, 1974). That same month, he remarried the sister of Sanak Singh. This marriage's dowry gave him short-term financial relief and assisted him in paying off his debts.

This period of wandering, loss, and survival marked a turning point in Jung Bahadur's life. It exposed him to the realities of hardship, sharpened his instincts, and deepened his resolve. Once uninterested in formal education, the young man now recognized the importance of timing, resilience, and strategy. The early struggles laid the emotional and experiential groundwork for the bold political moves that would follow.

Jung Bahadur's Re-entry into Court Politics and Rise in Rank

A turbulent chapter came to an end, and a new political development began with Jung Bahadur's return to Kathmandu. Though he had endured personal loss, financial hardship, and social exclusion, these experiences had sharpened his instincts and deepened his resolve. He returned as a young man tempered by hardship, prepared to negotiate the shifting landscape of Nepalese politics, no longer the privileged son of a courtier.

King Rajendra Bikram Shah went on an elephant hunt in the Tarai region at the beginning of 1840 A.D. Jung Bahadur was part of one of the hunting parties, and this

expedition proved to be a turning point in his career. During the hunt, the royal entourage encountered a wild elephant that had been surrounded but not yet subdued. Jung Bahadur risked his life by grabbing a sturdy rope, charging forward, and binding the elephant's leg (Rana, 2076). His fearless act stunned the spectators and left a strong impression on the king.

Moved by Jung Bahadur's bravery, King Rajendra summoned him for a personal audience. He was introduced as the son of Kaji Bal Narsingh Kunwar by a palace official, who also mentioned that Jung Bahadur had previously been fired from his military position without cause. The king quickly made him a captain in the artillery division after being impressed by his bravery, quick thinking, and agility. As a result, what started out as a hunting trip turned into a rewarding experience.

Jung Bahadur was soon moved to be Prince's bodyguard. However, the prince was suffering from mental illness, and Jung found the assignment deeply distressing. In November 1841, he was transferred to a more prestigious and powerful role as King Rajendra's bodyguard through his father's intervention.

During this period Putali Nani, a palace maid, became romantically involved with Jung Bahadur. Known for her intelligence and discretion, Putali Nani became a valuable source of court information and strategic advice (Rana, 2076). Her influence helped Jung Bahadur navigate the complexities of palace politics. He was appointed as a Kaji in Kumari Chowk, a crucial administrative position within the royal court, in December 1841, because of her efforts.

Following the assassination of Mathbar Singh Thapa, Chautariya Fateh Jung Shah returned from India to Kathmandu. Jung Bahadur was appointed as a General during the July 1845 meeting to reorganize court ranks and responsibilities, earning him a fourth-place ranking. He was given command over three military battalions and tasked with training soldiers across the entire army. Additionally, he was entrusted with selecting key Bhardars for judicial and administrative roles (Rana, 2076). Jung Bahadur used this authority to strengthen his faction. He appointed trusted individuals including his brothers and loyal Kunwar allies to captain-level positions. He elevated his brother Badri Narsingh to the rank of Colonel. These strategic placements allowed him to build a solid base of support within the military and court.

In addition to his noble ancestry and martial skill, Jung Bahadur was notable for his ability to read the political moment. He recognized the importance of visibility, loyalty, and timing. He cultivated relationships with rising figures, observed factional dynamics, and waited for the right opportunities to demonstrate his value. His boldness,

once dismissed as youthful arrogance during the premiership of Mathbar Singh Thapa, was now turned into a leadership potential. His return to court politics was a calculated move toward power rather than a return to comfort.

Identity in Formation—Jung Bahadur’s Early Life Through Erikson’s Lens

Jung Bahadur Rana’s ascent from obscurity to dominance was not simply a political maneuver. It was a mental impression that was created out of personal loss, aspiration and social experience in different periods of his life. The stage of adolescence is between the ages of 12 and 18, a developmental phase, which gives a lot of room to develop personally but also, it is often distinguished by a higher level of internal conflict as well as noticeable changes in the ego strength (Erikson, 1968). In many cultures, the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood is a socially acceptable time to explore values, beliefs, and career choices (Ruth, 2013).

Applying Erik Erikson’s psychosocial theory, particularly the stage of Identity vs. Role Confusion (Cherry, 2025), offers a compelling framework to interpret his early life up to the critical moment when he eliminated his maternal uncle, Mathbarsingh Thapa, and assumed the rank of General. The earning of the hereditary title of Kaji by Bal Narsingh Kunwar after publicly executing the King Rana Bahadur’s assassin left a deep impression on the Young Jung Bahadur. This formative event exposed him early on to the unstable relationship of power and loyalty within Nepal’s royal court that shaped his understanding of political survival and ambition.

Erikson assumes that adolescence is the identity formation stage, and at this stage, people try to find the correspondence between inner values and the external roles (Erikson, 1968). The childhood of Jung Bahadur was an unstable period. His father made him move regularly. The patronage of Bhimsen Thapa came to an end and the support and blessings that he had been getting so far were lost. Consequently, his family job was gone, and his all properties were confiscated putting him in a very difficult financial state forcing him to find employment in India.

These conditions created a psychosocial tension between ambition and marginalization. However, Jung Bahadur started emphasizing identity instead of admitting defeat into role confusion, first through small military appointments and later through strategic court alliances.

His relationship with then Prime Minister Mathbarsingh Thapa was both enabling and forbidding. Whenever court factions shifted and Mathbarsingh’s position weakened, Jung Bahadur seized the moment. He planned Mathbarsingh's murder in 1845 A.D., which was a pivotal moment in Erikson's identity development and the end of his teenage crisis.

By eliminating his uncle, he removed a political obstacle and became General. It helped him to solidifying his autonomous role in Nepal's power structure.

Jung Bahadur's early life illustrates how identity is shaped not only through lineage and opportunity but through psychological negotiation. His actions were the result of years spent navigating uncertainty, demonstrating his competence, and getting ready for leadership; they were not spur of the moment. His ascent to the rank of General marked a psychological and political turning point. This demonstrates how social experiences mold the leaders who shape their countries.

Conclusion

Early life of Jung Bahadur Rana had been exposed to the complexities of court politics, and inherited status. His lineage as a Kunwar was reinforced by the fact that Bal Narsingh Kunwar was loyal to the crown, and this ensured that his family is recognized among the Bhardars of Nepal. It gave him premature access to royal influence. But debates concerning his place of birth bring into the limelight of attention to the contested nature of historical narrative and the politics of legitimacy. Nevertheless, his early life situation was characterized by intimacy to power, ritual and expectation with strong indications pointing to Thapathali, Kathmandu, as his birthplace.

The fall of the Thapa family and the consequent loss of the family privilege drove Jung Bahadur into poverty and alienation, which initially started to weigh him down, but ultimately made him stronger. The calculated acts of courage, alliances and decisive participation in court politics that characterized his back to Kathmandu changed him into a marginalized officer into a rising statesman. By 1845 A.D., he had laid the foundation for the Rana regime, demonstrating that power was not simply inherited but actively constructed through adversity, timing, and strategic action. Any of the disruptions in his childhood was a significant element of identity consolidation, making him an architect of a new political order of Nepal.

Appendices

श्रीमन्मन्मन् साख श्रीदेव श्रीसितला
श्री जगन्नाथ

श्रीजि
उत्तमान्तमार्गसिरादिरोजपकादिनवकीपठाउनुभयाकोला
लमोहोएसहिअदिरोजइकादिनआइपुगोसिउचउनु कोअ
भाइपरलोकभयाकोएलमिलाइ व मेआणमभयाकोषवर
३ वाउलेषनुभयाकोलालमोहोरपुगीबुशीमोहो ३ लाइ
तिनदिनजोरोआइचोथादिनदेषि ० प्रवेसभयोथ्यो ३ को
वरिवकसैलेजानिसकनुएहनछमार्गसिरकादिनउजादीबुध
वाएकादिनआओतिथजलजोगपाइसवेतैसित ३ सुकुरुनुभ
यो ३ सहगमनरुनुभयो ३ लेसवषतमाएतेपामो
तपनिनिमिहेरुकोपालनागश्रीमछदेहुलालमोहोरधमे
५ कायुर्जिवमोजिमअलोचनायाकामगरभनिरुकुमआ
याकाअर्थलालमोहोरधमे ५ कायुर्जिवमोजिमअलोचना
याकोसुरिअ ३ सवषतमासवत्रवाउसलोपदीषामिद
रुनुहुअमआहामिलाइकेहिफिनिभिथेनहाएआभास
लेतिदिनजोरोआइचोथादिनमा ३ प्रवेसमेआओति
थनाजलजोगपाइसवेतैसितषामिदसुकुरुनुभयाकोषवर
५ याचिनावहुतेआकलुपदासभयाकोहामिकचषतले
कोहानकविंतिगरी ससालसर्ताररुकोअपुसोसहा
मिकसवषतलाइप्रथीरहेछषामिदसुकुमेपामधत
सुकुरुनुभयाकोसमरुदाविअकेनेतहसंगराषनसकिहेनसस
वषतमाएतेपामोतपनिनिमिहेरुकोपालनागश्रीमछदेहुमया
रुकुमसिरुपुएरुनेसतएकोसवेकामकराकोषवदारित
विदिसदेलकोहालसुरथवुशीविंतिगरिपठाउदेरहुनुभया
रुकुमआयाकोअर्थजगाजगकामानिसलाइषवदारिराष
न्याएअश्रीचनायाकामगरभयाधर्म ५ कायुर्जिवमोजि
मसवत्रनेश्रीअ ३ कोइकाएनेलाएगतिहहिछषामि
दलोइउचितगारिवकपासेवकरुकोचितप्रिअरेहला

इत्यदीसवक बालनरसि एककरअजम्बरपंथविरनइकुं
रसमरजितधत्रिसामुन्दरथापातारात्रिध्रिपथसन्नित्रअभपयाआ
सिद्धिकरुउपाधाको

रतिपम्यतपउरुलानमितिअगहनअदिउरोजधमो कामविजेपुरश्री

A petition submitted by Kaji Balnarsingh Kunwar including other Bhardars from Bijayapur to King Rajendra about mourning the death of King Girvan Yuddha Bikram Shah in 1873 B.S. Mangsir Sudi 8 Roj 4. (Source: Aitihashik Abhilekh Sangraha, p. 171)

श्रीः१

सैत्रपक्ष ३ साल फाल्गुनवादि २ रोज राजतरलकाजीवाठ काजीवालनसिकावाके

माधुसूदीप ३ रोज पकामिति मालेष्वाकोपत्र फाल्गुनवादी २ रोज २ कारिन अधिपुपोत्स
 र्थमालममयो उत्रान पलदनको हाजीरीसो जमवर मापुठा उलाभ निलेष्वाको कुरा
 लाइ हाजीरीले फेईइ हुपुठा उलाकामगनेछे। सिवानाकाकाजमाजामा मारीदार
 र अकवारकादीनहिइयो। उँगिसिवाना ~~पुसको विमान~~ कोकाजमाफीक होला सो
 लेपतेरुला। उँवाहसले जमावछन्वावदेवसगर्न ~~उलकमाहुल~~ उलकमाहुल न्याकाम वेडिया
 ॥ ~~उँवा~~ उँवा वन्देवसगरी जमावाधि अउलनह सीलकोकामतपरमे ॥ ~~उँवा~~ उँवा रवीपत
 वारीहस्तकीपनिमामनामयाको सिउगिरीकोयेक ~~उँवा~~ उँवा काकुराल ~~उँवा~~ उँवा कीपनिकाउलाभा
 वडपोकोजगा कउप रमा ॥ रमति उँवाहसलाइलेपीपठा उँवाकामतोल ~~उँवा~~ उँवा वांकि हु
 तिसारलाइकाठ वराइदारे ~~उँवा~~ उँवा उँवा १९०० नारकोमालिका नुमचिया जोहातिसारलाइ
 चाहीन्याहो ~~उँवा~~ उँवा हात्राना उँवा मानुषा मेअवा वीसगाल कउप चिवास मनि उँवाहस विंति ॥
 र्थनमनिलेष्वाकोअर्थ काठसराइ हातीमारवारन हसील गार्न हवेन उँवाहस वा जेन हु
 सील गार्न न्यालाल मोहा ~~उँवा~~ उँवा उँवा हसका ना उँवा जमाको ~~उँवा~~ उँवा उँवा उँवा नमसिगस
 कीपनिकास लिपगरीर नाराको कुरालेष्वाकोअर्थ ~~उँवा~~ उँवा कीपनिलाइ पारीसेलीकथीर
 जसिका ~~उँवा~~ उँवा वाजापुरकाका ~~उँवा~~ उँवा निलेगालाइलेली पारीकुकीलाउनदीनु नग
 रामति ~~उँवा~~ उँवा नउ ~~उँवा~~ उँवा

A letter written by General Bhimsen Thapa to Kaji Balnarsingh Kunwar from Kathmandu to Dhankuta instructing him to send attendance reports and informing him about the dispatched courtiers to border duties in 1873 B.S. Falgun Wadi 2 Roj 2. (Source: Aitihashik Abhilekh Sangraha, p. 112)

Land purchased by Bhimsen Thapa in Borlang from Laxmiraman Upadhyaya Dhakal on Jestha 9, 1874 B.S.

(Source: Aitihashik Abhilekh Sangraha, p. 114)

धारणा
 सुवेदारनङ्गबहादुरकुमारकोविन्द

स्वस्ति श्री सर्वोपमायोग्यन्यादिसकलगुणगरिष्ठराजभारोद्धारणसाम
 र्थश्रीश्रीश्रीश्रीश्रीजनरत्नपिताभीमसेनथापाकाचरणगतलश्रीवाल
 नरसिंहकुवरकस्यकोटिदंडवत्सेवापूर्वकपत्रमिदंआसिवादिदलेजो
 हाकुसलछौताहातपाजिकुसलमंगलरुतुभयाहाओड्डारहो
 लाआगेजाहाकेसमाचारभलोछुप्रात --- कापुंन्यप्रतोप
 लेतपाजिकोजसलेदलेवठियाभयो --- काहजुरमातपाजिला
 ईप्रमादतिलकपातिरागाकारियाकोटिकाभिट्टीकोतपमितकोपुजी
 बहाईपठयाकोछहजुरमालाउन्याहजुरबडाईतपाजिलाईचडाई
 पठयाकोतपाजिलाईलागोसुअरुविठिकोवलहिजोलेषिगया
 कोकरुनापूर्वकआजावठियालेषिआयेछुसिभजातलाईसंक
 छपदीश्रीजनरत्नकाआसुआयाधोभनि --- वारआजाभयो
 थोसोदिवेवस्थालेगरिआजतकुड्डारगरिआउनुभयोअवड
 प्रांतपनिपालनागनुपन्याछतपाजिकानिमिन्नमैलेजीउदिनुजी
 ग्यछदिन्यापनिछुधर्मकावावाहुनुईछमपरमायाराषिदयारा
 घाजालाचरणकोछेमकुसलसिखार्तिआसिवादिदलेषिआउदै
 द्यावठियाहोलाईतिमस्वत् १८८७ साल मितिआश्विमासुदि ११

A letter written by then Subedar Jung Bahadur Kunwar from Dhankuta to General Bhimsen Thapa addressing him as General father Bhimsen Thapa in 1887 B.S. Ashwin sudi 12 roj 4.

(Source: Foreign Ministry cited in Aitihashik Abhilekh Sangraha, p. 205)

References

- Cherry, K. (2025, November 13). *Erikson's stages of development*. Psychosocial Development Guide. <https://www.verywellmind.com/erik-eriksons-stages-of-psychosocial-development-2795740>
- Chetri, R. K. (2025, July 10). *Aitihāsik Lamapati durbar ra Balkot pauwa punarjiwit garne abhiyanma Kathmanduma chalfal* [Discussions in Kathmandu on the campaign to revive the historic Lamapati Palace and Balkot Pauwa]. MissionLumbini. <https://missionlumbini.com/posts/14399>
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Kankai Desk. (n.d.). *Bhimsen Thapa: The Visionary Mukhtiyar of Nepal*. Biograph Nepal. <https://www.biographnepal.com/historical-persons/biography-of-bhimsen-thapa/>
- KC, B. (2025, June 9). *Jung Bahadur was born in Lampati palace chitikk*. ekantipur. <https://ekantipur.com/pradesh-5/2025/06/09/en/jung-bahadur-was-born-in-lampati-palace-chitikk-17->
- Kunwar Ranajiharuko Brihat Bansawali* [The detailed genealogy of Kunwar Rana family] (1st). (1999). Panchayan Prakashan Pvt. Ltd.
- Landon, P. (1928). *Nepal* (Vol. 2). Constable and Co. Ltd.
- Rana, P. J. B. (1974). *Life of Maharaja Sir Jung Bahadur of Nepal* (Vol. 8). Ratna Pustak Bhandar. (Original work published 1909)
- Rana, P. J. B. (1974). *Life of Maharaja Sir Jung Bahadur of Nepal*. In A. C. Mukerji, (Ed.). Ratna Pustak Bhandar. (Original work published 1909).
- Rana, P. S. J. B. (2019). *Shree 3 haruko tathya britanta* [A factual account of Rana Prime Ministers] (6th ed., Vol. 1). Bidyarthi Pustak Bhandar.
- Ruth, C. E. (2013). *Crisis as opportunity: Personality constructs and Erikson identity development* (p. 2) [Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports].
- Thapa, S. B. (2082). *Aitihāsik Abhilekh Sangraha* [Collection of historical records] (Vol. 2). Rastriya Bibhuti Bhimshen Thapa Smriti Pratisthan.
- Whelpton, J. (1987). The ancestors of Jang Bahadur Rana: History, propaganda and legend. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 14(3), 161–192.
- Wright, D. (2007). *History of Nepal*. Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd.