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# Nepal-Britain treaty 1923: Nepal's achievements and legacies

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**Abstract**

Nepal's independent status has largely been shaped by historical events, personalities, treaties, and agreements. Domestic and external events that happened in the first two decades of the twentieth century had and continued to have a direct impact on Nepal's external behavior and independence. During that period, Nepal was deeply engaged in war with British-India and Tibet as well as in World War-I. Nepal's deep involvement in regional and global affairs resulted in the conclusion of the treaty between the United Kingdom and Nepal in 1923 A.D. which helped consolidate Nepal's independent status thereafter. Against this backdrop, a descriptive analysis of the historic events such as Chandra Shamsher's rule in Nepali politics, Lord Curzon's arrival in India as British-India's Viceroy, the Lhasa Mission 1903-04, Nepal's involvement in World War-I and the Hunting Diplomacy of Nepal are described in this article mainly to explain their contributions to the 1923 Treaty. The provisions of the treaty have also been examined with a view to assessing its contributions to the independence of Nepal. In short, it is an effort to argue on Chandra Shamsher's diplomatic success to consolidate Nepal's independence through a treaty between the United Kingdom and Nepal in 1923. In the short run, that treaty contributed to Nepal's international recognition as an independent sovereign country setting it aside from other Indian princely states. In the long run, it contributed to building a distinct international identity of Nepal.

**Keywords:** Nepali diplomacy, 1923 treaty, hunting diplomacy, Chandra Shamsher Nepal-Britain relations, Rana rulers

## Introduction

Nepal's history, as a unified nation, is one of the oldest histories in South Asia. Nepal's independent status has been consolidated through various historical events, personalities, treaties and instruments. In this article, we tend to analyze and comment on historic events and personalities through present standards which often can misguide us. It has often been a practice and tendency to demonize the Rana rulers of Nepal, but they also had significant contributions to Nepal's internal political developments and its external relations. Important events that took place in Nepal, in the region, and on the world stage in the early years of the twentieth century had a direct impact on Nepal's external behavior. During that period, Nepal was deeply engaged in war with British-India and Tibet and in the World War-I, too. Nepal's involvement resulted finally in the signing of the treaty between the United Kingdom and Nepal in 1923 A.D. which is said to have contributed to further consolidate Nepal's independent status. Though it is considered one of the major developments in the history of Nepal's international relations (Subedi, 2022, p. 5) some observers of Nepal's foreign policy contradict the meaningful contributions of the Rana rulers to Nepal's genuine international standing saying that they had subjugated Nepal's interests before the interests of the British Empire. Against this backdrop, Chandra Shamsher's arrival in the Nepali court as Prime Minister and Shree 3 Maharaja, Lord Curzon's arrival in India as British-India's Viceroy, the Lhasa Expedition (1903-04), Nepal's involvement in World War-I and the Hunting Diplomacy of Nepal merit closer scrutiny to understand the circumstances that had helped conclude the Treaty between the United Kingdom and Nepal (His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1924, p. 2). Maharaja Chandra Shamsher, the Prime Minister of Nepal and W.F. O'Connor, British Envoy in Nepal signed the Treaty on behalf of their respective governments in Kathmandu on 21 December 1923.

It can be assumed that negotiating a treaty to assert Nepal's independence when the height of the British Empire was at its territorial peak, especially in South Asia, was not an easy task for the Rana rulers. Still, the fact is that they conserved, extended their helping hands, took concessions, and concluded a historic treaty with Britain which has a long-lasting impact on the political independence of Nepal. Consolidating bilateral relations with the British Empire by incorporating the political, security and economic issues was a daunting task for the Nepali leaders. Prior to that Nepal had to confront the British Empire time and again.

It is an important treaty in the Nepali psyche also because it has helped overcome the humiliation suffered by Nepal 107 years ago through the Sugauli Treaty. For the first time, this treaty expressly acknowledged Nepal's independence as a sovereign state. Today, this treaty can be remembered as a turning point of Nepal's foreign policy. This can be also taken as a milestone by those who are interested in the colonial history in South Asia and Nepal's independence. This paper is an effort to shed light on Nepal's journey to strengthen its independence through the 1923 treaty. Through the critical review of the literature and the descriptive analysis of major events that took place in Nepal in the first quarter of the 20th century, I have argued that the diplomatic efforts made by Chandra Shamsher to conclude the 1923 Treaty was a meaningful and memorable milestone in the annals of Nepali diplomacy.

## Chandra Shamsher's early days in Nepali politics

The behaviours of the rulers play a very important role in shaping the outcomes of major negotiations. Chandra Shamsher's perseverance, personal contact and connections with the British rulers, comfort in the use of the English language, vast experience in Nepal's foreign affairs, and on top of all, the zeal to leave some mark on Nepal-Britain relations as done by his great uncle, Junga Bahadur Rana, had helped convince the British to conclude a new treaty. Chandra Shamsher always thought of himself as more intelligent and more capable of running the government than his brothers. Chandra Shamsher had an ambition and strength of character. He adopted an energetic and at the same time, cooperative attitude in his foreign policy (Husain, 1970, p. 150).

Chandra Shamsher became the Prime Minister, the executive of the state, through a bloodless coup d'état and consolidated his position through rapid and judicious actions. He, at once, held a reception of the military and civil officers of the government. Their instant welcome convinced him that the country entirely endorsed the coup d'état which had just been carried out (Landon, 1928, p. 94). Intimation of his accession as the Prime Minister of Nepal was immediately sent to the Government of India through the recognized channel of communication, the British Resident in Kathmandu.

He consolidated his power in such a way that he was vigorous and unlimited in his authority at the time of his accession. Consequently, he succeeded in making the history of Nepal then as the history of his administration, his reforms, and his policy, foreign and domestic affairs alike during his 28-year reign. The Ranas were convinced of the British invincibility and hence proceeded to cooperate with this power (Sharma, 2006, p. 13). Chandra Shamsher had the opportunity to be familiar with this fact even before taking power. He headed the Foreign Office of Nepal where he handled some thorny problems of Nepal's foreign affairs including letting the British increase the number of Gurkha's Battalions from nine to fifteen. As the Foreign Office head, he used the opportunity to chisel skills and expand knowledge of the diplomatic affairs and nuances of Nepal's relations with foreign powers, particularly with Tibet and British India. As a result, his considerably deep knowledge on the internal matters of Tibet would prove helpful in advising the British in the Younghusband Mission which is discussed in more detail in this article elsewhere.

He accompanied Bir Shamsher, his elder brother, during his visit to Calcutta in 1892. During the visit, apart from impressing the British Official, he secured arms for Nepal arguing that the Government of Nepal cannot come effectively to the assistance of India if any emergency befalls unless they are trained in the use of modern weapons. The immediate break out of Sikkim trouble again (Landon, 1928, p. 99) seemed to have proven his judgment logical. Later, Chandra Shamsher used Gurkha recruitment as a quid pro quo (agreement) to acquire arms from the British, and eventually, to recognize Nepal's independence (Mulmi, 2017, para. 32).

In 1901 A.D., the British Viceroy Lord Curzon visited Terai for animal hunting tour which used to be an adventurous play for the aristocrats of Nepal and outside during those times. Chandra Shamsher wisely utilized that opportunity and managed to accompany the Viceroy as his brothers were reluctant to do so. Rose commented that it can be only conjectured 'what these two brilliant and ambitious men discussed' (Rose, 1971, p. 152). It is not clear whether Chandra Shamsher's coup d'état, which was staged two months after the visit, was discussed in their meetings. But to his comfort, he got immediate recognition of his move from Calcutta.

The sudden death of Bir Shamsher in March 1901 and the short-lived rule of Dev Shamsher came to an end in June 1901. Chandra Shamsher staged a bloodless coup d'état by sending his brother Dev Shamsher to Dhankuta by proving himself as the only qualified person to take over the heavy duty of the Prime Minister. Historians have spoken highly of Chandra Shamsher's administrative power, his foresight, and his devotion to the purposes of life, the vindication of his country's complete independence and sovereignty, and the steady improvement of the conditions of his people.

He attended the Delhi Durbar of King Edward VII's during accession to the throne in January 1903 as the Prime Minister of Nepal. His presence in the Darbar among the representatives of France, Portugal, Holland, Siam, and Afghanistan was of special significance in itself for the consolidation of Nepal's position among independent states (Landon, 1928, p. 111). Having utilized this visit, he elevated Nepal's relations with Britain from the erstwhile 'frostily polite' to the 'most cordial and intimate'.

During Chandra Shamsher's rule, the interests of Nepali and the British Governments tended to be closely intertwined resulting in an increasing degree of interdependence. Chandra Shamsher had successfully proved that he was a friend of Britain, not a foe. The British impact on Nepal in the 20th century was an irresistible phenomenon. It was hard to counter the force of events that tended to draw Nepal into the British sphere of influence. Nepal, under Chandra Shamsher, strove to maintain and even assert distinct political individuality, and this was in tune with Nepal's tradition and history. It appears that the events and opportunities utilized by Chandra Shamsher in his early years of reign have served as the groundwork for the conclusion of the 1923 Treaty.

## Lord Curzon and Lhasa mission

In 1904, Chandra Shamsher visited Calcutta at the invitation of Viceroy Lord Curzon and received full honors in the Indian Capital. His appointment as the Viceroy in 1899 heralded an important change in the Government of India's policy in the Himalayan region. By abandoning the policy of using Peking as an intermediary, the British decided to negotiate directly with Lhasa (Rose, 1971, p. 151). However, Lhasa was not ready to enter such arrangements. Accordingly, the British considered Nepal as a location to establish contacts, communicate, and negotiate with Lhasa. Chandra Shamsher happily conceded to the British intention and tried to mediate between Britain and Tibet in the following years.

It was Chandra Shamsher, behind the scenes, who made it possible for the British Military Mission under Col. Younghusband to visit Tibet (Pradhan, 1996, p. 126). During his 1903 trip to Delhi to attend Coronation Durbar, Chandra Shamsher's role in the shaping of Curzon's Tibet policy (Rose, 1971, p. 155) was featured prominently in the British Foreign Secretary's comments. He convinced the Viceroy of how Nepali dominated all military and civil routes in northern India and the impossibility of conducting arrangements in Tibet with an unfriendly Nepal. He was also ready to give his assistance and he gave it with a full heart (Rose, 1971, p. 156). It is believed that Chandra Shamsher's briefing and his offer to help the British convinced the Viceroy to write to London on the importance of the Lhasa Mission. This communication was sent to London on 8 January 1903 just a few days after Chandra Shamsher's visit to Delhi. As the Younghusband Expedition to Tibet, also known as 'the Lhasa Mission', was waiting to move forward from the cold plateau, Chandra Shamsher and Lord Curzon discussed several important questions about this mission during his visit to Calcutta in early 1904.

The main purpose of the Lhasa Mission was to forestall the potential Russian threat to the British Empire by the way of Tibet as well as to secure the trans-Himalayan trade route. To seize the opportunity of British-Russian rivalry for himself and his country, Chandra Shamsher played an important role during the Lhasa Mission where he assisted the British and persuaded the Tibetan authorities for a negotiated agreement by using Nepal's sphere of influence in Tibet. Some political analysts characterized it as a gross mistake on Nepal's Foreign Policy front. Historical blunder to help the Younghusband expedition to Tibet in the early part of the 20th century virtually dismantled Nepal's historically rewarding entrepôt trade between India and Tibet (Sharma, 2006, p. 7). Thus, it can be concluded that Nepal's policy towards Tibet underwent a major change in the early years of Chandra Shamsher's rule, however, not always for good. 'Nepal's once near-monopoly in trade with Tibet was no longer the most important consideration' as Chandra Shamsher's policy position (Rose,1971, p. 154). Nepal witnessed erosion of its vibrant economic presence in Tibet (Sharma, 2006, p. 6). It appeared that he did not put much premium to keep Kathmandu as the principal entrepôt for the trans-Himalayan trade.

Chandra Shamsher also assumed that in the broader context of the British-Russian clash possibly resulting from a conflict of interest in Tibet, Nepal would have an opportunity to expand its political influence in Tibet. Nepal also helped British India in its dealings with Afghanistan at a time when the October Revolution rocked Russia and assisted the Younghusband's force to enter Tibet (Pande, 2044, p. 219). Thus, he tried to be one of the most assiduous abettors of British-Russian rivalry. Nepal tried to convince Lhasa to a negotiated solution before the British crossed the Himalayas, but Lhasa was adamant not to negotiate rather announced its intention to resist the British with full force.

In this circumstance, the Lhasa Mission proceeded on 01 October 1903 in which Captain Younghusband led a strong military detachment including the 8$^{th}$ Gurkha Rifles. The forward march went as expected and captured Lhasa on 03 August 1904 and the Dalai Lama fled to Mongolia. During the mission, apart from extending material support and advice, Chandra Shamsher provided important information to the British by sharing the report of Nepali Vakil in Lhasa. For the British, the shared report had served as the single most important piece of information to understand the attitude of Tibetan authorities. The Tibetan side was also expecting Nepal's help in the process leading to a negotiated solution to the British occupation of Tibet. The Dalai Lama requested Chandra Shamsher for Nepali mediation and asked him to send a 'well-experienced official' to help settle the dispute or assist in the conclusion of a Treaty. Chandra offered the service of Nepali Vakil in Lhasa for this purpose. Accordingly, in Lhasa, Nepali Vakil Jit Bahadur figured prominently in the negotiation of the convention which was concluded between Britain and Tibet on 07 September 1904 known as the Lhasa Convention, 1904.

It is also worth mentioning here that under the provision of the 1856 Treaty between Nepal and Tibet, Nepal was required to assist Tibet if it was under attack from any quarter. Accordingly, the position of Nepal became quite delicate when India and Tibet came into conflict. Before the events of 1903-04, Chandra Shamsher had urged the Tibetans to seek a peaceful settlement with the British arguing that better terms could be obtained before rather than after the military expedition. He also clarified Nepal's treaty obligations to Tibet in the event of British incursion. According to Chandra Shamsher, Nepal would be obliged to provide advice and counselling, not the armed assistance.

The Lhasa Mission could not fully achieve according to the British strategic interest and was devoid of immediate economic returns. At London's insistence, it was withdrawn in 1905, on terms that were less punitive than those initially imposed on Tibet by the Lhasa Convention, 1904. During less than three years of the Lhasa Mission, the major powers- Britain, China, and Russia- agreed to maintain the status quo in Tibet (Rose, 1971, p. 160) thus reversing the Forward Policy of Viceroy Lord Curzon. On Lhasa Mission, Leo E. Rose commented that Chandra Shamsher undertook his office of peacemaker for one particular reason. There was no doubt that one of the results of this settlement, the opening of the direct Chumbi valley route between Tibet and India, would to a great extent diminish the volume of trade that had hitherto ebbed and flowed along the Kirong or Kuti routes through Nepal (Rose, 1971, p. 158). It was his policy of intermediation or continuation of friendship and cooperation with British-India as it had been originated by his great uncle, Junga Bahadur. Why he tacitly agreed to concede Kathmandu's entrepôt position could be a topic for another research. However, Chandra Shamsher seemed to be firm that through the English he could attain the security and prosperity of his people which he used to consider as only incentives and only goals. His conviction and unflinching support to the British regime helped enter new treaty relations with the British Empire in its colonial heights.

## Nepal and World War-I

The Sugauli Treaty had set the course of Nepal-British-India relations for a little over a century. During this period Nepal was not only a friend in peace but also an ally in war (Uprety, 1996, p. 19). The British and the Ranas needed each other for their own selfish ends, and their relationship, like all durable alliances, was based on mutual self-interest (Morris, 1971, p. 862). Nepal proved to be the source of British military strength in Asia, and the British Empire found the services of Gorkha troops invaluable at times of crisis (Shah, 1971, p. 114). It appeared that as the War was ensuing, Nepal took the chance to be on the British side without delay. Chandra Shamsher had allied with the British as the basic theme for Nepali Foreign Policy of his era even at the sacrifice of traditional Nepali goals.

Contemporary observers opine that the Rana rulers upheld a policy of supporting and appeasing the British regime by extending generous military support no matter what the purpose would be. In addition to providing liberal military support to British India in the two World Wars, the Ranas often extended help to quell riots and mutiny in India (Sharma, 2006, p. 7). However, in the unfolding circumstances of the early 20th century, it appears that he was left with no viable valid policy alternative. Nepal became a virtual appendage of the British Empire, responsive to the requirements implicit in the alliance with the British (Rose,1971, p. 152). The fact is that Chandra Shamsher provided generous help to the British they required during the War, more than any other state in the long-allied line. Nepal offered men, money, food and in diplomacy to help the English in the war. Today in retrospection, it would be impossible to gauge the scale and significance of Nepal's involvement in World War I. Immediately, Chandra Shamsher's generosity became a matter of dedicated and prolonged discussion between the two governments. He had been conferred with the title of 'Honorary General' in the British Army and 'Honorary Knight Grand Cross', and most importantly thereafter he began to be addressed as 'His Highness' by the British (Landon, 1928, p. 149).

Keeping all these decorative recognitions aside, Chandra Shamsher wanted Britain to return the territory of Terai which was lost by Nepal during the 1816 Treaty. His wishes were turned down by the British. Instead, they offered an annual gift in cash. In June 1920, another noteworthy change was made in the nomenclature of the British Resident in Kathmandu to the British Envoy and the Residency to the Legation. An announcement was also made by the British-India Government that the change in nomenclature is intended to emphasize the 'unrestricted independence' of the Kingdom of Gurkhas, which is on an entirely different footing from that of the protected states of India.

Nepal's involvement in World War-I provided another opportunity for Chandra Shamsher to renew his proposal for a new treaty to establish Nepal's unrestricted independence which he had made clear during the Visit of King George-V. It also provided a great opportunity to consolidate Nepal's formal independence and of course to legitimize the Rana regime. Part of the reason the British agreed to sign a treaty so favorable to Nepal was that the Nepalese soldiers had paid for it with their own blood. The Ranas sent 200,000 troops to defend the British during World War I. There were 24,000 casualties in Gallipoli and the trenches of Belgium and France (Magar, 2021, p. 6). Nepal's participation in the War had not only cemented the long-standing relationship between Nepal and Britain but also created a moral pressure on the British to concede Chandra Shamsher's demand of entering into a new Treaty relation.

## Hunting diplomacy of Nepal

Nepal as a land of natural beauty was not easily accessible to the foreigners during the Rana regime. The Country was completely closed off to most foreigners. Occasionally, however, Nepal's Rana rulers did invite a few selected foreigners to visit. These privileged few were, for the most part, the members of England's Royal Family (Cox, 2010, p. 258). Wildlife hunt has always attracted British monarchs to Nepal (Khaderi, 2022, p. 2). The hunting game in the Terai region was legendary. Big game hunts were a vitally important diplomatic tool for Rana and Shah rulers (Cox, 2010, p. 267). Some defenders of the Ranas like to point to the way they maintained and strengthened Nepal's independence through their adroit diplomacy. If that is so, they did so with the help of a lot of ordinary Nepalis who they often disdained – the Gurkha men (and families) who gave their lives in World War I and the Tharu men and women who made possible the magnificent Tarai hunts (Robertson, 2021, p. 47).

Chandra Shamsher used the Hunting Expedition of King George-V in December 1911 to follow up on a request for formal recognition of Nepal's sovereignty and permission to import and manufacture weapons made during his 1908 London trip. He had attempted to secure recognition in London which was not, then, successful. The Maharaja's goal was to persuade the British to recognize Nepal as an independent country and specifically to allow it to import and manufacture weapons freely but he was not successful. This may have been one reason why in 1911 he invited King George V for hunting trip with him in the Terai (Cox, 2010, p. 262). Then he seized another occasion to push for a formal British acknowledgment of Nepal's full independence during King's hunting trip to Nepal in 1911. His second attempt to secure Nepal's independence turned out to be unsuccessful again.

Chandra Shamsher used the visit of the Prince of Wales in December 1921 as an opportunity to consolidate his position and raise his standing. Earlier during Lord Curzon's visit to Terai in 1901, Chandra Shamsher tactfully utilized the opportunity to ensure his impending accession to the Nepali court. This time, while hosting the Royal guests on a lavish hunting expedition in Chitwan in 1921, Chandra Shamsher renewed his years-long demand and lobbied for a treaty. During the hunting expedition in Chitwan, Nepali and British officials reached a new understanding of Nepali independence. This time, there was a concrete diplomatic outcome. Even as the hunting expedition was in progress, the British and the Rana officials reached a preliminary agreement on a treaty (Cox, 2010, p. 269).

As an effective tool in Nepal's diplomatic toolbox, this time, the big hunting game worked. The hunting expedition also served as a venue for important diplomatic negotiations between Nepali and British officials which resulted in the conclusion of the treaty after two years where Nepal would get weapons and a formal acknowledgment of its independence. Hence, this time the 'hunting diplomacy' served its purpose.

## Britain-Nepal treaty-1923

The 1816 Sugauli Treaty allowed Nepal to retain its independence in return for ceding more than half of its territory to British India. Great Britain then opened a legation in Kathmandu and began recruitment of Gurkha soldiers into its army (Dixit, 2013, p. 1). This retention of independence through the treaty was not full and honorable. After over a century, the British agreed to replace the 1816 Treaty by the 1923 Treaty. This Treaty gave 'unequivocal' recognition of Nepal's independence by asserting that 'the two governments agree mutually to acknowledge and respect each other's independence both internal and external (Uprety, 1996, p. 20). The Treaty of Peace and Friendship was signed in 1923 which formally recognized Nepal as an independent sovereign country (Pradhan, 1996, p. 126). In the background, during the visit of the British Officiating Foreign Secretary E. Hollaw to Kathmandu in April 1919, Chandra Shamsher reiterated his perception about the British attitude towards Nepalese independence and urged that the question be settled once and for all (Mojumdar, 1968, p. 92). The events taking place in India and rumors of an offer to be the Prime Minister of liberated India by the pro-independence Hindu Force in India and activism of Germany in Nepali court had also compelled the British to concede to Chandra Shamsher's demand to conclude the Treaty. Hunting diplomacy proved to be useful to convince the British of the desire and need for a new Treaty with Nepal.

British responded sympathetically to Nepal's renewed proposal for a new treaty and negotiations were begun. Britain was not forthcoming to concede the Nepali request for elevated treaty relations. Even until the last hours, the Indian Office wanted it to keep the issue of Nepal's status 'safely in an indeterminate condition' (Mojumdar, 1968, p. 310). He further says, the British were looking for some quid pro quo or a comprehensive settlement while spelling out Nepal's rights. The question of Nepal's diplomatic representation in London was dealt with delicately during the treaty drafting. For Nepal, it was a visible recognition whereas the British were reluctant to let Nepal have an international personality.

The treaty did not conclude overnight. It took much skillful diplomacy and lobbying by Chandra Shamsher, who worked hard to prove to the British that Nepal was worthy of being declared an independent country. Various positions and orientations of the key personalities including the

British Envoy O'Connor in Kathmandu, Viceroy, and Foreign Secretary were critical during the negotiation processes. Drafts mainly 'Hirtzel Draft' went back and forth between Calcutta, London, and Kathmandu for two years before being finalized. The Treaty was signed on 21 December 1923 in Kathmandu by Maharaja Chandra Shamsher and O'Connor, Lt. Col, the British Envoy.

The Instrument recites in its preamble that 'true friendship had been mutually and consistently shown by the Nepal Government and the British Government for over a hundred years and that with the intention of still further strengthening the good relations between the two Governments the new agreement has been drawn up'. Historians have commented saying, it was an agreement between two Kingdoms (Landon, 1928, p. 167), not an actual defense alliance. There is a mixed assessment even today on the contribution of the treaty to Nepal's international standing. One writer observed, 'as a reward for good behavior, this regime was supposedly ended in a treaty of 1923 which recognized Nepal's independence. In practice, British influence remained predominant' (Levi, 1957, p. 238). The Nepalese attitude towards the British did not bring any changes in the essentials of the latter's policy of keeping Nepal in isolation. Although the British might have ensured independence for Nepal, it also ensured the uninterrupted continuance of absolutism of a century-long Rana autocracy in Nepal (Pradhan, 1996, p. 127). In contrast to such opinions, some writers have concluded that the treaty has provided a solid framework to consolidate Nepal's international personality. One prominent writer commented, that by maintaining cordial relations with British India, Nepal regained some of the lost territories and was able to secure formal recognition of its independence and sovereignty through the 1923 Treaty (Subedi, 2022, p. 5).

The treaty provides Nepal with unequivocal recognition of its independence both internal and external. It is referred to as a shining example of Chandra Shamsher's diplomatic performance (Pande, 1987, p. 221). As Article 1 provides that there shall be perpetual peace and friendship between Nepal and Britain while agreeing mutually to acknowledge and respect each other's independence (Subedi, 2006, p. 188). This acknowledgment has undone the injustice that Nepal had suffered following the defeat in the Anglo-Nepal War from 1814 to 1816. Even today, this treaty has given shape and historic sense to Nepal's international personality.

Its seven articles deal with different elements of bilateral relations and recognition of each other's sovereign status. The first article talks on the establishment of friendly ties and guaranteeing each other's sovereignty; the second says the Sugauli Treaty would remain in effect; the third article ensured that both required to inform the other if there were problems with neighbours and the fourth disallows the use of the territory of one country to be used against another. The fifth article allows Nepal to import weapons for its security and the last article removes customs duty for Nepal's imports and exports.

At last, through this legal architecture built together with Britain, Nepal managed to overcome the disgrace caused by the conclusion of the Sugauli Treaty 107 years ago (Pande, 2044, p. 221). Historian Pramod Shamsher Rana agrees in his book that the 1923 Treaty went a long way in healing the wounds of 1816 in Nepali psyche. Indeed, the Sugauli Treaty forced the Gorkha Empire to cede two-thirds of the territory it had conquered to British India (Magar, 2021, para. 4). This treaty was deposited to the League of Nations in 1925, and it was the first such treaty that Nepal deposited to the world body (Acharya, 2019, p. 337).

Ever since Chandra Shamsher's arrival in power, the fundamental aim of his foreign policy had been to negotiate a treaty that would replace the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli and unequivocally recognize the independence of Nepal. Such an arrangement had, in fact, been sought by all the Prime Ministers of Nepal since Jung Bahadur (Sever, 1993, p. 269). But it was Chandra Shamsher's tireless effort that secured the milestone treaty in the consolidation of Nepal's independence. The document is characterized as the crowning achievement of almost a quarter of a century of diplomatic efforts (Husain, 1970, p. 208) of Nepal carried out under the leadership of Chandra Shamsher.

## Conclusion

Nepal's non-colonized history reinforced with such a historical pact as the Britain-Nepal Treaty of 1923 has rendered her a unique position in the South Asian political psyche connecting it to a broader South Asian sovereign identity. There can be noticed a non-colonial nationalism in Nepal which is deeply rooted in colonial India and it continues even until now. The current political relationship with India has its roots in Nepal's relationship with British India. In this context, it is pertinent to analyze the events that occurred in different historical timelines through the historic perspective, rather than through today's prism. But we are still not clear on how to characterize the Rana ruler's political contributions to consolidating Nepal as an independent sovereign State. On the one hand, the Ranas are blamed for their alleged subservience to the British, and on the other hand, we happily talk that Nepal has always remained independent and never recognized British paramountcy- a non-colonial nationalism.

As analyzed above, the events, efforts, and developments, which had taken place in the first quarter of the 20th century, directly contributed to the signing of the Britain-Nepal Treaty of 1923. Chandra Shamsher's tactful dealing with the British even before assuming the political power of Nepal and his wholehearted support to the Younghusband Mission worked as the groundwork for this treaty. He had utilized most of the tools available in his diplomatic toolbox. Hunting diplomacy and Nepal's meaningful participation in World War-I changed the dynamics of Nepal-Britain relations leading to the development of trust between the two. Chandra Shamsher's role in these two events convinced the British to concede to his demand for the new treaty of 1923.

Once concluded, this instrument has reinforced, as never before, Nepal's independent status both at home and abroad. It sealed Nepal's independence and sovereignty. It was possible because Chandra Shamsher pursued an energetic foreign policy (Sever, 1993, p. 239) and skillful diplomacy. Without such a treaty, it would have been difficult for Nepal to emerge with a distinct identity when the British power withdrew from the Indian subcontinent in 1947 (Acharya, 2019, p. 336). In this respect, both Chandra Shamsher acting from Nepali side and the British have contributed meaningfully to the protection and consolidation of Nepal's independence.

Hence, the treaty greatly helped Nepal to be recognized internationally as an independent country and not just another Indian princely state. A strong foundation of Nepal's international personality was the direct contribution of this document. It has also opened a new era for Nepal globally. It can be concluded that as the longer-term impact of the treaty, today all Nepalese people are enjoying a feeling of freedom and independence as the oldest nation of South Asia. This treaty was the basis for the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship that was signed between Nepal and independent India. The Ranas, for their part, not only used their alliance with the British to consolidate their

power but through the 1923 Treaty, they secured a great political objective- a guarantee that the British alliance would not lead to the disappearance of Nepal's independence.

Today, the treaty is considered as a crucial instrument that helped overcome the humiliation suffered by Nepal after the Sugauli Treaty. Diplomatically, it was not an easy feat for Chandra Shamsher and his confidants to deal with the British officials and convince them to negotiate and conclude a treaty. Hence, it is difficult to undermine Rana's Foreign Policy success to conclude Britain-Nepal Treaty of 1923 to ensure Nepal as a sovereign country on an equal footing with the British Empire. The Treaty is not just another instrument in Nepal's bilateral relations, but a strong framework for her external dealings as it had explicitly acknowledged the country's independence and sovereignty.

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